



## Can a \$30 a year board member be transformed into a \$60,000 fundraiser? **YES - Here's How**

**To paraphrase a song from Joni Mitchell, you don't always know what you've got til it's gone. In this case, a very valuable resource was realized before it was gone.**

Marshall recently conducted a three-part goBeyondhello Master's Series training. Board members and key staff spent three days over four months learning and then perfecting their relationship skills. In the final session, Marshall showed them how to use their relationships to engage new prospects to build a Partnership Council, a leadership team of new stakeholders that functions as a board incubator and fundraising group.

One participant, the Executive Director of a health services nonprofit in California (who asked to remain anonymous) expressed his frustration. Let's call him Bert.

**"I was exasperated after the second workshop," said Bert, "because I only heard Marshall talking about donors. But he wasn't listening to my concerns about my Board. When I asked him what I should do with my board members, he said, 'They are the same. . . . connect, connect, connect.'"**

"But I disagreed – I thought Board members should automatically want to support the mission and fundraising because, after all, they were on the Board. Yet, I had to beat up my 13 Board members just to get the \$30 annual membership from them," Bert complained.

Although he had skimmed Marshall's book "Let's Have Lunch Together" before the seminar, he now decided to re-read it thoroughly. The combination of learning how Oscar, the lead character in the book reached out to his board plus the skills training he was receiving at the workshop made a light bulb go off! He decided to make some radical changes in the way he interacted with his Board.

**"I decided to call a Board member who had been with us about a year. I actively recruited her because I was trying to build a diverse board with different ethnic groups and genders. Let's call her Nancy."**

Bert had never even been to her office. "Using one of Marshall's great suggestions, I made an appointment and asked her what she liked for lunch! Nancy was very specific about the healthy foods she preferred and I made sure to get a great array of just what she liked," he said.

Instead of going into his usual posture of talking about the organization and its programs, he took a very different approach. He looked around, noticed personal memorabilia and photos and asked questions.

"Mostly, I sat and listened - really listened. It was amazing. She opened up about her life and I also opened up about personal things in my life – things I had never discussed before. We found out that we had a similar upbringing which included severe illnesses in our families. You know these are very painful and personal stories. These are not the usual things you share," Bert said.

**"We also talked about religion, which is something that's also never discussed. In fact, she invited me to her church!"**

At the next board meeting, Bert talked about a very expensive project he had been thinking about launching, but felt in this economy, it would be too difficult to raise the money. Nancy's response was: "How much do you need?" When Bert told him \$60,000, she said, "I can get you that money! In fact, to the people who are giving the money, this funding is a small amount – it's a lunch to them!"

So now, this Executive Director *knows what he's got* – an invested, active and energized Board Member who's opened new opportunities. In fact, Nancy has offered to introduce the group's speakers to organizations around the area and, as Bert says, "she's in the trenches with us now." In fact, her participation is also energizing other Board members. A former Board President who was on the verge of resigning has now also become re-engaged!



### *What are their future plans?*

One Board member bought everyone a copy of "Let's Have Lunch Together" and at the next board meeting, the top agenda item is formulating a three-year plan to build a Partnership Council – their own Board incubator and funnel for referrals and donations!