



# MINISTRY PARTNER DEVELOPMENT 101



# YOUTH DYNAMICS

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# INTRODUCTION

## WELCOME

*"I have found there are three stages in every great work of God. First, it is impossible, then it is difficult, then it is done."*

-J. Hudson Taylor (Missionary to China, 1865)

Ministry Partner Development (support ministry) is challenging, frustrating, exhilarating, awe-inspiring, humbling, faith building—essentially it will do for you what we hope one of our trips will do for a student!

I have been raising personal support since May 2001 when I started as summer staff with Youth Dynamics Adventures and continue through today as the Support Ministry Coach.

Through this process I have learned what to do as well as what not to do. My faith has been tested and strengthened. I have grown personally in ways I don't believe I could have grown if not for fundraising. I now would not want to live any other way!

If you want to read a book on fund raising I would highly recommend:

- *Funding Your Ministry* by Scott Morton
- *People Raising: A Practical guide to support raising* by William Dillon
- *View Points* by Steve Shadrach
- *A Spirituality of Fundraising* by Henri J.M. Nouwen

I have read and used all of these books. This manual is essentially the Youth Dynamics condensed version of all of these books.

It is my heart to equip you as you enter into support ministry. Please know that I am on your side, that I have walked this path before, and I believe God will do amazing things in your life through this process. I am excited for you!

In His Grace,

Sarah Strickland :) <><

MPD Coaching Director  
Youth Dynamics

## **BIBLICAL BASIS**

*“Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its grapes? Who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk? Do I say this merely from a human point of view? Doesn’t the Law say the same thing? For it is written in the Law of Moses: „Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.“ Is it about oxen that God is concerned? Surely he says this for us, doesn’t he?”*

1 Corinthians 9:7-10

*“If it were wrong to be supported by the personal gifts of others, Jesus Christ would not have allowed it in His own ministry ... If Jesus became vulnerable enough to be supported by others, you and I must be willing as well.”*

Scott Morton (See Luke 8:1-3)

There are over 2000 verses in the Bible related to our money and possessions. God is concerned about our finances! Why? Because our attitudes and actions around money directly influence our relationship with the Lord. This pertains not just too how we spend or give our money, but also how we gain our money.

A great passages on fundraising is Philippians 4:10-20. (You can read that on your own.) In these 10 verses Paul addresses the three big pieces of support ministry; our own growth, fundraising, and ministry to our supporters.

- “for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ... I can do everything through him who gives me strength.” (vs. 11b, 13) Paul has *learned*. He has learned and grown and has come to trust in the one through whom he can do everything.
- “you sent me aid again and again when I was in need.” (vs. 16b) Paul raised funds; this is a big part of support ministry- fundraising! He was open in acknowledging their gift and thanking them.
- “I am looking for what may be credited to your account.” (vs. 17b) He was genuinely concerned with how the Philippians' giving affected their walk with the Lord.

There is so much that could be written on what the Bible has to say about money and funding the work of God. (In fact many people have written books and founded entire ministries on this very topic!) The best thing you can do is investigate this on your own. Look at the examples in the bible of the Levites, Nehemiah, Paul, and Jesus. Ask God to show you if you have incorrect attitudes and to replace those with His truth.

## ***SUPPORT MATERIALS PROVIDED BY YOUTH DYNAMICS***

Youth Dynamics will walk alongside you and equip you as you enter into Ministry Partner Development (MPD). That does not mean the process will be easy, however, we will provide you with some helpful resources. In addition, we will provide you with administrative tools and ongoing coaching.

### Administrative Office Support:

- Initial Fundraising Materials Packet:
  - 25 pledge cards and reply envelopes
  - 25 Thank you cards/envelopes
  - 25 brochures
- Google Doc, Microsoft Word, Publisher templates for appeal letters and newsletters.
- Set up of personal support page and link on the Youth Dynamics website.
- Processing and receipting of all donations.
- Monthly reports of donations given towards your ministry work. You will use this report to send thank you notes to all your donors.
  - *Note: if you need to know about a specific donation sooner than the end-of-the-month, you can contact the Support Services office.*
- Additional support materials provided as needed. The cost of these materials will be deducted from your reserve account. The charges cover the cost of the items:

\$0.08 per pledge card	\$0.05 per reply envelope
\$0.25 per brochure	\$0.05 per mailing envelope
\$0.75 per thank you card/envelope	\$0.25 per Reflections newsletter

### Ongoing Coaching

Your supervisor and the MPD coach assigned to you are both available to coach, train, challenge, encourage you, and hold you accountable in this process. There will be regular check-ins throughout this process and please call or e-mail with questions, frustrations, and joys.

**Additional materials:** Check with Support Services for Youth Dynamics swag items that you can purchase to give to your special donors. Supplies may vary.

## **APPEAL LETTER**

An appeal letter is a letter where you have the opportunity to share the ministry vision and what you will be doing in the summer working with students, what God is doing in your own life, how you feel God is leading you to go into missions for a season, and share with you hope to get out of the summer. This is an opportunity to share with your potential ministry partners (e.g. supporters, donors) how they can be part of this ministry (e.g. financially, prayerfully).

The appeal letter is the **introduction** to your ministry adventure – it is not designed to raise the funds for you. It is important to follow up this letter with a phone call (see *Follow Up on page 9*). The appeal letter is designed to be the introduction that helps paves the way for further conversation and explanation. It is just the beginning of your fundraising process.

Your appeal letter should contain:

- personal salutation (these are your friends and family!)
- attention getting opening
- reasonable amount of text (1 side of 1 page) explanation of what you're doing and why
- specific ask (ex: prayer support, financial support, how much financial support, monthly donations, special gift to a particular project, etc)
- personally signed by you
- a written post script (P.S.) saying you will call them to:
  - set up an appointment to meet with them and share more or
  - to talk with them further about this on the phone (if they are too far away to meet with in person)

Guidelines for writing your appeal letter:

- Use the Microsoft Word template provided to you.
- Have at least one person proofread your letter.
- Have your letter approved by Youth Dynamics before you send it out.

See the sample letter provided an example for you use as inspiration to create your letter. If you need help, please feel free to contact your coach or your direct supervisor.

## COMMUNICATION STANDARDS

Youth Dynamics has several foundational standards upon which this organization – and all of our communications – are built. Our goal is to have consistent communication throughout the entire organization. Our foundational standards include:



### **Name:**

The official name of the organization is Youth Dynamics. When writing external communications (e.g. emails, newsletters, social media, grants, appeal letters) write out the full name: Youth Dynamics. If writing long letters or if you are limited in character spacing, first write out the organization name and then put YD in parentheses. For example, Youth Dynamics (YD).

### **Mission:**

Youth Dynamics' mission is to invite and challenge youth to a lifelong adventure with Christ and His church.

### **Vision Statement:**

Youth Dynamics' vision is to see youth transformed by the power of Christ, integrated into the local church, and impacting their world for Him.

### **Organizational Objectives:**

1. To reach unchurched youth.
2. To assist local churches and other youth ministries to carry out effective ministries of youth evangelism and discipleship through adventure ministry.

### **Motto:**

LET'S ADVENTURE TOGETHER

*Why? Its invitational, it's inspirational, it reflects our brand, and it's applicable to everything we do in Youth Dynamics (adventures, communities, with our supporters, partners, and core ministries)*

### **Brand Essence:**

DISCOVER

*Why? Everything we do at Youth Dynamics is underscored by the word "discover". Discover your life in Christ, authentic relationships, who you are, whose you are, your purpose, adventure ministry and all it offers, what you are made of, life skills, leadership qualities, etc.*

### **Brand Position:**

Youth Dynamics is a relational adventure ministry that helps youth discover life in Christ through dynamic relationships and challenging experiences.

## **Brand Promise:**

Our main brand promise is we help youth discover life in Christ. We also help our donors and partners discover life in Christ.

## **Core Values:**

### YOUTH

We believe that reaching young people is strategic to impacting the world for Christ.

### RELATIONSHIPS

We believe in going beyond programs and investing our lives in relationships with teens.

### ADVENTURE-BASED EXPERIENCES

We believe that taking teens beyond their comfort zone and utilizing God's creation creates powerful opportunities for community building and spiritual growth.

### THE LOCAL CHURCH

We believe that the local church is the place of lifelong growth and maturity for believers.

### SPIRITUAL VITALITY

We believe that spiritual health is critical to our success and longevity.

### STAFF AND DONOR CARE

We believe that caring well for our staff and donors is critical to our growth and effectiveness.

### **Messaging Guidelines:**

All communication representing Youth Dynamics including writing, teaching, and speaking, should *not* contradict the foundation standards.

All communications should be honest, use clear and simple language (no jargon), be warm and personal, and provide complete, current, and accurate information.

## **Typesetting Standards**

The corporate font for the logo and motto is DIN. The standard corporate font for body copy is Calibri. This is to be used for all formal or public communications (correspondence/main corporate brochures/etc.). For headlines, subheads, etc. please use DIN. If DIN is not available to you, use Calibri bold.

- Headlines are recommended to be set in DIN Black at 18 or 24 pt. with sub-heads set at 14 or 16 pt. in DIN Medium.
- Body copy should be set in Calibri at 12 point. For older audiences, body copy should be set between 12-14 points.



- Block style for paragraphs should be used, not the indented paragraph.
- Avoid the use of ALL CAPS for the bulk of text. Use sparingly when highlighting or calling out specific text.
- Do not use underlining to emphasize a word or group of words. Instead use bold or italics, however, avoid overuse of bold and italic typefaces.
- Fonts should be limited to no more than three on any one page.
- Use exclamation points sparingly!

## Photo Guidelines:

- Photos should have strong and effective content.  
Photos primarily involving people are preferred.
- Photos should keep in mind risk management issues, i.e. life jackets on, helmets buckled, etc.
- Youth Dynamics Adventures should avoid “extreme” photos.

## Readability Standards

Readability is the ease with which a reader can understand a written text. Easy reading helps learning and enjoyment, so what is written should be easily understood. In an effort to appeal to a broad audience, writing at the 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade level is recommended—7<sup>th</sup> grade is ideal. While the targeted audience can read at higher levels, research shows that they prefer to read at this level.

Those using MS Word can utilize the automated feature to define the readability index of any Word document. Depending on your version of MS Word, it is usually an option under preferences and located under the spelling check/grammar check section (or under Tools/Options) – to have Word show readability statistics after it is done with a grammar check.

We also recommend checking out Grammerly ([www.grammarly.com](http://www.grammarly.com)) and Hemingway Editor ([www.hemingwayapp.com](http://www.hemingwayapp.com)). These tools check your written work for difficult passages, run-on sentences, etc. Don't forget that it's also okay to have someone edit your work. This is a great way to fold in supporters who have these gifts.

## Required Elements

All Youth Dynamics communications and promotional items need to include the following elements:

- Youth Dynamics logo
- Motto: Let's adventure together OR Discover.
- Link to the Youth Dynamics website: [yd.org](http://yd.org) or [www.yd.org](http://www.yd.org)

By using the provided templates and not making any changes to the formatting, you will meet these guidelines.

These guidelines still apply to any of your personally written, email, or verbal communications. When using these modes of communication, please keep in mind that *what* and *how* you communicate will directly impact your reader's view and opinion of Youth Dynamics.

### **What is Youth Dynamics? Relational Adventure Youth Ministry.**

Youth Dynamics has been committed to reaching youth since 1970. We do this through building relationships and inviting youth to high-quality, transformative outdoor adventures. We are both relational and adventurous, and we call our ministry strategy **relational adventure youth ministry**.

## ***CREATING YOUR CONTACT LIST***

Who are the best people to send your letter and invite to partner with you in ministry? Everyone you know and then some! Don't decide for people whether or not they can support you—let them decide for themselves.

For raising funds for a summer staff placement, it is recommended to have a list of 50-75 people. Here are some ideas when you brainstorm names:

- Acquaintances from your church, Sunday school class, small group or bible study
- Acquaintances from other churches in your area
- Acquaintances from the church you grew up in
- Friends from high school or childhood friends
- Friends from college
- Current/former co-workers
- Current/former neighbors
- Relatives and family friends
- Friends and acquaintances of your parents
- Friends from athletic/social/service organizations
- People you have mentored or ministered to (bible studies, etc.)
- Professors, coaches, mentors
- People you know who have a heart for youth ministry or missions in general
- Friends or family members of all the above (networking)

## ***FOLLOWING UP***

Following up with your appeal letter is key! In the business of our society today, people with the best of intentions will not respond to just a letter—they simply forget! Calling to remind them, and asking for a decision is not intrusive, it is helping them to live out God’s call on their lives concerning their finances.

It is a good practice to call one week after sending the letter. This gives them a chance to read the letter and have it fresh in their mind when you call. Don’t be discouraged if they haven’t had time to read your letter yet, ask if you can summarize the content right there on the phone.

***The most important part of follow up is to ask the golden question; “Will you support me?”***  
(See flow chart on next page.)

*If the follow up phone call sounds scary, it can be (just like rappelling for the first time). Here is an encouraging story.*

### **Story from Sarah:**

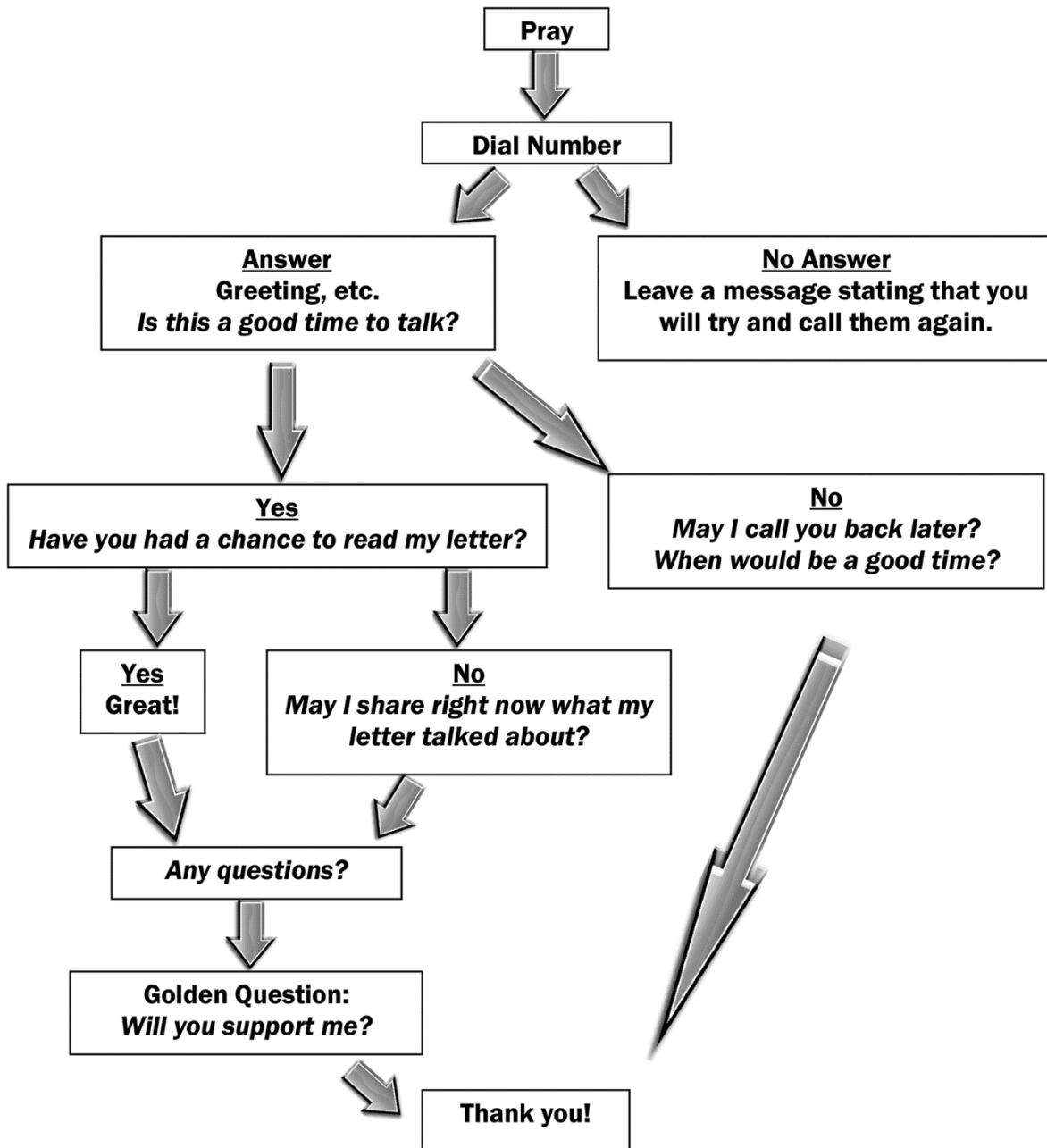
*When I was in college I was afraid to call for pizza because I didn't want to talk to someone I didn't know on the phone. My roommate discovered this and then would force me to call! By the time I came on full-time staff (just three years later) I had called people I had never met (friends of friends) to ask them to support me. How amazing our God is in the way He grows us!*

Phone calls really are a great way to connect with people when they are too far away to meet with in person. Here are some things to keep in mind when making follow-up calls, thank you calls, or update calls:

- Be up front as to why you are calling. It doesn’t have to be the first sentence out of your mouth, but don’t hang up the phone with the person wondering why you called.
- Have one or two specific stories in mind of students you have worked with. Have one or two specific things that you are learning in mind.
- Have one or two specific prayer requests in mind.
- Ask them how you can pray for them. Then be sure to actually pray for them, either right there on the phone or soon after.

# SUPPORT CALL FLOW CHART

This is not a script—it’s a flowchart! When making a call, make it personal to the person you are calling. The flowchart is a simple guide. If you want to write out a script, that is GREAT. Practicing with a friend prior to making the actual call is a helpful. Once you have made a couple calls, this will get easier and you won’t rely on these tools so much.



# LEGALITIES

## Checks

When donors write and send in a donation via a check, the check needs to be written to Youth Dynamics. It is important that they do not write the check out to you—you are not a nonprofit, Youth Dynamics is.

There is a federal law that states that funds donated to a nonprofit may not be *designated* to an individual. This law came into effect in response to a loophole law that would allow parents to give money to their church specifically designated to pay for their child's private school tuition and receive the tax benefit. It is against the law for Youth Dynamics to accept a gift specifically designated towards an individual.

That said, funds may be *preferenced* to an individual. It is a small issue of semantics, but the difference is huge. A *preferenced* gift places the gift into Youth Dynamics' hands and voices a preference for how the donor wishes the gift to be used. In this case, Youth Dynamics is not legally bound to use the donation in a particular way and has discretionary control of the funds. This also means that if you leave Youth Dynamics with a 'reserve account', these funds belong to Youth Dynamics and cannot be refunded to the donor. Having donors return a pledge card with your name on it makes it clear that they *prefer* the gift to benefit you and Youth Dynamics will credit this donation to your reserve account.

## ECFA

Youth Dynamics is a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability. You will see their logo on the reply card and on receipt letters. Youth Dynamics has chosen to be members and each year fulfil their seven standards of responsible stewardship. One of these standards requires an annual external review of the financials. To learn more and view Youth Dynamics' profile, visit [www.ecfa.org](http://www.ecfa.org).

Be assured that Youth Dynamics is using the funds responsibly and have entered into accountability on that.

## THANK YOU

It cannot be emphasized enough the importance of saying thank you! As soon as you get off the phone or out of an appointment, especially if they have answered your golden question of supporting you, write them a thank you card. Even if they said no, thank them for their time. You are encouraged to be creative in the ways you thank them, just make sure you say thank you!

*"I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus."*

1 Corinthians 1:4

## NEWSLETTERS

Written updates are a good way to communicate to a greater number of people what is happening in the ministry and to share prayer requests. Newsletters are not to be used for soliciting funds as it is less personal and the function is more for updates and prayer requests. A template and sample newsletter is provided for you and will help you craft your message.

### Helpful Hint:

Newsletter stories should illustrate, not explain. Write your stories as if you are telling them to your friend in their living room.

— Scott Morton  
Funding Your Ministry

Keep the following in mind as you write your newsletter:

- Tell stories well—meaning give enough context so the reader can follow you but don't get too bogged down with too many details.
- Be careful of the details you do share.
- Powerful stories can be any growth moment of a student.
- Always change the students name in a story – unless they give you permission.
- Be mindful of 'ministry jargon'. If you do use a 'jargony' word, define it so the reader can follow.
- Your stories will be read more when focused on one specific student versus statistics about the masses.
- Use the newsletter template provided for you.
- Be sure to adhere to the Communications Guidelines presented in this manual.
- Have someone proof-read your newsletter before sending.
- Be sure to have your supervisor approve your newsletter before it is sent out.

## ***FACEBOOK, E-NEWSLETTERS, OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA FORMATS***

You are encouraged to communicate about your time with Youth Dynamics and with all the forms of social media out there, it is hard not to. If you write a post on your personal page, please check with your supervisor to make sure that the post does not fall outside the parameters of participant confidentiality. Please be discerning in the stories you share to ensure you are doing your best to protect students and Youth Dynamics. See the Communications Manual for more clarity.

## ***SUPPORT MINISTRY DAYS***

Support ministry days are workdays set aside specifically to work on support ministry. Here are some suggestions on how to use that time:

- Hand write thank you notes to everyone who has supported you.
- Follow-up with people who said yes but haven't sent in their gift yet.
- Follow-up with people you have not been able to reach to ask for support.
- Thank you calls to special donors.
- Write mid-summer newsletter.
- Write end-of-summer newsletter.
- Make connections with individual donors to give a personal update as to how your summer is going.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Now it is time to put all this preparation into action. This is a lot of information all at once, however, there are people on staff to help you through this process. At any point, please call your supervisor or your support coach with any questions, concerns, joys, frustrations, prayer requests, etc. Here is a suggested timeline for your next steps:

### **March**

- Pray about this summer and the support ministry process.
- Ask for more materials (e.g. pledge cards, thank you cards, envelopes, etc)
- Write an appeal letter and email for approval
- Start brainstorming your list

### **April**

- Pray about this summer and the support ministry process.
- Send out appeal letter
- Follow-up with a call to all donors you sent a letter to
- Send thank you cards

### **May**

- Pray about this summer and the support ministry process.
- Follow-up with a call to all donors you sent a letter to
- Send thank you cards

### **June**

- Pray about this summer and the support ministry process.
- Thank you cards / call to donors
- Personal updates to donors

### **July**

- Pray about this summer and the support ministry process.
- Thank you cards / call to donors
- Personal updates to donors
- Mid-summer newsletter to donors

### **August**

- Pray about this summer and the support ministry process.
- Thank you cards / call to donors
- Personal updates to donors
- End-of-summer newsletter to donors



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