

# Depth Perception

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## "Yes, but . . . ." is not a supportive position.

"I don't like to ask people for money!" This statement is made by nearly every board member faced with their first capital fundraising effort. Embedded deep inside is an aversion to putting pressure on someone, most especially when it involves money, and most especially when a board member wakes up to the fact this is part of what board service involves.

So two questions must be asked and answered if readiness to invite support replaces this objection.

1. **Is my board service tied to advancing the mission of this organization?** The answer "Yes, but . . . ." is not appropriate for this question. If I feel I must qualify my answer, especially with an unwillingness to invite financial support, or unwillingness to devote my time to advancing the organization's mission beyond my presence at board meetings, then my answer is really "No." Perhaps it is even "NO!"

"Yes, but . . . ." does not mean that I am opposed to the mission advancing, it is just that if it is going to advance it will be in spite of me. If my answer is "Yes, but . . . ." I should reconsider my board service as I have a difficult time being honest.

2. **Do I believe in this project?** Again, "Yes, but . . . ." does not cut it and effectively serves as a "No." If I have an objection then I am declaring my unwillingness to proceed.

It is not wrong to have objections, and it is not wrong to have a no answer to either question, but we need to stop thinking "Yes, but . . . ." is a supportive position. And boards need to stop thinking "Yes, but . . . ." is the same as "Yes!"

If my answer is "Yes!" to both questions--not blindly, but after careful discernment and the development of a strong case for support--then I am no longer asking for money. Instead, I ask people to join me in advancing an inspiring mission.

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Dr. John Frank's [The Ministry of Development: Revised and Expanded](#) is now available.

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