

Fundraising  
Communications 2  
Crafting Your Message

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# Webinar Best Practices

1. Close any programs (other than GoToWebinar) that are running on your computer
2. Call-in using a telephone instead of using your computer speakers
3. Move your cell phone away from your computer
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# This Year's Fundraising Communications Webinars

<b>1</b>	Defining Your Case for Support	<b>Sep 16</b>
<b>Special</b>	Case Messaging For Environmental Organizations	<b>Oct 21</b>
<b>2</b>	Crafting Your Message	<b>Dec 2</b>
<b>3</b>	Engaging Volunteers with Your Case	<b>Feb 10</b>
<b>4</b>	Fundraising Materials that Work	<b>Apr 27</b>
<b>Special</b>	Communicating Your Campaign Case	<b>May 11</b>

FR Communications 1

Defining Your  
Case for Support

RECAP

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## Your Case for Support:

It's the **set of messages** that you communicate to **prepare your prospects** for a solicitation.

Your case has  
**three jobs** to do.

Engage and inspire

Create a rationale

Remove obstacles

Context

Where are we?

Impetus

Why is this urgent?

Vision

What will be different?

Credential

Why us?

Plan

What will we do with your gift?

Appeal

What are we asking you to do?

# FR Communications 2

# Crafting Your Message

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First thought,  
best thought.

*Alan Ginsberg*

First thought,  
best thought.



Think of an organization you have  
personally supported.

## **Why should a person give money to that organization?**

As quickly as possible, write down the major reasons  
or contributing factors that come to mind.

Don't polish it up. Just write it how you would say it.

# Food Pantry



Poverty on the north side is actually way worse than you might expect.

Food Pantry has been in the community forever, and they're one of the most active food banks in the whole city.

They're starting to do some really cool new stuff to help people get out of poverty.

# Planned Parenthood



They're the biggest defenders of women's right to self-determination.

If they were to go under, no one else could do what they do as effectively.

The political climate is very threatening, so I felt it was important that I do something to help.

# Social Justice Fund



I want to be super thoughtful about my personal philanthropy, but I don't always have the time to do the research.

When I give to SJF, I know that they have already done the heavy lifting.

They're looking at the needs of the community, observing who is excluded from mainstream grants or funds, noticing who is making real change in a way that's inclusive and taking a cue from the community itself.

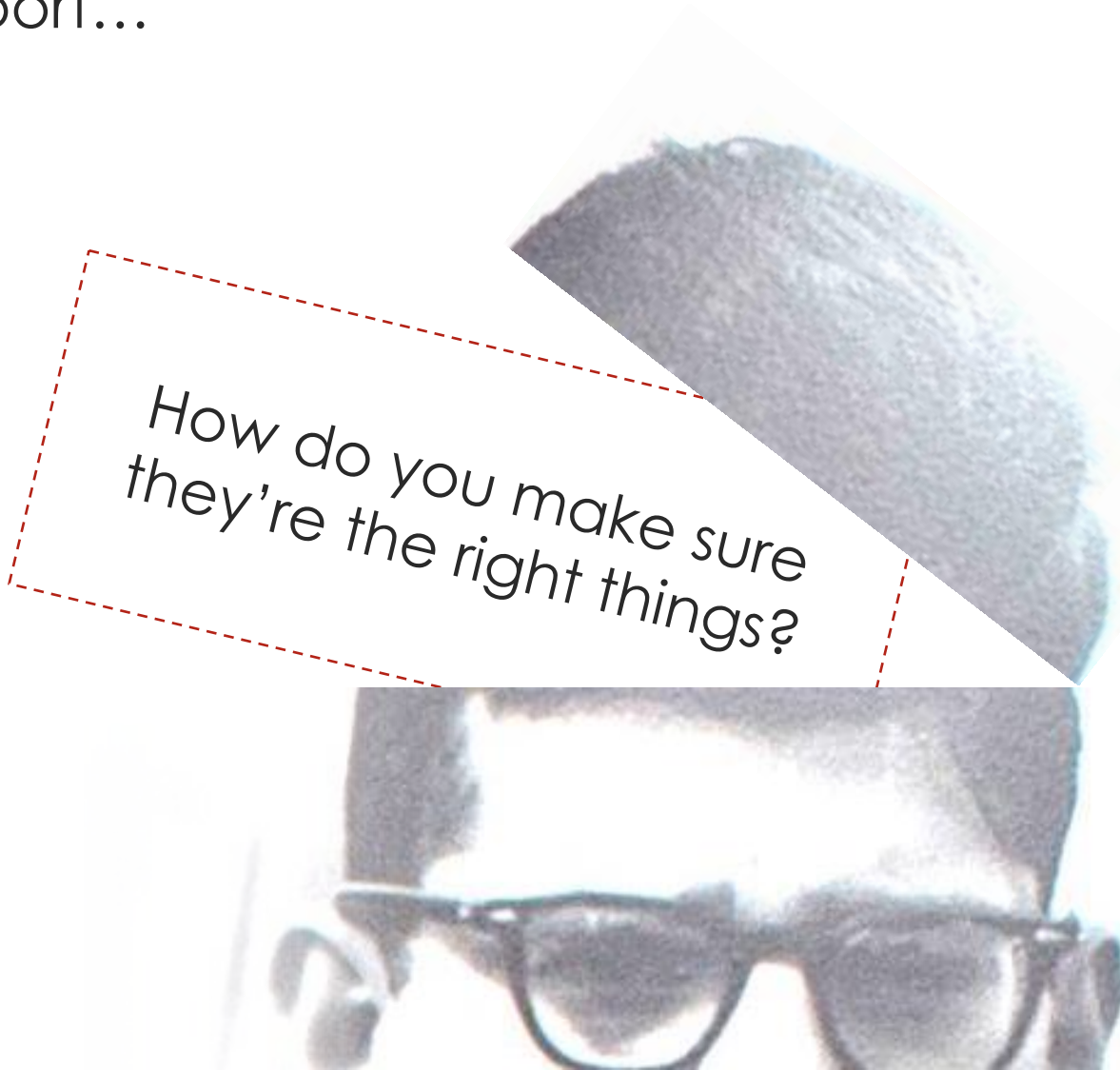
# Observations

Everyone listed 3-5 things.

Everything they said  
was pretty simple.

Some of them were  
pretty compelling.

If people can only recall 3-5 things about your case for support...

A photograph of a person wearing glasses, with a red dashed box highlighting a question. The person's face is partially visible, showing their eyes and nose. The background is a light, textured surface.

How do you make sure they're the right things?

# Messaging.

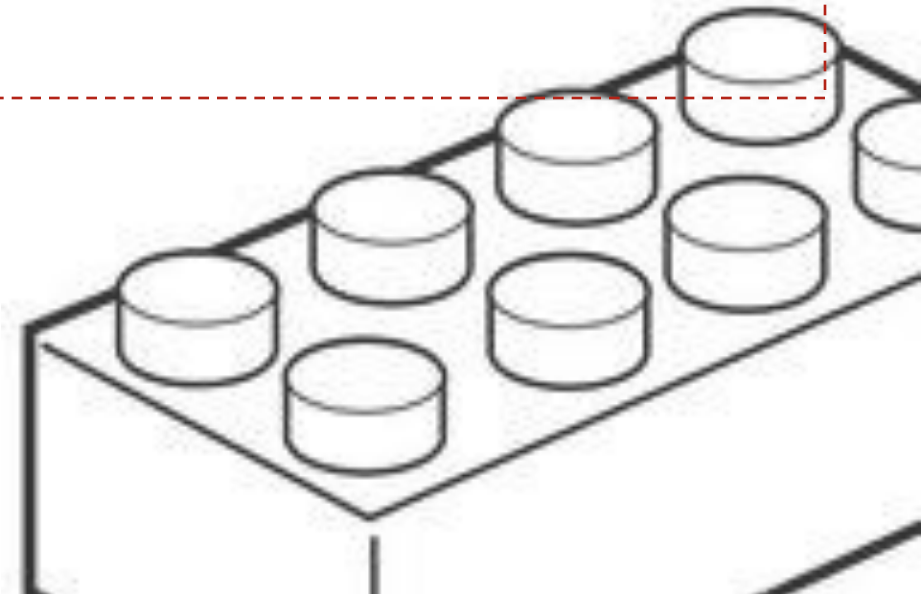
It's the most overlooked discipline  
in fundraising communications.

It's the cheapest way to make  
everything you communicate better.

# It's about writing.



Strong, well-defined messages  
are the building blocks  
of a strong case.



# Your Case for Support:

It's the **set of messages**

So what is a  
**message**  
anyway?



What is a message?

A message is  
**a statement** designed to  
**move an audience.**

A statement designed  
to move an audience

Alzheimer's disease is the  
defining public health  
challenge of our time.

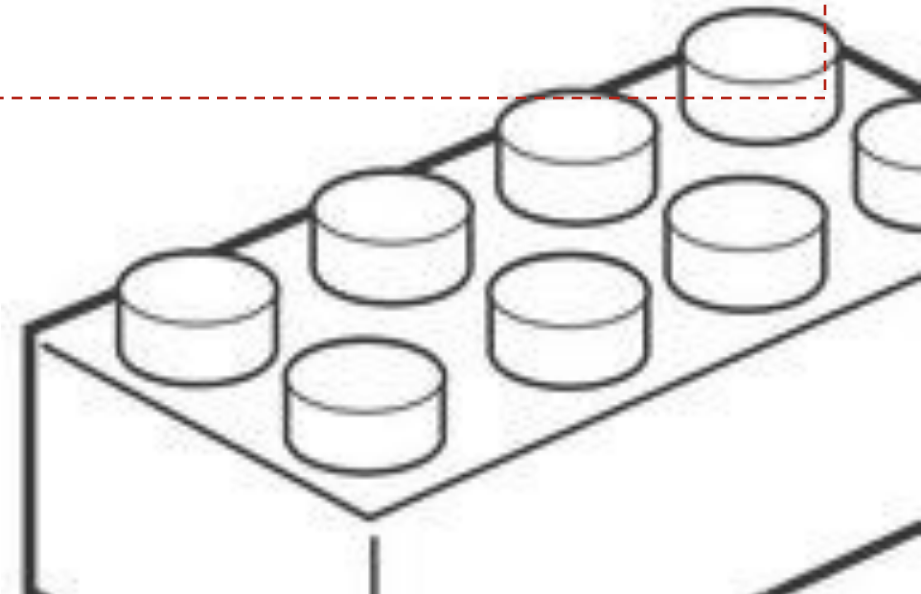
A statement designed  
to move an audience

No child should miss out  
on a great education  
for financial reasons.

A statement designed  
to move an audience

This campaign will  
determine our future.

Strong, well-defined messages  
are the building blocks  
of a strong case.



If I started to write elaborately, or like someone introducing or presenting something, I found that I could cut that scrollwork or ornament out and throw it away and start with the first **true simple declarative sentence** I had written.

*Ernest Hemingway*





# What makes a good fundraising message?

Makes a **compelling claim**

Creates **immediate understanding**

Works in **conversation**

A good fundraising  
message

makes a  
compelling claim.

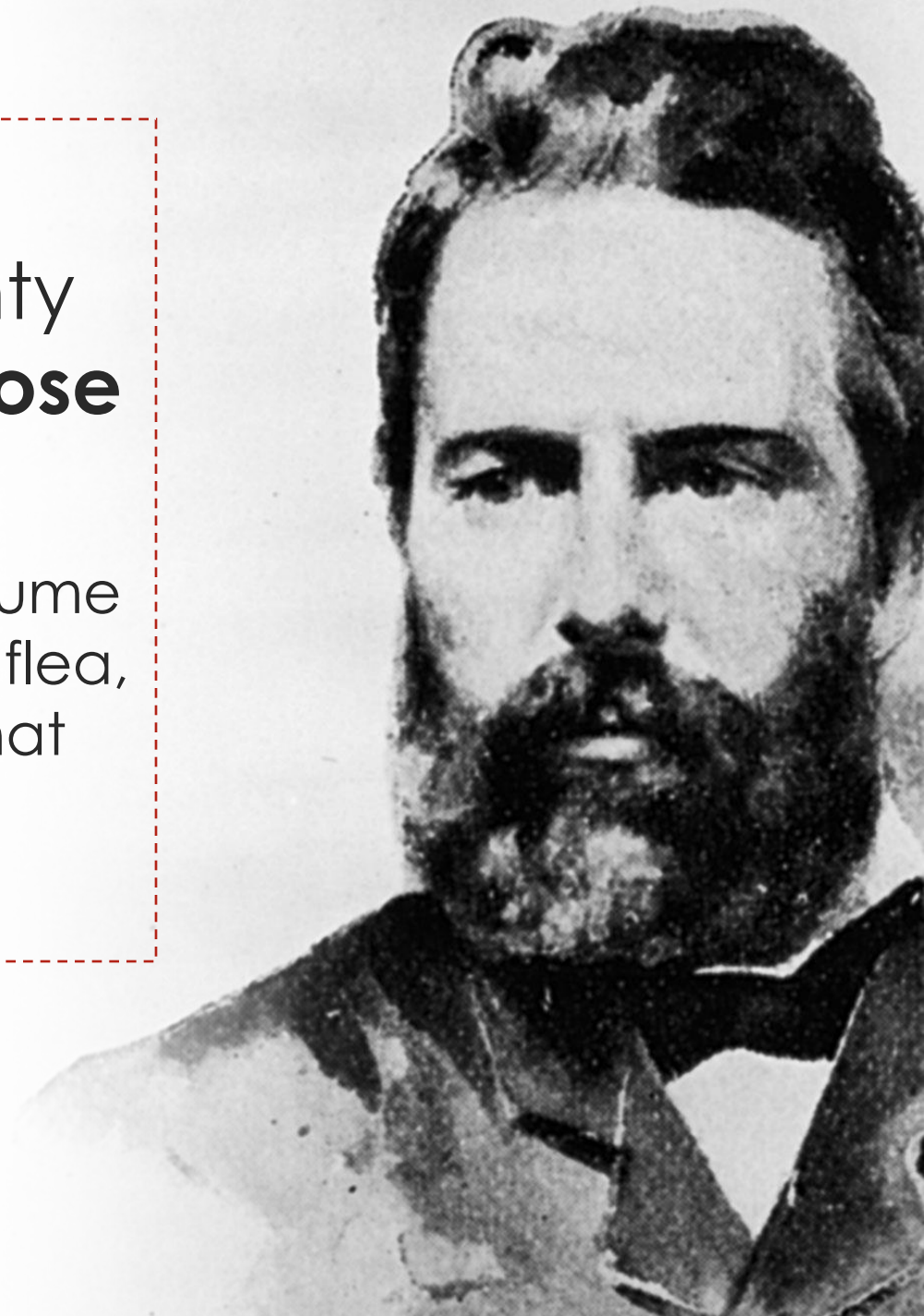
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To produce a mighty book, **you must choose a mighty theme.**

No great and enduring volume can ever be written on the flea, though many there be that have tried it.

*Herman Melville*



It all starts with  
**substance.**



*Coca-Cola* open happiness™

no



maybe?

It all starts with  
**substance.**



**Drivers wanted**

no



**The Ultimate  
Driving Machine**

maybe?

It all starts with  
**substance.**

Alzheimer's disease is the  
defining public health  
challenge of our time.

# **Push harder** to get to the strongest core idea.

We're stronger together.

The only way we can succeed is to work together.

We need solutions as interconnected as the challenges we face.

Take a **position.**

Everything that makes  
Chicago *Chicago*  
flows out of our history.



# Take a **position.**

We're building an orchestra for tomorrow.

The power of live music will never change, but the times have—and orchestras need to adapt.

The best messages  
make **interesting** claims.

For children, music is so much more  
than a way to express yourself.

It's a chance to *define* yourself.

The best messages  
make ideas feel **big**.

Healthcare reform is bringing a new focus on prevention, community health and affordability. For decades, we've been a leader in these critical areas.

American healthcare is going  
where we've always been.

A good fundraising  
message

creates immediate  
understanding.

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Too many songs, weak  
rhymes that's mad long.

Make it brief, son—  
half short and twice strong.

*GZA (Wu-Tang Clan)*



# Simplify.

Among all the ways we can invest in our school's future, the endowment is the most important, ultimately surpassing the impact of capital and program investments.

The endowment is the most important investment we can make in our school's future.

# Clarify.

We have always been recognized for our outstanding academic programs—yet we know that our extracurricular and co-curricular programs can be just as important in shaping our children's lives.

This campaign is about all the learning that happens *outside* the classroom.

# One idea per message.

The Annual Fund provides funding that supports a wide range of initiatives, including financial aid, faculty professional development, new program innovation, technology and equipment.

Your Annual Fund gift benefits every student, every day.



# One idea per message.

The Annual Fund provides funding that supports a wide range of initiatives, including financial aid, faculty professional development, new program innovation, technology and equipment.

Your Annual Fund gift supports all the things we love most about our school.

# One idea per message.

The Annual Fund provides funding that supports a wide range of initiatives, including financial aid, faculty professional development, new program innovation, technology and equipment.

Your Annual Fund is the most important gift you can make to benefit our students today.

# Create a **framework** for understanding.

We're going to coordinate tens of thousands of small improvements that add up to a major impact on the whole ecosystem.

The best messages  
create **a-ha moments.**

Neighborhoods are  
big enough to truly matter,  
yet small enough to truly change.

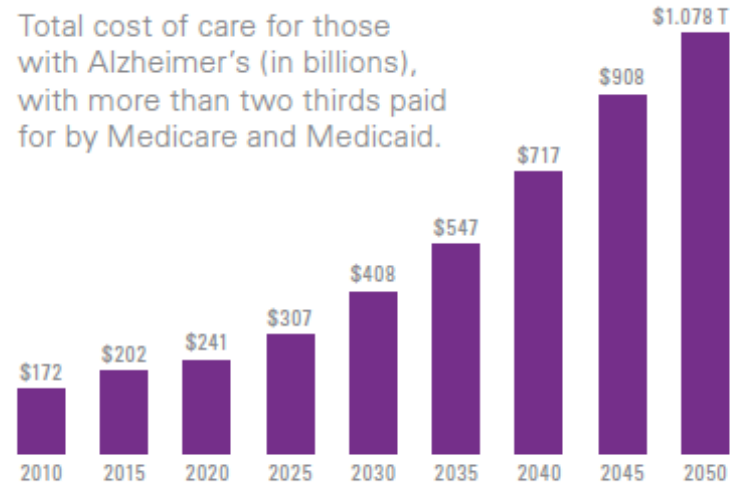
# Build around a message.

## The movement to end Alzheimer's disease isn't just a battle. It's a race.

That's because every day another 10,000 Baby Boomers turn 65, after which their risk for developing Alzheimer's doubles every five years.

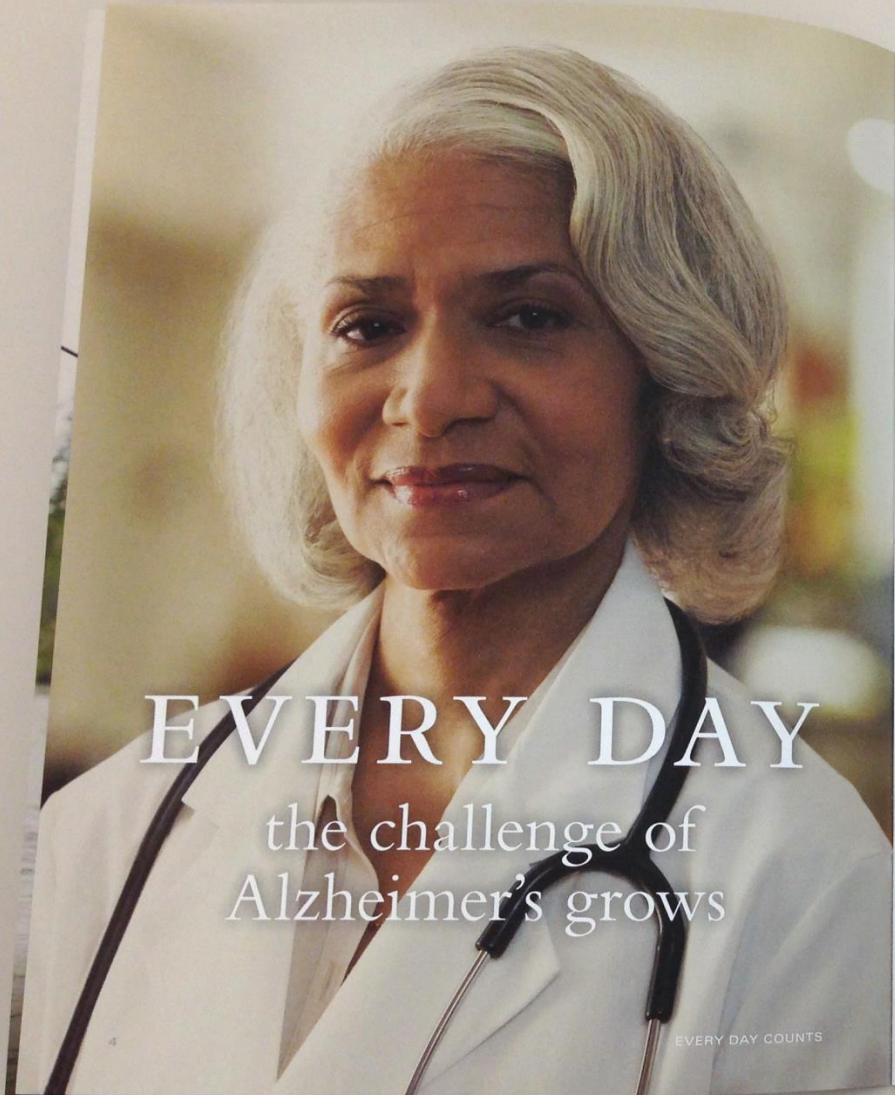


5 million Americans with Alzheimer's today  
16 million Americans with Alzheimer's in 2050



The already high cost of Alzheimer's will skyrocket as the Baby Boomers age.

Source: Lewin Group Econometric Model of Alzheimer's and Dementia Costs ([alz.org/trajectory](http://alz.org/trajectory))



EVERY DAY  
the challenge of  
Alzheimer's grows

EVERY DAY COUNTS

**The movement to end Alzheimer's disease isn't just a battle. It's a race.**

That's because every day another 10,000 Baby Boomers turn 65, after which their risk for developing Alzheimer's doubles every five years.

Each new diagnosis affects countless lives; caregivers rearrange their lives and careers; communities support struggling families; and the cost of care continues to grow at a rate we can't sustain.

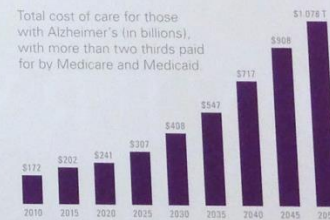
Alzheimer's disease is already the sixth leading cause of death in the United States. One in three seniors dies with Alzheimer's or another dementia.

Until we change the course of this disease, the cost of Alzheimer's to everyone in our country will only continue to skyrocket.

It's the defining public health challenge of our time. It's a race we must win. And our success depends on the actions we take today.



5 million Americans with Alzheimer's today  
16 million Americans with Alzheimer's in 2050



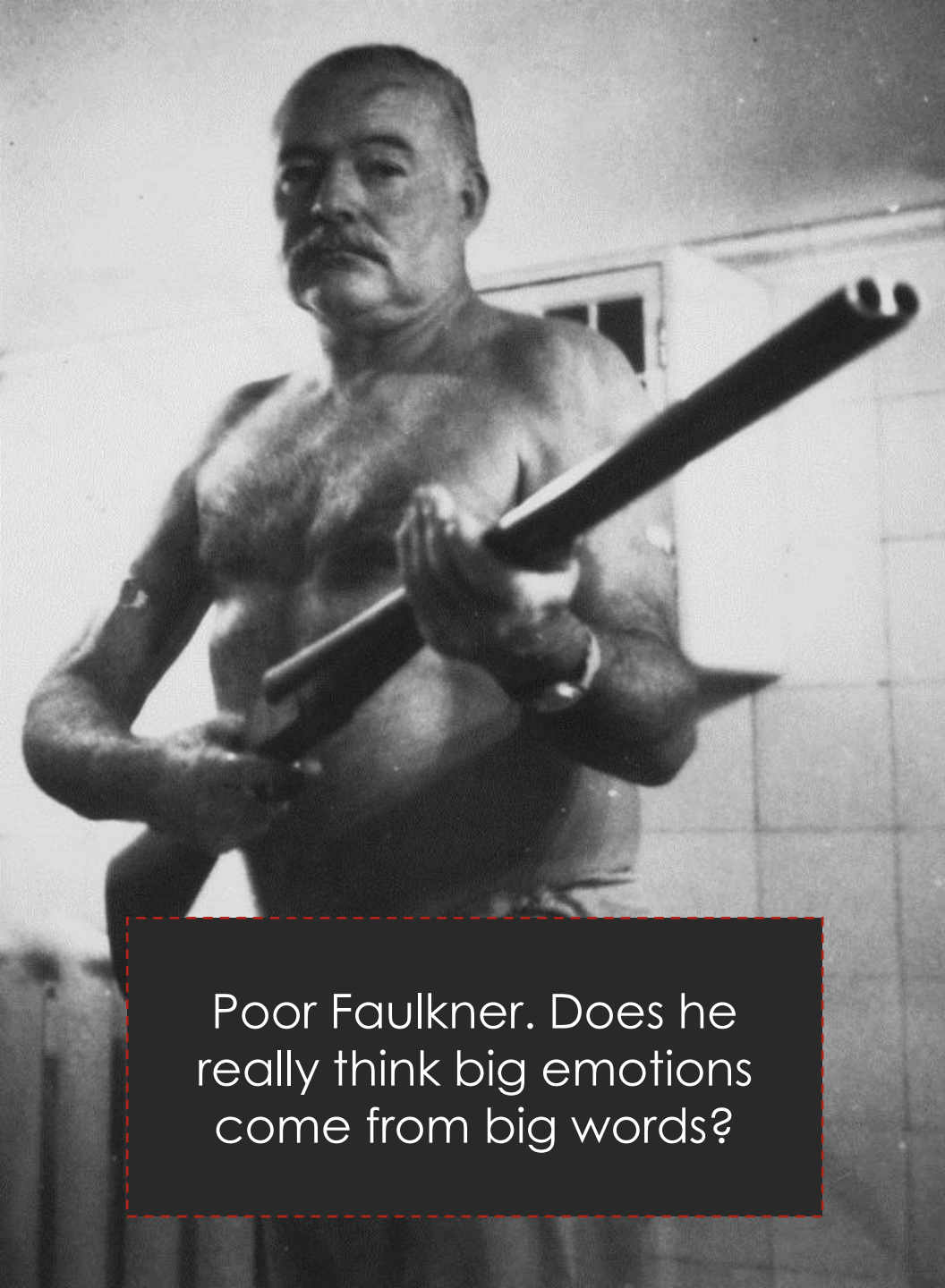
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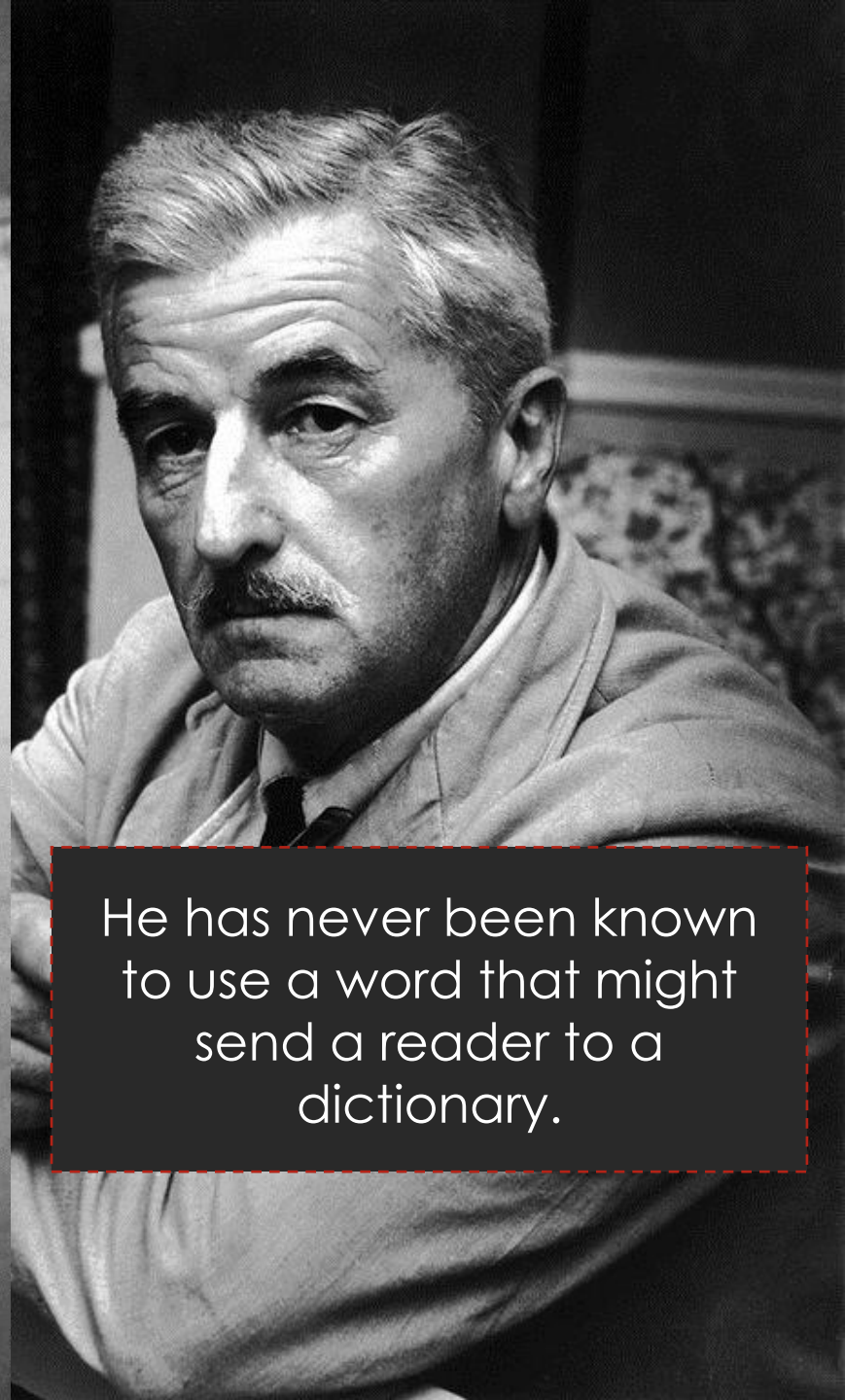
A good fundraising  
message  
works in  
conversation.

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Poor Faulkner. Does he really think big emotions come from big words?



He has never been known to use a word that might send a reader to a dictionary.



Don't be afraid of  
**simple language.**

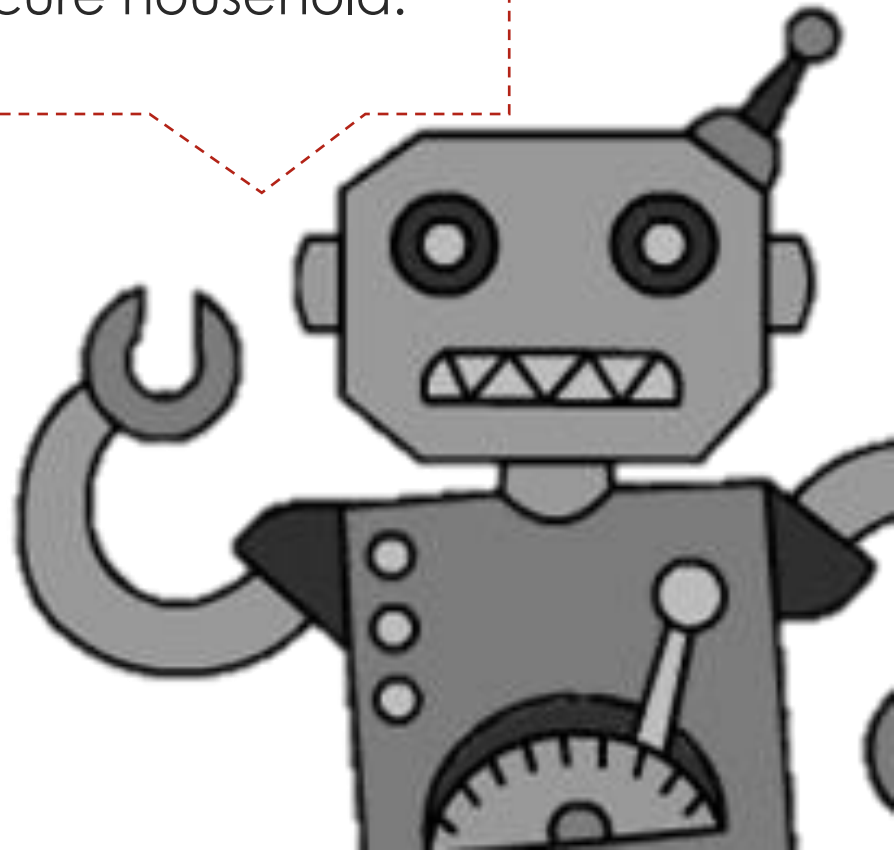
This isn't our last chance—  
but it's our best chance.

# Would a **human** say it?

No child should have to wonder where his next meal is coming from.



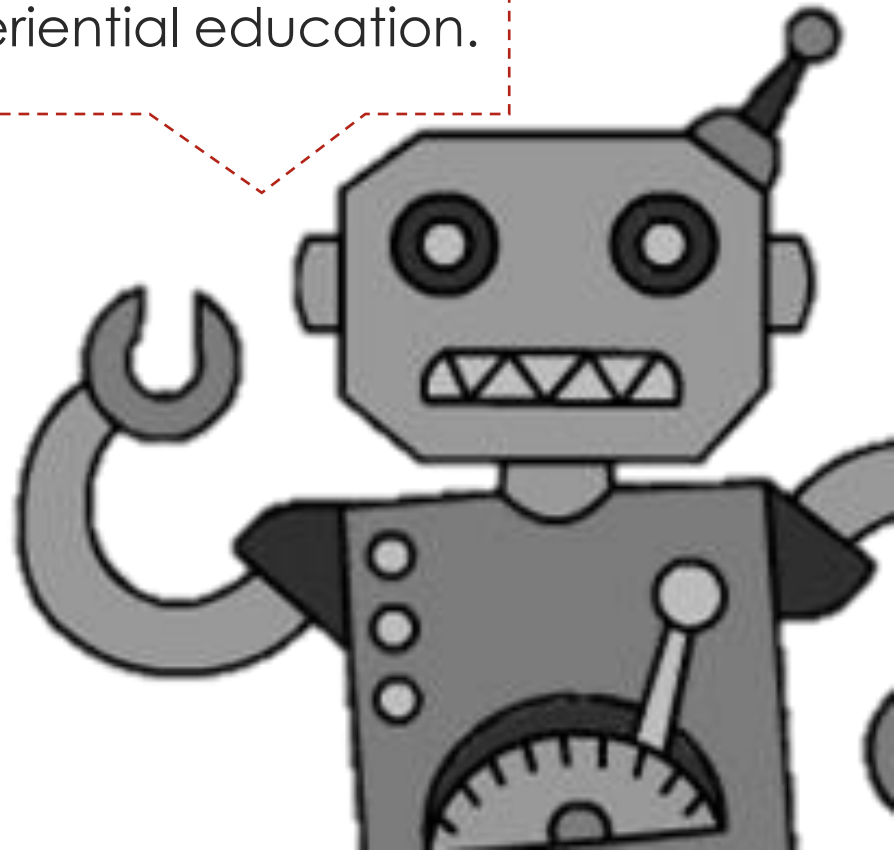
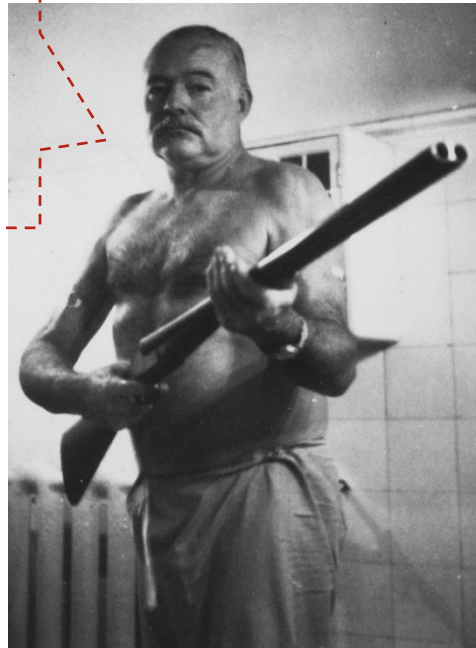
No child should grow up in a food-insecure household.



# Nouns and **verbs**, my friends.

We are committed to a child-centered, transformational, holistic, experiential education.

?



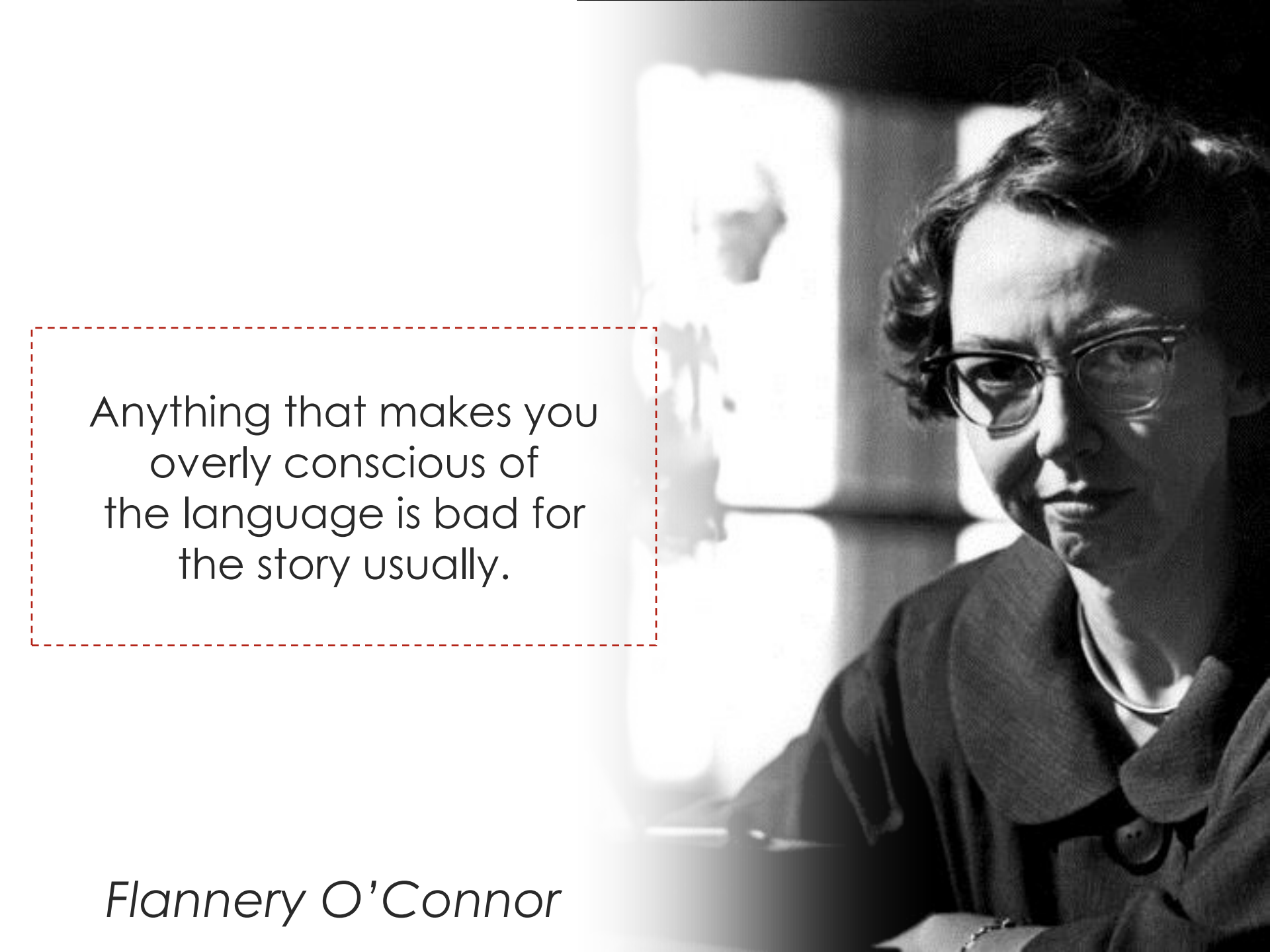
# A fun\* exercise:

One sentence.

You get one adjective, max.

No commas.

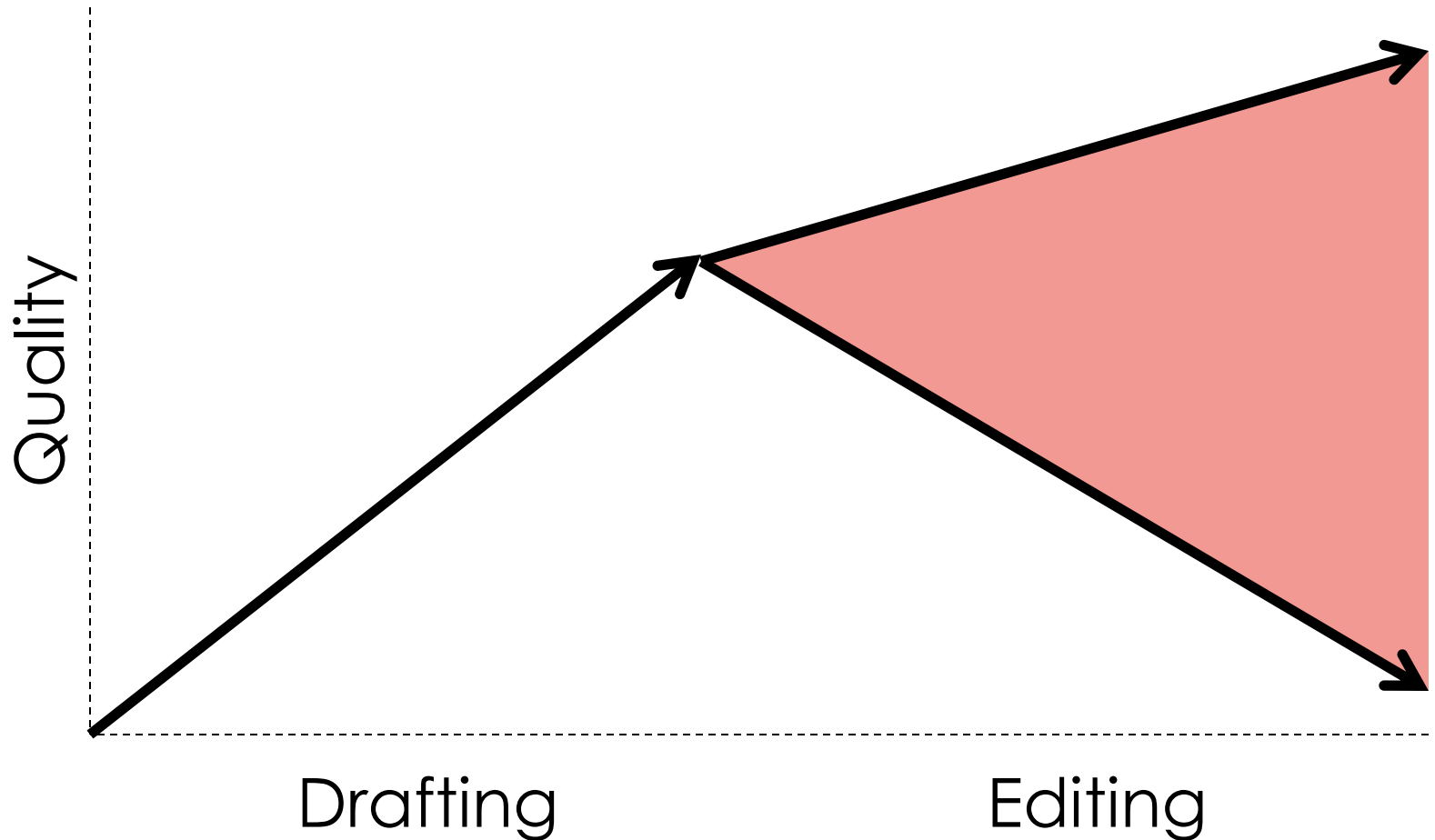
*\*Not actually fun*



Anything that makes you  
overly conscious of  
the language is bad for  
the story usually.

*Flannery O'Connor*

# Editing is life or death\*.



*\*Usually death*

# Editing is life or death\*.

children,  
teens and  
adults

If you care about the future of  
science education for ~~Chicago's~~  
~~children,~~ there's ~~no more powerful~~  
investment you can make.

Chicago,  
suburbs,  
Northwest  
Indiana

can we  
really say  
this

*\*Usually death*

The best fundraising messages  
start conversations.



# Create a cheat sheet.

**1**

It's time for our school to lead in science, too.

**2**

Our new Science Center will totally transform what our students and faculty can do.

**3**

It's the most exciting development on our campus in decades.

**4**

It's urgent that we invest today so that we can open in time for the 2017 school year.

**5**

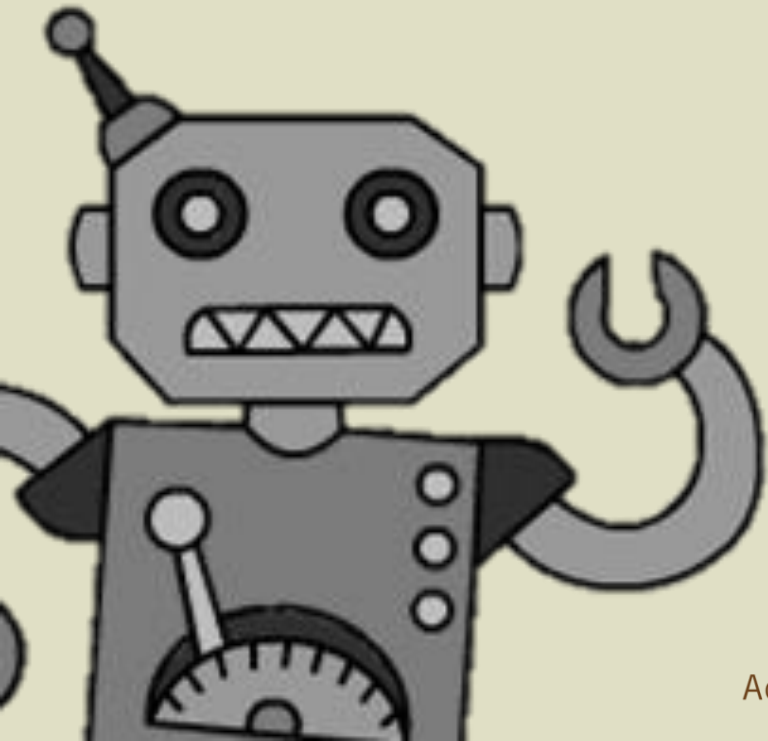
This is the most ambitious campaign we've ever taken on, but if we get enthusiastic support from everyone who cares about our school, it IS possible.

Words do not  
live in dictionaries;  
they live in the mind.

*Virginia Woolf*



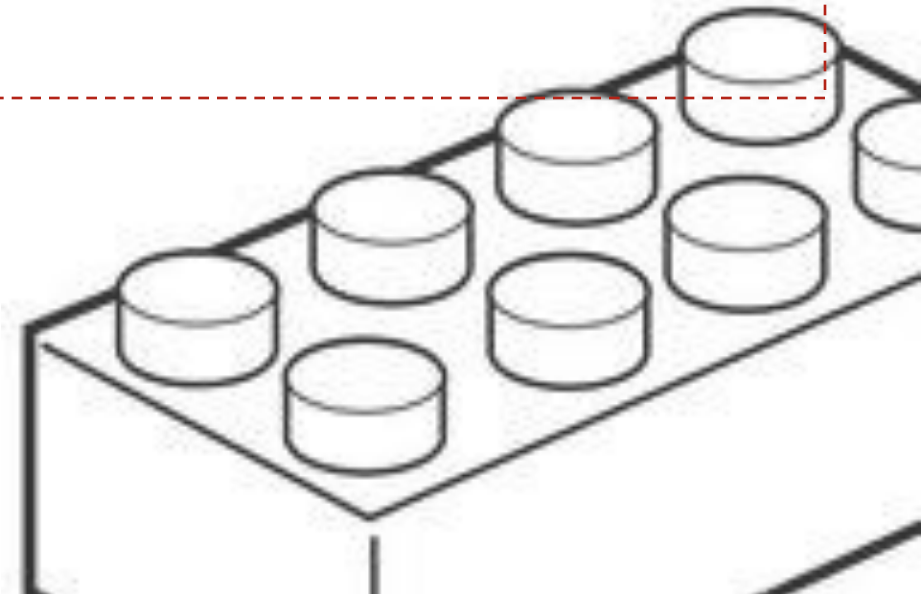
# Questions?



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Strong, well-defined messages  
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of a strong case.



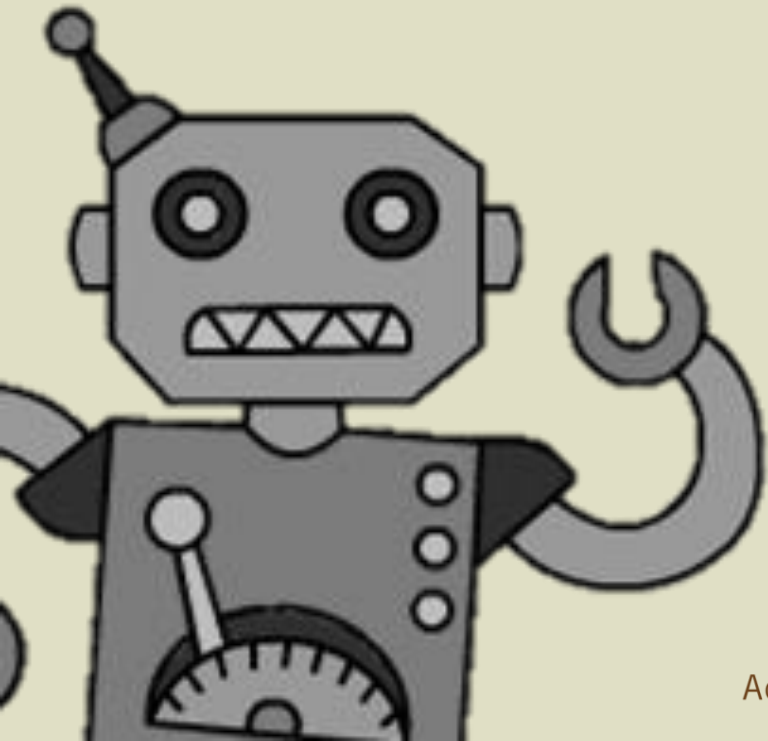
# What makes a good fundraising message?

Makes a **compelling claim**

Creates **immediate understanding**

Works in **conversation**

# Thank you.



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