

# Podcast Transcript

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Cathy: Welcome to, It Doesn't Hurt to Ask! A podcast where we talk about fundraising. This season we'll be talking to shift disturbers and philanthropy people who are shaking up traditional philanthropy practices. I'm delighted to welcome Ken Mayhew to It Doesn't Hurt to Ask! Ken is the president and CEO of William Osler Health System Foundation and in my estimation he is equal parts mentor, elder statesman, advice dispenser and understated stand up comedian. Ken is a quiet shift disturber in our sector and I'm delighted to have an opportunity to speak with him to shine a light on some of the things he has done and continues to do to shift our sector.

Cathy: So Ken, welcome.

Ken: Well thank you Cathy. Honored to be here.

Cathy: Aw, well I appreciate you making the time. Uh, cause I know you are a busy, busy guy.

Ken: I'm very, as you know, I'm a big, big, big fan of these podcasts and I really feel quite honored to be considered amongst the cadre of people who you've had thus far. So I'll, I'll try to do my best.

Cathy: Well thank you Ken. That's really kind of you to say. Well, look in as we speak, the announcement that you have been named, the Outstanding Fundraising Professional for Greater Toronto chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals was just recently made. So I want to be among the first to give you a big hearty congratulations. I couldn't be happier for you.

Ken: Thank you Cathy. I am kind of really deeply honored and humbled. Tad embarrassed. You can probably see over the phone, the sweat on my brow as we start to talk about this because uh, because it's not, there's so many incredible thought leaders and people who work really hard and don't do it for the profile or you know, as I say all the time to people considering fundraising. You don't do this work for wealth or fame, you do it for service and that's why I do it. But to be honored and recognized by my friends at AFP, it's a big deal. It's a really big deal for me. So I'm really honored that that happened and I appreciate your, you being a part of that. I means an awful lot that you're involved in that. So thank you.

Cathy: Wow. I was, I was delighted to be, uh, to be a part of it. So what you're referring to is I co nominated you with some folks at your office.

Ken: That's right. So thank you for that.

Cathy: I was delighted to be part of it cause I think very strongly that, that you deserved it and uh, maybe it was even a little bit late, but you know what, better late than never. You stick around for, for a long time in the gigs that you have and, and you are the, the longest standing acting board member of AFP, Greater Toronto chapter ever in the history of the organization. I checked into it, I did my research and I believe it was 12 years that you sat on the board and I know that you've had long tenures in a couple of, of organizations, so maybe you can talk about that.

Ken: Yeah, sure. So I guess with the AFP example to start with, I guess that just doesn't mean they have a strong enough board renewal. I guess that could be the issue that we are talking about there. Uh, no, I had a, the real, very privileged to be involved, uh, with the chapter for a long time and to meet some spectacular people to sit around a table and talk about some significant topics and to actually make some, some movement on some of those issues facing our sector, both within the sector and within the, you know, the communities we serve. And, um, at the MS Society of Canada, I was there for a long time as you note. And similarly, I just, I met so many people through no fault of their own who woke up one day with their lives changed, right? Something had happened and a progressive disease. And in both cases I was able to make just a little bit of impact to introduce, you know, are there different programs at the chapter or to be involved for more significantly with some research breakthroughs relative to MS. So, yeah, I do, uh, you know, when I get into something, it's not a, I don't do it lightly. I'd take it very seriously. And, uh, I was really, uh, honored, really, really honored with the notion of being able to support a couple of really worthy, extremely busy community hospitals in Northwest part of the City of Toronto and Etobicoke General Hospital, Brampton Civic Hospital and Peel Memorial Hospital and work, uh, with to volunteers and leaders in those communities to, to um, make sure those hospitals and the teams who worked in those hospitals had what they needed to serve the communities in which they operate.

Cathy: And so they operate under the, under the umbrella of William Osler.

Ken: Yeah, that's right. So William, Osler is the health system name and within that we have three sites and are our communities by and large, you know, as, as you know, are relatively modest socioeconomic. We have lots of people who are English as a second language, visible minority, um, often new to Canada. So I think the idea of working with communities to ensure that, you know, your quality of health care isn't defined by your postal code, but you actually have access to incredible facilities. And then the, you know, the women and men who work in these facilities are just impossibly inspiring and committed and dedicated and selfless. And, uh, so yeah, I haven't had the chance to, I guess a

little over seven years ago to come to Osler and to help them with the new campaign was a really inspiring opportunity. Really inspiring.

Cathy: Okay. So thank you for that. Um, sort of background information. And the reason I want you to share a little bit about that is, is that, you know, I think a lot of fundraisers talk about diversity and inclusion and you are actually engaging a very diverse group of donors and is, as far as I can tell, you're among, you know, a few of our colleagues who are, who are trailblazers in this respect. Um, so there's, uh, there's a lot of things that, uh, that I want to talk about within this topic, but I want to start by asking you something that might be a little bit uncomfortable, if that's all right.

Ken: Sure.

Cathy: Okay. So, I hope I'm not outing you to anyone, but you're a white, straight cisgendered man with privileged and perceived power. And, and notionally you're not the prototype of someone we might think of who can, you know, really connect with folks from many different communities and, and philanthropy as we typically practice it in Toronto and Canada and North America has been largely based on kind of Judeo-Christian and white sensibilities and practices and values. So how did you navigate what, you know, all of these different philanthropic traditions and practices in, in a, in a diverse group of communities?

Ken: Well, thank you for giving me an easy question to start. Well, I appreciate that a lot. You know, I appreciate that. Yeah, no, uh, you know, I think, um, uh, I think it's an absolutely fair and accurate comment and I think that, uh, it's something that I'm aware of every single day and I have my own lived experience and that's not lived experience of others. And I have, you know, uh, I think as we all do some implicit bias that's just kind of part of being who I am. But I am very curious and very reflective. I, as you know, I have diversity within my own immediate family. I'm really excited to, uh, look at Canada as something that's evolving and for the rule of philanthropy and community leadership to be equally evolving. And I think if I had to summarize it, I might say something like, uh, you know, the future of philanthropy's never looked brighter. It just doesn't necessarily look like me. It looks like our communities, right? It looks like it looks like sort of how our, our, our nation is evolving. So no, you k, absolutely fair comment. And something I'm always aware of, I don't speak for any other groups. Uh, I sort of work with and through people and I meet them where they, where they are kind of literally, uh, a temple, a Mondor, you know, uh, I'm interested in meeting groups at places that are logical to them, that makes sense to them from their own perspective and lived experience. And I think what I've found, Cathy, is while we are diverse and we're distinct and we honor that, many do have the notion of what in the Sikh faith is known as Seva. So Seva as this

notion of service and it's, it's not just within faith, at those side of faith as well, but it's just sort of this idea that, you know, part of what we try to do is, is make our, our streets, our village, our city world, uh, just a little bit better. We try to, um, enable improvement within that context. And that's something that I've sort of had my whole life. Uh, even though my values might be closer to the traditional Judeo Christian and I have seen time and time again groups as you mentioned, groups who had been fortunate enough to work with who have reflected that in their own unique context. And so our role has a team and we are, you know, as staff team, we, we, we serve, we serve, uh, through volunteers and a board of directors and our community leaders. We work with groups, but we resist at all times. Any temptation to, to convert, you know, to your whole notion of this idea of Judeo Christian or I'd like to sign a piece of paper over five years would be great, please. We never would do anything like that because, um, do any of us like being converted? You know what I mean? Do any S like that notion we don't, we'd like to sort of be recognized and appreciated and honored for being where we are. Uh, so one of the things I think that we've been able to do incredibly well is to mobilize our communities, uh, to develop sort of a shared ownership of both the importance of a community hospital and the story of your life and that it doesn't matter kind of who you are or where you're from or what your position is in your community at a moment in the story of your life. You're going to need your community hospital. And to recognize in a very authentic and thoughtful way of that and to honor it. So, um, if I was thinking about perhaps a place where we've been different, I think sometimes large fundraising is sort of done, you know, to, to, uh, kind of maybe a small group people, uh, with the notion that you, you have a, a small group who make these things happen. We've really tried to translate that to more community mobilization, that this is shared ownership and there's shared pride and it's kind of part of what we do here in this community. And because we're a community of communities, we need to be kind of constantly reflecting and translating how we do it in relation to, as you mentioned, all the different groups that we've had the privilege to work with. So yeah, it's very, it's very intentional. It's not sort of this other pillar of revenue, which I think in some shops it is. For us it's an over arching, it's perhaps the overarching strategy for us. Are we, we're a community of communities, right?

Cathy: Right. So it's not like the five step process to, uh, you know, diversity in your fundraising program or something like that. It's, it's a, it sounds like it's, it's organic. And led by the people who, um, uh, who led by your volunteers in many respects.

Ken: Well, that's right. And one of the great, uh, one of the great pieces of good fortune for this community is that the chair of the foundation for long time who was the first, uh, Sikh, uh, foundation, uh, chair in all of Canada. So from Brampton where we have right, a large Sikh population within Brampton and

had very, uh, incredibly brilliant, uh, and reflective leader who had quite to some quite strong opinions on ensuring that we were, um, set up and said to way that we reflected our communities, be it the staff composition, be it our ability to speak to in your, in your language, be it, uh, you know, our ability to kind of, um, literally and culturally meet you where you are. And certainly not perfect. You know, certainly there have been lessons that we've learned over the years. But, uh, I remember a, um, I do a little writing and I remember what I described as kind of a perfect week where, uh, my staff toured. We had lunch you know, and then we we serve pancakes on a pancake Tuesday in the church. Then we on the Saturday night and to faith of life all in the same week and the Portuguese community and (inaudible), you know, confirmed a seven figure gift for us. So I just thought I just, you know, drove home late at night, as you often doing this job and thought that was a pretty awesome week cause it, it was sort of very inspiring to see different cohorts with very, you know, unique backgrounds and in some cases views of the world coalescing around this common purpose, which was to improve the healthcare of their community and communities. And yeah, that was very rewarding. It's something that I've really been really, really, uh, grateful to be a part of and you know, in a way that I think is asked to current from Giving Tuesday. She describes it as success shared by many and owned by many, you know, as opposed to the traditional structure where maybe a few would run a campaign and they would sort of have the power and influence within that context. We've been very intentional in, uh, and realizing that it takes a village, like we have to mobilize, we need mass mobilization to meet because again, we're relatively modest socioeconomics. So we had to mobilize the entire community to make some of these things happen, which is an incredibly rewarding and amazing.

Cathy: And can you perhaps we've been talking about the, the different communities that you've, that you mobilized. Is it okay to talk about some of the specific communities that you were able to, or, or groups that you were able to, uh, to engage in the campaign?

Ken: Yeah, for sure. And again, you know, acknowledging that that has, as a team we serve, so we're enablers. So this was about creating tables and creating conversations and talking about a how in the story of your life to vast majority of your care will happen at your community hospitals. Yet often times those hospitals, especially in more modest communities, don't have the level of community philanthropic support that they need. Literally they don't. So what we were able to do was create tables with stakeholders and invite them to engage with us. And we had a group called into Canadian friends of Osler created out of that, we had Pakistani friends of Osler or we had Faith of Life group, we had Portuguese and Megan Peel Memorial. You know, I was at an event for the Tamil community two weeks ago. Uh, we had a, a large South Asian engagement relative to creating a naming our emergency after who is a, you know, one of the

gurus in the, in the Sikh faith. And in all of these contexts, right? We were able to work with groups in ways that were very meaningful to them. And I remember having Ramadan events, for example, in our hospital. And so it's been really quite thoughtful. Um, and I think that's important because trust takes time. You know, this is not a, this isn't about a gift chart. This is about community engagement. And the great benefit of that, Cathy, of course, is that now we're part of the family and they're part of our family. So it's not sort of, and I think this is one of the great pressures in our industry is you and I have talked before is the, you know, kind of the one and done or, or just kind of need to get the gift because I gotta meet my numbers for this month and well, that's not sustainable. It's not healthy. And if you're in communities where you literally have, you know, you have limited alternatives, uh, uh, I guess necessity is the mother invention. This is how we had to do it. And hopefully, um, all have had a little part in the legacy, which is not about meeting and exceeding a campaign goal. It's about creating a community of philanthropy. So that part of what happens today, tomorrow, in 10 years from now is that we are, we're a, we're an ecosystem, we're a family. And, and we've only been able to do that thanks to incredible groups of community leaders who have stepped forward to us. And you know, in, in many of those cases, by the way, Cathy, the production was, was done by someone who looked like me, who, you know, sort of introduced us to one of these groups. Yeah. Certainly one of our largest groups ever was thanks to former premier Bill Davis who said, uh, I want you to, I want you to talk to this guy, Ken Mahew. And that group ended up raising over \$1 million for us. So it's you know? Yeah. It's an ecosystem. It's been really quite an incredible privilege to be a little part of this.

Cathy: Well, so, so that makes me wonder what, what advice would you give the, you who started out at William Osler or eight years or so ago, if you knew, you know, what does it, if you knew then what you know now?

Cathy: Well, part of it, again, I guess that I would just note that what I realized is two things. One is I realized that we weren't necessarily being reflective of the communities in which we provided service. Right. So that was one part of it. But the second part of it is that in order to do what needed to be done, like in order to meet the incredible need of three concurrent capital campaigns, building different hospitals, sites and equipping hospitals, there was no other way to do it. Like we had to have a broader conversation. Right? It couldn't be sort of the same old as you said in your introduction, right. Sort of the same old group that people seem to turn to all the time. It had to be a bigger conversation. And, um, so to the new person taking my role, I would probably tell her that, meet people where they are and take a little bit of time and establish the trust and, and realize it'll take a bit of time because it's, as you said, this isn't being done everywhere. This is something that's, uh, relatively new yet we have kind of faiths and backgrounds from all over the world to have a notion of service. It's

just not necessarily the traditional, you know, campaign pledge over five years. It's a bit different. And I would also, I would also ensure that my board is aware of that. Right. So that people understand that you'll need a bit of patience and you'll be quite intentional in terms of building the team and the structure and the events. We, we, uh, uh, we built something called the Holy Gala, which came from nothing to an event last year, raised over \$600,000. And it's a very different kind of event and different volunteers and working with volunteers who, you know, who operate a little bit differently and um, having the skill and capacity to do that. It's really, yeah, it's been, it's been amazing and the best is yet to come. We have lots and lots more to do and we don't have it, right. You know what I mean? We're, we're as I am, the team is a work in progress, but we're certainly, we're certainly much more, um, I think we have a lot more community penetration and friends than perhaps some other entities too. And some of that's by necessity you have to do it right and is the right thing to do. Right.

Cathy: It's the right thing to do. Yeah. So I mean that kind of leads me to another question, which is, I mean, you're deeply engaged, involved in this notion of supporting diversity and inclusion in the profession and that, and is it something beyond just, you know, mother of necessity. So in, you know, you looked around and in order to reach here, what was your campaign goal or what is your campaign goal? By the way? Have you mentioned that?

Ken: \$100 million.

Cathy: So that's a lot of money. So necessity is the mother of invention in some cases, but is there something else that drives you to be so engaged in this because you do it at work, you do it through your volunteer service

Ken: Uh, yeah, for sure. For sure. There's something which is that I am really, I guess I'm driven by this notion of civic engagement. I'm driven by this notion of fighting back against Netflix nation, getting to people off the couch and engaged in their communities. And you know, a former Governor General David Johnson said in his book this whole notion of, of engagement, because some of our traditional methods of having people engaged some of those attendance and some of those institutions are in decline. I think really the idea of, of being engaged through philanthropy is something that can be very meaningful to people and also have profound public, good, profound public good. So yes, for me, uh, you know, when, as a person who is kind of naturally curious, the a work in progress, uh, whatever you want to call it, I've learned far more than I think I've taught other people and I'm really interested in different perspectives and dimensions on how things are done. And uh, I think especially because some of the, perhaps traditional models of philanthropy or are a little tired and there's lots of fresh and incredibly engaged and mobilized cohorts that are, they have something to say. And I think that it kind of behooves us to, to listen and to kind of move over

a little bit. And, well, that's why I said what I said about the future of philanthropy being so profoundly positive because I think that that's a really good thing. So for me, I think it's just, I think it may just be part of my value system. It's kind of the way that I've always been. I think I'm interested in, you know, talking to the person in the corner of the room who's not talking to anybody and if I can quietly help them a little bit. I don't really like him to do this stuff with a lot of profile. I, I really don't want it to be about me. I want it to be about them. But if I can enable people or help them or provide any kind of counseling or advice along the way, I'm happy to do it. I think it's really a healthy thing for our sector and for our communities.

Cathy: You know, Ken, when I first met you, I wasn't sure if you were a nice guy or some kind of stereotype of an old boy. Uh, and, uh, and the more that I got to know you in the more that we spoke and the more that I listened to you and realize just how thoughtful you are about things. I, um, uh, I, I came very strongly down on the side of you being a, um, a really nice guy.

Ken: That's kind of you say, and it means the world to me coming from you because you don't say those sorts of things slightly. Uh, and yes, I do look like someone in a financial industry and so, you know, I do have a certain, it's just kind of what it is. Don't blame me, blame my parents, you know, it's just, it's just kind of, yeah. Uh, uh, yeah, exactly. I'm not really, I don't really come across initially as the outside of the box candidate. I get all that and I just think, you know, for all of us who, who are kind of perhaps in the situation that I'm in, well, you kind of have responsibility that lead from where you stand. And I, and I really, I know I told you about this a few months ago, but I really, really learned a lot from a book that someone gave me when they were kind of challenging me, like someone who sort of listened to me but said, you know what? I think you might want to consider this. And the book is called "The Person you Mean to Be" It's by Dolly Chugh. So it's a, it's just a book about this notion of trying to serve and trying to be, um, open and reflective. It's a work in progress and all of us need to realize that from time to time, you know, we won't be our best selves, but if we can continually try to be as she describes it, good ish, you know, aware and reflective, right? And moving forward. And that's what I really try to do. And there certainly are times when I'm not my best self that I think that's just kind of being human. But when you go through the things that we've gone through as a community and as society over the last few years, and then you kind of reflect out to what the future is. And you know, partially as a dad of two teenage girls, I feel a responsibility and perhaps a little bit of an opportunity to kind of say, Hey, let's, let's make sure we're continuing to, to do the right thing and to, and to grow and to learn and to kind of inspire others in a similar situation to do the same sort of thing. So I appreciate you saying that Cathy, and maybe that's a little bit about where that comes from.



Cathy: Hmm. You, you sometimes disarm me with your thoughtfulness Ken. I have to say that was, that was lovely.

Cathy: Hi, I'm taking a quick break from my chat with Ken to let you know about a brand new resource for online fundraising, learning and training that we're offering Fundraisinglab.ca. After 20 years of teaching in college and university and over 25 years working as a frontline fundraiser and consultant, I developed the fundraising lab to share skills and best advice with even more people. And I'm bringing some of the best professionals in the sector together to share their knowledge. To hope you'll visit fundraising lab.ca to check out our upcoming online training opportunities. Let's get back to Ken.

Cathy: I want to change tacks a little bit and, um, uh, you know, I, I know from personal experience, um, and I've also heard from colleagues and through the grapevine, um, that you've been known to quietly call or email folks after meetings, offer your support and you've been known to help edit and rewrite scripts for younger professionals from important presentations and you've been known to have great ideas that others have taken up as, as their cause. And I just want to ask you about what you think your role is as an and I don't know what to call it as it, as an ally or a mentor or that the elder statesmen that I referred to you as an in, in the sector. What are your thoughts about that?

Ken: So, uh, I think one of my thoughts is just that every time I hear the word elder I cringe right, it's a bit like, is this AFP award, the lifetime achievement awards, you know what I mean? And then you, uh, you're sort of reflective of yesterday a little bit, you know, so, uh, so I don't know. I and I, and I really try not to be that way. I really try to, um, bring, uh, my curiosity and experience to the notion that, that other voices are in a better position and frankly are, uh, more aware of certain issues than I am. So, uh, when we did some work in the Toronto chapter through Emma Lewzey and, and our friend Dr. Krishan Metha and others, I certainly knew that I wasn't necessarily reflective of some of that work, but I was so hugely excited about perhaps being an enabler and a champion. And so I can kind of help offer some thoughts on, on traction relative to, um, getting things done, right. Sort of moving things through the, through the process, through the ecosystem. And, uh, you know, we may get into it in a minute, but, um, but I would also state that I know a lot of people who are in our profession who are struggling and who are really, really solid people who want to change the world and make the world a better place. And from time to time you're in a situation would, that's not a healthy situation. Maybe it's not a healthy work environment or maybe, you know, you literally don't know how to get things started. So as I said, if there's anything I can do quietly just sort of to, to give people a couple of thoughts and how they might be able to break through a situation or deal with some volunteers who are being inappropriate or unreasonable. Uh, I'm happy to do that. I've been so lucky that people have helped me along the way and had a

few glasses of coffee and a few glasses of something else. And I think that's it. I think it's a big underutilized part of our community, Cathy. And I think he'd agree, which is that we really are interested in helping and we're far more transparent and giving and I think generous with each other than some other professions. So, you know, just as at AFP, 22 years ago, I'd have walked up to whoever it was, Marni Spears or whoever else and asked some questions at the end of the session. So I, I still encourage people to do that today. And if I can help anybody on any issue at any time, I kinda think it's my, you know, it's my contribution, the, it's the little thing that I can do. And literally I've had dozens of occasions where someone was really stuck. Like you could just see the light was fading and then just give them a bit of a different way to potentially approach an issue. And just as people have done that for me, just as, as you and, and Susan and so many others have, it's just a little bit of a paying it forward. And it's, it's also fun. It's something, it's fun to work out. Tough problems. I really liked doing that.

Cathy: Yeah, it's like real life puzzles. You're going to get a lot more calls for coffee after this.

Ken: I like coffee. That's fine. No, I

Cathy: or other beverages.

Ken: Well, I like that as well as a matter of fact. So there you go. I'm, I'm, I'll meet people where they're at. I think I just said that right. So a coffee shop or somewhere else, I'll meet them where they're at. But uh, no, I, I, and maybe one of the reasons why I was involved in AFP for so long is I was in the same job for a long time and it seemed some days were Groundhog day. And so it was really interesting to work with other people on other problems, big issues, sector wide issues, and also to have them help me kind of rethink my own context, you know, like to approach the problem from a different perspective. To talk to some of the people, you know, you and I have had the chance to work with this volunteers. These are really smart, thoughtful people and they've helped me, I'm sure, solve as many problems as perhaps I've helped others over the years.

Cathy: Yeah, well I'm, you know, glad that you uh, continue that tradition that others before us shared and, and that you continue to help folks who, uh, who come to you seeking advice because you are a, a great resource and you have been for me personally and I know you have been for other colleagues that I know so, so thank you. Um, on behalf of everyone you've ever had coffee with or chatted with on the phone,

Ken: I do have, yeah, a bit of a caffeine addiction, but we all pay a small price for these things. .

Cathy: All right. Just in case as we set this up for people who are going to reach out to you, what's your preferred caffeinated beverage so that when they're bringing you a coffee, they know what to bring

Ken: a dark roast with more milk than you think should be legal. That would be what I like.

Cathy: Okay. All right. We heard it here first. All right. This is my last question for you. I consider you a deep thinker about our profession. And so my question to you is, what are you thinking deeply about these days?

Ken: Um, so I would probably come at it in two dimensions. Um, you know, Imagine Canada used to have this tag line that said, uh, looking into and out for the sector. And I really thought that there was something to that. And so I continue, yeah, I continue to do a lot of work with, with AFP and to be inspired by the diversity of the volunteers who are involved in that. And, and I lead a very large committee for AFP and I'm extremely intentional in terms of making sure that we have voices from different lived experiences and, and, and experience levels period around the table. And we're working on issues to do with, you know, workplace safety, gender wage parity, um, more work and on an idea. I think there's a lot more work to be done there. So

Cathy: what's ideal for listeners?

Ken: Inclusion, diversity, equity and access. So this, this builds on a lot of the work that Dr. Krishan Metha, Emma Lewzey and so many others are involved. And you were involved with that as well years ago. And it continues to be a big part. What AFP is, is working on certainly lots, lots more to be done in that context. Um, so that for me would be more looking into, so it's this whole idea that as we're here to save the world and when we come to this profession to change the world and, and sometimes we find ourselves in situations that we shouldn't be in. So I think there's work that needs to be done. I think the AFP can be to your, to your term an ally and some of that work. So I don't necessarily build it cause I'm not necessarily the subject matter expert on that stuff. I am helping to facilitate a lot of work around that. Uh, and then the other big one, which might be macro as well, is just this notion of, um, what people are calling a new narrative. So this whole idea that fundraisers often perceive or live reading, not really a profession. This is just something that you do, but you know, we have professions out there and fundraising is something that people do that maybe is a little bit fuzzier than, than some other professions. And so work that can be done right, both externally in terms of public awareness that all the worthy causes out there are only able to do what they need to do because someone is the intermediary between the organization and and the great people who support that organization. What my friend Rickesh Lakhani describes as the

privilege of being a facilitator between good that needs to be done and those who want to do it. That's kind of the notion of right? So we actually we actually take our place and we're proud of our place in that conversation. I think oftentimes we're conditioned to remove ourselves from that, from that discussion and it, it just doesn't happen. These, these hospitals wouldn't have been built without with the great team that we have here supporting the people who wanted to make it happen and the, and the cause that needed to happen. So I'm describing that with a whole group of other people as something called a new narrative relative to fundraising. And then I also think as a part of that, Cathy, I think there's perhaps work to be done on the internal narrative, you know. The self narrative for people who do our work as well. Just making sure that people do it, uh, are reminded the importance of work that they do and the impact that they make and the fact that we're larger than the manufacturing sector or the automotive sector or all these other things that we don't necessarily think about. Because in our work we tend to kind of put ourselves last and sometimes we put self care last. So I do think about that a lot, especially with those who will and are the, the leaders of tomorrow. Just making sure that those people,

Cathy: Yeah. And why is that important? Why is that notion of, of internal, um, um, what did you call it?

Ken: Care self care. Yeah. So it's a self narrative. So it's the fact that the work that we do is difficult and much of the work leaders, like who in particular Cathy have done the work can be chronic. It can be endless and it can actually be for things that are kind of incredibly intense so that people doing that work are also reminded that the impact of, of they've done not just the next need, the next thing that needs to be done, but, but also, you know, take a bit of time to celebrate the.... There's tons of statistics on this in a AFP Asking Matters or AFP is fundraising is awesome. There's tons of stats that actually talk about the difference that you make in the role that you play. And I don't know that fundraisers always think that way and because it's never enough and because the targets are always busy and bigger and because, you know, sometimes we, we deal with challenging environments and challenging volunteers. I think people in our sector get tired and that's something I'd like to try and mitigate. We won't, we won't eliminate it. But if we can sort of, you know, mitigate that a little bit. I think that might be a really incredible contribution to make sort of a, make sure that people feel valued. I think that's really important. People, people at the highest level, you know, sometimes tell me that they, they feel tired, they're feeling tired. So is there something that can be done about that?

Cathy: Well, that, you know, it speaks to a term I raised publicly last year around this notion of trauma informed philanthropy and that, uh, as you pointed out, we do work in sectors where there is a lot of, there are a lot of difficult issues and, and

difficult situations that we find ourselves in. And our colleagues who work directly in mission oftentimes have access to trauma informed care philosophies and they, they work within a practice of trauma informed care. And I think there's some work for us to do as a sector, as a broader sector to translate that kind of trauma informed care approach into also a trauma informed philanthropy.

Speaker 3: I think that's really important. And I, and I think that that related to that as well, and I'm sure you've come across this in all your work, uh, as an as an educator, is that people are drawn to this profession through the notion of service and giving back and, and making a difference. And then all of a sudden they find themselves, you know, thrown into an environment where they're not properly onboarded. There's not proper documentation or HR practice. Suddenly they're given these enormous targets with little or sometimes no guidance. And it can be quite jarring, right? So the whole notion to be here we are, we're gonna make this incredible difference in our communities and we are passionate, committed, do so. And then it can sometimes feel a bit like a numbers game for sometimes it can be people. Can I hear the term quite lonely, you know, this is quite lonely. I feel quite lonely here. So that's what I mean, a different dimension of what you're talking about, Cathy, and just this idea that philanthropy and certainly fundraising is evolving and it's professionalizing for better and for worse. So I, I like to think that we're more efficient than we used to be. But I think perhaps sometimes sort the less, you know, human when we used to be. So anything that can be done to kind of, to kind of provide that reinforcement or this notion that there are others in this work with you? And I guess that's one of the reasons why I've been involved with AFP for so long. It's because lots of times somebody helped me. So I just, I'd like to see a little bit more of that in their sector.

Cathy: Well, I think, can you just, uh, made me think of a future podcast around this, the, the self narrative that you, that you call as you call it and elements of that related to self care and trauma-informed philanthropy. And uh, I'll be calling upon you again for, uh, for some more deep thinking about that.

Ken: Yeah, I would be honored like really in a, again this the, again, this whole idea that, uh, when I was kind of first involved in all of this, you know, a lot of the trainings that we would get would be so kind of technical and this is how you do a direct mail program and how you might do a golf tournament or something like that. And certainly a lot of what we are seeing people ask for is not that right. It's about leadership and it's about equity and it's about dealing with harassment and it's about all these topics that I think are much more substantive and unfortunately are prevalent. They're not unique to fundraising, but there are pressures in the work space. So anything like that, my friend, I think you'd be the perfect person to kind of call in the sector a bit in that context and try to get a conversation going.

Cathy: Well there the gauntlet has been thrown down so I will, uh, I will keep that in mind for future. You can any last words as we wrap up?

Ken: No, I would just say that I'm really grateful for for the, for the opportunity and uh, I really have enjoyed the conversation and as always you make me stretch and you make me think and they make me better. And you've been doing that for more years than probably either one of us would want to reveal.

Cathy: Okay.

Ken: I look forward to continuing to, you know, do a little bit better tomorrow than I did today and I do celebrate all my fellow fundraisers and no matter what capacity you are new to the sector or elder like me, what you do matters. It's making a difference. And, and some small part of this world is a little bit better tonight because of what you did today. And I believe that as much as I did the day I started in fundraising,

Cathy: You are a class act, my friend. Thank you for taking the time to be a guest on it doesn't hurt to ask and as I expected you were thoughtful and measured and profound. So thank you also for taking such gentle care and thinking so deeply about our sector. We are, we are all better. For your involvement.

Ken: Uh, thank you Kathy, and you know, I feel exactly as the same way about everything that you do, so thank you very much.

Cathy: This has been great.

Ken: It's always such a pleasure talking with Ken. He's a deep thinker, about our sector, and I am often disarmed by his insights, but I really love that he challenges me to think differently about things. I hope our conversation has given you pause to reflect and perhaps think differently about things too. My heartfelt congratulations to Ken on being named in 2019 Outstanding Fundraising Professional of AFP, Greater Toronto chapter. Such an incredibly well deserved honor. If you like what you heard and want to hear others talk, shift, go on over to [itdoesnthurttoaskpodcast.com](http://itdoesnthurttoaskpodcast.com). Subscribe on iTunes or Stitcher. This was produced by poodle party productions and Cathy Mann and Associates with the ever patient podcast producer and Anne Lemesieur working her magic. The music you heard was Dog Days by Isaac Joel, and remember in fundraising as in life, it doesn't hurt to ask.

# Show Notes

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## **Organizations Mentioned**

[MS Society of Canada](#)

[Imagine Canada](#)

## **Individuals Mentioned**

[Dr. Krishan Metha](#)

[Emma Lewzey](#)

[Marni Spears](#)

[Rickesh Lakhani](#)

## **Extra Resources**

[The Person you Mean to Be Dolly Chugh](#)

[AFP Asking Matters](#)