

# Turn Your Board from Bored to Blazing: 7 Steps to Fire Up Your Board



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Strategies for a Changing World

# Who Am I?



Gail Perry

25+ years

Blogger, coach, consultant

Duke University and UNC-Chapel Hill fundraising

Author “Fired-Up Fundraising: Turn Board Passion into Action”

AFP Fundraiser of the Year

International speaker and workshop leader

**#firedupFR**

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# Our Agenda Today

- A different philosophy and approach!
- Start with you - personal changes to make
- 7 steps to fire up your board

# Lets Take Our Boards – From Bored . . .



To Blazing!



# Your Biggest Challenge?

## *The Pull of the Status Quo*

"If you always do what you **always did**,  
you'll always get what you always got."

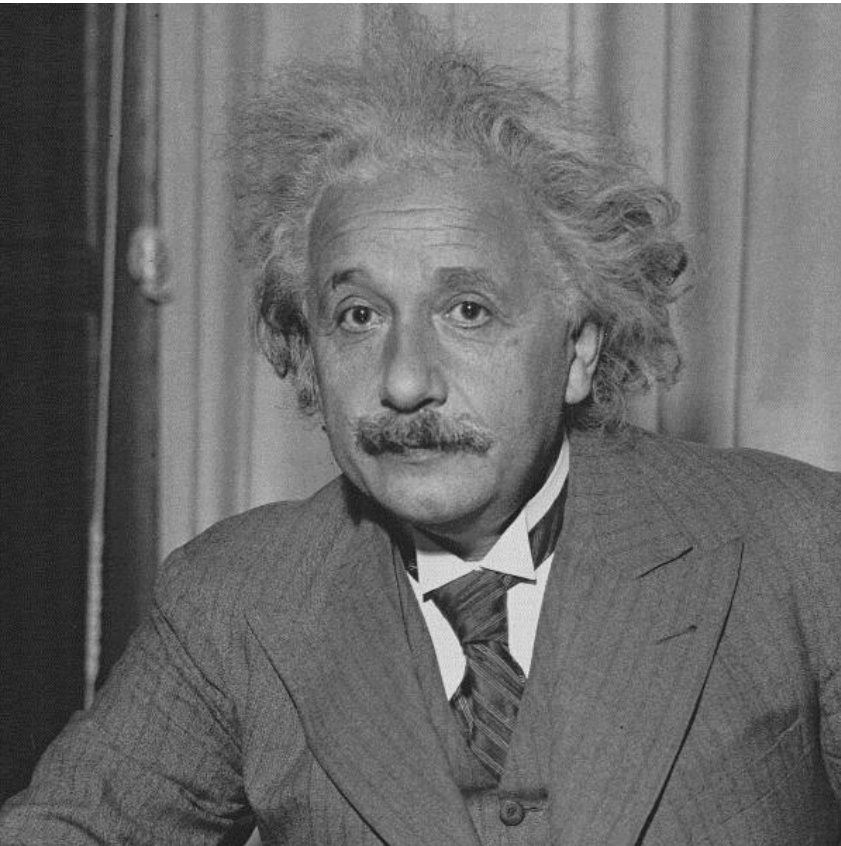
# Peter Drucker:

“Culture eats strategy for breakfast.”



BLD080951 [RF] © www.visualphotos.com

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“No Problem can be  
Solved from the  
Same Level of  
Consciousness that  
Created It.”

Albert Einstein



# It All Starts With YOU!

## Take charge.

- Don't be passive!
- Be willing to lead!



# 4 Personal Changes to Make

## 2. Be the cheerleader.

- Encourage them
- Gung-ho
- Cheerful



# Personal Changes to Make

**3. Model the energy you want your board to have.**



# Want Different Results?

**Lighten Up!  
Make it fun  
for your  
volunteers.**



# Why You Should Lighten Up With Your Board

- Nobody's having any fun.
- Volunteers have plenty of places to put their time.
- Why would they choose you?



# 7 Steps to A Fired-Up Board

## 1. Personal story.

2. Why is it important?

3. Mission moments.

4. Interesting meetings.

5. Give them what they want.

6. Social time.

7. Action items.



**Step 1:**

# **Their Personal Story Will Re-Ignite Their Passion for the Cause**



# Ask Them Why They Care



**When I talk  
about why I  
care, I find my  
passion for the  
cause again.**



A photograph of two men in business suits engaged in conversation at a social gathering. The man on the left is younger with dark hair, and the man on the right is older with grey hair. They are both holding glasses. In the background, other people are visible, including a smiling woman in a red dress. The text "Why Do You Care About Our Organization?" is overlaid in white, bold font across the center of the image.

**Why Do You Care About Our  
Organization?**

# Their Personal Story

They forget what brought them to you in the first place.



# How to Set Up The Mingle Exercise

1. Find a partner.
2. Introduce yourself.
3. Tell them why you care about our organization.
4. Listen to them tell you.
5. You only have 30 seconds each.
6. When I call out, find another partner.



# Setting Up the Mingle Exercise:

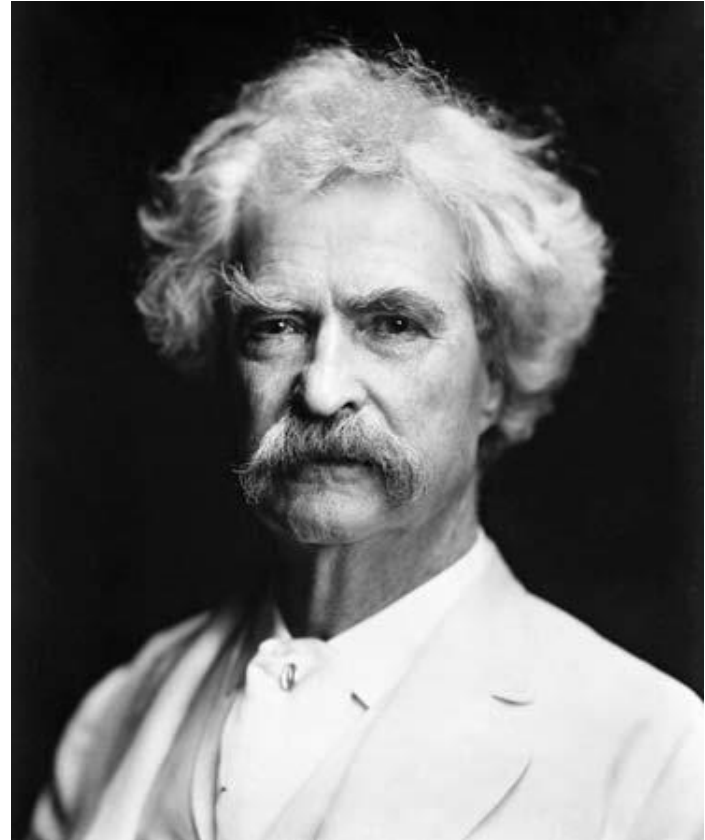
**“As you go around talking to people, be aware of 5 things:**

1. Track what you are saying and how it changes.
2. How are you impacted by what you hear?
3. Is it easy or difficult?
4. Is it fun or miserable?
5. Observe the energy in the room!

# Make it Short

“I didn't have  
time to write a  
short letter,  
so  
I wrote a long  
one instead.

~Mark Twain



# Try This Question To Pull Out Their Personal Story

At our last Trustee meeting, I asked, “**What legacy do you want to leave from serving on this board?**”

**Well, you would have thought I had opened the flood gates.** One man told us about his cousin in hospice . . . and how we helped his family through that terrible time.

**This turned out to be the best meeting we've had so far on with this group in the last 3 years!**

I can't change them, but I can change me.

*Laurie Taylor, Lower Cape Fear Hospice Foundation*

# Want Different Results?

*“I can’t change them.*

*But . . .*

*I can change me.”*

# Fire Up Your Board Step 2:



**A Deeper Discussion**



# 7 Steps to A Fired-Up Board

1. Ignite their passion.
- 2. Where does the money go?**
3. Mission moments.
4. Interesting meetings.
5. Give them what they want.
6. Social time.
7. Clear action items.



# Where Does The \$ Go?



- A panel discussion or interview format.
- Why does it cost so much?
- Program by program.
- How much does it cost per person?
- Story about someone whose life was changed.

# Fire Up Your Board

## 10 Terrific Questions to Discuss with Your Board

1. Why do we even need private contributions anyway?
2. Why does it cost so much?
3. Where exactly does the money go?
4. Why does it take so much staff?
5. How many people are we helping in this program?

# Fire Up Your Board

## 10 Terrific Questions to Discuss with Your Board

6. How much does it cost per person helped?
7. What else do we really need? How much would that cost?
8. How many people are we turning away?
9. Can you tell me a story of someone whose life was changed thru our work?
- 10, What would we do if we had an additional \$100k? *(or \$50k, or \$500k or million)*

# 7 Steps to A Fired-Up Board

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2. Why is it important?
- 3. Mission moments.**
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## Fire Up Your Board Step #3

# Mission Moments: Give Board Members a Direct Personal Experience



# Why Are Mission Moments So Powerful?

They Immerse Your Board Members in  
How You **Change Lives**



**Try cancelling  
your next  
board  
meeting and  
take  
everyone on  
a field trip.**





# A Word About **Nonprofit BOARDS**

**Is This Your Board?**





# Or Is this Your Board?

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# Boring Meetings = A Bored Board



# Is This Your Board Meeting?

weblogcartoons.com



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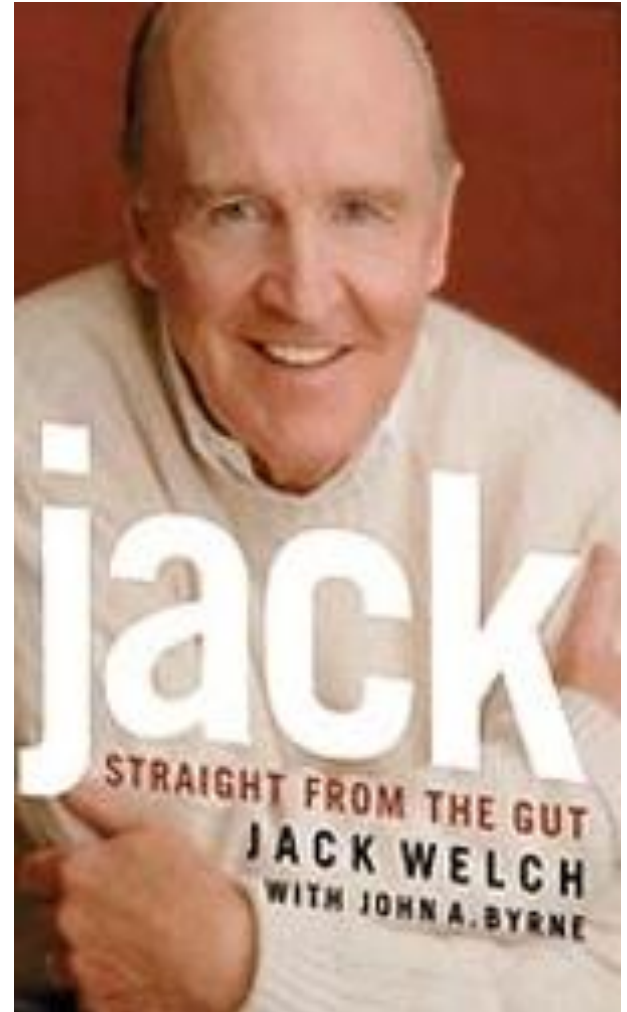
**After all is  
said and  
done, more  
is SAID than  
DONE!**



# Your Board?

“If the rate of change  
outside the organization  
exceeds  
the rate of change on  
the inside,  
**the end is near.”**

*Jack Welch*



# Fire Up Your Board Step #4

## Liven Up Your Meetings

NOT Business As Usual





# 7 Steps to A Fired-Up Board

1. Ignite their passion.
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# 12 Ways To Liven Up Your Board Meeting

1. Focus on results.
2. Be creative with the agenda.
3. Focus on problems, challenges, or broad issues.
4. Look at trends within routine reports.
5. Plan big.
6. Look at your board meetings as cheerleading sessions.

# 12 Ways To Liven Up Your Board Meeting

7. Use consent agendas.
8. Interview the Executive Director.
9. Set up one interesting item for a discussion.
10. Select a theme for each meeting.
11. Create “mission moments” in every board meeting.
12. Break into groups.

# Fire Up Your Board Step #5

Give Them What  
They Want

# What Do Board Members Want?

To feel that their time is used wisely.



# What Do Board Members Want?

To get their  
hands dirty.



# What Do Board Members Want?

**We want to  
get to know  
the other  
board  
members!**

**—June Bradham**

“What Nonprofit Boards Want”



# What Do Board Members Want?

**To work with people who are as passionate and excited about the organization as they are.**





# The Number One Reason People Join Nonprofit Boards?



**Who else  
is on the board!**

**—June Bradham**

**“What Nonprofit Boards Want”**

# What Determines How Much Your Board Members Will Give?



**How much they enjoy their experience as a board member.**

-June Bradham

“What Nonprofit Boards Want”

# 7 Steps to A Fired-Up Board

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# Fire Up Your Board Step #6 Give Them Social Time



*Down Time Together is Essential*

Social Time For Board  
Members

Builds

**Trust** and **Collegiality**

and **TEAM**



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# The Five Dysfunctions of a Team



1. Absence of Trust
2. Fear of Conflict
3. Lack of Commitment
4. Avoidance of Accountability
5. Inattention to Results

# Group Process



## What's Underlying Your Board?



# The Solution?



# Peer Pressure: The Best Motivator



# #7 - Steps to Fire Up Your Board Clarity on Action Items!

Give them  
something specific  
to do!



# 7 Steps to A Fired-Up Board

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2. Where does the \$ go?
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7. Clarity on action items.





# A Happy Fired-Up Board!

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Get This Powerpoint and my Free Workbook:

# Enlist Your Dream Team Board

Workbook and Discussion Guide (37 pages)

# Try These Ideas and This Is What You Will Get!

*“It was such a thrill to see the body language and faces of our board members change from reservation, reluctance, and uncertainty to smiles, laughs and excitement.”*

— **Abby Johnston,**  
Director of Development, Saint Mary’s School, NC



# Many More Resources at FiredupFundraising.com

Why Board Members Love Advice Visits

Does Your Organization Really Support Fundraising? Take This Simple Quiz

Easy Elevator Speech Exercise for Your Board

Show me the Money: How To Move From Friendraising to Fundraising

Does Your Organization Really Support Fundraising? Take This Simple Quiz

How Major Donors are Changing and What To Do About It

Board Members' #1 Job: How to Be a Personal Advocate for the Cause

20 EASY Ways Board Members Can Cultivate Donors

Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards

10 Easy Ways Board Members Can Raise Money

12 Ways to Liven Up Your Board Meetings —and Your Board

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