



**Raise**<sup>®</sup>  
2025

**Beyond the Event: *Designing Experiences  
That Build Real Funder Relationships***

**with Mallory Erickson**



# Hi, I'm Mallory!

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**Course Creator:** Power Partners Formula™

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I became an  
accidental  
fundraiser  
as a nonprofit  
Executive Director...





**CONSISTENT  
FUNDRAISING  
SUCCESS**

**EMPOWERED &  
CONFIDENT  
LEADER**

**NEVER WORK  
MORE THAN 40  
HOURS A WEEK**

**HAVE  
DONORS COMING  
TO ME**



**IMPACT REPORT FAKE**

pretending like everything was great



**BUT IN REALITY....**

this is how i felt at the end of every day

So I decided  
to change.



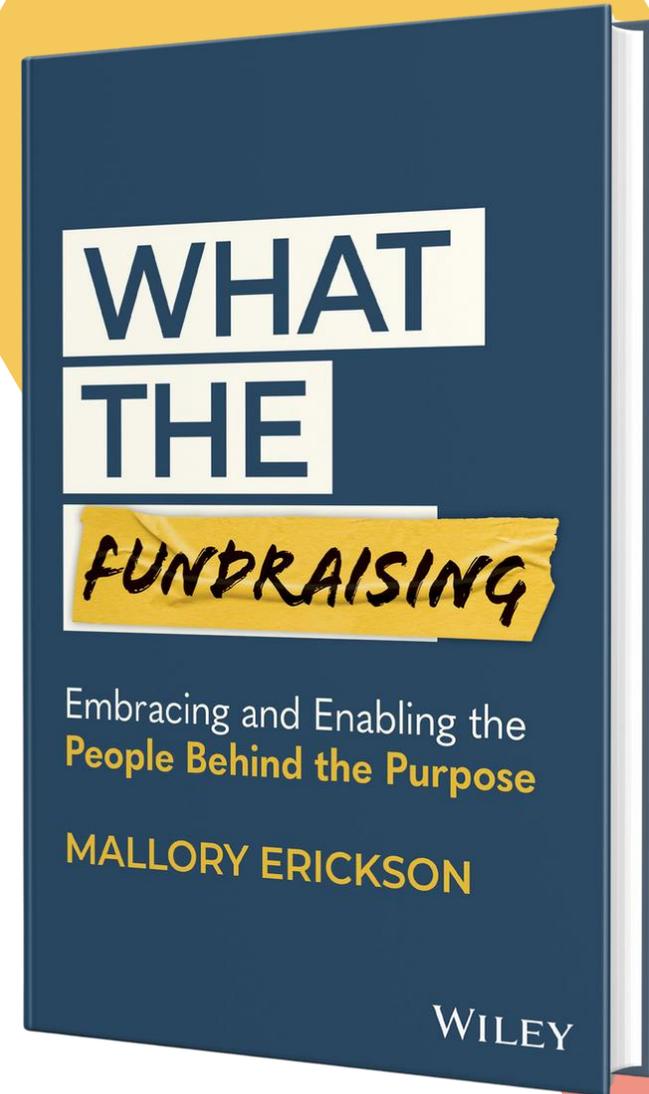
The  
*Power*  
partners  
FORMULA™  
was born!



SIGN UP TO WIN

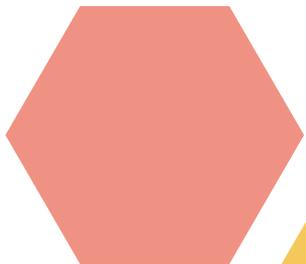
# A Signed Copy of What The Fundraising

SCAN ME





A huge part of my  
**BURNOUT**  
came from events.



"In almost every model we've ever done, event attendance is one of the strongest predictors of giving."

- Nathan Chappell

# I was getting it all wrong.....

I was designing my fundraising events unconsciously around:

- Dollars raised
- Attendance numbers
- Logistics execution



I wasn't asking.....

Did guests feel more  
connected to our mission, our  
people, and each other?

I wasn't asking.....

Did corporate partners leave  
with a deeper understanding  
of our shared values?

I wasn't asking the MOST important question....

How will this event foster  
belonging?

**BELONGING**

**is the precursor to giving.**

# The Belonging-First Fundraising Event Guide

How to Plan Events That Build Connection, Inspire Community, and Raise Funds





## What actually creates connection and belonging?

- You can be more fully yourself, and so can the other person.
- Both of you are willing to be vulnerable.
- You trust that self-disclosures will not be used against you.
- You can be honest with each other.
- You deal with conflict productively.
- Both of you are committed to each other's growth and development.

From: *Connect: Building Exceptional Relationships with Family, Friends, and Colleagues* by [David Bradford Ph.D.](#) (Author), [Carole Robin Ph.D.](#) (Author)

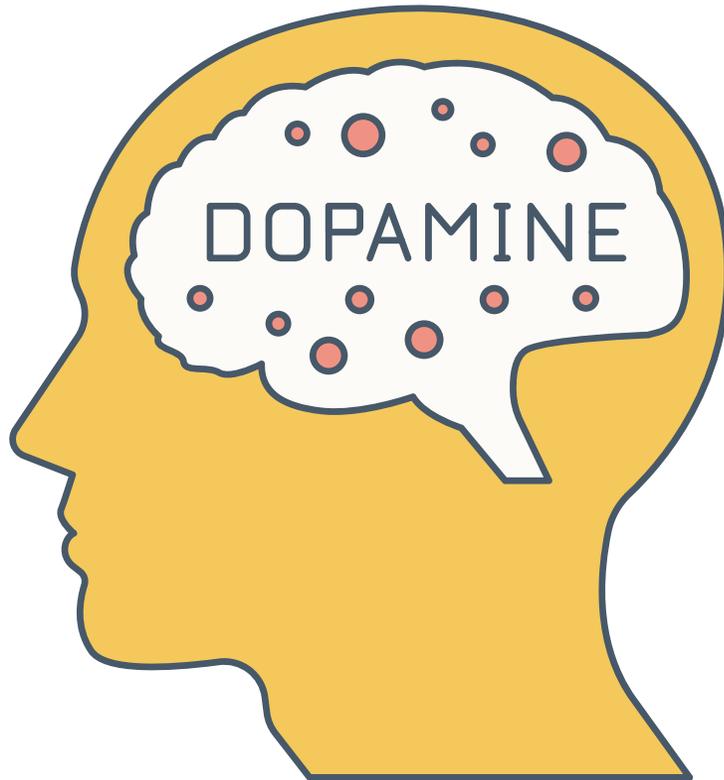
Oxytocin and dopamine play a key role in making people feel included and invested

# The Role of Oxytocin



**Oxytocin then increases trust, generosity, and feelings of belonging which are all critical for donor relationships.**

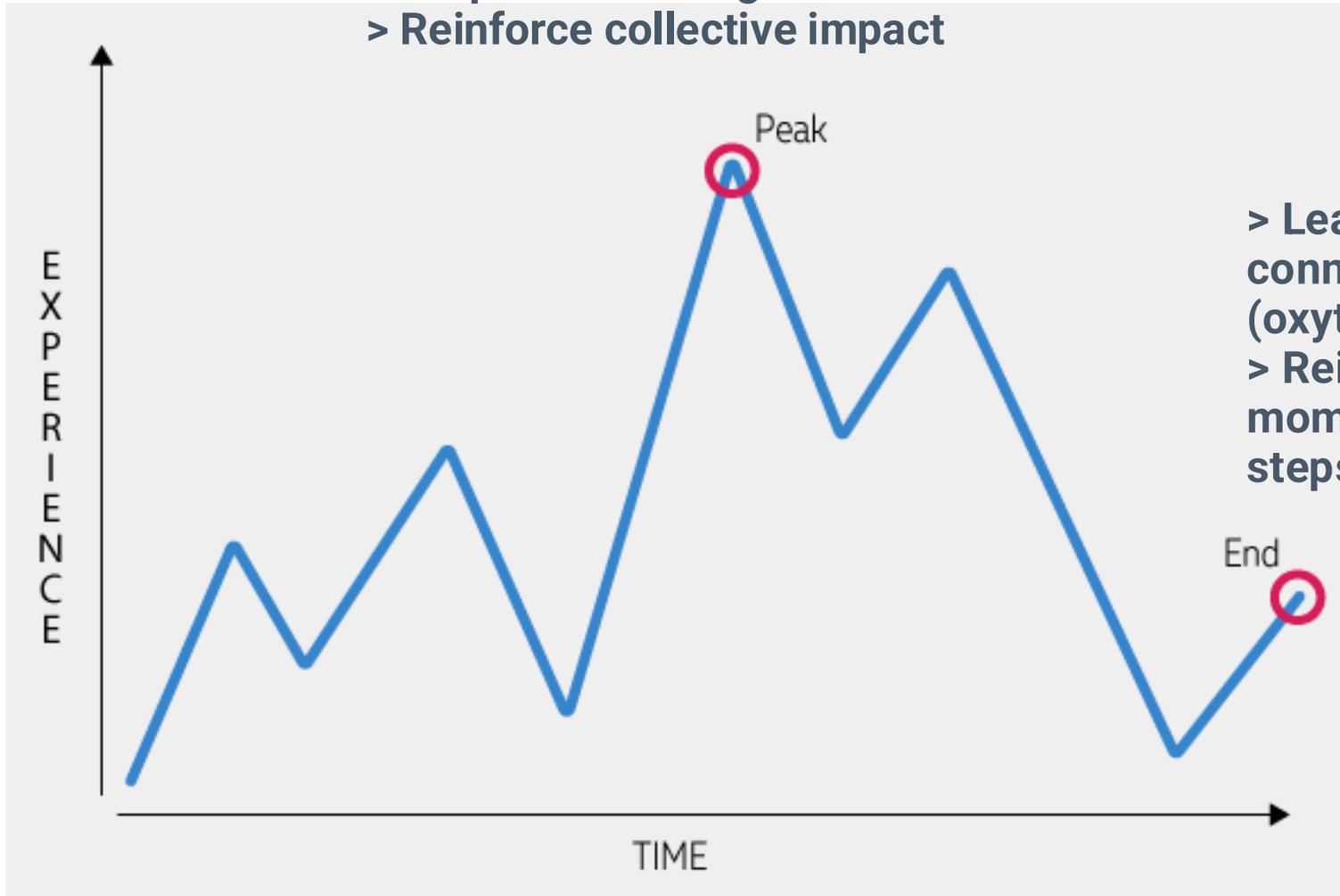
# The Role of Dopamine



**Dopamine fuels motivation, engagement, and a sense of accomplishment—critical for getting attendees to take action.**

# Peak and End Rule

- > Be an emotional high point—either inspiring, exciting, or deeply moving
- > Surprise and delight attendees
- > Reinforce collective impact



- > Leave attendees feeling connected and valued (oxytocin)
- > Reinforce ongoing momentum and next steps (dopamine)

# Designing Mission-Linked Touchpoints

## Make connection tangible

- Surprise & delight → creates a memory peak
- Small, sensory, mission-linked object (not merch)
- Visible = social signal (“people like us do this”)
- Opt-in cue for a hallway check-in



# Check-In “Connector Card”

“Find someone else who also...”

...was introduced to this mission by a friend.

...is passionate about [cause-related topic].

...volunteers or wants to get more involved.

“My first experience with this community was...”

“The moment I knew I cared about this cause was when...”

>> Guests are encouraged to use their card to spark conversation with subtle reinforcement throughout the event.



# “We Built This Together” Collective Impact Wall

Set up a giant, interactive “Impact Wall” where every guest (donors, staff, volunteers, beneficiaries, etc.) can add their name or a short statement about why they support the mission.

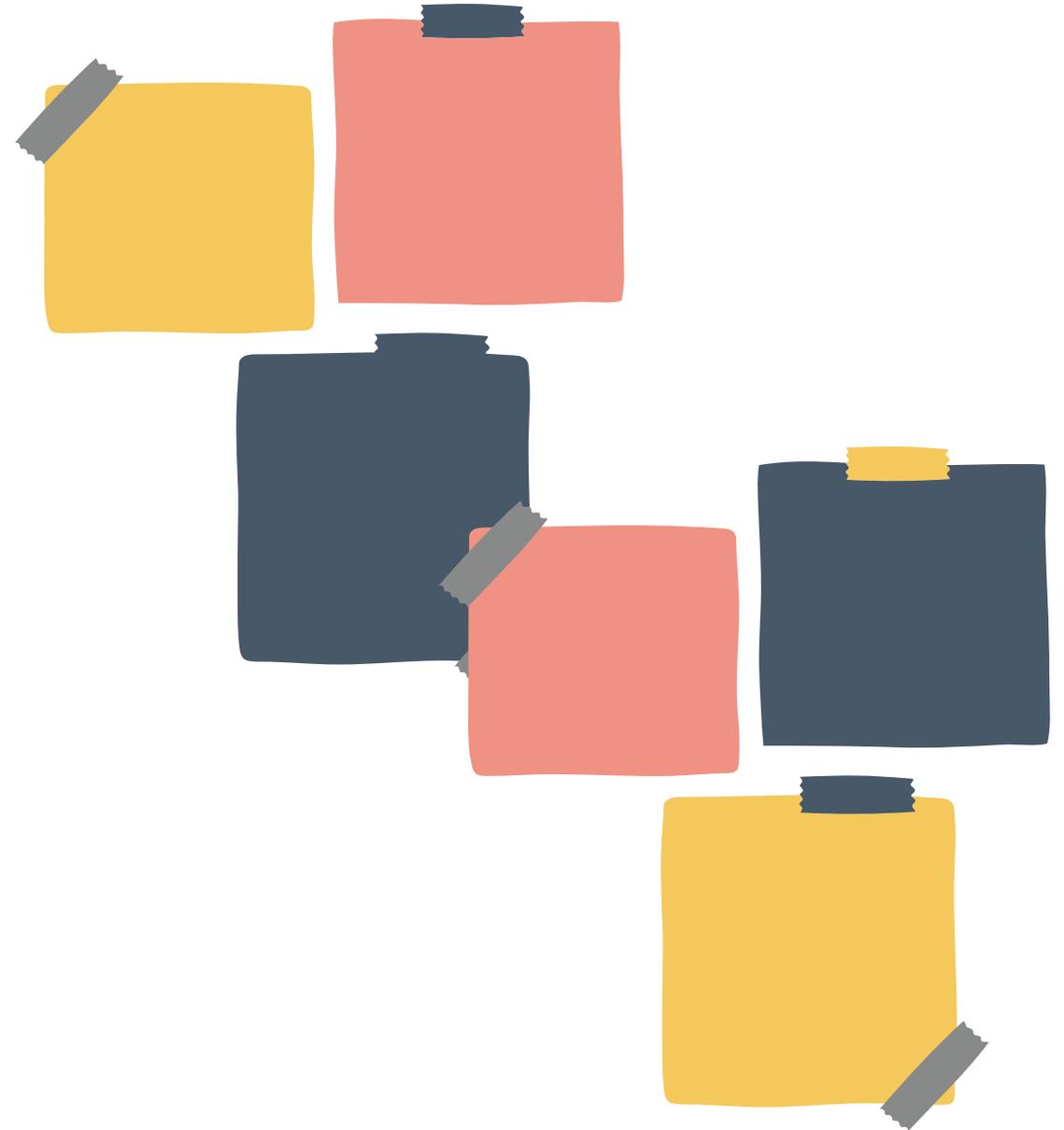
By the end of the night, the board visually represents collective power in action.

**Example prompts guests can answer before placing their note:**

“My hope for this community is...”

“One small action I’m committed to...”

“What this mission means to me...”



## Interactive Goal Setting

At the start of the event, set a collective impact goal (e.g., “Tonight, we aim to fund 100 mentorship hours!”).

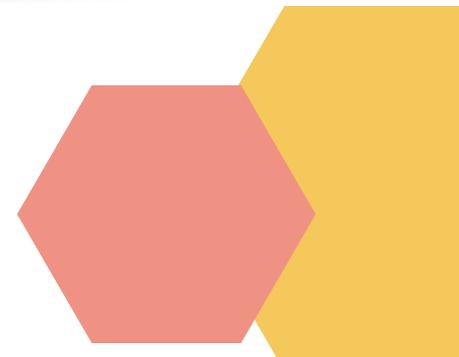
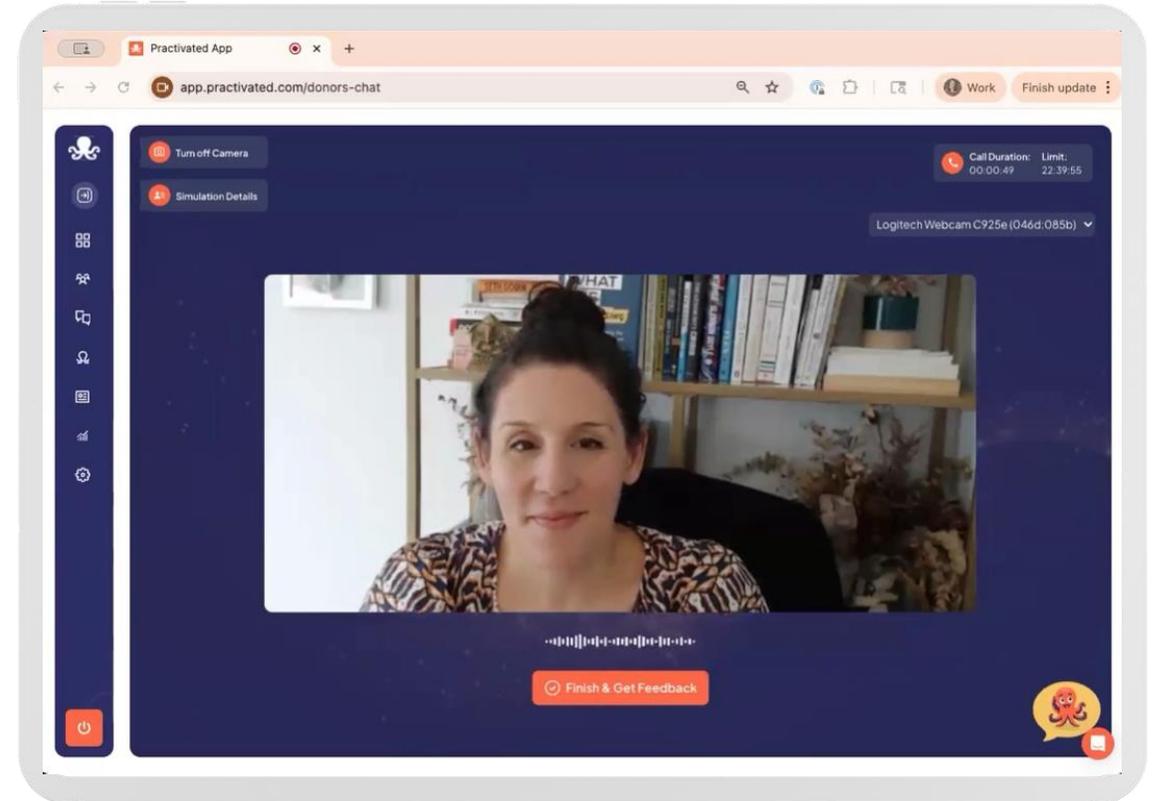
Throughout the night, show real-time progress toward that goal on a live screen.

When milestones and the final goal are reached, cue an exciting moment!



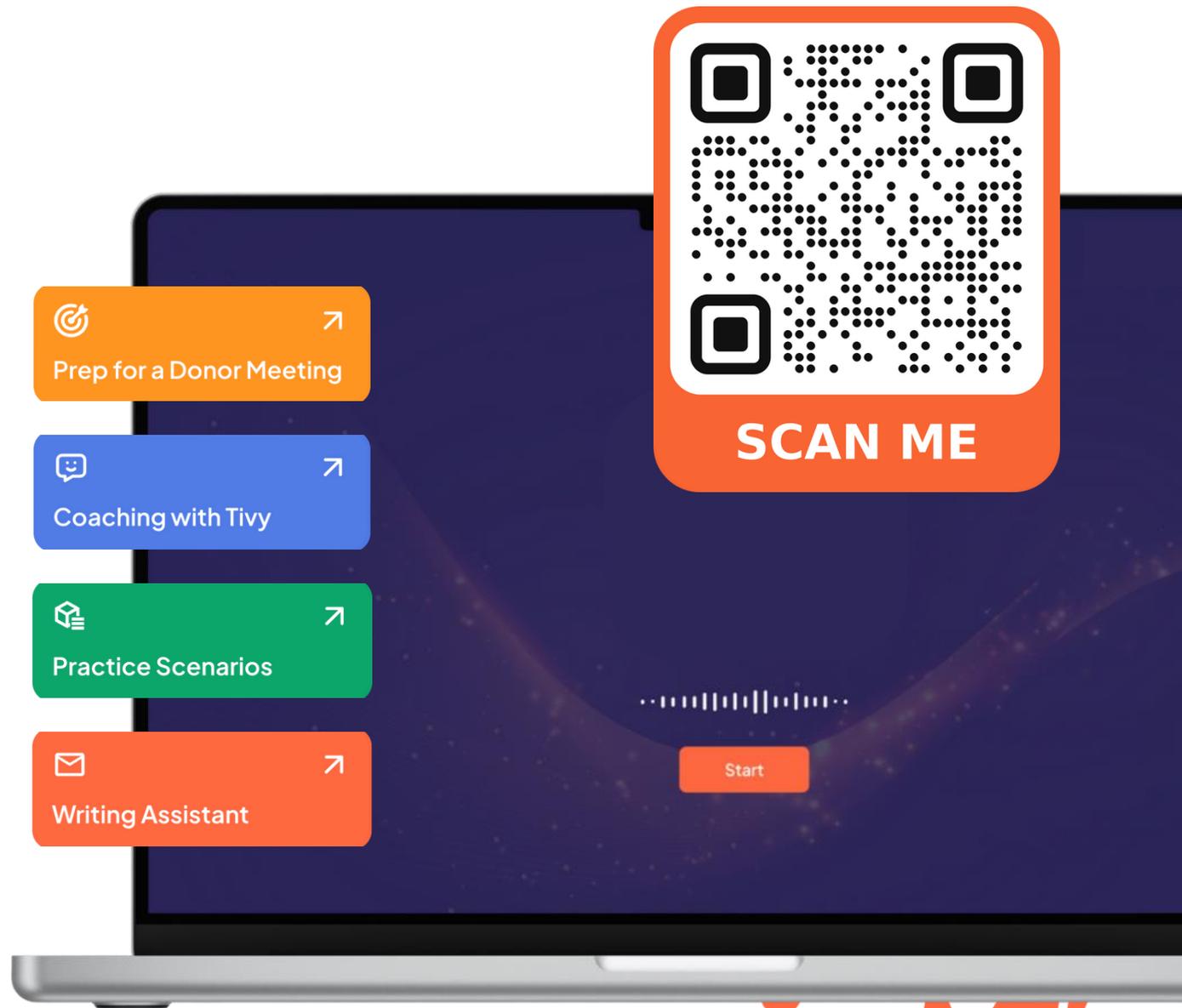
## Connected Conversations

- Ask open-ended, values-driven questions that invite authenticity (e.g., “What moved you to support this cause?”)
- Listen actively and reflect back what you hear
- Connect the donor’s story to your mission in a meaningful way
- Create a moment that feels personal, inspiring, and relationship-building





# *Conversations*

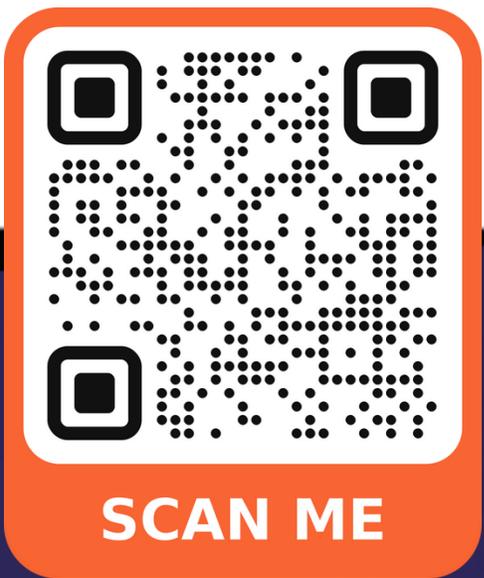


   
Prep for a Donor Meeting

   
Coaching with Tivy

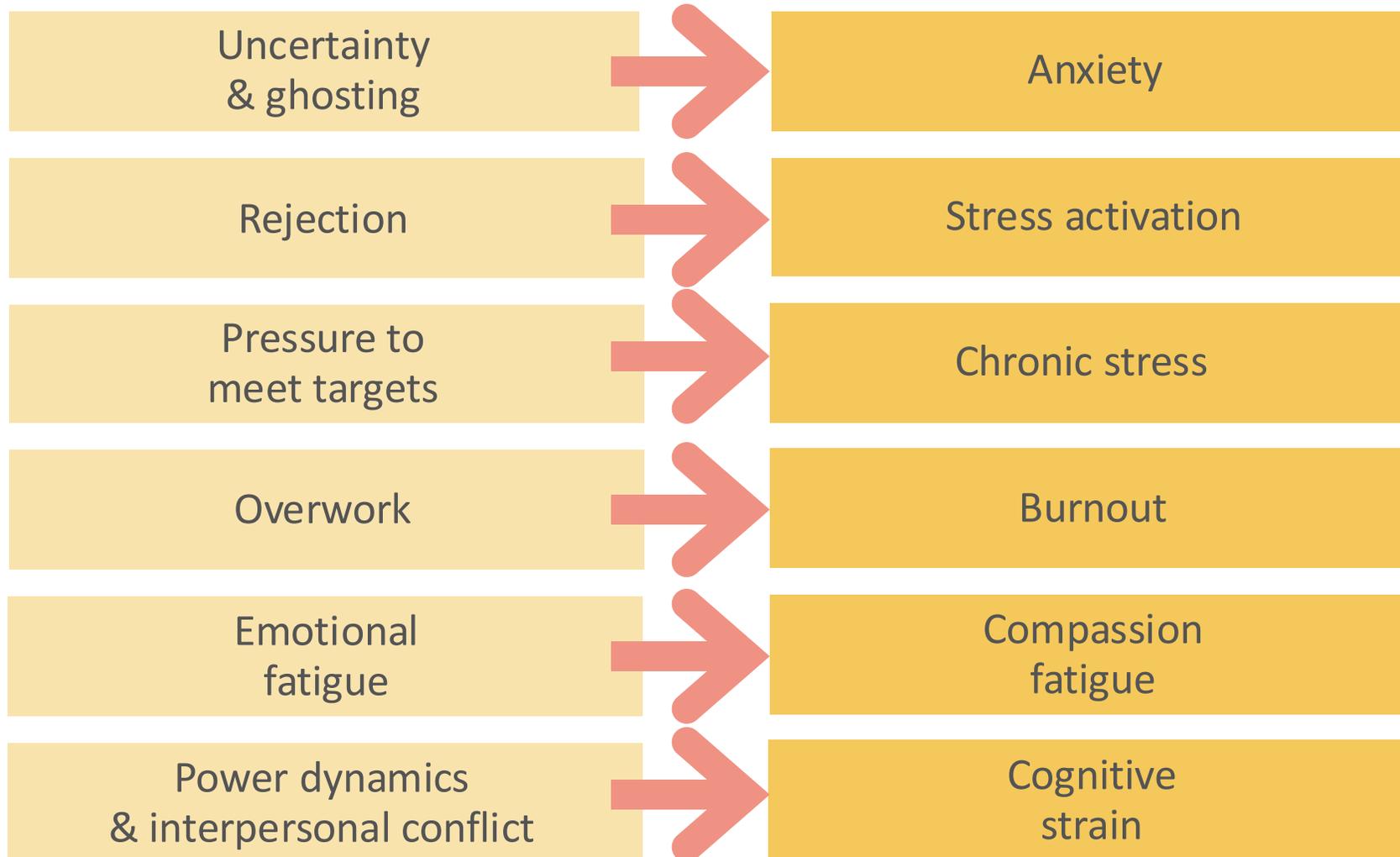
   
Practice Scenarios

   
Writing Assistant

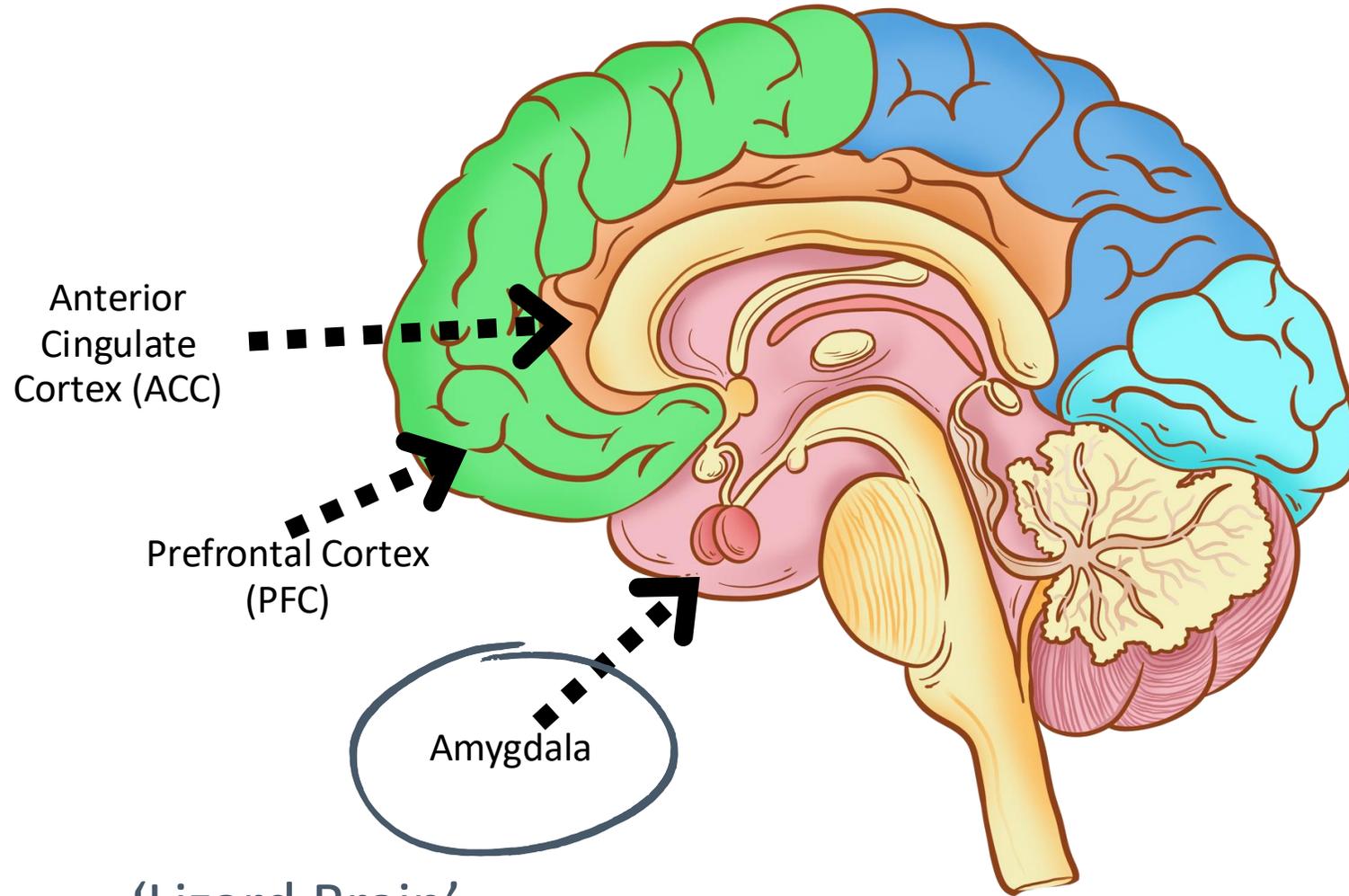


Start

# Event Planning Impacts Our Nervous System



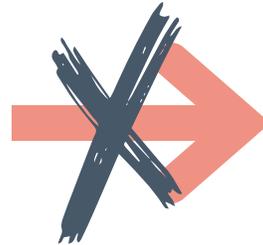
# Brain Structures



'Lizard Brain'

# Which Then Impacts Our Ability to Connect with Donors & Take Action

- Anxiety & stress activation
- Chronic stress & burnout
- Compassion fatigue
- Cognitive strain

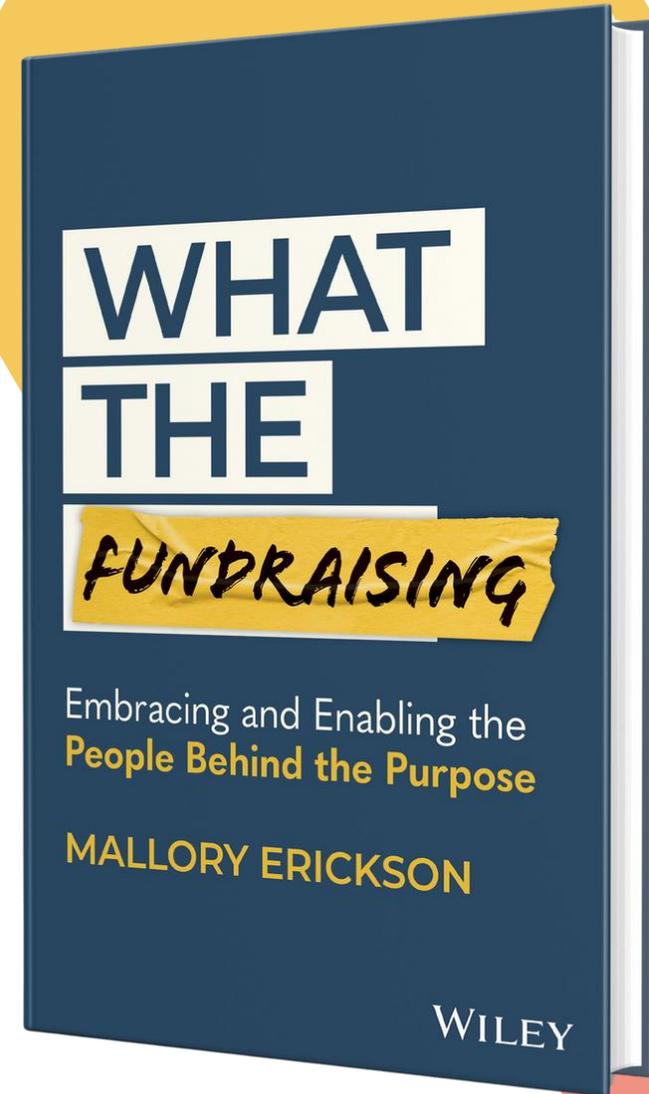


- Capacity for connection, compassion, & closeness
- Feelings of trust, empathy, & social recognition
- Innovation, collaboration, flexibility, resilience, etc.

SIGN UP TO WIN

# A Signed Copy of What The Fundraising

SCAN ME



Prioritizing connection and  
belonging impact more than our  
donor's experience.

How we feel  
determines  
what we do.

Feel better.  
Do better.  
Raise more.

# Alignment Fundraising Collective

**GET A FREE 30-DAY TRIAL**



[malloryerickson.com/alignmentfundraisingcollective](https://malloryerickson.com/alignmentfundraisingcollective)

**USE CODE: SPEAKINGAF**



## Connect with me!

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