



Signature Speaking Topics

Alice Ferris, MBA, CFRE, ACFRE

Custom workshops are also available upon request.

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Keynotes

The Power of Your Working Genius

What drives you to excel at work? What lights you up and keeps you motivated? The answer lies in understanding your natural strengths. Drawing on the transformative framework of "The Six Types of Working Genius" by Patrick Lencioni, this keynote unpacks how Wonder, Invention, Discernment, Galvanizing, Enablement, and Tenacity shape how you work and collaborate. As a certified Working Genius Facilitator, Alice Ferris will guide you in understanding your geniuses and leveraging them to boost productivity, energize your team, and create a more fulfilling professional life.

Ikigai: Living Your Life's Purpose

In the nonprofit sector, relentless commitment to others can lead to burnout and a sense of lost direction. The Japanese concept of ikigai—your reason for being—offers a path to rediscover balance and fulfillment. By exploring the intersection of four elements—what you love, what you're good at, what the world needs, and what you can be rewarded for—you can align your work with your passions and values. Drawing on her extensive experience and personal journey, Alice Ferris provides practical insights into integrating ikigai into your career, helping you navigate challenges, nurture resilience, and live a purpose-driven life.

I Am Not a Bot: Why Your Donors Are Counting on You to Stay Human

AI can write your appeal. It can segment your list, draft your thank-you note, and analyze your donor data. So what's left for you? Everything that actually matters. In this session, Alice Ferris gets real about what AI can and can't do for working fundraisers—and why the empathy, judgment, and genuine connection you bring to the work are more valuable than ever. Walk away with practical frameworks for evaluating AI tools, honest use cases you can apply immediately, and a clear-eyed sense of how to let technology work for your mission without letting it speak for you.

The Art of Letting Go: Lessons from Leadership Transitions

Change is hard, but it doesn't have to be messy. Leadership transitions are inevitable, and with intergenerational shifts sweeping through the nonprofit sector, the stakes have never been higher. Drawing from real-world successes and struggles, this session explores how to honor what came before while paving the way for future growth. Learn how to set the stage for a new chapter that builds on the past without being bound by it.

Lessons from Accidental Trailblazers

Trailblazers aren't just the figures in history books or on magazine covers—they're the quiet pioneers shaping our lives and communities every day. Drawing on her family's immigrant journey and her experiences as an Asian American, Alice Ferris shares stories of resilience, courage, and breaking barriers. This keynote celebrates the spirit of trailblazing and offers lessons on how we, too, can embrace challenges and pave the way for others to succeed.

Workshops

Board Development and Leadership

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Boards

Too often, nonprofit boards operate on instinct rather than intention. But what if you took a more proactive approach to your work? Inspired by Stephen Covey's timeless principles from *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, this session explores the core roles and responsibilities of boards, how to set yourselves up for success, and how to maximize impact with your limited time. Whether you're a seasoned board member or new to governance, this workshop provides practical tools to elevate your board's effectiveness.

Communication

Creating Stories that Stick in Your Grant Proposals

Grant reviewers may seem like a tough crowd, but at their core, they're human—and humans connect with stories. While following guidelines and presenting facts is essential, weaving a compelling narrative can make your proposal unforgettable. This session dives into the key stories every fundraiser needs in their toolkit, helping your proposals stand out and inspire action. Learn how to turn your facts into a story that sticks with your audience long after they've read it.

Small Shops

Fundraising for People with No Time to Fundraise

Working in a small shop can feel like running on a hamster wheel—nonstop demands, limited resources, and little time to think beyond today. But even the smallest organizations can create fundraising programs that grow resources and make a case for expanding your team. This session is packed with practical tips to help you do more with less, prioritize what really matters, and show why investing in development is a smart move for your mission.

Planning, Assessment, and Practical Strategies

Creating a Fundraising Plan That You'll Actually Use

Fundraising emergencies can feel endless—an urgent donor request, a last-minute proposal, or a mailing that needs approval ASAP. It's easy to push planning to the back burner, but a solid fundraising plan can actually reduce your daily stress. And here's the good news: building one doesn't have to take months. Whether you're a one-person shop or part of a large department, this session will guide you through the critical elements of a fundraising plan, show you how to create one in less than a day, and teach you how to make it your daily go-to tool.

Planning When You Don't Know What's Next

In today's constantly shifting environment, it's tempting to ditch your plans entirely. But as President Dwight D. Eisenhower famously said, "The plan is useless, but planning is indispensable." This session dives into how to plan effectively when the future feels uncertain. We'll explore risk assessment, planning processes amid chaos, and strategies for creating realistic, actionable plans that keep you focused—even when the unexpected happens.

The 30-Day Fundraising Reset: Assess, Refresh, and Reactivate

Is your fundraising plan overdue for a refresh? This session offers a streamlined approach to revitalizing your strategy in just 30 days. Learn how to assess your current efforts, identify and eliminate tactics that no longer serve your goals, and build a focused action plan to achieve greater success. Whether you're gearing up for a new fiscal year or simply ready for a reset, this workshop provides the tools to refocus and move forward with clarity and confidence.

Management, Leadership, and Trends

Fostering a Growth Mindset in Difficult Times

Collaboration, resilience, and adaptability—these traits define a team with a growth mindset, and they're precisely what nonprofits need to navigate challenging times. But how do you inspire forward-thinking and motivation when uncertainty is the norm? This session unpacks Dr. Carol Dweck's groundbreaking research on mindset and offers practical strategies for cultivating a growth-oriented culture. Through real-world examples, you'll discover how embracing a growth mindset can empower your team to weather challenges and emerge stronger and more innovative than ever.

Handling Change When Humans Are Involved

Change is rarely straightforward, especially when people are part of the equation. Whether it's a major restructuring, a new initiative, or shifting donor priorities, guiding your team through uncertainty takes skill and intention. This workshop tackles the human side of change, exploring its stages, common personality archetypes, and strategies for keeping your team motivated and on track. Walk away with practical tools to help your organization adapt, innovate, and succeed in an ever-changing world.

Understanding Philanthropy Across Generations

Here's the truth: Millennials aren't lazy, Gen Z isn't entitled, Gen X isn't invisible, and Boomers aren't out of touch. Each generation in the philanthropic world brings its own strengths—and challenges. If you're still marketing like you did 20 years ago, it's time to rethink your strategy. In this session, we'll break down what makes each generation tick, what motivates them to give, and how you can use this knowledge to create fundraising programs that engage everyone—from seasoned Boomers to often-overlooked Gen Xers to activist Gen Zers.

Webinars

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Boards

Nonprofit boards often operate on instinct, but intentionality can dramatically improve their effectiveness. This webinar applies Stephen Covey's timeless principles from *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* to board leadership, addressing core roles and responsibilities, strategies to set your board up for success, and ways to maximize impact. Walk away with practical tools to elevate your board's performance and drive your mission forward.

Fostering a Growth Mindset in Difficult Times

How do you keep your team motivated and focused when the world around you feels uncertain? This webinar explores Dr. Carol Dweck's groundbreaking research on growth mindset and provides actionable strategies to foster collaboration, resilience, and adaptability within your organization. With real-world examples, learn how to cultivate a growth-oriented culture that empowers your team to tackle challenges head-on and emerge stronger.

Fundraising for People with No Time to Fundraise

In a small shop, it can feel like you're constantly putting out fires, with no time for strategic thinking. This session explores practical tips to help you build an effective fundraising program—even with limited resources. Learn how to do more with less, prioritize what matters most, and make the case for investing in development. This session will give you actionable insights to move your mission forward without adding to your stress.

Creating a Fundraising Plan That You'll Actually Use

When emergencies dominate your day, it's easy to push planning aside—but a realistic fundraising plan can make your work more sustainable and less chaotic. This webinar will show you how to build a practical, actionable plan tailored to your needs. Whether you're working solo or part of a larger team, you'll leave with strategies to create a plan you'll actually use and make it your daily guide for fundraising success.