

## AFPOC – President’s Message – May 2008



Believe it or not, I still reflect on the comments made by Sir Bob Geldof , a plenary session speaker at the San Diego AFP International Conference on April 1. The anxiety he caused through his message grows more and more inside my conflicted mind. Why do I feel uneasy? Why does the old United Way slogan, “I am one person, what difference can I make?” play on an audio loop in my head? Will I ever be as passionate about raising funds as he is about famine relief? Am I a bad person because I live in the United States, grew up in a middle-class family and spend more at Starbucks than I give to African hunger causes? I ask the questions, rhetorical or not, for I know the answers will only reveal themselves over time.

That Sir Geldof is a compassionate man should not be debated. Most will also agree that anyone who can hold the attention span of 3,000 fundraisers for 90 minutes and even cause several to feel uncomfortable enough to leave the presence of a knighted Irishman is a brilliant speaker. Ex-rock and rollers are supposed to get fat and join the country fair circuit, not inspire you to change the world. I don’t agree with everything this former front man for the Boom Town Rats said but you can’t deny that he got off his sofa after viewing a 10 minute BBC news story and did something about what he viewed as “preposterous”.

I’m thinking maybe my anxiety over his comments stems from a jealousy that this man is close to achieving the “holy grail” of charitable work. He has created the mother of all strategic plans - global policy change - and yet is content that if his work has changed the life of just one person, then his efforts were a success. WOW! I’m grappling with trying to continue double-digit gift increases while in the back of my mind knowing that if only one scholarship was awarded, my bosses would be p\_\_\_\_\_.

OK, where I am going with this. Two places. Make yourself uncomfortable enough to question why it is you do what you do. I bet you will be even better at what you do as a result. And listen to those who “walk the talk”. Chances are they have the answers and advice you are seeking.

Sincerely,

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