



BEFORE YOU START FUNDRAISING:

The very first steps you need to take





HI, I'M KASSONDRA!

In 2018, I left my career in foster care and adoption to have my first child, Ethan. Shortly after he turned a year old, I noticed he was slowing down developmentally. Four specialists, two years, and countless tests later, I learned he has a rare genetic illness that affects his development, mobility, and cognition. After learning about his condition, I knew that we would need a wheelchair-accessible vehicle to accommodate his eventual wheelchair. After hours and hours of searching online, I was surprised to learn how expensive a van would be and the lack of resources to help cover the cost.

In 2021, I started our fundraiser. I knew I needed a simple, effective, no-contact way to fundraise, so I focused my efforts on social media. I sought out everything I could about medical fundraising, which I learned was mostly for professional fundraisers. I changed my course and learned about branding, marketing, goal-setting, belief, tenacity, and storytelling. Putting everything I learned into action, I raised half of my goal in just six months.

In 2022, I started The Striped Stable to teach parents the same principles I learned to help them launch their campaigns in a simple, authentic, and effective way. I knew if I could see success, anyone could! Time is our most valuable resource and it shouldn't be spent worrying about how a medical expense is going to be paid. It should be spent taking care of ourselves and our loved ones. It is my hope that you find the guide helpful and you feel inspired to take action to start your own fundraising journey.

Do Good. Be Well.

Kassondra

START



ABOUT MEDICAL FUNDRAISING

Chances are you've probably thought about starting an online fundraiser to cover your child's medical expenses for a while now. If you've started down the online search engine rabbit hole, then you know how easy it is to become completely overwhelmed by the amount of information and various fundraising platforms to consider. But before you actually publish your first fundraiser, you need to set yourself up for success. Now, I'm sure you're thinking you need to have a website, posts, pictures, and things to sell to start but before all that, you need to decide your fundraiser will be a success. In this e-book, we'll be talking about the importance of setting a specific goal, creating a winning mindset, practicing resilience, and the general fundraising process.

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- WHY MINDSET MATTERS.
 - HOW TO SQUASH SHAME.
 - THE IMPACT OF LIMITING BELIEFS.
 - HOW TO SET A SMART GOAL.
 - WHAT IS YOUR NEXT STEP?
-



Mindset Matters

Google “why mindset matters” and you’ll find endless pages on the importance of mindset. Entrepreneur.com, Stanford University, Medium.com, and Forbes (to name a few) have articles addressing how vital mindset is to happiness, resilience, achievement, and success.

“ Research shows that mindsets play a significant role in determining life’s outcomes. By understanding, adapting and shifting your mindset, you can improve your health, decrease your stress and become more resilient to life’s challenges. ”

In 2012, a research study showed that participants who experienced high-stress levels had an increased risk of death, but only if they believed stress to be harmful. Participants who did not believe stress to be harmful were no more likely to die, even though they had the same high-stress levels.

It is easy to feel like the victim of life circumstances. “Why is this happening to me?” is a statement many of us struggle with. One of the best ways to boost your fundraising success rate and overall happiness is to shift out of the victim mindset and into a growth mindset. Having a growth mindset means you think about setbacks and challenges differently. If you have a growth mindset, you believe even if you struggle with certain skills, your abilities aren't set in stone. You know you're capable of learning new skill sets and abilities to overcome challenges.

It makes sense that our beliefs can substantially impact the outcome of situations and the direction of our lives. Taking an emotionally charged goal, such as funding an important piece of equipment or treatment, and reframing it from “how will I ever get there?” to “I can’t wait to experience treatment/drive our car/train my service dog/etc.” will substantially increase the likelihood of achievement. You are fortunate to have power behind such an emotional goal! The trick is showcasing that power in your posts and videos.

Squash Shame

Our society has been built on hundreds of years of etiquette, stemming from societies passed. This etiquette showcases “social norms,” the rules that society deems “normal.” We are taught these rules from a very young age and have them well ingrained into our consciousness. I’m here to tell you there is no such thing as normal and sometimes rules are meant to be broken.

The absolute first thing I had to go toe-to-toe with on my fundraising journey was my feeling of shame. It was painful to admit that I could not financially cover my son’s medical expenses. I thought to be a good mom, I had to be able to pay for every medical expense, regardless of cost.

What I didn’t understand was that my belief system did not factor in having a child with a rare disease and having astronomical medical expenses because of that. I also didn’t account for the high-cost, high-value prices being charged to patients and families by companies who know that their products/services directly impact the quality of (and sometimes literally save) lives.

The more I understood the medical and insurance systems in the United States, the more I realized it was literally impossible for me to directly exchange my hours for money and money for medical equipment in the traditional sense.

Whether your child has a rare disease, chronic health issues, a genetic anomaly, or something completely different, stand strong in knowing that the tool of fundraising is nothing to be ashamed of using.

Limiting Beliefs

The most fascinating—and trickiest—thing about limiting beliefs is their origin. A limiting belief is a belief or state of mind that we place on ourselves that hinder us. Because we construct these beliefs ourselves, they can be particularly tricky to challenge.

To change these tightly-held beliefs, we must understand the different types of mindsets and how to use them. A *fixed mindset* is the belief that fundamental things about us (our personality, intelligence, work ethic, etc.) are fixed, forever going to be that way. A growth mindset believes that with practice and hard work, these traits can be developed over time. To embrace a growth mindset, we need reminders that we are good and capable of change.

Fixed Mindset

Growth Mindset

Asking for help is weak

Asking for help is powerful

I'm either good at something or I'm not

I can improve my skills with effort & practice

Not succeeding right away signals failure

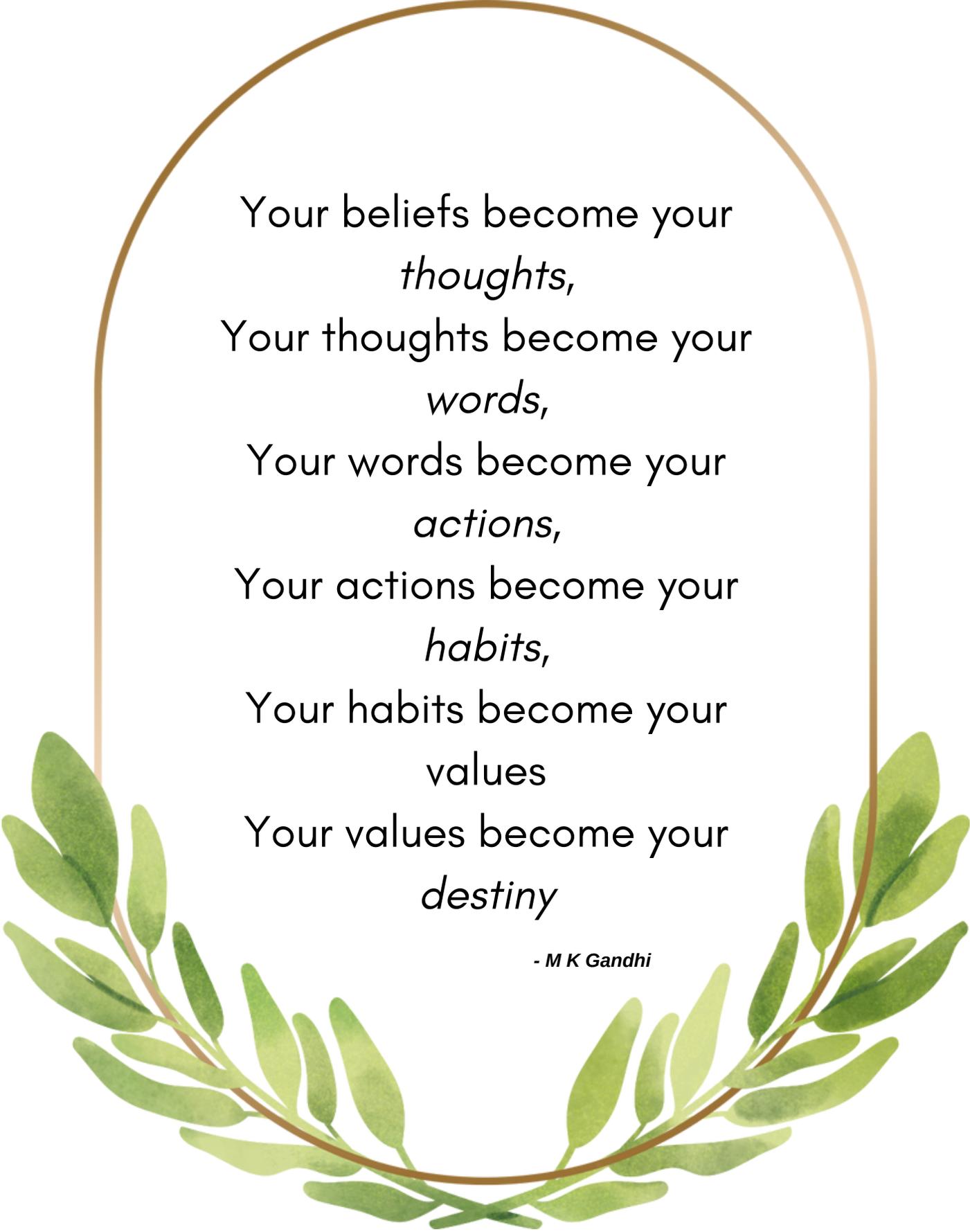
Setbacks are ideal opportunities for growth

I'm a bad parent for asking for help

I'm a good parent for doing whatever is needed to provide the best life for my child

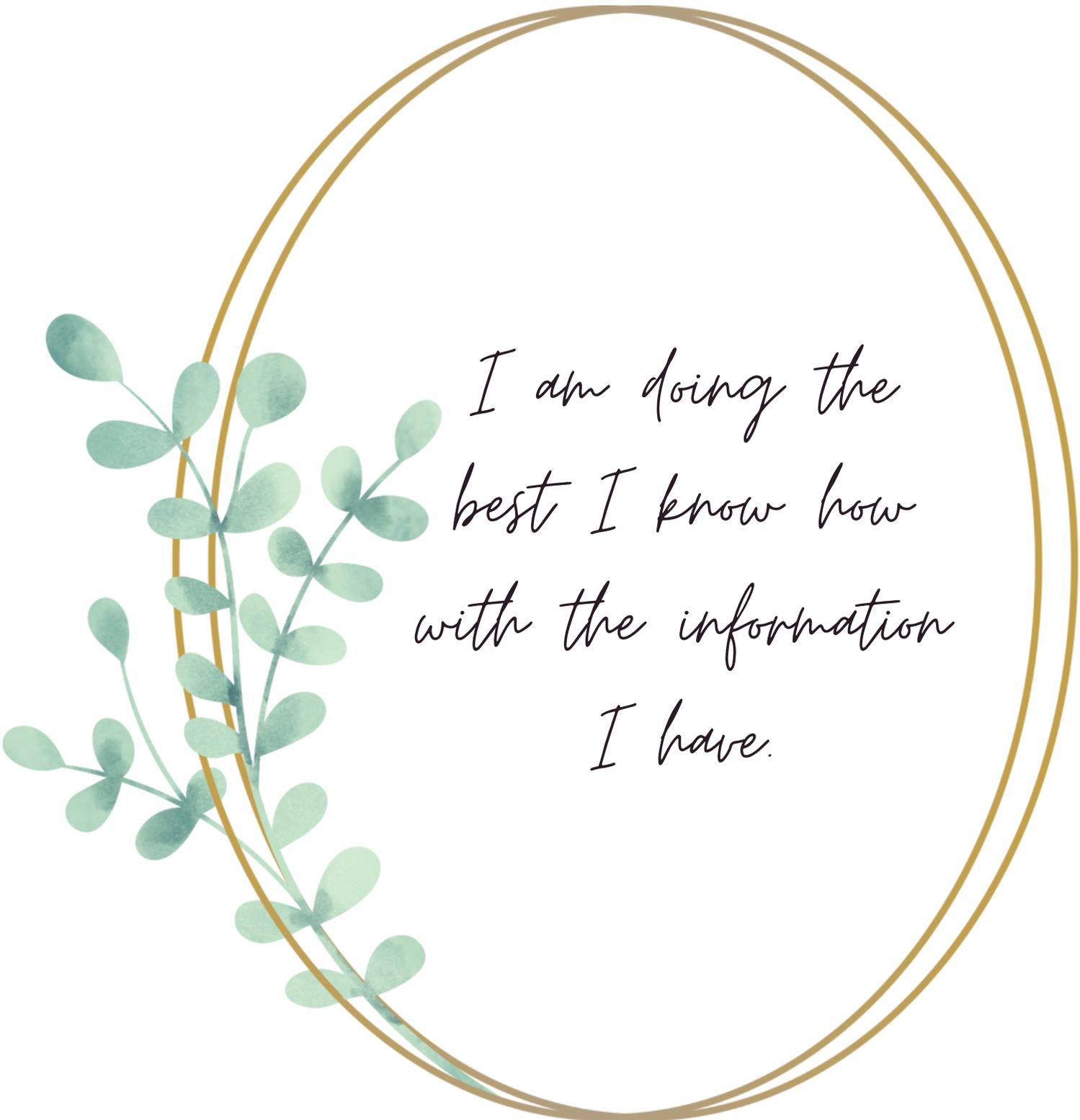
On the next 4 pages are affirmations just for you. Make sure to print these off and put them places you will see them often (bathroom mirror, office, fridge, car radio, you get the picture). These will serve as reminders to keep you fueled and on track towards you goal.





Your beliefs become your
thoughts,
Your thoughts become your
words,
Your words become your
actions,
Your actions become your
habits,
Your habits become your
values
Your values become your
destiny

- M K Gandhi



*I am doing the
best I know how
with the information
I have.*



It is powerful to ask for help.





Start with the End in Mind

To prepare for a successful fundraising campaign, you need to define your goal. It's impossible to arrive at your destination when you don't know where you're supposed to go!

One of the best ways to define a goal is using the acronym S.M.A.R.T.E.R. This framework sets up an achievable goal that helps you remain focused and communicate your goal easily to others—a huge benefit when rallying your donor's support!

What is a S.M.A.R.T.E.R. goal?

S P E C I F I C
M E A S U R E A B L E
A C H I E V A B L E
R E L E V A N T
T I M E - L I M I T E D
E M O T I O N A L
R E A D J U S T





S

Let's start at the beginning. What are you fundraising for? Get **specific** with your goal. *For example: a down payment, a heart transplant, hippotherapy sessions, etc.*

M

Next, **measurable**. I suggest keeping the goal numerically, whether it is the number of items or the cost of items. This will allow clarity when measuring success. How much/many do you need, down to the penny? Focusing on funding one bill or item at a time. *For example: one \$250 bill, two hours of respite care, one shift of in-home nursing, etc.*

A

Achievable- this can be tough. Can you achieve raising 1 million dollars? Absolutely yes. However, it is much easier to manage a bite-sized piece of 1 million, than it is the whole pie. *For example: the funding of an accessible van that costs \$75,000 total should be split into multiple, focused goals. One goal is to fund the chassis and one goal is to fund the adaptations.*

R

Relevance is so important when planning your goal. Why are you setting the goal that you're setting? This is where you get to dig deep, beyond "because it's important." *For example: I'm fundraising for a wheelchair-accessible van because it will provide freedom for my son and opportunities for new experiences like travel.*

T

Setting a **time** parameter will help you stay on track to hit your goal. It's hard to stay focused on fundraising, especially when medical issues arise, but by having a due date it's easier to remain focused and engage your community of supporters to help you achieve it. *For example: We will have 1/4 of our transplant fund funded in 90 days.*

E

What ISN'T **emotional** about these goals? Your ability to tie your emotions to your goal is so important. This is how you will be able to persevere through the milestones and set-backs. *For example: my eyes tear up when I think about the smile on my son's face when I am finally able to drive him to the zoo.*

R

Sometimes, things don't go as planned. In fact, a big part of parenting and advocacy is **readjusting** a goal, a method, or a plan. The importance of readjusting cannot be overstated. When you're setting your goals, make sure to factor in some grace in the process. *For example: prices skyrocket, inventory shrinks, a major life event happens.*

Next Steps

Once you've read through this guide and picked your S.M.A.R.T.E.R. goal, now is the time for action! Here are a few ways to get started fundraising:

- Host an in-person fundraising event, such as a 5k or bake sale
- Submit a press release to local news agencies and give interviews
- Start an online fundraiser
- Apply for grants related to your child's needs or condition
- Reach out to your friends and family to garner support
- Start an online blog to showcase your family's journey
- Create a Facebook page

Listen, you may be overwhelmed and confused on where to start. That's ok, I felt the exact same way! I realized that I was too busy to organize in-person events (not to mention they weren't safe at the time due to COVID-19) so I focused on social media and found it was the perfect tool to build an online fundraiser from home.

**Interested in online fundraising from home?
Check out my course:
Crowdfunding for Beginners**

Learn More



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