

“Is It Just Me, Or...”

A quick way to write subject lines and opening sentences donors can't resist.



The “Is It Just Me, Or...” Hook

A quick way to write subject lines and opening sentences donors can’t resist.

An Example

Subject line: “Is it just me, or does winter feel longer when you’re hungry?”

Opening line: “That’s the reality for families in our community right now. Your gift today helps put warm meals on the table.”

See what happened?

- The **hook** (“Is it just me, or...”) feels like a personal thought — not a marketing blast.
- The **pivot** (“That’s the reality...”) connects the donor’s recognition to the mission.
- Then you can slide right into the rest of the email or appeal.

Why this works

Most donor emails die in the inbox because they feel like marketing. But “Is it just me, or...” feels like a real human talking. It’s a phrase that:

- Grabs attention because it sounds conversational
- Signals intimacy (like you’re letting someone in on your thought)
- Invites agreement — which makes the donor lean in

The magic isn’t just the hook, though. It’s the **pivot**.

- The hook creates a moment of recognition (“Yes, I’ve felt that too”).
- The pivot bridges that moment into your mission (“Here’s what that means for the people we serve”).
- Together, they move the donor from *curiosity* to *connection*.

Think of it as starting with a feeling your donor already knows, then connecting it to the people you serve.

Where to use this right now

- **Subject lines** → cut through crowded inboxes
- **First sentence of an appeal** → instantly humanize your writing
- **Social posts** → get attention with a line that sounds like a thought bubble

- **Thank-you emails** → start warm before moving to impact
- **Board or volunteer scripts** → help non-marketers sound personal and engaging

The Formula

Step 1: Start with a relatable “Is it just me, or...” observation

Step 2: Pivot to the mission — show why it matters for your beneficiaries

Step 3: Connect the donor to the solution — show how they can act or what they already made possible

Six Categories with Hooks + Pivots

Once you get the hang of it, you’ll notice that “Is it just me, or...” lines naturally fall into a few patterns. Each one creates a different kind of moment with your donor.

- Some make them nod along with a **shared human truth**.
- Some highlight the **contrast** between donor life and beneficiary life.
- Others use **playfulness, reflection, or urgency** to pull the donor closer.
- And some give the donor a moment of **recognition and pride**.

Below are six categories — each with a ready-to-use hook and pivot — so you can see exactly how they work in real fundraising copy.

Shared Human Experience

- Hook: “Is it just me, or do kids grow up faster than we’re ready for?”
- Pivot: “For students without school supplies, those fast years are even harder.”

Exaggerated Contrast

- Hook: “Is it just me, or does one night outside feel endless?”
- Pivot: “For the abandoned pets we serve, it can be weeks without shelter.”

Playful Observation

- Hook: “Is it just me, or does math make more sense with snacks?”
- Pivot: “That’s why our program pairs tutoring with a healthy meal.”

Emotional Reflection

- Hook: “Is it just me, or does silence feel heavier without a pet in the house?”
- Pivot: “That’s why we work to place every animal in a loving home.”

Urgency / Time Pressure

- Hook: “Is it just me, or is wildfire season starting earlier every year?”
- Pivot: “That’s why we need to be ready now, not later.”

Recognition & Pride

- Hook: “Is it just me, or does saving one dog feel like saving the world?”
 - Pivot: “That’s the impact you made last month — thank you.”
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Sector-Specific Examples with Pivots

1. Shared Human Experience

Use universal feelings donors already know.

Animal Rescue

- Hook: “Is it just me, or does a wagging tail make any day better?”
- **Pivot:** “That’s the joy every rescued dog brings—and with your help, more tails will wag.”

Education

- Hook: “Is it just me, or do kids grow up faster than we’re ready for?”
- **Pivot:** “For the students we serve, those precious years can slip away without the support they need.”

Healthcare

- Hook: “Is it just me, or does a doctor’s visit always feel rushed?”
- **Pivot:** “That’s why we make sure every patient at our free clinic is heard, cared for, and treated with dignity.”

Environment

- Hook: “Is it just me, or does the first breath of fresh air feel priceless?”
- **Pivot:** “That’s what your gift protects for families who live near polluted areas.”

Arts & Culture

- Hook: “Is it just me, or does music bring back memories faster than anything else?”
 - **Pivot:** “That’s why we bring live performances into nursing homes—your gift makes that possible.”
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2. Exaggerated Contrast

Show the donor life vs. beneficiary life.

Animal Rescue

- Hook: “Is it just me, or does one night outside feel endless?”
- **Pivot:** “For the abandoned pets we serve, it can be weeks without shelter.”

Education

- Hook: “Is it just me, or does homework feel impossible without a quiet place?”
- **Pivot:** “That’s what our afterschool program gives kids every single day.”

Healthcare

- Hook: “Is it just me, or does waiting for test results make you feel powerless?”
- **Pivot:** “That’s why we walk beside every patient, making sure they aren’t left in the dark.”

Environment

- Hook: “Is it just me, or does this year’s hot summer feel longer than ever?”
- **Pivot:** “For families without shade or safe water, it’s dangerous—not just uncomfortable.”

Arts & Culture

- Hook: “Is it just me, or does a dark stage feel empty without performers?”
 - **Pivot:** “Your support brings the lights back on and artists back to work.”
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3. Playful Observation

Add a smile before pivoting to the serious.

Animal Rescue

- Hook: “Is it just me, or do dogs always know who will love them most?”
- **Pivot:** “That’s how they find the families they need — and your support makes it possible.”

Education

- Hook: “Is it just me, or does math make more sense with snacks?”
- **Pivot:** “That’s why our program pairs tutoring with a healthy meal.”

Healthcare

- Hook: “Is it just me, or do Band-Aids cure more tears than cuts?”
- **Pivot:** “That same comfort is what our nurses bring to kids who are hurting.”

Environment

- Hook: “Is it just me, or does every squirrel look like it’s up to something?”
- **Pivot:** “Nature has its quirks—and protecting it takes people like you.”

Arts & Culture

- Hook: “Is it just me, or do musicals make everyday life feel like a story worth telling?”
- **Pivot:** “That’s exactly what the arts give kids — the chance to see themselves as part of something bigger.”

4. Emotional Reflection

Tap into tender, relatable emotions.

Animal Rescue

- Hook: “Is it just me, or does silence feel heavier without a pet in the house?”
- **Pivot:** “That’s why we work to place every animal in a loving home.”

Education

- Hook: “Is it just me, or does encouragement matter more than grades?”
- **Pivot:** “Our mentors give kids the confidence they need to keep going.”

Healthcare

- Hook: “Is it just me, or does loneliness make recovery harder?”
- **Pivot:** “That’s why our volunteers sit bedside with patients who have no one else.”

Environment

- Hook: “Is it just me, or does the world feel calmer near water?”
- **Pivot:** “That calm is what we’re preserving by protecting local rivers.”

Arts & Culture

- Hook: “Is it just me, or do stories make us feel less alone?”
- **Pivot:** “That’s why we keep community theater alive—with your help.”

5. Urgency / Time Pressure

Make the ticking clock feel real.

Animal Rescue

- Hook: “Is it just me, or does a week in a shelter feel like a year?”
- **Pivot:** “Your gift today helps us place animals in homes faster.”

Education

- Hook: “Is it just me, or does graduation sneak up faster every year?”
- **Pivot:** “For seniors in our program, support right now means crossing that stage.”

Healthcare

- Hook: “Is it just me, or does waiting for treatment feel endless?”
- **Pivot:** “For families we serve, every day matters—your support speeds up care.”

Environment

- Hook: “Is it just me, or is wildfire season starting earlier every year?”

- **Pivot:** “That’s why we need to be ready now, not later.”

Arts & Culture

- **Hook:** “Is it just me, or does opening night always arrive too soon?”
 - **Pivot:** “That’s why rehearsals—and your support—matter so much.”
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6. Recognition & Pride

Affirm the donor’s generosity and identity.

Animal Rescue

- **Hook:** “Is it just me, or does saving one dog feel like saving the world?”
- **Pivot:** “That’s the impact you made last month—thank you.”

Education

- **Hook:** “Is it just me, or does helping one child learn feel like helping them fly?”
- **Pivot:** “Your support gave 27 students that lift this year.”

Healthcare

- **Hook:** “Is it just me, or does hope feel stronger when it’s shared?”
- **Pivot:** “Every gift you give spreads that hope to another patient.”

Environment

- **Hook:** “Is it just me, or does planting one tree feel like planting hope?”
- **Pivot:** “Every gift you give grows into clean air, safe water, and a healthier planet.”

Arts & Culture

- **Hook:** “Is it just me, or does live theater make the world feel brighter?”
 - **Pivot:** “Your support brought that light to 300 children who experienced the arts for the first time.”
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👉 **Pro tip:** The pivot should always do one of three things:

1. Pull the donor closer to the beneficiary’s reality.

2. Translate the observation into mission language.
3. Point the donor toward the role they can play.

Quick Guardrails

- Don't let the hook float on its own. Always pivot.
- Keep it human — not gimmicky or corporate.
- The best “Is it just me, or...” lines invite agreement, not debate.

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