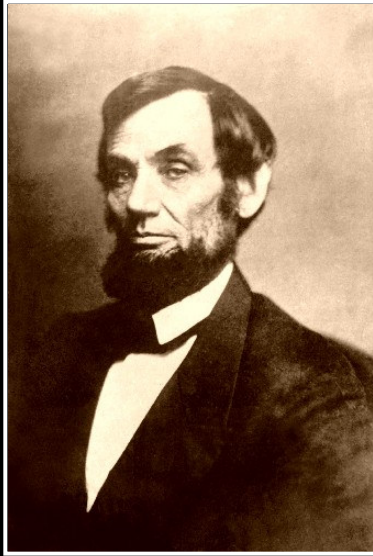


We Need to Build Public Will



"Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it nothing can succeed. Consequently, he who molds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces decisions. He makes statutes and decisions *possible* or *impossible* to be executed."

- Abraham Lincoln

Communicating to Building Public Will

Advocate Leaders Training
Portland, OR – September 15, 2010

Patrick Bresette – pbresette@demos.org

Public Works: the Dēmos Center for the Public Sector

www.publicworkspartners.net



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Public Works: the Dēmos Center for the Public Sector

Public support for a
government dedicated
to the common good
and empowered to
address the challenges
and opportunities of
the 21st Century.



Today's Training

- What is “framing”
- How do dominant stories/frames/perceptions shape understanding
- What are the tools of good framing
- What are framing missteps to avoid
- Framing for social change



**America is at a cross-roads:
Public Challenges and Public Will**

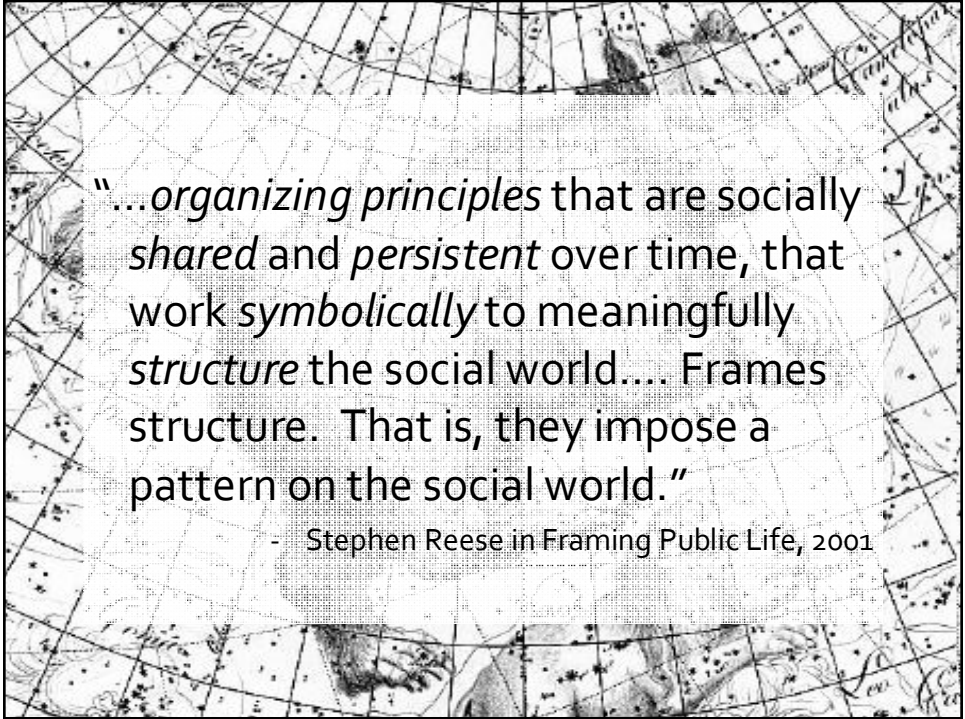


**We need to change the terrain on which
discussions about our issues occurs**

Communicating to Build Public Will

Questions that we need to answer:

- What is the problem?
- Why does it matter?
- Who is responsible?
- What should be done?



"...organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world.... Frames structure. That is, they impose a pattern on the social world."

- Stephen Reese in Framing Public Life, 2001

The importance of framing

“If they can get you asking the wrong questions, they don't have to worry about answers.”

- Thomas Pynchon,
Gravity's Rainbow



Spanking Makes You Stupid

Development, not IQ

Early experiences affect the architecture of the maturing brain and establish either a sturdy or a fragile foundation for all of the development and behavior that follows.

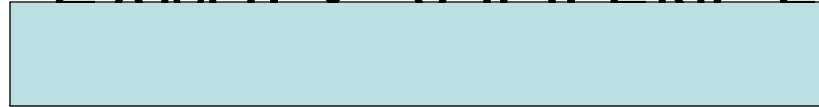
When a young child experiences excessive stress, chemicals are released in the brain that damage its developing architecture. These stress chemicals make it harder for brain cells to grow and connect to each other.

Facts do not Trump Frames

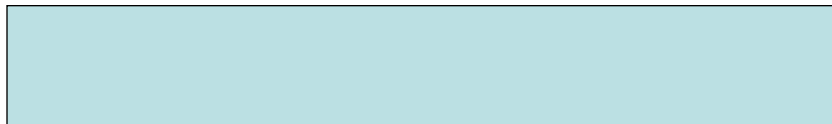
Understanding means finding a story you already know and saying, "Oh yeah, that one." Even just one piece of affirming information about a stereotype is sufficient to confirm the entire stereotype, whereas presentation of even several disconfirming cues has little effect on disconfirming the stereotype.

- (Schank, 1998 & Gurwitz and Dodge, 1977)

FAMILY VIOLENCE



EAMJI X VJQI FNGF



It Depends on How You Ask

The public's desire for tax cuts can be hard to measure. Pollsters asking what should be done with the nation's budget surplus got different results depending on the specifics of the question.

THE QUESTION

President Clinton has proposed setting aside approximately two-thirds of an expected budget surplus to fix the Social Security system. What do you think the leaders in Washington should do with the remainder of the surplus? ...

Variation 1

... Should the money be used for a tax cut, or should it be used to fund new government programs?



Variation 2

... Should the money be used for a tax cut, or should it be spent on programs for education, the environment, health care, crime-fighting and military defense?



Source: Pew Research Center

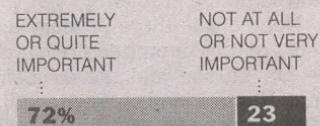
The New York Times

SHIFTS AND SHIMMIES

Similar Questions, Different Answers

In polling about health care issues, the phrasing of questions is crucial. Below are two questions from a Wall Street Journal/NBC News Poll. While the questions differ only slightly, they generated vastly different responses.

In any health care proposal, how important do you feel it is to give people a choice of both a public plan administered by the federal government, and a private plan for their health insurance?



Would you favor or oppose creating a public health care plan administered by the federal government that would compete directly with private health insurance companies?



Some beliefs to question

- ✓ The facts will set you free.
- ✓ The data speak for themselves.
- ✓ We need to educate everyone.
- ✓ We just need a catchier message/slogan.
- ✓ I understand it so everyone else should.
- ✓ Those who don't support us don't make sense.

Framing

Framing research examines **how thinking, communication, and culture interact**, and understanding those interactions can help advocates determine how to communicate more effectively.

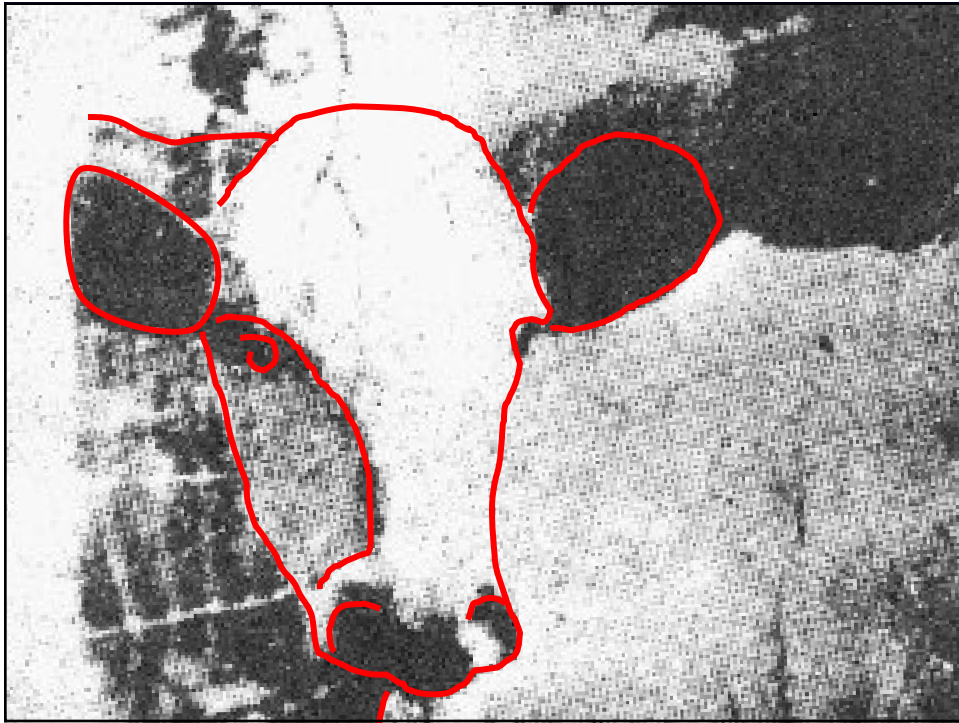
- Larry Wallack

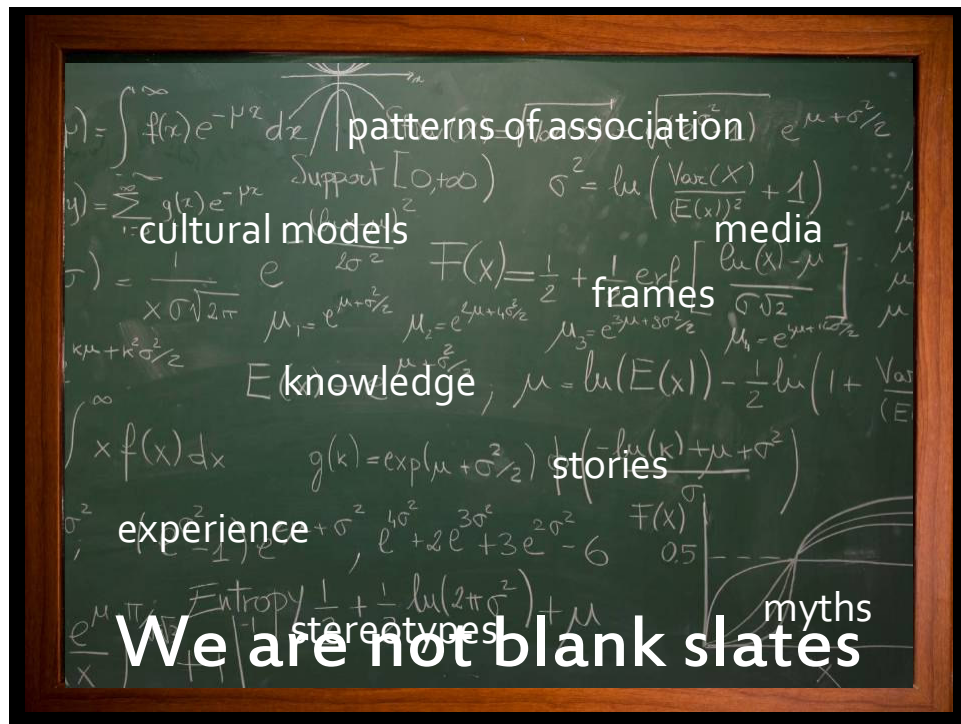
Framing vs. Spin

- Frames are always present
- Framing for Truth vs. Spinning to Deceive
- Understanding not Manipulation.

Framing Happens

- Frames are used by our brains to make sense of incoming information
- It happens fast
- Frames fill in the blanks
- They direct thinking





Framing Happens

- If we do not pay attention to how we frame our issues people will default to the "pictures in their heads"

Essential Steps for the Future of America's Wetlands



Why Wetlands Matter

Wetlands **benefit us all**. Wetlands **act as a filter** for the waters of our lakes, rivers and streams. Wetlands improve the water we drink, and the air we breathe. **Wetlands act like giant sponges**. They soak up rain and snowmelt as they occur, serving as temporary storage basins, thus reducing erosion, and limiting the destruction caused by severe floods . . .

CITY

I confess to a prejudice. I believe that Cities are the most important single unit of human society. **They are to human beings what beehives are to bees.** Human beings are fundamentally community beings . . . No other level of government has to face so directly the reality of how well we or poorly we work as a human community. **We are bound together.** The municipal leader knows it, and sees it.

Pragmatism, Prophecy, and Prayer - The Rev. B. P. Campbell, Virginia Municipal League, Prayer Breakfast, 24 October 2005

The Stories We Tell

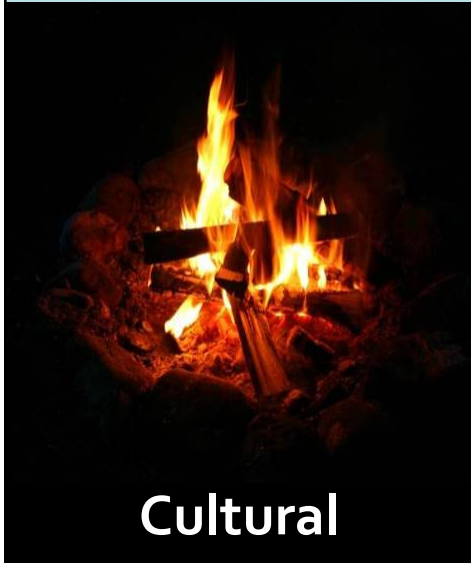
“The way a story is told – its selective use of particular symbols, metaphors, and messengers – which, in turn, triggers the shared and durable cultural models that people use to make sense of their world.”

- (Bales and Gilliam)



our brains are
rapidly seeking
to connect new
information to
the existing
stories in our
heads

Stories



Cultural

"They are the **narratives of life**, spanning the centuries and connecting the generations. They are the **vessels** in which we carry our **history** and **traditions**, our **values** and **lessons for living**, our **hopes** and **dreams**."

The International Storytelling Center, TN

Stories



Cognitive

All evidence leads to the conclusion that **concepts conveyed in story form** — more than ideas explained with logic and analysis — **imprint themselves naturally in human minds**."

- Roche and Sadowsky

**Dominant “stories,”
cultural models and
habits of thinking
shape perceptions**

Master Narratives

Whenever we engage in public debates we may think of ourselves as conduits of information. However, our audiences think about those same policies, issues, and programs in terms of the background story— **the master narrative** —that lies beneath our bullet-points, facts, statistics, and legal citations.

The Triumphant Individual



"Self-Made Man" – Irene Ritter

Independence

The Benevolent Community



Dave Kolpack / AP

Interdependence

Core Beliefs about Poverty



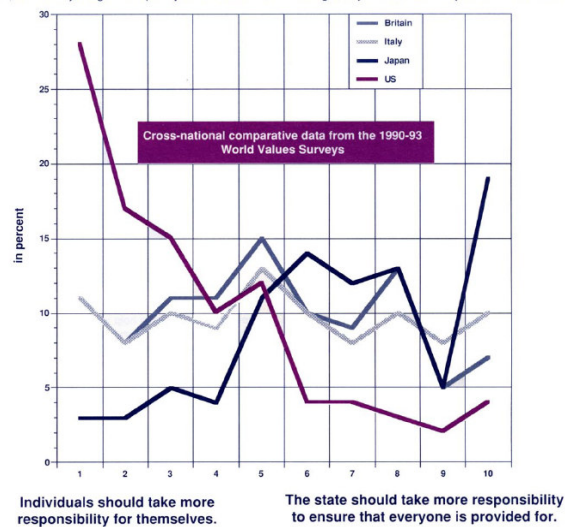
- Each individual is responsible for his or her own success or failure;
- With hard work comes reward;
- The goal is equal opportunity, not equal outcome; and
- Anyone can achieve the "American Dream".

Source: Meg Bostrom, *For an Economy that Works for All*

When you say:	"We" hear:	"They" hear:
Poor	I have a responsibility to help.	They aren't trying hard enough.
Working poor	They're doing all they can, but it isn't enough.	They may be trying, but not trying hard enough.
Equality of opportunity	Things need to be fair so people can have a chance.	Just take advantage of all the opportunities that America offers.
Low wage, low income, disadvantaged	I have a responsibility to help.	You can't fool me, these are poor people.
Poverty	A situation that deserving people can't always overcome.	Maintained by wrong-headed government programs and policies.
Targeted program	Some people have more immediate needs.	Are these people really deserving?
Working people	People who may need a helping hand sometimes.	If they are really working hard, they should be making it.

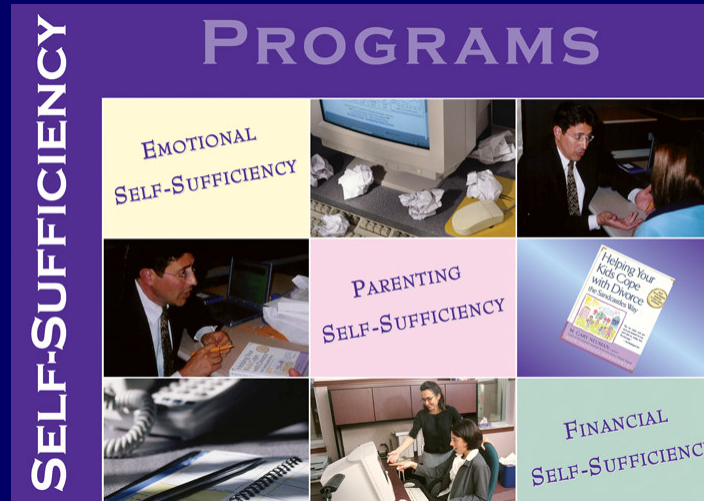
People, Opinions, & Polls
Affirmative Action, Welfare, and the Individual
Backdrop: The Distinctiveness of American Values
on "Individualism," ...

Question: ...How would you place your views on this scale? 1 means you agree completely with the statement on the left, 10 means you agree completely with the statement on the right, or you can choose any number in-between.



Source for pp. 24-25: World Values Survey, 1990-1993, done by the World Values Study Group. The samples consist of adults age 18 and over, in 45 countries.

Which story are we reinforcing?



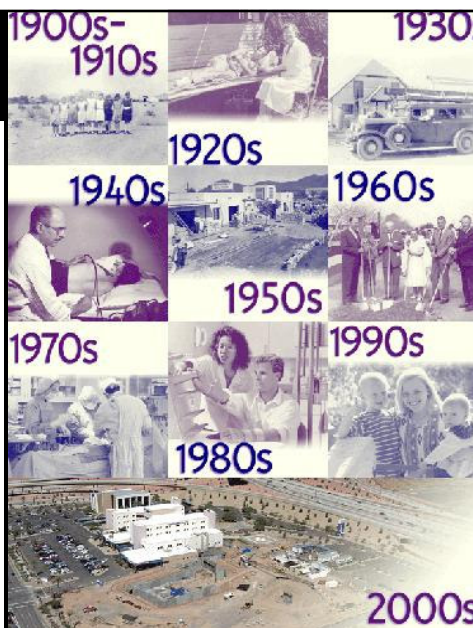
Interdependence or Independence?

Some Public Beliefs work for us . . .

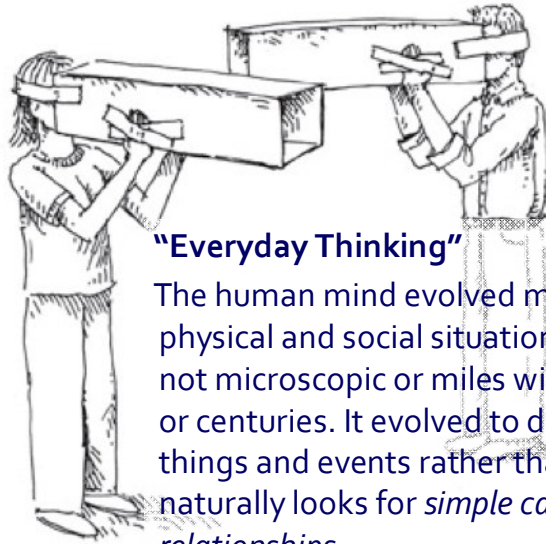
- Hard work should be valued and rewarded
- Working people are struggling
- The country needs to act to impact the economy
- People tend to judge the economy based on their perceptions of *how they and people like them are doing*.
- We can all work together to find solutions

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.

Short-Term Focus



Long-Term Thinking



"Everyday Thinking"

The human mind evolved mostly to deal with physical and social situations at a *human scale* – not microscopic or miles wide, not milliseconds or centuries. It evolved to deal with *concrete* things and events rather than abstractions. It naturally looks for *simple cause-and-effect relationships*.

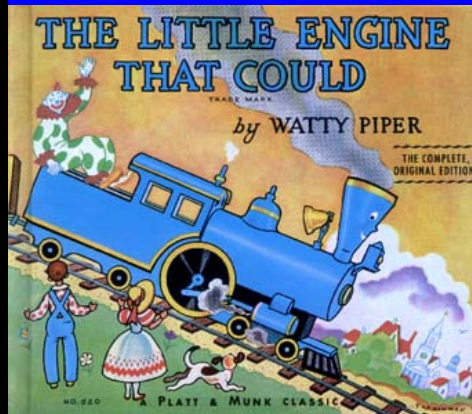
- *Provoking Thought, Changing Talk: Discussing Inequality*
Cultural Logic, April 2008



Chicken Little

Desperation

Aspiration



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New Mexico

Land that used to be Enchanting

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news

New Mexico Wilderness



A Wilderness Legacy

When Spanish settlers first arrived in New Mexico four hundred years ago, they described rolling hills of auburn grass and cacti that came up to the stirrups of mounted horsemen. Later, Aldo Leopold, "the father of Wilderness", wrote of this land of unparalleled biological diversity that the "...oak-dotted hills, ...pine clad mesas, and lazy trout streams ...come near to being the cream of creation."

Sadly, today most of the rolling grasses are gone, the streams have long dried up, and many of the speckled mesas and hills have been sacrificed to economic development and motorized recreation. These lands, once treasured as some of the wildest in the west, are quickly dwindling.

Wilderness Protection is the Answer

There are well over 4.5 million acres of potential Wilderness in New Mexico; only an aggressive Wilderness advocacy campaign will create the

public demand to permanently protect these areas as Wilderness.



New Mexico – Land of Enchantment

The wild lands of New Mexico have been the source of our spirit and culture for a thousand years. We have a legacy of living with the land, not just on it. A new century poses new challenges – balancing growth and prosperity with the open space that is our heritage. The Wilderness Alliance is working to keep this balance and ensure that New Mexico remains enchanting for future generations . . .

Competing Frames, Stories and Habits of Thought

Framing Tools

- Metaphors & Analogies
- Values
- Social Math

Metaphors, Analogies and Simplifying Models

Metaphors and Analogies

The dictionary defines a "metaphor" as a figure of speech that uses one thing to mean another and makes a comparison between the two.

"All the world's a stage"

An analogy expresses similarity between things that might seem different. It can be a logical argument: if two things are alike in some ways, they are alike in some other ways as well.

"Having ADD is like wearing a hearing aid on all five senses."

Metaphors are cues to the cultural models we all use to make sense of a complex world. We make sense of “new” information by **calling up familiar images and experiences for context**. This is “relational” thinking and is central to human cognition.

(Holyoke and Thagard 1997)

ARGUMENT IS WAR

- Your claims are *indefensible*.
- He *attacked* every weak point in my argument.
- His criticisms were right on *target*.
- I *demolished* his argument.
- I've never *won* an argument with him.
- You disagree? Okay, *shoot!*
- He *shot down* all of my arguments.

Lakoff & Johnson 1980

TIME IS MONEY

You're *wasting* my time. This gadget will *save* you hours. I don't have the time to *give* you. How do you *spend* your time these days? That flat tire *cost* me an hour. I've *invested* a lot of time in her. I don't have enough time *to spare* for that. You're *running out* of time. You need to *budget* your time. Is that *worth* your while? Do you have much time *left*? He's living on I *borrowed* time. You don't use your time, *profitably*. I *lost* a lot of time when I got sick. *Thank you for* your time.

Lakoff & Johnson 1980

Mechanisms for Understanding

"... people typically rely on analogies in order to learn complex, abstract concepts. These concrete analogies are *simplifying models* - they help people organize information into a clear picture in their heads, including facts and ideas that they have been exposed to, but never been able to put together in a coherent way . . ."

- cultural logic

Ozone Depletion



Analogies in Health

Having schizophrenia is like viewing life through a kaleidoscope. It is hard to put the pieces together and they keep changing. (*Wikianswers.com*)

Having ADD is like wearing a hearing aid on all five senses. You hear the people talking, the clinking of the glasses and the plates. (*The Holiday Husband: Helping Your ADD Spouse Concentrate on the Season*)

Alzheimer's disease is like a cat burglar. It slips into a person's life without making a sound, and soon treasured possessions start disappearing: memory, personality and independence. (*Chris Woolston, CONSUMER HEALTH INTERACTIVE*)



Speaking to Values
Directs Thinking

Values Matter

- We reason first from deeply held values.
- Values help answer: “Why does this matter to me/us?”
- We need to start with **Values**, not with the policy and program details

Levels of Thinking

- **Level One** – Big ideas:
protection, justice, family well-being
equality, opportunity, prosperity
- **Level Two** – Issues:
housing, the environment children’s
issues workforce development
- **Level Three** – Policies:
pay equity, bycatch SCHIP presumptive
eligibility EITC

Why does this matter?

“Every child should have access to immunizations but too many families in our community are not bringing their children in to our clinics. This is why we are proposing a new agency rule requiring more clinic hours . . .”

Speak to Values First

“The health of the whole community is **protected** when we ensure that our children are immunized. One of the ways we do this is through **our public health agencies** that provide free and low cost **immunizations for all children**. We need extended clinic hours to keep up with growing demands. ”

Funding for School Nurses

"School nurses today carry out a variety of roles in providing healthcare to our nation's children. There are approximately 45,000 school nurses employed in the United States. Unfortunately, this means that there is only one school nurse for every 1,155 students and many are responsible for multiple schools. Funding cuts are making the situation worse, as school nurses are sacrificed to balance budgets."

Why does this matter?

The Value of School Nurses

"We all know that healthy children are better able to learn and participate fully in school. Studies show that students in schools with a school nurse perform better academically. Today, their work is more important than ever. More children with special health care needs, chronic conditions and regular prescriptions are attending schools. At the same time budget cuts are eliminating nurse positions or forcing them to be responsible for multiple schools. It is time to reinvest in this essential public health and education role. Our children, schools and communities will all benefit."

Using Values

telling stories with numbers





Numbers don't
tell stories by
themselves

"Social Math" can
make numbers
more vivid and
understandable

Social Math

Making large numbers
comprehensible and compelling
by placing them in a social
context that provides meaning.

- Pioneered by the Advocacy Institute and
Berkeley Media Studies Group

"Framing with Numbers"

Social math can help set a new frame by :

- (1) connecting two or more things together;
- (2) comparing the size of things; or
- (3) functioning as a metaphor.

- The FrameWorks Institute

Connect to the Familiar

One less coal plant is like cutting 40 percent of Washington's vehicle emissions.

That amounts to all the cars and trucks in Seattle, Tacoma, and Spokane *plus* the 25 next largest cities in the state, *combined*.

37g of Fat



+

=



+



Social Math Results

The story was an immediate sensation, featured on CBS, NBC, ABC, CNN, the front pages of USA Today, the Los Angeles Times, and The Washington Post's Style section.

Headlines: "Popcorn Gets an 'R' Rating," "Lights, Action, Cholesterol!" "Theater Popcorn is Double Feature of Fat."

Moviegoers were repulsed. Sales plunged.

Soon after, most of the nation's biggest theater chains — including United Artists, AMC, and Loews — announced that they would stop using coconut oil

- From "Made to Stick"

Connect “this to that” for Context

In San Francisco, there is one police officer for every 18 young people and only one school counselor for every 500 kids.

For the cost of incarcerating one prisoner for one year, California could send two students to the University of California, three students to a California state university or seven students to a community college.

Connect to the Familiar

Community residents near a gasoline refinery noted that the plant emits 6 tons of pollutants per day – that’s 25 balloons full of toxic pollution for each school child in the town.

Scale and Size

"If the fishing industry were a country, it would rank with the Netherlands as the world's 18th-largest oil consumer, a team of fisheries scientists is reporting. Boats often carry so much fuel 'they leave the dock lower in the water than when they return with a hold full of fish,' Dr. Tyedmers said.

"Fishing Industry's Fuel Efficiency Gets Worse as Ocean Stocks Get Thinner," Cornelia Dean, The New York Times, December 20, 2005

More Social Math

- In the United States there are more gun dealers than McDonald's restaurants.
- In 1991 enough alcohol was consumed by college students to fill 3,500 Olympic-size swimming pools, about one on every campus in the United States.
- 1000 people quit smoking everyday --by dying. That is the equivalent to 2 fully loaded jumbo jets crashing every day with no survivors"

Harper's Index Font of Social Math

Number of candy-bar wrappers needed to win a basketball as part of Cadbury's new anti-obesity campaign: **90**

Number of hours an 85-pound child would need to play basketball in order to burn off the calories in that many candy bars: **100**

- *Harper's Index*, August 2003

Framing Missteps



- Portraits vs. Landscapes



- Elephants



- Tone Matters

Frames Influence Decisions

“Every frame defines the issue, explains who is responsible, and suggests potential solutions. All of this is conveyed by images, stereotypes, or anecdotes.”

- Charlotte Ryan, Prime Time Activism, 1991

Portrait



Landscape

Public or Private Responsibility?

"The use of either the **episodic** [*portraits*] or the **thematic** [*landscapes*] news frame affects how individuals assign responsibility for political issues; **episodic framing tends to elicit individualistic rather than societal attributions of responsibility while thematic framing has the opposite effect.** Since television news is heavily episodic, its effect is generally to induce attributions of responsibility to individual victims or perpetrators rather than to broad social forces."

(Iyengar, 1991)

Different Stories > Different Solutions

Portraits

- Individuals
- Events
- Private
- Appeal to consumers
- Better information
- **Fix the person**

Landscapes

- Issues
- Trends
- Public
- Appeal to citizens
- Better Policies
- **Fix the Condition**

- Based on work by Iyengar and Gilliam

Individual Problem

Collective Problem



Personal Solutions

Structural Solutions

Personal Stories are Not Thematic Stories



Graeme Frost – Poster Child for SCHIP



Turned into a Category 5 Hurricane in the blogosphere

- Time Magazine, Oct 10, 2007. "the Swift-boating of Graeme Frost"

"Maybe Dad should drop his woodworking hobby and get a real job that offers health insurance rather than making people like me (also with 4 kids in a 600sf smaller house and tuition \$16,000 less per kid and no commercial property ownership) pay for it in my taxes."

-- blogger calling himself Icwhatudo

Immigration



economics



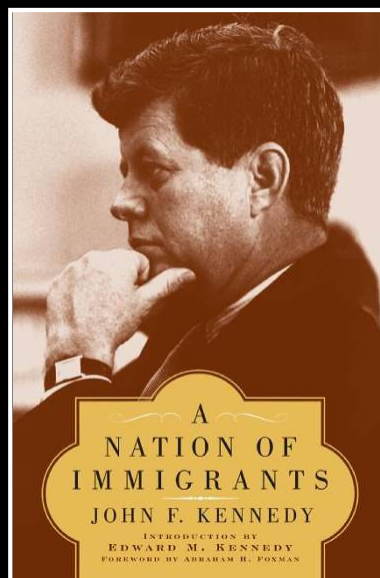
individuals





"Immigration reminds every American, old and new, that . . . American society is a process, not a conclusion. The immigrants we welcome today and tomorrow will carry on this tradition and help us to retain, reinvigorate, and strengthen the American spirit."

- John F. Kennedy



From Portraits to Landscapes

Personal stories are told more often and are easier to tell than stories that illustrate the systems and structures that perpetuate inequality. **Stories of individual change are at the core of our culture and they engage us. Stories of collective action are there as well but told less often.** With practice, advocates can identify the conditions they want to illustrate and better link those descriptions to the particular policy debate and values they hold.

- Larry Wallack



Privatization

“Those who favor water privatization argue that switching from publicly owned and operated utilities to private sector firms will lead to greater economic efficiency, stabilized rates, reduced public debt and improved budgetary management. **But** there is little evidence to support these claims. Privatization schemes throughout the country have a track record of skyrocketing prices, deteriorating service and a loss of local control.”

Public Good

“Each and every day we rely on our **public structures** to ensure that safe drinking water is here for our communities today and far into the future. This essential resource that we all depend on **must be managed and protected for the common good**. This is not an appropriate **public asset** for the private sector to control.”

No one is in favor of taxes for their own sake, **but** we can't expect government to do a good job unless it has the resources it needs to get the job done.

The real question is, **what public structures do we need to have in place in order to have the prosperity and quality of life we all desire?** Does that include transportation and communication systems? A legal system for resolving disputes? Agencies that watch over our food supply, air and water? And what level of funding do we need in order to create and maintain these structures?

tone matters



"Greedy developers have their sights set on a 50 acre parcel of land in the middle of Westwood. Unless government steps in, all we'll get there is more expensive housing and big box stores that exclude the poor and powerless in our community."

Our communities are strongest when economic development works for everyone. We need to use our public systems and structures to ensure that new development in Westwood benefits the entire community. It is time for an inclusive planning process to . . .

Frame Deconstruction Exercise

Our Stories Create the Possible

"We don't cultivate the future with shovels or software, the way we might tend other commons. Instead, **we cultivate the commons of the future through stories**. The future is, in fact, just a collection of stories that we tell each other. The more and the better stories we tell—and the more people we tell them to—the more we strengthen the commons of the future."

- Jeremy Adam Smith, *Don't Stop Thinking About Tomorrow Embracing the Future as a Commons*

Lessons from Social Movements

Framing – as a tool in social movements – refers to "the conscious, strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action."

- McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996

Lessons from the Civil Rights Movements



Frames

- Christian Values
- Democratic Ideals
- Charity, redemption & Non-Violence
- Compelling Messengers & Diverse supporters
- Tactical Innovations
- Public (shared) solutions



Outcomes

- Influenced media coverage
- Tapped into bedrock American Values
- Raised broad awareness and support
- Defused the opposition
- Called government to action for the common good

Frames and Social Movements



"I am about to sign into law the Civil Rights Act of 1964. I want to take this occasion to talk to you about **what that law means to every American**. Not black people. Not Southerners. Not even our nation. Every American. . .

. . . should we defeat every enemy, and should we double our wealth and conquer the stars, and still be unequal to this issue, then we will have failed as a people and as a nation . . .

Their cause must be our cause, too. **Because it is not just Negroes, but really it's all of us who must overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice.**"

"Party in Search of a Notion," by Michael Tomasky, American Prospect, May 2006.

“... A talent for speaking differently, rather than for arguing well, is the chief instrument of cultural change ...”

- Richard Rorty