

# Cognitive Politics

a Communications  
Workbook  
for Progressives

by Stephen  
Cataldo

Review  
new science and  
past successes  
of compassion  
dominating  
public  
discourse

Gandhi & King

Cognitive Science

Linguistic Framing

Abortion

Gay Marriage

American Exceptionalism

Economics of Contribution

Weave  
the science &  
successes into  
frames that will disarm  
the Republican land mines.

# Cognitive Politics

People -- including scientists with MRI machines -- have recently been discovering much more about why we believe what we believe, finding underlying differences between liberals and conservatives. Some studies <sup>[1]</sup> predict whether you'll be liberal or conservative based on your childhood fears & habits; others find that liberals can't even *taste* some of the moral values that conservatives taste. <sup>[2]</sup> Meanwhile linguists are telling Democrats they don't know how to frame their message, and when we look back at historical figures like King and Gandhi we see campaigns that were much more alive, and effective, than anything progressives do today.

There is much new theory on how progressives can win debates: this manual aims to take various scientific, activist and business *theories*, integrate them, and show at least one way to *apply* each to current issues. It's a workbook: edit your own copy, explore how you want to talk about these issues.

- Linguistic framing: George Lakoff
- Cognitive science and moral foundations: Jonathan Haidt and others
- Communications and compromise: Beyond Fire with Fire
- Historical successes: King and Gandhi
- Historical failures: Authoritarianism and Hate Politics

## Section I: Theory

Give an overview of new research on the differences between liberals and conservatives, then integrate historical politics.

After just a quick look at theory, we'll apply it to a variety of wedge issues that befuddle liberals today, issues that get liberals and conservatives talking past each other:

Other than gay marriage, these aren't *our* issues as liberals, rather the focus here is on the conservative wedge issues that cause liberals to fumble. The issues where liberals don't understand conservative mindsets. The manual aims to bridge the gap between the new scientific theories and practical politics. *{ needed* A key purpose is to prepare you for more productive, calm discussions around the watercooler at work or at the Thanksgiving table. Explore how to adjust both goals and communication techniques to the reality that good-hearted conservatives see the world very differently than good-hearted liberals.

## Section II: Practice On Key Wedge Issues

- Abortion
- Gay marriage
- American exceptionalism
- Economics of contribution

??

The dream of this book is to prepare ordinary progressives to have better, calmer, more effective conversations with conservatives & moderates: in some cases getting them to agree with our points, swinging some swing voters; often just creating space for both sides to focus more on fighting the corruption that thrives when politicians can get good people angry at each other.

Beyond political effectiveness, can we put heart back into political conversations: find ways to understand each other, find ways to disagree without wrecking friendships and family

connections? Political conversations are often deeply difficult. In yoga, in spiritual practices, or in relationships, the difficulties are often where we grow. Today, political conversations are just painful, not growth experiences. How do we change that?

*Which paragraph to cut? Footnotes where -- back cover?*

1. Overview: Differences in Conservative and Liberal Brains [<http://2012election.procon.org/view.resource.php?resourceID=004818>]
2. *The Righteous Mind* by Jonathan Haidt. New York Times review [<http://nyti.ms/Tkl16r>]

## **Acknowledgements (rough/early)**

- (who read the book in Thailand?)
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Conservatives often see a powerfully organized, nearly unstoppable left. What do they think we're doing, and can we start doing it?

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The wedge issues below each call for different techniques from those explored in the first section. Practice integrating theories and strategies to explore more effective goal-setting and framing.

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- **Strategic Overview**
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## Section I: Theory, History and Strategies



The first section explores a wide variety of new and old thinking and theory on how compassionate people can create a more compassionate politics. Many are new theories coming out of linguistics departments and cognitive science labs. Others are strategies and techniques that many of us have heard of, but that the Democratic Party<sup>[1]</sup> and most liberals today are not applying well.

*Need to figure out what interesting things to say here, not in table of contents.  
Does this go beginning or end, or not needed?*

### 1. **George Lakoff, Linguistics and Framing:**

We think in metaphors. Republicans speak in metaphors, drawing people to envision the government as a strict father, drawing people into a conservative mindset. Democrats speak in policy. There are two lessons from Lakoff: first is to learn the basics of communicating: get on-message, avoid talking in your opponent's framework even to contradict it, use stories instead of dry policy descriptions, repeat your key ideas. Second, Lakoff encourages progressives to get people thinking of government from a "nurturing parent" framework, while conservatives aim for a "strict father" model.

Much of the electorate is seeing people who do back-breaking labor as moochers, and some male politicians seem to suggest only one government response towards a woman who has been raped -- sending in the police to make sure she doesn't choose an abortion. Why are Americans afraid, distrusting of each other, looking for a strict father government to make other people behave?

### 2. **Cognitive Science and Moral Tastes:**

Other cognitive scientists have been putting liberals and conservatives into MRI machines, finding that we think using different parts of our brains, and that progressives are more trusting and excited by new ideas and experiences. Meanwhile surveys are showing that conservatives have "moral tastes" that liberals aren't even conscious of.

What ideas that sound perfectly reasonable to progressives trigger a negative "moral taste" that we can't even sense? If we pay attention, can we tune our message to avoid triggers and traps that aren't what we mean, but are what conservatives often hear?

### 3. **Progressive Core Skills -- Active Listening and Nonviolent Communication:**

Progressives often think we're better listeners, better communicators: we listen to both sides, conservatives just talk, right? Turns out this is just wrong. <sup>[2]</sup> There are plenty of ideas for making conversations calm and connected: what do we know in real life that we

forget to bring to politics?

#### 4. **History -- Gandhi, King and other Successes:**

Gandhi and King dealt with oppression hard for most white American liberals to even comprehend, and yet they peacefully and lovingly kicked butt. What is missing from our movements today? If Lakoff and the cognitive scientists are right, does that mean Gandhi and King intuited their work? Can we see it in action? Or did liberal successes rely on something else?

#### 5. **Basic Movement Building:**

Conservatives often see a powerfully organized, nearly unstoppable left.

Do we pick issues that let us build a movement?

1. This book is about two broad, overlapping, fuzzy groups that already have many labels. I cannot find a way to describe Democrats, liberals and progressives, nor Republicans and conservatives and libertarians, without using the labels in ways that upset or mildly confuse almost everyone at some point. I somewhat arbitrarily try to use the party-labels for the political bodies, and use liberal and conservative in complex ways: see the Appendix on "Word Choices."
2. get Haidt's survey about conservatives knowing more about liberals than the other way around.



## Chapter 1

### Lakoff's Linguistic Framing: Language, Logic and Metaphor

George Lakoff is a cognitive linguistics profesor at UC Berkeley<sup>[1]</sup> who has been shaking up the Democrat's efforts to communicate in recent years. His book *Don't Think of an Elephant*<sup>[2]</sup> gained fame critiquing the Democrats for merely saying "no" to one Republican initiative after another. Saying "no" merely reinforces thinking with the Republican metaphors: "no tax relief" and "tax relief" put us all within the conservative framework. Lakoff provides the theoretical foundations for a new way to communicate progressive ideals.

Many people aligned with the Democrats have been excited by his research but unsure how to apply it in conversations.<sup>[3]</sup>

Lakoff has two distinct layers to his message. First, like many others he is calling for more attention to general framing techniques: to use and repeat stories, reinforcing a metaphor that implies your point of view; to get your phrase to be what people talk about instead of just reacting with a "no" to your opponents story. This advice isn't new or unique, and would apply to either party or non-political debates as well. How could we possibly have created a national health care plan without a clear name, so it became known as Obamacare? As a group Democrats don't seem to like marketing, we'd rather talk policy even if it costs us elections.

Framing

Lakoff's unique addition is digging up the specific metaphors that underly conservative and liberal mindsets. Each type of politics, each view of the nation, is built on a different view of the family: strict father families vs nurturing parents. Maybe you can sell soap with any marketing campaign, but you can only advocate liberals ideals by reinforcing the overall liberal metaphor.

Strict Father

#### Introduction to Lakoff's Linguistics & Framing

Speak a Mindful Truth: General Framing Advice

Specific Advice for Politics: Strict Father or Nurturing Parent

Thoughts on Why the Democrats are Losing the Metaphor Battle

Cognitive Dissonance as Metaphors Overstep Moral Values

Bibliography. Skip this chapter and read Lakoff's own words?

#### There are two fundamental ideas to Lakoff's theories:

Section: 1:1

1. **We think using metaphors as the fundamental building blocks.** We don't live in a world dominated by facts and logic, but by metaphors that cascade from language choices. Studies

show that people are more tolerant of gay men than homosexuals, less angry at working parents hoping to get green cards than at illegals. Anytime you say a negative, like "I am not a crook," people's minds cascade through the affirmative version, reinforcing those neural pathways. #ftnnothere

2. **We usually think political thoughts using specific family metaphors, with one liberal and one conservative metaphor.** Most people think about politics using both metaphors at different times. The more you can use language from the liberal frame, the more people's thoughts will cascade to liberal conclusions. The metaphor of nurturing parents puts people in a liberal frame of mind; while evoking the protection of a strict father causes people to think conservatively.

Democrats win when we create, and repeat, stories with an underlying metaphor of nurturance. Evoke a strict father, even with the word "no" in front of your story, and Republicans win. <sup>[4]</sup>

## Bibliography

1:1.1

If this section inspires you to read Lakoff in his own words, here are some options:

- Don't Think of an Elephant is a long-time favorite, and The Little Blue Book a recent, very fast read.
- Lakoff's blogs on Huffington Post: <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/george-lakoff/>
- Sightline Daily "Crib Notes" on Lakoff: <http://daily.sightline.org/2012/08/09/crib-notes-for-lakoffs-latest/>

## Language and Real People: Speak a Mindful Truth

Section: 1:2



People supported acceptance for "gay men and lesbians" at a rate 15% higher than for "homosexuals."<sup>[5]</sup>

We tend to assume we live in a world of logical arguments: explain the reasons for and against an issue, then convince people who disagree to consciously change their perspective. But the language used often pre-disposes us to see an argument one way or another, even when it doesn't change any conscious perspectives. And anytime you argue against your opponent's view, you get people thinking in your opponent's way of thinking about the world: if you say "Don't Think of an Elephant," everyone will think of an elephant.#ftnnneeded If you oppose tax relief, you reinforce the idea that taxes are an affliction to be relieved rather than a way to hire teachers.#ftnnneeded

Metaphors are not about changing facts: you haven't confused anyone if you say "gay men and lesbians" instead of "homosexuals." The emotional state and series of thoughts that fire are

different based on the metaphors and linguistic details of the word choices.

Lakoff argues that every time you see the world with a certain metaphor, you reinforce and strengthen that way of thinking. So it might be important to say lesbians and gay men, over and over, rather than homosexual: you might be reinforcing whether swing-voters think of these people as people or merely as a sexual preference, over and over, developing habits of thought.

This is part of why Lakoff's suggestions are difficult: we're trying to expand the focus of politics to real human beings, while the best marketing campaigns seek to find a one or two word slogan. We'll probably never have slogans as short and effective as "illegals" or "tax relief." [SEE GLOSSARY: FRAMING STUMBLING BLOCKS.]

### People and Slogans

For Democrats, we recommend sincerity and transparency. Understand your values, speak them out loud, repeat them, use the facts honestly, and link facts and policies overtly to values. Do this over and over.

George Lakoff<sup>[6]</sup>

Do this not just as individuals, but together as a party.

## Example: Immigration Status

1:2.1

One of the most obvious examples of difficult framing is "illegals." In conservative framing, a hardworking, church-going, underpaid mom who crossed a national border hasn't committed a petty, minor, non-violent crime -- nor even committed a major crime. Instead, she has *become the crime*: it is her noun, rather than just something she has done or an adjective that describes her.

Often progressive framing comes down to making stories of real human beings more real: we like women and men, even if they have a few characteristics we don't appreciate. But describe the same person using that one characteristic as if it is their name, as if they are not a human being but a homosexual or an illegal, and we imagine we don't like them. Progressives need to stay focused on people and people's stories, careful of allowing people to be reduced to a single characteristic. Over and over.

If you travel to Thailand as a tourist and overstay your visa while goofing around, you do not become "an illegal," you likely pay a little fine with everyone smiling and are welcome to come back. The same crime here, done to protect your children rather than goofing around, is seen as a deep violation.

Conservatives frame people who cross the border illegally as:

---

Illegals.

---

Progressives should break the habit of referring to people as a single action they've taken. In a conversation, we might choose:

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Hard working people who don't have green cards and are taken advantage of by employers.

---

It would be helpful to come up with a very short phrase to represent these people that evoked a more positive metaphor. *Undocumented immigrants* is milder than *illegals*: does it evoke a human story in your mind? <sup>[7]</sup>

A challenge for progressives remains: it's easier to reduce a person to a slogan than to create a slogan that helps people think in complex ways. This is why the names that roll off the tongue are often conservative framings. In a few second soundbite, what frame can compete with "illegals" for brevity without reducing human beings to controversial actions? We need both key words, when we can find them, and discipline to say a phrase when we don't have a faster way to keep our subject human. *why-Lakoff-hard-to-implement*

Try This At Home

### Resist Overusing Soundbites at Home: Go For Stories

Liberal leaders have a history of ignoring soundbites and slogans. As we watch intelligent politicians with detailed policy prescriptions outmaneuvered in the fast-paced world of tv, there is pressure on liberals to frame, brand and fit our messages into soundbites. Politicians on tv have to speed up to fit their media: at home we should slow down. We want to drive many conversations into stories, use time to connect. Talk about real people.

## Examples of Democratic Framing Struggles

1:2.2

- Tax relief: taxes are a burden you should be relieved of. Lakoff recommends "Membership Fees." On April 15, will you think of taxes as a burden or a membership fee?<sup>[8]</sup>
- War on. War on terror, war on drugs. Would the corresponding progressive idea be harm reduction?
- The Democratic Party never came up for a term for abusive bankers. Anarchists in Occupy handed us "The 1%." Yet again, mainstream Democrats are missing from the framing effort.

Let's focus on Harm Reduction. Why doesn't Obama have a *Drug Harm-Reduction Campaign* to replace the *War on Drugs*? Harm reduction is an idea, but not repeated as a headline often enough to be a frame. It's not a term on the tip of everyone's tongue. If this was a good frame for Republicans, what would they do? They would repeat it now, they would repeat it next week, you would hear it from many voices, you would still be hearing it next year. Soon, you'd know the term, and be familiar with their definition.

Democrats are failing the framing war in large part because of a failure of our own values: we're

not cooperating with each other, we're not looking to the future.

Why did it take the Anarchists to frame the bankers? <sup>[9]</sup>

It goes beyond the scope of this book, but I consider the gentle, humanizing tactics of modern Democrats a sign of their party being cognitive-liberals, rather than economic-liberals or working class. The willingness to reduce opponents to slogans is common among conservatives and what we might call the fighting-left, a left that sees enemies and defines in-groups at least somewhat like cognitive-conservatives.

## Quick Tips & How-To Overview

1:2.3

- Always focus on your values.
- Tell your story repeatedly, from different angles.
- Don't start with your policy solutions, and don't argue against your opponent.
- Get out of their story, into yours.

## A Different Angle: Mindfulness

1:2.4

Lakoff's suggestions often remind me of simple meditation practices. What we are doing right now is often like a temper tantrum: *What are the Republicans doing now, who are they hating now, no no no no No No NoNoNo! Stop treating homosexuals like they are less than people, Stop endless wars, Stop blaming immigrants!*

They might deserve to be the object of our temper tantrum, but it isn't effective.

When you meditate, you might focus on each breath. Not "the breath," but your breath, each one, in and out, paying attention continuously. You make life real. Progressives often prefer logical arguments: we say "everyone needs to breathe!" Lakoff is challenging us to switch from "everyone needs to breathe," followed by a long discourse on why we need to breathe and how stupid Republicans are that they don't know this, to instead following and talking about each breath. I need this breath right now. And I feel gratitude for this next breath. And you need the breath you are taking now.

Lakoff's recommendation to talk about "forest, soil, air, water, or sky" [get exact quote][p42 of Little Blue Book] instead of "the environment" mirrors meditation advice.

Imagine this approach on health care. In politics, this means talking about real people, specific examples. And repeating the basic story over and over. Keep letting swing voters hear our values. If they desire to get into the nerdy details they can, but most people who aren't already progressive activists would consider that the job of the leaders: [SEE THE MIDDLE AND CONSERVATIVE VIEW ON LEADERSHIP](#). They don't expect to have to write a detailed report card on their leaders, rather they are looking for leaders they can trust. Conservatives look to leaders they can trust, and then they follow them with loyalty. <sup>[10]</sup>

## Exploration: Your Leadership Metaphor

1:2.5

How do you think of your ideal elected representatives?

- Do you see your elected representatives as people you grade on their work? You review their performance *ideally in detail*, approving of some things, disapproving of others. Possible metaphor: you are the teacher with a red pen, they are the student who gets your grade?
- Do you see your elected representatives as leaders? They lead, you follow, and under their leadership things go well or badly. You don't try to micromanage: in the end did they win or lose? You are electing them to lead: if they lose too often they are not fit to lead anymore.

Or do you have another metaphor for your elected representatives? In the next chapter, we'll be looking at the differences between liberals and conservatives. One of the big ones is how liberals and conservatives think about [authority](#).

## Strict Father vs Nurturing Parent: The metaphors under liberal and conservative thoughts

Section: 1:3

The above ideas on framing are relatively generic: no matter your issues or politics, or if you were marketing a product, frames count. We think about almost everything using metaphors. But Lakoff went farther than this -- farther than saying that we think in metaphors. He claims that liberal and conservative thoughts are built upon specific metaphors. Lakoff explores the odd collections of liberal and conservative thinking: what do Pro-Life, lower taxes, stronger military and men with short haircuts have to do with each other?

### Thinking in Metaphors

1:3.1

Linguists find that we often use very basic concepts to describe more complex ones: up is good, Heaven is above us, somehow that seems obvious to a human brain that it should be up, described with a direction term. We have a frame where "up" is a positive way of describing all kinds of concepts that have nothing to do with direction.

Our brains think using basic metaphors to understand more complex concepts: and we understand government and society using basic metaphors of the family.

### The Metaphors of Politics

1:3.2

Lakoff found that many of us have two frameworks that we often apply to human structures. Not surprisingly, we use the core experience of family to describe relative new-fangled concepts such as nation-states, and our ideas about leaders are built on a framework of how we see parenting.

At heart, the difference is very simple: we all think about our leaders using the metaphors of

parenthood. If you look up towards a *strict father* as the best possible parent in this scary world, you wind up thinking conservative thoughts. If your heart seeks a *nurturing parent*, you'll think liberal thoughts.

Suddenly the odd collection of liberal and conservative views make sense as sets. A strict father in a scary world demands accountability: if you get pregnant, if you can't afford health care for your children, if you have troubles getting a job, it is your requirement to deal with the consequences, no one is required to help you with your responsibilities. And a strict father prepares you for a scary world: you need to support the group, to be willing to join the army, to fit in (get a haircut). It's all about your responsibilities.

Correspondingly the nurturing parent wants us all to look out for each other, and learn to thrive in a beautiful, abundant world where all our needs can be met if we look after each other.

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### A Metaphor on Metaphors

Imagine that you build thoughts with metaphors. And you build conservative thoughts with bricks, liberal thoughts with wood. You can't argue "don't use bricks here" and get someone to think about your alternative. You have to build the whole house with your metaphor, preferably ignoring theirs.

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## Elections

1:3.3

Most people do not stick to one framework, but our minds jump back and forth between both strict and nurturing frameworks. There are two ways to influence politics:

- Short term, on one issue: Get people to think about your issue from the frame more beneficial to you.
- Long term, across issues: Get people to more often think in your frame.

Fortunately, according to Lakoff, these go together: getting people to use a frame in the short term is a good way to reinforce that frame for the long term.

## Evoking the Helpful Parent

1:3.4

- Fear evokes a need for a strong, strict father. Stay away from fear and anger.

## Progressives Still Lose the Metaphor Battle

Section: 1:4

Skip Ahead Point



We've covered the basics of Lakoff's ideas, and the Democratic leadership is familiar with them. Why aren't these ideas being implemented well? Sometimes the Democrats are just not framing



well, but often there are underlying challenges for compassionate people developing marketing campaigns.

Conservatives are constantly evoking a strict father world, evoking a need for protection in a rough and immoral world. They talk about war, "illegals" and other criminal activities that evoke a need for a strong, strict protector. They talk about guns and our need to defend ourselves. They talk about abortion as either women or men misbehave and then the woman does something unhealthy and wrong. It all adds up to: *You'll be in trouble when Dad gets home!*

Progressives often skip evoking a nurturing parent. On abortion, we often talk about a woman's rights in a rather abstracted way: while Pro-Life advocates claim abortion "*stops a beating heart*" -- I can picture that. While Pro-Choice advocates claim choice as an abstract right -- I have no sense of a story. Conservatives have a clear story; liberals have no story until some person is considering to make a particular choice. There is no progressive metaphor or story until the woman makes the choice of an abortion; we don't call ourselves Pro-Abortion but poor framing leaves that as our story. We use the Republican metaphors on war, immigration, tax cuts for the rich. Rights are not stories, rights are not the motivating reason for the right.<sup>[11]</sup>

Read More: [Reframing, Words to Reclaim](#) by George Lakoff.<sup>[12]</sup> []

## Reduction of Human Beings to Slogans

1:4.1

One of the challenges to progressive ideas, quite often, one of the reasons we often lose political battles when more than 51% of the people agree with us, is that our ideas are often more complicated. Conservative thought reduces a human being often to a problem. Progressive thought often aims to help us expand our view of an issue to see the real human beings involved. There is no easy solution: this is one of the reasons that Lakoff's theories on framing sound so good in the abstract and are so hard to implement.

It makes me wonder if Nonviolence practioners who have personal practices of mediation or prayer, and have had amazing successes politically, might be turning their inner-peace into their approach to metaphors.

## Fundamental Challenge: Liberals Prefer Ideas Over Marketing

1:4.2

Lakoff proposes that Democrats lose because they *like* ideas and spend too much time in the world of ideas, and too little time exploring how to frame and market those ideas: philosophy and literature majors tend liberal and tend away from marketing classes; business majors who took marketing tend conservative.#ftneeded

Lakoff's ideas expose some challenges for progressives. Core activist progressives often both enjoy and believe in discussing policy in detail: we don't like hearing the same ideas repeated, we don't like marketing, we don't like leaders that repeat slogans.



Increasing this challenge, a marketing approach can reduce humans to slogans. I think for liberals the best counter to this is to lead with a story. Provide policy notes and statistics, but always as footnotes after your nurture-evoking stories.

## Appendix

Section: 1:5

### Cognitive Dissonance: Metaphors Clash With Moral Values

1:5.1



Lakoff encourages us to have a set of very-progressive metaphors across a wide range of issues. His ideas are simultaneously very popular among Democrats, and rarely used.

How do *you* talk to someone who believes that life begins at conception? If we're going to defeat hate-based politics, we need to get better at deflating hate, not contradicting religious values. We can't tell a conservative to change their religious views, we need to find metaphors that let us have different religions and keep them out of politics.

For example, George Lakoff and Elisabeth Wehling encourage progressives to stop calling abortion "abortion" -- the metaphor that you are aborting a mission that you began on purpose -- and instead use "development prevention." <sup>[13]</sup> <sup>[14]</sup>

What do you think would happen if Obama refused to use the word *abortion*, and instead used *development prevention*?

Imagine a Catholic church-goer who gives to charity, volunteers at the food shelter, is against the death penalty, does not understand how Iraq fit the requirements of a just war, and would likely lean liberal except the abortion issue gives them pause. Would Obama calling the termination of a fertilized egg or fetus "development prevention" calm down religious moderates as they think about abortion using our metaphor? Or make liberals seem even stranger to conservatives than we seem now?

Cognitive psychology has not shown that people absorb frames through sheer repetition. On the contrary, information is retained when it fits into a person's greater understanding of the subject matter. -- Steven Pinker, challenging Lakoff's ideas.<sup>[15]</sup>

### Frames vs Information

1:5.2

How far we can go with Lakoff's ideas before they backfire.

Casualness about abortion violates a conservative sense of sanctity. This book will follow the abortion debate and, step by step, try to make more sense of it.

Reality has a liberal bias<sup>[16]</sup>, but simplification has a conservative bias.

### Evoking the Strict Father

1:5.3

How do you evoke the strict father metaphor? Lakoff has a straightforward answer: you use words that evoke the metaphor. You might be putting the word "no" in front or not, but you're talking: *we don't need a strong military to defend us against a non-existent threat* will still evoke the military and threats.

Expect to lose the framing fight!  
Just try not to lose so badly.

Are there other ways to evoke a strict father thought pattern?

Lakoff says we think using metaphors. So perhaps we evoke the strict father metaphor when we're thinking about a situation, even if no words are used. For example, when Iran took hostages, and President Carter was unable to bring the situation under control, did anyone have to say anything? Or would each of us have thoughts that sought a path to more power and control and security, evoking the strict father metaphor without a word used?

If this is the case, it turns some of Lakoff's theories back around. Many Americans lost faith in liberal idealism when we built a welfare system that damaged many communities' work ethic. Yes, a great communicator like Reagan can push metaphors a bit, but the underlying reality also generates metaphors. If we create more effective programs and take responsibility to fix them if they don't work, then no one will need to call in the strict father.

The second section of this book will use many of Lakoff's ideas on specific issues, and also point out times when other approaches are more powerful. Transforming American Exceptionalism will take much of Lakoff's framing techniques to define our story, while using these aggressive techniques on the abortion issue often backfires.

1. George Lakoff's UC Berkeley web page [[http://linguistics.berkeley.edu/people/person\\_detail.php?person=21](http://linguistics.berkeley.edu/people/person_detail.php?person=21)]
2. *ftnneeded* - basics on Don't Think of an Elephant
3. I'm one of the people excited by Lakoff's research: the search for practical ways to apply his ideas was the starting spark for this book.
4. I think there are at least three ways to evoke the *strict father* metaphor. Lakoff starts with two: either affirming or negating a strict-father metaphor with your word and story choices. The third way is by leaving people feeling out of control, in a way that they wish dad would show up and restore order. Flipping between Fox and MSNBC might leave you feeling like you wish someone would take charge and shut these people up: no matter what language choices they are making, the very process of squabbling is one way to evoke the strict father.
5. A Good Week for Science — and Insight into Politics [<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2010/02/21/839150/-A-Good-Week-for-Science-8212-and-Insight-into-Politics>] by George Lakoff, Feb 21, 2010.
6. George Lakoff, *The Little Blue Book*, p.38.
7. *Cardless Workers*, meaning those with no green card, is my current favorite term. The metaphor here has an obvious solution, give them a card, and points out that most of them are working. Perfection isn't as important as agreement and consistency: to have a short phrase that represents a longer conversation, to have Democrats

add layers and layers of story to "Cardless Workers" or whatever term we agree to until it does mean something. We've watched Republicans take blank terms like "Contract with America" and grow the term until everyone understands what it means and what values are behind it. Would you have bought this book with no title?

8. A positive alternative to "tax relief" is signage like *Your tolls help to build roads* near construction sites. Make it personal, tell a story people will understand.
9. Perhaps the most effective frame from the left in recent years is "The 1%," which reduces people to a slogan, just like "illegals" reduces people. It's unfortunately easier to rapidly frame simple ideas and reductions, and liberals are often trying to go in the opposite direction.
10. A lot of liberals act as if our leaders are our students, and we are busy grading them. I certainly feel some of this. This approach has some advantages, but it makes it difficult for liberal leaders to lead: they have no echo chamber, their ideas are not repeated.
11. Meaning to say tax cuts for the rich, I first typed tax reform for the rich. Good metaphors repeated get into our brains.
12. Reframing, Words to Reclaim [[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/george-lakoff/reframing-words-to-reclai\\_b\\_32389.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/george-lakoff/reframing-words-to-reclai_b_32389.html)] by George Lakoff
13. In England the medical profession uses Termination of pregnancy (TOP) [<http://www.patient.co.uk/doctor/termination-of-pregnancy>] . This is very different from Lakoff's suggestion: prevention is often a nice word, termination can easily carry negative connotations. Even so, abortion is still the widely used term outside of the medical profession.
14. The Sacredness of Life and Liberty [[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/george-lakoff/birth-control-framing\\_b\\_1675759.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/george-lakoff/birth-control-framing_b_1675759.html)] , George Lakoff and Elisabeth Wehling. 7/16/12
15. Block That Metaphor! [[http://pinker.wjh.harvard.edu/articles/media/2006\\_09\\_30\\_thenewrepublic.html](http://pinker.wjh.harvard.edu/articles/media/2006_09_30_thenewrepublic.html)] , Stephen Pinker. The New Republic Online, 2006-09-30.
16. Reality has a liberal bias? I'm positive that conservatives feel that reality has a conservative bias. And the sets of liberal and conservative ideas are vast and complex mixes, such that anyone can always cherry-pick and confirm that their preferred side is better. Nonetheless, when it comes to framing, I do think that cognitive-liberals often succeed best when the focus is on "reality" -- on individuals and real stories or on policy details, rather than reducing people to abstract slogans or marketing. So the longer point is: long policy debates and rich stories are where liberals often have an advantage, but we can't drop our guard and ignore the fight in slogans.

## Chapter 2

### Cognitive Science: On Fear, Moral Tastes and Social Capital



Cognitive scientists studying liberals and conservatives are finding deep differences, differences that go well beyond politics. There are traits that are already visible in childhood that predict our grown-up politics: future liberals are more excited by new experiences, and future conservatives more focused on safety and cleanliness. Conservative brains also seem to detect a wider range of values or "moral tastes" while liberals focus on just compassion and fairness: this means conservatives understand the liberal ethical "palette" while liberals badly misread the motivations of conservatives. ftnsurvey

What are the differences between Progressives and Conservatives?

Fear and Social Capital

Key Difference: Leadership and Authority

Key Difference: Support Your Group

Key Difference: Sanctity

Summary: Speak Your Truth to Their Moral Tastes

Weaving Lakoff's Metaphors with Haidt's Values

Appendix: Better, Worse Different

*Riana thinks this table of contents should all go.*

People's politics often come in strange sets. Why are all these superficially incongruous values held together as one conservative set: *Pro-Life, no guarantees on health care, a stronger military, lower taxes, and men with short haircuts*? If you're pro-life, why no health care? Pro-military, don't you have to tax for it?<sup>[1]</sup> Lakoff begins to provide an explanation: all these can be explained if you think about politics using a Strict Father metaphor, a government that demands you take responsibility for yourself and all your mistakes as you prepare yourself to deal with a threatening world. But that's not the end. When cognitive scientists study our minds, the set turns out to be bigger than just politics: the main conservative pattern also includes a desire to be clean -- *add footnote* -- and a preference for the familiar and safe -- *add footnote* --, traits that can be detected in childhood far before someone has political views. Meanwhile the progressives have a preference to be exposed to the new and a desire for change rather than clinging to safety: crazy haircuts, different languages and skin colors, or a desire to throw out the old economic and societal patterns and create more idealistic ones are all more *interesting* than *scary* to cognitive liberals. [SEE GLOSSARY: COGNITIVE SETS.](#)

Our politics seem to be just a sub-set of larger psychological phenomena, one that has little to do with our rational thoughts about today's issues: we range from risk-taking explorers to defensive, protective community builders.<sup>[2]</sup>

And these psychological differences seem to be driving our politics more and more: a generation ago working class people joined unions full of people with different mindsets who would vote their working-class interests together, not as focused on cultural conflict.<sup>[3][4]</sup>

In the US today, our politics seem to come from smell-tests rather than self-interest: picking politicians is more like going on a date -- do you feel chemistry? Who cares what that man thinks your tax bracket should pay: does his brain-type respond to mildly scary situations in kindergarten the same way yours did?

What are the fears, hopes and moral bases that differ between liberals and conservatives? How can liberals better communicate with other compassionate people who have different ways of seeing the world?

U.S. Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill said "All politics is local." There are times when the electorate is dominated by people paying attention to their local economic interests. In recent years we have been moving towards "All politics is smell-tests." We're no longer asking if politicians can help us, but how they feel to our intuitions. Would you go out for a drink with them?

### Two Cognitive Perspectives on Liberal and Conservative Differences

Researchers are finding two related patterns discernable showing underlying differences, deeper than politics, that lead to liberal and conservative worldviews.

## The Fear Pattern: Explorers and Protectors

Section: 2:1

### Liberals as Risk-Taking Explorers

2:1.1

Even as children, on average future liberals like to explore, meet and trust new people, try new things. Life is better when you shake things up. Liberal brains are tuned to notice hope and opportunities. We don't just take more risks -- we enjoy risks, it's fun to be far from home, in a land where you don't speak the language surrounded by people who don't

### Conservatives as Careful Protectors

2:1.2

Conservatives like a safe home: order, building communities where everyone knows and supports each other, especially the smallest community of the family, or perhaps a band of brothers in the military. Life is better when things and people are all in their places. Conservative brains are tuned to watch out for danger and find safety: it's a dangerous and

look like you.

dirty world out there, so look after the people  
in your immediate community, don't rock the  
boat, stay clean and don't break taboos.



## More Functional Together

2:1.3

It's easy to imagine a group of stone-age humans doing well to have both defensive and exploratory members in their community. If they encountered new neighbors, the explorers might be excited to meet and trade, and the defenders might review all the risks involved around the campfire.<sup>[5]</sup>

In America today, the cautious and the explorers are talking to each other less, we are dividing into separate religions, explorers moving to cities. Now we don't just disagree about the news, we watch different stations and get completely different news stories.

If ordinary people are not divided by greed or stupidity, but rather by two very different world-views that both make perfect sense from an evolutionary psychology perspective, what does that mean for politics? When we are neighbors watching the same news and talking to each other, we might discuss two views of politicians. But when we separate into groups each with its own news, the other group's views will sound alien.<sup>[6]</sup>

## Moral Foundations: Liberal and Conservative Core Values

Section: 2:2

Jonathan Haidt has been asking very detailed questions about what people care about, comparing liberals and conservatives, and finding still more patterns beyond explorers vs. protectors.<sup>[7]</sup> He's also been framing metaphors to help us make sense of these patterns: comparing our moral sense to taste-bud receptors. Just like there are only a few types of tastebud receptors -- salty, sour, sweet, bitter and umami -- most of have just a few major "tastes" for moral values.

If we see someone suffering, we desire to help. We get upset at unfair situations. This is true for nearly everyone. Just about everyone can taste these two values:<sup>[8]</sup>

1. Compassion and
2. Fairness

But there are more "moral tastebuds" than these, and we don't all have them all. Being conservative is correlated to having three more "moral tastes" that liberals hold less strongly or not all:

3. Leadership or authority.
4. Loyalty to your in-group.
5. Sanctity or sacredness, related to the root conservative desire for cleanliness.<sup>[9]</sup>

*this would be a good place for the chart of values vs political spectrum -- what are copyright issues?*

As a simple example, let's compare the Occupy movement and Republicans on leadership. At Occupy, liberals might respect a good leader, but in their *ideal* world, there would be no leaders, we would all equally be leaders. If Occupy members respect a leader, it is because she is doing a good job implementing compassionate and fair policies -- we don't see a natural order that requires leaders. Republicans, on the other hand, idealize having a strong, competent leader who knows how to take charge. They respect a good leader *as a core value*, separate from how that leader implements other moral goals. Conservatives are hoping for another Reagan; liberals are dreaming of making leaders obsolete.

## **Liberals Don't Understand Conservatives**

2:2.1

Perhaps the most striking discovery liberals should notice: when Haidt asked liberals and conservatives to fill out a questionnaire about their political values, then switch and say how the other side would answer, conservatives know what we're thinking and we don't have a clue about them. This is one of those moments when we need to stop: I and pretty much every liberal friend assumed that Fox-watching conservatives were completely clueless,<sup>[10]</sup> and that they didn't listen to us while we did listen to them. The science is in, by liberal or balanced scientists, and we are very wrong. We're like cooks that can taste sugar but not salt, trying to replicate a salty recipe. We don't understand what's going on in conservative minds. ftnsurvey - again!

The rest of this chapter will explore the underlying differences more deeply, and then touch on how these core differences that show up before first grade turn into much of our politics. If we pay attention to our false assumptions, we might be able to unwork the magic that gets middle America voting against its own interests.

### **Cognitive Politics**

**There are many definitions of liberal and conservative, each definition with imperfect overlap. For this book, we're adding another: the mental framework that *most* liberals use will be called a "cognitive liberal," and the same for conservatives.**

SEE GLOSSARY: COGNITIVE POLITICS.

**The rest of this chapter will delve into the differences researchers are finding between most liberals and most conservative; between cognitive-liberals and cognitive-conservatives. Towards the end we'll explore implications of Lakoff's advice, and the rest of the book will then look at history, and then examples, implementing these new theories in political conversations.**

## Components of a conservative mindset:

### Conservative Mindset: Caution<sup>[11]</sup> and Social Capital

Section: 2:3

Some of the differences take us right back to the definitions I learned as a child, that liberals wanted society to brazenly explore what is new and experiment wildly, and conservatives try to hold on to established traditions and experiment only slowly. Demographically kids who are less fearful and enjoy exploring are more likely to grow up to be liberal. Conservatives like order, cleanliness and the familiar. Make a swing voter afraid, or put them near something filthy, and their conservative thought patterns can be triggered -- making them more likely to shift to the right.

#### Caution and Fear

2:3.1

To use an extreme example, faced with the Depression liberal FDR reminded us that "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself." He called on us to trust in each other, and let go of fears: to let go of conservative mindsets and embrace trusting liberal perspectives.

Faced with the same Depression, Hitler set out to increase the fear as much as possible: Jews and others were conspiring against real Germans, there was plenty of reason to be afraid, the German in-group had to define itself, stick together, remove outsiders who were threats. And of course respect the authority protecting them from these threats.

There are also healthy conservative leaders, of course. Churchill is a good example of a militaristic, strict-father cognitive conservative. When his nation was actually under attack, the electorate craved his leadership style.

Early and provident fear is the mother of safety<sup>[12]</sup>  
-- Edmund Burke, often called the "father of modern English conservatism"<sup>[13]</sup>

In the world of real issues, we need to decide how much fear is appropriate: there may be times you want Churchill in charge. In the world of framing, perhaps even in the face of dangers such as global warming that are opposed more from the left than the right, fear nonetheless shifts people into conservative mindsets.

FDR was a nurturing parent, calming fears, building hope & focused on your strengths. Problematic politicians who want to be your strict father will focus on threats, otherness and *their* strength or your collective in-group's strength excluding and blaming outsiders.

#### Social Capital

2:3.2

On the other hand, here in the US liberals have been building feeble communities that are slightly more tolerant of outsiders while being weak at actually supporting their own members. If you want friends to help you move, do you want to live in San Francisco among the liberals who will wish you well, or be part of a church community where someone will show up with a truck?<sup>[14]</sup> *Are there any studies / comparisons / even just quotes?*



I purposely chose two very different examples: I don't think it's helpful to say that the explorers and the protectors, or the liberals and the conservatives, are better or worse than each other overall. But each has patterns of strengths and weaknesses. Liberals need to learn how to counter conservative fear-politics whenever it shows up, while also taking a hard look at our own patterned deficiencies.

### **What might this mean for politics?**

2:3.3

Let's look at the overlap between abundance, fear and compassion:

Liberal mindsets correlate to a feeling we live in an abundant world where problems can be solved, where we can take care of everyone

Conservatives mindsets correlate to seeing a more threatening world. Finding a way to get health care to every child will have an important cost, a real trade off with consequences: there is no free lunch.



Causation probably goes back and forth: if someone is afraid and in a defensive mindset, they will assume the world is a zero-sum game with scarcity; convince someone that there is enough to go around, and some of that fear can go away.<sup>[15]</sup> Both the worst right-wing disasters and the best progressive expansions of compassion have happened in times of scarcity based on whether people overcame or drowned in fear: the Depression led to the New Deal *and* the Nazis.

What happens if we assume that conservatives opposing government-provided pre-natal care are not lacking compassion, but rather are twitchy with fear? Our arguments would need to move from pounding the message that compassion is needed, and instead switch to engaging the fears that block their compassion.

### **Components of a conservative mindset:**

#### **Leadership and Authority**

Section: 2:4

#### **The moral taste buds that lead to a preference for strict fathers**

A key intrinsic value for conservatives, not shared by progressives, is respect for authority. #ftnleader For conservatives, some people having authority over others is not merely a necessary evil, but the natural order of the universe.

This "moral taste" described by Haidt, along with the greater fear in the larger world that conservatives tend to feel, clearly overlaps with Lakoff's work. Someone with the moral tastes of a conservative is more likely to turn to an authority-figure strict-father to be their leader.

Conservatives tend to look to leaders. They want to trust their leaders in an overall, summarized way: find someone

What gave Saddam Hussein or

trustworthy to lead and then trust them, follow them. Leaders are with us or against us. If a leader is good enough, then you can work with them even if you disagree on a single issue, or forgive them for an occasional moral lapse. Good people believe in what is right, but occasionally lapse or sin, and can be forgiven. If a leader is good enough, if they have a true sense of the sacred, the in-group community of followers should line up behind them.

bin Laden authority in their sphere? Rather than solidify their fear-claim to leadership and loosening their power with bombs, could we have directly targeted their claim to leadership with a new frame?

Progressives tend to look to ideals. We judge leaders perpetually: many of us have long lists of the things Obama has done that we agree with and long lists we disagree with. It's his job to get behind us: "if the people lead, the leaders will follow." To a conservative, the people would lead only when the leaders failed. But to a liberal this isn't about failed leadership, instead the *ideal* leader does a lot of listening and following the general will. At Occupy gatherings, people didn't want another MLK or Gandhi, we wanted to do it ourselves this time.

### **=> Practical Example: Ineffectiveness of the Hypocrisy Message**

To a conservative, a strong moral compass is an absolute requirement to lead. You must know what is right and what is wrong. Knowing and saying the right thing about family values is a requirement, even if once or twice you sinned against those values. It's more important that leaders understand what is right than that they perfectly, sinlessly maintain it.

This is one of the reasons that the religious right is full of people who talk all day about values, especially sex-related values, then do particularly nasty versions of what they preach against, then are forgiven. Liberals need to understand that people who speak a conservative truth but have failings -- a divorced man who talks about family values and the need to stick it out in marriage -- will not necessarily be seen as a hypocrite but merely as a mortal. Battering a hypocrisy message doesn't always work as well as we would like.

If we want to reach more cognitively-conservative voters, pointing out hypocrisy on the other side might be part of the campaign, but what they are really looking for is the annunciation of clear values worth following. They are looking for leaders who know the path and can point it out, not students who will be graded on how well they walk that path.

## **Components of a conservative mindset:**

### **Community Loyalty**

**Section: 2:5**

Loyalty to your community is a very complex moral taste. It's at the root of racism, and at the root of conservatives donating more to charity and to their communities than liberals do. Liberals have a lot to learn, and a lot to worry about.

Conservative thought patterns see a rough world out there. Look after your family and your immediate community -- your church, your squad -- put them first and trust them to put you first.

Community Loyalty pairs well with Leadership: there is a natural order to life, and we should discipline ourselves to follow it.

In politics, conservatives are often more concerned with figuring out who's on their side, and less about policy.

"Either you're with us or against us" sounds childish and scary to logical, liberal ears -- there is so often a place and need for neutral mediators -- but the conservative mindset

seems to draw in- and out- groups strongly and focus on them. When Bush used that language, his frame pulls moderates into thinking like conservatives for a moment, just to process the phrase.

I'm not a member of any  
*organized* party. I am a Democrat  
-- Will Rogers<sup>[16]</sup>

### =>Example: Grouping Tactics

Liberals will often face an unfair conundrum: we're going to be accused of not being patriotic, it's an often effective tactic by conservative politicians. The accusation is unworthy of answer but no one is keeping score for us, so we have to deal with unworthy accusations and find an answer anyway. Meanwhile the reverse tactic is not likely to rally our base: Republicans are dividing Americans into us-and-them, solidifying their in-group loyalty to their party. More division is not a counter-tactic.

Our best hopes are to create cognitive dissonance when they step too far: what can you say to a moderate that will have them feel like "with us or against us" is crazy? And, what can you do to break down the barriers between groups. Some of the most powerful "tactics" do not "win an argument" on the spot and so are underemphasized: active listening techniques so ordinary people feel heard by liberals, to keep the volume down whenever possible, to ask questions that come at issues from different angles not easily divided into left and right.

### => Countering Hate Politics Example: Define Normal

Humans at our worst are cowards. As a child first learning about Nazi Germany, I imagined a land completely full of hate, but the researchers have consistently found that thriving evil does not look quite like it does in fiction or imagination. Apathy and cowardice, not burning hatred, was the typical person's sufficient contribution to the Holocaust. The conservative-mindset aims for the middle of a community. The prototypical authoritarian-minded German was looking to dislike Jews as much as their Aryan neighbor did, not more, not less.

This means that marketing has a huge impact: the Nazi propaganda machine made hatred normal through repetition. In the other direction, it's taken relatively few gay characters and celebrities coming out to make homosexuality vastly more normal than it was twenty years ago, and a losing fight for conservative politicians trying to mobilize against gay rights including the repeal of DOMA.

If we stay in community with  
authoritarian-minded people, not  
forming separate groups even as  
we voice our full opinions, we

Defining "normal," and defining ourselves and programs as normal, is very important for the fifty-first percent of the electorate. People want to belong. If belonging means being racist, many will be racist; if it means not being racist, they'll tend towards stopping. In politics, we must raise our voices without separating from people who hold abhorrant views, repeating in many ways: *we* are in the same boat, *we* are on the same team, and that team does not accept racism, sexism or phobias.

can define a tolerable middle.

### ***Intuitive Integration of Community-Binding Moral Foundations***

*People who are afraid crave structured communities: we need to circle the wagons, rely on our team and respect our strong, strict leaders. The same demographic often has another set of ideas built on the idea of cleanliness, leading to a sense of sacredness and taboos. Sticking together, following authority and respecting the natural order keeps you out of trouble in a dangerous world.*

## **Key Difference: Sanctity and Cleanliness**

**Section: 2:6**

Cognitive science has found that first graders who are more fearful and more focused on cleanliness are likely to become conservatives. This is a young field with many unanswered questions, but I find it intuitive that fear underlies with a desire for a tight community and for order, with Haidt's *authority* and *in-group* values and Lakoff's *strict father* metaphors. But cleanliness seems more connected to sanctity.

How could a focus on soap possibly lead to conservative politics? Try this thought experiment: Are you a visual thinker? Wikipedia states "Visual thinking is the phenomenon of thinking through visual processing."<sup>[17]</sup>

Humans have an innate sense of disgust, and just as a visual thinker will use the part of the brain developed for vision to think about something they are not actually seeing, we can use the part of the brain developed to avoid disgusting things to think. Typically conservatives do this more often, or thinking using this part of the brain helps lead to more conservative perspectives.

If referencing something filthy, or even just putting soap nearby finneeded, influences swing voters to be more conservative, that would seem to indicate that they are thinking politics with the same part of the brain used to think about dirt and cleanliness. We use different parts of our brain to think about political issues: for liberals, compassion and empathy rule. Conservative brains are often thinking about politics with the same part of their brains that would fire for anyone if they found dog poo in their shoe.

**Practical:**

Let's look at abortion from this new lens. Imagine for a moment that abortion makes you react -- fires the same neural pattern -- as if a dog had pooped in your shoe. Your lip curls. You are disgusted.

Conservatives can listen, and mildly agree with, the whole idea that women should have the option of choice, without that impacting this strong, visceral reaction chain. What liberals say about abortion simply isn't what *feels* important. No logic -- and no simple linguistics reframing -- can overcome a visceral response.

**The lesson for liberals.** Don't make conservatives or swing voters feel like they want to wash their hands. The "Pro-Life" political machine is mostly not about reducing the number of abortions, nor consciously about taking away women's rights <sup>[18]</sup>, but about finding leaders and a government in tune with their sense of sanctity. *If you want to reach across the partisan divide to people who are intuitively against abortion, arguments or a willingness to compromise on the policy are not good tools against intuition.* Instead, you spend time making clear that you see what they are talking about -- you don't have to fully agree, nor agree at all on policy. This might be what Difficult Conversations calls an 'AND' conversation: I see why you care *AND* I believe empowering women is the right path. <sup>[19]</sup> Get good enough at describing their views so that there isn't a place for an unending argument anymore. Reach the point where you can say "I hear you" and move on -- perhaps to issues where you agree, or to fighting corrupt politics, instead of being stuck where you will never agree.

Abortion is perhaps the biggest Republican landmine that gets people who have a partly conservative brain-structure but are also very compassionate to stop listening to liberals. More on abortion politics in Section II, Chapter 1.

## Practical: Goals

2:6.1

There are issues where it will be very difficult to change people's minds when they see a violation of the sacred. It's important to carefully consider *goals* in these cases. We all tend to enjoy winning debates. But, we aren't setting policy around the Thanksgiving table or the watercooler. Very often, moneyed-interests will try to focus good people on the most contentious issues to pull our attention away from corruption issues. We need sane politics, we don't need complete agreement at dinnertime. When you hit a subject where the other person will never change their mind, scoring points is not a helpful goal: just talk about something more fruitful.

## Summary: Speak Your Truth to Their Moral Tastes

Section: 2:7

*connect this section to Language and Real People: Speak a Mindful Truth in chapter 1*



You may reach the same policy end-goals through different moral values than you hold.

"When I'm honest with myself, I'm not comfortable with gay people ... but it's not my job to judge."

This quote comes from a powerful video describing a political campaign to support gay marriage, well worth watching: [Webinar: How to Move a Conflicted Loved One to Support LGBT Dignity](http://vimeo.com/51161395) [<http://vimeo.com/51161395>] .

This quote doesn't describe the "moral flavors" that I taste. This is a person who hasn't let go of the idea that homosexuals breach sanctity and deserve to be judged. They live in a world where they believe in authority, and people claiming authority are encouraging them to blame others. Yet, they're voting for a policy on the cutting-edge of the progressive agenda.

We can get along much more easily, and save American politics, if we can help conservative-minded people recalibrate their respect for authority away from people who seek to manipulate them. We have to be extremely careful to listen carefully, understand where people are coming from, and to open communications.

Once a person has stopped expending their energy judging, how long until they can actually see the happiness in the smiling faces of new couples, and let go of any intolerance? We don't have to walk people through every step, just help them past their triggers.

Lakoff's linguistics took us from saying "Homosexual's Aren't Bad" to reframing that "gay men and lesbian women have the same rights" -- and repeating the stories of good people who loved the same gender over and over. Haidt's moral values added a twist to this campaign: "you can feel what you feel, but is it your job to judge?" Haidt is guiding us over the landmine that previously prevented Lakoff's metaphors from working: once someone decides that homosexuality is wrong but it's not their job to judge, they can look at news articles about gay couples getting married -- they can absorb the new frame, the repeated stories -- and the work suggested by Lakoff can slowly grow roots.

Liberals tend to believe in acceptance where conservatives believe, fundamentally, in authority. Maybe more supportive childhoods will reduce this. But in the medium term, in this generation, we have to start where people are, figuring out which steps trigger them, and finding steps that are the beginning of change. Starting with conversations that respect their current deeper values.



How can we follow Lakoff's advice about metaphors, without triggering the deeply held values described by Haidt?

## Weaving Lakoff's Metaphors with Haidt's Values

Section: 2:8

Haidt says:

"Conservatives and many moderates are opposed to gay marriage in part due to moral intuitions related to ingroup, authority, and purity, and these concerns should be addressed, rather than dismissed contemptuously." *[find the source]*

Lakoff instructs:

Create metaphors that cascade thoughts only through the progressive, nurturing mindset *[get a quote]*. In other words, ignore and dismiss the moral intuitions of conservatives while sticking to your own story. and many moderates.

Lakoff and Haidt are looking at much the same data, but coming to opposite practical conclusions: they encourage contradictory approaches whether for Democratic speechwriters or the Thanksgiving table discussions. Do you create your own metaphors, or address theirs?

How much can you frame a world where compassion and fairness are emphasized, where they cross in-group boundaries fluidly, without triggering the conservative world-view? Lakoff wants to grab the metaphor by the horns and overpower it: we can stop calling abortion "abortion" and instead call it "stopping development" *check details*. Haidt's research indicates that conservatives having a stronger sense of sanctity around a fetus is a core value, not something you can easily metaphor away.

**We've reached the central contradiction, the reason for this manual, that scientists exploring conservative and liberal mindsets are reaching almost the same scientific consensus with diametrically opposed speechwriter-recommendations.**

Increasingly this book will turn to conjecture: we're leaving the realm where theories have been tested, and exploring the next set of conjectures and hypotheses jumping beyond those results. Often there won't be solid, scientific answers, rather useful materials for your to explore and find what works for you. Run your own experiments, try the different techniques, see what works.

### Traps and Triggers

The remaining chapters in Section I will explore older tactics: active listening, Nonviolent Communication, historical successes. Did King and Gandhi ignored conservative metaphors and create their own, or did

2:8.1

- Lakoff says it's simple: we need to get out of conservative metaphors and mindsets and stick to our own.
- Haidt says it's simple: we need to listen better and address conservative concerns expressed in their metaphors.

**This book aims to give progressives their voices back, in a way that will be heard, while also knowing what triggers good-hearted conservatives to stop trusting us.** We neither want to use their metaphors, nor metaphors so alien that we will just trigger them.

SEE GLOSSARY: LANDMINES AND TRIGGERS.

they engage conservative moral foundations? **Index: Say your values or answer theirs.** Hopefully these will help unknot some contradictions between Lakoff's metaphors and Haidt's values.

The second section of the book will put these ideas to the test with specific issues. Feel free to jump chapters, the order from here on matters less. We're moving from theory towards techniques.

### Technique Suggestion

- Use Lakoff's advice to frame your message when there is no conflict. For example, sharing a story about happy gay parents without mentioning a political fight at the same time.
- If political conflict is brewing, switch to Haidt's approach, and spend more time listening.

*When* do we create new metaphors that focus on progressive values, and when do we listen to our opponent's values? This will be an art that builds on cognitive science, without a single answer. There will

be issues where we might repeat and repeat and repeat our story while mocking a rigid Republican worldview: for example when Romney whose job consisted significantly of outsourcing jobs tells farmworkers and substitute teachers that they are not "contributors," we might mock and repeat. And there will be other issues where ordinary people have deeply held values, and our main role may be to listen and listen again until they are and feel heard, even if we will never agree.

### What has worked in recent history?

2:8.2

This quote comes from a powerful video describing a political campaign to support gay marriage, well worth watching: **Webinar: How to Move a Conflicted Loved One to Support LGBT Dignity** [<http://vimeo.com/51161395>]

from Seattle's successful campaign to allow Gay Marriage in 2012

The video listed above [<http://vimeo.com/51161395>], from Seattle's successful campaign to allow Gay Marriage in 2012, shows a good balance of the techniques: we repeat our story [Lakoff's advice] in non-political settings, getting the idea that gay men and lesbians are regular, *in-group* people, both through media exposure and through many individuals coming out of the closet. We tell our story on its own often, but we don't dismiss conservative values when we are



talking with conservatives: instead we listen, find out where their values are coming from, and seek answers that pull them closer to their hearts and farther from the Republican playbook.

**Is it more effective to create your own metaphors, or address theirs?**

- Lakoff's advice: Repeat your metaphor. When? Tell your story with clarity far from politics, when people don't have an opinion yet, or in a debate.
- Haidt's advice: Listen with respect. When? Talking with an individual who has a different opinion or perspective than you do.

**Quick Guide**

Theories on communications and history both vary: sometimes it seems you should be a kind and gentle listener; other advice tells you to ignore their message while shouting your message repeatedly. There is no single answer: try both, which works better for you, and when?

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**Chapter Appendix**

**Section: 2:9**

**Section: 2:10**

**Exercise for Progressives:**

**2:10.1**

First think of an economic issue where liberals and conservatives disagree, and imagine a typical conservative's thoughts. Now note that on average, conservatives give more to charity and to their communities than liberals do. Does your perspective of why conservatives think what they think fit the data, or are there contradictions to untangle?

*combine next two sections*

**Refinements and Suggestions for Future Research** *needs work*

**2:10.2**

**Reversing the Perspective**

News articles on these subjects often seem to say "liberals are like this, conservatives are like that." But another perspective is to see sets of behaviors larger than politics, sets of behaviors that should have a name but perhaps don't. Names I like are Protectors, Explorers and Wagon-Circlers. If being liberal means having a set or pattern of views regarding politics

Example: Imagine if we really cared about which hand you used in classrooms. Then we noticed correlations between people who wrote and use scissors with their left in class, and hitting a volleyball with their left hand. At this stage all scientists have is a correlation, but there is good reason to be suspicious that which hand they use in class is not the larger set. Similarly, if we have a checklist of liberal values that relate to politics, that often come as a set, it seems odd to think it isn't a larger set, and we've merely noticed the political set and ignored the non-politics. Odd to think that "related to politics" rather than explorer or empathic is the core value. Liberal and conservative are perhaps words that should be superceded, maybe I am empathic, defensive

or a risk-taker in most of my life, including politics.

## 1) Just Two Groups?

Grouping people into just two camps is very relevant at election time. But likely entire groups are bunched inside those larger sets. Obviously many individuals don't fit, but perhaps entire groups don't fit, and merely have their data overwhelmed by the larger groups.

There are already efforts to explore libertarian values, which are likely to be very different from social conservatives, even if they were lumped together in early research. And research into authoritarians indicates two separate patterns, leaders and followers, with very different belief systems.<sup>[20]</sup>

- religious
- social
- fiscal
- libertarian
- neo-con
- ???

Many people are likely to find themselves matching only parts of the pattern. For example, as kids liberals are supposed to be: "more curious, verbal, and self-reliant, assertive and aggressive, less obedient and neat."<sup>[21]</sup>

Let's break this down further: what if you're not assertive or aggressive and were generally obedient or "cooperative." Does a curious cooperative introvert become a different kind of liberal than an curious assertive extrovert? You might find big sub-groups of gentle compassionate curious, but not so assertive or aggressive, who push the liberals towards compassion; and perhaps the Hollywood-liberal who is more assertive, wild, rule-breaking, anti-authority. Assuming that both liberals and conservatives smoke, I'd bet that the smokers correspond to this libertine or Hollywood rule-breaking liberal, and non-smokers on the curious, compassionate, intellectual side. The research isn't done, and it may be very difficult to ever define the groups -- just because the research isn't done yet doesn't mean the sub-groups don't exist. In the years ahead, we may see a convergence of cognitive science studies of politics, and commercial marketing approaches.

## 2) Tactics

If being fearful is at the root of racism, what do you do when people in your in-group are discriminating against others? Do you ostracize and attack them? Or find a way to give them more hugs and support to get over their fears, and the racist attitudes will soften as the fear under their anger under their racism loosens? How do you choose the right tactic at the right time?

## 3) Metaphors Breakpoint

If you use a metaphor that seems sufficiently crazy, you will define yourself as an outsider rather than reframe a debate. Future research built on both Moral Foundations Theory and Lakoff's view of metaphors could explore the break-point: how much can your metaphor move someone from their initial starting point without triggering a counter-reaction? Can you push different

values more or less without triggering a reaction?

#### 4)Addressing Deep Roots and Causes

If we help kids grow up with more confident, would they be open to everyone, not just their in-group? Is early childhood fear a cause of conservative viewpoints, or just a correlation, with something deeper causing both fear and conservative viewpoints?

Haidt argues that conservatives and liberals are not better or worse than each other. But within each group, it's clear that both liberal and conservative values can go bad. Perhaps we can help children who are too afraid to explore and less curious than average to be more curious and less fearful without altering their fundamental makeup as conservatives -- we don't really know yet. If you take the fear out of a future-conservative child, do they become an agnostic liberal, or a less fearful conservative who still goes to church every week, or are you only altering a symptom of something deeper?

#### Further Readings

Section: 2:11

*Political Conservatism as Motivated Social Cognition* John T. Jost, Jack Glaser, Arie W. Kruglanski, and Frank J. Sulloway. *Psychological Bulletin*, 2003, Vol. 129, No. 3, 339–375  
[Download here](#). This academic paper reviews many of the studies of liberal and conservative cognition. I particularly recommend looking at Figure 1: "An integrative model of political conservatism as motivated social cognition."

1. Conjecture: I think there is a very common pattern when two parties are dominant. One relatively represents the interests of the powerful, the other of the mass of people. How does the party that represents the smaller number of voters build a majority? They naturally aim to attract people who are attracted to the power and authority that they have. Cognitive conservatives are not naturally in favor of lower government requirements compared to liberals: they are likely to support a draft, likely to respect the government demand, by nature. However, the natural political alliance between those with power and money -- who want lower taxes -- and cognitive conservatives who support the status quo and stability leads these values to be merged into one set.
2. It's important to realize that the names we assign are people's interpretations of underlying data, trying to group and make sense of different studies.
3. For some historical income and voting patterns, see: Gelman, Andrew, Lane Kenworthy, and Yu-Sung Su. "Income Inequality and Partisan Voting in the United States." *Social Science Quarterly*, Volume 91, Number 5, (2010): 1203-1219 Available online at [www.stat.columbia.edu/~gelman/research/published/ssqfinal.pdf](http://www.stat.columbia.edu/~gelman/research/published/ssqfinal.pdf)
4. There seems to be a widely held assumption that people are voting more based on their moral senses and less on their economic interest than in the past. It is hard to be objective, to tease out details from statistics. Civil Rights or Vietnam may easily have dominated elections for a while. Are today's social or "moral foundations" issues less important than those? Perhaps those social issues inspired and inflamed liberals, but now liberals would like the elections to be about economics? For this book, the long term trends don't matter as much as seeking steps to make our current politics a little saner and more compassionate.

5. Based on Haidt, but I need a better footnote here. #ftneeded
6. Unfortunately, in a world where power can do a great job looking after its own interests, if good people are divided based on fundamental differences we already had as five year olds, there is little to constrain power.
7. The Righteous Mind by Jonathan Haidt. #ftneeded details  
 Three good sources to get started: The New York Times book review [[http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/25/books/review/the-righteous-mind-by-jonathan-haidt.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/25/books/review/the-righteous-mind-by-jonathan-haidt.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0)] is a good introduction, or read this detailed review especially if you are a skeptic [<http://newbooksinbrief.com/2012/04/02/a-summary-of-the-righteous-mind-why-good-people-are-divided-by-politics-and-religion-by-jonathan-haidt/>] . Or watch his TED talk online. [[http://www.ted.com/talks/jonathan\\_haidt\\_on\\_the\\_moral\\_mind.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/jonathan_haidt_on_the_moral_mind.html)]
8. Sometimes liberty is also included as a shared moral value. Moral tastes are efforts to define and put labels on sets of values, so there will be no final answer.
9. The moral foundation of *sanctity* or *sacredness* has been the hardest to name. We're trying to name a set of values related to smell-tests, related to taboos. Ask a liberal if they think nature is sacred and you're very likely to get an affirmative answer. The set of values we're looking at is a subset of the English word for sanctity, something like those values whose violation would make you want to wash your hands. If you clearcut an ancient forest, as a liberal I might want to cry at the violation of the sacred, but not feel like I have to wash my hands. Another differentiation might be whether there is a direct destruction going on, or a more abstract violation of taboos: for a liberal, an ancient forest is itself beautiful and has sanctity -- destroying it destroys the sanctity it has directly. Compare this to taboos: to a liberal sense of sanctity, invading a country or ruining its environment directly violates its sanctity; to a conservative brain, abstract actions like burning a flag or perhaps insulting the President break taboos and also violate sanctity.
10. Yes, there have been multiple surveys finding that Fox viewers are lost on basic facts, for example Fox viewers were "18 percentage points less likely to know that Egyptians overthrew their government than those who watch no news at all" in [http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2011/11/22/fox\\_news\\_leaves\\_viewers\\_ignorant.html](http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2011/11/22/fox_news_leaves_viewers_ignorant.html) Facts aside, conservatives are much better at understanding how we think and what our values are; liberals tend to have a mocking view of conservatives. We understand facts, they understand motivations.
11. There seem to be real differences between liberals and conservatives as demographics, but it is very hard to be unbiased. The same survey results could be called caution or fear, revealing more about the speaker than the demographic.
12. The Project Gutenberg EBook of The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke, Vol. VII. (of 12) [[http://www.gutenberg.org/files/16292/16292-h/16292-h.htm#Page\\_39](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/16292/16292-h/16292-h.htm#Page_39)] . Speech on the Petition of the Unitarians
13. Wikipedia lists various sources for the common attribution that Edmund Burke is the "father of modern English conservatism." [[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edmund\\_Burke#cite\\_note-Dehsen1999-133](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edmund_Burke#cite_note-Dehsen1999-133)]
14. I don't know of any studies comparing liberals and conservatives tendencies to show up for each other. At least within my community, few people challenge me when I ask them to imagine moving day if they were part of a conservative church vs living in the liberal Bay Area without a church affiliation. Economic studies indicate that church-members give much more money to the combination of charity plus their own church community. This effect is much more about either religion or church-attendance than politics, but I think it could be argued that the overall liberalizing changes are fracturing communities: rapid changes breaking apart traditions is at the core of what conservatives fear. I don't think being stuck in the past is even possible. But how do we all

rebuild strong communities?

15. Liberalism, lack of fear and a feeling of abundance are all correlated, but to my knowledge studies have not been done about causation.
16. Will Rogers, Ambassador of Good Will, Prince of Wit and Wisdom (1935) by P. J. O'Brien -- according to [wikiquote \[http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Will\\_Rogers\]](http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Will_Rogers)
17. [Wikipedia entry on Visual Thinking. \[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visual\\_thinking\]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visual_thinking) Or do you think using the part of your brain that processes language? Various people try to solve problems unrelated to looking or words using the visual or language brain-centers.
18. #ftnwomen Women's rights just don't count for much when someone is using a conservative mindset thinking about abortion with the same part of their brain as if they stepped in dog poop. Countless Pro-Lifers have never even considered how long they want to put a woman in jail for if their laws pass -- yes, they will start imprisoning women if they win just a couple more elections and Supreme Court seats, no they can't be bothered to think about that before they throw women in jail. This is a liberal way of seeing the issue, as well as true, and a *good approach* to mobilizing anyone who *can* see this argument. But the people who don't see women while reacting viscerally won't recognize themselves as fighting a war on women, so accusations that are obviously true to you won't stick for them.
19. Difficult Conversations
20. And research into authoritarians indicates two separate patterns, leaders and followers, with very different belief systems.
21. p280 (of what!)

## Chapter 3

### Options Beyond *Fire with Fire* and *Give In*:

#### Active Listening and Nonviolent Communications



US progressives have struggled to engage with aggressive tactics in recent years. We've switch unhappily between both the obvious choices: jump in and argue with raised voices and power politics, or cave in and get bullied. It's not cutting-edge like Lakoff or the new cognitive science studies, but there are basic communications techniques that can help.

Politial conversations at the Thanksgiving table are notorious for being simply bad conversations.

Conservative ideals thrive in a scary world: if we can't get along, if we have arguments where neither side listens, if we divide into groups, then politics will shift towards fear. If your Thanksgiving dinner turns into an argument that all on its own evokes a need for a strict father to maintain order, then trust, hope and compassion have lost. If we want to convince and inspire, we need to live our values: to be active listeners even when we disagree, modeling anti-fundamentalist behaviors where we continue to respect people we disagree with, waiting for logic, patience or compassion to work rather than bluster. <sup>[1]</sup>

You often grow from difficult challenges. For many, talking politics has not been one of those *worthwhile* challenges, just a drain. Can that change?

- Active Listening
- Compromise
- Nonviolent Communications
  - Connection First, Strategies Last
  - Needs, Feelings and Triggers: An end to strategies at Thanksgiving
  - Don't Say No: "Say the need that keeps you from seeing yes"
  - Liberals love to argue policy and strategy: explore underlying needs

Two keys:  
Leaders kick ass, but members of a community don't.  
Chaos evokes a need for a strict father.



In Active Listening, you wait to make your points until after you have fully heard, repeated back, and perhaps asked some honest questions aiming to understand their point of view.

Conservative politics thrives in a world of fear and argument, when people are put on the defensive, when they might evoke a strong father figure to protect them. Progressives believe in a world of compassion and hope. Do you practice compassion and hope when you converse with Republicans? Maybe you don't agree with a thing they say -- do you listen attentively and let them know you've heard them?

Without the cultural civil war, conservatives cannot win -- George Lakoff ftnelep: { p88 of Elephant, Lakoff. } Turn the civil war into civil discussions, and we win.

This is very basic advice for any difficult conversation. I might tell a nephew to count to 10 if he gets angry, do I count to 10 if someone doesn't believe gays should be able to get married? Is my key question: "is my anger justified?" or is my key question "what will work to change politics in America?" Few of us, myself often included, keep our cool enough to be effective in our political conversations.

As Lakoff shows, so much of our politics is not logical points, but whether we trust the other person. #ftnneeded Before beginning a "debate," step back and remember that the nature of your conversation is the most important part:

what are your real goals? Verbally crush them and make them wish they had a powerful father-figure to argue on their behalf, or create enough of a connection that just one of your ideas will sink in, maybe months from now?

1. Slowly build trust
2. Make one point at a time.

### Weaving back to Moral Foundations: Making a Claim to Leadership and In-Community Status

3:1.1

Studies find that liberals really like to argue out the policy points and theory on political debates. Meanwhile, conservatives value and seek legitimate authority to be their leaders. For example, I've often argued the fact that farther-left societies, the ones doing what I'd like the US to emulate, have very low abortion rates. If you want less abortions, progressives already have the facts on our side. **But being right alone doesn't work.**

1. Don't give up, but don't aim for complete transformation in any single conversation.
2. Don't give up but don't beat yourself up if you can't work miracles.

At a certain point we're making a claim to leadership: add everything up and Democratic leaders will represent your values better than the Republican leaders. How are we going to actually convince swing voters who have some conservative values that they want to trust us? We've already piled on facts -- we now need to engage them, make sure they don't feel our goal is to defeat them with superior minds but that we want to invite them into a broad community that welcomes different opinions.

-- editorial question: is this section worthwhile, making you think? Or massive cuts appropriate? Maria liked it other than too many abortion examples needs variety --

## Pragmatic Politics: Ass Kicking Leadership or Coopertive Community Builder

3:1.2

Crushing your opponent is likely to evoke the strong, strict father leader. That's great if you're Obama crushing Romney and claiming the role of strong leader. He would be showing who is fit to lead, and the two candidates are obviously not on the same team, Romney will never vote for Obama no matter how the debate goes. But if you are not running for office, just talking person-to-person, claiming *Leadership* separates you, you have to claim *In-Group Loyalty*, with a very different kind of conversation.

Assaulting a conservative-leaning swing voter with facts and logic is a way to increase their fear and thus evoke the strong, strict father protector within their mind. When my favorite politician is trying to convince conservative-swing voters that he or she is suitable to lead, being strong and defeating the opponent politician -- showing the opponent politician to be a loser -- is helpful. The conservative parts of our minds are seeking that type of authority, someone who can defend us, and the world really is at least as rough as a political debate. Hold your own or go home. <sup>[3]</sup>

But in our personal lives, in one to one conversations, not many people are likely to feel like they were really wrong just because you out-argue them. If you are evoking the chaos that calls for a protective father, you're likely to leave them in a conservative frame of mind. There may be times, especially if you have an audience, for put-downs. But mostly in one-to-one conversations you are trying to make a deal, you're trying to help them feel that you are on their side, that you'll listen as they listen.

The *Drug Abuse Resistance Education* program, familiar for the slogan *D.A.R.E. to keep kids off drugs*, uses authority and facts to pressure kids against trying drugs. It's a fear-based, authority-based conservative tactic: it fails horribly.<sup>[2]</sup> Many political conversations at home use similar tactics: we crush their arguments, tell them what they have to do, overwhelm the person we're talking to with our knowledge-based authority. No one is keeping score; crushing arguments doesn't work.

## Fairness Moral Foundation: Tit for Tat and Active Listening

3:1.3

Conservatives and liberals disagree on many fundamental values, but we agree on *fairness*. This value doesn't just apply to policy, it applies to the conversation itself. If you are friendly, if you are part of their group of shared loyalty, then if you concede a few points it's only fair that they concede one to you.

Republican politics today is based on creating an in-group of Republicans, instead of Americans. Breach that line,



If one person does this, listening carefully for all the areas where you either already agree or can point out merit or respect for their view, it is a wonderful way to draw them to listen to you, to feel obliged to agree with you in turn. You can agree to half a dozen things you already can agree with, and push just one key, reasonable point. They can leave a conversation feeling proud, you having conceded agreement to many points; feeling aligned, that you are in the same loyalty group.

remind the people in your circle that you are part of their in-group, and you've done far more good than winning any single policy point in a debate.

If both try the tactic, that creates a virtuous circle: two people trying to concede points to get the other to feel (unconsciously) obligated to concede points, soon everyone will be having an attentive and reasonable conversation even if what they initially set out to do was merely to win.

If you add one communication tactic to your political conversations that will make the biggest difference, try Active Listening: start each conversation by letting the other person talk, repeat back everything so they know they've heard you, and agree with everything you can. Note that agreeing when you can is not a normal part of active listening: normally you listen and repeat back without editorial, focusing on them instead of your own views. Try it both ways for political conversations, see what works for you.

Can you change the conversation from them defending against your logic and facts, to a mutual sharing?

## Compromise

Section: 3:2

Lakoff and a few million other Democrats have lamented their leader's craven compromising for many years now. We often hold the value "be reasonable" and are enthusiastic believers in compromise in our personal lives, but the Democratic leadership has made compromise seem weak instead of dignified, shifty instead of decent.

As politics in Washington have gotten more heated, Democrats have responded to bullying tactics in two ways:

### **The Old Plan: Make nice.**

Show up with a big compromise. See if giving them three quarters of everything they want without a fight makes them change their tactics. Tell the world we *want* gays in the military to hide in the closet, we *want* the least inclusive health care system of any wealthy nation.

### **The New Plan: Become like them.**

Fight fire with fire. Get angry. Pump up your base by building anger at the other side. Lie and exaggerate right back. Cognitive science research indicates anger, two-sided conflicts and fear shift people to conservative thinking ... but it clearly gets some donations in the short run.

So, are we losing yet? Fortunately the Republican strategy has difficulties as well, creating an in-group from a shrinking demographic of angry white males. If we learn to speak our truth with clarity, we could start seeing landslides in our favor.

### **Political Weaknesses for Conservative and Liberal Parties**

Republicans have built a hate, anger and shame machine atop a demographic originally chosen for resistance to Civil Rights; while Democrats are constantly speaking to our weaknesses, talking about people in trouble who need help, which none of us desire to be. Both parties are floundering and faith in politicians is very low. I don't know how the Republicans can sort out the mess they've made long enough to get decent, winning candidates with integrity to win primaries. Democrats are waiting for the "win at any cost" machine to get out of the way so we can again win on our own merits instead of on Republican shortcomings. Today's Democratic Party is trying to fight half-clean and half-dirty: this loses all the benefits of fighting clean, and leaves you second to opponents who fight dirty as a first-choice. Here is a quick review of why "fire with fire" hurts Democrats more than Republicans, and which tactics Democrats can use that would leave Republicans burnt:

Cognitive-conservative leaders can lie at low cost, empathic leaders can't. Truth has to be on our side, in-group loyalty won't carry the liberals along: the Republican base could (barely) tolerate Romney's disregard for the truth, a similar

Signs of change:

"I've never been shy in talking

Democrat would have been even less popular with her or his base. <sup>[5]</sup>

Liberals have different advantages. We can be wrong without panicing, we can apologize. We can admit areas of weakness. The natural order of things is not unbalanced with an apology from the leader. If a leader is strong but accepts that they made a mistake, they are evoking the nurturing parent metaphor. In the Obama vs Romney election, we saw how in-group thinking and an unwillingness to see problems left Republicans unable to admit or engage their difficulties when Romney fell behind.

Most Democratic politicians have not caught on to either of these: Obama refused to speak truth to power against the banks (which seem to have more power than he does), refused to tell a story of ordinary people earning less because the banks are sucking up too much of our nation's wealth. It was a story that was true, and popular with liberals and conservatives, and he never told it, he withheld his anger even when anything less than anger would be untruth.

about my belief in universal health care or fair Tax Code ... The people of Connecticut might have disagreed with Joe Lieberman on specific issues, but they liked the fact — and they still like the fact — that he reaches out across the aisle to get stuff done. ... Connecticut voters know exactly what side of the negotiating table I'm going to be on, but they want me to be at the negotiating table." Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) replacing Sen. Joe Lieberman.<sup>[4]</sup>

### **Wait! Didn't the sections on Active Listening and Compromise Contradict?**

3:2.1

"Tit for tat" in active listening describes two people who value their relationship. It probably did partially describe the "Old Boys' Network" in Congress until perhaps the 1990's. This involves a one to one conversation. You wouldn't want to go too far with the same tactics if you have an audience being confused; and there is no point if you are arguing with a bully trying to score points off you and enjoying his high score instead of trying to have a conversation. Active listening techniques are at their strongest one to one.

The section on compromise is focused more on politicians, people who can make actual policy compromises. Holding strong is something we expect of leaders. Getting angry at a banking system or a politician benefiting from corruption is very different from getting angry at your powerless-except-one-vote uncle for his political views.

### **Land-mines, Triggers, and Wedge Issues**

Section: 3:3

Watch a typical liberal and conservative conversation at Thanksgiving, and it's clear we often trigger each other, setting off deeper reactions than politics in distant Washington DC might really deserve at dinner.

I'll use the term "triggered" when you react so strongly to an idea that you fly off the handle, getting upset instead of effective. For a triggering example, "What do you mean my gay friends are destroying the country and you're going to tell them they can't see each other in the hospital:

go to hell!" This reaction might be merited, but you're not helping your friends.

In this workbook a "landmine" is when you plant the seeds of a major conflict without even realizing it. The economics of contribution is full of landmines: liberals are often pointing out the differences in wealth between the rich and ordinary Americans. Every time we lead with this argument, conservatives get triggered, and fly off the handle about fairness and who is contributing. As we'll explore in the Workbook, there are very strong arguments that fit within conservative moral frameworks to have a more balanced economy: when we step on this landmine, we lose the chance to have the real discussion.

Triggers and land-mines make a mess of things, and keep us from connecting with people who we do share interests with. They make us feel more different and more separate than we otherwise are.

What is a wedge issue? A wedge issue is a purposeful effort to introduce landmines, to sensitize us so we do trigger each other. Abortion and gun control are issues that see little change over the years -- decades of Democrats and Republicans taking turns in power merely tweak the edges of the issues -- but very easily trigger ordinary people so we are fighting against other ordinary, decent people. Wedge issues are purposefully chosen by strategists to get ordinary people to trigger each other and reinforce divisions.

### Going Deeper

**There are countless systems of communication that go beyond the basics of Active Listening. If you have a favorite system for personal conflicts, try it in a political conversation, and let us know how it works at <http://www.cognitivepolitics.org> Two favorites that will be explored in the rest of this chapter:**

- **Difficult Conversations** ftnx brings experience making sales to personal conversations
- **Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communications [NVC]** [<http://www.cnvc.org/about/marshall-rosenberg.html>] provides techniques for going farther at creating connection where previously there was just anger and confusion.

## Difficult Conversations

Section: 3:4

### Seek Their Values

3:4.1

Consider taking Active Listening -- where you repeat back the basic facts the other person has

said -- to the next level. Try describing the feeling and especially values that the other person feels. Ask them how they see an issue differently than you do. The "why" is important. Asking, inviting, them to state their differences cuts back the stress.

Many liberal communication shortcomings come from our failure to understand the underlying cognitive-conservative values: often when we want a more compassionate world, the other perspective is not lined up arguing against compassion, rather that fairness or real compassion call for a different approach. You can't progress in a discussion until you know where the other person is coming from. If you're not on stage in a televised debate, very consciously make your goal understanding rather than victory: aim to figure out which the cognitive-conservative values or other values are important to the person you are talking with.

### **Getting Big Disagreements Back on Track<sup>[6]</sup>**

3:4.2

If your conversations are being derailed from disagreements too large to find common ground, consider reframing. Change from discussing truth and blame, and instead tell stories with contributions: you see this *and* I see that.

Difficult Conversations recommends to "Name the Trouble: Make the problem explicit."<sup>[7]</sup> Political conversations are often heated because we're talking about different things. For example, we might be arguing about a specific U.S. foreign policy choice, and voices are being raised because underneath the argument one party or both sees that other as not having pride in the US. Or in an argument about welfare, the liberal person is troubled by a lack of compassion while the conservative is troubled by a lack of common sense, but each person repeats their own arguments rather than understanding what troubles the other person.

### **Bad Conversations: Yes, Make it Personal<sup>[8]</sup>**

3:4.3

Liberals who love policy and logic often try to make a conversation impersonal.

Treat the other person as an equal. Then demand to be treated as an equal. If the other person won't listen and won't treat you with decency, you might want to walk: making it very clear that *they* have violated the terms of fairness, of having a fair conversation with you. Don't let it be conservatives vs liberals. Don't accuse all Fox viewers of being unwilling to listen, don't accept the definitions of different in-groups and out-groups. Instead call them as an individual on their own behavior. Treat it like you would a relationship challenge: you don't want to get stepped on, you're upset, and you're taking a breather -- finding a middle-path neither allowing yourself to be pushed around nor acting as if their treatment is unforgivable.

Treat the other person as if you are in the same in-group (Americans, humans, your family), and demand the respect accorded to people on the same side. Think twice before continuing in a heated conversation.

## **Nonviolent Communications**

Section: 3:5



Marshall Rosenberg's [Nonviolent Communications](http://www.cnvc.org/about/marshall-rosenberg.html)

[<http://www.cnvc.org/about/marshall-rosenberg.html>] starts with active listening but goes far beyond, providing techniques for going far beyond active listening: creating connection where previously there was anger and confusion.

### **Connection First, Strategies Last**

3:5.1

Begin by finding connection. Spend much more time listening -- letting them know you are listening. Figure out what their needs are -- especially needs related to conservative moral foundations that liberals usually miss.

Listen, then ask questions that probe at their moral values. When their view is not automatically clear to you, look in particular towards the leadership, community, and sanctity values. What makes them afraid? What metaphor are they using?

Example: I hear that you believe federal assistance to people who are poor breaks down their discipline and hurts them in the end. It makes me wonder if all programs are the same, or do some programs encourage people and others discourage people. Maybe we can look at some real people and talk about this further.

Example: You want a law against abortion. Do you feel a need to hold the government as a discipliner? Do you feel a need to save as many babies as possible? Or is it about trust, that you want to know that other people see the same things as sacred as you do, so you can trust them?

### **Evoke what is alive in you.**

3:5.2

When it is your turn to talk, say what your needs are without first arguing about policy. On abortion, don't *start* with opposing their position: don't start with saying when life begins, setting out to oppose their position instead of focusing on the heart of yours. Start with a story of the woman you are thinking of who does not need a man or government forcing its will upon her, perhaps avoiding the whole abortion topic for a good few minutes. If pro-choice is about empowering women -- if that is your key issue -- don't make it about women having abortions until you've described the values that *inspire* you.

When we combine the cognitive scientists' new discoveries with practices from Nonviolent Communication [NVC], our goals for Thanksgiving-table interactions become clear: create a sense of connected community across progressive and conservative populations. Breach the in-group out-group boundaries being cut by Republican politicians, show that you have an understanding of sanctity and values that meshes more often than it clashes. Anger politics won't be defeated by policy suggestions. Politicians may need specific policies, but in regular life we need to restore democracy: liberal leaders understand sanctity even if they phrase it differently -- and I'm liberal because I think they act on it more effectively though I can respect you have a

different view, let's keep talking, we should all be working together as one community, targeting corruption more than we target honest disagreements.

### **Needs, Feelings and Triggers: An end to strategies at Thanksgiving**

3:5.3

Sometimes as I've talked with conservative individuals (not the most politically active), I've been surprised at how few differences there are. One of my friends told me she's a life-long conservative, I'm still waiting to hear a real difference besides her unwillingness to have the government run healthcare -- and even there I bet that individual issue by individual issue, we'll agree.

She desires to vote for fiscally conservative, responsible, compassionate-conservatives, but the votes are going to reactionaries fracturing the country. It isn't about policy. The nature of our conversations is fundamental to cleaning up politics. In particular, manipulative authoritarian-leaders are hyping up the conflict, creating a new in-group boundary around conservatives, and stepping into the leadership roles they are creating. We can't fight them to be the leaders of the conservative impulse; but we can make that whole role disappear by getting liberals and conservatives talking, back in the same community.

### **Liberals love to argue policy and strategy: explore underlying needs**

Policy arguments often **start at the end**: all your beliefs, desires and thinking about what works are piled together, and then you argue one policy against someone with a different mix of beliefs, and battle away with no way to pick who's winning. These arguments just turn up the heat.

If you disagree strongly, avoid getting triggered, and avoid triggering. Instead, lower your goals from transforming their worldview in one evening, towards having a calm and connected conversation. Start by asking people what they need:

On abortion, we already know that Socialist pro-choice pro-woman countries have some of the best records on lowering abortion, and those facts doesn't seem to matter to Pro-Lifers. Instead of just insulting them for it, dig for their real needs: conservatives don't typically *feel a need* to lower the number of abortions, their feelings and specific numbers are not connected. Important: don't throw this in their face, but do build your arguments conscious of their needs. They do feel a need to declare right from wrong. Conservatives are not utopians, they don't expect to eradicate all sin. They know they can't get rid of all sin -- so they don't emotionally feel a need to. They do *feel a need* to have authority define its legitimacy by recognizing sacredness. The very act of listening and empathizing partly meets this goal, without giving a millimeter on policy. Compassionate listening may mean that you convince a deeply loving, family oriented conservative to change no opinion at all, but vote for Head Start instead of Pro-Life simply because they no longer think all progressives are disconnected from basic morality, and so can listen to the policies.

We tend to focus on the strategies: making abortion legal or illegal. Back up and look at the

underlying needs: perhaps having a government led by people who have a basic understanding of sanctity, of right and wrong. When you realize that that is the underlying need being expressed, not consciously, there is room for much more interesting conversations.

If you know what someone wants better than they do, and are gentle in getting there, it can open people up to changing their minds more deeply. In conversations conservatives often express, from a logical perspective, this need to have the government say the right thing rather than to take steps to objectively lower the number of abortions and pre-natal deaths. It makes sense given the underlying moral "tastes," but it contradicts conservatives' conscious views of themselves as pragmatists. Compassionate listening with the right questions might help them realize for themselves that they are expressing a need for a sacred government, instead of taking steps to effectively reduce the total number of abortions. Try lots of listening, lots of questions, and introduce facts wrapped into real questions.

### **Fuel Solutions: Find agreements and shared areas**

3:5.4

Finding areas of agreement is far more important than working your way through the areas of disagreement.

Listening to Marshall Rosenberg, he spends most of his time on conflict resolution, but his words seem to indicate that finding ways to express gratitude may be more important.<sup>[9]</sup> The positive stuff doesn't make interesting writing, so I'm guilty of that too. But finding all the other issues you do agree with is a more powerful way to get people thinking, feeling, that they live in a world where nurturing politics and hope can come out on top, where we don't need to live in fear all the time.

Rosenberg encourages us to "bring it to now." I think this parallels the goal of moving from policy to stories: describe a real person, and how government choices change her or his life. And how you feel about it.

He also says that gratitude is the fuel for positive change. This is something left almost entirely out of politics, much of why almost all of us feel desperate about politics: we hate the idea that women will lose choice, or are disgusted that Head Start won't be funded, rather than feeling like politics is empowering and moving the world ahead.

Politicians are likely to have a difficult time mixing gratitude into debates and elections. But we can do it: go to a soup kitchen with people with different politics. Share as many stories that you know the other person will appreciate as you can. At Thanksgiving, come unarmed with half a dozen "Yes" stories that your conservative relative will appreciate. That alone is a bit of a win: "liberals are crazy except my niece is pretty cool." Or half a dozen "Yes" stories and one carefully chosen disagreement. Not over the thing that makes you angriest, but over the issue most likely to get them to start budging and changing.

### **Just for NVC Practitioners: Don't Actually Use NVC-Style Without Consent**

3:5.5



There are many good ideas in NVC. But be warned, it very much matches the cognitive-liberal style of thought. When you make it clear that you are doing NVC, and they don't practice it, it's a bit like arranging the meeting room furniture the way you like it -- a way to make someone else feel like you are in charge of the negotiation. This is the opposite of the goals of NVC, but very easy to slip into, and politics is already super-charged. So yes: avoid blaming them for your feelings, ask questions, bring it to now, share gratitude. But don't use catch-phrases, and especially don't try to force the conversation into your mode!

When you phrase every sentence like this,  
I feel disconnected from you and a bit angry,  
because I am trying to talk to you like I talk to people and you are doing  
some superior, smug exercise you know I won't like and you do it anyway.

## Integrating Communication Techniques with Cognitive Science

Section: 3:6

Some of the most contentious issues seem aimed at triggering progressives into saying things that will separate them from good people on the "other" side. I think this is a good place to start: Rush Limbaugh is aiming to get you pissed, so that you'll either be angry and help him separate your demographic from his, or else you'll quit talking politics and leave him unchallenged. We win with open, compassionate listening and strong, hopeful, true voices, keeping anger out or very carefully controlled and targeted.

### Checklist For Effective Communications

3:6.1

- Review a recent political conversation you had. What question were you trying to answer: "Is my anger justified?" or "What will work to improve politics in America?"
  - What is their metaphor? Will you stick with their metaphor or propose another? If you propose another, what questions would draw their mind into your new frame?
  - What moral values are they expressing? Do you want to counter their perspective, or just shift it? For example, can you at least respect that they have a sense of sanctity around a pregnancy, and express that you hear them and respect that part, without agreeing to their right to impose their views? Focus on active listening: spend time agreeing to all the things you can agree with or respect until they hear you, and only then move forward into areas disagreement. Remember: political manipulators are already encouraging them to believe you disagree about everything, so it's not necessary to list everything you disagree about!
  - What are your goals? Do you desire to have them change their mind about policy? Have them spend more time or less time focused on a particular issue? For example: someone opposed to gay marriage could be challenged to give up their deep beliefs and intuitions about sanctity and agree that gay marriage is absolutely fine -- or convinced that it is ok for them to leave this as a free choice that they expect God may judge but it is not their job to judge. The second option fits the beliefs they already hold, and meets our political needs. Are they more likely to become accepting of gay rights if they let go of the need to judge?
  - If you are having a discussion, for example at the Thanksgiving table, would everyone else at the table appreciate if a strict father came and told you both to shut up? If so, back off! Re-assess your goals: what besides a clash on policy would let you both "win" this conversation.
- 
1. Lakoff points out that in college liberals seem to like, not surprisingly, liberal arts and science. Republicans flock to business including marketing. Liberals seem not to study or enjoy marketing, and so of course do it badly. That's costing elections and costing kids better health care, so let's get over it.
  2. Wikipedia lists [many resources](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drug_Abuse_Resistance_Education#2001_-) [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drug\_Abuse\_Resistance\_Education#2001\_-

[\\_Surgeon\\_General\\_categorizes\\_D.A.R.E.\\_.22Ineffective\\_Primary\\_Prevention\\_Programs.22](#)] finding DARE a failure.

3. The study of cognitive science and politics is new, so much is conjecture. Lakoff talks about evoking a metaphor by talking about it. I think we often evoke metaphors by their lack: Americans like strong leaders, we like a politician who is at least capable of playing the strong warrior. If they are not, like President Carter, we evoke the strict-father metaphor without words being required.
4. [Interview with Sen. Chris Murphy \(D-Conn.\)](http://www.politico.com/news/stories/1112/83812.html) [<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/1112/83812.html>]
5. Republican readers who don't believe this are very, very welcome to try out-truthing Democrats next election.
6. Based loosely on Chapter 11 of *Difficult Conversations*
7. *Difficult Conversations*, p. 209.
8. Based loosely on Chapter 10 of *Difficult Conversations*
9. #ftnneeded I think this is in his video?

## Chapter 4

### **Gandhi and King: Nonviolence, Fear and Authority** **How Historical Leaders Engaged Cognitive-Conservatives**



Many progressives too young to remember Vietnam or the fight for Civil Rights *feel* like we're facing the nastiest, most overwhelmingly powerful conservatives in history. My peers often feel overwhelmed and outnumbered. Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. faced opponents who wanted to keep their peoples under foot, by law dominated as sub-humans. They faced overt armed threats and their movements suffered regular deaths. They struggled incredibly cleanly, played very very fair, and overwhelmed their opposition. They understood something we don't: how do their tactics relate to frames and moral values?

Plenty has been written and I'm going to assume readers already know the basics about Gandhi and King. This section will focus on their intersection with cognitive politics: the perspective of the moral foundations, frameworks and higher levels of fear among cognitive-conservatives. Perhaps exploring how King and Gandhi intuitively implemented framing and worked with varied moral tastes will help us start implementing the new scientific research.

What does Nonviolent Resistance do with fear, leadership, in-group vs out-group formation, and sanctity?

#### **Frameworks, Moral-tastes and the Nonviolence Campaign**

Section: 4:1

##### **Nonviolent Resistance and the Sacred Leader**

4:1.1

Gandhi believed: even the Axis powers of World War II could have been stopped by a sufficiently brave and disciplined peace-force. <sup>[1]</sup> If unarmed human beings lined up on the borders and allowed themselves to be murdered, no army could continue for long. Japan and Germany could easily maintain armies that were suffering tremendous casualties fighting an armed resistance; their armies would fall apart if all they did was murder, out in the sunlight where they were forced to face it. <sup>[2]</sup> <sup>[3]</sup>

Let's translate this to a moral-tastes perspective: non-violent resistance breaks down the sanctity of the aggressor's cause and removes the fear, and thus diminishes their leader's authority to lead.

Forcing the armies to make eye contact and murder in cold blood would evoke the compassion moral taste while it erased the respect for authority. You can see much of this in Nazi leaders' struggle to commit mass-murder: they played a twisted game of getting people to commit atrocities without looking, without thinking about what they were doing.

the Nazi state employed cynical euphemisms to disguise their real activities: "Final Solution" instead of extermination, "transfer" rather than deportation, and "special treatment" in place of killing by gas. <sup>[4]</sup>

Even within the worst authoritarian or racist regimes, ordinary people are attempting to do right. They are propagandized to see their nation, their cause, their leaders, as sacred. No one tested this theory with the Axis: no one found a way to break down that sanctity besides defeat on the battlefield and burning cities. { ftn this would be a good place to footnote if German and Japanese soldiers/population saw the US as both stronger and more moral. Discuss the overlap of strength and morality, and what it means for politics. } But Gandhi did grapple with and threaten the British Empire in a different way than armed rebellion, targeting the politicians hold on their power instead of defeating the army.

He spoiled the British sense that their Empire was sacred, that they had appropriate authority. And he did it without triggering a sense of the British in-group: he didn't make the British feel like they were under attack.

It's easy to see where King did something similar: he broke white America's feeling that their use of authority was appropriate, broke their sense that the way things were was a sacred, natural order. And did it without "taking sides."

Neither Gandhi nor King used a metaphor of creating sides, there was no "us and them." It was not white against black. Instead, they simply stood on the side of Truth waiting to welcome people not standing on that side to come over. **They neither diminished their truth nor attacked the other side.**

Neither Gandhi nor King said their opponents were evil. It would be easy to make the case that they were: British imperialists sticking around in the mid-20th century or American racists telling children what water fountain to drink from? But their goal was to create change, not score points in a debate. That meant not strengthening the in-group feelings of people who currently opposed their goals. We need to learn to do this.

Gandhi and King both welcomed their political opponents as if they were the same in-group of human beings with dignity, and struggled so cleanly that even their opponents understood the sanctity of their goals. Meanwhile, *separate* movements expanded the "window" of options so the pacifists would be moderates.

Nonetheless, Gandhi and King were simply uncompromising in holding up truth, without declaring that people could be given a final judgement (evil) by their actions. They took on the role of teachers -- or *nurturing parents* to misbehaving kids. *Yes, you stole some cookies and enslaved a nation, how about you put the ones you haven't eaten back and don't do that again.*

They were the nurturing parent, in charge, taking control, setting things right, but not here to punish. You knew you were misbehaving if you tangled with Gandhi or King: sanctity was not on your side.

A central metaphor of both King and Gandhi was that life has dignity. They didn't engage their opponents metaphors, they told their own. And they went deep: they looked at the dignity of what it meant to be a human being, not fighting for a 2% change in a tax rate. England could have dignity, India would act with dignity no matter what force was used, whites could have dignity, blacks would act with dignity no matter what force was used against them. <sup>[5]</sup>

### **What would happen today?**

4:1.2

We've watched the Tea Party and Occupy, both founded partly in response to government give-aways to Wall Street, squabble or ignore each other. Within Occupy, very often the Tea Party needs were dismissed: the Tea Party was seen as racist and ignorant, propagandized to be its worst elements. There have been exceptions, and I think these exceptions fit more in the soul-force approach. Gandhi and King's tactics disengaged opponents sense of being an in-group, calmed their fears, and reversed their sense of sanctity, leaving the leaders dangling. What was Occupy's path?

- Challenging authority and turning up fears. Occupy, holding protests for protests' sake, often challenged the very notion of respecting authority. This is a direct liberal assault on core conservative sense of the world, on a desire for order in a scary world: a desire that half the population has had since first grade and is not easily changed. We did not create finite demands: we gave no path for a leader to restore their connection with sanctity. The restaurant sit-ins or the Salt March were both intended as wedge-protests to create something on the scale of a revolution, but they were very specific and hard to argue against; Occupy said "we want a revolution."
- King and Gandhi both built strong, disciplined movements: they did not trigger the desire for a strong father by lack of discipline. American protest movements since the late 1960's have been protests of, by and for cognitive liberals who can enjoy chaos. They are unwelcoming events for compassionate people who want to end poverty but also think you should ideally be in church on Sunday wearing a tie. Our movements are not welcoming to people unlike ourselves: we are losing in part by failing to express our own respect for diversity.
- Further the boundaries between sides. We were Occupy, and the Tea Party was "them." We often engaged in confrontation; there was no sense of welcome, that Tea Party and Occupy could hold joint events that were not flavored by either side but rather focused on the banking fraud. Gandhi and King did not do this: they claimed the high-ground within people's existing moral systems. They would have focused on the better parts of the Tea Party movement and evoked more of that, pulling individuals away from leaders who don't represent the best, rather than attacking the movement.
- Sanctity. A Nonviolent movement would have focused on specific breaches of sanctity and rightness by the government or banks, and invited everyone who wanted to peacefully oppose it to do so together. Protest someone being foreclosed on very specifically, asking the bank and government not to take that action.

Occupy built a movement designed for cognitive liberals; charity-giving, community-building cognitive conservatives were not welcome. The Tea Party has done the same for cognitive-conservatives only. Both movements did well building enthusiasm among their base supporters, and neither has turned into a broad movement.

### **Gandhi and King movement building in the time of Occupy:**

4:1.3

- Build stronger communities ourselves.
- Do more volunteering, or take steps to create the world you want. You are at your most powerful when you meet and work with people on the ground, working together creates a sense of in-group.
- Break down the in-groups; there is no enemy. Speak in universal values that invite everyone to participate.
- Show a sense of the sacred, express your values in a way that your sacred values speak to the people who've been supporting the other side.
- Be brave and willing to take risks. Replace the strict-father metaphor with something equally strong.

If you hate the world of argument, putting your belief into action while declaring gently that you would like to see more good work done at the societal level is powerful.

Another way of looking at this workbook: we don't have a progressive Gandhi or King active today. And these leaders are far too easily murdered. Gandhi and King understood Lakoff's framing and the moral tastes of conservatives intuitively, they understood how to create stories with underlying metaphors, far beyond any of us. I don't want to wait for charisma, miracles or heroes. This manual attempts to take what geniuses have done, look at what the scientists have theorized about it, and create some simple forms and exercises so ordinary people who care can speak their truth and be heard.

## Section: 4:2

### Nonviolent Reaction

Practice not entangling yourself in Elephant metaphors, practice not reacting to their truth and instead return to yours:

Pick an issue that fires you up and pisses you off. Not one that is plain corruption, but where real people disagree: perhaps abortion, the US role in the world, or hunting and guns. Review a wide set of conservative arguments. Now, pick one that you don't agree with, but don't have to care about:

Imagine letting it go rather than focusing on it. One to which you can say, perhaps just to yourself, "I hear you, don't really agree,

but I hear you say \_\_\_\_\_ and now let's talk about something else ..."

### Leadership and In-Groups

4:2.1

Practice re-weaving community undoing the game of us-vs-them.

Gandhi and King both acted as if they should be moral leaders for the world. There wasn't another "side." Rather the British or white-America were part of the flock, to be treated with the same compassion as anyone else in the flock who has gone astray. If conservatives seek out leaders with authority, Gandhi and King

were ready to accept the role.



Find areas of agreement between yourself and conservatives. As I write this, there is a loophole written specifically for NASCAR. Instead of arguing that we spend too much or too little, seek out waste. Turn it into a shared activity.

If you don't want to cave in on politics at Thanksgiving but don't want to argue endlessly, take home a list of shared opinions! You're likely doing much more good for progressive ideals than trying to win through head-on confrontation, and don't have to fight with family.

In-Group Loyalty: Much of the corruption on the right slides in on the sense of in-group and out-group. "Liberals are other, so we don't have to listen to them. We're the good guys, even if we're spending tax money on corporate subsidies." Breaking down the sense of separateness is incredibly destructive to authoritarian leaders.

Possible shared activities:

- Besides outlawing abortion -- let's agree to disagree but for the moment look at ways to cooperate -- list every other way that abortion rates have been cut. Perhaps you can even volunteer together in a helpful way?
- If government is wasteful, let's find some local pork and ask our congressperson to stop fighting for it. Sports stadiums are often being funded by liberal city governments in a way that shows how corruptible governments are, needing some conservative waste-fighting to step in. Green Scissors lists many anti-environmental wastes of government money. [greenscissors.com](http://greenscissors.com)

## Summary: Yes, Gandhi & King Implement Moral Foundations and Framing

Section: 4:3

- They did not separate even the oppressed and oppressors into in-groups and out-groups, into us and them.
  - Did not argue against the sanctity values of the oppressors, but claimed and trumped those values.
  - As leaders better understanding sanctity even from a conservative viewpoint, they claimed and took "sacred" leadership. Large parts of the electorate of the oppressors saw them as true leaders, creating leadership crises for politicians opposed to them.
  - Did not allow their movements to become chaotic and undisciplined -- they did not invoke the need for a strict father to clean up chaos. They minimized feelings of fear that could have been used by the leadership of the oppressors politically.
  - They did not maximize shame, especially broad or historical shame, even when diatribes against centuries of oppression must have been tempting. Rather, all people who had been oppressors needed to do in order to not feel shame was to do the right thing, right now.
- 
1. Wikipedia leads here: Gandhi, M.K. "Non-violent Non-cooperation" Harijan 24 May 1942, p. 167 (The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi vol. 82, p. 286; interview conducted 16 May 1942).
  2. The Nazi leaders took strong steps to make sure their troops were not faced outright with the reality of the Holocaust. -- repeats below
  3. Whether Gandhi was correct we'll never know but it's irrelevant to this discussion: this example simply shines a very clear light on beliefs that underlie all his work, much of which was tremendously successful.
  4. [Culture of Murder, Culture of Complicity: Anti-Semitism and the Origins of the Holocaust.](http://www.suu.edu/faculty/ping/culture_of_murder.htm) [[www.suu.edu/faculty/ping/culture\\_of\\_murder.htm](http://www.suu.edu/faculty/ping/culture_of_murder.htm)] This article shows the complexity of the Nazi leadership trying to both justify and hide the Holocaust, creating a space for ordinary German to rationalize away what they suspected or even knew.
  5. Looking for a way to put this deep dignity into your conversations? Nonviolent Communication [NVC] has that as a goal.

## Chapter 5

### Shame, Blame and Authority

#### Historical Failures -- What Powers Authoritarianism?



We've just reviewed liberal leadership at it's best. This section looks at conservative values gone wrong: what turns conservatism into authoritarianism or fascism, what are the warning signs, and how can we counter it?<sup>[1]</sup>

#### Which Conservatives Go Bad?

Section: 5:1

Are conservatives more fearful than liberals? Broad studies show that to be the case, but some research intended to counter fascism has found a more nuanced answer. Personally, I have troubles imagining Arnold Schwarzenegger or Ronald Reagan as fearful people. But I find it easy to imagine Rush Limbaugh or his followers covering their fears or shames with anger. Can we dig deeper into cognitive-conservatism?

Beginning in the wake of World War II and European fascism there were many studies of the fascist-right. One I find most illuminating is *The Authoritarians* by Bob Altemeyer<sup>[2]</sup> He explores the right wing at its worst, not the only option for conservatism, not even a common result of conservative political victories, rather the worst case disaster.

Altemeyer is focused only on subsets of conservatives. He has two scales: one for Right Wing Authoritarians [RWA] that loosely parallels Haidt's moral values of leadership, in-group support and tradition along with tendencies to be fearful. The second test he calls Exploitive-MAD, but it has little to do with Haidt's moral values.

RWA followers<sup>[4]</sup> "are highly submissive to established authority, aggressive in the name of that authority, and conventional to the point of insisting everyone should behave as their authorities decide." They are fearful, self-righteous, and also do give to charity, they do believe in their religion.

Here is how Altemeyer groups people<sup>[5]</sup> with authoritarian characteristics:

Traditional conservatives in the US have fought against a powerful president, liberals have wanted a presidency capable of pushing change, while fascists crave a single man in charge. Research is still in its infancy: there are a variety of psychological makeups voting in conservative and liberal clumps.<sup>[3]</sup>

- High-scoring RWA *followers* take their team very seriously, don't interact much with outsiders, and follow their leaders. They

Of course, the people do not want war... All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism, and exposing the country to greater danger. --  
Herman Göring, at his Nuremberg Trial <sup>[6]</sup>

want to live in a universe where order is provided and are ready to submit to it. They don't want to start wars -- that would be interacting with foreigners -- but will follow their leaders enthusiastically into wars.<sup>[7]</sup>

- *Social Dominators* are very different than high-RWA followers. They are not afraid: they want to be in charge. They don't score high on the RWA scale score, rather they score high on the Exploitive-MAD scale.<sup>[8]</sup> A sample question on the Exploitive-MAD scale: "There's a sucker born every minute, and smart people learn how to take advantage of them." They don't seem to fit Haidt's research at all: they are not "cognitive conservatives" as we have defined the term, they don't show a sense of the sacred, and they want to manipulate and lead their in-group rather than support it. Note that this is a small group while RWA Followers are a much larger population, and so Haidt's studies of conservative average characteristics will show the traits of Followers much more than Dominators. Social Dominators are important politically, but their characteristics are washed away when studying larger populations.
- *Double Highs* are relatively rare, but have the characteristics of both groups. These are typically men who tend to have a lot of shame and fear, but also desire to lead others. Altemeyer considers them the biggest threat<sup>[9]</sup>, the most likely to appeal to RWA followers for being like them, and the most likely to lead in horrifying ways.

If you want to explore further, read *The Authoritarians* starting at p182, which describes global simulation games played by RWAs alone and RWAs plus social dominators. The differences between the bulk of the authoritarian-willing electorate alone, or with potential leaders mixed in, is striking.

## Moral Foundation Variations Within Conservatives

5:1.1

In general, authoritarian leaders make up their own rules, and can be vicious to those outside the group they hope to lead. Authoritarian followers follow the rules, and take sanctity and taboos very seriously.

KEY POINT: in my experience, progressives often focus on the *social dominators* as if they represent conservatives. We look at social darwinists who seem to be nasty people treating even their own voters, never mind the powerless, as suckers. They have a lot of power

It's important to remember that

within the Republican leadership. The problem is these are the leaders, the politicians, and barely any of the followers -- the electorate. We build our political campaigns as if we want to get Cheney to vote for hope and compassion, instead of focusing on someone who would never dodge the draft, took the gun safety class the first time he was asked, and gives to his church. Good, fearful people who cover their fear with aggression and submissiveness are still at root good, fearful people. There is more to work with.

RWA's are a fraction of cognitive conservatives. Large portions of the conservative base do not test as Right-Wing Authoritarians. Without these cognitive conservatives brought along as allies, authoritarians are out of power.

The research shows that different sub-groups of conservatives hold different moral foundations.

Altemeyer finds "Social dominators show greater prejudice against minorities and women than high RWAs do, but the followers are much more hostile toward homosexuals."<sup>[10]</sup> Or in the language of Moral Foundations: the leaders focus on their in-group, focus on authority and disdain weakness, but aren't tuned towards sanctity -- they might well break taboos. Conversely followers are very focused on "smell tests" and the sacred. Today, to a bible-focused conservative, homosexuality is openly attacked by his in-group, but he is regularly told it'd not ok to be racist or sexist. Right-wing authoritarian Followers try to move to the middle of their in-group, not to the hateful edge. Another study showed that high-scoring RWAs "bow more" to show respect: like the smell tests for politics, this is an animal instinct, many species lower heads to show submission. Cognitive-conservatives believe in a "natural" order. Social dominators do not fit this pattern, they are conservative but not consistent Moral Foundations cognitive-conservatives, using but not believing in sanctity. <sup>[11]</sup>

## Application

## Section: 5:2

Some of Altemeyer's work is fascinating in its direct applicability: by using an empirical Right Wing Authoritarianism [RWA] scale, he can test historical and activist events to see how they influence moral foundations.

"The only situation I found in which a crisis lowered RWA scores involved a repressive government that assaulted nonviolent protestors (which I have termed "the Gandhi trap"). Otherwise, when there's trouble, people generally look to the authorities to fix things."  
-- Altemeyer, *The Authoritarians*, p.58.

This might help explain why the amazing strength of angry, protesting leftists in 1968 was alongside Nixon's path to power. Cognitive-liberals may love a wild political-protest-parade, but much of the middle of the electorate will shift to the right, relying on authority or relying on a strict father, during chaos. Compare the electoral chaos in Chicago 1968 that was on the path to Nixon's power with King's disciplined, well dressed protests, which were politically much more effective. Practical Lessons:

{ } Consider if your outreach only reaches your base, or a potential electoral majority.

## Using Shame and Fear to Fuel a Rise to Power

Section: 5:3

### Leadership Pattern: Shlumpy Superman

5:3.1

Political leaders using shame have consistent markers: you'll often see someone talking to people with low self esteem, telling them how superior they are, how their problems are all someone else's fault. A distinct marker is that the leader won't be very imposing and won't be an example of the superior, ideal man he describes. Hitler had neither blond hair, nor blue eyes, nor a successful business or military career, nor was he all that imposing. People who felt like failures listened to him talk about the superman Aryan, and felt ok about it because he was fantasizing just as much as them. In US politics, Arnold Schwarzenegger is a good counter-example: he told conservatives to work hard, and he was a good example of what he talked about. Rush Limbaugh fits the shame-into-blame leader role perfectly: honest, self-aware cognitive-conservatives can see him ruining conservative political movements.

Counter-tactics: liberals would do well to make the study of authoritarian leaders part of high school education. Accusing Limbaugh of being dependent on the government seems to have a limited effect: if you're not careful, you further increase shame among his listeners, and further increase separation. I am a fan of [INOCULATION](#): teach kids about the Nazi example. Pound into young heads that the worst group-think leaders are often failures. Teach how shame was turned into blame in Nazi Germany. Once that way of thinking is set up, it will be easier to help people notice as it happens again.

[INOCULATE](#) against these patterns, the worst of the conservative spectrum, they will repeat:

- Draft dodgers who like wars.
- Weak men who talk about a strong ideal.
- People connected to power who think the worst threats are very weak people (minorities). They will claim that power is not corrupt, and instead that the poor are well enough organized and powerful enough to steal from the rich. From the Roman Empire through the Nazis, circuses and scapegoats have kept the oppressed targeting each other: remind and reinforce this meme, it is always obvious when you look at history far enough from today's mythology.

All of these are points where healthy conservatives and all liberals should be on the same side, working together,

Many youth anti-smoking campaigns attack the self-esteem of smokers, putting down the kids who smoke. You can easily see this approach looking at some older "anti-smoking" materials put out by the tobacco company.<sup>[12]</sup> Kids tend to smoke in part because of low self-esteem: attacking them for smoking backfires. Getting authoritarian followers away from the authoritarian leaders has similar difficulties: insulting them or their leaders is an attack, a reason for them to feel shame and circle their wagons.

"if you look at the high RWAs

making Never Again into more than a slogan.

If liberals want to frame as successfully as conservatives do, planning for years ahead, then we should be joking about draft-dodgers who love war now. Get a new term for it into the language, or reinforce chicken-hawk. Make broad jokes about how pathetic is, or point out that Senator McCain is not a chicken-hawk and has the decency to have faced the risks he asks of others. Have the term already at the tip of people's tongues when you need to use it.

## Group-Think

5:3.2

Lakoff often encourages us to repeat our message. And Altemeyer's research indicates that this is far more key for RWA followers than any other group explored. They seek the middle, to be securely inside the fences of their in-group norms. We need to both expand the window and emphasize a middle that is more compassionate than what we have today. These are people who would be patriotic with paying taxes if that's what their country asked of them.

## Appendix: Conservative Strength

Section: 5:4

Reading about European fascism or resistance to Civil Rights can be depressing. When political activists decide that liberal ideas are better than conservative, And lots of us have been Protectors, on our way to being conservatives, since first grade.

## Workbook

Section: 5:5

Hitler rose to power in a rather liberal country.

There are two clear steps to put out brushfires of fascism and authoritarianism:

who do know someone gay or lesbian, they are much less hostile toward homosexuals in general than most authoritarians are."

-- Altemeyer.

Authoritarians are fear driven not to look at the wider world, and then don't like what they haven't seen. If you can *safely* expose them to a wider world, many will lose their fear and then the hostility.<sup>[13]</sup>

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed ... The cost of one modern heavy bomber is this: a modern brick school in more than 30 cities.

-- President Dwight Eisenhower<sup>[14]</sup>

- Long term, make sure children are not abused, that they face no more bullying than they are capable of dealing with (we may do well to teach kids how to stand up for each other rather than just punish bullies, while watching for kids who are drowning), that people grow up both supported and able to stand up for themselves psychologically.
- Short term, remove authoritarian-followers from their leaders usually gently and through peer-pressure *within* their peer group. The main exception to being gentle is when you can create an in-group that they feel part of only by adjusting their values. Attacking an authoritarian follower -- angry protests, yelling at them, smashing their feeble logic or inability to find the nations they want to invade on a map -- will merely solidify them as fodder for authoritarian leaders. Even if they act like a stunning hypocrite, they likely do believe in their religion, and it may be possible to respectfully reinforce the positive aspects of that religion. If you're completely correct in an argument and they are completely wrong, you just shake their foundations and push them towards their leaders. High RWAs want to be normal: invite them, welcome them, to be normal instead of racist or homophobic.

When bullies have grown up to be authoritarian leaders, it's likely too late to change them, the main goal should be to keep them and their potential followers apart.

## Exercise

Section: 5:6

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As moral, religious and law-abiding citizens, we feel that we are  
unprejudiced and undiscriminating in our wish to keep our community a  
closed community.

-- Neighbors in Levittown, Pa, 1957, uniting to keep their neighborhood  
segregated.

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I found this quote in an opinion piece about African Americans still facing perpetual low-level harassment, *The Good, Racist People* by Ta-Nehisi Coates. <sup>[15]</sup> This quote is extreme, but as a society, implicit racism is widespread: you never have to consciously decide to be racist, sometimes researchers even find these effects in the subconscious of the oppressed groups. If you have an easy answer for this phenomena -- racism by people who don't think they're racist -- you're probably not looking close enough. Liberals have had a tendency to "call them on it" when we see [poorly] hidden racism. But when people are only subconsciously racist and then are called racist, it sounds more like an insult than a call to change. <sup>[16]</sup>

The above quote makes very clear the desire of authoritarian minded racists and bigots to be in the center of their in-group: they don't want to be particularly bigoted, at worst they desire to be average bigots. And yet after decades since Civil Rights and the end of openly acceptable racism, they're still at it. <sup>[17]</sup>

These tendencies go beyond the basic Moral Foundations that Haidt described. How do we



challenge mindsets that people don't realize they have? I don't have good answers, but there is one answer very relevant to this workbook: educating and perhaps attacking people who don't know they are racist with examples of overt and nasty racism does not seem to help reduce milder implicit racism, but sharing studies of the subtlety of implicit racism does help people introspectively find those patterns within themselves and work on improving.<sup>[18]</sup> I think this is a broad pattern in political conversations: we attack entire worldviews, demanding the person we are talking at conclude that they are wrong, rather than chip away slowly at foundations. Even when we're correct, we're ineffective.

## **Take Away Message**

**Section: 5:7**

Moral Foundation Theory showed us a world where liberals and conservatives were merely different, not better or worse. We also live in a world where fascism has raised its head, and we watch some politicians who seem uncaring, who don't match the positive community-building set of values ascribed to cognitive-conservatives in general. My conservative neighbor is described by Moral Foundation Theory -- the leaders he follows are more varied, and some are very different from him.

This can easily create a marketing trap for liberals: Obama's values are a lot like his followers, arguably near the middle of the Democratic Party, not on the edge with his base. Vice President Dick Cheney was a different phenomena: he has different values than his followers, even if they follow him for his values. The trap: if liberals see their uncle at the Thanksgiving table who empowers Dick Cheney as being like Dick Cheney, all our arguments will miss his inner values. We'll keep arguing that Republican policies create a merciless world where only the strong survive, they'll keep arguing that people need challenges to thrive, and the leaders already know that they are creating that merciless world. We can be more effective if we realize the greater psychological distance between conservative leaders and followers (at least at certain times in history -- I think this is one) than between liberals and their leaders.

Research on fascism shows that many cognitive-conservatives -- people who have conservative values of Haidt's Moral Foundations -- look up to leaders who do not share the conservative Moral Foundations. You don't have to convince the leaders, you have to convince their electorate.

## **Bibliography**

**Section: 5:8**

I highly suggest at least skimming Bob Altemeyer's "The Authoritarians," published in 2006, Winnipeg: University of Manitoba. OCLC 191061772. And available for free online: <http://members.shaw.ca/jeanaltemeyer/drbob/TheAuthoritarians.pdf>

1. These two chapters are openly unbalanced: successes from liberal history, conservative movements at their very, very worst. This makes sense for a workbook for liberals trying their best to stop the worst of conservatism, and obviously is not useful for *comparing* liberals and conservatives. I hope someone else will write the

corresponding chapters: what to liberals get most wrong when they do have power, and how can conservatives not merely defeat liberals but pressure us to better liberals? Much of the cognitive science does seem to be coming from Explorers (liberals) who I think are overly focused on conservative's fear and shame responses, and not realizing that these studies may point out shortcomings among liberals. I'm not ready to write that book, I hope someone else does.

2. *The Authoritarians*, Altemeyer, Bob 2006. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba. OCLC 191061772. This is available as a [free pdf \[http://members.shaw.ca/jeanaltmeyer/drbob/TheAuthoritarians.pdf\]](http://members.shaw.ca/jeanaltmeyer/drbob/TheAuthoritarians.pdf) . Altemeyer writes in a blunt style and is often insulting towards demographics he considers the leaders and followers who create fascism, but he has a more tuned focus on the problems of the right than more recent cognitive science. Altemeyer's bluntness and Haidt's neutrality make excellent companions to read side-by-side. I find both more informative than the less focused insults thrown at conservatives by some other researchers who treat conservatism as a single pathology.
3. Conservatives in the US have traditionally opposed a strong, unified executive: they want states' rights, a Senate with rules designed to obstruct, and power balanced and counter-balanced. Meanwhile liberals on average have often wanted a president that can get things done and create change, and authoritarian-minded people most of whom are also conservative want a very powerful man in charge. When we look at the demographics, liberals tend towards the middle, and two poorly-defined groups of conservatives that most current research lumps together are on opposite sides. This is both a signpost pointing at the worst conservative habits, and a good meme to spread: healthy conservatives believe in a weak president, fascists prefer a strong one. It's also good to note that the cognitive science research is finding four rather different groups or psychological profiles who tend to vote together as conservatives: small-government social-capital conservatives, angry low-self-esteem authoritarian followers who want someone to take charge, people who want to be in charge, and libertarians. Most studies don't go this far. I'm jumping far ahead of the evidence, but I would bet the authoritarian and dominant conservatives make the worst neighbors, and the social-capital conservatives make the best, with liberals in the middle. To speculate even more wildly, I think much of the success of the American experiment has been having small-government advocates dominate the conservative side compared to conservatives in Europe looking to a king or dictator, having more authoritarian-minded people in dominating their politics. I'll speculate American and European liberals are more like each other, and our politics have been different because different conservative demographics dominated the right.
4. RWA followers are people who score high on Right Wing Authoritarian tests and also prefer to follow rather than lead
5. Altemeyer only discusses *right-wing authoritarians*, and his research is in the wake of the rise of 20th century European fascism. It's worth repeating that his research sees many conservatives as non-authoritarian. Disentangling different definitions could get difficult. We've defined cognitive-conservative or Protectors to be someone who values authority, so by that definition, someone with liberal politics and authoritarian characteristics is falling outside what we're modeling: they might be a cognitive-conservative operating in an environment where economics defines the political battle more than social/cognitive issues, or they might be outside these early simplistic models. This workbook is aiming for what I see as defining current US elections: Communist authoritarian movements, or libertarian movements, are not the focus here today.
6. Many sources list this quote, including: <http://www.askwhy.co.uk/warandpropaganda/03Propaganda.php> and <http://www.snopes.com/quotes/goering.asp>
7. *The Authoritarians*, p.186.

8. *The Authoritarians*, p166-167
9. Hitler and Goebbels are the obvious examples of right-wing authoritarian dominators: suffering heavily from fear and shame, tuned to the fears and shames of potential followers.
10. *The Authoritarians*, Altemeyer. p.168
11. Conservatives fundamentally believe in an ordered universe. This universe is very similar to chimpanzee or wolf pack order: leaders above, pack below. You can't effectively tell this to a conservative once you are talking about social order: but you can make sure that high school students study pack animals, and teach people to identify and perhaps overcome these instincts while young.
12. *Study: Teen Antismoking Ads Backfiring* Reviewed by Louise Chang, MD. WebMD Health News <http://www.webmd.com/smoking-cessation/news/20061031/study-teen-antismoking-ads-backfiring>
13. *The Authoritarians*, p.61.
14. *The Origins of That Eisenhower 'Every Gun That Is Made...' Quote* [<http://www.usnews.com/opinion/blogs/robert-schlesinger/2011/09/30/the-origins-of-that-eisenhower-every-gun-that-is-made-quote>] , Robert Schlesinger, Sept 30, 2011.
15. *The Good, Racist People*, Ta-Nehisi Coates. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/07/opinion/coates-the-good-racist-people.html> [<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/07/opinion/coates-the-good-racist-people.html>]
16. Teaching about subtle racism seems to help: neither talking not about racism or Jim Crow, nor accusing individuals of being subtle racist, rather talking about how subtle racism works. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aversive\\_racism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aversive_racism) to start. Note: I'm out of my depth on this, and ideally will point people towards real experts in a later draft. Reader suggestions welcome.
17. *The Nature of Implicit Prejudice: Implications for Personal and Public Policy* [[http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~mrbworks/articles/InPress\\_Shafir.pdf](http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~mrbworks/articles/InPress_Shafir.pdf)] by Curtis D. Hardin, Brooklyn College & Graduate Center, City University of New York, and Mahzarin R. Banaji, Harvard University, provides a broad overview of implicit [unconscious] racism, how it is continuing to impact us even as explicit racism rates drop.
18. "Prejudice Among the Well-Intentioned", Dr. Sam Gaertner [<http://gaertner.socialpsychology.org/>] . At talk at Purnell Hall at the University of Delaware, April 24, 2013.

## **Transition: How Do You Choose Goals:**

### **What does winning look like?**



Political conversations at the Thanksgiving table are notorious for being simply bad conversations. Conservative ideals thrive in a scary world: if we can't get along, if we have arguments where neither side listens, politics will shift towards fear, people will seek strong fathers to maintain order. If we want to win, we need to live our values: to be active listeners even when we disagree, modeling anti-fundamentalist behaviors where we continue to respect people, patiently creating space for compassion and logic to do their slow work rather than winning a point. We also need to be able to stand strong on our values -- another way that liberals sometimes evoke the need for a strong father is when we compromise not just with someone, but compromise our own voice: President Carter evoked a need for a strong father because his own voice was too weak. The Gandhian activist ideal: gentle, engaged, listening, non-vilifying, and unstoppable.

### **Choosing Goals for a Conversation**

The first half of the book reviews many possible strategies, but before you can pick, you need to explore possible goals. What is it possible to accomplish in any given conversation?

As you review goals, it's clear that there are different times to apply the techniques explored in the first section. I want to see Obama kick Romney's ass, maybe get in a zinger that looks Romney look bad; with a conservative friend I might prefer an NVC conversation where he does most of the talking, real conversations that get to the heart.

In any particular argument, "winning" can be complex. Is your goal to feel vindicated whether you convince anyone or not? Shore up your own base? Convince smart people on the other side? Convince people on this issue? Convince people that your side should lead, whether they agree with you or not? Undo a "trap" or "trigger" issue whose importance is mostly tripping up real dialogue?

### **"Winning" is not a real goal. Winning what?**

The sections ahead will vary the goals for each issue: aiming to get moderate-conservatives to see the facts of the economy differently, change their underlying values on gay marriage, and encourage them to loosen some of their distrust for Pro-Choice candidates that they otherwise agree with.

### **Meta-Goals**

It's easy to see the kind of world that pulls people to vote right-wing: angry voices, chaos and confusion leave many people wanting a strong, strict father-figure.

Progressive values thrive more on hope. From Gandhi to the Black Panthers, doing good acts in the world counts for more than arguments. Some of the best examples of transformation I've seen come from vegetarian efforts that are open-minded and welcoming, that help people transform their health while very lightly mentioning the compassion and environmental values that go alongside the health benefits.

### **Consider your audience**

Progressives love facts and policy: my personal favorite discussion style is a logical debate, scoring points, as if this is a class where a teacher will grade us. Occasionally this communication style is effective: it has worked to bring almost all scientifically minded people -- people that like facts, policy and footnotes -- towards the left in the US today. We shouldn't remove our old favorite way of communicating from our toolkit, just use it (only) when the person we're talking to appreciates it.

Are you trying to convince, calm or connect with the person you are talking to? Or to convince other listeners? Tripping someone up and making them look stupid is usually pointless if your goal is to get them to one day vote for your candidate.

- Are you talking to a scientist: lay out a hypothesis and then examine evidence together.
- An engineer? Give them a problem, and then let them solve it.
- A teacher? Ask questions that will get them exploring as they answer.
- Someone who deeply disagrees on one issue? Talk about something else, focus on corruption instead of arguing.

## Section II: Issue by Issue Workbook



The first section explored a wide variety of new and old thinking and theory on how compassionate people can create more compassionate politics. Section II switches from science to application: from reviewing science and history, to a first effort apply these ideas to four example issues. Yes, much of this is new, it includes speculation and brainstorming, ideas to try rather than well tested theories. Use the worksheets, choose your own favorite issues, figure out where you have better ideas.

Each of the four practice-issues uses very different pieces from the first section:

1. Abortion: Fires up conservative sense of sanctity, which soon leads to a crisis of authority: you can't trust someone to lead if they don't understand basic sanctity.
  - Strategic Impact: Abortion keeps good-hearted people at each others' throats, even when they agree on many issues, while it provides a life-affirming position for military-financial puppet politicians.
  - Values: Political conversations on the sanctity of a pregnancy have been ineffective and overwhelmed other perspectives. Where does liberal policy really breach conservative sanctity? Can we make abortion ineffective as a wedge issue even if we never agree on the sacredness of a fetus?
2. Gay Marriage: In recent years we're seeing rapid victories: rolling back authoritarian thinking.
  - Strategic Impact: People who might otherwise be fiscally conservative are finding themselves unable to accept last year's "in-group" rules.
  - Values: Even many strong conservatives are recognizing the acceptability and the right of people in love to get married. Why are liberals winning here, what can we learn?
3. American Exceptionalism: This issue is one of extreme disconnect, where progressives simply don't understand conservatives.
  - Strategic Impact: It is a trigger issue, used to make conservatives feel uncomfortable with liberals and liberal leaders. Exceptionalism is a code-word without a specific policy, and so liberals are silenced and confused by it.
  - Values: People who understand why America should never apologize form an "in-group." Liberals don't get the secret handshake. Can we tell a story about America that will ring more true and reconnect us?
4. Economics: Progressives rage against an imagined conservative viewpoint, which simply isn't the widely held conservative viewpoint.
  - Values: Progressives demand more compassion for those in need, and typical conservative-voting church-going people don't disagree about compassion, but they do see the current system as reasonably just and thus fair, and see the challenges that individuals face as healthy challenges.

- Strategic Impact: Failure to engage conservative hesitations keeps us repeating points where there is agreement, instead of answering the questions conservatives have. People feel like there is a deep, fundamental values disagreement where there isn't one.

**These are mostly conservative wedge issues**

These issues are not the key to progressive successes, rather they are examples of wedge issues where we tend to stumble, issues where liberals often don't understand where conservatives are coming from.

## Chapter 8

### Abortion: Sanctity, Authority, and Otherness



Abortion is perhaps the key wedge issue dividing good people who want to put aside greed and corruption, people who give money to charity or give time to volunteer. We wind up calling each other evil or crazy over honestly held differences of opinion.

How do *you* talk to someone who believes that life begins at conception? You probably can't change their religious values: can you deflate the anger-politics that feeds on our differences?

#### Framing & Goals

Section: 8:1

##### Today's Conservative Framing:

##### ◆ Respect for Sanctity as a Leadership Requirement

8:1.1

**Ordinary People:** For many good people whose politics are based on their honest beliefs, not just politics, abortion is a heart-rending cause. A fetus is a defenseless human baby, and the sacred values are unlimited: this issue overwhelms any day to day politics. When people don't respect the idea that these babies' lives are sacred, they become other, outsiders from the society of good people. In a world where defenseless human babies are treated callously, there is an opening for a stern, powerful father figure to step in and restore sanity.

Money interests support Pro-Life because it helps define us into two camps. Remove abortion's value as a wedge, even without changing anyone's mind, and you ruin the value of Pro-Life to the money players. Remain one community, disagreeing but not separating, and you ruin the wedge.

**Politics:** If you represent the interests of the top .1% and act in the interests of donors, what do you do, how do you get 51% of the population to vote for you anyway? You take issues of honest controversy but little budget impact, like abortion and gun control, and rally people around these ideological wedge issues far from the budget issues and give-aways to lobbyists. Note that there is something strange about these wedge issues: they dominate debates, but as Republicans and Democrats each take turns in power, nothing much happens quickly, just minor laws at the edges. When the supporters of abortion restrictions take power, they rush to lower taxes on the wealthy. This approach reaches many cognitive-conservatives: liberals don't appear to have a sane sense of what is sacred, and so are not trusted to be leaders, even when their other positions match up with a typical cognitive conservative's



self-interest.

**Conservative Story & Frame Summary:** Women are making bad choices, violating the sacred, and we need a strong strict-father type leader to step in and make things right. People who don't understand how bad abortion is aren't morally fit to lead.

**Implications:** If we're going to keep abortion safe & legal, we don't have to convince everyone that abortion *isn't* a sin. We have to convince people that we are sane, honest and capable of leading for many reasons even though we disagree on this one issue. Progressives can give women choice within the world of force and politics while letting Pro-Life advocates preach their views on when life begins outside of politics -- as long as we keep this from being a useful as a political wedge.

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If you can't trust me with a choice, how can you trust me with a child?

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Linguistically, it's hard to imagine a worse framed slogan. The words will be heard to twice slander your own side as untrustworthy, both with choices and children.

To a conservative or moderate ear, it's time to call "Dad," to summon a strict father to straighten out the mess created by "untrustworthy" liberals. See [Glossary: Lakoff's Strict Father Metaphor](#). The political goal of the Pro-Life movement, the reason that saving fetuses is packaged together with cutting funding for maternal health care, is to convince good-hearted people that you liberals, and especially your liberal leaders, can not be trusted. That the women you want to give a Choice to "can't be trusted with a choice." The goal of conservative strategists is to mix together progressives, untrustworthiness, irresponsibility and mistakes: exactly like our bumperstickers say.

Countries with pro-woman government policies find that paid maternity leave, day care and health care lead to more women being empowered to choose not to have abortions.<sup>[1]</sup>

Why isn't our frame:

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Respecting Women is Pro-Life.

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A frame isn't the same as a policy goal or wishlist: "empower women with the option to control their own bodies and make their own choices, and stop making this an issue." Yet it creates real unanswerables for conservative values, while

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Against abortion? Don't have one."

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merely serves to divide us into two groups and decrease trust. The slogan's core message is that I am separate from you and don't want to listen from you, not that I respect women.<sup>[2]</sup>

*Against abortion? Don't have one!*, like conservative slogans, orbits around abortion, rather than orbit around women's rights: we are merely saying **No** while talking about the conservative frame. "Respecting Women is Pro-Life" breaks the conservative frame badly, aiming to avoid conservative triggers. It both expresses our core value of respecting women (abortion is not what we're here for) and -- if you follow it with the facts about abortion rates in Socialist northern Europe or the failure to reduce abortion in Catholic, Pro-Life Latin America<sup>[3]</sup> -- it helps us answer some of their fears.

Many of us desire to tell uterus-centric Republicans to shut up, and to prove them logically wrong. Do we want to be right, or win elections? There may times when politicians should be told to shut up, but it will not work on individuals who truly hold a deep belief. Often

Nonviolence practitioners have faced people who deserve to be screamed at or worse, but have successfully chosen overwhelming moral weight, expressed without anger even when the listener might deserve it, as a path to win as well be right.

Frames to Transform Our Message:

- What is your goal? On the abortion debate, agreement would be a miracle, but a realistic goal might be preventing abortion from becoming the key issue in deciding who is a good person or who is "other." Find ways to disagree on this issue and still work together, still be one country.
- What is the core progressive truth here? The progressive truth doesn't orbit around abortion, it orbits around women: "Respect Women."

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I trust women and I vote

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*Proofreaders: please help me navigate the difficult challenge of writing about women being shit on by Republicans where certain kinds of fighting back are fair, justified, and politically ineffective.*

### Goals for the Workbook

**Abortion is the first issue in this workbook because it's at the crux: people who all want a better world are turned against each other with this wedge issue. I don't believe that we can reframe the abortion debate to total agreement or solve the differences in religious perspective. I do think that liberal policy makers have often treated conception and the beginnings of life with at least as much sanctity as conservative politicians: in fact rather than in rhetoric, lowering the rates of abortion just as effectively as anything conservatives have done. Yet we've bungled the communications, misunderstood the conservative "sense of smell" around this moral question, leaving good people are divided.**

**We've fallen into the conservative framing talking about when life starts: as usual, reactively saying "NO!" to the conservative story instead of saying our own story. And in the world of cynical politics we've lost track of our goals, allowing the abortion issue to break apart an otherwise widely shared framework of compassion shared by most Americans.**

## Cracking the Conservative Frame: Exposing Contradictions to Conservative Value Tastes.

Section: 8:2

### Liberals don't intuit conservatives' sense of sanctity, and some politicians use that as leverage to claim leadership

Those who want power through division need the focus to be on two-dimensional caricatures: they need a good-hearted church-goer to look at a bought-and-paid lackey of the military-industrial complex who is defunding Head Start and buying missiles, and *see* "Pro-Life." The goal is to create division and to get good people to stop listening to other good people: to make the other side seem to have no sense of shared values, and that the only morally acceptable authority, the only leaders you can trust, must agree on this issue above all others. They win when abortion is a litmus test, defining the good-guys and the bad-guys for across politics.

The abortion frame isn't policy, it isn't about saving babies: it's about trust.

Contradictions in the conservative frame:

### ❖ False Authority Replacing Individual Faith

8:2.1

Even if you believe that killing a fetus is killing a baby and the worst kind of murder, there are contradictions in sending in armed men. Other people deserving of compassion will have their rights stepped on by the false-authority of anti-abortion laws.

To a liberal mindset, we might see a typical story in the abortion debate as a woman whose birth control failed or was forgotten, and whose rights will now be trampled. Conservative minds are harsher about full accountability for any mistakes, and so unlikely to back down within this framing. However, we have made the typical liberal mistake of being wrapped in the policy instead of choosing a frame, policy instead of people: some women also choose to give birth in difficult circumstances. Republican policy violates their right to ultimately, carefully *choose*, rather than be told. There's no policy difference because no abortion services are needed in this story, but it's a very different world if you believe in freedom or faith.

### Suggested Progressive Story #1

Imagine this scenario today: a raped pregnant woman struggles for days with the decision to carry the baby or abort, then ultimately chooses to carry her child.

In recent Republican vice-presidential candidate Paul Ryan's world this woman will have not made that choice, she will now be bringing a child into the world because she was forced to, because Mr. Ryan told her to and forced her to. Even if you believe a fetus is fully human, there are cases where there would be no abortion, where in Ryan's ideal world the state is committing a crime by cognitive-conservative values, continuing to apply to force to the raped woman rather

than even giving her the possibility of making a brave choice. Women are invisible to many of the Republican leaders: you can believe that conception is sacred and still realize that Paul Ryan doesn't respect women, doesn't see women as full human beings capable of faith, and doesn't give them their rights.<sup>[4]</sup>

**Summary:** What if you believe that life begins at conception? Then Republicans are still treating women with disrespect, still violating the proper bounds of *authority*. Can we create space for people to express their sense of *sanctity* without grasping at authority over women?

## Breaching the Wedge:

### What Works? What can we cooperate on?

Section: 8:3



Working on a task together is perhaps the best way for individuals to feel like a united community. Bridging the wedge breaks the key goal of the politicized Pro-Life movement.

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What works? Can we work on the parts we agree on?

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You believe that a fetus is as sacred as a full human life; I believe that I don't know exactly how life starts and am not prepared to have the government declare a fetus as sacred, but appreciate and am ready to stand by the idea of a pregnancy having some aspect of the sacred -- not backed up by armed men and jails. Very sacred and somewhat sacred: seems like there is room to work together?

### Explore Questions Together

8:3.1

What works to reduce abortion? Have you researched which developed countries have the lowest rates? What do they do?<sup>[5]</sup> *If possible, don't answer this question, let them look for themselves or together with you.*

Consider in any conversation if your goal should be to talk about something less divisive than abortion-law: if so, this is a good spot to just stop the conversation, offer to continue after they do research. It turns out to be the most Socialist, women's rights, sex-positive states. Sex-guilt and poverty increase abortions; giving women more choices (many more choices) will turn out to be the best thing you can do if you actually believe that a fetus is a baby: *I have not found pro-life people receptive to being bashed with this fact, but have found the process of looking for it together, at least discussing that I've searched for this information and am curious what they know, this team-building breaches the divide between "us" and "them."*<sup>[6]</sup>

Personally, I value the steps proposed here that increase options for women in ways that will let them choose less abortions. But this book isn't about abortion, it's about politics: the political goal is to un-wedge our communities.

Don't let the anger-driven right-wingers frame the debate: It's not Pro- vs Anti-Life, liberal leadership does not mean more abortions. It's about whether the *government*, through *force*, will

make the choice. Let the government provide Head Start, time off from work, and everything that the low-abortion-rate Scandinavian countries provide, and yes let Paul Ryan as a private citizen pray as hard as he wants for raped women to carry their babies. Being tolerant of choice regarding government force and Pro-Life in your beliefs, faith and support for struggling mothers are not real contradictions: today both are missing from Republican platform, and Democrats are sucked into opposing the Pro-Life narrative instead of saying our own.

Explore ways to focus on the conservative values of authority -- focusing on the way conservative politicians abuse authority by their own value structure -- and countering the division into "us" and "them."

### **Sample Conversation I: Use lots of questions!**

**Section: 8:4**

Let's imagine this hard story: a young woman in our community was raped, and is scared to have the baby but doesn't want an abortion and is struggling. What is it I should do? In real life, few people will begin where the politicized reactionaries begin, shouting threats if she has an abortion. We don't have to control the conversations and won't be able to: just ask the question and listen, be on the same team whenever possible.

### **The Nurturing and Empowering Frame Summary**

**Section: 8:5**

A woman has a challenging faith decision ahead. One side does not help her, and does not speak to her faith, their only contribution is through the police enforcing the decision they have imposed on her. The other side aims to help: to create enough space in the material world that she can make a decision of her own faith without fear. She may choose to have a baby from a rape, or that will impoverish her: this must be her own faith-choice that she must be allowed to make, and our role is to support her.

Below are two value-laden stories. Hopefully the progressive story will make more sense to a cognitive-conservative than the cheap and easy version promulgated by the Republican echo chamber.

### **Pulling it all together for a one-to-one conversation**

**Section: 8:6**

- Start with active listening. Try to keep cool with individuals. Give them a chance to talk. Possible questions, if like me you're not patient enough to just listen:
  - How long would a women who committed the crime of abortion be in jail? When would she be allowed to be released on parole?
  - What has worked to lower abortion around the globe?<sup>[7]</sup>
- Agree with everything you can agree with. Certainly many women suffer after having an abortion, certainly many women regret it later. These don't prove that the government should send the police in to stop it. If you feel that abortion goes against your sense of what is right -- maybe you personally feel that it is a difficult, painful choice, something less than murder but more than nothing -- then share that. None of these beliefs even begin to give the government the right into a woman's uterus, so don't treat the "other side" as enemies. Agree every last bit you can, before finding your truth and speaking it strongly. Don't focus on disputing their truth, focus on speaking your truth.
  - My truth has little to do with abortions, and much to do with respecting and empowering women.
- Use stories and metaphors that focus on women thinking, making hard decisions, and needing support. Use stories that evoke a nurturing parent helping good people through hard decisions, not evoking a strict father to restore order: if you let your discussion devolve into a shouting match, that evokes the strict father to restore order every bit as much as the topic being discussed!
- What do we believe in, what do you believe in? I believe in trusting and empowering women. Speak your truth, not your opponent's opposite. I have very little to say about abortion within politics. I have a lot to say about the way girls and women have been abused by our political and economic system.

This section has had a heavy emphasis on compassion and connection with individuals you know who are Pro-Life. Often, it is more effective to show strength with politicians. Yes, when Mr. Todd Akins<sup>[8]</sup> is ready to force a raped woman to carry the rapists' child partly because he is too lazy and disrespectful of women to learn basic biology -- shout. Attack the men who make it central to their lives to take rights from women, or who make denial of women's rights a stepping-stone to power. Attack them not for being Pro-Life in the compassion of their hearts, but for being ready to use government power callously, for being ever ready to use force against women but too lazy to learn biology or find helpful ways to make the choice of having a child easier. If you really want to cost someone like Akins votes, attack him for forcing all women -- including those who would choose not to terminate their pregnancy -- to do it under force of arrest rather than through appeals to faith. Meanwhile, be easy with friends, co-workers and family members who honestly believe what they believe.

### **Summary: Create Space So People Can Believe What They Will Believe and Vote With You**

8:6.1

Consider spending more time listening to people disturbed by abortions. We can respect their

sense of sanctity, can help them feel heard, even if we don't budge a centimeter on making abortion anything but a freely available choice. Combine listening with asking people their position amongst many more than two opposed labels, letting people declare themselves as believers in Life without forcing them to automatically oppose Choice to do so. And combined with focusing unwanted pregnancy conversations on women making tough choices who need our nurturing help.

It is more effective politics to let people say "I'm not like that" rather than trying to tar them with the same brush. SEE: WIN BY CREATING SPACE

I think it's ok to blast at Anti-Life Abortion-Punishers at times. Just be careful to help people who believe in Life and even "Life Begins at Conception" to not be entangled with people like Paul Ryan who oppose pre-natal care and Head Start.

## Section: 8:7

### Exercise 1 on Abortion: Challenging Progressive Disengagement

8:7.1

1. Consider your standard conversational approach about abortion. Write down:
  - What do you say to Pro-Choice liberals?
  - What do you say to Pro-Life conservatives?
2. Afterwards, [listen to this man who is a child of a rape \[http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=2KcqRSMbtXA\]](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=2KcqRSMbtXA) .

Review your responses as if this man were your friend. Do they still make sense? Are we allowing ourselves to get so triggered by dishonest conservative leaders who *use* abortion that we forget that most Pro-Life voters are coming largely from a place of sacredness? The men who want to be empowered as our strict-fathers are using an issue that is sacred in the hearts of good people: how can we keep dialog open with people who we disagree with -- and will continue to disagree with -- on matters of faith and religion?

Imagine a bleeding-heart conservative, a charitable person and good neighbor who believes that God brings life at conception. If you could encourage them to make one small change in their views, what would it be? Mine might be: What if we lived in a world where those people still called for a Pro-Life ethic from the churches, if they still held that life began at conception and said that unmarried people shouldn't have sex, but gave up on getting the government and police to be at the center of their faith? So they could again ally with politicians who followed Jesus's thoughts on helping the poor and healing the sick?

### Exercise 2 on Abortion: Brainstorming Linguistics, Frames and Labels

8:7.2

What are all the ways you could name the movements that have labeled themselves as Pro-Life and Pro-Choice? Are there more descriptive names? For this exercise try to avoid, or at least put on the edge of the paper, terms that are merely offensive like Anti-Choice or Pro-Abortion. Instead look for terms or phrases that get at key ideas, phrases more *descriptive* of characteristics



of each movement.

### **Simple Example: Women's Choice vs Government's Choice**

This is a very liberal frame, a fighting-frame rather than an agreement frame, but it makes our point and might be a good choice for base-building. It's unlikely that even vaguely Pro-Life people would ever use this frame. The next section will seek subtler terms that make more sense to many people, not just liberals.

### **Framing That Counteracts "Us vs Them" Wedging**

A good way to break down us-vs-them is using more than two labels!

A central problem for liberals in the abortion fight is the "us vs them" divide it generates -- this division is a way to win votes for politicians who don't represent ordinary people.<sup>[9]</sup> This separation helps corrupt politicians thrive under ideological cover. A key to progressive framing is to make it more complex, to get people really thinking [See Glossary: Open Thinking](#). One key to framing the abortion debate is simply to have more terms including some that bridge the wedge.

Some Pro-Life people [by today's definition] really are well described as Pro-Life, others are merely Pro-Birth and happy to be controlling women. Let's separate them: don't call the whole movement Pro-Birth, go case by case. And perhaps allow for more than one flavor of Pro-Choice, including a very clearly labeled position for people who pray that women will make the choice not to have an abortion, but want to leave women with that choice. Right now the available frames guide that person to call herself Pro-Life, because that is what she feels in her heart and prays fervently, but what liberals are supposed to be caring about is that person's position on the government, where she is sadly and unenthusiastically accepting of choice. We need to remember that sadly and unenthusiastically accepting choice is 100% of our policy goal, it is as far as the scope of our politics should go.

Repeat the above exercise, aiming to fracture both sides into ever smaller groups. Especially look for terms that criss-cross the current political divide, wreck the boundaries of "us" and "them". In the drug debates, there are people very focused on harm-reduction: they see the damage done by drugs and want to get serious rather than ideological. What if there were a well-used word that included people who were pro-life meaning they want to reduce abortions and believe in their own hearts that abortions are the wrong choice, but still want to leave women to make preferably the pro-life choice, but empowered to make the choice?

My first brainstorm on expanded labels for the choice, abortion and life debates are [at the end](#) of this chapter and online at [CognitivePolitics.org](#). Before you read my thoughts, please brainstorm your own and send me your ideas, help create new categories and come up with better names for the categories. The ideal frame is one where people with complex ideas about abortion will be comfortable with an accurate term.

## Framing meets Active Listening: Give People Their Voice

Surveys of homophobia have found an interesting result: if you ask people who don't approve of homosexuality if they support Civil Unions, they are more likely to be ok with this after saying they oppose Gay Marriage. If the only chance they have to express their distaste with homosexuality is Civil Unions, they'll oppose them.

Similarly, many people are disturbed by abortion: if we give them a chance to say they oppose abortion *in some way*, if we merely do a good job listening to their opinion, that will often be enough -- they don't really want to use force, they really want to have their voice heard. Sometimes expanding the window helps -- gay marriage has made civil unions much less controversial. Sometimes creating new frames inside the current, polarized window will help, a way for people to legislate Choice while still having faith in Life.

Can we create a frame, a label, that allows people to *express* their distaste of abortion, while clearly indicating that they are talking to women and women's supporters, not police or restrictors?

Give people their voice, help them feel heard even when they disagree with you, and they are less likely to try to force you to obey.

Against Abortion? Join my church's single mothers support group!

What would happen if we created labels for people who were broadly pro-life and specifically anti-abortion, but didn't want to use the government to force that opinion on you? You can be, many people are, Pro-Choice, Pro-Life and Pro-Faith.

I expect "pro-life but giving women their choice about it" is one of the most widely held positions on abortion, a position that often leads to voting Republican out of feelings of connection to the Pro-Life movement, even though it matches better to Democratic policy choices. People who feel deeply that abortion is bad, but don't want to use force against women who choose otherwise, have a comfortable *home* in the Pro-Life *framing* today. They feel at home in the party that is implementing policies they wouldn't agree with, and feel cold and disconnected to the party that keeps abortion safe, legal and just as rare.

The Republican in-groups will turn on themselves with expanded framing: they cannot make space for Pro-Life through Faith (not government) when it is time for their platform, not without giving up on the whole abortion fight. It *must* be "us" and "them" for Republican success. If we can successfully turn up the complexity of the soundbites, we'll win elections.

### Exercise 3: Explore the Strict Father and Nurturing Parent on unwanted pregnancies

Imagine you are a caring father with a daughter, listening to a story about a rape: what is your first thought?

- Did you primarily get angry and wish for a world where somebody would punish the rapist?
- Did you immediately get nurturing and want to help the woman heal?
- Something else?

It's not unreasonable, it's a part of a healthy response, to want to punish the rapist -- this is the time even very liberal people take on what Lakoff calls a strict-father perspective. But note: it's dangerous territory from a framing perspective. Moving the "fault" of an unwanted pregnancy from a woman to a rapist still puts many people in the mood of "the world is out of order, we need a strict-father government to help put it in order." Recent Republican statements such as Todd Akin's "legitimate rape" were so wrong that they cost votes, but we are in some danger that they will lose votes but expand the window of what is acceptable: creating a frame of how violated a woman has to be before the state can't force her to have the child. How can we talk about unwanted-pregnancy-politics in a way that puts people in a healthy, hopeful, empathic state of mind?

The more effective frame regarding abortion law is focusing on the woman who is struggling with a challenging choice. As soon as both participants in the debate are walking in her shoes, it doesn't matter if you're Pro-Life -- "well I wouldn't have an abortion" -- she needs help & nurturance, she doesn't need the government to interfere.

## Exercise 4: Introduce Complexity and Depth to Conversation

Section: 8:8

If you have a friend or family member who cares about abortion, consider offering to spend an hour focused on their issue. Ask them what they want to explore, and along with what they want to look at, add:

1. What are the steps that mean more pregnancies survive into thriving children? What has been tried, what works?
2. Which of these steps do you believe the government should do?
3. Which approaches have been most successful at reducing abortion?

If you actually do the exercise with someone you would otherwise argue with, you're likely to notice that both liberals and conservatives have many ideas that reduce abortion: a liberal might believe that empowering women so they can talk about sex without shame and fear would mean more birth-control, and the government should provide health care to every pregnant woman, and there could be a religious or sacred voice (far from government) advocating taking responsibility and seeing life as sacred. A conservative flips many of these, with the church

Don't try this except at home... Democratic leaders need to lead, to get on-message with hard-hitting, repeated-frame soundbites. But off the tv we can connect with depth.

providing babysitting and nurturing while the government plays the strict father role of saying 'no.'

Nonetheless, if you spend time in allied conversation working on a [SHARED TASK](#) -- share the task of brainstorming, coming up with all the ideas you can, not arguing about them -- this is a way for everyone to feel like they are part of the same in-group.

You can bring two attitudes to this conversation. You can try to win: "hey the Socialist countries are completely Pro-Choice and yet effectively more Pro-Life than you, and Red States have terrible abortion records. I win! I win this debate!" Or try to have an hour long conversation, where at the end everyone leaves having connected. You may not overthrow the other person's belief structure -- even if you learn something and they learn something, even that is not key -- this exercise is really to make Pro-Choice people (you, and the politicians you vote for) seem like responsible human beings to people who are being manipulated to see you as otherwise. Don't win points, share mutual respect so that in-group politics will collapse.

## Stick to Your Frame -- Exercise 5

8:8.1

Google a news article about abortion that has comments.

Among the broadly-defined liberal or Pro-Choice comments, count how many use each of these frames, counting a comment in both frames if it uses both:

1. Within the frame "is abortion ok?"
2. Within the frame "does the government take away a women's choice?"

Think about what comments would get the frame back from *pro-vs-anti abortion* to either *pro-vs-anti choice* or something less clearly divided.

## Sample Comments on Abortion

Section: 8:9

**Started Gentle** Turning up heat towards the end. Challenge people to hold their own values with more integrity, rather than to mimic your values. single-mom liberal friend. There's a little leading to some of these questions, but not a lot. Forces thinking.

**Reversed accusation.** Welcoming "opponents" to be better, rather than insulting them.

A long comment I posted to an abortion article:

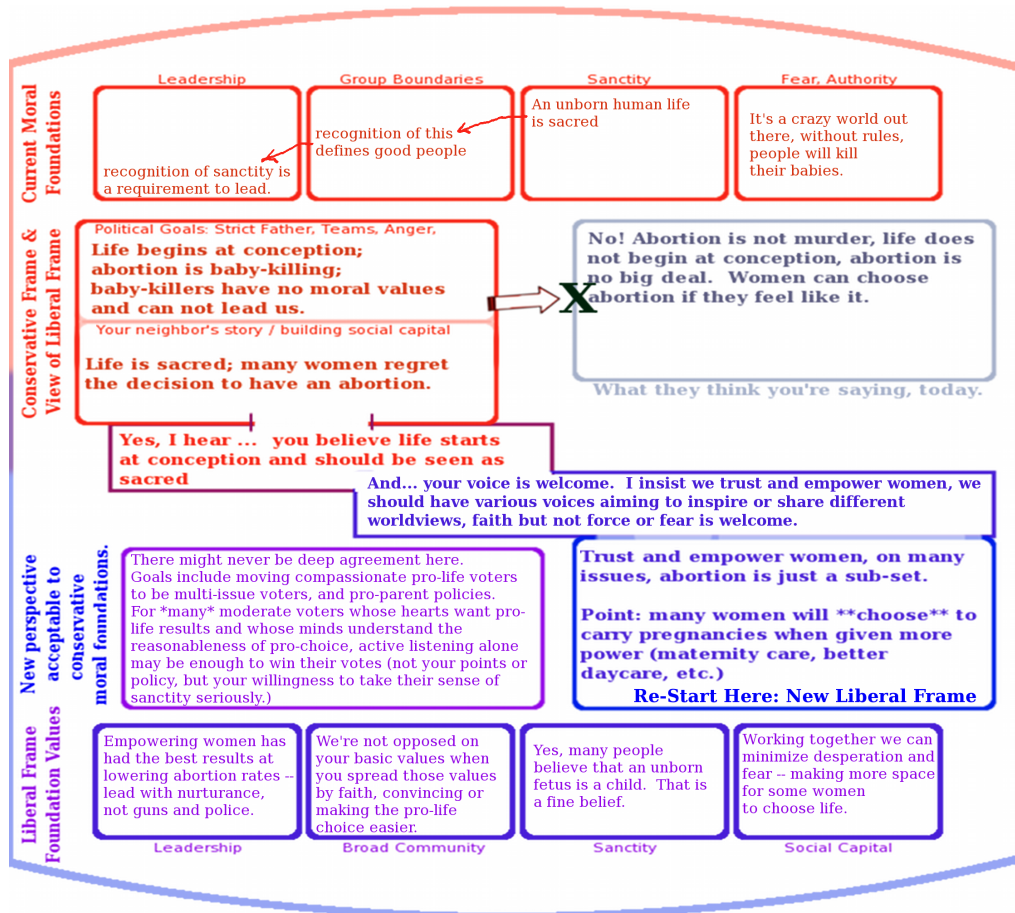
**How much progress is being made in creating respect for the sanctity of life?**

Time Magazine takes a purely legalistic and punishment view the Pro-Life question, caring about polls rather than life, legislation rather than results. **The article assumes that Pro-Life people are purely about criminalizing abortion, rather than actually lowering the rate of abortion.**

**We could ask questions like this:** When someone makes a mistake and gets pregnant, and is comparing the choices of throwing her own life upside down in order to carry the baby vs having an abortion, is her community showing up with offers to babysit? Does your community make sure she will have prenatal health care, **respect for her difficult decision, a decent education, a tolerable economic life** if she decides to make the decision that takes more work? Before she decides whether to have an abortion, whether a legal abortion or a criminal abortion: what will we do to help if a woman in our community has a pregnancy she doesn't really want?

This article asks only the easy question: What is the government proclaiming? Who will win? What will the electorate vote for?

**Many countries have outlawed abortion,** yet have much higher rates of abortion than others that haven't outlawed it. Being Pro-Life isn't a bumper-sticker, there has to be more to it than that. What has worked in other countries -- what modern countries like the US have low abortion rates? What has actually worked? If you've spent years either Pro-Choice or Pro-Life, but don't know what pressures a woman to make a Choice she doesn't necessarily want to make, or don't know what has actually worked in other countries to lower abortion rates, look inwards. **If you don't know, a Pro-Life bumpersticker isn't enough to make you Pro-Life.**



Digital versions of the workbook charts are available in color, or blank so you can fill out your own. Find them at [CognitivePolitics.org](http://CognitivePolitics.org)

- Pro-Life: against war, the death penalty, for providing support and not shame when a woman is in need. Head Start and pre-natal care, either by the government or by the church, but by someone. It is better that pregnancies lead to birth: the tactics chosen may be up for debate.
- Abortion-Restricters: Government is the key. We need to respect the authority of the government and the government needs to tell us what to do, which is to not have abortions, backed up by the police.
- Abortion-Restricters/ Pro-Control not Pro-Life: if a fetus dies because the mother can't afford pre-natal care, it's her fault. These are the War-on-Women people who would force a raped woman to carry, but not provide pre-natal care. They often aren't even conscious enough of women to notice the foulness of police following up after a rapist.
- Abortion-Unrestricted/ Pro-Life through Faith: It is not the government's job to be sending the police to force women not to have abortions, but it is the faith community's role to encourage women to make the pro-life choice. Believing that pro-life is the right choice, but leaving it to choice. Or perhaps label this as *Life within Choice*?
- Abortion-Unrestricted + Pro-Choice + Mind Your Own Business: A fetus (or a fetus without neural activity) is not a human being and not even close and abortion should not be an issue. As a nation we should be helping people who need help, not bossing women around. It should be clear that the Democratic tent is bigger than this: people preaching Pro-Life but not legislating it should be welcome in the party of compassion, any view that does not have the government restrict abortion is welcome by the political party.

## The War on Women & The Single Issue Voter

8:11.2

*Should this chapter stay? Or be a blog? Also, Lakoff has written similar, not sure if I read his before I wrote this. Maybe I should just point at it? proofreader thoughts welcome!*

Abortion is a very confusing issue, rather on purpose: conservative strategists seek wedge issues.

I haven't seen studies, but my intuition tells me that Pro-Life in politics is really, oddly, aimed at women more than men. Yes, there are many men who want men in charge of women, but I don't see our country or our politics being **consciously led** by those urges: strategies are built around the needs of money and power. Those needs might lead to nasty actions taken against people, but the nastiness is not the motivator. The men who want to dominate are already right-wing in so many ways -- they have many other options to display their urge to be in charge. Abortion would not be brought up by the leadership of the right unless it served larger interests, unless it helps them get elected.

I think abortion is largely aimed at women. Imagine a God-fearing woman who works far too hard with a job and raising kids and taking care of the home, with a husband who thinks apologizing is among the worst things you could ever do, and she shows up at the soup kitchen to volunteer -- how do Republicans get her vote? Abortion becomes the lead. Conservative-minded nurturers are encouraged to be single issue voters.

How do we counter the War on Women? Women are collateral-damage in the old boy network's primordial hunt for wealth and dominance. In some ways the war on women is worse than liberals usually describe: the war is a byproduct, they will take away women's rights without focusing on women consciously. It's important from a framing perspective to realize that the people who seem to be fighting a war on women are not conscious that they are doing so. If you challenge them, they will be telling the truth that they are not aiming attacks at women. Many articles about abortion don't even mention women: women are more like civilian casualties than the target.

### **Focus Accusations**

If you accuse Pro-Lifers with fighting a war on women, they won't see it. Women are invisible. At the political level, we are talking about coldness and callousness rather than conscious aggression.

If you are a Pro-Life man: How long do you want to put women in jail for if they have an abortion? Can men ever be punished for abortion, or only women? Have you looked at what works for lowering abortion rates, or is the only thing you've done, the only thing, be to attack and restrict women? It's clear that for many conservative politicians, women are simply outside their area of focus.

Note that none of these accusations are about beliefs in the sanctity of life. Stay focused on the War on Women and not the personally-held faith that life begins at conception.

I feel funny here because my thoughts lead me to think that the best answer for the Pro-Choice movement is often to avoid this wedge topic: the answer to Pro-Life at Thanksgiving is to talk about something else. I'm very much the kind of liberal who enjoys complex and convoluted conversations. This book's goal is not to win points in a debating contest, but to win elections for more compassionate and higher-integrity politicians. Listening and moving on to shared concerns can mean votes will go to better people.

I think that not talking much about abortion with people who disagree with us is often the best step for the Pro-Choice movement. The biggest threat to Choice is not people believing that life begins at conception, rather it is Single Issue Voters. Pro-Life is only a central issue because it serves the interests of the wealth machine, which is callous towards women's rights but not going to spend political capital either way.

If men could get pregnant, abortion would be a sacrament. -- Florynce Kennedy<sup>[10]</sup>

If it didn't get votes, abortion wouldn't be in the party platform.

Meanwhile, many Pro-Choice groups see people like Akins as a great recruiting tool, exposing the callousness towards women of politicians using the label "Pro-Life."

And they are right too. This book is focused on messages that aim at conservatives and



moderates. The Republican callousness towards women, including a widespread mindset about rape that sees problems with the victims and spends no time angry at the rapist, was very visible in the 2012 election. This was visible to many women across the spectrum, overwhelming Lakoff's standard framing advice: Todd Akins lost when people said "No" to his reactionary message, rather than "Yes" to a pro-active liberal message.

It's quite fair to say that liberal and moderate women should be mobilized to fight back against the War on Women, recruited into organizations, even if it might be more effective with other demographics to be quiet about abortion. I do believe that the 2012 election shows the best approach: just as conservatives are trying to focus on so-called partial-birth abortion, progressives should focus on the callousness towards women of many male leaders of the Pro-Life movement. Ask them about rape, and whether a woman can choose then, ask them at what point a woman is independent enough to have power over her choices -- ideally without asking exactly whether she can have an abortion, but whether she is empowered to make either choice. Frame the issue as about women, not about fetuses or babies -- our frame should be on women being able to make their choice, not on women making a particular choice to have an abortion.

1. Abortion statistics are incredibly complex, and people tend to find statistics that support their existing beliefs. Moving the conversation into looking at what works is a very positive step -- ask you conversation partner to join you in looking at the mess of research to find out which pieces of legislation actually lower abortion. You don't need the answer, you need the process of working together.
2. "*Against abortion? Don't have one*" implies two factions, two societies with different values. It implies that people against abortion should seek leaders that share their value, they should find leaders against abortion. The quote tries to score points in an abstract debate about abortion instead of winning elections and thus getting progressives on the Supreme Court.
3. See the box labeled "Terminal Failure" listing global abortion rates in [Abortion in Latin America: Miscarriages of justice](http://www.economist.com/news/americas/21579065-brutal-farce-el-salvador-highlights-regional-failing-miscarriages-justice) [<http://www.economist.com/news/americas/21579065-brutal-farce-el-salvador-highlights-regional-failing-miscarriages-justice>] in the Economist, June 8th 2013.
4. You can read Ryan's views on abortion [in his own words](http://paulryan.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=207539#Ua0WaeuBSiE) [<http://paulryan.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=207539#Ua0WaeuBSiE>] -- note that the word "woman" doesn't get used even once. Additionally, Ryan's thoughts on [creating wedge issues](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/11/paul-ryan-abortion_n_3065932.html) [[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/11/paul-ryan-abortion\\_n\\_3065932.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/11/paul-ryan-abortion_n_3065932.html)] : while I'm arguing that liberals should bridge (reverse wedges) with pro-life individuals by making it easier for women to choose to raise a healthy child, he seeks to work with people who wouldn't want their rights interfered with but are willing to pass laws that interfere with the abortion options of the poor and the young.
5. Note that US statistics are argued over endlessly. To sweepingly overgeneralize, blue states have cut teen pregnancy rates more, while red states have cut back on abortion after pregnancy. If you are Pro-Life, there is little wiggle room that both red and blue states are using tactics that seem to work while ignoring tactics from the other side -- and while convincing pregnant teens to carry has an obvious down-side, there is strikingly little reason that a Pro-Life person wouldn't be scrambling to also implement blue-state education and

empowerment tactics even if they remain in favor of abortion restrictions. You might challenge why they don't focus on places where big differences can be made quickly, instead of enjoying this unending squabble of Pro-Choice vs Pro-Life? Or you might pull your punches and move on to other conversations.

6. Search the web, and you'll quickly find that people use statistics to meet their existing beliefs. The point is not to bash our statistics against their statistics. The goal is to transform the conversation into shared effort, get questioning happening.
7. I've asked pro-life people what has worked to lower abortion around the globe, so far none has been ready to answer. While I know some of the empirical answers and they tend to be very liberal answers, I often stop with the question. It can be a good conversation-calmer, a good chance to change topics with an invitation to return to discussing abortion later.
8. Todd Akin's 'Legitimate Rape' Claim a Peek Behind Anti-Abortion Curtain [<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/08/21/todd-akin-s-legitimate-rape-claim-a-peek-behind-anti-abortion-curtain.html>] is one of many articles
9. It's also a terrible problem for real Pro-Life people, because the issue is now always a fight instead of a cooperative give-and-take. There are many theoretically non-controversial ways to reduce abortion through empowerment rather than force, but the politicization of the issue prevents them.
10. Florynce Kennedy [[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florynce\\_Kennedy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florynce_Kennedy)]

## Chapter 9

### Gay Sex and Marriage



Progressives often feel despair around our communications skills: working-class people are voting for rich politicians who don't even respect them. Gay rights has been quite an exception: gay marriage went from barely conceived to widespread acceptance in a decade.<sup>[1] [2]</sup> Like racism, it feels absurd that we have to fight this issue, absurd that people don't get it, but we did have to fight it, and might feel some pride and gratitude at the pace of recent victories. How did we do it?

We've changed the politics of the country at an astounding rate. How did we do it?

#### Framing & Goals

Section: 9:1

#### Historical Conservative Frame: Is Homosexual Sex a Mere Sin or Existential Threat

9:1.1

Before progressives transformed homosexuality into a movement and a debate, people knew men sometimes had sex with other men.<sup>[3]</sup> And society was a bit odd in how it approached male-male sex. A soldier in a foxhole could have furtive sex and try to keep it secret, and that could be tolerated: furtive male-male sex was a mere sin.

It wasn't the sex itself that was a threat. It was the breaching of social norms: a man who had sex with dozens of men during his time in the military service and never spoke about it was ok, just a normal guy with a few sins and secrets; a man who wants a committed relationship with one other man -- in public -- is anathema. [SEE GLOSSARY: SHAME AND SIN.](#)

If you are a member of the in-group, a lie, a little corruption, or foxhole male-male sex were always things to keep quiet: everyone sins. If you were ashamed of these things, kept your head down, ideally prayed for forgiveness, that was good enough. You could still be a good Christian.

#### Moral Foundations

##### Comparison: Sanctity

Compare homosexuality and abortion: the "sacredness/cleanliness" value in abortion is "a human baby, murdered." The "sacredness/cleanliness" value in same-gender sex is often merely "I think that's gross." Homophobia and Pro-Life have both made the same shift where violating the sacred is

This helps explain why -- I will not say excuse, just explain -- why homosexuality has become a

super-sin. Why does the Catholic Church hierarchy go crazy over homosexuality, and get quiet about priests raping children? Homosexuality challenges the conservative authority where raping a child merely dodges that authority: *love the sinner, hate the sin* requires a sinner who feels guilty, not someone proud of an alternative. Cognitive-liberals don't have an innate sense of this "authority" and focus on actions and intentions: even if a liberal thinks homosexuality is unhealthy or unnatural, a cognitive-liberal mindset isn't concerned with violations of sanctity that don't violate fairness or compassion.

transformed into violating the in-group norms, some men using that as a lever to claim authority, but *homophobia has a much weaker "sacred" value*. This has implications for counter-arguments.

Homosexual sex has always been happening, and individual homosexuals were historically often in danger of being targeted. But *pride* transformed homosexuality from a minor *sin* to a fundamental *challenge* for many cognitive-conservatives, a threat to the natural order and to the authorities who previously defined the sanctity of the natural order.

## Progressive Frame

9:1.2

Most liberals do not understand the conservative frame on homosexuality, and talk right past it. We are constantly amazed at oddities like the Catholic Church banning *celibate* gay priests. But barring gay priests makes logical sense if priests are leaders who teach us about the ordered universe we live in, and homosexual desires are a symptom of being out of tune with that natural God-given order.<sup>[4]</sup>

Fortunately, many moderates and fiscal conservatives feel homosexual sex is a minor breach of sanctity, not a strongly held value. Just telling our story happens to be a good strategy. We've been winning this struggle largely thanks to Hollywood and regular people. Political and intellectual debates have not been key in convincing conservatives, instead success has come from normalizing lesbians and gay men. Once lesbians and gay men were visible as members of the community that conservative values strive to protect, homosexuality in the abstract lost its threat.

When we show that abstracted homosexuals are actually real people and good neighbors, thus within the basic bounds of sanctity, we engage conservative values without necessarily understanding them. Conversely, when we list reasons every woman has a right to an abortion, or argue for compassion in economics, we *fail* to engage conservative values of sanctity or fairness on those issues.

## Goals for the Workbook:

### Effective Activism Against Hate-Politics

9:1.3

Homophobia involves group-think and shame, the home base of right-wing authoritarianism, hate politics and fascism. How do you fight authoritarian tendencies? When we look at the history of fascism, of how Germans murdered Jews, it's clear that typical Germans who came to participate in mass murder of Jews didn't desire to be the most-hateful person they could be: they

became Nazis when they thought all their neighbors joined, they only hated Jews when hating Jews was the thing to do.<sup>[5]</sup> The Nazi leaders used media and organized protests to *normalize* hatred.<sup>[6]</sup>

To fight hate-politics, we have to make the out-group seem normal, and the hatred abnormal. And we did. Hollywood, which I wouldn't generally broad-brush as a real liberal ally breaking down stereotypes <sup>[7]</sup>, has nonetheless recently done a better job displaying lesbians and gays as human beings. As have millions of individuals who've come out of the closet. Characters, or relatives, who are gay and normal-enough, who are people you know and care about (even if on TV), have been destroying the feeling that homosexuality is a strange, foreign threat to society.

What might be considered the biggest victory by progressives in the last twenty years came from two main causes:

1. *Pride*. Providing the space for countless individuals to be proud of who they are, and a combination of brave enough and safe enough to speak their voice: a twenty year old (who is someone's niece) or a sixty year old (grandfather) to publicly admit who they are. You could also look at this as an exception to progressive's tendency to ignore support for our community. We exhibited the conservative in-group loyalty value, supporting individuals who took risks, and it worked.<sup>[8]</sup>
2. Repetition of personal, human stories. Those now proud people have done the work individual by individual, both on tv and at home. We didn't need a central story or central metaphor to win the gay rights struggle, we needed a million different stories.

Allies like PFLAG<sup>[9]</sup> play a huge role in both making it safe for people to be publicly proud of who they are, and then showing the rest of the country that other families are ok and proud to have gay members.

Cognitive-conservatives desire a nation where we show group loyalty. I say that group includes the rainbow and doesn't include phobias. If enough voices are raised together, than that can be made the consensus of the in-group, people who seek the norm, the middle ground, will stop openly voting phobias. Liberals can offer to meet the needs of conservative group-loyalty values while getting the policies and tolerance we need.

## Conversational and Action Goals

Section: 9:2

### Overall Goals

9:2.1

1. Help people hurt by homophobia.
2. Win elections.
3. Long term, deep goals: reinforce the thinking pattern that we are all in this together; break down the tendency to out-group.

Perhaps the biggest puzzle exposed by the recent cognitive

science research is how to strengthen the positive values of the "in-group" and keep a sense of social-capital and community building, while simultaneously getting rid of hate and out-grouping.

## Practical Approaches

9:2.2

1. **Support People.** People stepping out of the closet, telling their stories, being willing to be in a spotlight, were the core of breaking down homophobia. It's not required to have political leaders lead, nor to win debates. Clinton and Obama didn't do this, we did.
  - Supporting our activists is a lesson progressives have tended to struggle with. Look at conservative think-tanks: they support their interns, help them network with each other, help them find jobs when the internship is over. Progressive think-tanks leave their interns with a million distractions and comparatively leave them on their own when the internships are over.<sup>[10]</sup> From Washington interns, to union advocates, to canvassers: the left forgets to look after our own, we burn out, we burn our young activists out for short term change. Gay rights is one of the few exceptions, where people coming out of the closet did get support, and correspondingly is one of our biggest victories. The research showing conservative demographics to have manipulable-fears also shows liberals to be short on social-capital values. This shortage is not mere framing, it's about our actions, and we succeed when we change.
  - We might look at anti-bullying campaigns for inspiration; and support effective anti-bullying campaigns. Empowered people who are out of the closet and proud are the root of effective anti-phobia campaigns. Teach people serious empowerment skills, and how to look after each other.
2. **Focus on stories and personalization.** People don't give up homophobia because you tell them being homophobic is wrong or attack their Bible for inconsistencies. They give up on homophobia when more homosexual individuals (real or fictional) become personal.

Gay marriage political successes compared and contrasted with other issues:

- Economics of Contribution: Obama could have taken someone at the 47% income level, a single mom who works and pays no federal income taxes, and brought her up over and over and over. We never made Romney's disgusting perspective on who contributes personal and real, and got far less traction out of it than we could have.
- Segregation and Discrimination: The slower progress on racism, and the increasing tendency to hate the working poor, contrast with homosexuality being widespread -- even Cheney has homosexual relatives -- while modern America segregates more thoroughly around economics and race, and Hollywood dismisses people who don't have much money and very often casts minorities into caricature roles.
- Speaking Truth: Progressives politics had a major failure in fighting homophobia: Don't Ask Don't Tell. We may have sought a policy compromise, but we compromised our values and our truth instead. President Clinton did not step up and say "Gays are people, what a ridiculous idea to think otherwise, do you want them to wear pink triangles? They're asking to serve in our nation's armed forces, and you are stripping the nation of soldiers." He didn't have to *win* that particular political battle. He did need to restate the basic fence-smashing truth that gays are people and stick with it. If congress voted him down, there is still honor and clarity in saying that homosexuals are full humans and not to be shamed. Progressives fail when we muddle our own values: when Obama stops saying that every person in America should have health care, when Clinton says that gays shouldn't tell. Let the Republicans create the compromised disasters. You might vote for a compromise, but never support it, never pretend it is your truth. Clinton could have said:

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Gay men and women who want to serve in our military are loyal patriots, deserving our thanks for their courage. The farthest compromise I can get out of Congress is "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," which I think insults women and men serving in our armed forces and I apologize I couldn't get a bill with more dignity passed."

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Hopefully the success of the gay marriage effort show a path to unravel other right-wing hate-mongering. Ordinary people and small actions, even just watching healthier media, do make a difference.

## Expanding the Lessons

Section: 9:3



The success of the gay marriage efforts shows how right-wing hate-mongering can be unravelled. Turn the victims of their hate into people, and it gets hard to see them as purely "other." Get them into tv shows with decent roles, into stories; teach ourselves to speak with pride whether we are members of the group or family and friends.

If homophobia fades as a political tool, hate politicians will find a new target. Islamophobia seems a likely next target, as well as attacks on the poor and immigrants.

## Defending Targeted Groups

9:3.1

- Attacks on the poor will tell stories of the *lazy and irresponsible poor*, even as policies target the *working poor*. We need to tell stories of the working poor who contribute far more than they get: people who are not receiving the deal that Henry Ford's workers did, where a worker making a car was paid enough to own one. There are millions of these stories, we need to tell them millions of times. Note that it is particularly helpful to tell these stories when people aren't thinking about politics! Create a culture of reality, where everyone thinks about what it must mean to work for minimum wage, rather than unending political debates. <sup>[11]</sup> Activism may be as simple as watching a movie where the characters are poor or recent immigrants, even if politics isn't part of the movie.
- The history of Islam and the Arab lands needs much more exposure, as well as -- just as with gays -- having normal characters in normal roles in TV-land. There are many periods of history when Islamic civilization was more civilized than crusading or dark ages Christianity. Some actions are very simple: rent a movie with a conservative, perhaps about the Crusades that is mostly action-flick but shows the relative levels of civilization in Christianity and Islam, which religion's armies slaughtered civilians more in the 1100's. Many, many small actions of normalization.

## Creating Deeper Change

9:3.2

How do we deepen this process for people who are transformed? Many people in my parents or grandparents generations started hating Jews, then blacks, then gays, in each case personal hate mixed with political. In some ways this is a tremendous progressive success story: groups that have been hated for centuries are now accepted inside the fence, Jews are an in-group in America in a way unimaginable a couple generations ago. I expect that as soon as it is politically not expedient to hate gays, homophobia will be shoved into its own closet. But and so, what do we do to change people more as we as they go through the process of not hating?

I'm very curious about anti-bullying programs for kids. We're getting ahead of the research that I've seen, but I expect bullying among kids exacerbates the very worst conservative fear-based patterns. Many healthy conservatives seek a world of where people are strong enough to stand up for themselves, and where social-capital values are promoted: not the fear-, blame- and hate-politics of talk radio. There is a lot of space for us to come together here. Anti-bullying programs like [Challenge Day](http://www.challengeday.org/) [http://www.challengeday.org/] seemed to me to be exactly the right mix of what progressives and conservatives each do best: break down in-group/out-group and isolation, while strengthening the school community. Community, but not a walled in-group. Lowering hate while building social capital.



## **Sample Conversation: Make it personal and true not political**

**Section: 9:4**

This is the opposite of the abortion conversation: it's relatively easy and we're already doing it pretty well. Keep posting pictures of nice cute gay couples on Facebook, make homosexuality cuter than kittens, make it normal. Pride parades where people feel absolutely supported in being themselves are key to helping individuals out of the closet; and people who are gay -- or friends and family -- who (at other times) put on nice clothes, look responsible, and talk about supporting their families are the other half. In all cases, we know our values and talk without hesitation, with pride. If we could talk about working people with the same clarity, we could win on economic issues.

A series of comments to a Christian blog about same sex marriage:

Start gently lacking clarity. Give readers something odd to think about instead of something to resist.

Appeal to conservative values. Call on conservative beliefs about authority.

Authoritarians seek the middle. Hate politics requires a sense that everyone else is hateful. Provide a middle-path and many people will take it.

Challenge small parts of a worldview. I'm not challenging someone's entire

**Does your pulse go up?** An exercise for those who agree with this article:

1) You read an article about two gay men happily getting married in San Francisco, intending to adopt kids. How upset are you? How much does your pulse go up? Enough to get involved in politics?

2) You read an article about a couple getting divorced in your neighborhood. How upset are you? How much does your pulse go up? Enough to help?

Do you get upset reading articles about gays getting married in San Francisco, but don't even know about troubled marriages in your neighborhood?

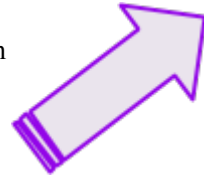
**There are really two positions among people who believe that homosexuality is a sin.** [1] One, the position of the authors, is that it is a giant sin that should consume people, that we should hurry up and take on God's judgement role. [2] **It is also possible to believe that it is mostly not your business**, that all the commandments about love and notes in your brother's eye do apply here, whether you think homosexuality is gross or not, a sin or not.

**If your pulse goes up** reading about homosexual marriage, you are

worldview, just one bit.

responding to your inner angers about something you personally find gross, you are not responding to any Higher calling.

I hope that understanding homophobia will also lead to understanding -- and understanding how to fight -- the fascist tendencies of the right. Racism and anti-Semitism have morphed into homophobia, concealed racism, and Islamophobia. At every decade, some politicians have been fueling and feeding off of hatred. How do we clean our nation of organized hatred? Can we replicate the gay marriage movement every time fascist tendencies appear? Sexual mores shine a light on our underlying, often subconscious values, and what it means to be conservative or liberal.



1. Looked at historically, homosexual rights is a stunning area of victory for progressives. For me, it never feels like it: of course the gender of the people you want to have sex with is not the government's business! But stop and take a historical look: the year I was born homosexuality was seen as a disease, ten years ago gays couldn't get married in San Francisco.
2. According to Wikipedia [[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Same-sex\\_marriage\\_in\\_California](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Same-sex_marriage_in_California)], the first gay marriages recognized by San Francisco were on Feb 12, 2004, and support for gay marriage in California has gone from 28% to 59% from 1977 to 2012.
3. *The Men With The Pink Triangle*, London 1980, Heinz Heger. For example, on p61: "Homosexual behavior between two 'normal' men is considered an emergency outlet, while the same between two gay men, who both feel deeply for one another, is something 'filthy' and repulsive."
4. According to the *Instruction Concerning the Criteria for the Discernment of Vocations with regard to Persons with Homosexual Tendencies in view of their Admission to the Seminary and to Holy Orders* [[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccatheduc\\_doc\\_20051104\\_istruzione\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20051104_istruzione_en.html)], men who "present deep-seated homosexual tendencies" and not only those who actually "practice homosexuality" cannot become priests. Watching the struggles within the Catholic church is an interesting window on conservative values of authority and sanctity, particularly with Pope Francis making some subtle shifts towards loosening what had been a growing infatuation with strict authority. A good place to start is *Who Am I to Judge? Francis Redefines the Papacy* [<http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/newsdesk/2013/07/who-am-i-to-judge-francis-redefines-the-papacy.html>] by Alexander Stille, July 30, 2013. Often this book is looking at the same techniques: not directly assaulting beliefs, but circling around them: where the old debate was *Can women be priests: yes or no*, he appears ready to look for other doors that can be opened.
5. Trying to determine the level of enthusiasm or resistance that average Germans brought to the Nazi hatred is an

argument that can never end. I expect even the participants never quite knew; hate and anger politics are running partly at the subconscious level.

6. For example, see Wikipedia's discussion of *The Eternal Jew* (1940 film) [[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Eternal\\_Jew\\_%281940\\_film%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Eternal_Jew_%281940_film%29)] , and note how media efforts needed to be kept ahead of actual violence such as Kristallnacht.
7. *5 Old-Timey Prejudices That Still Show Up in Every Movie* [[http://www.cracked.com/article\\_19549\\_5-old-timey-prejudices-that-still-show-up-in-every-movie.html](http://www.cracked.com/article_19549_5-old-timey-prejudices-that-still-show-up-in-every-movie.html)] makes explicit some very obvious-if-you-look racist and sexist patterns in Hollywood
8. During the ascent of liberal politics in the US, workers and unions led the liberal movement. And people were proud to be workers. Blue-collar workers claimed to create all wealth; they didn't generally express a desire to become middle-management.
9. PFLAG, or Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays [[pflag.org](http://pflag.org)]
10. An article on the different treatment of interns by conservative and liberal think tanks. URL appears to have changed. [<http://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/?article=742>]
11. The "nobels" of old -- the knights, the warrior class -- knew that the peasants worked like hell, and just decided that they were better than them. Now that the peasants can vote, more complex -- and more fragile -- ideas are required.

Subchapter:

## Transitional Section

### Violations of Sanctity: Shame, Sin and Leadership



The issues of the last two chapters are rooted in sanctity values, especially sanctity and shame around sex. It's long been obvious to liberals that the leadership of the Christian right -- the people who talk about sex-shame the most -- are regular exhibitors of what they themselves would call sinful behavior.

Progressive and conservative mindsets have very different approaches to shame. Why do sinful politicians survive on the right?

#### **What values are invoked if you cheat on your spouse?**

To a progressive, the values are fairness and empathy. You have violated your agreement (fairness) with your wife and hurt her (empathy): you might be worthy of forgiveness if you apologize to your wife, if you make it better with her -- ask her what your path to forgiveness is. If you've been talking about the sanctity of marriage as your main talking point, then you'd be both a cheat and a hypocrit, and we liberals really don't like hypocrites. <sup>[1]</sup> We don't understand how people like Gingrich <sup>[2]</sup> can be elected by family-values conservatives.

To a conservative, cheating violates the rules of society: you have violated the rules set by authority and disrespected your society and group membership. You need to make yourself right with authority: with God and with religious leaders who represent Him. You can be a good person who was tempted and failed: that doesn't make you a hypocrit, that doesn't mean that proclaiming that men should be faithful was wrong.

*Goes off rails here ... here is this going? Why in gay marriage section?*

Unwrapping this is a great challenge for liberals, and to my knowledge we haven't done the studies yet. Many of the worst attacks on healthy, alternative sexuality come from people with very unsuccessful sex and marriage histories. Many Pro-Life people are inspired by regret for an abortion. Pointing out hypocrisy will not work as well as we think it should; we should focus mostly on other tactics. <sup>[3]</sup>

My intuition is that for racisms and phobias, the way to fight shame is to get ahead of it: normalize gays as individuals with stories, and say that being homophobic is shameful more repetitively than conservatives say that homosexuality is shameful. Conservatives have their "Jimmy Carter moments" tangling their own values, trying to explain how they don't hate the sinner just want to make sure their partner can't visit them if they have cancer or share their health care benefits, or whatever they are trying to explain away when really they are paying too much attention to genitalia and messing people's lives up over what they see as gross. Our goals

there can be big: homophobia is a terrible value, we can say so, we can win. We can cost Republicans votes and protect individuals and couples, and break down a bit of the stuffy strict-father value framework all at the same time.

On abortion, we are in a political landmine: we can expect to see conservatives as deeply hypocritical --> conservative families where a member has an abortion will be encouraged to feel shame, and encouraged fight their shame by being even louder anti-abortion. That this seems striking hypocritical to progressives is politically meaningless. [Progressive: a person gets a right to talk about values only if they are deeply worthy of respect in their own life, and hypocrisy should be jumped on. Conservative: we should all speak and repeat the truths given us from authority figures above us.] Abortion, even abortion in the case of rape, gives people with a conservative mindset a feeling that all is not right in the world -- and people saying abortion is no big deal increase that feeling (where people saying "my niece is gay and a fine person" doesn't). We need to create space for people who believe in choice to We need to get people with Pro-Life values looking elsewhere than shame: even at reducing the number of abortions (which goes fine with liberal politics and giving women many choices).

### **Frame-Lines and Audiences: Lack of Hypocrisy**

On average young people and liberals tend to hate hypocrisy, while older people and conservatives dislike chaos and overt challenges to authority. Many people in the middle, I believe, would tell you they are more upset at child-rape than consensual gay couples, and that is their intention. But if you measured their upset based on heart-rates or time spent reading articles, it may be the other way around. They didn't choose to be more upset at proud challenges by consenting adults more than they are upset at shameful rapes, and their conscious minds don't agree with their unconscious focus. Gently making people aware that they are doing this is a way to get the conscious mind disentangling the more problematic parts of the conservative mindset.

### **Action:**

What does this mean? It means liberals must use arguments more complex than pointing out hypocrisy on the right: sinning does not mean a person cannot lead, even on the issues where they have failings and sin.

1. I wonder if progressives have another value that might be labeled consistency or logic, where conservatives value respect and agreement? These conservative values would fall under group-loyalty. I've avoided saying liberals prefer "truth" because I think we have a divide here: liberals seek a logical consistency "truth," where conservatives seek a Truth that is aligning yourself to the order inherent in the world.
2. See [CNN on Gingrich Divorce](http://www.cnn.com/2011/12/26/politics/gingrich-divorce-file) [http://www.cnn.com/2011/12/26/politics/gingrich-divorce-file] , for example.
3. Young people still forming their ideological perspectives are an exception: straightforward pointing out of hypocrisy will often work.



## Chapter 11

### American Exceptionalism: Sharing Views to Define an In-Group Politics Wrapped in Our Flag



Exceptionalism & never apologizing are big deals to many conservatives, while these topics are often invisible to most liberals. The idea of American Exceptionalism, that America is special because we are special, is often repeated by right-politicians. Most of us want to love our country. It evokes in-group pride for many, many people, far beyond the conservative base.

#### Framing & Goals

Section: 11:1

#### Conservatives evoke a God-given, Magical Exceptionalism.

11:1.1

Romney's book "No Apology: The Case for American Greatness" sounds like a progressive caricature of stiff, fragile conservative pride; you might think it was a made up example by Lakoff showing how conservatives seek a strict "Father Knows Best" character who is a perfect dad, episode after episode.

Liberals tend not to care about or understand the Republican obsession about not apologizing. How did apologies become an issue? And more importantly: why are Republican leaders regularly turning to this issue, how is helping their campaigns?

I will never apologize for America.  
-- Romney<sup>[1]</sup>

I will never apologize for the united states of America, I don't care what the facts are.  
-- George Bush Sr.<sup>[2]</sup>

**Political Goal:** Prime people who feel pride in their nation -- which is most of the electorate -- to feel on the defensive. Both bloat and threaten their pride. Create a landmine where if liberals pin-prick that pride, and liberals declare themselves as "outsiders" to a merged American and Republican "in-group."

How do you express pride in our mutual accomplishments? How do you express the mixed reality instead of making America either a good- or bad- fairytale? What's your story of what is special about America? How do you disengage the land-mine when people treat America as intrinsically sacred and use that as a signifier of their in-group? When politicians wrap themselves in the flag, can you make that tactic ineffective or backfire?





## There are two very different ways to see America's history, but the story begins together:

11:1.2

Republicans and Democrats look to many of the same heroes. People across the spectrum quote Jefferson. We were the exception to European feudalism and kingdoms, introducing the democratic revolution to the modern world. The exception and the world's rescue from fascism and the insanity that swept much of the the modern world in the mid-20th century.

Conservatives are building a no-apologies framework that helps *Real Americans* identify *Real Americans*: America is sacred, and people who believe that are "us." The conservative frame here is simple, and it is not about the details of history. Rather it has two parts:

- **Bloat Pride:** Yes, go ahead, feel tremendous pride in your nation. Nations are good or evil, with us or against us, and America is the greatest. Define your loyalty to your in-group with this pride, it is a marker.
- **and Prick:** Someone else, another group, completely disagrees with you, and sees no reason to feel any pride in America. They are out to undermine your pride.

Liberals have a wide range of perspectives on patriotic pride. Democrats range from self-defined patriots who feel that this is the greatest nation on earth, to people whose primary consciousness about America is the racism, treatment of Native peoples, or the CIA's murderous work in places like Guatemala, Chili and Iran. In general, these views fit under a very broad liberal frame: America is a big complex country, we should feel pride for the good stuff and apologize for, and fix, our problems.

There is another perspective focused on the treatment of Native Americans and slavery that does not conclude that our history was "a success." I'll explore it in the appendix, but this manual focuses mostly on framing current views rather than arguing about what we should believe in, so it will mostly compare the Republican view represented by "No Apology" against the quiet, complex pride felt by many mainstream Democrats. Framing doesn't trump other concerns, merely that this workbook focuses on framing.

## Liberals Smashing Their Heads Against the Wall

11:1.3

What do we do with the horrible stains of racism, murder of Native peoples, and unnecessary wars? What politics are built from the stains? The problematic politics is when we just say "No" to the other side. Republicans cast out the message that America is so perfect we should never apologize for anything, and so liberals argue against that, pointing out imperfections in American history. Our facts might be right, our frame and politics are counter-productive.



Landmine: We hit a landmine whenever we fight against the idea that people should feel pride in their own nation. You might be right, it doesn't even begin to matter.

As conservatives proclaim a level of faith in America that more than borders on idolatry -- treating our nation as Immaculate -- many progressives have gotten shy and embarrassed at expressing our pride in American ideals. Just because Republicans will never see a blemish doesn't mean that we need to ask Americans to feel *no* pride in a country that does have many things to feel pride about. If you want to create positive changes, to win elections, you can't ask that 51% of the electorate reach ego-free nirvana. Help people feel pride, but for healthier things.

Just as with the issues around unwanted pregnancies, where liberals want to empower women but we label the issue to be about "abortion" and our frame (not our policies) is saying no to what the Republicans say. Abortion shouldn't be our focus, empowering women should be. Here, demanding that American apologize, demanding that people judge this nation, or saying that America isn't Exceptional -- saying NO to the Republican frame -- shouldn't be our focus.

To see framing that doesn't usually work, seek out a list of the countries the US has invaded. One example is [From Wounded Knee to Libya: A century of U.S. Military Interventions](http://academic.evergreen.edu/g/grossmaz/interventions.html) [http://academic.evergreen.edu/g/grossmaz/interventions.html] by Dr. Zoltan Grossman. For example, between 1950 and 1954, the US used military force or threats in Puerto Rico, Korea, Iran, Vietnam and Guatemala.<sup>[3]</sup>

When conservative eyes see this list, what they see is an attack on their pride, an attack on their in-group. These lists may solidify people who agree with you, but when you barrage people with lists of unwanted facts, you just create separation.

## Republicans Smashing Their Heads Against the Wall

11:1.4

The idea that America has nothing to apologize for shows the hidden, often self-hidden, racism that seeps through the Republican messages. If you think America has nothing to apologize for, you're clearly on the extra-white side of the Three-Fifths compromise, the broken treaties with Native Americans or invasions in Latin America.

It's a fairy-tale version of America that insults large demographics -- unsurprisingly the demographics currently voting against Republicans in large numbers.

The Republican style of single-focus Truth, where the sacredness of the Pro-Life cause is not just more important than women's rights, but makes women invisible, is losing their party most women, while American Exceptionalism is a good conversation to further solidify the Republican loss of anyone not white.

How can Democrats avoid taking the blame for facts that hurt patriotic voters' pride, while spotlighting the Republican lack of consciousness of non-white history?

- 1) Don't believe that Republican strategists are magical and progressives total failures! Republican reliance on in-groups can very easily leave 51% of the voters feeling outside.
- 2) We should look for the problems in their metaphors. Make sure the "Never Apologize" quotes subconsciously intended for white audiences are spoken in front of other demographics.

## Goals for the Workbook

**Learn to speak a story that is richer and more alive than the conservative story. Find all the areas where you do agree, find your idealism, and turn it into a real story. Rather than attack the conservative frame, simply replace it, let it die of its own shallowness. Help conservative-minded individuals feel more loyal to real American history, warts and all, than to the Santa Claus version.**

**In addition, learn history well enough to be able to call out Republican blind-spots to both studious idealists and to ignored demographics. Get young students who do not yet have formed views to learn the real history: point them at the dirt, then share why you might still have pride. Take both *intellectual integrity* and *leadership* seriously: get people to look at the facts, then light a path towards a better alternative and towards a country we can feel yet more proud about.**

## Outmaneuver No-Apology Exceptionalism: Create a Richer Story.

Section: 11:2



What calls itself American Exceptionalism in modern American politics is not a natural conservative ideal. Conservative values are to work hard and take responsibility. Real people shed blood, sweat and tears for American Independence. Real people shed blood, sweat and tears -- and even paid taxes, conserved resources and recycled -- to defeat the Axis. The No-Apology frame fictionalizes them. If slavery was unavoidable, then so was Washington's exhausted army crossing the Delaware.

American Exceptionalism as often described erases sacrifice and hard work, and just says, "we're better, we're almost doomed to succeed, because we are America."

American Exceptionalism has no clear and obvious policy implications: it's pure framing. It is two competing stories, one of which encourages complex thinking and introspection and a sense that America was made through hard work, and another which encourages mindless group-think: America is a miracle, an act of a higher authority.

Which is more patriotic: to teach high school students an idealized version of history, or a real one as balanced and true as possible? If you disagree the balanced approach, why do you disagree?

Lakoff talks of the need to repeat our stories, our frameworks: what is our ideal America?

Progressives shouldn't see it as valuable to navel-gaze, and the rules for America are the same as for the rest of the world: arguing about whether our history is a cleaner or a dirtier than other nations' -- giving us a final grade -- is a silly, unhealthy task. The whole exercise of judging whether America is a superior or inferior nation is a conservative frame.

Saying NO to the Republican frame shouldn't be our focus. Instead, let's say that America has a rich history with a lot to learn from it, and patriots should ask what they can do to make their country a better nation. Someone else can argue about abstractions and judgements: give me real, complex history worth learning about, worth more than a label.

The two frameworks separate between an intrinsic *God-given Exceptionalism* and a *hard-work Exceptionalism*<sup>[4]</sup>. We look at the same revolution and history, but some see it as handed down from authority, as something intrinsic like a Hollywood movie where the good guys simply have to win, there was no path but this path of American greatness and we already know that America is destined to be great in the future. Whether saying "Yes" or "No" to this authority keeps us in an authority frame.

Hard-work exceptionalism sees smart people like Jefferson and Paine inspiring ordinary people to risk their lives for ideals, yeoman farmers working hard: past generations created an imperfect but in many ways impressive United States. They could have screwed it up, replace just a few of the early Founders with a few modern politicians and there might not be anything we'd recognize as the United States of America; lose a horseshoe nail and Lee would have captured Washington DC and the US split in two. America became exceptional because of inspiration, hard work, ordinary people: we made this country exceptional, it wasn't handed to us from an authority. This frame isn't concerned with judging or authority, but with learning and improving.

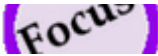
I don't think that ordinary, honest conservative people need the children's magic story, but do need a way to feel pride in America. It makes sense to have a nation with enough pride to have social capital, to be willing to sacrifice if necessary to defend the country or pay taxes for schools and railroads. Progressives need to pull the threads of what is worth feeling proud out of our combined history, and reach to the values of group pride and loyalty in a healthy way. Attacking the pride of conservatives will just cause them to circle the wagons: we need stories of American patriotism and pride that treat people as adults, inviting them to feel pride in a three-dimensional America.

## **The Progressive Frame: What Works? What can we cooperate on?**

Section: 11:3



As in many other framings, the best place to start is where we agree. Unlike abortion where there is often deep disagreement about what is sacred and so it is a good idea to do a lot of quiet active listening, progressives already agree on much of what adds to America's



greatness. Go ahead and say it!

If a conservative feels that your patriotism is feeble, get ahead of them. Go ahead and say every last thing you agree on, say everything you can think of that makes the American ideal a great ideal. Learn a bit about Thomas Paine in particular, the person who did more than any other to make the American Revolution a popular revolution rather than elite vs elite, and who was very far to the left. Know more history than they do. Show some pride. Yes, include your pride in the Abolition, Women's Rights and Civil Rights movements and more as part of the "real America." Don't list these competitively, but with a sense that we all agree on these. Don't try to win points against the person you're talking to, but be part of the same welcoming, unbounded in-group that confidently defines an American ideal worthy of pride.

Romney does not think he is being a racist when he says the nation that drove the slave trade, or empowered Pinochet and the Somozas, or slaughtered women and children at Wounded Knee has no need to apologize. He isn't looking at the list of facts and saying, "oh, well, there's no reason to apologize for slavery." To cognitive-conservatives, it's not that the list of historical facts has been weighed and balanced and America found worthy, but that the exercise of weighing and balancing is inappropriate. Loyalty precludes spending time focusing on facts, loyalty precludes wondering if you should apologize for something America has done.*cut?*

Instead, you have to define what we should be proud of. Build up a positive picture and push American policy towards that ideal.

Much of this manual is written for Democrats talking to the core of the Republican base, typically white and often male. The "No Apology" frame is a very dangerous frame for Republicans, practically self-explanatory why it will backfire for anyone who identifies with America's treatment of blacks or invasions in Latin America. The framing strategy for many non-white audiences is obvious: remind them of Republican attitudes. Put a copy of "No Apology" next to photos of slavery or pictures of Pinochet, and let Republicans speak for themselves.

## Sample Conversation

Section: 11:4



Those who want power create a fairy tale story, America is great by a magical authority. We want to focus on what we all admired in high school history class: ordinary people fighting the revolution together, yeoman farmers who today would be part of the 47%, cooperating in waves of movements that kept expanding democracy and equality.

Create a story of mutual cooperation. A story where ordinary people created America despite abuses by the powerful. It frames a bit to the left of Lakoff's nurturing parent story: a nurturing sisters and brothers story. Ordinary people

beat back the feudal overlords and monopolists and haters just a bit more often than in Europe, stained by some horrifying failures especially around race.

Delve deeper, creating a richer story that gets people thinking more deeply, of an America created by ordinary people as much as by famous people, with many flaws, but still having a place to put your pride. America is a partial creation of American ideals of equality and democracy, stained in many ways as we have failed to reach that goal, and pride in America involves pulling this real nation closer to the ideal.

#### **Authoritarian Goals:**

11:4.1

Create a simple story where American pride comes from an innate status-quo, given by a natural authority, to "Real Americans." Today's leaders will implicitly claim that authority. The story is used to define an in-group, people who will support each other no matter what.

#### **Progressive Goals:**

11:4.2

Separate real conservatives from their authoritarian wanna-be overlords. People who value hard work can be attracted to a story of hard work and cooperation succeeding.

#### **Questions and Focus:**

11:4.3

What do you love about American history? Even if your perspective sees 90% slavers and 10% abolitionists, it's a long history, even 10% leaves plenty to respect.

Getting to specifics is key. There are not many direct contradictions between a progressive pride in America and what our wanna-be overlords typically express, rather progressives have a richer, more alive view. **We made this country, it didn't just happen, and we have to make it again for our kids. Conservatives and liberals have long agreed on this, only people who want to be masters sending troops off to poorly defined wars prefer the shallow story.**

#### **Audience**

11:4.4

I don't think this story varies as much as others, whether you are talking to a far-conservative or a moderate. We are generally not arguing with or contradicting the wanna-be-overlords, simply deepening their version, making it richer and more real.

There is a story of America that is more real and more progressive than the "American Exceptionalism just because and don't argue with me" of authoritarians. Unlike homosexuality or abortion, there is less fundamental disagreement. All we have to do is tell a richer story and we've won: there is no in-group and out-group, create space to think instead of rote respect for authority. From there, you can work on issues one at a time.

**Exercise #1: Warm Up with Facts That Lead to Pride**

11:5.1



Exercise 1: Say everything about American history that makes you proud for five minutes.

Treat it like a meditation: No, the exercise was not to list all the asterisks and things foul with this country. If you can't, sitting by yourself, tell an amazing story about the amazing side of American history, explore why you *want* to be angry. And there are damn good reasons to be angry. But you can be much more effective at creating change, much more effective at showing other people where the ideals of democracy and equality have not been reality, sometimes horrifyingly so, if you are able to answer the question of what makes you proud without needing to answer the question of what makes you ashamed *in the same five minutes*.<sup>[5]</sup>

Most of the things that make even conservatives proud of America fit quite well within progressive values. Get people to look at the real history, get people to look at reality more deeply, and we win. A great conversation with a conservative, for example at Thanksgiving, is to ask them to spend five or ten minutes telling you what makes them proud of America. Let them get it out, listen to them.



Exercise 2: With conservative relatives, ask them to spend five minutes telling you everything about America that makes them proud. Human beings need to feel pride in their communities; this is separate from the detailed behavior of their communities.

This isn't a great place to end, but it is a very good place to begin. A warm-up that will prepare them to hear you. Listen for what you agree with, reinforce every area of agreement before you move forward.

Low self-esteem is a major contributor to young children smoking. Attacking their self-esteem because they smoke is counter-productive. If people are voting Republican because their faith and comfort are shaken, shaking it more is a dangerous tactic.

**Exercise #3: Practice Shared Pride as a Story; Separate Ideals and Stains**

11:5.2

Practice telling a story of your *idealized* America that is human, real, and worth feeling pride for. The ideal of Democracy, the Jeffersonian ideal of equality where every family had 50 acres of the means of production, the slow and courageous struggle for freedom and civil rights. However many stains there are on this story, practice telling it as a story of pride where every failing *is a stain* and not the central story.

Tell the story of independence, equality, abolition, expanding civil rights, and the ideal of widespread abundance.<sup>[6]</sup>



Create a story of "us," both at our best and when we fail. For the exercise, catch yourself whenever the story becomes a "them" story. There are likely to be times for hard-hitting truth, but people need a story of pride. Practice a story that begins:

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This is what I believe in about America

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and practice sticking to that. A story of heroism, Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson's ideals and liberal mercy for his failings, Abolition, Women's Rights, Eleanor Roosevelt, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. Tell it from the bottom up, but for the exercise practice telling what you feel proud about instead of accusations -- tell the accusations only as the shadows and stains, at least for a practice exercise.

If you can tell this story better than Bush or Romney can tell their "cranky old man who doesn't apologize" story, Thanksgiving politics are yours. You'll have broken the in-group vs out-group boundary, shown that you have a reasonable sense of the sacred. After the stories, framing, landmines and triggers are put aside and everyone is listening, that's when you pull out our liberal favorite: you can finally talk about wonkish detailed policy choices.

#### **Exercise #4: Mesh Tactics with Achievable Goals**

11:5.3

William Blum wrote *Killing Hope: US Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II*. Just starting with the title, who do you know who might benefit from a fact-heavy listing of times that the US was in the wrong? Create a list with at least three columns of people you might talk politics with:

1. Who is idealistic and fact-oriented enough that they would absorb the information in a book like *Killing Hope* and become more committed to changing US foreign policy?
2. Who would not be surprised at a long list of atrocities, but this information would likely produce more burn-out than new action?
3. Who would recoil and become more firm in their belief that their conservative political group is an "us" and you are an anti-patriotic "them?"

Section: 11:6

#### **Educational Outreach**

11:6.1

- Read and hand out copies of A People's History of the United States, especially to youth. <http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/peoples-history-of-the-united-states-howard-zinn/1100536993>
- Develop some challenging questions appropriate for high school and college students to write about in a paper. It's more powerful to stay out of the way and let people discover their own answers: get students to look at Chile, Nicaragua or Iran's modern history. Get them started and stay out of the way, let the facts talk, let them do their own discovery.

## Cooperative, Non-confrontational Shared Activity

11:6.2

Sometimes the early goals should just be to build bridges, not go on the attack against worldviews very far apart. With a conservative, read a book on Thomas Jefferson together: wonderfully complex history that makes simplifications difficult, with lots of space to agree. Healthy, human conversations that have give-and-take *without consequences* are a prerequisite to talking about current issues that need give-and-take about *core beliefs* where egos are tender.

## Framing Summary

Section: 11:7

Become fluent in a story of patriotism and pride in America. As needed to redefine your idealized America until you can be patriotic. Create a story that makes the conservative fairy tale's shallowness visible; create a story that is solid and real.

Don't attack loyalty to your nation, don't attack the idea that America is sacred. Instead make loyalty more complex, thoughtful. Don't act like a rebellious teen triggering a need for a strict father. Don't use lists of everything America has done wrong.<sup>[7]</sup>

Conservatives leaders promote a dry-drunk version of history: slavery was bad, but we're not racist anymore, and we don't want to talk about it. To be a patriot, they insist we ignore those chapters, learn no lessons and make no apologies, just move on.

The progressive version is also less fantasy and more reality, pointing out ideals rather than pretending ideals are always met. We want you to take a history class. To think about just how bad slavery and Jim Crow were, how recent it was that Civil Rights legislation was passed, how badly needed, who opposed it, and to see the challenges and heroism that were part of the escape. Abolitionists & Civil Rights Marchers were American, we can all be proud to be American. We are a nation mature enough to apologize.

Have a patriotism story more real than the conservative fairy tale.

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## Chapter Appendix

Section: 11:8

### Reality vs Framing

11:9.1

Section: 11:9

Framing to win elections might lean towards waving American flags at Occupy rallies, despite the absurdity of white occupiers on what we all know is Native's land. Framing to win elections would mean calling America a "Great Nation" and generally counting slavery and genocide as worth vastly less when "judging greatness" than focusing on our experiments in democracy.

Is there an answer to this? I don't think so. I don't think we need a single answer. Ideally people who focus on winning messages for Democratic candidates will take the time to listen and hear stories from deeply oppressed groups. I think people trying to create a more compassionate

world -- one that would leave behind war and racism -- should speak with a variety of voices.

Giving letter grades to students can make them afraid to try new things, to take risks. Giving a letter grade to an entire country's history is simply unhealthy, making people afraid to risk changing their mind. We have to let go of judgement. Say what you see as right, say what you see as wrong. If you add up the rights and wrongs and try to judge, you'll have an unwinnable, unending argument.

People running for election should tell a story that has some hope of being electable -- in my opinion a compassionate story is more important than a harshly true story that is frighteningly judgmental. The most likely path as far from our racist past is a compassionate one, including to the kids of the oppressors. Truth & reconciliation, not time machines and magic answers, is as far as we have realistic hopes.

I don't think we need to speak with one voice, have one answer from everyone "left" of center. It is part of President Obama's job to look at America from a positive angle, to build pride in this nation as we are. It would do no more good to have him spend all his time focused on past failings than to have an alcoholic keep both eyes on the bad spots of the bad years. There should be a liberal voice from a party that has a chance of winning elections -- and that party should get "on message."

There should be other voices, and the people who speak about America with pride and compassion should create space for the voices of anger and justice.

One of the themes of this book is that you don't create a worldview in one conversation. It's good to feel pride in your nation's accomplishments some days, and good to hear harsh, challenging voices on other days. Putting the vast good and the vast bad on a scale and trying to balance them simply isn't a helpful thing to do, however the scale would tip.

## **Annotated Bibliography**

**Section: 11:10**

- *Share this: A People's History of the United States*, Howard Zinn. I strongly recommend this book as a gift for inquisitive friends and family. It's a great example of having pride in the amazing and worthwhile history of your nation, rather than a stiff, elitist and angry pride.
- *No Apology: The Case for American Greatness* by Mitt Romney. St. Martin's Press. New York.
- Lakoff dissects "Romney's Apology Frame":

"Why no apologies? Because America, operating under conservative ideology, is seen as the world's ultimate legitimate authority, whose actions define what is right."

- Romney: 'We Should Never Apologize For American Values Or Japanese Internment Camps' according to the Onion [satirical].
- 
- William Blum shows the opposite of "never apologize" with his stark list of activities many of us wish the US didn't do: [http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Blum/US\\_Interventions\\_WBlumZ.html](http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Blum/US_Interventions_WBlumZ.html), or read *Killing Hope: US Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II*. Howard Zinn carries much of the same factual information in a format that I think more people will be able to absorb.

1. Romney at Clinton Global Initiative: 'I Will Never Apologize' [<http://www.christianpost.com/news/romney-at-clinton-global-initiative-i-will-never-apologize-82185/>] . Paul Stanley, Christian Post, September 25, 2012
2. Wikipedia lists many 'never apologize' quotes [[http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/George\\_H.\\_W.\\_Bush](http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/George_H._W._Bush)] by Bush.
3. If you feel tempted to share a list of things that America has done wrong, ask yourself if your audience would do research. If yes, point them directly towards the research, it's more powerful if they discover on their own. If no, give up, you would just be scoring points in a game with no referee.
4. Is Hard Work Exceptionalism a liberal frame, or a neutral one? It encourages real research and independent thoughts, making your own judgements: so if you think that those are liberal values you can call it a liberal frame, but I could imagine conservatives saying it is really a conservative frame for the same reasons. I don't think this is really important to answer either way. The Hard Work Exceptionalism frame stands in opposition to the shallowest of ideas coming from the Republican party.
5. This book is written for liberals across a wide spectrum, some of whom are very angry about America's historical role in the world and many of whom aren't. If you haven't listened to a Native American, black, feminist or anti-war assault on the idea that the United States is a great nation, that doesn't belong in a book about framing but does belong in a good self-education. *Get some "America sucks" links to make this section make more sense to people less familiar*
6. The Republican leadership no longer believes even in the middle class ideal or "two chickens in every pot." Neither at the policy level, nor in their rhetoric, do they think that every American deserves and can reach a job with more dignity than Walmart paying so little that working people are on public assistance. Abundance is a story of hope -- a little tricky to tell in this era of McMansions followed by collapse followed by McMansions -- but what does an abundant nation look like to you?

7. Blasting lists of things that a country has done wrong is rarely useful. Blasting research topics is another story, especially for students. Yes, encourage people to study the CIA & Pinochet, study the CIA & Guatemala, study the CIA & Mossadegh.

## Chapter 12

### Economics: Fairness and Appropriate Authority



Do our paychecks reflect our contributions? What do people deserve? For people struggling with low paying jobs, is the key value compassion or fairness?

Republican leaders have been twisting economic reality so that hard-working people who are struggling believe they are being taken advantage of by those below them, deflecting from Wall Street and CEO pay. Compassion is crowded out when those most abused are seen as abusers. Meanwhile, the people the Democrats intend to champion, people who work hard and earn little while their CEOs earn 300 times as much, those people often feel that the Democrats pity them, rather than seeing the Democrats as champions of fairness.

No matter how you slice it, the rich do the heavy lifting when it comes to shouldering the national tax burden.

--Curtis Dubay.

[1]

#### Current Framings

#### Section: 12:1

**Cognitive-Conservative Working Class:** I work hard. I am a responsible contributor, doing what I'm supposed to, I feel like I'm doing more than my share. I pull my weight, so my struggles in life must be caused by someone not contributing their share, and leaching from me.

**Conservative Ideology:** You get paid according to your *real contribution*. CEOs do contribute hundreds of times more than ordinary workers. We live in a world of scarcity, and you earn wages or get rich only through voluntary transactions where someone is happy to pay you for your contribution. If you're not getting paid much it signals you're not contributing much: work harder, find a better job, but don't beg for help.

Cognitive-conservatives intuit towards seeing the status quo as mostly fair. If you need help, it must be because you have failed. The Democrats want to have pity on your struggles, do you want that pity? Will you identify with the party that pities you?

**Democratic Party Today:** People are struggling, paid terribly or can't find work. It's a sad situation, unfair, deserving empathy and pity. Democrats mush together a desire for compassion and real fairness -- two very different values. We take it for granted that a CEO is not worth 300

times an ordinary worker... but because it's so obvious to us we don't emphasize that CEO's don't contribute equal to their pay. When we talk economics, a struggling drug addict who can't hold a job or someone who works hard but whose skillset is easily outsourced and so is terribly underpaid both fall in the same conversation: we mix the values of compassion and fairness.

**Past Framing / Old Left:** Workers create all value. CEOs, Wall Street and stockholders *redistribute* that wealth from the people who created it. We live in a world of abundance where all needs can be met, if parasites don't create artificial scarcity and keep us from working and being paid for the value we create.

The frame that *workers create all wealth* was in the air at the time of progressive ascendancy.

## Head Against the Wall: Mixed Moral Foundations of Liberals

12:1.1

I suspect that ordinary conservatives and liberals disagree in a different way than liberals think we do: Liberals think conservatives lack compassion. But the rhetoric of "Compassionate Conservative" was welcomed by ordinary moderate-conservatives. Instead, the key difference we're blind to is around fairness: and unlike the other issues in this workbook, it's not fundamentally a values difference, it's more about logic and facts.

Democrats fail to separate the two values we hold: we want compassion for those unable to contribute enough to equal their basic economic needs, and we want fairness that workers and CEOs be paid according to their real contributions.<sup>[2]</sup> When we mix these messages, it seems like we are pitying working class people as unable to pull their own weight. That's not what we mean, liberal activists know that's not what we mean, but we don't make the message clear to people who don't already get it.

Do proud working-class people want your empathy, compassion or pity? Democrats might not mean this, but our current message is easily manipulated into sounding to working class people like they need help, they are failing.

A CEO being paid 300 times what a worker earns is seen as a bad thing. Is it a bad thing because the poor worker, with few skills, isn't much of a contributor to the economy and we should have pity on them, and that the CEO can't really *need* such a large salary? Or is the problem that the system is rigged, and the workers have too little power and the CEOs too much power when wages and salaries are set?

### Goals for the Workbook

**Progressives need to go on the offensive about real economics: that people who provide the goods and services we need count, that there is currently abundance, that we should not be desperate. If we're desperate, something is wrong, let's find it.**

- **Separate conversations driven by compassion from those driven by fairness, and be very, very clear which is the value you are emphasizing at any time.**
- **Talk about the real economy and real contributions, not dollars.**

## Focusing on the Conservative Frame: Shame, Pride and Redirection.

Section: 12:2



Underpaid people are struggling, and therefore their pride is fragile. Republicans are playing two games: One is to increase shame, and just slightly twist the Democratic message so it hurts the pride of people who are struggling. The other game is to take that shame and give it an outlet: to help people inclined to trust authority blame people "below" them, to blame the poor and immigrants.

People feel like they work hard. They contribute. If they are unemployed, they desire to contribute.

Democrats usually focus on people struggling and needing help. I personally do not enjoy to think of myself as struggling and needing help -- if I'm struggling, I have pride, I'll struggle through. Progressives think conservatives lack compassion, but partly we're just off-topic. Republicans are attacking working people, Democrats are pitying them. Unions historically gave working people pride; today, no movement does.

Democrats can not be the party of charity or even the champions of fairness for the little people. They have to be the party *of* the working person, not just *for* her or him.

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Conservatives have figured out their moral basis, and you see it on Wall <sup>[3]</sup> Street. It includes: the primacy of self-interest. -- George Lakoff

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Lakoff is going against the evidence that conservatives give more to charity and their communities, on average, than progressives.<sup>[find footnote]</sup> There are billionaires who get rich by having desperate people work without health care: the primacy of self-interest. But ordinary cognitive-conservatives turn to the "strict father" when their sense of fairness is crossed. They are *excited* by the "compassionate conservative" frame, not excited by the "self-interest" frame. They are as willing as anyone to reach into their pockets if they believe the cause is just. And perhaps more importantly, when it comes to framing and winning elections, they don't see themselves as holding self-interest primary: if you simply make that accusation without a solid story, you just prove that you don't understand them, that you are "other."

The problem is not that *contributing-class*<sup>[4]</sup> conservatives lack empathy. Instead, we've hit a



moral-tastes landmine, where they intuitively trust authority and power, and in turn *intuitively* trust that Walmart contributes billions to the economy. Progressives hit a landmine when we argue as if conservatives believe in the primacy of self-interest rather than the primacy of contributing your share and being a functioning part of society.

Cognitive-conservatives lean towards trusting authority and power: that even if there are a few exceptions of greed and cheating, most millionaires and billionaires got their money because someone else chose to give it to them in a fair exchange.

Conservatives believe that giving help, especially automatic help, creates dependency. This is not the primacy of self-interest -- they give more to charity than liberals, if you show up at church needing help you are more likely to get it than showing up at a university. Neither liking nor trusting government is not equivalent to believing in the primacy of self-interest. Yes, the political movements are led by people whose policies push for the primacy of their self-interest, specifically self-interest of the wealthy and powerful. But to pretend that self-interest is their metaphor is both unfair to middle- and working-class conservative voters -- and a nightmarishly ineffective way to counter it.

Conservatives feel an intuition that liberals will create a nanny-state that will bankrupt hard-working people and turn the poor into overgrown children. {#ftnneeded DeLong reviewed a book i could footnote here} I think liberals in the 1960's made some mistakes in this direction -- simultaneously making dependency a little too psychologically easy and making the path out of dependency a little too difficult -- and we learned some lessons. Do we actively listen to conservatives, and answer their intuition in words and stories? Are we emotionally mature enough to notice and admit that the conservative intuition did have some truths: at the policy level, conservatives would create a world with immense poverty, a whole class of older people in misery, and people dying of lack of health care in huge numbers. That doesn't mean that they didn't intuit some of the problems with the welfare state. Are we willing to engage those?

These conservative values aren't bad *values*. Conservatives are not lacking compassion. The problem with the conservative story is not the values but the facts: typical working class people are begging for jobs where they would be able to contribute far more than they look to consume. We need to show conservatives that Walmart workers -- part of the 47% -- are contributing. And that Walmart billionaires have mostly learned how to pay people less, a financial game that doesn't create real wealth, Walmart billionaires are not actually contributing. It's the billionaires, not the Walmart workers, who fail to contribute.

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To be effective, your movement must be seen by all of the 99% as <sup>[5]</sup>  
positive and moral."  
-- George Lakoff

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When we pretend that the facts -- Walmart billionaires profiting from their economic power of over honest, hard-working people -- when we pretend that those facts that we see are the *values*

conservatives hold, we are being unfair to ordinary cognitive-conservatives -- and we become ineffective at countering the conservative metaphor.

## A Effective Progressive Frame: Economics of Contribution

Section: 12:3



What if labor creates almost all, or even most, wealth? What if making the stuff we need, healing the sick and teaching the kids, what if that is the economy, and other jobs are just a little bit parasitic on the builders, makers, farmers, teachers and healers? What if there is plenty of work needing to be done, and Wall Street profits today come from destroying jobs as much as creating them? CEOs and advertising executives and Wall Street are not contributing what they take out of the real economy.

The goal of progressives should be to use frames and stories that **focus on real contributions rather than monetary**: who makes what we need, how hard are people willing to work? Use real examples, often have many voices using the same examples, and repeat till you can't stand your own voice.

Your pay and profits are only loosely tied to your real contribution. If people want to eat strawberries and you pick those strawberries, you're making a real contribution, you have earned health care and a place in our society: this isn't charity. If you want to eat strawberries, in this economy the person who picks the strawberries will get paid almost nothing, and some advertising people, investors and Wall Street manipulators will all get surprisingly large cuts. It's not a question of compassion, but fairness.

If you do a necessary job and are not paid a sufficient wage, then there is a 'redistribution' happening away from you. You are making a real contribution of *a fair day's work* and not getting a real distribution in the form of *a fair day's pay*. You will produce real, needed goods or services, and yet not be able to afford a similar share of real goods and services. The modern economy does not provide jobs for everyone who wants to work, and does not pay people according to their real contribution.<sup>[6]</sup>

### Key Framing Tactics on Economics

Never, ever mix compassion and fairness when talking with cognitive-conservatives. Know that the Republican message machine aims to twist your message, be very explicit. You might explicitly say "it's not a question of compassion, it's a question of fairness" at the start

- **Separate conversations about economic fairness from conversations on charity or empathy.** Many

and end of conversations about CEO pay or similar economics.

progressives believe in charity: if you can't work, we want the government to lend you a hand, and even if you're just lazy we still don't think you should actually starve. But that's charity and compassion, not economics. If you argue compassion during the same conversation about economics, you create space for the conservative metaphor: Walmart's owners are great contributors, paying more than their share, while their workers contribute little and should thank the owners for their jobs.

- **Talk in real terms, not money terms.** If you create something other people need, you contribute. If you contribute and can't afford health care, you are being taken advantage of. Don't allow the abstract word "efficiency" to float by unchallenged: Bain Capital found ways to pay people less or fire them and find someone else to do it cheaper.<sup>[7]</sup> They didn't create new value, they didn't help workers create more with less, they merely squeezed profits away from the real contributors, the workers making things. Money was extracted; nothing was made more efficient.
- **Language suggestion: "Contributing Class."** Are you doing something that someone needs? Can you describe what you contribute: you teach, you heal, you build something that people would actually value? Republicans are relying on the complete incompetence of Democratic framing to even dream of using the word "contribution" in this economy.

## Get Better at Talking Economics

12:3.1

It would be helpful to be better at discussing Free Market economics. That discussion goes beyond the scope of this book, but if you can explain how Adam Smith's free market is supposed to work to begin a conversation, and be the expert on capitalism before there is any controversy raised, it can be a good starting point.

A few quick brainstormers are below -- in a real conversation, ask lots of questions.

Capitalism and free markets as defined by Adam Smith are supposed to have many small competitors all competing based on price and quality. Is that what you see? Or do you see companies buying companies to squelch competition: so the contributors get a smaller share, and owners extract a more monopolistic, larger cut than their free-market share.

Our economy thrived when industrialization gave people more efficient jobs, producing more per hour, and getting paid more each hour. Today investors and CEOs can make just as much money by forcing a worker to accept a smaller paycheck -- perhaps by threatening them with outsourcing -- as by helping that worker become more efficient. The Industrial Revolution was centered on increasing efficiency; the current crony capitalism is about stealing from the people who do the real work. It's not good for our economy nor for ordinary people.

Free market capitalism theorizes that there will be no unemployment, and no market crashes. If

you see that there is unemployment, you can't fully believe in the free market theories. Adam Smith's theories say unemployment just won't happen, but it happens in every economy that isn't centrally controlled. What do you think causes unemployment? This is deeply crucial: we have people who want cars and other goods, who are skilled enough to help build cars, who want to work, and they are sitting at home rotting. Something is wrong with the contribution economy.

We live in an era when we have huge production-surpluses and abundance: we can build all the factories we need, right? That wouldn't even be a challenge. But we don't build all the factories to give everyone who wants stuff a chance to work and create stuff and earn money to buy stuff. We've built a rent-taking, monopolistic economy where Wall Street earns more profits by hoarding capital instead of building factories.<sup>[8]</sup>

Many conservatives are upset with the Federal Reserve and government institutions that are moving countless billions into the hands of the people at the top: they already see that non-contributors are getting vastly rich through shenanigans. We need to get better at explaining that fixing these thefts, not pity for the working class, is the core in helping people who aren't receiving big paychecks or can't find work.<sup>[9]</sup>

## Sample Conversation

Section: 12:4

I hear you saying that our economy is in trouble, that productive middle-class people are working too hard to carry more than their share, and others are getting a free ride. I agree something is amiss. The 47% includes janitors & grocery clerks & substitute teachers & walmart employees. Are those the people you are upset at? Do you think that people doing hard work and not being paid well for it, so then they don't pay enough taxes, are at the root of this country's ills? *keywords: NVC*

How do you define contribution? To me contributors are people who provide the things I want. I want the food on my table. Someone had to pick the strawberries. Does it make sense to you that we live in a world with enough abundance that you and I should be able to eat strawberries sometimes? So, shouldn't the person who picks the strawberries have all the basics of a decent life? It's not a job you have to study for, though it sure isn't an easy job, so I'm ok with the idea that a doctor contributes more and owns a bigger house. But are you saying that the people who provide the things you actually want aren't real contributors, that you can eat strawberries and are ok that the person who picked them doesn't have a decent if small home or health care?

Today, people who do contribute more than their share are not paid enough to buy their share.

Part of the underlying difference between liberals and conservatives is that liberals assume the world is abundant, and conservatives see it as a rough place. No matter how productive humans get, cognitive-conservatives expect *SCARCITY*, and if someone isn't pulling their weight it threatens us all. Cognitive-liberals don't see scarcity, we see too few jobs -- whatever that means -- and our productive capacity overwhelms

**Exercise 1: Generating Dissonance on Economics**

12:5.1

**Abundance**

This question is probably unanswerable to free-market true-believers, so keep asking it, and listening, encouraging conservatives to wander into more realistic answers.

According to capitalism / free market theory, the more land, labor, capital and technology we have, the wealthier we should be. While environmentalists warn about the future, today we use far more resources with more capital and better technology than ever. So if we don't live in an abundant world economy, what went wrong? If we produce so much so easily, why don't we have enough?

**Free Trade**

According to capitalism / free market theory, free trade should -- basically it has to -- make both nations wealthier. Do you think that free trade with China has made America stronger? If you feel like free trade is making ordinary Americans poorer, doesn't that mean that the whole theory is off-kilter?

Followup: You don't have to believe in Socialism to realize that the game is being rigged. Previous generations of Americans did not turn to Socialism, they actually turned to more real free-markets: before America's ascension in the 20th century, progressives broke the monopolies and empowered working-class people to have unions that could negotiate at the same scale as their bosses. Working people were able to take home more of their share of their contribution, the rich took less false profits than ever, and America thrived like no other nation on earth. <sup>[10]</sup>

**Contribution & Reinforcing the "real"**

What has the economy provided you today? Who contributed it?

One of the signature goals of this book is helping politics at Thanksgiving. A good place to start, very much in line with the spirit of the holiday, is to look around at the the good and services that make that dinner possible. Don't bring up politics as you do this, reality will intrinsically reinforce contribution-focused economics. Who picked the cranberries? Almost everything that normal people will give thanks for is contributed by underpaid people, often immigrants without green cards with very few rights and very low pay, or unpaid family labor.

These are based on comments I've found useful, feel free to use them with a bit of editing but basically as opensource.

## Two takes on Capitalism

12:6.1



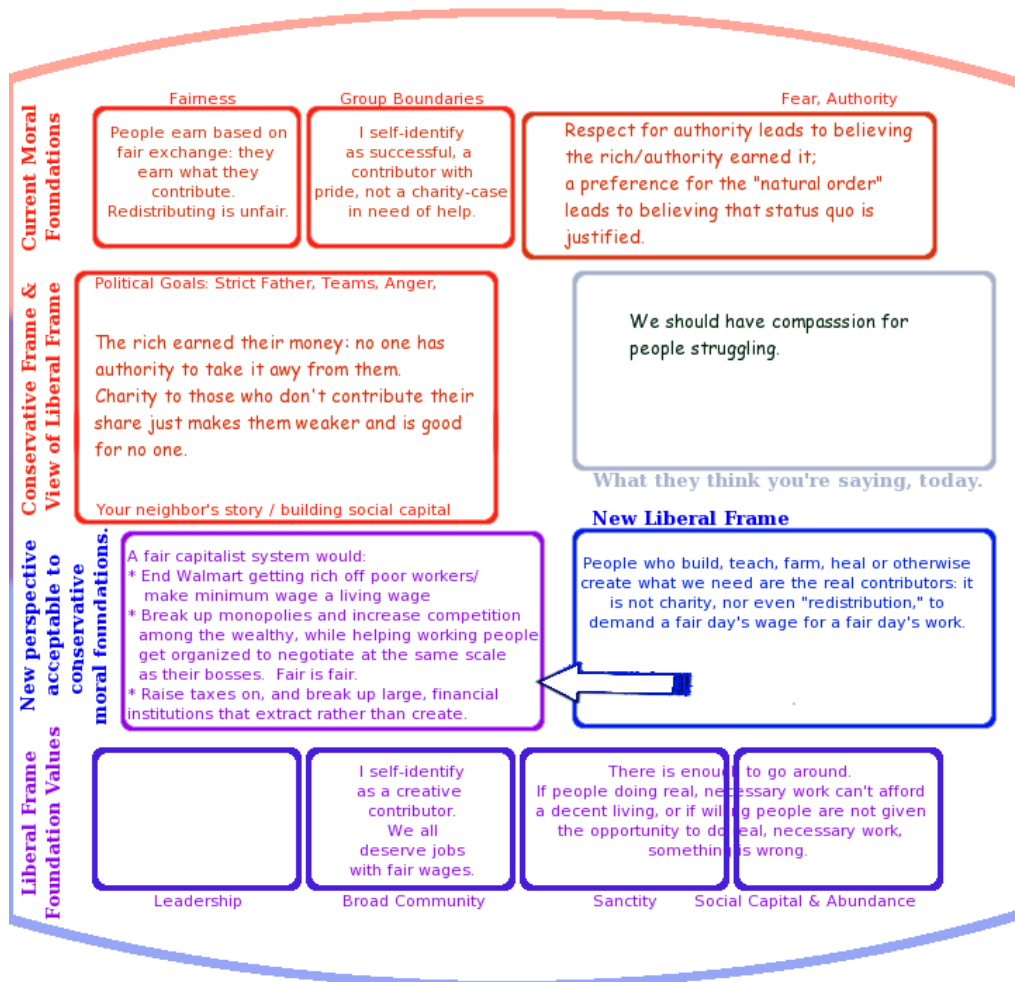
Example progressive frame on fairness and contribution. Note that it does not target compassion, just fairness. Focus on one or the other, not both at the same time.

In the US, this past election, and probably the next, and the next, are all struggles around two definitions of capitalism. In one version of Capitalism, if you are doing a job that needs doing, providing value other people need, a functioning free market will return that value: provide you with at least the basics of healthy food, decent shelter, health care, and collectively we can manage art classes for your kids. A fair day's wage for a fair day's work.

In another version of Capitalism, you get what you can negotiate for in a market where you have to compete against powerless non-unionized teenage girls in impoverished countries (if you are a worker, not a CEO), where CEO's are paid 300 times what you are paid (it's their friend's decision, that's fair, right?), and where the stock market extracts immense wealth from the economy even when they make terribly wrong investment decisions. Where you can create value, do things someone has to do, and be called a "freeloader" by the people who are managing to pay you almost nothing to do the hard work that makes them rich. In Adam Smith's world, if you were more efficient, you got paid more -- today you or your co-worker might lose a job where you were efficiently producing and contributing to the US economy, and the CEO or Wall Street firm that fires you will get paid more cash for doing so.

Democrats have a big advantage in economics framing: a century ago progressives had good policies and good framing, we just need to repeat. Set the window of argument with "workers create all wealth" as one window frame, and let the rest of the debate follow from there. Tell the working class they create all wealth, not that we pity them and want to help them.

Is capitalism about being competitive and producing what people need? Or is it about paying people less and skimming from other people's contributions? \* This election, and the next, and the next.



Digital versions of the workbook charts are available in color, or blank so you can fill out your own. Find them at [CognitivePolitics.org](http://CognitivePolitics.org)

## Footnotes or Draft

Section: 12:8

### Romney Played With Fire

12:8.1

Candidate Romney is one of my favorite sources for making the conservative frame visible to liberals who are ignoring Fox news. Where Reagan very smoothly reframed the issues, the 2012 election was full of Republican failures that expose their ideals.

He generally failed to understand his own advantage in the economics debates: much of the electorate near 47% income doesn't want pity. His comments about the 47% were insulting many of the people whose dignity caused them to suffer Republican rule rather than accept Democratic



pity.

He has also opened up what might be the best possible Democratic frame: contribution. If we transform the contribution talk from abstract dollars to real contributions, the billionaires will not be seen as having contributed what they've pocketed.

I'm a fan of Headstart and foodstamps, but re-focusing the economy overall is a much bigger deal than the size of life-preserver programs.

1. Curtis Dubay, The Heritage Foundation, [More People Should Pay Taxes](http://www.heritage.org/research/commentary/2012/09/more-people-should-pay-taxes) [<http://www.heritage.org/research/commentary/2012/09/more-people-should-pay-taxes>] , September 19, 2012.
2. We of course also want workers to have the opportunity to contribute. American savings should become American factories giving workers jobs that let them contribute to our needs. If Wall Street executives were making millions moving capital in a way that created more jobs and more wealth for other people, and they were just getting a cut, that would mean they were contributing. But when they make millions for moving jobs overseas, there is something more deeply wrong. The problem isn't people earning very large salaries or bonuses, it's people getting paid large amounts without contributing to overall wealth.
3. [by George Lakoff](http://occupywriters.com/works/by-george-lakoff) [<http://occupywriters.com/works/by-george-lakoff>]
4. What metaphors come to mind when you hear the term *contributing class*? I like using and defining this term to mean someone who creates something someone else wants or needs. Picking strawberries is definitely contributing-class, a CEO who helps a team create a useful produce more efficiently is contributing; advertising or sending jobs overseas isn't contributing. Often it won't be by job title: a divorce lawyer who helps parents focus on their kids needs could be a huge contributor while their colleague who encourages revenge isn't at all. I think most of us desire to be contributors, but some sub-cultures of greed lose track of that, and many working-class and service-class people are not given the chance to contribute much. And economy where people are allowed to earn a comfortable living while contributing seems like a straightforward demand and goal.
- 5.
6. This book is about framing, so we can't go too deep in to economics, but: if Wall Street was efficiently allocating resources people who wanted to work would have jobs. If they're not efficiently allocating resources, they're getting paid not for contributing but for extracting wealth.
7. [Romney's Bain Capital invested in companies that moved jobs overseas](http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-06-21/politics/35460959_1_american-jobs-private-equity-firm-employment) [[http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-06-21/politics/35460959\\_1\\_american-jobs-private-equity-firm-employment](http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-06-21/politics/35460959_1_american-jobs-private-equity-firm-employment)] , By Tom Hamburger, June 21, 2012, The Washington Post.
8. Example of Wall Street closing rather than opening factories, shutting down a profitable factory to move the jobs overseas: ['I'm sick to my stomach': anger grows in Illinois at Bain's latest outsourcing plan](http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2012/aug/10/illinois-workers-bain-outsourcing) [<http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2012/aug/10/illinois-workers-bain-outsourcing>] By Paul Harris, The Guardian Friday, August 10, 2012 12:28 EDT
9. Personally, I would be happy to pay the taxes it would take to help people who need help, who aren't really able to handle the modern world and don't contribute well. But that is a completely different story from someone who is an able-minded, able-bodied willing worker who would like to contribute and get paid for it, and isn't

given the opportunity. Even if sometimes the policy choices to help both groups would be the same, the stories need to be kept separate.

10. Wikipedia on the Progressive Era economics: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Progressive\\_Era#Economic\\_policy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Progressive_Era#Economic_policy)

# The Workbook

## Tools to examine an issue before a conversation

Pick an issue and a person you struggle to convince. Then use the pages below, or download the larger [online workbook](#). The four worksheet pages help structure the ideas from this book:

- **Values & Frame** Review the issue from Chapters 1 and 2: the perspective of Lakoff's stories and metaphors, plus moral "tastes." Where does everyone begin?
- **Goal Setting** Goals should vary tremendously. A liberal might hope that Obama embarrasses Romney; a Thanksgiving conversation should make you feel like you are both on the same side.
- **Tactical Checklist** A variety of techniques to choose from.
- **Communications Strategy: Mapping a Conversation** Depending on your goals, choose an approach to the conversation. Often active listening or NVC, and map out at least one way to imagine a healthy conversation.

## Review of Progressive Tactics and Strategies



A quick overview of strategies used throughout this book -- skim this list before engaging on a new issue!

### Strategic Overview

The section below is a very quick reprise of the book.

#### **Moral Values: Know which value is being triggered.**

Consider what values the other person is struggling with, and make sure your arguments either: engage those, or reframe. For example, if they are focused on the sanctity of human life in a fetus (value: sanctity), and you argue for choice (value: freedom), you're likely to just piss them off that you are not listening. Or if you argue for more help for the poor (value: compassion), you'll piss off even a compassionate conservative who has absorbed too much [false] information about the poor as lazy (values: fairness, responsibility).

#### **NVC: Listen and agree as much as possible**

Merely acknowledging their opinion [NVC] doesn't mean you have to agree with it. "I hear how much you care when you talk about the sanctity of life starting at conception."

#### **Framing: Don't argue starting with their trigger points**

Start where you both agree -- with values dear to you that your audience holds as well -- but where the frame will be favorable for nurturing government & for compassion. For example, don't begin a conversation about health care talking about what the government should do, start with stories about people needing health care. Start with values you agree on, and have those shared values unfold into your policy conclusion.

#### **Limits of Moral Value Changes: Attempt only a small change with each conversation.**

"I thought life was sacred at conception, and believed in God and America, but I've completely changed my worldview in the last five minutes from you yelling at me." It's not going to happen, so choose other goals.

#### **Limits of Moral Value Changes: Reconsider your goals**

Consider non-policy goals, like breaking down the way conservatives are being taught to see liberals as the enemy. Do you *need* someone to agree with you about abortion, or calm down about it and consider who to vote for from a wider angle?

## **Unraveling or Weaving Compassionate Frameworks**

### **Solidifying In-Groups and Outsiders: Shame, Blame and Fear**

Sometimes idealist youth find out about the US role in overthrowing Guatemala, Iran and Chilean democracies, and separate emotionally from the US and join the left. But for someone whose identity is wrapped in patriotism, inducing shame on it's own with no place for a proud alternative will get you nowhere. People comfortable with their worldview do not become more compassionate under attack.

### **Softening In-Group Boundaries and Avoiding Triggers**

#### **Openings: Evoking Thought Instead of Reaction**

- Doing simple science, research or other complex, attentive, reality-based thinking. Science -- testing your hypotheses -- is not the same as listening to summaries from scientists and believing them. Projects done as a team are by far the best.
- Acting or other activities that put you in someone else's shoes. I'd long assumed that reporting and theater attracted liberals; but I wonder if regular practice walking in other people's shoes wouldn't push almost anyone into the liberal mindset.
- Open ended questions that lack a conclusion, or a lack of clarity about your views, can evoke either problem-solving thinking or trying to see from another perspective. They can't automatically disagree with you until they've figured out your point. "Who Would Jesus Bomb" might be pro- or anti-Christian or something else entirely. "Trust Women" might be Pro-Choice but it's not clear. These types of messages get someone thinking about a subject, rather than just bashing them with your opinion.
- Trusted messenger, or Non-Messenger. Have a conversation on a bus where someone can overhear you. This works well for detailed stories, like US imperialism, or global warming. Talk for ten minutes going over details. People who would shut you out the moment you said that the US was behind Pinochet will eavesdrop happily, paying attention.

#### **Moral Foundations: Community Building & Compassion**

- Humor. Being able to laugh, laugh together -- or ideally even be laughed at without fear.
- Compassionate listening and mindfulness. Making sure people feel heard.
- Compassionate acts done together. Nothing breaks the in-group/out-group barriers like working on a project together across previously-perceived barriers.

1. "Well Behaved Women Seldom Make History," original quote by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich. Get a t-shirt at [Northern Sun](http://www.northernsun.com/Well-Behaved-Women-White-T-Shirt-%281008%29.html) [<http://www.northernsun.com/Well-Behaved-Women-White-T-Shirt-%281008%29.html>] .

2. Get a t-shirt at Northern Sun [<http://www.northernsun.com/Homeland-Security-Black-T-Shirt-%281977B%29.html>] .
3. "I'll believe corporations are people when Texas executes one." Get a bumpersticker at Northern Sun [<http://www.northernsun.com/Corporations-Execute-Bumper-Sticker-%287338%29.html>] .

## Exploring Slogans and Bumperstickers



This section will look at bumpersticker messages and similar short memes. Imagine with me what values and frameworks these might trigger, or challenge.

- Declaring allegiance to your political in-group
- Subtlety and Humor
- Openings

## Going on the Attack

### In-group empowerment or identification that further defines and alienates an out-group

#### Media Examples

- News for Dumb Fux
- I think therefore I don't listen to Rush Limbaugh

**Framing:** This violates Lakoff's framing rules: every time you say "Not X" you get people's neurons firing about X, reinforcing X. We make Fox and Limbaugh the representatives of conservatives. These stickers are the "DARE" of progressives: for years we've known that "Dare to Keep Kids off Drugs" programs where police go into schools and tell kids all the trouble they'll get into with each drug mostly act as introductions to all the drug options: insulting Fox or Limbaugh in general, without comedy, merely

advertise them.

**In-Group Loyalty:** These slogans reinforce the In-Group conservative value. "You're a liberal other, so you don't watch Fox. I'm a good conservative, so I do." The message is that we are not Americans, but liberals and conservatives, in separate loyalty-groups, opposed to each other. If this is a bumpersticker next to other bumperstickers, if the reader likes Fox you have further separated them from all your causes.

**What might work?** Balance, listen to the other side, create space for people who disagree with you on many things to do one thing you want. Perhaps:

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MSNBC makes liberals dumb; Fox makes conservatives dumb.

Boycott both, read real media!

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#### Increasing Separation

All these quotes define liberals and conservatives in opposition to each other.



- Slower Minds Keep Right
- Voting is Like Driving: R is for going backwards, D is for going forwards.
- Somewhere in Texas a village is missing its idiot.
- Don't pray in my school and I won't think in your church
- Bipartisanship: I'll hug your elephant if you kiss my ass.
- Vote Republican it's easier than thinking.

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### Racist People Suck

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"Racist People Suck" is different. It declares an in-group or loyalty group of all people who don't like to consider themselves racist (a very large majority, even if subtle racism continues in much larger numbers), and reinforces that group-membership calls for agreement against racism. This fits with theories of authoritarian thinking, that authoritarian followers prefer to be in the great big in-group: if enough people are against racism, then authoritarian followers will want to fit in.

It has less humor and it breaks the framing rule by

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### Hatred is Not a Family Value

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saying "No," but I expect it works pretty well. It shows the dysfunction of liberal politics that conservative think-tanks and focus groups would know if these slogans work, and I sit here along pondering.

Why do you think "Hatred is Not a Family Value" is so much more popular than "Love is a Family Value?"

## Subtle or Funny Slogans Cementing a Liberal Worldview

### In-group empowerment that doesn't focus an out-group

*Used in the draft copy WITHOUT PERMISSION YET -- need to ask for it if proofreaders like this --*



<http://laloalcaraz.com> The Republicans have often framed "cardless" people as "illegals," a word currently much more clear than my use of "cardless." It's hard to make people seem like people quickly with a word, while it is easy to reduce them to an issue. But images can work the other way. I particularly appreciate this message: it's not hard to connect to immigration, but it comes across as a joke just long enough to get past some people's defensive barriers.

I've found these slogans and t-shirts to be quiet effective at getting people thinking and talking. They are reinforcing a fundamentally progressive view of the world, but with enough humor to reduce resistance. Moderates can easily agree, some conservatives can agree. They don't aim to define groups, and they are focused on values not politics, even if it is only a short logic-chain to politics.

- Well Behaved Women Seldom Make History <sup>[1]</sup>
- Homeland Security: Fighting Terrorism since 1492 <sup>[2]</sup>
- I'll believe corporations are people when Texas executes one. <sup>[3]</sup>
- Politicians should dress like race car drivers. At least we'd know who their corporate sponsors are.

Consider the "race car drivers" slogan. It's barely ideological, though it does emphasize the progressive idea that politicians are bought by corporations rather than corporations owned by politics. To my ear, I expect most conservatives won't hear it contradicting their values, it is exposing many of the problems that honest Tea Party members are upset about, so it can draw us together. It gets people thinking in the frame you want -- a tremendous job for a bumpersticker.

## Openings

### Getting past triggers, landmines and defenses to new ideas

#### Finding Shared Values

Find all the areas of agreement. If you have a car full of left-wing bumperstickers, the most powerful ways to start might be with positive, pro-community message, one that identifies your in-group as the whole community:

- Give Blood
- Vote for your grandchildren
- Eat well, feel well.

#### Gentle Liberalism

- Coexist, with all the different religious symbols.
- Stickers that say: Bicycle, organic, etc. State your own values without attacking the other side's.

#### Lacking Clarity, Forcing Thought

- *Who would Jesus Bomb?* This is one my favorite t-shirts. It is not clear if I am Christian, pro- or anti-Jesus. This lack of clarity confuses people and makes them think about what I am trying to say. Politicians need clarity and 3-point plans because it is hard to make people think complex thoughts, and Democrats have often failed to reduce talking points to clear soundbites. But if you're not giving a political talk, if you're not leading, then anytime you can make people think complex thoughts, it puts them far into a progressive framework. Getting people thinking, not spoon-feeding them answers, is the goal.
- *A business that makes nothing but money is a poor business* – Henry Ford Quoting conservatives (Ike has some of these too) with messages that today would make them liberals.

## Exercise

Imagine you are a good-hearted person who since childhood has leaned slightly towards a cognitive conservative perspective. You care about your church more than politics, and tend to vote Republican more than Democrat but think of yourself as open. Find some bumperstickers on cars owned by progressives, perhaps at a coop: how do they influence you?

Try this short checklist:

- The person identifies with a group I identify with.
- It does or doesn't make me wish a strict father would impose order.
- They share a sense of sanctity.
- They do or don't like me and my friends.
- It makes me think, or it makes me wish they would think.

## Tactics for Comments / Worksheet



There is a lot of hate-speech on the internet. After the Holocaust people looked back and saw apathy as the most widespread contributor: people disgusted by the brown-shirts left the streets to the brown shirts. They were the "trolls," and the advice to "not feed the trolls" seems to match everything decent Germans did wrong as Nazis rose to power. Add an occasional voice of sanity to the blogosphere. How do we not get wrapped up in "feed the trolls" conversations while also not ceding the public forums to hate and anger? We need to find more ways to add voices of sanity to the blogosphere, a different technique than being silenced or getting into shouting matches.

### Openings

- **Start gently lacking clarity.** Force "active listening" by being unclear whose side you are on and where you are going.
- **Conclude, or Hit Hard, only at the End** Make your point, then turn up the heat. Only hit people according to their own values, or you're wasting time.
- **Enemy of Your Enemy** Go after trolls who are "on your side," or gently disagree with a point "on your side." You don't want to create divisiveness in your own movement, but online debates are partly about coming across as reasonable -- no one is keeping score! This makes a good opening, too.
- **Reversed Accusation** Defend the "other side" from false accusations. They are a terrible idea and wrong, anyway. Notice them, fight clean, it works better. It breaks down the sides and lets you carry the middle -- much of modern politics on the web is, or could be, won by the people who are able to make their points without coming across as jerks. One sane voice in each crazy conversation.
- **Create More Sides** It can't be us-vs-them if there are three ideas.

### Increase Thinking

- **Real Questions** Ask real questions. Make sure they're not BS -- ask questions that don't lead, or that only lead a little. Questions that cause you to introspect, or look around, or open ended questions that have no party line easy answer.
- **Skip the Conclusion** Leave parts of your argument unfinished. Make it less obvious which side you are on. People can't think and run their automated argument defenses at the same time. "Who Would Jesus Bomb" is a favorite of mine: it's not clear if I'm Christian or anti-Christian, which makes it hard for someone to have an automatic reaction. "Trust Women" might be Pro-Choice but it's not clear. These types of messages get someone thinking about a subject, rather than just bashing them with your opinion.  
*repeated in F1*
- **Lakoff's Framing: Begin a story** Conjure the frame you want. This goes with the recommendations to be unclear or not finish the story: leave them to think through the implications of the metaphor or story you've begun, let it be the reader's idea as much as possible.

## **Moral Foundations and Group Formation**

- **Fight Hate-Speech From the Center** Create a group in the middle, the sane people. Invite people with different values to calm down. Invite readers to see a moderate, sane middle. Be careful not to welcome decent conservatives to hate you as a liberal more than they hate hate-speech trolls. Don't get in arguments with trolls one-to-one, and especially don't claim it to be a liberal-vs-conservative battle, which may be a small truth but it effectively pushes semi-sane conservatives to join the hate, rather than isolating the haters.
- **Authoritarian Followers seek the middle** When fighting hate, bullies come in big gangs and all try to stay in the middle. Repetition is important. Providing a middle-path is important: some people aren't ready to be gay allies, but if they feel like it's "normal" to be tolerant, they'll obey the group mind.

## **Haidt / Healthy Conservative Values**

- **Appeal to conservative values** If your audience is conservative, consider if your policy goals can be requested in their value frame.
- **Loyalty Check** A standard conservative politician approach is to stand between a religious person and their God, claiming authority that isn't theirs. Religion is being used for politics, not politics used for religion. Point this out whenever it is clear.



# Bibliography for Responses by Issue

**Links to Share on a Variety of Issues** *redesign into a tear-out? This section is just begun, but want proof-reader suggestions!*



Perhaps with friends, create a list of *your* favorite memes and footnotes that win arguments. Help get the best ideas repeated, rather than just repeating "my side my side"

## Gay Marriage

### Christianity and LGBT

A minister talking about giving water at Pride Day, as a representative of religion which is 90% of the oppression that LGBT face: <http://www.upworthy.com/next-time-someone-uses-the-phrase-good-christian-this-is-who-ill-think-of?c=ufbl>

### Economics

Bernie Sanders Teachers didn't cause the recession, Wall Street did. 'They said: "Get the gov't off the backs of Wall Street" They got it.' \$16Tr. lent to the banks <http://www.upworthy.com/how-the-hell-did-wall-street-get-an-extra-16-trillion-bernie-sanders-explains?c=ufbl>

### Blue State / Red State Responsibility Articles

When you need to make a fool of someone... Blue State / Red State Responsibility: <http://www.upworthy.com/chart-our-country-votes-ass-backwards-do-you?c=ufbl>  
Value::Fairness

1. *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus: The Classic Guide to Understanding the Opposite Sex*, John Grey.



## Word Choices: Progressives, Liberals, Democrats

### I don't want to upset people, I'm sure I will



Writing about demographic differences is always difficult. This is a workbook -- a place to brainstorm, test ideas and experiment, not a place for final verdicts -- and neither Democrats nor Republicans are oppressed minorities, so sometimes I'll summarize without writing the caveats that could fit in nearly every sentence.

In general, I'll use Democrat or Republican to indicate the political parties as political machines: what is their position, how do they vote? Liberal (or progressive) and conservative are here used as patterns of beliefs that should usually get at least one more modifier to be meaningful: social- and fiscal- are the most common modifiers. This book focuses on a different modifier, cognitive- liberals and cognitive-conservatives, two widespread ways of seeing the world that often, but not always, match the various political liberal and conservative options.

A few years ago, *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus*<sup>[1]</sup> gained fame. It's full of massive overgeneralizations, of course, but it helped many women and men accept differences rather than burn bridges over differences. I think something similar is needed between defensive, protective cognitive-conservatives and exploring, open-hearted liberals -- this book is going to be a mess of over-generalizations and times when I overstep, but hopefully useful anyway.

Despite writing about the differences between conservatives and liberals, this book is really about the similarities: we're fighting at Thanksgiving not between good and evil, but over different ways our brains are wired to see the world, with all of us oriented towards good.

And when I describe differences with liberals coming out as "better than" conservatives, I'm aiming for those to be challenges to liberals: everyone should believe that their side is more honest and thinks deeper, so that the tactics that work for your side would be cleaner. If you think the Republican base has a better grasp on logical thinking and is more turned off by mere slogans, if you think the Republican voters lose faith faster than Democrats when politics goes negative, great! We don't need to argue about it, just race to the top.

## **I lied: This book isn't about conservatives**

I lied. I live in Berkeley and this book isn't really about conservatives. It's easy to have a conversation here where people take for granted that liberals (or whatever synonym people will insist on) are on a higher spiritual plane than conservatives. When I hear that, I'll posit that a typical conservative church-based community would show up for you on moving day, and a typical Berkeley liberal community won't. People tend to nod their heads at this statement. So it's time to shut up about being on a higher plane of spiritual development.

I am a cognitive as well as political liberal: I'll instantly disagree with my in-group if I think something else, find the idea of cheering with my community for a sports team unnatural, talk about power-with and resist power-over, and used the word "heteronormative" yesterday, and the day before. Empathy inspires me, and I want to change the world and our species for the better, and I think it can be done. But I'm aware that this scattered, intellectual approach to life has losses as well as gains, and the cognitive scientists as well as cultural anthropologists are pointing them out for us.

Many liberals feel like we're in a school-yard, being bullied and getting our lunch-money stolen by the Republicans. Yes. The thing is, they're not bigger than us, and we outnumber them, and they're still stealing our lunch money. We need to learn about community, and think about game-theory: why are all the wedge-issues initiated from the right? Why aren't we smart and disciplined enough to split good-hearted conservatives from self-interest business machines? Human beings turn to God when we can't

And under it all, that's not merely a call-to-arms: it's a real question. What about the liberal mind-set has left us unable to handle school-yard-style bullying even as adults? Me too, I'm a facts-and-analysis liberal who doesn't show up anywhere every Sunday, despite some conscious efforts to work on community.

Politics is as much a dance as a fight, and this book aims to show liberals a bit about some of our shortcomings as leads and as follows, framed as tactics both because we do need those tactics and because a book about shortcomings wouldn't get read.

# Glossary

## Frames, Metaphors and Values

### Thinking with Metaphors.

We're not merely influenced by stories or metaphors. Rather, the thinking process in our brain uses metaphors directly. Metaphors are the building blocks of our thoughts. It's very hard to construct a liberal house with conservative building blocks.

### Use Your Frame and Stories

Using words, stories and metaphors to evoke different ways to think about an issue. For example, "tax relief" frames taxes as something we need to be relieved of, and "Oppose the Tax Relief Act" is a slogan that *still frames taxes as something we need to be relieved of*. You can't just make up a frame or metaphor and tell people to use it: "taxes are puppies!" Stories are the delivery vehicle: stories must feel real, be repeated, and evoke a carefully chosen metaphor. People are unlikely to ever call taxes "membership dues" because we don't like paying taxes. But you might tell a story of a community deciding to pay membership dues and benefiting, and another similar story and another, and have multiple liberal politicians and allies repeat variations of those stories, until people get your metaphor.

### Specific Political Metaphors: Strict or Nurturing

Lakoff's Strict Father conservative metaphor and Nurturing Parent liberal metaphor are introduced in the first chapter.

- Liberal frames invoke the strict father in abortion debate, simple & working test X8:0. --  
--#abortion-strict-father-metaphor

### Framing Stumbling Blocks

Framing is often challenging for liberals.

- Reducing people to slogans is easier than having slogans invoke a rich story., simple & working test X8:0. -- --#people-and-slogans
- 

### Underlying Values

So far, researchers such as Jonathan Haidt have found underlying values that almost all people share: compassion, fairness, and freedom. And underlying values that are stronger among conservatives, very liberal people will not consider these as positive values: respect for leadership, loyalty to your group, and a smell-test sense of sanctity. There is fascinating science

and objective research in the form of surveys showing consistently different answers. It's good to note that the surveys are scientific, but the labeling of the patterns can not be: whether to call a pattern of answers to surveys "healthy respect for the natural order of leadership" or "desire to submit to authoritarian leaders" is political.

### **Values Often Come in Sets**

Why are Pro-Life but less government support for pre-natal care, pro-military and perhaps pro-draft but anti-taxes -- or all their opposites -- such common ways to group values?

- From strict father to cognitive science, simple & working test X8:0. -- --#introduce-sets

### **Three ways our metaphors and arguments go horribly wrong:**

#### **Cognitive Dissonance**

Cognitive dissonance happens when your story and it's underlying metaphor clash with someone's understanding of the universe: basically when you go too far with Lakoff's ideas. An interestingly complex example is the metaphor of the US as the world's policeman: many people who have solidified in their idea that the US is fighting greedy wars for oil will completely reject any argument that uses this metaphor. (Meanwhile parts of the conservative base are confused by the metaphor, really believing that we are paying taxes to help other countries, and they don't want to do so anymore.)

"As the world's policeman, America has made great sacrifices helping the rest of the world"

"Support the Troops: Bring Them Home!" is a pro-peace bumpersticker than many conservatives might react to very differently than liberals think, taking the whole thing as an insult. (I think this is from Haidt?)

#### **Shame and Sin**

Conservatives react to sin very differently than liberals. Liberals hate hypocrisy: don't tell me to do better than you can do. Conservatives expect sin, it is not hypocrisy to talk about following in Christ's footsteps and fail. Conservatives are repulsed when you don't know what the truth is, don't recognize and advocate for the natural order, even if you will fail.

- Focus: The Values Invoked by Shame, simple & working test X8:0. -- --#focus-conservative-shame
- *Gay pride and public commitment* violate God's order; gay sex is merely a sin, simple & working test X8:0. -- --#gay-conservative-shame

#### **Triggering Landmines**

An issue that sets off someone's values, often creating a response far beyond the policy implications. These most often happen when people have different moral tastes all together: one person thinks they are arguing about how compassionate we should be, while the listener thinks you don't understand what it means to be a dignified independent human being. When you trigger someone, they tend to think of you as strange and "other," and conversations go bad. Trigger issues call for listening and communication, neither logic nor compromise help.

- Moral Foundations Landmines within Lakoff's Metaphors, simple & working test X8:0.  
-- --#intro-trigger-landmine

## Compromise

### Speaking Truth

Speaking your truth is the art of being neither mushy and quiet about deep truths, nor extreme or insulting. Often it comes from focusing on your thoughts and your compassion, rather than opposing the other side. Similar to problems with compromise, it is easy to lower the volume or raise the volume, rather than tune your conversation to your truth.

### Straw Men Burn

When you don't listen to the other side and repeat arguments that show you haven't listened to them, you reinforce their views of you as *other*. Straw men are good for firing up the base, but backfire at Thanksgiving.

- Repeating calls for compassion when another issue is their key, simple & working test X8:0. -- --#XXXXXX

## Tactics to Avoid Defensive Reactions

### Inoculation: pointing out the wrongness of an idea before people self-identify with it.

Wrapping yourself in the flag, or losers who talk about superior men so losers will follow them. You have to get out ahead on these patterns: you can't go after Bush for wrapping himself in the flag after 51% of the electorate likes him, you have to go after un-named, abstract (not particularly Republican) politicians who do this. Even if Republicans wrap themselves in the flag much more than Democrats, it's unhelpful to say this. You're setting a trap so slimy behavior will be better noticed, but pointing out the problem before it is associated with anyone's side.

*Inoculation is in some ways the opposite and parallel of landslide wedge issues (Lakoff? what exactly did he say?)*

*Possible Inoculations:-- move from glossary --*

*When talking with animal science majors who I think many are going to run factory farms in an extremely abusive way, and they say it's not happening, the default argument is to scream back and forth: yes they do*

*torture animals, no they don't torture animals, repeat. The tactic I prefer is to leverage that agreement: to get a promise, with a handshake, that if they ever see it, they will oppose it. Foul things tend to happen bit by bit as good people stop paying attention to their own beliefs, and then people will find ways to defend and rationalize what they have found themselves doing. The point is to get past someone's defenses by crossing their minefields before they've put in the mines.*

- Claims that a group is superior always come from unimpressive leaders., simple & working test X8:0. -- --#weak-leaders-claim-superiority-inoculation

## **Trusted Source**

Everyone tends to trust facts based on whether we trust the source, and it takes no great leap to imagine that people who are inclined to follow authority are especially tuned to the source of information. Making yourself trustworthy – by listening, telling the truth, caring about what the other person feels – is often more important or simply more possible than winning a debate on a particular issue.

•

## **Allegiance and Opposition Values**

Developing a value based on people you agree with believing it, or by automatically opposing anything the opposition stands for. I expect many liberals horrified at the callousness shown by the Republicans towards women around the Pro-Life debate ("What do you mean we're callous, we weren't thinking about them at all?") has pushed some people to completely reverse "Life begins at conception," where if this wasn't a political issue then the opinion of when life begins might not map so clearly. People who supported the invasion of Iraq and not the tiny assistance to Libyan rebels are pretty far gone into their party politics.

•

## **Group Cohesion with Shared Tasks**

Elite and special-interest economics requires good people argue about hot-button wedge issues, and that we form separate loyalty groups: we're not Americans, we're Republicans and Democrats. One of the best ways to feel like we are a single group is shared tasks. These can be big: World War II united America perhaps more than anything else. But perhaps we can find small tasks that make us conscious of being one community overtop out political differences.

- Improving the options for a woman who chooses to carry an unwanted pregnancy, simple & working test X8:0. -- --#shared-task-introducing-complexity-anti-abortion-pro-life

## **Create Space**

Allow people to feel heard, to feel like you and they are in community. Create space within your community for a variety of ways of looking at life, including theirs. This is the opposite of the conservative effort to mark in-group out-group boundaries: "you're with us or against us." Don't reinforce opposition. Active listening, empathy and a willingness to see their point of view do not have to be followed immediately by compromising on policy positions.

- [Abortion x, simple & working test X8:0. -- --#abortion--win-by-creating-space](#)

### **No One is Keeping Score**

In many political conversations both people are trying to score points off each other, to prove the other wrong. While knowing a lot of facts and having a lot of sharp points is very powerful when talking with someone who has not identified "their side" in an argument, no one keeps score, you can't win by direct fact and logic assault if the other person already knows what they want the answer to be.

- [Nonviolent Communications vs Ass-Kicking, simple & working test X8:0. -- --#nvc--no-one-keeping-score](#)

### **Choosing to focus on their truth or yours**

Democrats are simultaneously being advised to ignore the Republican's metaphors and values and speak their own, and to get much better at listening to and answering the very different core values of cognitive-conservatives. This is where it gets fun.

- [Question introduced, simple & working test X8:0. -- --#intro-ours-theirs.](#)

### **Channeling the Right to Lead**

Cognitive conservatives look for leaders. How do they know a leader when they see one? Often conservative politicians are setting up a channel of frustrations or shame that leads to the need for their leadership.

- [If you can't trust her with a choice, I'm your man, simple & working test X8:0. -- --#abortion-the-right-to-lead.](#)

### **Open Thinking, Complex**

Fear, anger, tightly defined in-groups, and clear answers move people towards conservative thinking. Hope and broad connection are obvious counters, but there are other tactics that move us into liberal frames of mind. I'm not sure these have been studied as scientifically, but consider ways to get people to open their thinking, far from clear answers. Just as fear or anger could be in the room, rather than on the topic, open thinking can be induced by the nature of the conversation: koans and puzzles, leaving some information missing, giving clues rather than

answers are all great ways to get people thinking like liberals.

- [Open: Trust Women, simple & working test X8:0. -- --#trust-women-open-thinking.](#)
- [Complex: Adding Layers to the Abortion Debate, simple & working test X8:0. -- --#abortion-open-thinking.](#)

## **Support People**

People stepping out of the closet, telling their stories, being willing to be in a spotlight, were the core of breaking down homophobia. It's not necessarily the big policies that make the difference whether they feel comfortable taking those risks. Clinton and Obama didn't do this, we did. Often liberals fail here, when we point out the moles in conservative eyes about footnotes, both science and history point out that we're often weak on community skills. Some of it is money, but some of it is not: mentor, be an ally. The Old Boys Club is conservative in a world where just as many liberals have college degrees. We say: If politics adds stress, deal with it. If you're a little socially awkward, go work on that first. We don't act like a community ready to help its members.

## **Fear and Scarcity; Hope and Abundance**

- [Scarcity and Abundance in Economics.](#)

## **Value Judgements**

*Where does this go? Collect the various items of this glossary and put elsewhere / @ToDo*

## **Good, Bad, Different?**

### **Is this a liberal book?**

Some authors have tended to see liberals as good and conservatives as bad, or to see conservatives as people who haven't dealt with their fears and need therapy. Others keep consistently neutral about the differences between liberals and conservatives. I think this is a question that will be worse than a waste of time to try to answer overall. When conservatives show up for their in-group and have a barn-raising that's good and more importantly liberals have something to learn; when support for your in-group turns to callousness or worse for out-groups that's bad and more importantly something liberals should learn to divert. This is a workbook, not an answer book.

## **Economic and Cognitive Politics**

There is no single, clear, exact definition of liberal or conservative. There are at least two large patterns that are similar -- but not at all exactly the same -- for dividing us into liberals and conservatives. Economics liberals are people who lean towards supporting more equality.



Cognitive liberals are people with a way of thinking that leads them towards an "we know it when we see" liberalism: open, gentle and compassionate. In a two party system, cognitive and economic politics tend to combine into one party on each side, cognitive conservatives with liberal economic interests (think union members) or with out-group characteristics (minorities) can swing either way. Current US politics is dominated by cognitive politics much more than in decades past; the Republicans seem to understand this and be good at framing. ==> move the rest of this. We've seen the US go from union-centric *economic liberalism* where unions did pretty well, to Civil Rights induced and abortion-fight reinforced cognitive politics where the wealthy have done very well and the social issues generate a lot of noise but not much progress. Cognitive conservatives have been getting votes and economic conservatives have been winning results. We may be entering a new phase, where in-group politics with racial overtones encounters demographic problems: in a USA with no majority, open-minded people have an advantage. They'll need to build a difficult coalition since many people who feel like they are treated as an out-group by Republicans are cognitive conservatives.

A cognitively-conservative German Jew would not have voted for Hitler; Two large patterns that most of us recognize There are brain-development issues, larger than our politics, that evidence increasingly shows lead us towards some

Yes, I fit mostly towards the liberal

People sometimes use the analogy that you can't tell exactly when day turns into night, but you can still tell day from night. I think for many conservative-liberal questions and the new cognitive science discoveries, there is an awful lot of twilight, with only short days and nights.

- [Introducing the new definition in Moral Tastes and Foundations](#)

## Chapter 9

### Closure

ToDo: Turn the table of contents into



Marketing and now science have their fingers deep into politics. They are studying you. Study back.

If you want to change the world, approach your conversations with mindfulness: think about what you think the other person thinks, think about what you will say and especially what you will ask, and at the end of the conversation review how it went. Learn lessons.

The next pages are an annotated table of contents, very quickly walking through the book. *until table of contents is done, these are pages at the beginning*

# Cognitive Politics: Communications Workbook for Progressives

## Section I: Theories and Historical Strategies



A rapid review of new theories on how liberals and conservatives think, compared with historically successful strategies.

1. **Linguistics and Framing:** What frame gets moderates to think like progressives? George Lakoff has led the call for Democrats to frame a progressive message. He advocates both for basic framing techniques such as using stories and repeating key ideas, and also for specific framing for progressives that evokes a nurturing parent metaphor for government while avoiding strict father metaphors.
2. **Cognitive Science and Moral Tastes:** Scientists have been putting liberals and conservatives into MRI machines, and finding differences: progressives are more trusting and excited by new experiences, while conservatives have "moral tastes" that liberals aren't even conscious of: good people see sanctity, authority and leadership differently.
3. **Active Listening and Nonviolent Communication:** Progressives think we're better listeners, better communicators. There are plenty of ideas for making conversations calm and connected: what do we know in real life that we forget to bring to politics?
4. **Understanding Authoritarianism:** Conservative values lead some groups to give more to charity, and others to become authoritarian. What is this process? How do we stop it?
5. **Satayangha:** Gandhi and King dealt with levels of oppression hard for most white American liberals to even comprehend, and they peacefully and lovingly kicked butt. Compromise and fighting anger with anger are not the only options.
6. **Basic Movement Building:** Conservatives often see a powerfully organized, nearly unstoppable left. What do they think we're doing, and can we start doing it?

# Table of Contents

## Section II: Practice



The sample issues below each call for different techniques from the first section. Practice integrating theories and strategies to explore more effective goal-setting and framing.

- **Abortion:** Fires up the conservative values of sanctity and authority: who has the right to lead? Arguing about sanctity just gets us fighting, but are there ways to keep abortion from putting the worst politicians in power?
- **Gay Marriage:** Homosexuality also fires up a conservative sense of sanctity and their definition of the in-group, but we've been successful in changing that for many people. What are progressives doing right?
- **American Exceptionalism** Candidate Romney kept reiterating how we should never apologize for America. Clearly, they've run this past focus groups. Conservatives enjoy being encouraged to never apologize: what values are resonating?
- **Economics and Contribution** On average, conservatives give more than liberals to charity: they understand compassion as well as we do. But when politicians talk economics, people who do real work are seen as leaches, while Wall Street game players and people who inherited wealth "contribute" more than their share. What short-circuits conservative compassion, and common sense, on economics? People who give to charity, respect hard work and complain about elites are voting the exact opposite: liberals are sadly begging people who give more to charity to show compassion, and failing to make the case. What's wrong with our arguments?

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### Quick Review of Other Issues

### Exercises and Techniques

- Example comments for media
- Techniques for conversations

### Glossary and Index