

## Framing Your Story

### **What are frames?**

(George Lakoff) Frames are the “mental structures that shape the way we see the world.”

### **Where do frames live?**

Frames live in the synapses of a person’s brain.

### **Why are they important?**

They affect how people understand problems and what solutions are seen to fit.

Like with a picture frame, the mind focuses only within set borders – not seeing what lies outside the frame.

People filter your arguments, supporting facts, and policy details through deeply held frames.

*People’s minds rely on frames, not facts.*

## **If frames are in the brain how do we know what our frames are?**

The way we know what our frames are, or evoke new ones, comes out of language, what words we use.

## **What are some framing words?**

They are the words that express our values.

Such as,

God

Fairness

Equal Opportunity

Justice and Freedom

Sustainability

Responsibility and Shared Accountability

Diversity

Doing Your Fair Share

Truth

Loyalty

Family

Village

Personal rights

Community

Courage

Leaving a Better World for our Children

The personal responsibility frame is one of the strongest in America.

**What does all this have to do with my telling my story?**

You need to be clear on the frame for any story you tell. Because if you don't frame it, the other person definitely will and it may not be with a frame you wanted.

**So how do I begin to frame my story?**

Just say to yourself: This is a story about \_\_\_\_\_.

Fill in the blank with the expression of a value.

If you said "this is a story about my sister Jacinta," you missed the point. Try again.

If you said "this is a story about how standing up for your beliefs (courage) makes you a winner," you got it.

**Once you've got your frame it becomes clear what parts of your story must be shared and what parts can be left out.**