



## Breaking Through With Democratic Messaging



### Let's get the message right

How many times have you heard a Democratic Congressperson interviewed in the halls of the Capitol talking about things like reconciliation, debt ceiling, three point five trillion dollars, continuing resolution, etc.? It's not interesting content. It can be difficult for Democrats to communicate dramatic and humane proposals that will provide major improvements to millions of lives—they get caught up in the weeds of policy or process. Oftentimes, they speak in the most safe, bipartisan, please-everyone scripts that actually please no one.

It leaves average Democrats helpless in conversations with voters, friends, and family. Policies need to be explained in terms that people can understand. We must recognize the power of our collective voice and use it to build a better future. And, we must expose the GOP's devious division tactics so that we may successfully win the resources we all deserve.

[We Make the Future Action](#) is a groundbreaking communications organization that has become a leader in strategic messaging for progressives and Democrats over the past few years. Anat Shenker-Osario, a leading language researcher, has partnered with *We Make the Future* to create [messaging guides](#) that acknowledge how race, class, and gender play a role in politics. This narrative is made up of three parts: **Values/Villain/Vision**, also known as the “three V’s.” The Values/Villain/Vision approach is designed to help groups and individuals communicate progressive values while avoiding stereotypes and weaponized language. It enables people to talk about politically charged issues in a respectful and effective way.

## Lead with values

**Values:** Establishing **unity across differences and shared values**. It establishes a **we**, and keeps the listener willing to keep listening. Most people, regardless of party affiliation, would agree with a simple values statement that invokes the Golden Rule. In other words, it reflects how they wish to see themselves.

*“Most of us want to live in a world with clean air and water.”*

## Expose who is violating our values— the villain

**Villain:** Describe the **problem, who caused it and how they benefit**—those who are making conscious decisions that hurt people.

*“But some lawmakers, beholden to fossil fuel lobbyists, deny the devastating effects of dirty fuels and block the development of clean energy.”*

## Describe a collective action of coming together—the vision

**Vision:** **Collective action** offering a “we” solution focusing on **specific outcomes** that connect action in the present with our vision for the future.

*“We need to join together with people from all walks of life to fight for a healthy world for all our communities and for future generations.”*

“Democrats have their work cut out for them. The Republican message is just a lot less complicated. Democrats have a lot of things they want to do. But Republicans have nothing they want to do, except cut taxes, end regulations, crush the libs, and maintain power by any means necessary. You’ve heard the term “elevator pitch?” A Republican could give you his party’s elevator pitch in the time it takes to go from the lobby to the third floor. With a Democrat, you’d need to go about 40 floors and they still wouldn’t be finished. The way the media are today, dependent on soundbites dumbed down to a few seconds, simple (and stupid) get through much easier.”

—Michael Tomasky, “The New Republic,” 6/6/22



## Truth Brigade—pushing back on the GOP lie machine

"Truth Brigade" is a grassroots education project of [Indivisible](#), which teaches authentic, positive messaging tactics. Their monthly Zoom training is typically based on a single subject. (ex: climate, LGBTQ+ rights, education, etc.) Using the three V's strategy, they provide factual resources for self-informing and encouraging others to check their sources of information before sharing. Attendees are given graphic art featuring truthful messaging for sharing on social media, but it is not mandatory. Trainings like these encourage us to write letters to the editor and have honest conversations with friends and family members. Sign up for their email list [here](#). Note: You don't need to be part of an Indivisible group to participate.

## Reframing America

Messaging expert Antonia Scatton writes “Reframing America,” a Substack newsletter about changing the way we, the American Left, operates in the public debate based on her research about how language functions in the brain. This newsletter provides relatable situations that often addresses the underlying emotional needs of voters and how we can better navigate the public debate. Sign up [here](#).

”Voting and consumer behavior is driven by emotions. Swing voters make decisions based on how they “feel” about the Party and the candidate.”

“Our goal is to get them to like us more than they like Republicans, by appealing to their emotions and their sense of right and wrong.”

—*Antonia Scatton “Reframing America”*



**This month's DORR educational breakfast will feature a strategic messaging training with **Words That W!N** featuring Ali Feldman, Melissa Knutson, and Lisa Wagner**

**DORR Educational Breakfast**

**In Person and at Home**

**Friday, September 15, 2023 at 9:30am**

The Sedona Community Center, 2615 Melody Lane. (\$10.00) *and* on zoom at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89569635520?pwd=L00xbGRUZEVNa294Zm4yNjFMMeGQ3Zz09>



## About Words That W!N

Words That W!N is dedicated to teaching and promoting strategic messaging to win hearts, minds, and votes. We are an all-volunteer group, passionate about good messaging and telling our story.

*"The speakers and content were better than I could've imagined! I thought I knew this stuff, but what you taught me was priceless!! And the resources provided? Phenomenal! After watching this webinar I felt hopeful about the future for the first time since Joe Biden's victory. Thank you!"*

-- DK, New Mexico