

Messaging Laws

(not legally binding)

SOME BASIC TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING GOOD:

- Find your audience** Don't assume that everyone is along for the ride just because you've got great content. You're not trying to speak to everyone at once, so define your audience and meet them where they are.
- Metaphors matter** The metaphor frame for a message affects how people perceive it. E.g. framing crime as either a beast or a virus / the economy as natural phenomena or a machine / human rights as object or action
- Stay positive** Negating an argument does not work, it only reinforces it. Progressives tend to be **against** things, we need to start talking about what we are **for**, and project positives that people can relate to.
- Tell a story** It doesn't matter how compelling you think your facts are or your truth is, people connect with stories and through emotion. Facts are persuasion neutral and should support, not lead. Understand narrative.
- Tell *your* story** It's really easy to get distracted and be reactive, to government, journalists, people walking in the door, etc. Focus on your narrative – work out your three main points and stick to them.
- Prepare for emergencies** Most journalists are friendly, but you need a crisis communications strategy for when things go wrong or when you need to respond quickly. You need training, practice and clear lines of delegation.
- Say it again** You need to repeat what you say multiple times across multiple channels to cut through and reach your audience. You can repurpose old content.

Prepared by Mark Riboldi & Rachel Ryan, August 2018.

Further Reading:

WRITING GENERALLY:

- George Orwell, [*Politics and the English Language*](#), 1946.

NARRATIVE & STORYTELLING:

- Jonah Sachs, [*Winning the Story Wars: Why Those Who Tell - and Live - the Best Stories Will Rule the Future*](#), 2012.

“A word after a
word after a
word is power.”

—MARGARET ATWOOD

MESSAGE FRAMING/RESEARCH:

- General/Politics: [*Don't Think of An Elephant! Know your values and frame the debate*](#); George Lakoff, 2004. [*Messaging This Moment*](#); ASO Communications, 2018.
- Economics: [*Don't Buy It: The Trouble with Talking Nonsense about the Economy*](#), Anat Shenker-Osorio, 2012.
- Economics: [*How to talk about economics: a guide for changing the story*](#). Australian Progress, 2018
- Race-Class: [*Race-Class Narrative*](#); ASO Communications, 2018
- Refugees: [*Advocating for Asylum: Words that Work*](#); ASO Communications, 2016.

WEBSITES & E-LISTS:

- Voices for Civil Justice (US): <https://voicesforciviljustice.org/>
- Geena Davis Institute of Women in Media (US): <https://seejane.org/>
- Our Watch (AUS): <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/News-media>