



TRUMAN NATIONAL  
SECURITY PROJECT

# COMMUNICATION 101

Connect then Lead: Communicating  
Effectively About National Security

COMMUNICATE  
ADVOCATE  
LEAD

# Connect then lead. Empathize and connect with the emotion, then go for the policy position.



You start in a hole.  
That's why you need  
to connect.



Use values and  
emotion to  
establish that  
trusted  
connection.



Then lead to your  
policy.

# Persuading others of our national security beliefs requires establishing credibility through character and values: not stats and details!



“He seemed like an honest fellow – I liked him.”

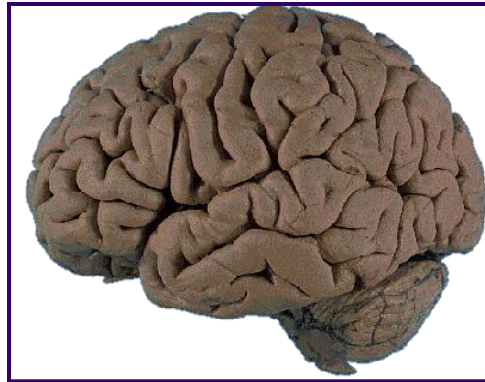
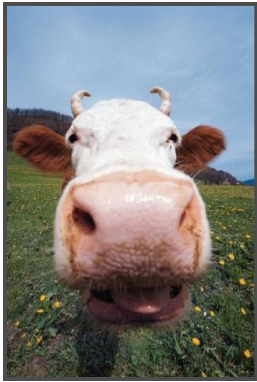


“We got a good feeling from her. We think she would do a good job.”



“I'm just not sure he could get the job done”

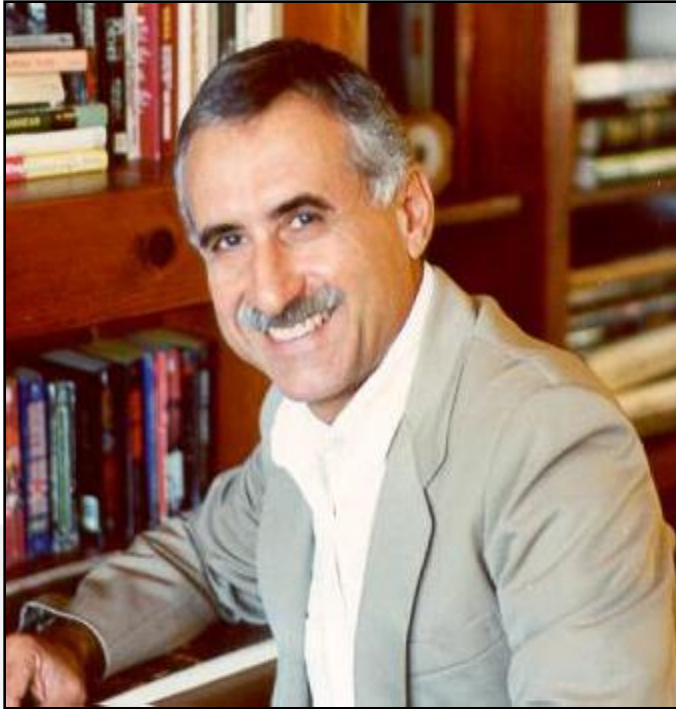
# To understand our problem, learn how the brain works - especially the limbic system



Issues of security and safety (which all foreign policy questions evoke) trigger **the limbic system**—the reptilian, fight-or-flight part of our brains.

The limbic system **bypasses** the intellectual and rational receptors, and goes straight for the emotional gut.

# Not just what you say...



**Body language**

55%

**Tone of voice**

38%

**Words**

7%

**We can connect with the persuadable center—without giving up our policies—if they feel we share their values**

**CONNECT (Emotionally)**  
**Then**  
**LEAD (to your policy)**  
**Is the Key to Successful Communication**



If people feel you are “like them” – that your emotional reactions are the same—they will trust you to lead them on policy

At Cornell College on Dec. 5, for example, a student asked Mr. Obama how his administration would view the Second Amendment. He replied: "There's a Supreme Court case that's going to be decided fairly soon about what the Second Amendment means. I taught Constitutional Law for 10 years, so I've got my opinion. And my opinion is that the Second Amendment is probably -- it is an individual right and not just a right of the militia. That's what I expect the Supreme Court to rule. I think that's a fair reading of the text of the Constitution. And so I respect the right of lawful gun owners to hunt, fish, protect their families."

Then came the pivot:

"Like all rights, though, they are constrained and bound by the needs of the community . . . So when I look at Chicago and 34 Chicago public school students gunned down in a single school year, then I don't think the Second Amendment prohibits us from taking action and making sure that, for example, ATF can share tracing information about illegal handguns that are used on the streets and track them to the gun dealers to find out -- what are you doing?"

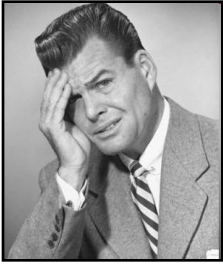
In conclusion:

"There is a tradition of gun ownership in this country that can be respected that is not mutually exclusive with making sure that we are shutting down gun traffic that is killing kids on our streets. The argument I have with the NRA is not whether people have the right to bear arms. The problem is they believe any constraint or regulation whatsoever is something that they have to beat back. And I don't think that's how most lawful firearms owners think."

# Take-away value statements

- 1. Acknowledge that there are bad people in the world who deserve punishment**
- 2. Make it clear that we want to keep America/our communities safe**
- 3. Show our belief that America is a good country**

People want to know “Are you like me? Do you understand where I’m coming from?” Only after we connect emotionally with root values will our audience listen to what we have to say.



1.) What emotions are triggered by this issue?



2.) What short **personal** story can you tell to connect?

*Remember, its about your own credibility.*

# Your Turn, Pick One..

“Development and foreign aid is just charity. Why are we giving money to build schools in other countries when we need it for schools here in America?”

**OR**

“Torture is the only way we can get information fast enough to keep America safe. These terrorists don’t deserve to be given special rights; they’re murderers to must be stopped.”

# Connect then lead: an example

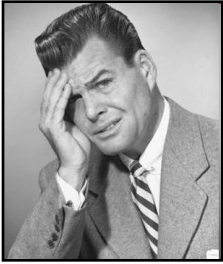
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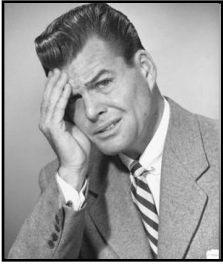


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3.) What are your **VALUES** and **GOALS**?  
*Hint: Keep America safe!*



4.) What is your policy and why is it the best?

# **Making a real emotional connection**

**vs.**

**“I understand your point, but...”**