

# GROW YOUR IMPACT!

Make your messages more powerful  
for Climate Action PSAs and other  
vital issues



## The Metaphor Project

*Framing Our Messages for Americans*

### WORDS MATTER!

#### Framing: Choosing the most powerful words

##### American Change Language

*“innovate” • “progress” • “improve”  
“positive” • “new” • “good” • “better”*



[More words and phrases for change](#)

##### American Breakthrough Language

*“spark” • “turbocharged” • “synergy”  
“powerful” • “transforming” • “awakening”*



[More words and phrases for breakthrough](#)

#### Counter-Framing

##### Counter-Framing Rules of Thumb

If an opposing sound bite or phrase evokes a familiar American story, one that implies a commonly accepted set of moral or social values:

1. **Construct your own phrase or metaphor** to evoke a different, but equally familiar American story, one that implies your set of moral values.

*Example:*

If they say **“regulations,”** you say **“rules,”** because rules evoke the idea of fairness.

2. **Tweak their phrase** in a meaningful way by changing it just enough to evoke a different but equally familiar American story. It should be one that implies a set of moral values that will carry your message. This technique is a bit riskier because the tweak must create a genuinely different feel than your opponent’s sound bite. Too close to the original and you will just be helping your opponent by reminding everyone of what they said, not what you want to convey.

*Example:*

If they say **“stay the course,”** you say **“change course.”**

3. **Create a brand new combination of frames.** This method is often used for calling attention to issues still outside much public awareness.

*Example:*

If they say **“gun control,”** you say **“gun safety.”**



[Learn more about counter framing](#)

#### Climate Framing

##### Framing #ClimateDamage for the #ClimateHoldouts

**General climate action lobbying:** Say **“we want climate-safe profits,”** & **“we want to cut climate-damage costs!”**

**Energy policy lobbying:** Say **“We want #CleanEnergy,”** instead of **“green energy.”** All Americans want to be clean.

**#ClimateCrisis:** Say **“GlobalOverheating,”** or **“ClimateOverheating,”** not **“warming.”** “Warming” sounds kind of nice and cuddly, so it’s weak, weak, weak!

**#ClimateChange:** Say **“Stop costly new climate damage! Restore the rules that protect us!”** or say **“Make new rules to cut carbon!”** Never say **“regulations.”**

**#Carbon rules:** Say **“We want a Carbon fee & Dividend rule!”** Never say **“carbon tax!”** It isn’t one, and you can kill the rule by calling it a tax! DOA! Fossil fuel companies pay a fee. Citizens get reimbursed for higher prices. For more info, see: [Citizens Climate Lobby](#)



[See Framing #ClimateDamage for the #ClimateHoldouts to learn more](#)

For more framing suggestions for climate action and a wide variety of other issues, visit VIP Frames, in the [News Section of the Metaphor Project.](#)