

## Transcript: Frame101x Episode 1 Part 2

We'll use another example to demonstrate the fourth characteristic. Suppose there is a country where students receive a government grant towards their living expenses. Now imagine that a right-wing minister in that country wants to abolish these grants.

The minister's argument is a simple one. Students pay low tuition fees, which means that their education is mostly funded by taxpayers. Once they have left university, many of them will earn two or three times the average wage.

Left-wing politicians, in contrast, are against abolishing student grants. This is what a left-wing politician might say:

'This measure will hit low-income working families very hard. Children from these families will decide not to attend university. I am standing up for these low-income families.'

And this might be the minister's response:

'My opponents say that they are standing up for low-income families. Indeed, I am going to abolish student grants, and I have a very good reason for doing so. Students' degrees are entirely paid for by the taxpayer. Why should a baker pay for a law student to go to university while in the end the law student will earn four times as much as the baker?'

One of the values of left wing politicians is standing up for poor people. By using this frame, the minister attacks her opponents' core values. The minister says that poor people are better off under her leadership than they would be under her opponents'.

The fourth characteristic of a good frame is that it attacks your opponents' core values. And when their core values are attacked they are forced to respond. They cannot simply ignore what has happened. In other words, they are forced to step into your frame. In the next episode of this course, we will analyze how risky it can be to step into your opponent's frame.

Now we come to the fifth and final characteristic of a good frame. Every society has undercurrents. An undercurrent is a strong view that many people take for granted. In many Western countries, for example, people have a strong dislike of bureaucracy in schools, hospitals and the police. The common view is that there are too many managers and bureaucrats – pen-pushers and box-tickers – who only make things difficult for the real professionals. This is an undercurrent, a feeling of discontent shared by many people.

So what is the fifth characteristic of a good frame? A good frame taps into these undercurrents. Suppose, for example, that two hospitals decide to merge. This is what an opponent of the merger might say:

‘A bigger hospital means more managers and less health professionals. More bureaucracy and less care.’

This is a simple message that taps into an undercurrent. It evokes a feeling of “here we go again.” More managers, more bureaucrats. By framing your message in the language of an undercurrent, you make it more likely that the frame will “stick.”

This brings us to the end of this episode about the five characteristics of a good frame.

What kind of impact do frames have? We’ll talk about that next time, as well as about how the game of framing and reframing is played.