

## Transcript: Frame101x Episode 2 Part 2

In the previous two examples, we have come across two denials: the minister does not hand out fish, and the road authority does not lack expertise. The American linguist George Lakoff often refers to a mechanism that is as powerful as it is simple: “When we negate a frame, we evoke the frame.” Denial often serves as confirmation. Consider the following example. Here is the French Prime Minister visiting his Dutch counterpart to discuss the state of the European economy. He makes a statement – first in Dutch, to please his host, and then in French:

Frankrijk is niet de zieke man van Europa.

La France n’est pas l’homme malade de l’Europe.

“France is not the sick man of Europe.” Many European politicians see France as a country unable to control its budget deficit. As the sick man of Europe – which is a frame. By negating this frame, the

prime minister activates it, evokes it, reminds us that there is something wrong with France. We associate “France” with a “sick man.” We may even think, why does the French prime minister say this? Why does he emphasize that France is NOT the sick man of Europe? “Where there is smoke there is fire”.

In Early 2015, there was a terrorist attack in Denmark. The Prime minister of Denmark, Helle Thorning-Schmidt says this:

“This is not a war between Islam and the West”. “This is not a war between Muslims and non-Muslims”. Probably, she wants to take the wind out of our critics’ sails, her critics whose frame says that Islam is the root cause of attacks like these. But when we negate our critics’ frame, we evoke their frame – the prime minister takes the risk of activating her critics frame.

Perhaps this is a much more powerful message:

*Don’t Think of an Elephant* is the title of a well-known book on framing by George Lakoff. “Don’t think of an elephant” is an instruction that is impossible to carry out. In order to remember not to think of an elephant, you have to think of an elephant. The negation evokes an image in your mind.

What should you do in a debate if you notice that your opponent is using a frame and you know that you shouldn’t step into that frame? You have to reframe. When framing is countered with reframing, a game emerges – the game of framing and reframing. This game has certain patterns, which we will explore starting with the next episode.

