

## Frame101x: EPISODE 12

In recent years, Europe has been going through an economic and financial crisis in which the markets have threatened to lose faith in the euro. One of the reasons for the crisis was Greece's massive deficit. Under the leadership of Germany, the Greek government has been forced to make substantial budget cuts.

Our actors will now play a scene in which the German Finance Minister encounters a restaurant owner from Crete on a Greek television show. The restaurant owner asks the Minister to explain why Greece is being forced to accept an austerity package that includes significant budget cuts.

There are three reasons for these measures. The first one is obvious. Greece is spending much more money than it is taking in, leading to deficits and high interest rates. The government therefore needs to make cuts. The second reason is Greece's poor tax culture, which results in low tax revenues. The government therefore needs to improve tax collection. And the third reason is Greece's bloated public sector, which consumes enormous resources. The government therefore needs to start privatizing. We believe that these three measures will help strengthen the Greek economy.

But the situation is terrible. I used to own four restaurants, but now I only have one. My daughter, she used to go to university, but I cannot afford for her to go. Can you imagine how it is for us, that she has had to sacrifice her future because we have no money?

I understand that things are hard, but the Greek economy will only recover if the government implements a balanced budget, improves tax collection and sells off public assets.

For whom do you feel more sympathy in this scenario – the Finance Minister or the restaurant owner? Our guess is the restaurant owner. This is because we are witnessing a clash between two worlds. The world of the Minister and the world of the restaurant owner. Between policy and real people. Between analysis and emotion. Between what is abstract and what is tangible. Between what is cold and what is warm. In this scenario, the tangible, human, warm, emotional world easily beats the Minister's abstract, technical, cold, analytical world.

The restaurant owner's message is embedded in a powerful emotional frame. In fact, the restaurant owner has a monopoly on emotion in this particular scenario: he is warm and emotional, while the Minister is cold and analytical.

This clash between an abstract policy frame and a tangible emotional frame is obviously a very common phenomenon.

How do you reframe an emotional frame? How can you break the restaurant owner's monopoly on emotion? Reframing an emotional frame always involves two steps. The first is to show empathy by indicating that your opponent's frame has touched you.

She has had to sacrifice her future because we have no money?

Your story is very moving. I also have children – and we all want the best for them. If a child is studying and doing well, it makes us proud. We want them to complete their studies. There's nothing I can do about your personal situation, but I am deeply saddened by what you have told me.

This is empathy. Such empathy must obviously be genuine, but the fact is that anyone who expresses their feelings is bound to feel sorry for the restaurant owner.

Empathy alone is not enough. If you only show empathy, your opponents may rightly ask why they are not getting their way. The second step in reframing an emotional frame is therefore as follows:

I would also like to say something else. What matters to me is getting Europe out of this crisis. I'm not imposing budget cuts for fun. I want young people to have better opportunities in the future, including your daughter. I want the elderly to be able to look forward to a decent old age. I want people of working age to have access to professional growth opportunities and new jobs. These are the things I am fighting for.

In this example, the Minister explains why she is taking the measures. She reveals her underlying motives, which all have an emotional component. By revealing her own emotions, she is able to break her opponent's monopoly on emotion.

In conclusion, it is possible to reframe an emotional frame by showing empathy and revealing your own motives, values and passion. By following these two simple steps, you too can break your opponent's monopoly on emotion.

Who wins when no one has the monopoly of emotion? Well, that will depend on your political opinion and no longer depends on who has the smartest framing.