TRANSFORMING ANXIETY INTO ACTIVE LEADERSHIP

September 10–12, 2019 at Stanford University | #SSIRInstitute
Achieving Great Things: The Art and Science of Aspirational Communication
Visionary Leaders & Organizations

NONPROFIT
- Freedom to Marry
- Planned Parenthood
- City Year
- care
- National Geographic Society
- She Decides.

BUSINESS
- Consumer Reports
- REDF
- HuffPost
- RUNA

GOVERNMENT & MULTINATIONAL
- World Health Organization
- The World Bank
- U.S. Department of State
- USAID
- United States Senate

FOUNDATION
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Ford Foundation
- The Rockefeller Foundation
- the David & Lucile Packard Foundation
- William & Flora Hewlett Foundation

HIGHER EDUCATION
- Harvard University
- Stanford University
- Brown University
- Indiana University
- University of New Hampshire
Six Steps: From Anxiety to Aspiration
The Plan

1. The Power of Aspirational Communication
2. Six Steps: A Path to Durable Attitude Change
3. Exercises and Q&A Along the Way
“Merely having a majority is not enough. You need a solid majority. You need a majority that can’t be eroded or peeled away.”

— Evan Wolfson, Freedom to Marry
Public Support for Legal Recognition of Same-Sex Marriages

Source: GALLUP
Public Support for Legal Recognition of Same-Sex Marriages

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“Durable” attitude change: A shift in attitudes that persists over time and resists counterattack.
Aspirational Communication: A method for motivating people to support a cause by connecting it to the aspirations of the audience.
Aspirational Communication Model

- Aspirational
- Social
- Emotional
- Functional

INTEREST & ENGAGEMENT
“Fighting Poverty with an Aspirational Message”
hattaway.com or iTunes

Kirsten Lodal,
LIFT Founder & Senior Advisor
They started with a handful of pennies.

Now they’re entrepreneurs.
Does your organization have an aspirational brand?
Teen Smoking Rates Declined from 23% to Just Below 5%

Mark Wahlberg and Leonardo DiCaprio in *The Basketball Diaries*
Aspirational identity: Images and ideas of the kind of people we want to be.
## Six Steps: A Path to *Durable* Attitude Change

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<td>Understand their anxieties.</td>
<td>Connect your cause to their authentic aspirations.</td>
<td>Frame it with Winning Words.</td>
<td>Share Strategic Stories.</td>
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Thanks to: [The Rockefeller Foundation](https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org)
Step 1: Focus on people who are ambivalent.
Ambivalence:
Conflicting beliefs or feelings.
Favor civil unions
AND
Oppose same-sex marriage
Never smoked a cigarette AND Wouldn’t rule out trying a cigarette
Avoid or Approach:
To stop feeling the discomfort of inner conflict, people may *avoid* the issue or *approach* it—and resolve the conflict by changing their views.
Do people feel ambivalent about your cause?
Step 2: Understand their anxieties
Anxiety:
A feeling of dread over an anticipated threat.
Anxieties and Doubts About Marriage Equality

- Society descending into social chaos
- Relationships not seen as genuine
- Institution of marriage redefined
- Government forcing religious groups to perform same-sex weddings

Dr. Mitzi Desselles
“One consistent experience of adolescence is the constant feeling of being ‘on stage’ and that everyone and everything is centered on their appearance and actions.”

— Guide for Healthy Adolescent Development
Bloomberg School of Public Health,
Johns Hopkins University
What anxieties might people feel toward the change you aim to create?
Step 3:
Connect your cause to their authentic aspirations.
Authentic aspirations:
Idea about the kind of person you truly want to be, the life you want to live, and the world you want to live in.
Similarity heuristic:
We are more likely to like and trust people who are similar to us in some way.
Teens aspire to...

- Be independent from adults
- Express their individuality
- Take more control over their lives
What aspirations do people share in connection to your cause?
Step 4: Frame it with Winning Words.
Framing:
The *first* thing you say about a topic influences all of the perceptions and judgments that follow.
Legal Rights and Benefits
Love and Commitment
WINNING WORDS

FEEL IT.
BELIEVE IT.
SEE IT.
SAY IT.
The Millennial Impact Report

“For Millennials, taking consistent positive actions every day or week is a fundamental part of their identity.”

— Jean Case, Case Foundation
Are you using Winning Words?
Step 5: Share Strategic Stories.
Strategic Storytelling:
Creating stories of specific people, settings, and situations that convey ideas shown to motivate your target audience.
LOVE & COMMITMENT DESERVE PROTECTION

THEY SURVIVED LONG DISTANCE DATING. CANCER. AND 16 YES OR NO VOTES ABOUT THEIR MARRIAGE.

Like more than 9,000 other married gay couples, Neredya and Christina Valentin-Macias have fought for one another. For better, for worse. In sickness and in health. Because that’s what you do. After all the hearings, debates, votes, and more than two years of marriage equality, it’s time to say “congratulations” to them. And to everyone in Massachusetts. Learn more at MassEquality.org

MASS EQUALITY EDUCATION FUND

Hattaway Communications, 2005
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Frame it first.

Hattaway Communications, 2005
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Tell Strategic Stories.

Hattaway Communications, 2005
Create Inspiring Images.
Grassroots Organizing

Lobbying

Earned Media

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Advertising
Truth connected to teens’ aspirations through a narrative focused on “socially irresponsible behavior of the tobacco industry and the ability of youth to rebel against the industry and take control of their lives, thereby establishing their Independence.”

— Journal of Health Communication
DON'T LET
BIG TOBACCO'S
PRODUCTS CONTROL
YOUR PAYCHECK
BODY BAGS
What stories can you tell that convey ideas shown to motivate your target audience?
Step 6:
Help people think it through—and be their best selves.
“Attitude change that is based on high levels of elaboration is more likely to influence thought and behavior and more likely to be persistent over time and resistant to counterattack.”

— S. Christian Wheeler, Richard E. Petty, and George E. Bizer,
“Self-Schema Matching and Attitude Change: Situational and Dispositional Determinants of Message Elaboration.”
Elaboration:
Careful consideration of information and ideas by the recipients of a persuasive message.
Elaboration Likelihood Model

Message

Central Route
- High motivation → Deep processing → Durable attitude change

Peripherial Route
- Low motivation → Superficial processing → Shallow attitude change
“We can see that their commitment to each other is similar to our commitment to each other. As a coworker, a neighbor and a parent, the Golden Rule is very important to us.”
“Thoughtful message processing occurs when we think about how the message relates to our own beliefs and goals.”

— Principles of Social Psychology
Connecting your cause to people’s authentic aspirations is the key that can open the door to durable attitude change.
One cigarette company biologically engineered tobacco plants to have twice the normal level of nicotine.
Nearly 70% of smokers say they want to quit, but only 6% are able to each year.
Imagine your life without tobacco. Looks great, right?

Get Started (It's Free)

Join BecomeAnEX for Quick Access

- A customized quit plan that learns and grows with you.
- New! Text messages for support quitting smoking or vaping.
- Smart, interactive guides and tools for you to navigate your tobacco-free journey.
- Expert advice and tips from Mayo Clinic.
- An active, supportive EX Community of real tobacco users who have been through it all.
“Your vision of who you want to be will focus your quit plan on what really matters.”
How does your organization help stakeholders be the kind of people they want to be?
Your Turn

What ideas, information, or activities can you provide to help people “think through” your issue?
## Six Steps: A Path to *Durable* Attitude Change

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For More on Aspirational Communication:

Interview with Freedom to Marry’s Evan Wolfson
hattaway.com or iTunes

Article appearing in the November issue