

# WasteMINZ 2025: Framing for Better Decision Making

A 90 min Framing Workshop

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Dr Jess Berentson-Shaw

[theworkshop.org.nz](http://theworkshop.org.nz)

# Today

Topics	Group Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is framing (30 mins)</li><li>• Values framing (15 mins)</li><li>• Better explanations (15 mins)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• About you and your concerns (10 mins)</li><li>• Brainstorm (5 mins)</li><li>• Your why (10 mins)</li><li>• Reflections</li></ul>

# About Us

We help people and organisations  
reframe big issues.

Through reframing we can shift public  
thinking and drive action that makes a big  
difference to our communities and our  
planet.

Learn more [theworkshop.org.nz](https://theworkshop.org.nz)



Homes that meet our real needs:  
How people think and reason about  
housing performance in Aotearoa  
NZ



How to talk about redesigning our  
economy to prioritise people and  
the planet: a narrative briefing paper



Understanding how Pākehā think  
and reason about te Tiriti | the Treaty  
to guide how we talk



Community planning for climate  
disruption - Framing report



How to talk about Community  
Planning for Climate Disruption -  
Framing and messaging guide



Shifting narratives about gangs and  
gang harm

# How I got here



# Activity 1. About you and your concerns

Time 10 minutes

**What are your biggest concerns or issues with how people talk about and think about an issue you work on?**

- Discuss at your tables



## Some theory about framing



# Framing is....

Choices we  
make on how  
to present an  
issue

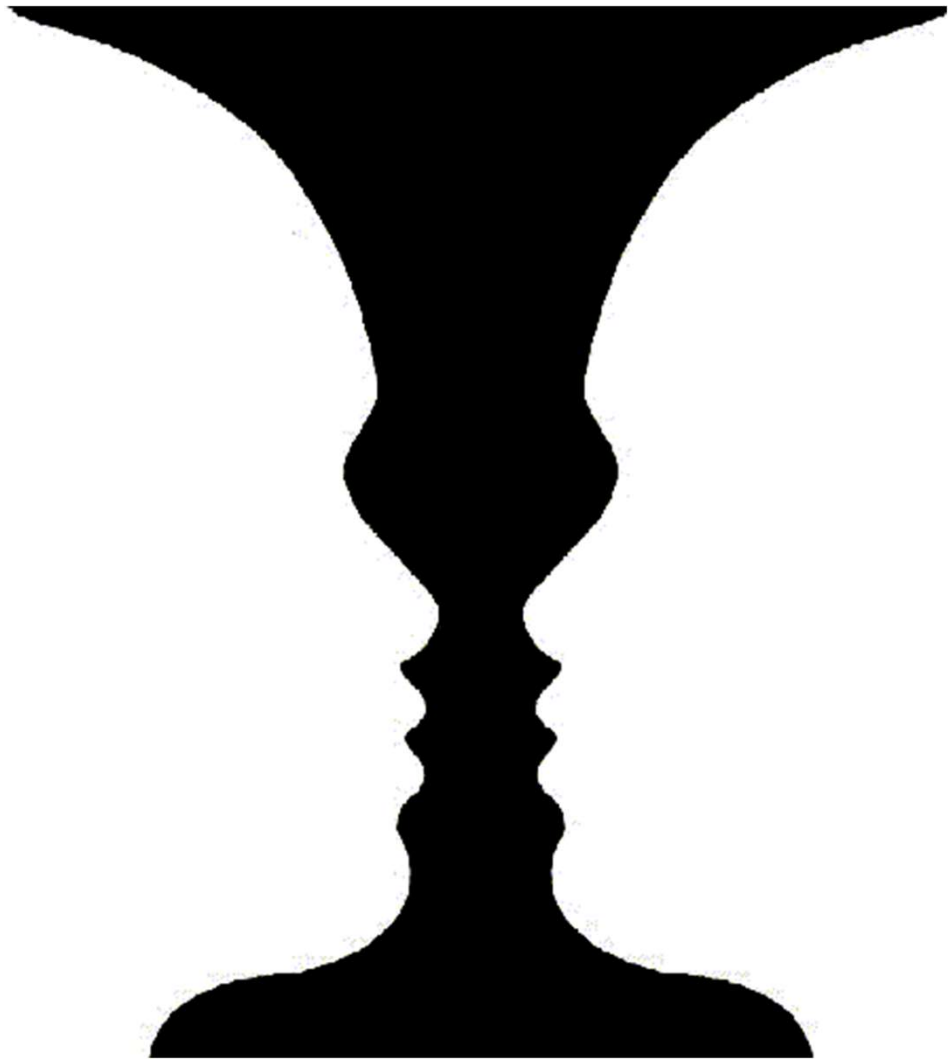


# Framing strategies help you:

- 💡 Find a shared language
- 💡 Shift people's perspective on tough issues
- 💡 Bring your issue in through a side door
- 💡 Empower communities to demand action
- 💡 Future proof approaches that work







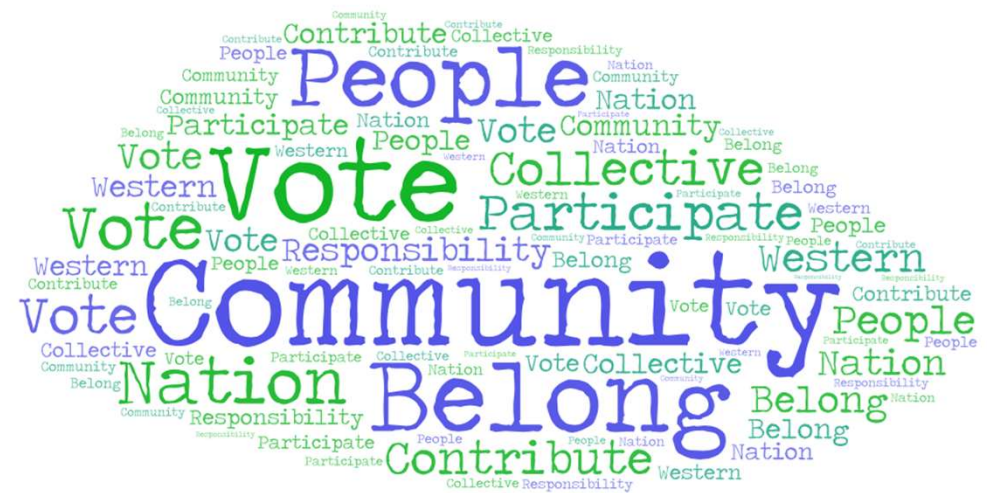
# Consumer

# Citizen

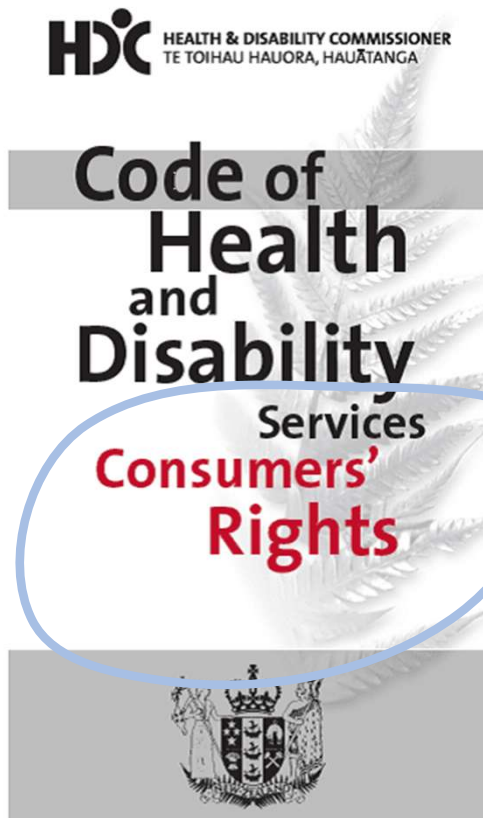
# Consumer



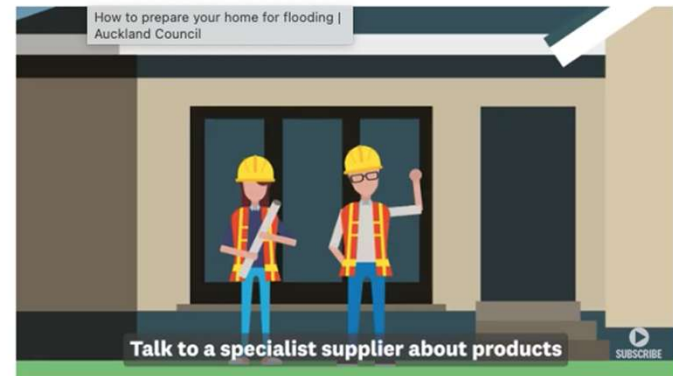
# Citizen



# What causes, solutions & people are outside this frame?



## Reduce flooding risks on your property

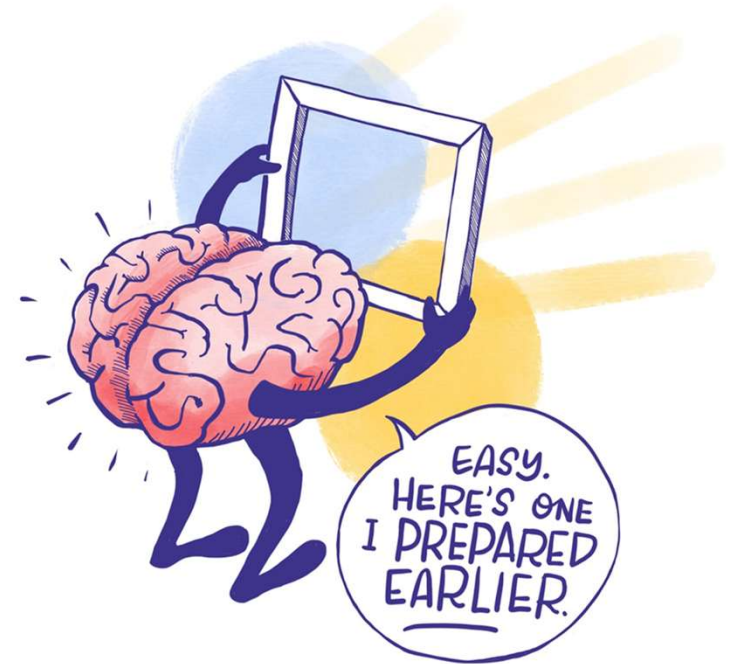


Why drive when you could ride?

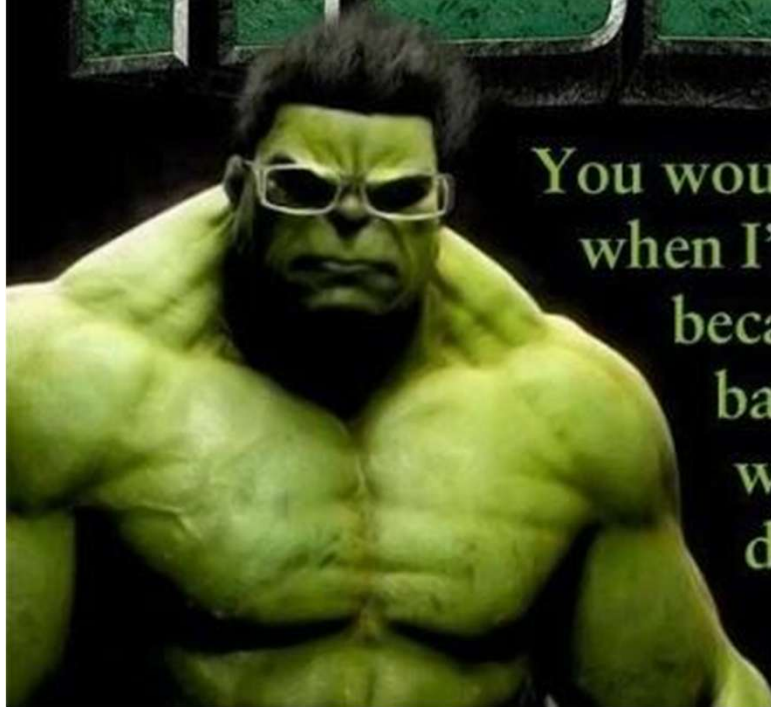


In sum: framing activates neural networks in our brains associated with shared beliefs

But why do beliefs matter when we have facts?

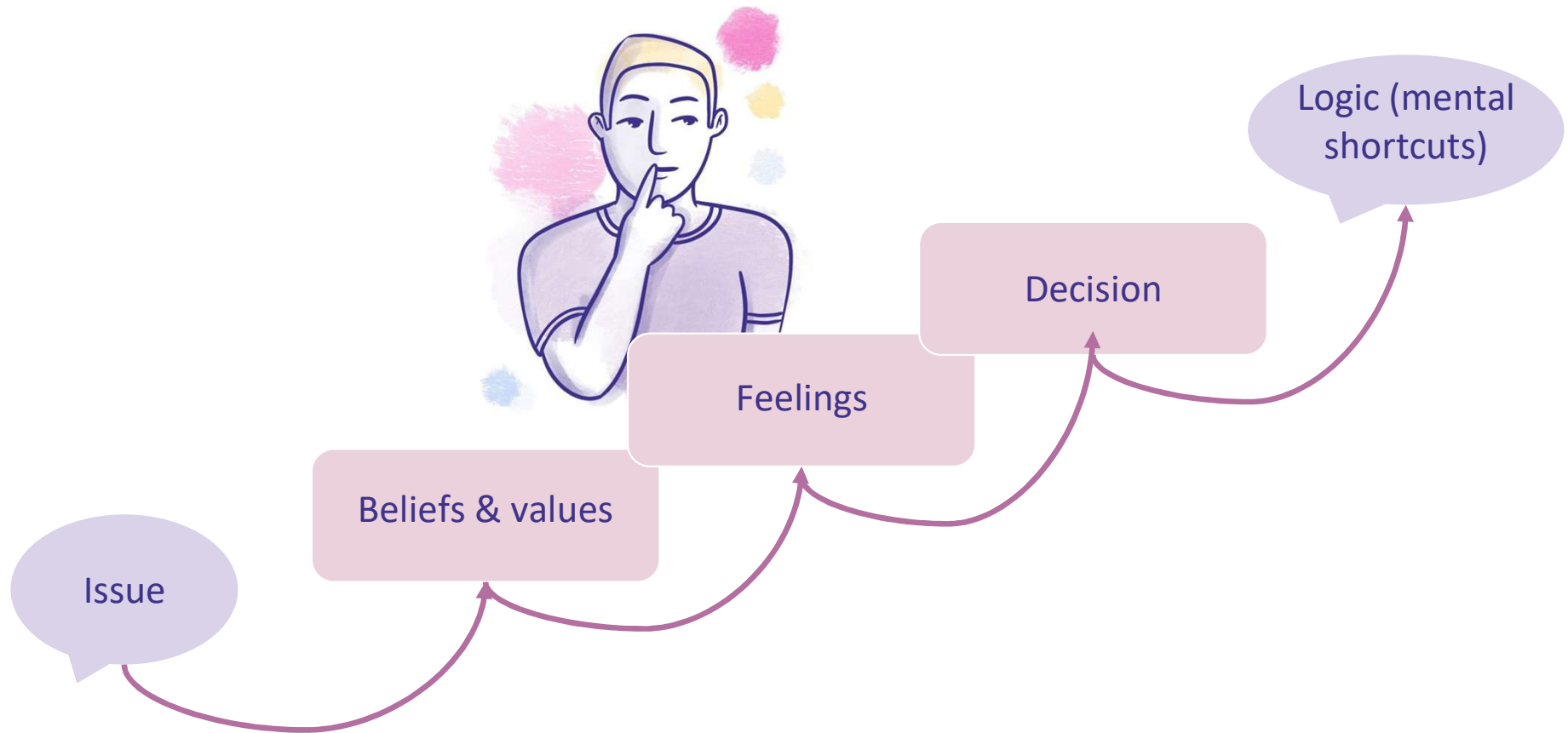


# THE CREDIBLE HULK



You wouldn't like me  
when I'm angry  
because I always  
back up my rage  
with facts and  
documented  
sources.

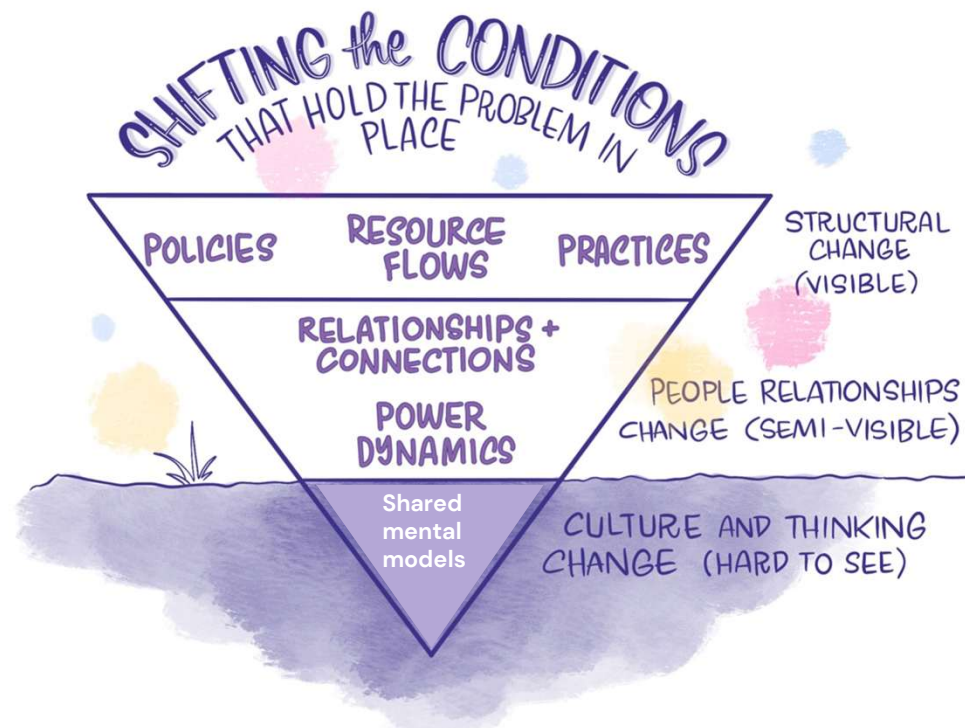
## Fast thinking: Beliefs first / logic last



Many shared mental models/mindsets exist



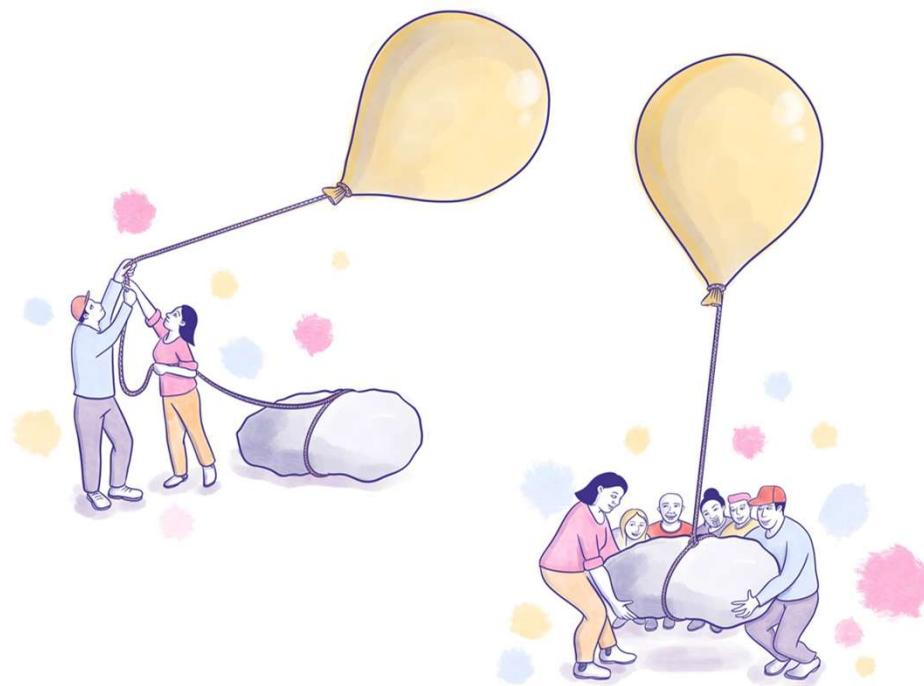
# Shared mental models need to be part of our strategy



Adapted from Kania et al. The Water of System Change (2018)



Shifting public thinking can empower and **embolden** communities to demand more from decision makers



## Repairing 'replacement culture': The right to repair gains ground

 Alka Prasad | The Post

November 25, 2024

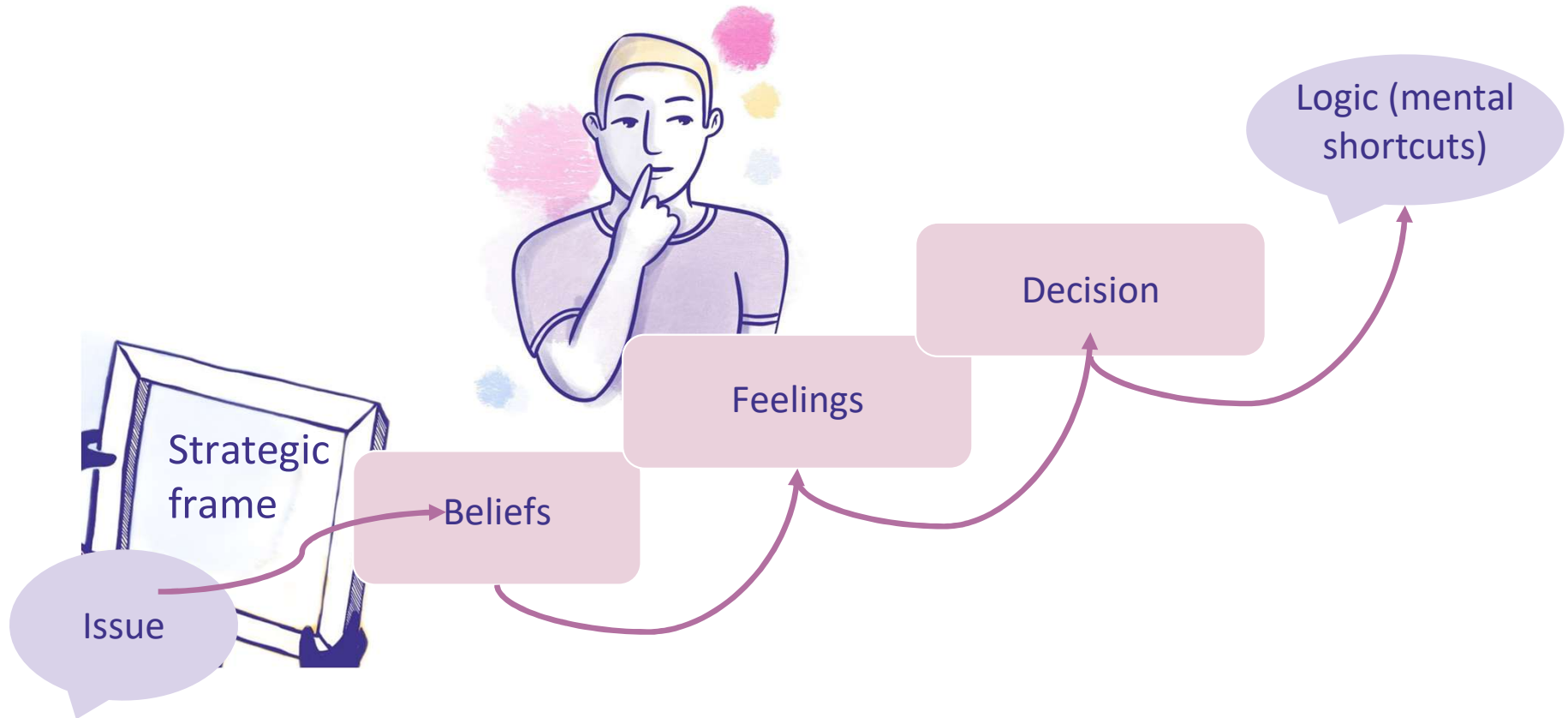
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More Kiwi businesses are making the commitment to create products that will last consumers a lifetime as repair regulations make political ground.

The right to repair movement has been about shifting the public to demand something different from decision makers

# Use frames that switch on helpful thinking



Some ways that we can **choose to frame** an issue:

**Values**



**Explanations**



**Metaphors**



**Messenger**



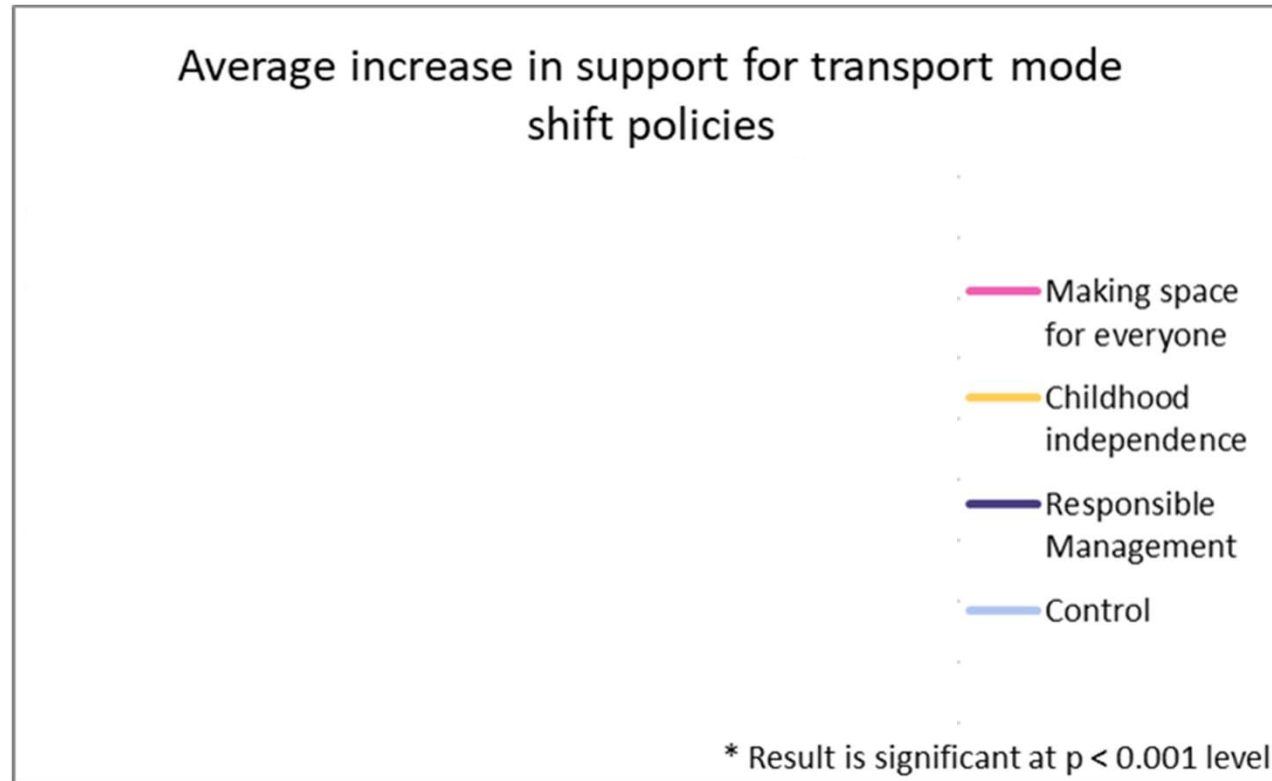
**Solutions**



**Tone**



# Frames can open minds to best knowledge (or shut them)



*Selected results from The Workshop's experiments on framing transport mode shift 2020*





## Activity 2. Brainstorm

Time: 5 minutes discussion at your tables

What does this information suggest about ways we commonly approach talking about our issues that we might want to avoid?

## AVOID the following 3 things:

Telling someone  
else's story (using  
their frames)



Leading with facts,  
problems, or  
ingredients



Repeating incorrect  
information to  
prove it is untrue  
(mythbusting)



# Telling someone else story

## They say

“Climate change: reduce your carbon footprint”

## We say

“People can change behaviour to reduce emissions”

## Public thinks

“So I have to do the hard stuff as an individual?”

**Public doesn't think about**  
Policy and practice solutions they can support

## Their story



Ben van Beurden, chief executive of Royal Dutch Shell, wants to collaborate with other businesses to reduce carbon emissions  
RICHARD POHLE FOR THE TIMES

THE TIMES CEO SUMMIT

### Eat seasonally and recycle more to cut emissions, says Shell



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Carbon reduction

- BP and responsibility
- Our operations
- Health, safety and security
- Our people
- Business ethics
- Climate change
- Carbon reduction
  - Carbon footprint calculator
  - What BP is doing
  - What others are doing
  - What you can do
- Our products
- In society

#### Carbon reduction

It's time to go on a **low-carbon** diet.

#### Your carbon footprint

Find out how your lifestyle choices affect your carbon emissions



► [Carbon footprint calculator](#)

#### Related links

► [What do you think of bp.com?](#)  
Complete our online questionnaire



► [Alternative energy](#)

## Our story

# GEN LESS

## EVERYDAY LIFE

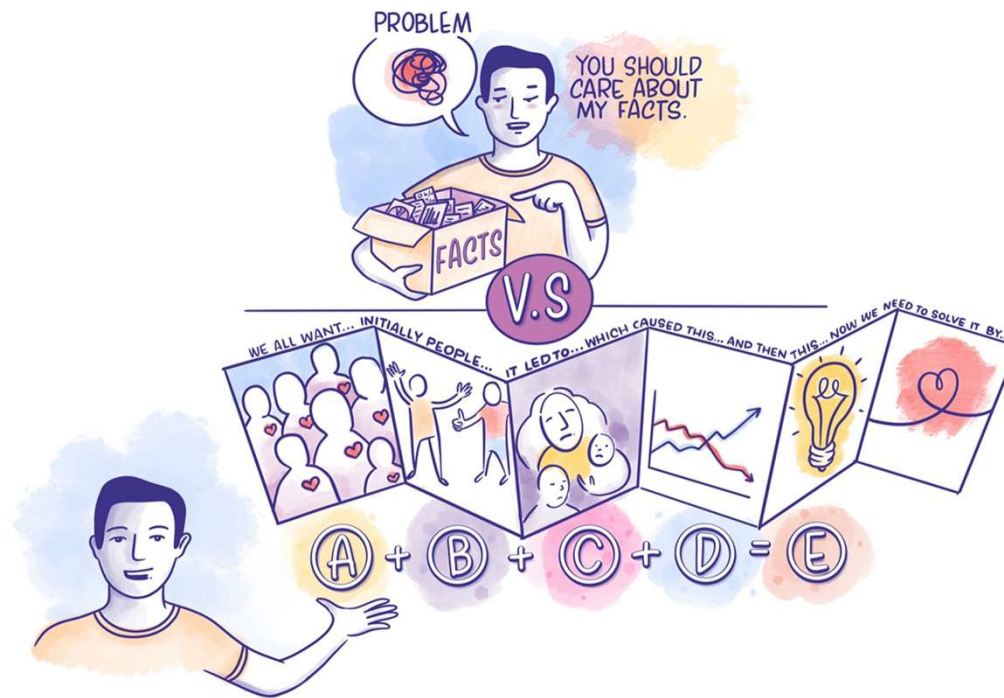
Learn how energy use impacts the carbon footprint of the things we buy.

[Home](#) > [For everyone](#) > [Everyday life](#)

Every product we buy – whether food, clothing, or household items – carries hidden carbon emissions from the energy used to produce, package, transport, and store it. These emissions, known as ‘embedded’ or ‘embodied’ carbon, accumulate throughout a product’s lifecycle.

Read on to learn more about embodied carbon, and how to be more carbon conscious in your everyday life.

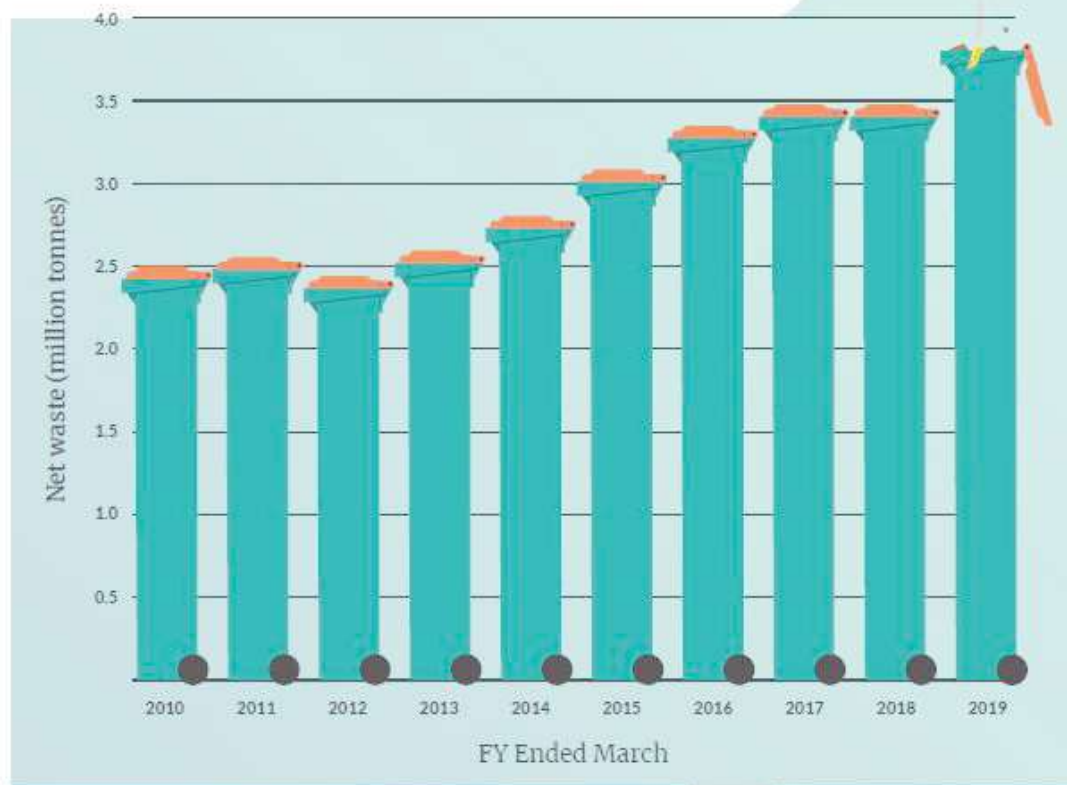
# Leading with facts, problems or ingredients disengages people





# waste

going to levied landfills in NZ



Mythbusting makes  
information the more  
familiar and feel more  
“true”





## Repeating aids believing: climate misinformation feels more true through repetition - even if you back climate science

Published: August 8, 2024 8.14am NZST

bangoland/Shutterstock

# The myth of how families in poverty spend their money



Reality check: rich people actually spend more on grog than poor people do.

KIRK HARGREAVES / THE-PRESS

**OPINION:** It's not true that if giving cash to the poor means they will just spend it on "booze and ciggies", writes Jess Berentson-Shaw.



# Strategically framing our communications to tell your story



# Our story waste example

## Their story

Growth ensures our prosperity, it's a luxury to be trying to create a circular economy at a time people just need jobs and food.



## Our story, what we know from data

Long term thinking is critical to meeting our communities immediate and future needs. It is good sense for government to provide the scaffolding to scale up industries and jobs that eliminate waste and protect our environment.



# Values framing to help you tell your story

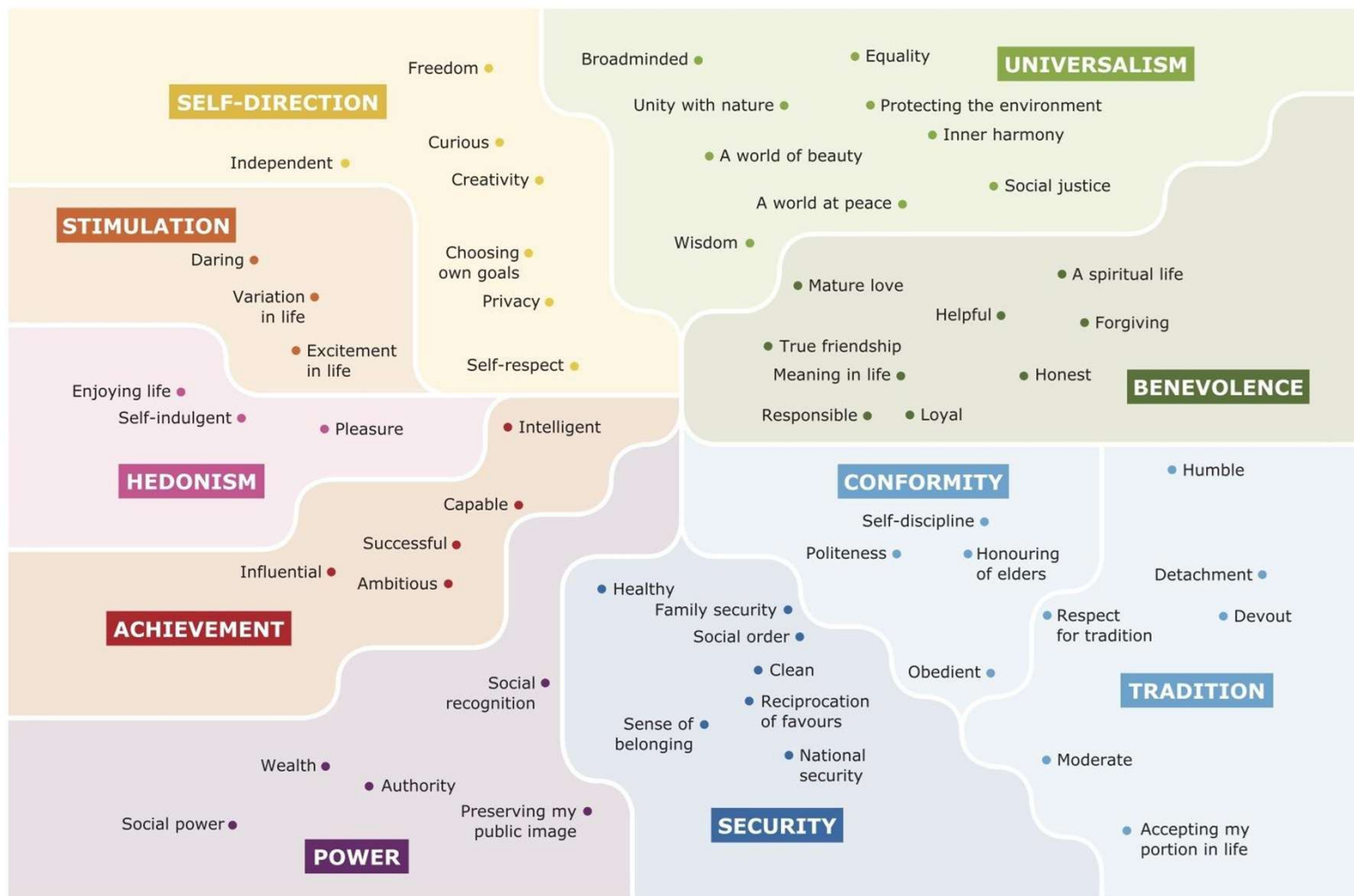
## Activity 3. The why of your story: values & strengths



Time: 10 minutes

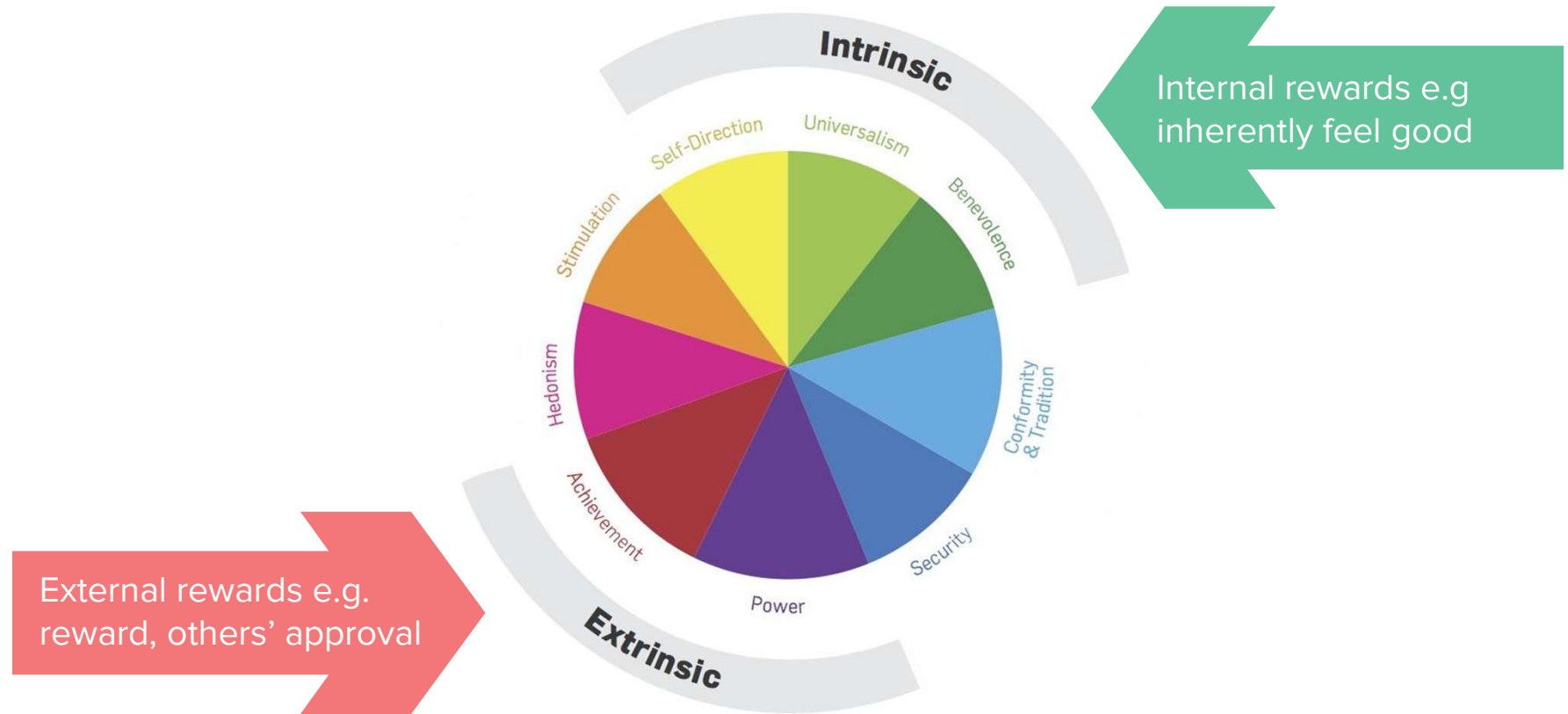
In twos or threes discuss and capture what you really want people to know about:

- *what motivates you/people in your work (your why)*
- *the strengths of the work you do, the people who do it*



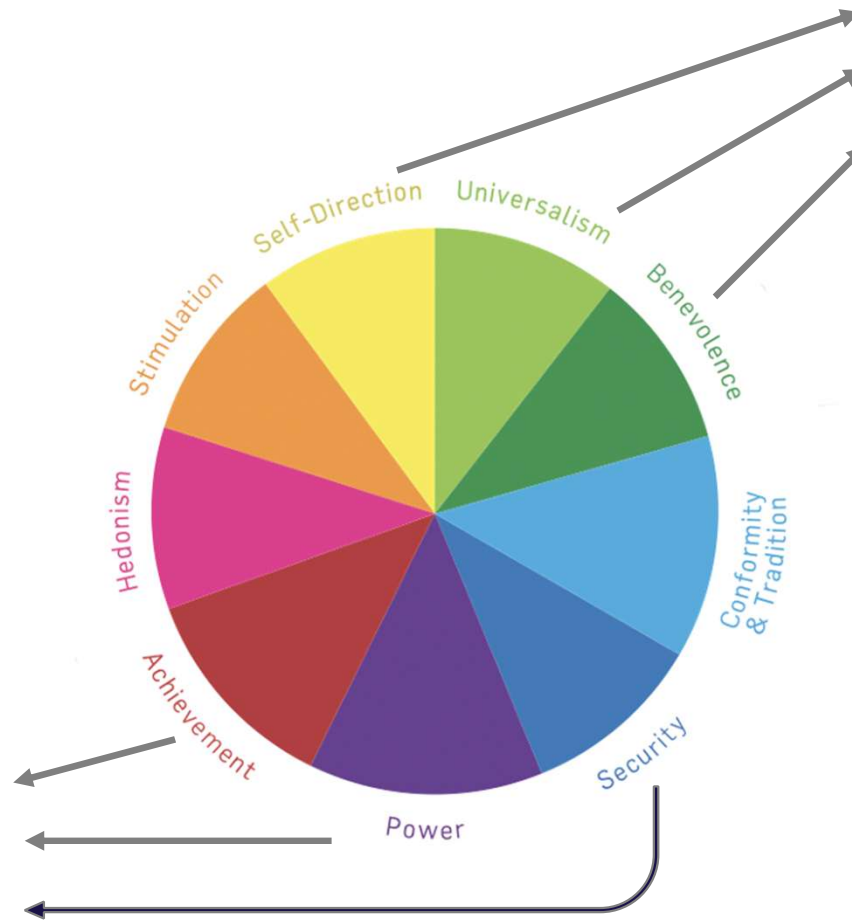
Redrawn with permission for **common cause** from Schwartz, S.H. (2006).

# Intrinsic and extrinsic values



### ACHIEVEMENT + POWER

- Selfish
- Competitive
- Antagonistic
- Anxiety & depression
- High environmental footprint
- Nationalism
- Homophobia
- Racism
- Anti-immigrant
- Sexism (hostile)
- Military solutions
- Social dominance orientation
- Intolerance of ambiguity



### SELF DIRECTION + UNIVERSALISM + BENEVOLENCE

- Altruism
- Cooperation
- Environmental behaviours
- Interest in big issues
- Corporate accountability
- Politically activism
- Peacefulness
- Tolerance and acceptance
- Human rights
- Poverty
- Fair trade
- Volunteering
- Donating

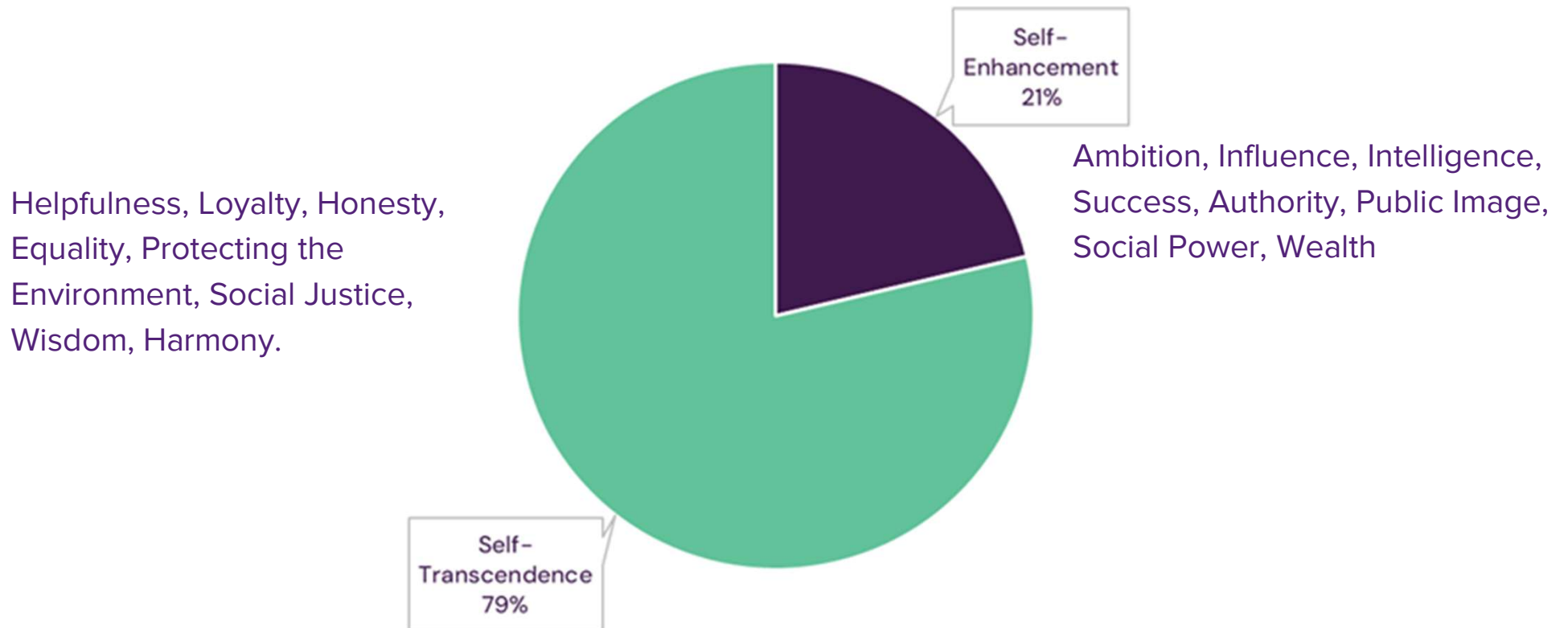


**What do you notice about the motivations of people at your table?**

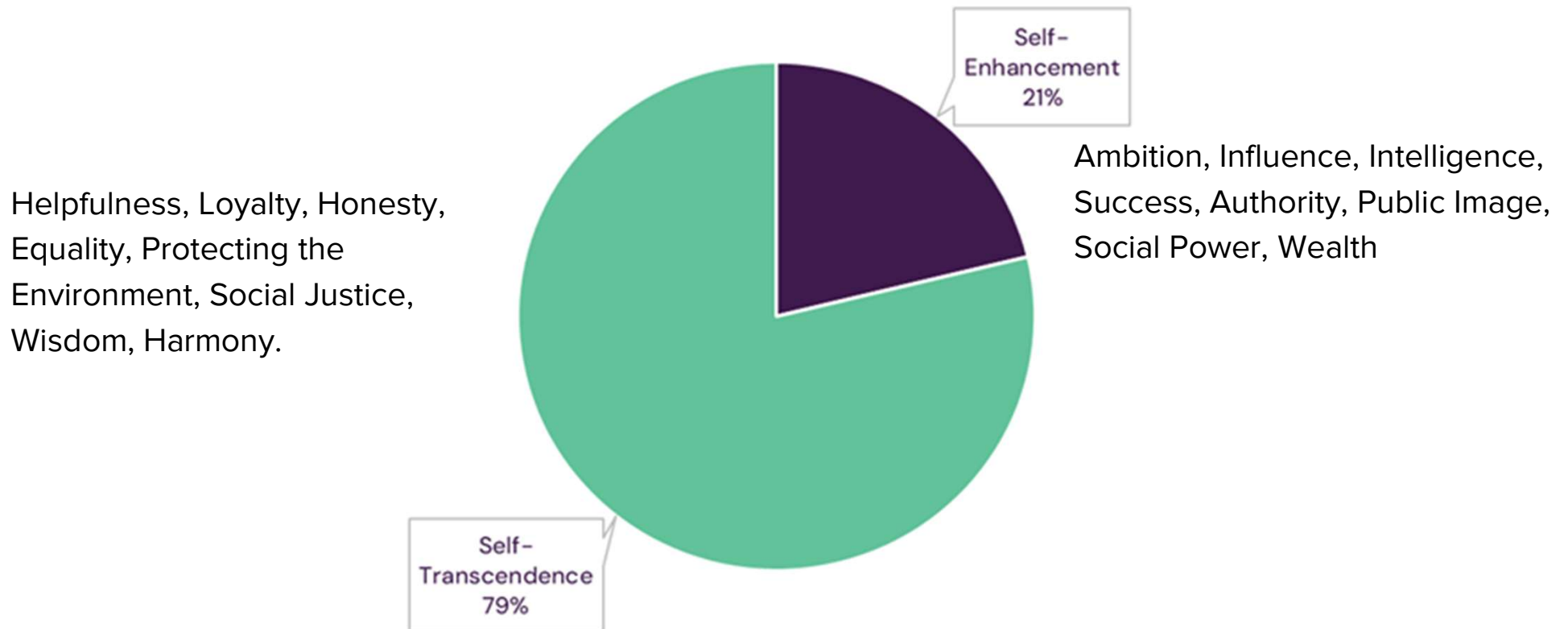
**Their 'why' in relation to this map?**



# New Zealanders' Values 2025

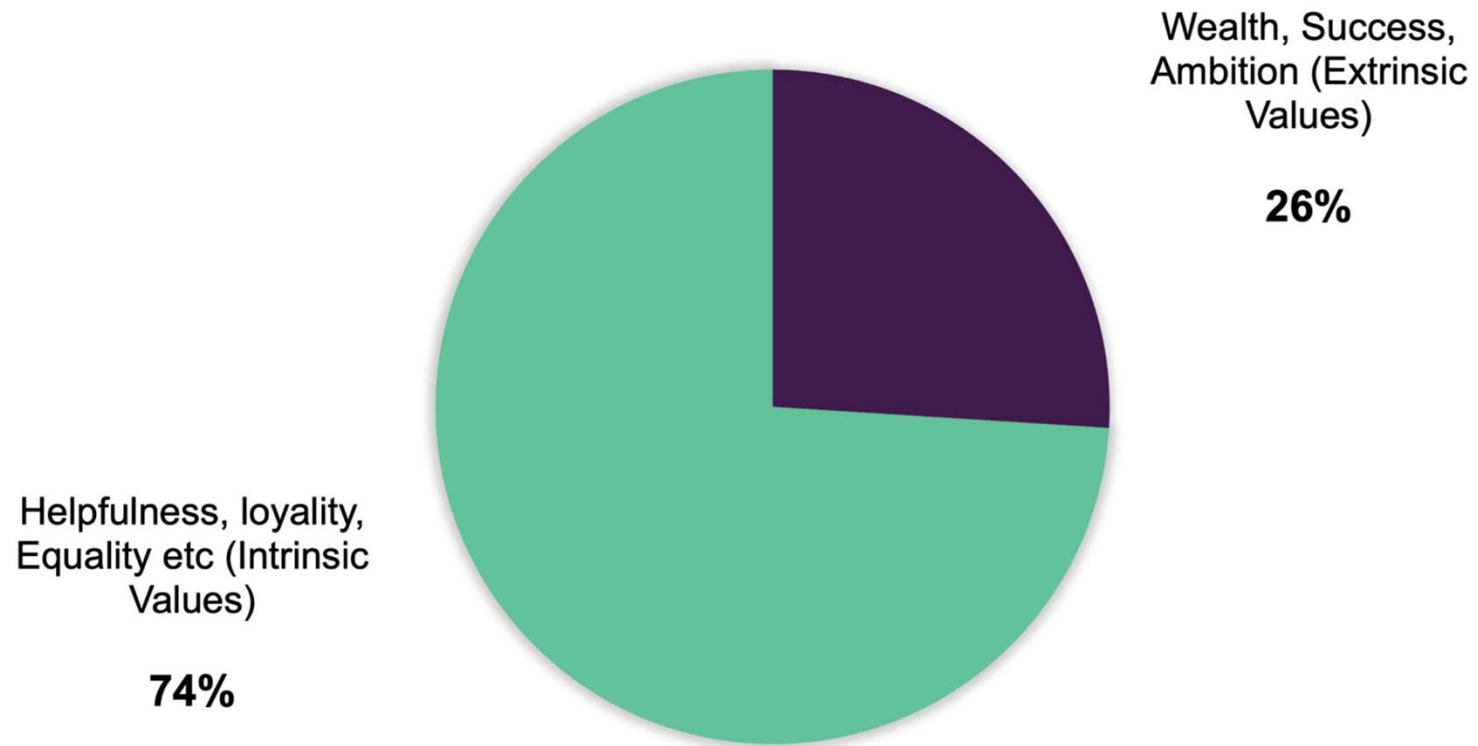


## Problem Solved then!

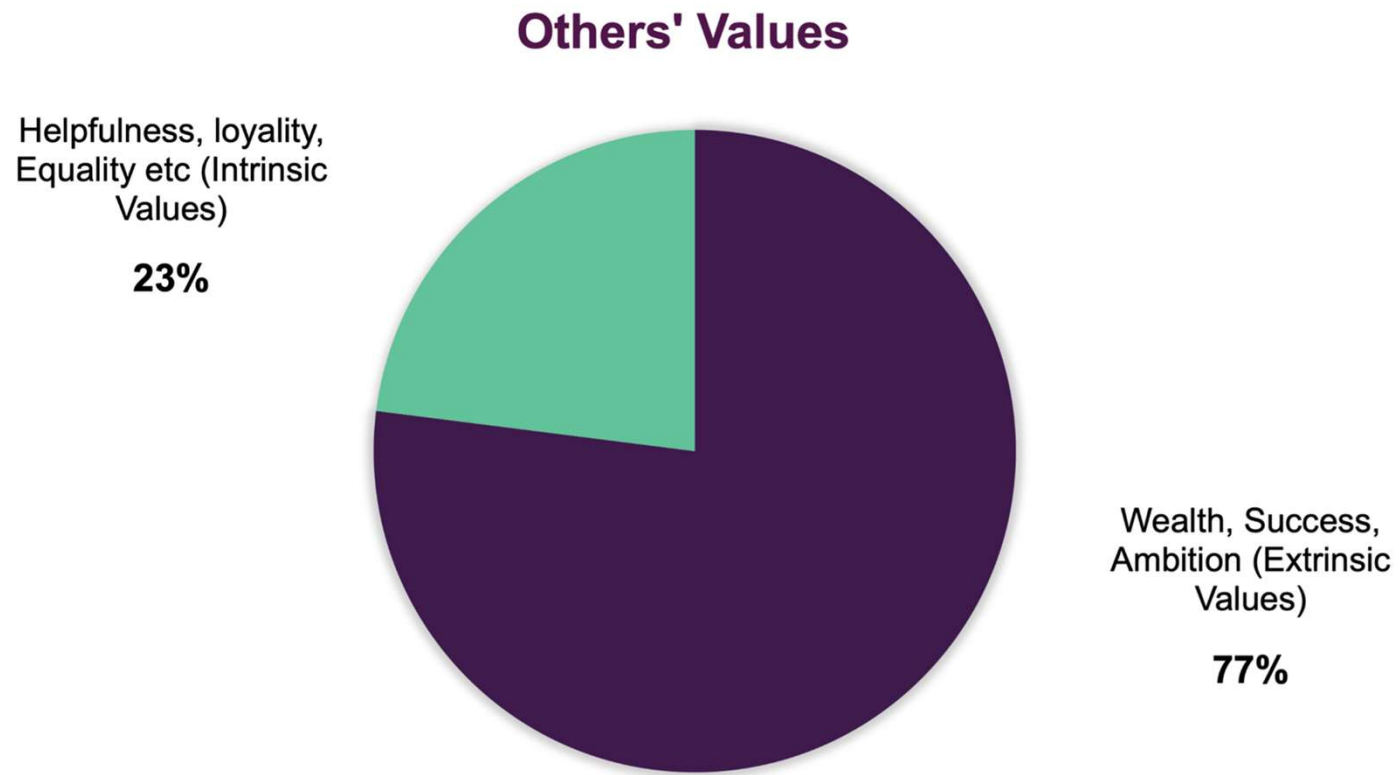


# Reality of our values disposition

## My Values



# Perception of our values disposition



# PERCEPTIONS matter

I BELIEVE  
we should  
ACT.



BIG  
GAP

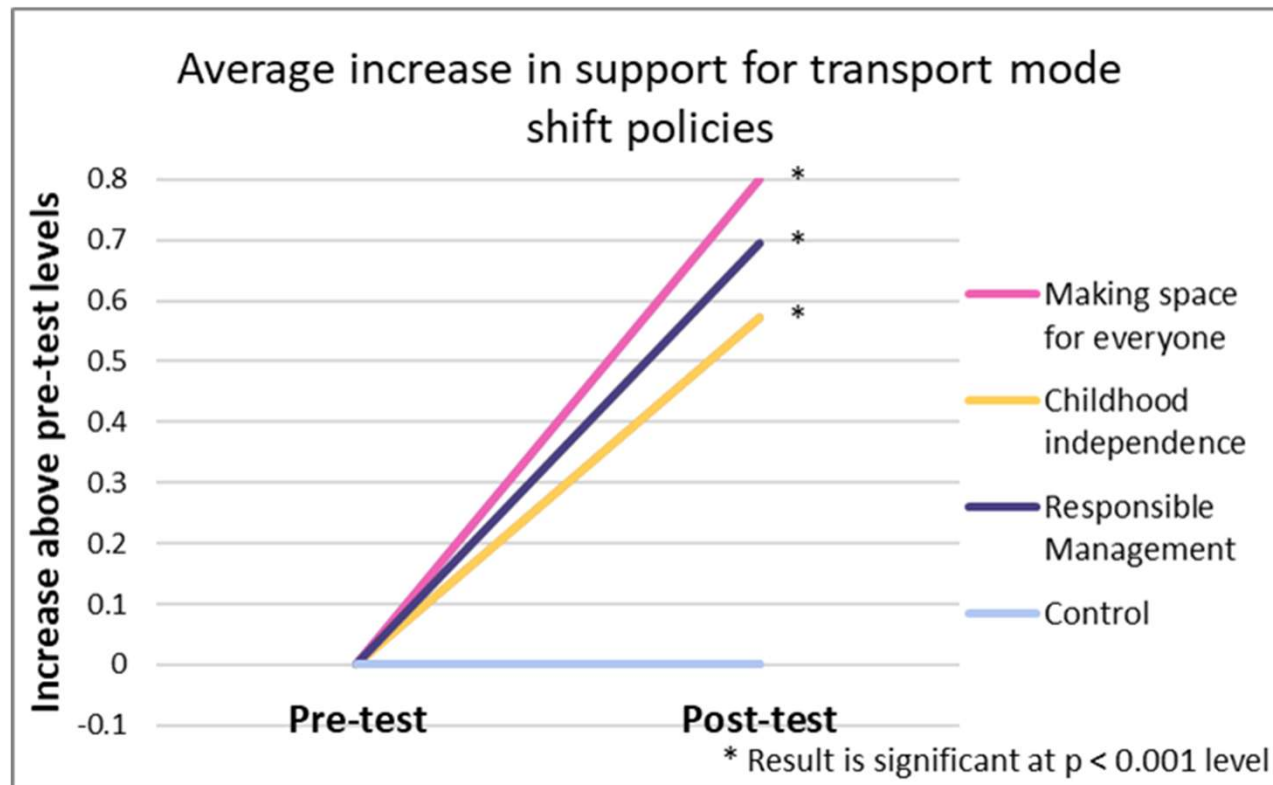
BUT I DON'T  
BELIEVE  
others  
WILL ACT.



THEY NEED TO KNOW  
that  
OTHERS FEEL the  
SAME WAY

IT'S VERY DEMOTIVATING

# Values framing works





From: Fear values frames  
(security values lift our thinking caps off)

SCIENCE / ENVIRONMENT

## David Wallace-Wells: Inaction on climate change will turn Earth into 'a hell'

From **Nine To Noon**, 10:07 am on 7 March 2019

Share this      

The author of a new book on climate change says if people don't mobilise to tackle the issue immediately, the planet will face untold disasters, wars, droughts and famines.



To: Wisdom and responsibility frames

## Cutting emissions not 'woke' just sensible say NZ Super Fund investment managers



**Russell Palmer**  
Political Reporter

**New Zealand / Politics** 22 mins ago



# Framing we care & want action

## The 89% project



**Most of the world's population wants stronger climate action. They just don't realize that they are a majority**



**'Spiral of silence': climate action is very popular, so why don't people realise it?**

Researchers find 89% of people around the world want more to be done, but mistakenly assume their peers do not



**Activate climate's 'silent majority' to supercharge action, experts say**

Making concerned people aware their views are far from alone could unlock the change so urgently needed

## Repairing 'replacement culture': The right to repair gains ground

 Alka Prasad | The Post

November 25, 2024

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More Kiwi businesses are making the commitment to create products that will last consumers a lifetime as repair regulations make political ground.

Framing a way of life more aligned to care taking of our environment and people.

## **From individual actions and \$\$ benefits**

Minimising waste will save  
households and businesses  
loads of cash



## **To collective action and collective benefits**

Many of us want to protect the  
places we love and rely on.  
When governments prioritize  
stopping waste before it is  
made it makes it easier for all  
of us to do that.

## From intelligence & security

If we don't follow the science and do the smart thing we will all be in the 💩



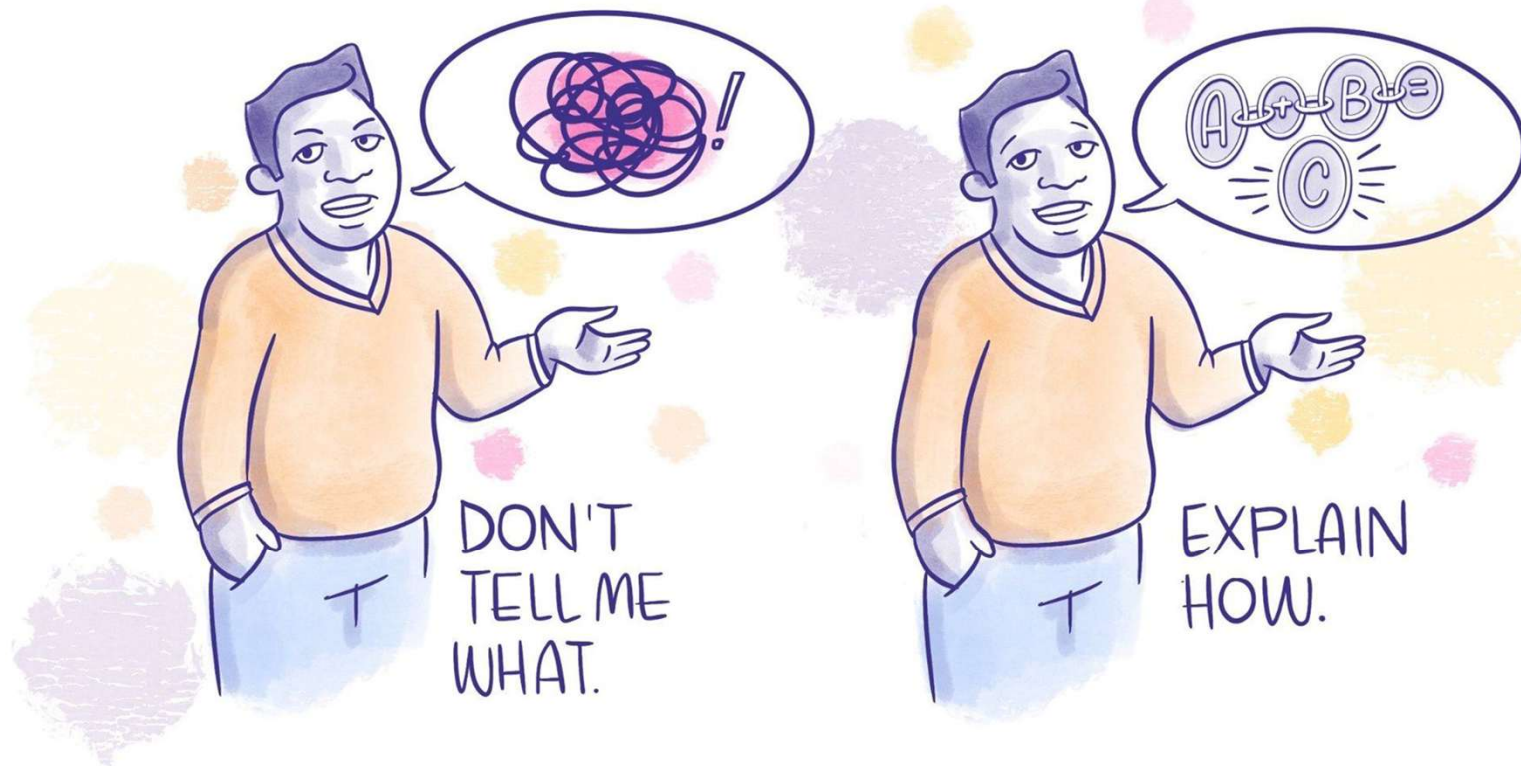
## To Māori strengths

For many people, Māori culture and strengths make our country unique. Strengths such as caring for the places we love.

Embracing Māori strengths and knowledge in caring for the environment helps all of us thrive.

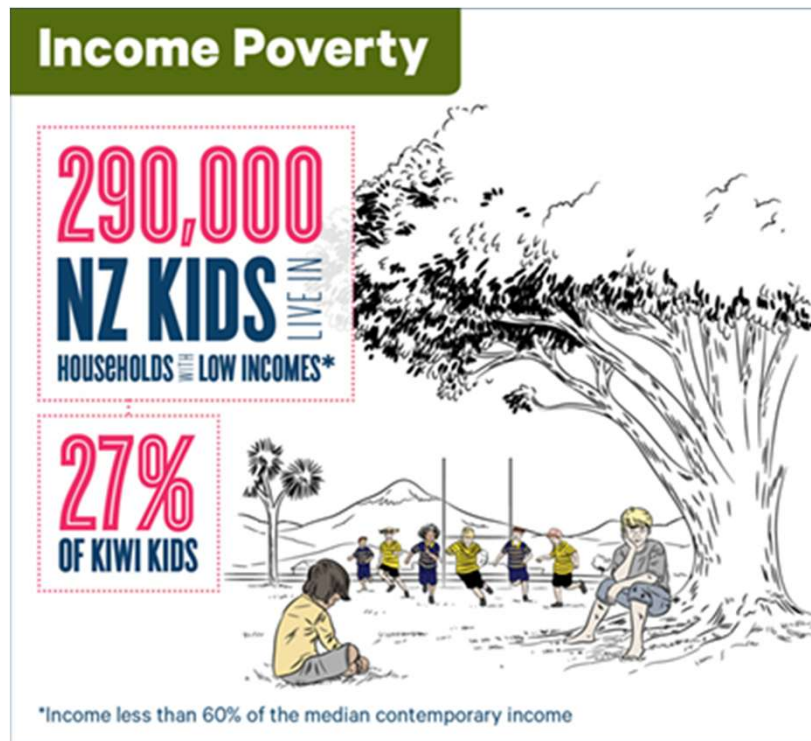


# People need better explanations

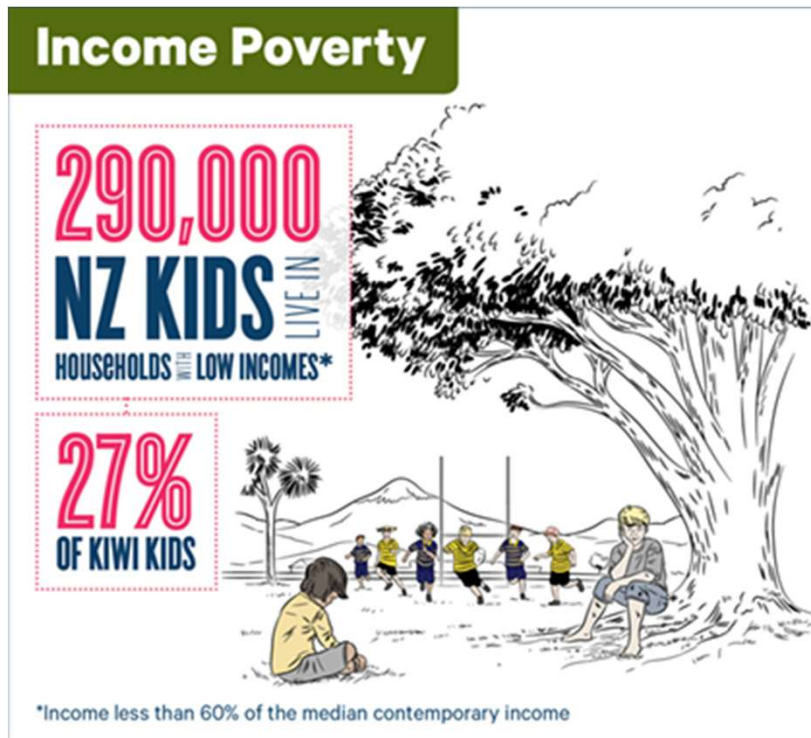




Question: What causes poverty according to this information?



From: describing poverty



To: explaining the causes & solution

## Anti-poverty groups call for Government to wipe debt owed to Ministry of Social Development

Ethan Te Ora

February 28, 2023 · 5:00am

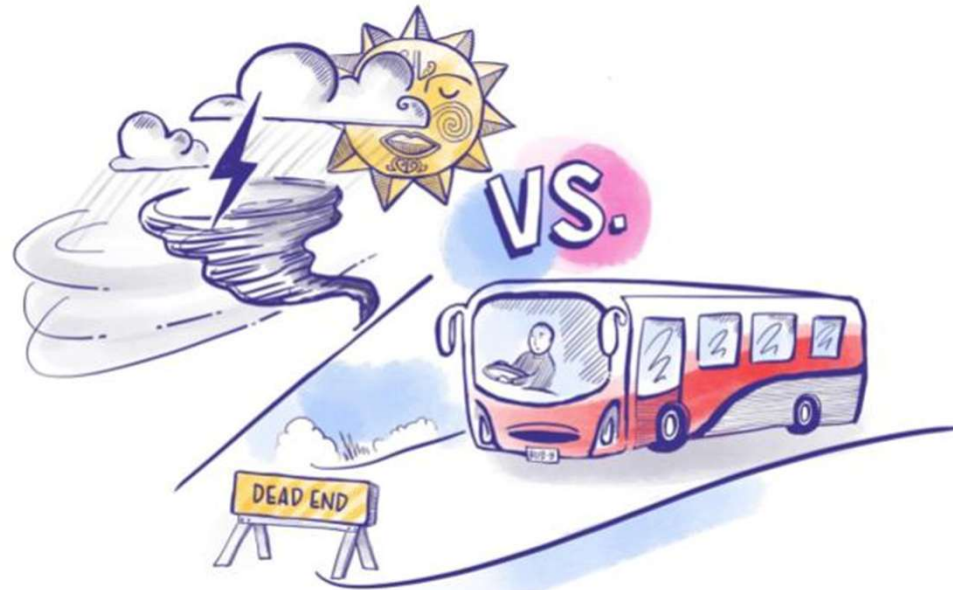
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Auckland Action Against Poverty coordinator Brooke Stanley Pao called communities resilient, resourceful and adaptable – despite the punitive system  
BRUCE MACKAY / STUFF

ActionStation campaigner [Max Harris](#) said “Wiping the debt matters.....It would lift the weight off people’s shoulders. Debt weighs people down, it makes them feel their hopes are impossible to realise, and their lives are more limited than they should be.”

# Explanatory metaphors are powerful



## From Describing

Volunteering is worth x billion to our economy

Carbon warms the planet

27% of kids are in poverty



## To Explaining (with metaphors)

Volunteering and unpaid work fuels the paid economy

Carbon pollution creates a heat trapping blanket

Low benefit levels lock 27% of parents and children into poverty



# **The Environmental Ground Crew**

## Solutions frames





## To make solutions easy to hear and share ...



### From:

- Complex /jargon filled solutions - e.g working for families tax credits, pay equity
- All problems
- Not naming specific people or using “we” (no agents)

### To:

- Plain language solutions e.g ensuring everyone's work is valued
- Explaining solutions that already work
- Name who should do what

## From all problems & facts with no solutions

Our landfills are a finite resource. They will not last forever. In fact the waste being sent by people to landfills is increasing every year. We need to do better with recovering more waste and preventing it from going to landfills in the first place.



## To Concrete solutions

Many people want to send less rubbish to our landfills. People in government can provide better options to achieve this goal. When they support people in business to produce less packaging, and recover more waste that is produced, when they use policy to allow people to get everyday items repaired, then our landfills only get what absolutely has to go there.

# In Summary

1. Frames affect how people think and behave
2. Everything we communicate is framed – be strategic
3. Fast thinking means shared mental models and beliefs first/logic last.
4. Switch on shared mental models helpful to your issue

How:

1. Tell your story, not theirs
2. Use helpful values frames
3. Explain over describe
4. Show and explain the solutions that work in simple ways





# Final Activity: Group Reflections

- Something you will stop doing
- Something you will start doing
- Something you will continue doing
- What more do you want to know

# Framing and messaging guides you can rely on

Framing  
report

## How to talk about Community Planning for Climate Disruption



Te Kaitiaki o  
Tāmaki Makaurau  
Kaitiaki Māori

The  
Workshop

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## How to talk about government and its work for the long-term public good



July 2022  
[www.theworkshop.org.nz](http://www.theworkshop.org.nz)

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The  
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## Short guide: How to talk about air quality and environmental health



July 2022  
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