

Messaging and How to Present It

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Public Opinion

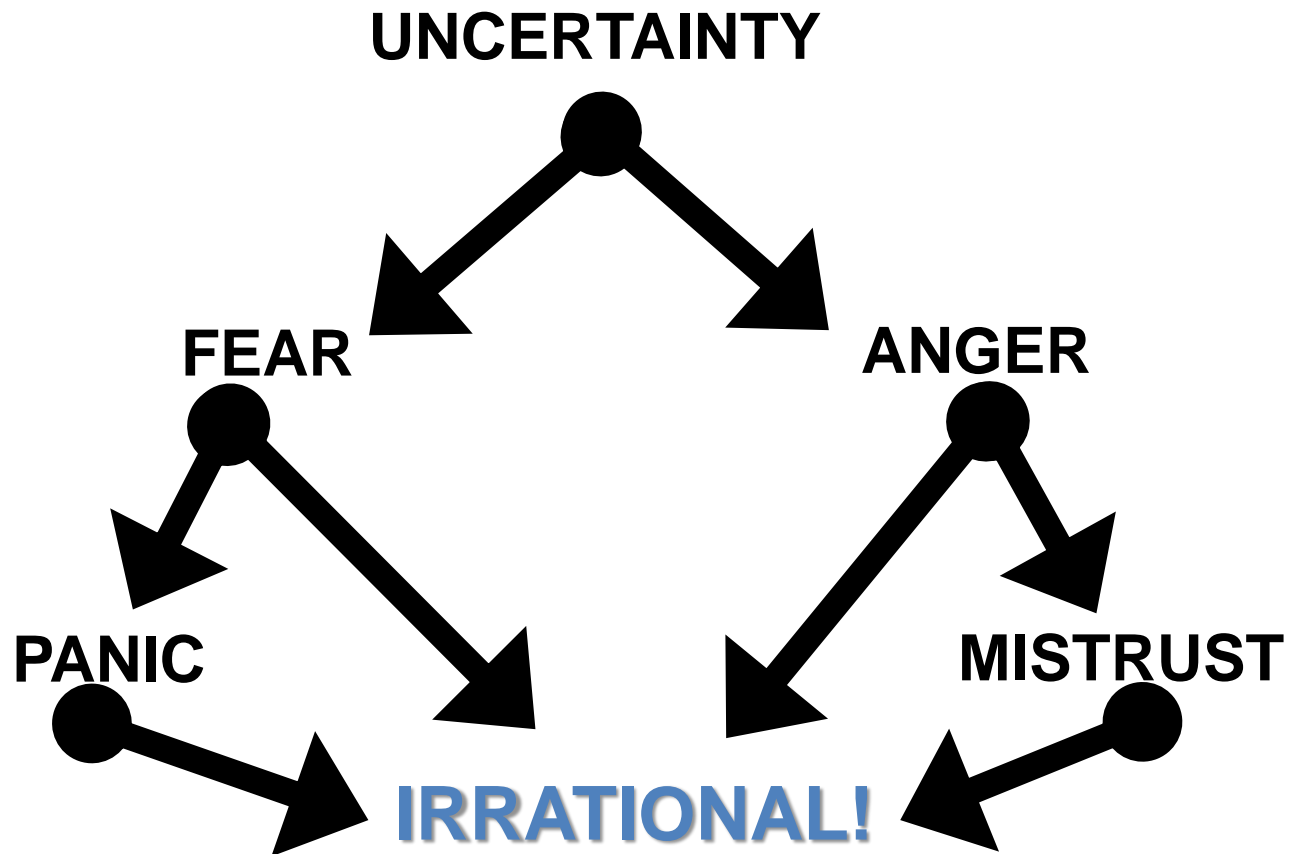
**“Public sentiment is everything. With it, nothing can fail;
against it, nothing can succeed.”**

Abraham Lincoln



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The Logic of Public Opinion



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Three Messages on Messaging

- *It's what we always say:* It's always safe to say, and you always say it, no matter what.
- *Using messaging is not natural.* Not preparing it, saying it, or fielding questions with it. But:
- *You can use it to manage any challenging conversation – **if you master the techniques.***



How to prepare messaging

- Most of information that will compose your messaging is already in your reservoir of ***smarts, experience, and wisdom.***
- But for the most challenging presentations or conversations, this reservoir is necessary but ***not sufficient.***
- To serve you safely and well, messaging must be **written, honed, vetted, learned, and practiced**. That means:
 - ✓ ***Write it*** – then edit it to make it briefer, tighter, snappier.
 - ✓ ***Get feedback*** – from colleagues, bosses, staff, spouses.
 - ✓ ***Learn it*** – so you recite it but sound like you're chatting.



Messaging is persuasive

- A ***fully-supported assertion*** intended to lead the recipient to a ***persuasion-, information- or empathy-based conclusion***.
 - NOT a simple “talking point”
 - NOT a mere “sound bite”
 - NOT just a claim or statement, but a complete ‘start-to-finish’ thought.



How to write messaging: the 3x3 form

- Messaging is more than a list “bullets” or talking points.
- Messaging captures your best information, arguments, and wisdom in messaging that follows a **3x3** form:
 - ✓ There are always **exactly three messages** – not more, not less.
 - ✓ Messages should be high-altitude statements – assertions, lofty claims, statements about your organization’s core values.
 - ✓ Each message should be accompanied by **at least three proof points** – facts, statistics, and anecdotes that prove your assertions.
- The goal: a miniature story that delivers an argument that is ***credible, empathetic, and therefore persuasive.***



Key Message Worksheet

Key Messages Worksheet

Interview Subject/Topic/Reason/Situation

Key Message #1 (What's your Point?)

Support Points for KM-1 (What's your Proof?)
Relevant facts, examples, what people did or are doing, research studies, test results, case studies, real-life events, 3rd party statements, citations, anecdotes, observations, rhetorical questions.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Key Message #2 (Point)

- Proof 2-1 _____
- Proof 2-2 _____
- Proof 2-3 _____


Media Training



Another tool: 3Ps

PPOINT + **P**ROOF + **P**AYOFF = 3**P**s



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3Ps mean “talking backwards”

1. **Always conclusion first!** What’s your point?
2. Then offer as **proof** examples; anecdotes that tell a story; facts that surprise, support and explain.
3. Finally, **“what it all means to you/us”**.



Example: claim vs. message

“I think the market is going up.”

or

“Evidence tells us the stock market is heading up [point]. We know the Fed is easing [proof1], corporations are flush with cash [proof2] and the S&P 500’s earnings projections are up 3%. [proof3] So it’s a great time to add to your IRA [payoff].”



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10 Keys to Using Messaging

1. **Don't answer questions – present:** With messaging that is prepared and rehearsed, you should think of every challenging conversation as a **presentation:** No matter the question, the answer relies on messaging. This means fielding questions with responses, not just answers.
2. **Qualify yourself:** Always start by qualifying yourself – by specifying what you can and cannot discuss.
3. **Recognize question types:** Be wary of questions that ask you to speculate, predict the future, repeat loaded terms, etc. Recognizing question types makes it easier to transition to messaging.



10 Keys to Using Messaging *(more)*

- 4. Prepare a Q&A prep document for especially challenging conversations.** Some conversations are certain to generate challenging questions. Anticipate these questions, and write and practice messaging-based answers.
- 5. Use A+1 to respond to questions:** **A**nswer or **A**ddress or **A**cknowledge the question simply – sometimes with just one sentence. Then segue **immediately** to a point you want to make – from your own messaging.
- 6. Flag your key points:** Signal your key points with introductory phrases that **highlight** them.

“The key point is this: . . .” or “I say this again for clarity and emphasis: . . .”



10 Keys to Using Messaging *(even more)*

7. **Repeat yourself and stop for effect:** These techniques call attention to your message.
8. **Correct errors:** Immediately correct (only) **major** errors.
9. **Learn how to say “I don’t know:”**
 1. Compliment the question.
 2. Say you don’t have that information.
 3. Offer to follow up by learning what you can and getting it to the questioner.
10. **Be yourself.** Some may lie, spin, be rude, or be someone else using messaging. That’s wrong. And that’s not “public service.”



Questions?

Thank you.



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