

that liberals started using it.

Think of the framing for *relief*. For there to be relief, there must be an affliction, an afflicted party, and a reliever who removes the affliction and is therefore a hero. And if people try to stop the hero, those people are villains for trying to prevent relief.

When the word *tax* is added to *relief*, the result is a metaphor: Taxation is an affliction. And the person who takes it away is a hero, and anyone who tries to stop him is a bad guy. This is a frame. It is made up of ideas, like *affliction* and *hero*. The language that evokes the frame comes out of the White House, and it goes into press releases, goes to every radio station, every TV station, every newspaper. And soon the *New York Times* is using *tax relief*. And it is not only on Fox; it is on CNN, it is on NBC, it is on every station because it is “the president’s tax-relief plan.” And soon the Democrats are using *tax relief*—and shooting themselves in the foot.

It is remarkable. We have seen Democrats adopting the conservative view of taxation as an affliction when they have offered “tax relief for the middle class.”

They were accepting the conservative frame. The conservatives had set a trap: The words draw you into their worldview.

That is what framing is about. Framing is about getting language that fits your worldview. It is not just language. The ideas are primary—and the language carries those ideas, evokes those ideas.

There was another noteworthy example of conservative framing in George W. Bush’s State of the Union address in January 2005. This one was a remarkable metaphor to find in a State of the Union address. President Bush said, “We do not need a permission slip to defend America.” What was going on with a permission slip? He could have just said, “We won’t ask permission.” But talking about a permission slip is different. Think about when you last needed a permission slip. Think about who has to ask for a permission slip. Think about who is being asked. Think about the relationship between them.

Those are the kinds of questions you need to ask if you are to understand contemporary political discourse. While you are contemplating them, I want