

actively or passively. Progressives see a John Wayne movie or an Arnold Schwarzenegger movie, and they can understand it. They do not say, “I don’t know what’s going on in this movie.” They have a strict father model, at least passively. And if you are a conservative and you understand Oprah, you have a nurturant parent model, at least passively. Everyone has both worldviews because both worldviews are widely present in our culture, but people do not necessarily live by one worldview all of the time.

So the question is: Are you living by one of the family-based models? But that question is not specific enough. There are many aspects of life, and many people live by one family-based model in one part of their lives and another in another part of their lives. I have colleagues who are nurturant parents at home and liberals in their politics, but strict fathers in their classrooms. Reagan knew that blue-collar workers who were nurturant in their union politics were often strict fathers at home. He used political metaphors that were based on the home and family, and got them to extend their strict father way of thinking from the home to politics.

This is very important to understand. The goal is to activate your model in the people in the “middle.” The people who are in the middle have both models, used regularly in different parts of their lives. What you want to do is to get them to use your model for politics—to activate your worldview and moral system in their political decisions. You do that by talking to people using frames based on your worldview.

However, in doing that, you do not want to offend the people in the middle who have up to this point made the opposite choice. Since they have and use both models in their lives, they might still be persuaded to activate the opposite model for politics.

Clinton figured out how to handle this problem. He stole the other side’s language. He talked about “welfare reform,” for example. He said, “The age of big government is over.” He did what he wanted to do, only he took their language and used their words to describe it. It made them very mad.

It turns out that what is good for the goose is good for the gander, and guess what? When George W. Bush arrived, we got “compassionate conservatism.” The Clear Skies Initiative. Healthy Forests. No Child Left