

affordability of health care and associating *Obamacare* with *government takeover* and *death panels*. The press, quoting the attacks, used the term Obamacare and not the clunky name Affordable Care Act. Obama eventually tried, in vain, to turn this to his advantage—saying it meant “Obama Cares.” But it was too late. The conservatives had given the name the meaning they wanted by frequent enough repetition.

The president and members of the administration counterattacked with lists of facts: the provisions of the plan. It didn’t help. The president went on TV with a laundry list of provisions. It didn’t help. His adviser, David Axelrod, sent a memo to Organizing for America’s email list, roughly 13 million supporters strong, asking them to speak to their friends and neighbors in support of the president’s plans. He said there were twenty-four things to remember, but just to make it “easier,” he divided the list of facts into three groups of eight!

Any cognitive scientist could have told him no one was going to remember the three groups of eight, and I have never met anyone who has.

The conservatives won the framing war of 2009, and it helped strengthen the nascent Tea Party movement as Tea Partiers were deployed to go to town meetings around the country that summer and repeat *government takeover*, *death panels*, and *Obamacare*.

If the president had understood the conservative framing tactic, he could have undercut it in a simple way. He could have adopted the same two moral issues, Freedom and Life, from a progressive perspective.

If you have cancer and you don’t have health care, you are not free. You are probably going to suffer and die (a Life issue). If you are in a car accident and suffer multiple injuries and don’t have health care, you are not free—you may be disabled for life, or die. Even if you break your leg, do not have access to health care, and cannot get it set, you are not free. You may never walk or run freely again.

Ill health enslaves you. Disease enslaves you. Even cataracts that rob your vision and can easily be healed by modern medicine will enslave you to blindness without health care.

Healthy food is also a freedom issue. Much of big agriculture produces