
How to talk about Passive House: Storytelling that motivates

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Today

1. The Passive House vision
 2. Communication barriers to achieving your vision (brain and social science)
 3. Overcoming the barriers: Values (& other things)
 4. Key ingredients for action: motivating people to act on Passive House
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Who are we & why do we care?



Jess.
Researcher &
evidence
agitator

Marianne.
Researcher &
advocate

What is your
vision?

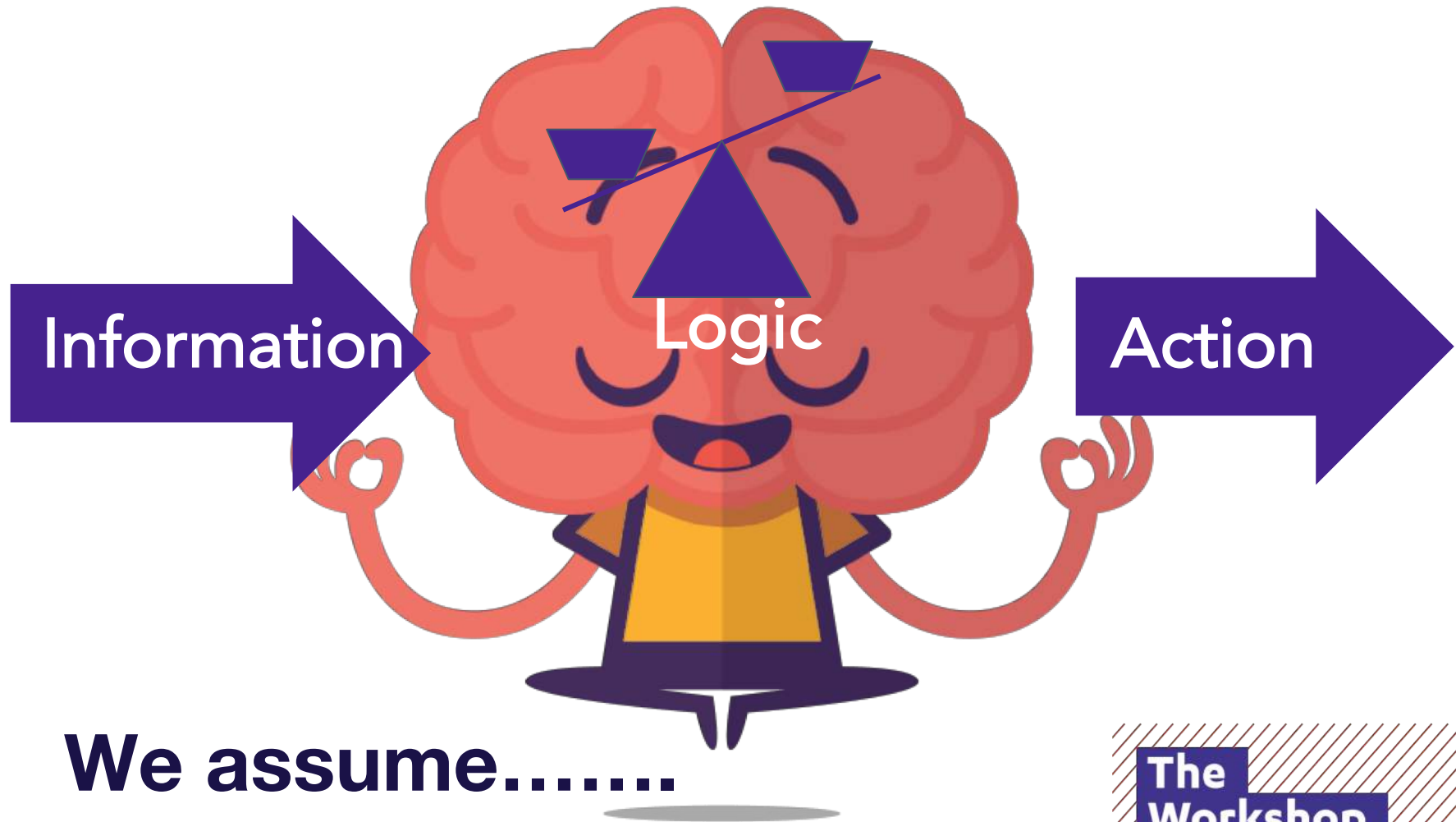
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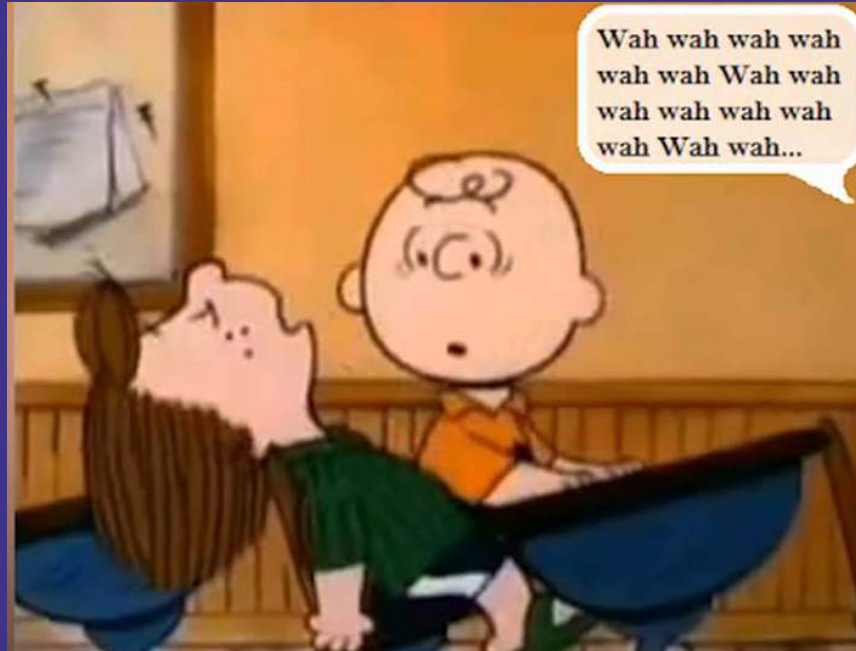
All people in NZ thrive
in the buildings they
live, work, & learn in.

How?
Passive House
everywhere!

**How do we work to
achieve our vision?**

**We talk (tell stories),
usually with our facts.**





Facts fail to motivate

Because of....

1. Emotions/feelings

1. Mental models

**1. The views of
others**

We receive A LOT of information



Millionaire tells millennials: if you want a house, stop buying avocado toast

Australian real estate mogul Tim Gurner advised young people to solve their housing woes by putting their '\$22 a pop' toast toward a deposit instead



© 'When I was trying to buy my first home, I wasn't buying smashed avocado.' Photograph: Vladislav Nasic/Getty Images/istockphoto

An Australian millionaire and real estate mogul has advice for millennials struggling to purchase a home: stop buying avocado toast.

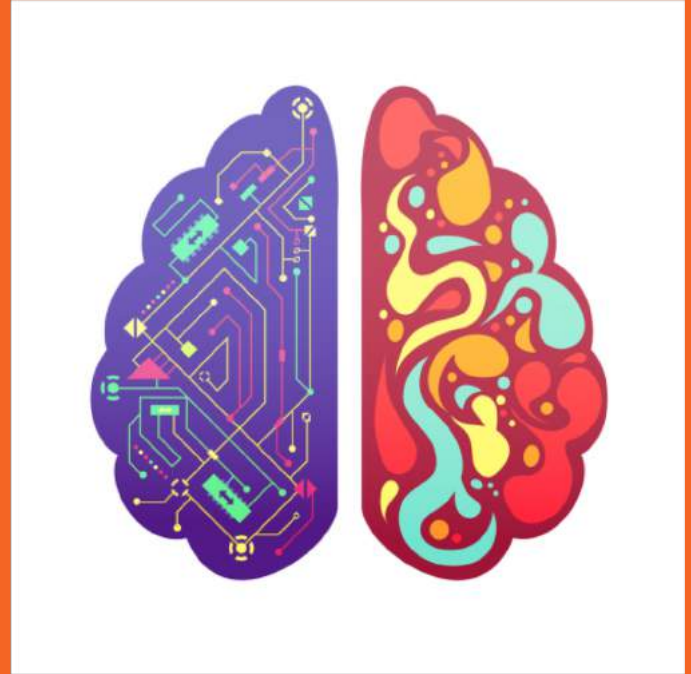
Tim Gurner, a luxury property developer in Melbourne responsible for over \$3.8bn in projects, is facing heat for comments he made on 60 Minutes in Australia, implying that young people can't afford to buy property because they're wasting money on fancy toast and overpriced coffee.



The stories we
assimilate related
to housing may
be simple or
simply wrong



We use emotions
to protect these
existing beliefs. We
reject inconsistent
data & use
consistent data to
cement the story

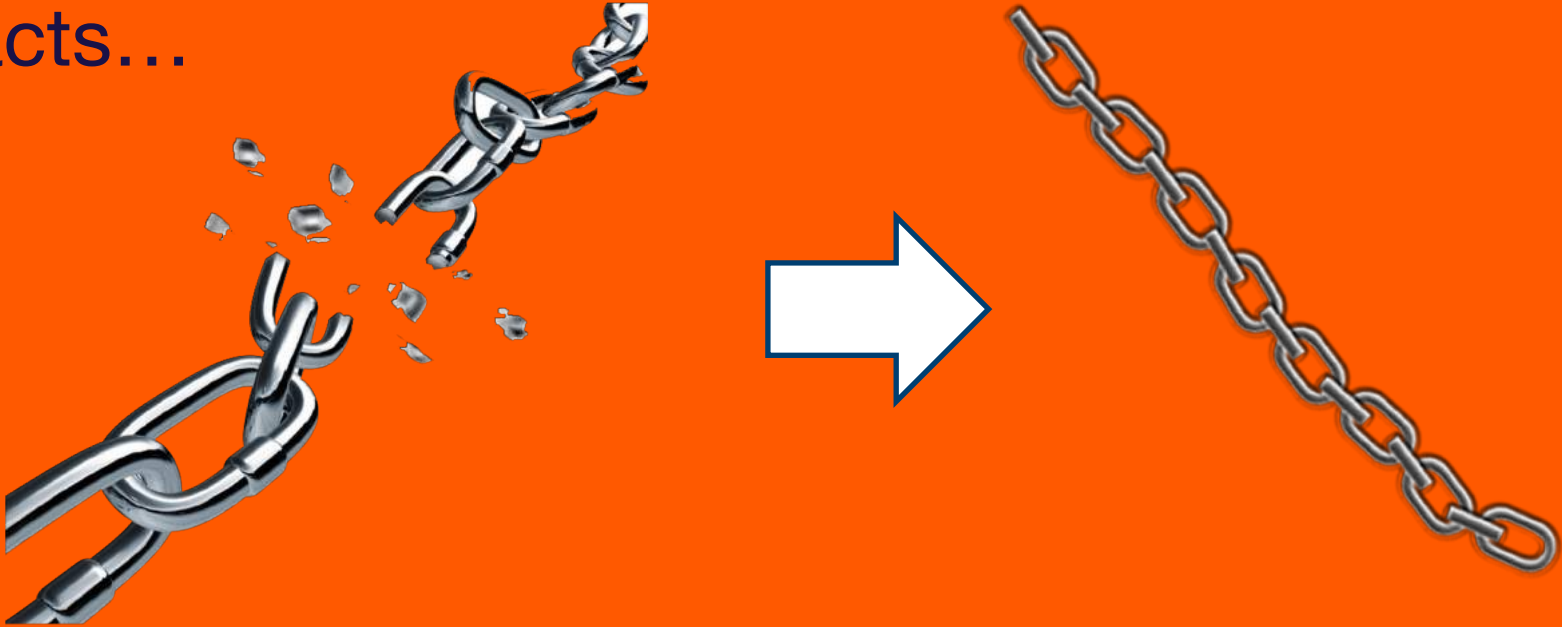


Mental models are shortcuts to explain the world & people's actions. They comprise many links forged over a lifetime of information...



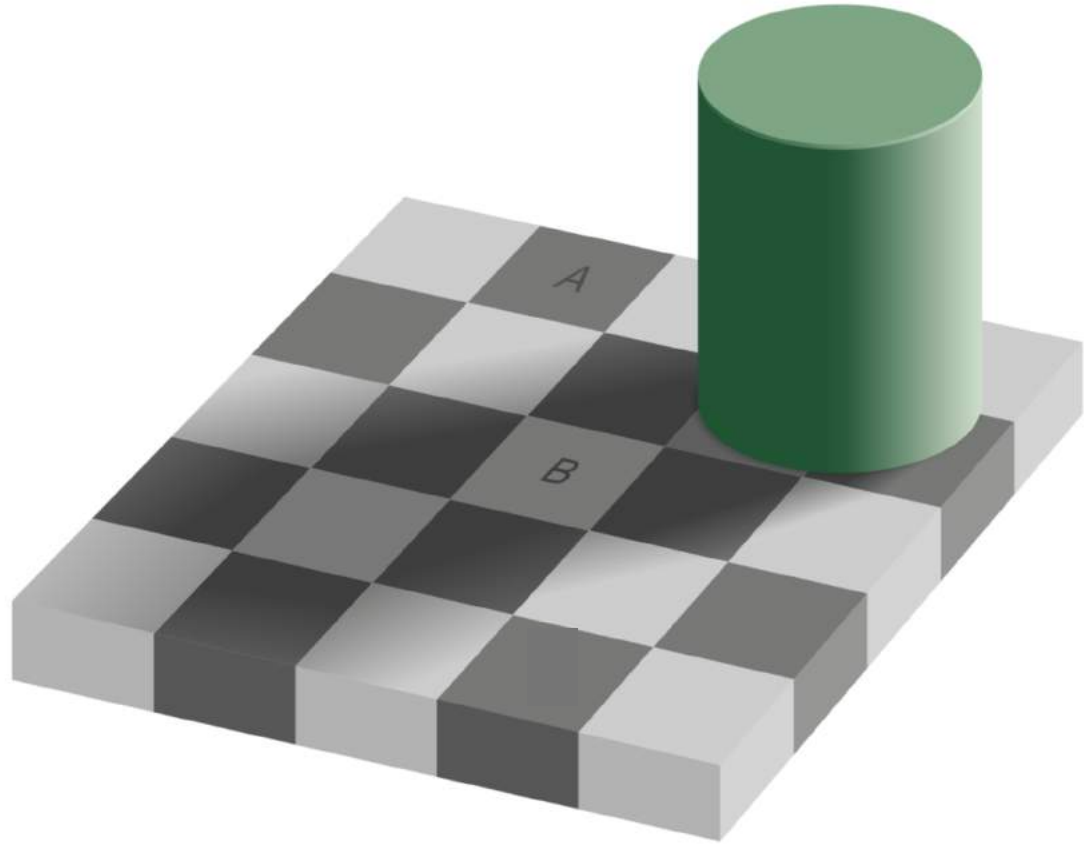
$$A + B = C$$

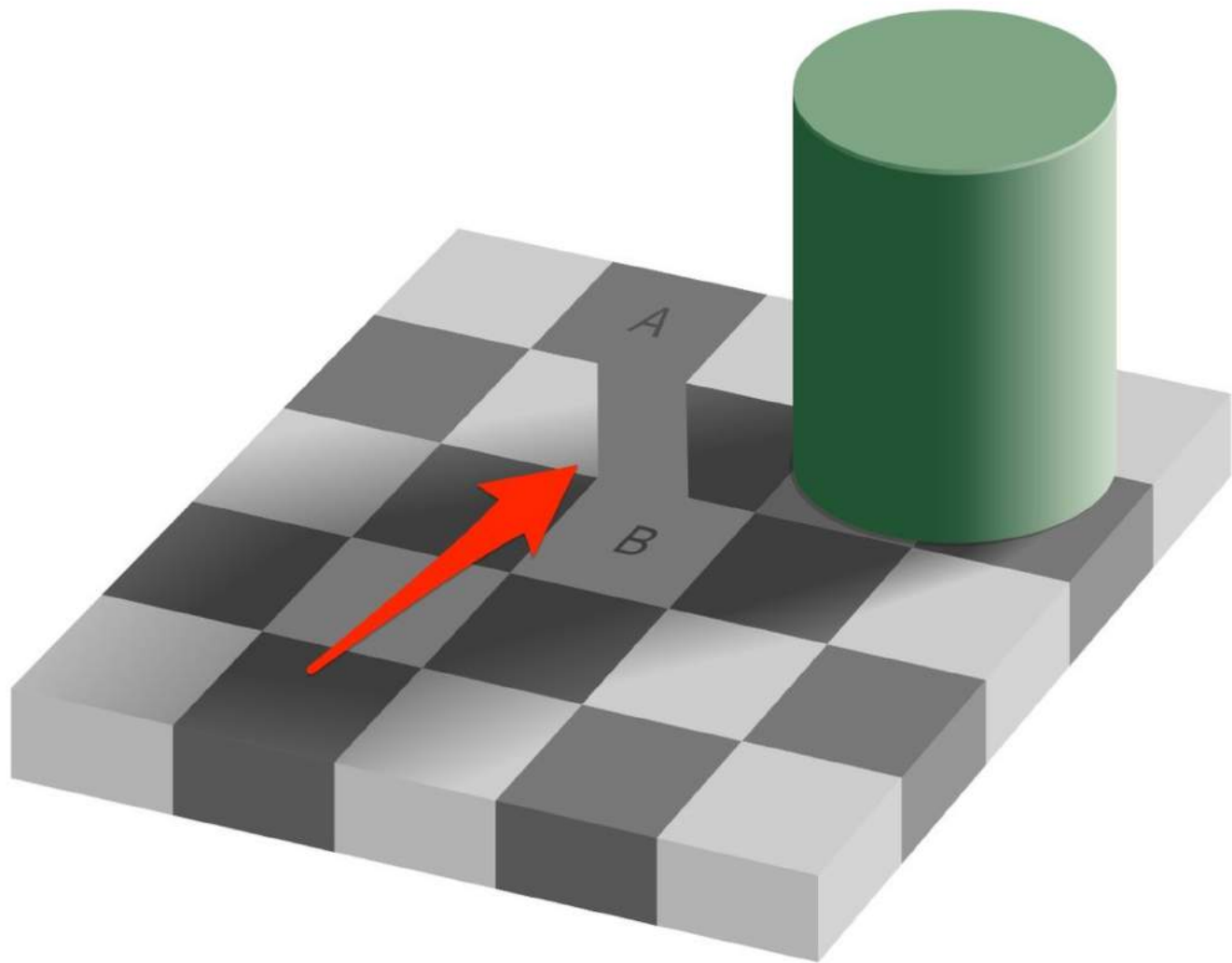
If we break one link in the causal chain with facts...



People will just repair it

Mental shortcuts help us manage a huge cognitive load. But they can stop us seeing good evidence





We are social creatures. We are influenced by what we think others think.



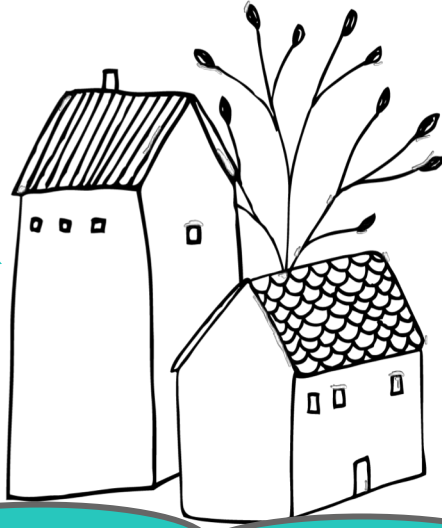
Evidence of
problem &
solutions
presented

Facts
hit beliefs

Experts' and
advocates' fail to
contest existing
stories or to
substitute better
ones.

**How do we
overcome these
barriers?**

for the house
you want to
build



Language &
metaphor

Know your
people

Brain
science

Values

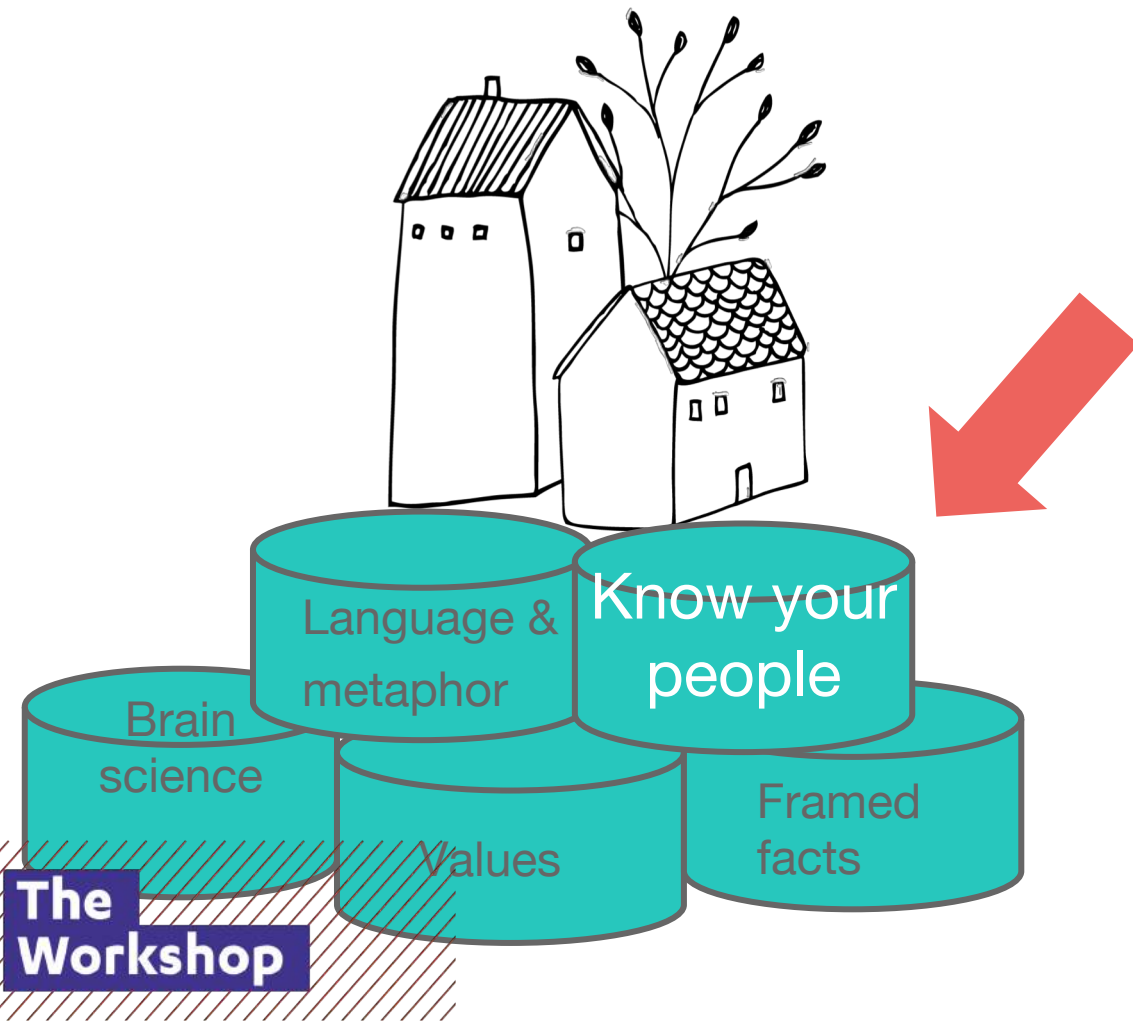
Framed
facts

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**Use an evidence-
led
communication
foundation to
build people's
motivation to act**

use the right
foundations





Your aim is
not to
motivate
everyone.



SUPPORTER BASE



PERSUADABLES

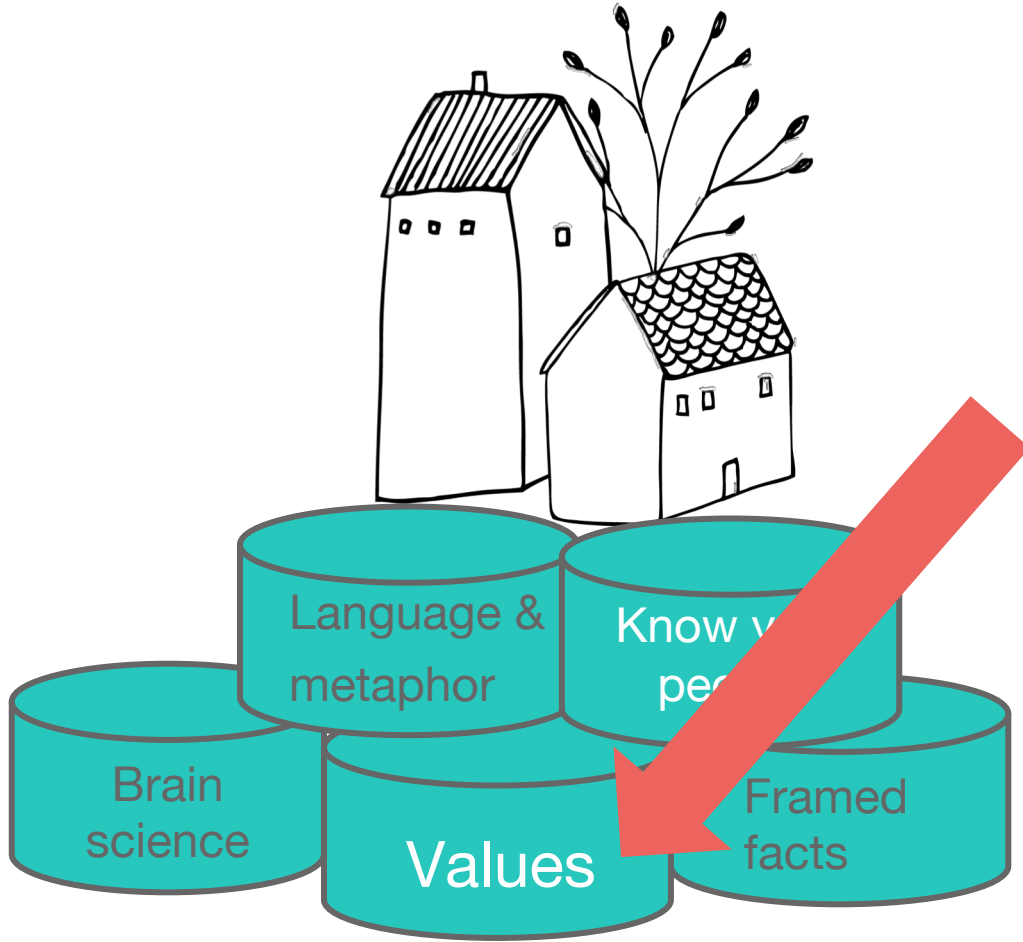
The bulk of the population whose views are not strongly held and whose opinion can be affected by how a policy is talked about or framed.



STEADFAST OPPONENTS

Those opposed to our policies and who are very unlikely to change their minds when we use a different message (note: no connection to the political party meaning of 'opposition').





Lead your public
communications with
shared values

Values are... universal concepts
about what matters most to us.

Beliefs are... assumptions we hold
to be true to uphold our values.

Values are at the heart of our motivations





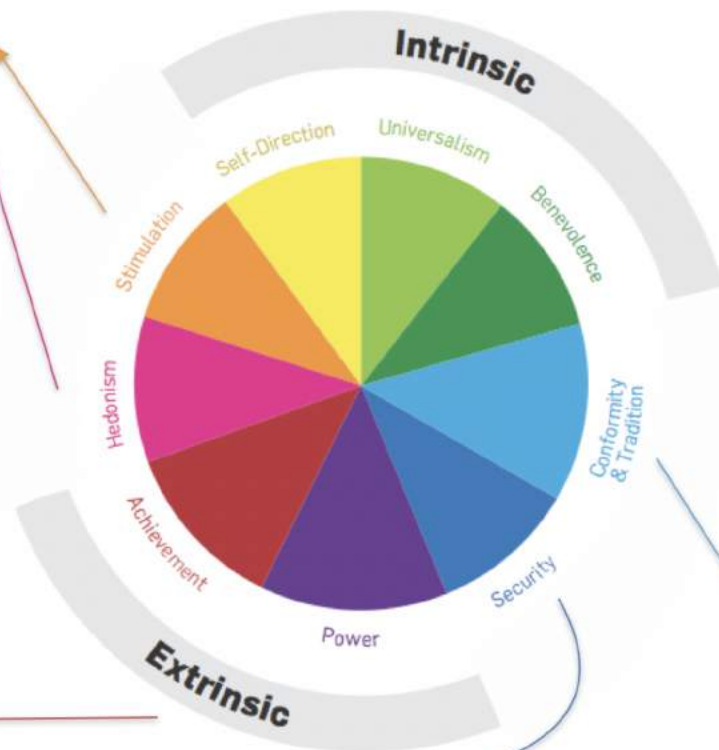
Some values are more helpful to motivating people on issues of collective wellbeing (like passive house for all)

?

ACHIEVEMENT + POWER

+ SECURITY

- 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

CONFORMITY + TRADITION

- Homophobia
- Racism
- Sexism (benevolent)
- Anti-immigrant

We can prime or engage people's
helpful values through the way we talk.

1. People and Planet, not Dollars and Cents (or fear)



Building a Passive House doesn't have to cost more than building any good house would. And in cases where it turns out to be a bit dearer, the long term return is likely to be much greater than a standard house.

Dollars & Cents

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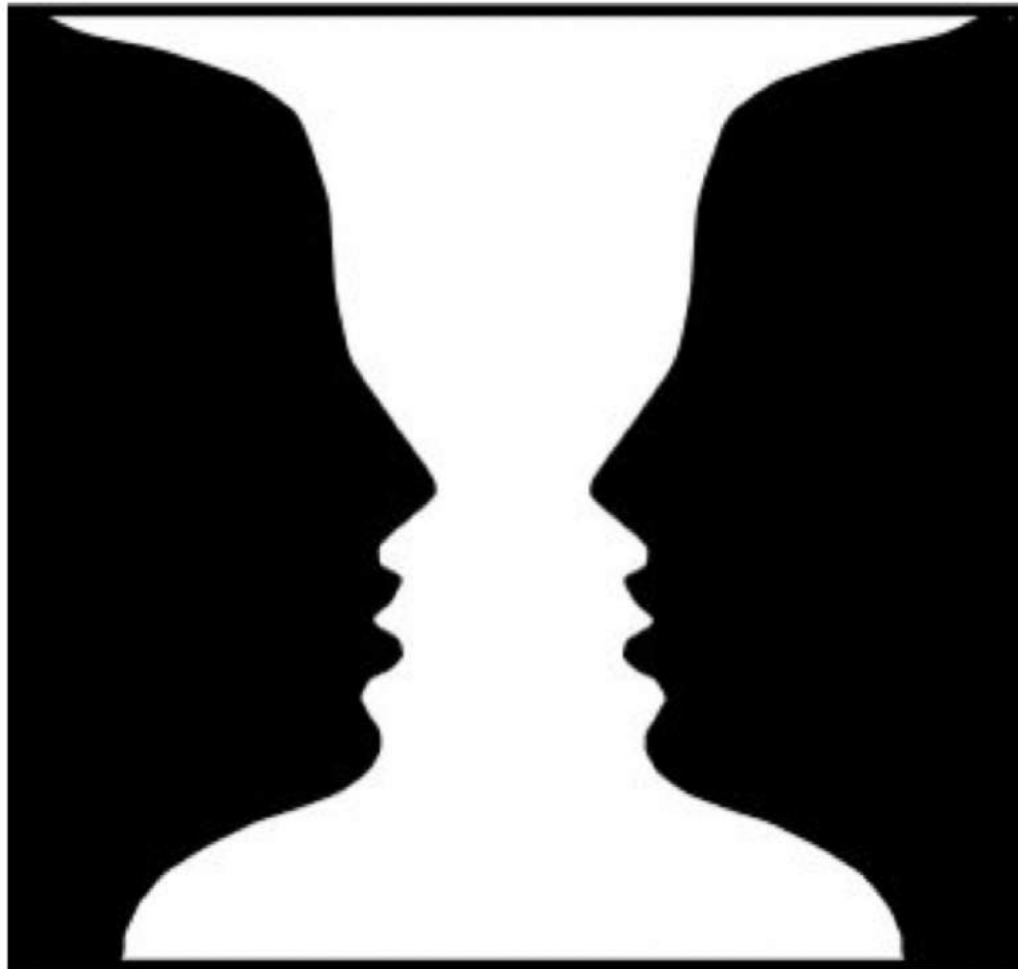
In Passive Houses people can live in homes that are warm, comfortable, and affordable to heat. Homes that are low carbon. Homes that helps us all thrive.

People & Planet

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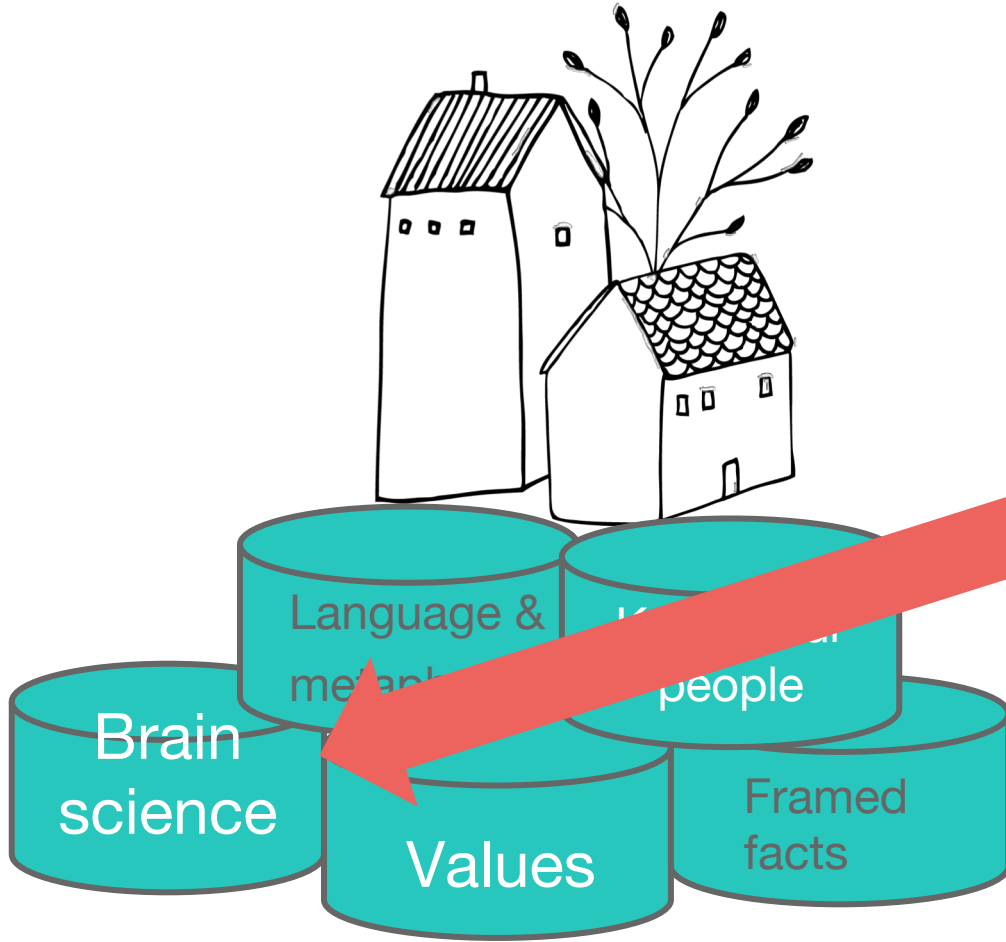


© Bentham



Values in housing that may be useful (caveat)

- Fairness with across places (e.g. some people get warm dry homes and others don't).
- Interdependence/connectedness (regional) - what affects one part of our community affects us all

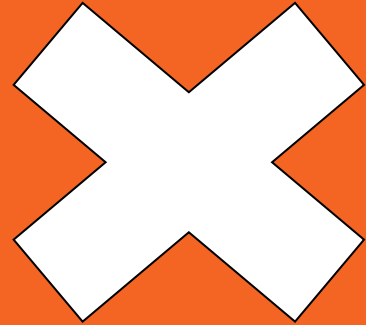


Work with our
brains and social
processes in your
public messaging

3. Tell your story, don't just rubbish theirs.



4. Sell the
cake, don't list
the ingredients



Don't take you passive house standard out in public.

“Increase the number of energy efficient buildings” is good.

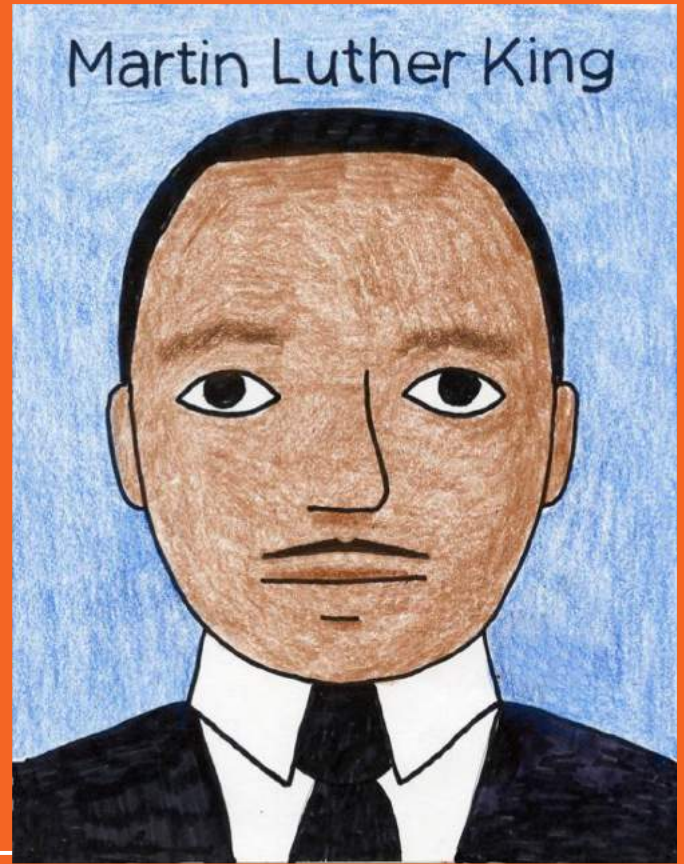
“End fuel poverty is better” is better.

Support “a higher quality of housing” is good.

“Build homes, not shelters for people” is better.

5. Create a vision for people

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6. People do things

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No passive voices in Passive Houses!

"Houses are built to a low standard in New Zealand"

"We have too many cold damp homes"

"The building code is inadequate"

People do things

“Leaders in the building industry build houses to a low standard in New Zealand”

“We have cold damp homes because the people in politics have failed to prioritise health in housing policy”

7. Avoid myth busting and negating



You say....	People hear or remember....
“It is untrue that our housing code is fit for purpose”	Housing code is fit!
“It is not true that passive houses always cost more”	Pretty expensive those passive houses
‘Achieving the Passive House standard is not difficult in principle”	Like a camel through the eye of a needle

8. Describe
the problem
behavior.
Avoid labeling
people

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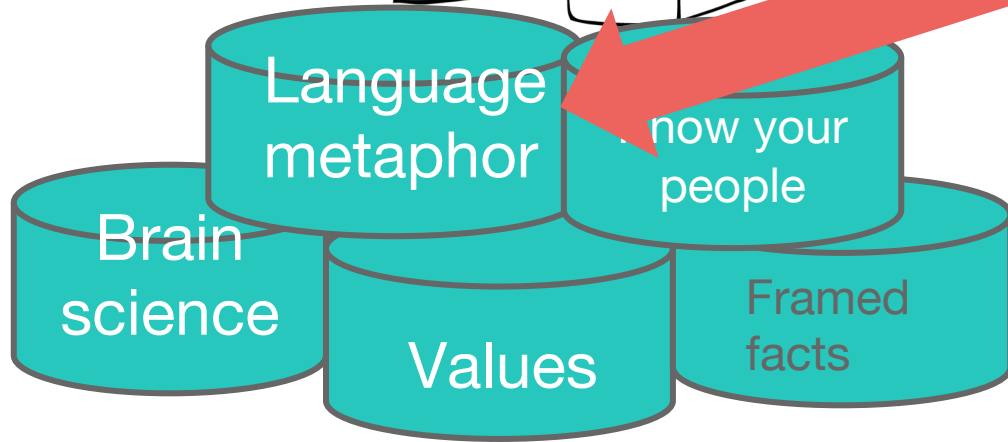


Villain OR

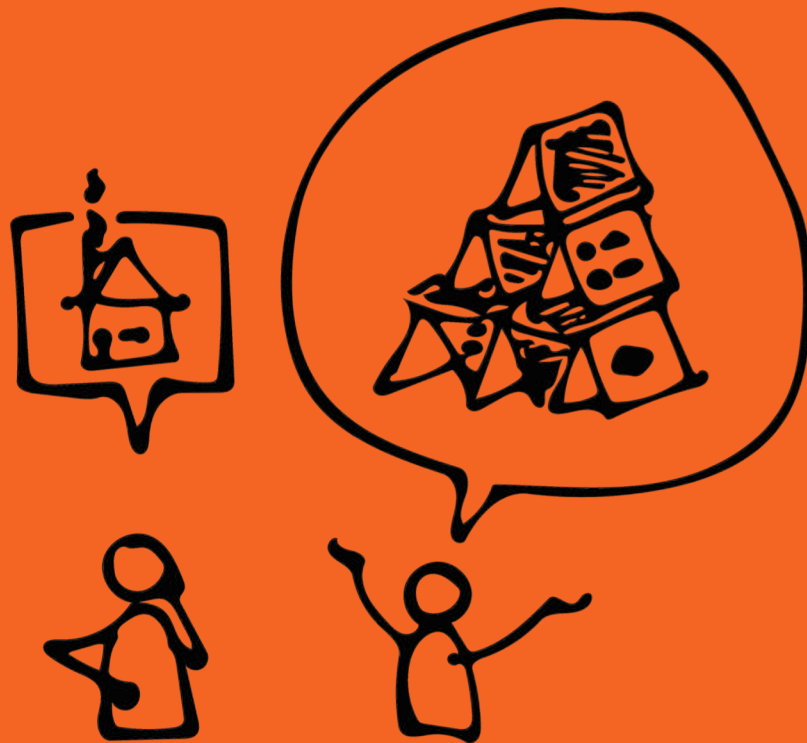
Misusing the
Force?



Words shape how we see the world, frame what people see and hear.

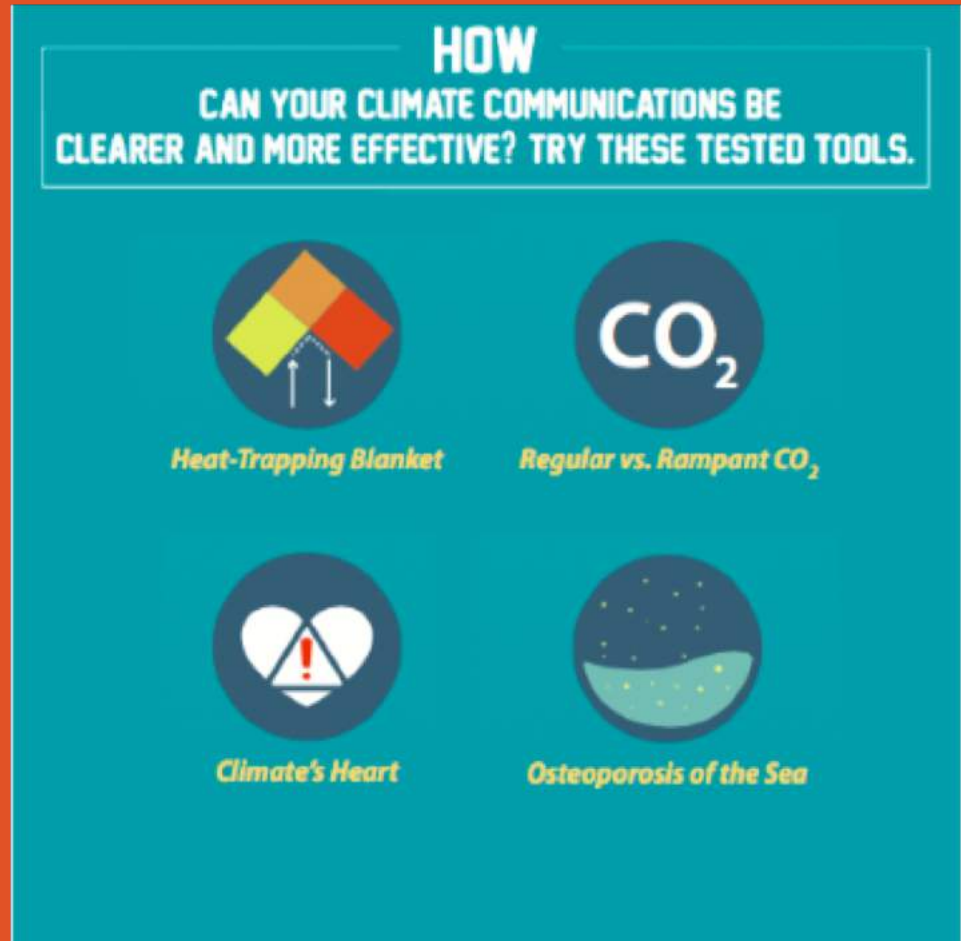


9. Watch your language



**Metaphors
help frame the
values and the
evidence**

**(Source:
Frameworks)**



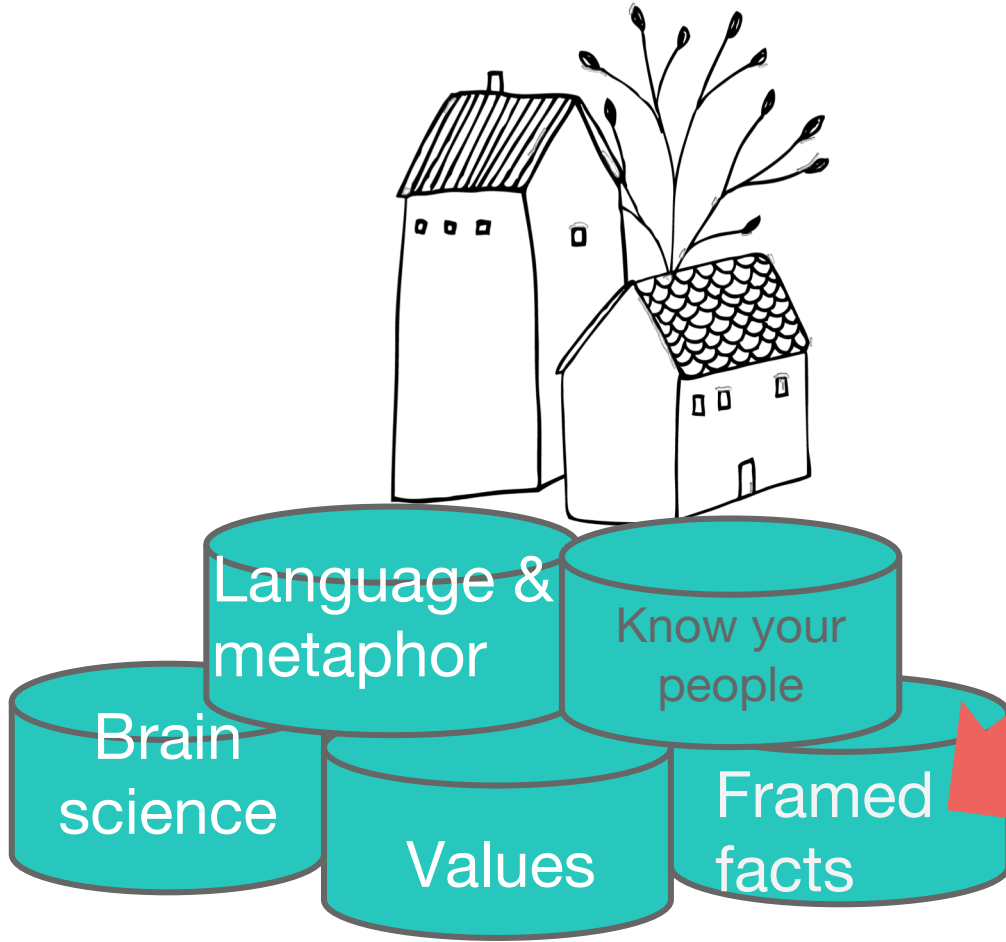
You say....	People hear
“with the Passive House system all buildings <i>have a cocoon</i> around them.“	A warm and snuggly building.
“The Passive House Planning Package (PHPP) is the ' <i>Swiss army knife</i> ' of Passive House modelling and design.”	Complicated, expensive and probably unnecessary
“the housing landscape”	A natural phenomena untouched by human influence

10. Talk about people, everyday life, in concrete terms

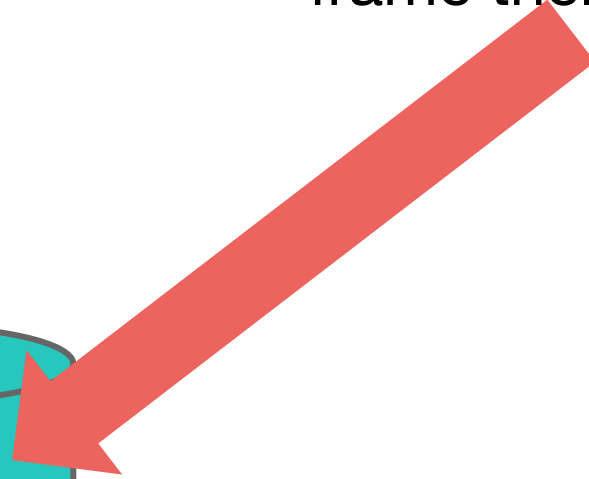
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This 400 W panel heater keeps all the rooms in a 138 sqm Certified Passive House in Whanganui cosy. Photo: eHaus





Facts still matter
(this is about best
evidence), just
frame them well



11. Together
not apart - tell
systems not
individual
stories

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12. Build an brief,
powerful
explanatory chain
of framed facts to
explain the issue

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Unframed facts
floating free mean
people fill the
gaps with their
own story.

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+



4 steps to a well framed argument based on a positive vision

Step 1. Lead with a value or positive vision (outcome), based on our shared helpful values.

Step 2. Describe the barrier to that reality with people identified

Step 3. Talk in concrete simple terms about solutions to overcome those barriers (again with agents for change)

Step 4. Return to your vision and what this means for people and the environment in their everyday lives

People are people



We live in story like a fish lives in water.
We swim through words and images
siphoning story through our minds the
way a fish siphons water through its
gills. We cannot think without language.

- Christina Baldwin

Want more?

Science of story training with
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A Matter of Fact: BWB Short
Text.

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