



SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT EXPRESSING VALUES

- **Keep in mind that values are expressed most effectively when they are contrasted, at least implicitly, to *different* values. One of the best ways to do this is to contrast two nouns or adjectives and use that contrast as the pivot of your speech.**
- **Your perspective is often more persuasive when you're able to reframe the conversation or argument to highlight the value you are advocating. (E.g., "It's not about right and wrong, but about the foresight to predict what will work.")**
- **If you're advocating a value that no one would question, consider offering some new insight about why this value is important—or about why alternative values are dangerous, immoral, impractical, etc.**
- **One of the best ways to advocate a value is to tell the story of how you came to believe in it.**
- **Alternatively, tell the story of how you used to believe X, but now you've come to change your mind and believe Y.**
- **If you know some in your audience will have different values, show that you understand those other values, maybe even respect them, but you hope to be able to convince your listeners to consider seriously your position.**
- **When appropriate, show how your value is somehow higher than, or existed prior to, the values more commonly held by your audience.**
- **Sometimes the most effective speech argues that values in this case are secondary—because some crucial action needs to be taken that requires putting conflicting values aside to get the job done.**
- **A good way to build trust with your audience, and to engage them to think through your issue, is to admit that you're personally struggling between two conflicting values—and explain why.**

[Marie Danziger](#)

Lecturer in Public Policy

marie_danziger@harvard.edu

617-495-2686

HKS Communications Program

www.hkscommunicationsprogram.org

Twitter: @hkscommprog