

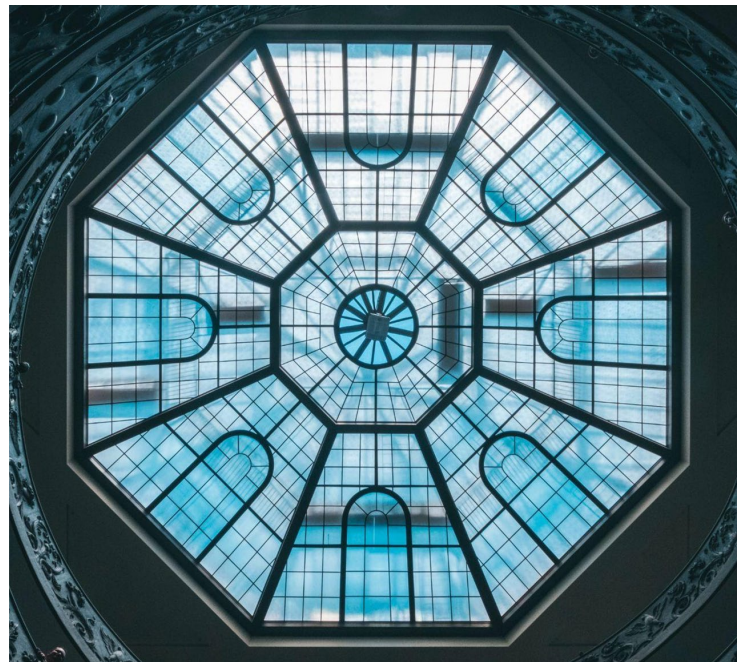


Heartwired Persuasive Messaging:

Your (audience's) brain on emotionally complex issues
in polarized times

Today's Objectives

- Understand what's **actually** going on in our bodies **and brains** when we're having discussions on emotionally complex social issues.
- Learn to use the Heartwired approach to **understand your audiences and their emotional, psychological, and informational needs.**
- Practice **actionable strategies** for using **Heartwired messaging to communicate with persuadable audiences** and equip them to arrive at support for our issue.





Exercise:

Vote Like a Legislator



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Worksheet #1: Vote Like a Legislator

Yes  /  No

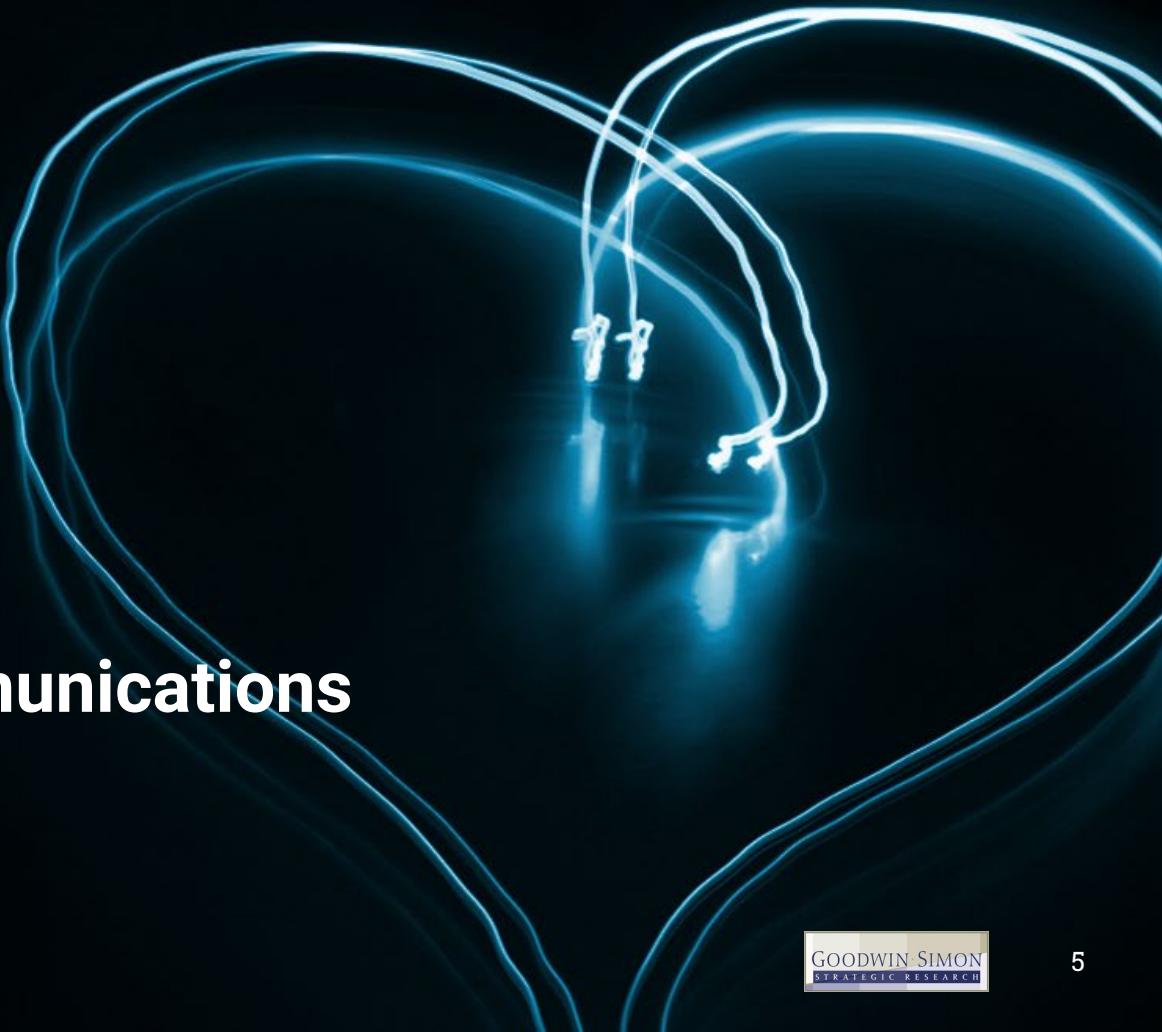
1. Prohibit the use of social media by anyone under the age of 16.
_____ | _____
2. Allow minors (ages 13-17yo) to work for pay on weekdays, nights, and weekends.
_____ | _____
3. For people convicted of misdemeanors and low-level felonies, automatically seal their criminal records if they have no new arrest after five years.
_____ | _____

1. Mandatory loss of driver's license for three years for driving while intoxicated.
_____ | _____

On your worksheet:

2. Outlaw marijuana use in all public spaces.
 - Circle the ONE vote that was the most challenging for you to decide.
 - Write down your thoughts and feelings you experience as you make that decision.





Persuasion Communications



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How do you communicate differently to different audiences?

ACTIVATE



OBJECTIVE

Activate target audiences
who are already supportive.

PERSUADE



OBJECTIVE

Persuade target audiences
who are conflicted.



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How do you communicate differently to different audiences?

ACTIVATE



OBJECTIVE

Activate target audiences who are already supportive.

Example:

*Pride isn't just a month. It's a mindset.
Celebrate love, authenticity, and equality. Love is love.*

PERSUADE



OBJECTIVE

Persuade target audiences who are conflicted.

Example:

LGBTQ people are our family members, friends, neighbors. They are part of our families and communities. Love is love.





The Heartwired Approach



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HEARTWIRED

AUDIENCE

ADVOCATES /
ACTIVISTS

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Emotions

Feelings in response to stimuli. Emotions drive behavior particularly when we feel threatened and need to make split-second decisions.

Identity

How one sees oneself in relation to the world. Identity incorporates many facets and traits.

Beliefs

Ideas held to be true. When we have little experience with something, we tend to fill in the knowledge gaps with assumptions.

Values

Ideals held about good and bad, right and wrong. Values influence emotions, beliefs and behaviors and are often shared within a culture or community.

Lived Experiences

Meaning made from events and relationships that a person experiences in their life.



Uncovering the Heartwired Conflict



Upstairs vs. Downstairs Brain: Your Brain on Messaging

UPSTAIRS BRAIN

Responsible for decision-making and planning, control over emotions and body, self-understanding, empathy, compassion, and morality.

Allows for empathy which is a precursor to compassion.



DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN

The primitive brain is responsible for basic functions, innate reactions, and impulses and strong emotions.

Hijacks upstairs brain to respond to fear and to focus on survival.



Q & A



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Case Study:

Heartwired Principles in Action: Coming Together Across Differences in Colorado



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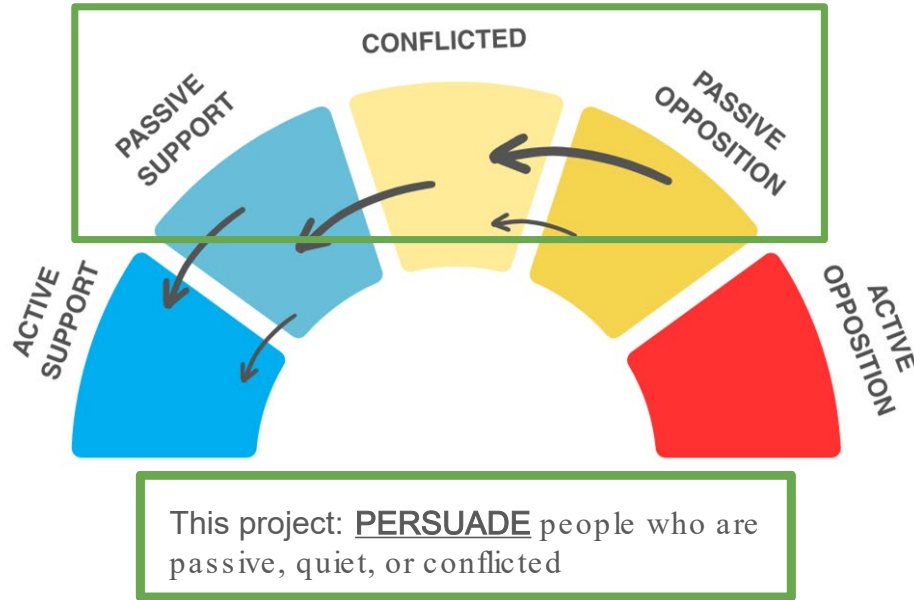
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Coming Together Across Differences Project

- Multi-year messaging and narrative research project
- Develop evidence-based strategies to **communicate more effectively with Coloradans on issues of division, discrimination, and racism**
- Focuses on **persuadable Colorado audiences**: those who are not yet **strongly supportive nor strongly opposed to culture and policy shifts to address division and racism – but who could be convinced**
- Scan the QR code at your table to learn more about our messaging recommendations!

Our Audience

The Spectrum of Support



**The spectrum of support shown here is heavily inspired by the [Spectrum of Allies](#), a community organizing tool developed and refined by activists and civil rights leaders over decades of work.*

Understanding Our Audience

For persuadable Coloradans across race, ethnicity, gender, ideology, and geographic region:

- **Economic insecurity, uncertainty, and affordability** are top concerns.
- Many are also **deeply concerned about ever -growing division and polarization** within our communities and society; and **see class and political ideology as among the strongest dividing factors** at the current time.
- There is a strong desire to have more **connected and caring communities** where differences – e.g. in race, culture, geography, education level, and politics – **are valued and respected rather than divisive**.
- Persuadable Coloradans also feel **frustrated and unsure** of whether it's possible to become more connected and less divided.

Audience mindset: Coloradans in their own words

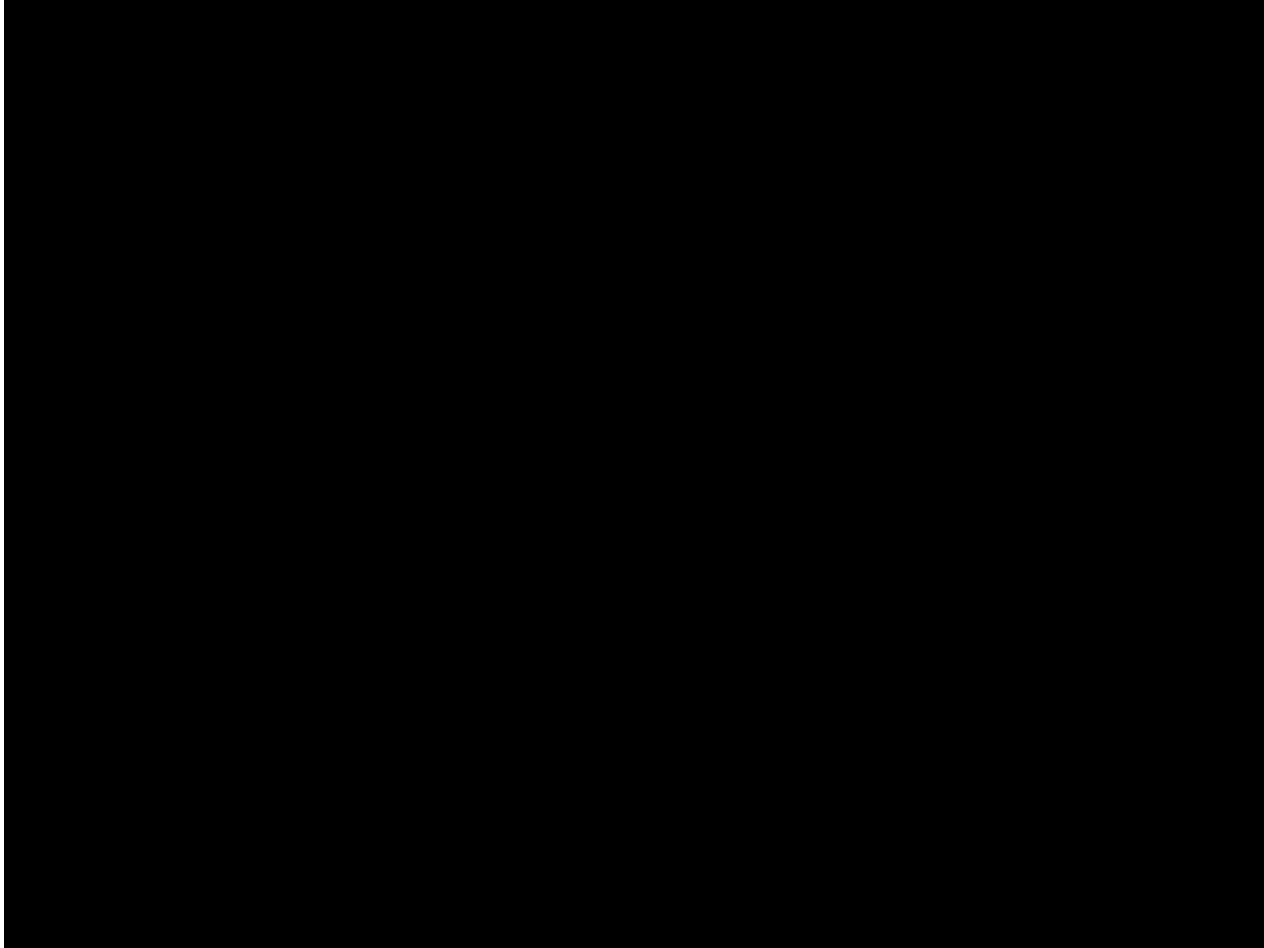
“There's less communication [these days] . Growing up, you knew who your neighbor was, you knew the people across the street, down the block; you spent a lot of time interacting with them. Now people to stay in touch by text, people stay in touch on social media, they don't really take the time to talk to one another. And I think it's a lot easier to misconstrue what someone's saying in those mediums ... as opposed to having a conversation.”

– Asian man, 57 yo, somewhat conservative

Discussion:

- Thinking about the persuadable Coloradans we have been discussing: **how is this video Heartwired to reach them?**
 - *Think about: emotions, values, beliefs, lived experiences, and identities.*
- How could the video be improved to reach persuadable Coloradans?
- What else stands out to you about this video?

Analysis of a Heartwired Video Message



Discussion:

- Thinking about the persuadable Coloradans we have been discussing: **how is this video Heartwired to reach them?**
 - *Think about: emotions, values, beliefs, lived experiences, and identities.*
- How could the video be improved to reach persuadable Coloradans?
- What else stands out to you about this video?

Audience reactions: Coloradans in their own words

“Sometimes we might think that our voice doesn't matter because it is just one person. What can we do? What change can we actually do? But they are showing as they got together **there is strength in numbers... and finding out that there are more people that feel the same way that they do. As that grows, **[they can] take it to somebody that can make some changes for them, or is hearing and listening to them — or us actually, not just them.”****

– Native American woman, 62 yo, very conservative



Five Heartwired Messaging Principles



Equip audiences to arrive at support

- 1 Build Trust
- 2 Acknowledge Complexities
- 3 Calm Concerns
- 4 Nurture Compassion
- 5 Activate Hope

STEP ONE: CALM THE
DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN

STEP TWO: ACTIVATE
THE UPSTAIRS BRAIN



Build Trust

Establish trust to effectively communicate and connect with your audiences.

- Spotlight diverse messengers
- Name messengers' wholesome motivations for speaking out
- Feature change-of-heart stories

STEP ONE: CALM THE
DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN



Acknowledge Complexities

Demonstrate that you understand people's conflict.

- Work to understand people's conflict and concerns
- Acknowledge the challenging nature of the issues
- Describe the complex positive and negative emotions people bring to issues

STEP ONE: CALM THE
DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN



Calm Concerns

Address the powerful emotions that audiences experience on social issues.

- Use permission structures
- Name and normalize people's negative emotions
- Model how others managed their conflict

STEP ONE: CALM THE
DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN



Nurture Compassion

Highlight a common sense of humanity and show audiences why they should care.

- Demonstrate how people and communities are part of the ingroup (not the outgroup)
- Show the harms caused by not taking action
- Widen the circle of care
- Practice compassion for persuasion audiences

STEP TWO: ACTIVATE
THE UPSTAIRS BRAIN



Activate Hope

Spotlight effective solutions to inspire optimism and hope.

- Show (rather than tell) that our proposed solutions have worked elsewhere
- Mix personal stories with one or two data points to demonstrate the efficacy of your proposals
- Beware of exaggerating the efficacy of your ideas

STEP TWO: ACTIVATE
THE UPSTAIRS BRAIN

Equip audiences to arrive at support

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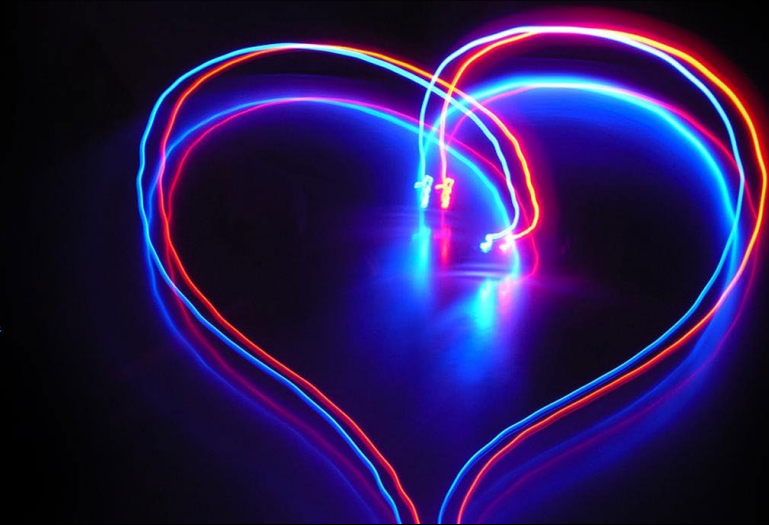
Thank you!

Amy Simon
Founding Partner
Goodwin Simon Strategic Research
amys@goodwinsimon.com

Naser Javaid
Research Director
Goodwin Simon Strategic Research
naser@goodwinsimon.com

Julia Liao
Vice President
Wonder for Good
julia@wonderforgood.com

Ian C. Grady
Vice President
Wonder for Good
robert@wonderforgood.com



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