

# Creating Conditions to Win: The Power of Narrative Strategy

1:00pm–2:30pm



## Narrative Defined

*“Narratives are the big stories we tell ourselves about the world, rooted in our values, that influence how we process information and make decisions. We reference mental narratives constantly, often unconsciously, and they are so powerful that they often matter more than facts. And while they play on our values and beliefs, they don’t come from within us—the narratives we know depend entirely on what we’ve heard and what we’ve been exposed to. Every story you share reinforces certain narratives, whether you intend it or not. **By repeating the right narratives, you can create a new tipping point in public consciousness and create the conditions for you to advance your agenda and broaden your base.**”*

*([Equity Narrative Playbook for PolicyMakers](#), PolicyLink, accessed November 21, 2022).*

# The Freedom to Marry & Voting Rights Restoration

*Lessons on Persuasion from Campaigns Seeking to  
Change the World*

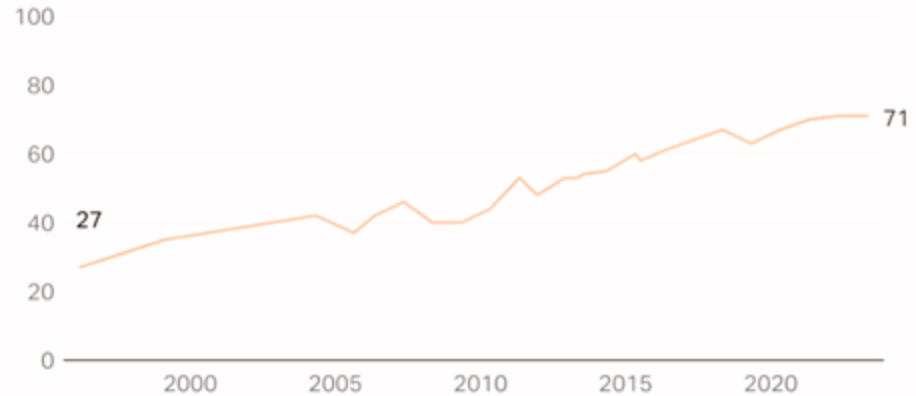


# People **Do** Change their Minds

## U.S. Support for Gay Marriage

Do you think marriages between same-sex couples should or should not be recognized by the law as valid, with the same rights as traditional marriages?

— % Should be valid



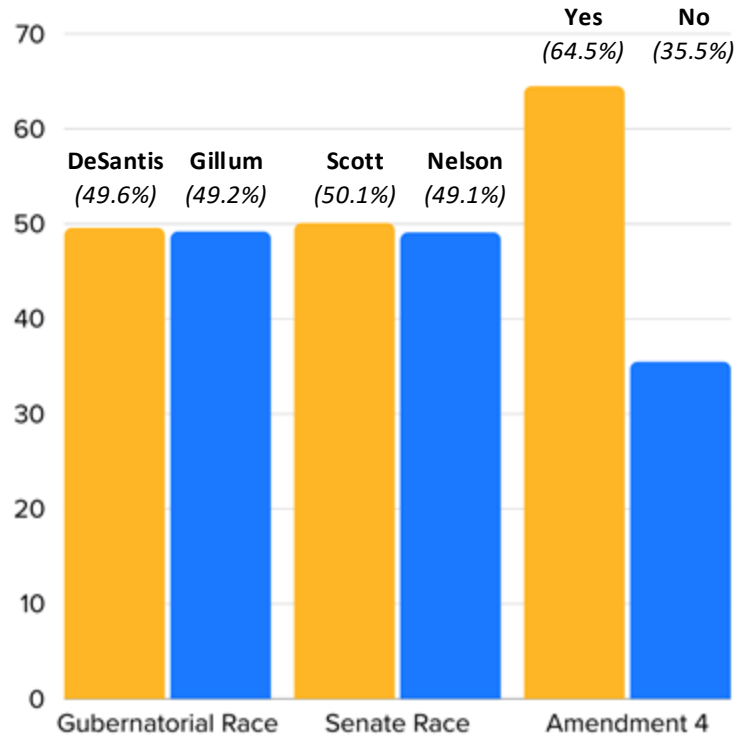
1996-2005 wording: marriages between homosexuals

GALLUP

# Florida Amendment Four



## 2018 Election Results



# The **Golden Rule** is Real

- At their best, people do want to treat others the way they want to be treated.
- But first, they need to be able to connect and genuinely empathize.
- Those who benefit from the status quo use fear and division to dissuade. That's what persuaders are up against!

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide consists of numerous thin, overlapping lines in shades of blue, red, yellow, and white. These lines curve and flow from the top left towards the center, creating a sense of movement and depth against the black background.

## Characteristics of a **Persuader**

- Bring whole selves to their engagement.
- Connect as human beings first and foremost.
- Treat those you're trying to persuade as an equal (and definitely not as a bigot!).
- Recognize that it takes time to change a long-held view.
- Answer questions, even [especially!] the uncomfortable ones.
- Treat those you're working on as *those who aren't yet with us* rather than *our opponents*.

# Abe Lincoln on Persuasion



*If you would win a man to your cause, first  
**convince him that you are his true friend.***

*Therein is a drop of honey that catches his heart, which, say  
what he will, is the greatest highroad to his reason.*

*On the contrary ... **make him as one to be shunned or despised, and  
he will retreat within himself,** close all the avenues to his head and  
heart; and though your cause be naked truth itself ... you shall be no  
more able to pierce him than to penetrate the hard shell of a  
tortoise with a rye straw.*



# Meet Your Audience **Where They Are**

? Who are  
LGBTQ+ people

? How is this going  
to affect my life?  
My family?

? What about what  
my faith tradition  
teaches about  
homosexuality?

? Why do they  
want to get  
married?



# Connect Through Values

What are the values  
that guide your life?

What are some of  
the values that you  
live by, or guiding  
principles?



A word cloud centered around the Golden Rule, featuring various values and principles. The words are arranged in a circular pattern, with the largest word being "GoldenRule". Other prominent words include "Faith", "Respect", "Integrity", "Family", "Honesty", "Ethics", "Charity", "PersonalResponsibility", "CommonCourtesy", "BeKindToOthers", "Forgiveness", "Health", "Don'tJudge", "TreatEveryoneTheSame", "Traditional", "BeliefInGod", "HelpYourCommunity", "KeepYourWord", "Hope", and "Charity".

BeliefInGod  
HelpYourCommunity  
Faith  
Respect  
GoldenRule  
KeepYourWord  
Integrity  
Ethics  
Family  
Honesty  
Traditional  
TreatEveryoneTheSame  
Charity  
PersonalResponsibility  
CommonCourtesy  
BeKindToOthers  
Forgiveness  
Health  
Don'tJudge

# Connecting: Marriage Matters Deeply to Same-Sex Couples

Show straight people that LGBTQ+ people “get” why marriage matters:

- *Marriage is unique and special.*
- *It's the ultimate expression of love, commitment and responsibility for taking care of each other.*

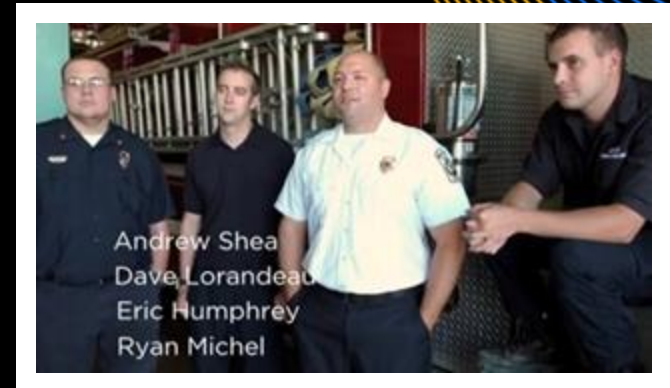
**Marriage matters to LGBTQ+ people in the same ways that it matters to everyone.**

- *Same-sex couples want to get married to make a lifetime commitment to the person they love and to protect their families.*



# Find the Best Messengers

- Conflicted people like them.
- Local people.
- Unexpected supporters:
  - Republicans
  - First responders
  - Military
  - Clergy



## TV Spots: **Maine**



# TV Spots: **Alabama**



# TV Spots: **Brett & Mallery**



[View the Video](#)

## TV Spots: **Redemption Song**



[View the Video](#)





# Persuasion & Long-Term Engagement Work



The Church's teachings and position on this moral issue are unequivocal. Marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God...We ask that you do all you can to ... assure that marriage in California is legally defined as being between a man and a woman."

– LDS Church, **June 2008**



We extend a heartfelt thank you and our congratulations to all who played a part in the passage of the amended Respect for Marriage Act.

– LDS Church, **December 2022**

# Thank you!



For more information, please visit:  
[policylink.org](https://policylink.org)



# Annex

# Thank you!



For more information, please visit:  
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# Convey a Clear, Inspirational **Vision**

- Vision must be bold enough to spur enough people to action!
- It's the "Demand Side" of the equation.
- Incremental progress—like civil unions--is part and parcel of our political system. But it's important not to confuse accepting incremental progress with the end game.



# Have an Overarching Strategy

## THE ROADMAP TO VICTORY

How to create the climate necessary for the U.S. Supreme Court to rule in favor of the freedom to marry nationwide.



**Win the  
Freedom to Marry  
in More States**



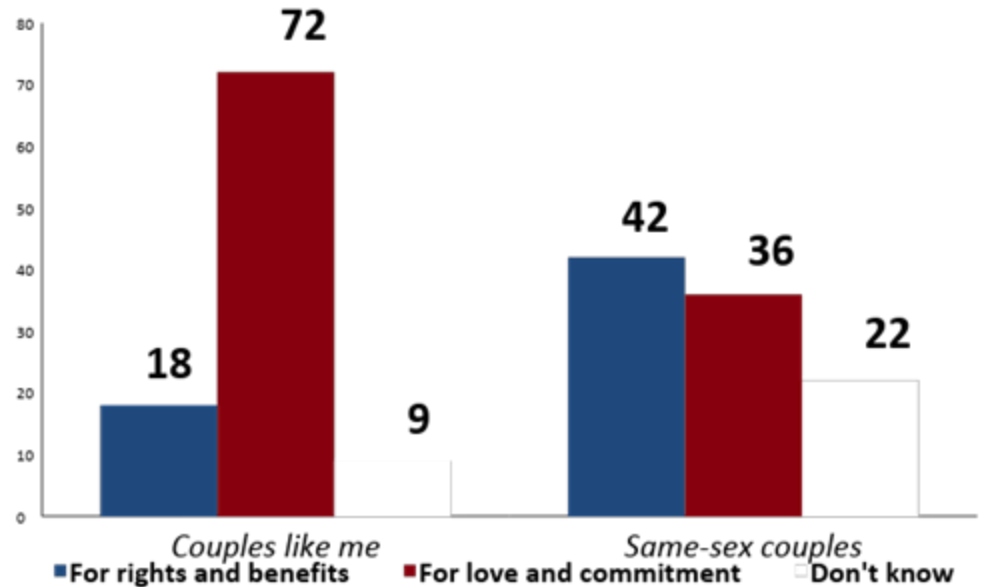
**Build and Grow  
Majority Support  
for Marriage**



**End Federal  
Marriage  
Discrimination**

# Our “Aha” Moment

**Oregon Survey:  
Why Do People  
Want to  
Marry?**



# Connecting: How Americans Think of Marriage

Marriage is About Commitment,  
Partnership & Love

*What words and phrases come to mind when I say the word “marriage”?*

A word cloud of terms associated with marriage, with 'Partnership' being the largest word. Other prominent words include 'Love', 'Freedom', 'Commitment', 'Friendship', 'Hard Work', 'Sacrifice', 'Legal Rights', 'Compromise', 'Grow Old Together', 'Forever', 'Children', 'Lifetime', and 'Entrapment'.

Love  
Entrapment  
**Partnership** Freedom  
Lifetime Commitment  
Grow Old Together Friendship  
Compromise Hard Work  
Children Legal Rights Sacrifice  
Forever Commitment



# Connect Deeply with Your Audience

When we argue “facts”  
or “reason” and our  
opposition focuses on  
values or tradition or  
fear, we lose the  
argument



A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide consists of numerous thin, curved lines in shades of blue, red, yellow, and white, creating a sense of motion and depth. The lines are arranged in a way that they appear to flow from the top left towards the bottom right, with some lines overlapping and creating a layered effect.

# Core Elements of Persuasion

- Values-Based and Believable Messages
- Delivered by the Right Messengers
- To Movable Voters
- In a Sustained, Multifaceted Effort

# Engage with Those Not Yet With You

- Do engage in heartfelt, honest conversations to explore why they see things the way they do.
- Do engage on their terms (remember we're trying to persuade them).
- Do remember that it will usually take more than one interaction or conversation for them to seriously consider changing their minds.
- Don't call them bigots or haters.
- Don't question their goodness.



# Connect Deeply with the Audience

- Values-Based and Believable Messages
  - Delivered by “the Right” Messengers
  - To Movable, Conflicted Voters
  - In a Sustained, Multifaceted Effort
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