



Analyzing Frames

The Art of Discovering
Underlying **Assumptions** and
Values in Frames



Naming and Framing the Energy Problem

- Unreliable Sources, Reduce Our Dependence On Foreign Energy
- Emissions Warning, Get Out of the Fossil-Fuel Predicament
- Curb Our Appetite, Reduce Our Demand for Energy

Source: National Issues Forum, The Energy Problem, <http://www.nifi.org>



Assumptions

- Assumptions are beliefs about the world
 - X thousand people use Open Courseware each year.
 - Democracy improves the quality of life.
- The first type of assumption is situational
- The second type of assumption is theoretical
- If a belief is tacit in our thinking we name it “**assumption**”, once it is made explicit it becomes a “**hypothesis**”.



What Are Values?

- Values are criteria that we use for deciding if a situation is desirable or undesirable, or if an idea is a good one or a bad one:
 - being secure or insecure (security)
 - being treated fairly or unfairly (justice)
- Every time we frame or evaluate situations we apply values. Frequently values are tacit.
- In the example “Emissions Warning, Get Out of the Fossil-Fuel Predicament” “the protection of the environment” is a value.
- In the example “Unreliable Sources, Reduce Our Dependence On Foreign Energy” “energetic independence is a value”.



Frames, Assumptions and the Thinking Box

- Every time we frame a situation we base elements of our frame in beliefs about the world; but we are not aware of them.
- The discovery of assumptions is easier when we are “out of the box”, but the box is invisible for us.
- People who disagree with our frames are more acute for identifying our assumptions.
- The discovering of assumptions is a kind of reverse engineering that disturb our beliefs.

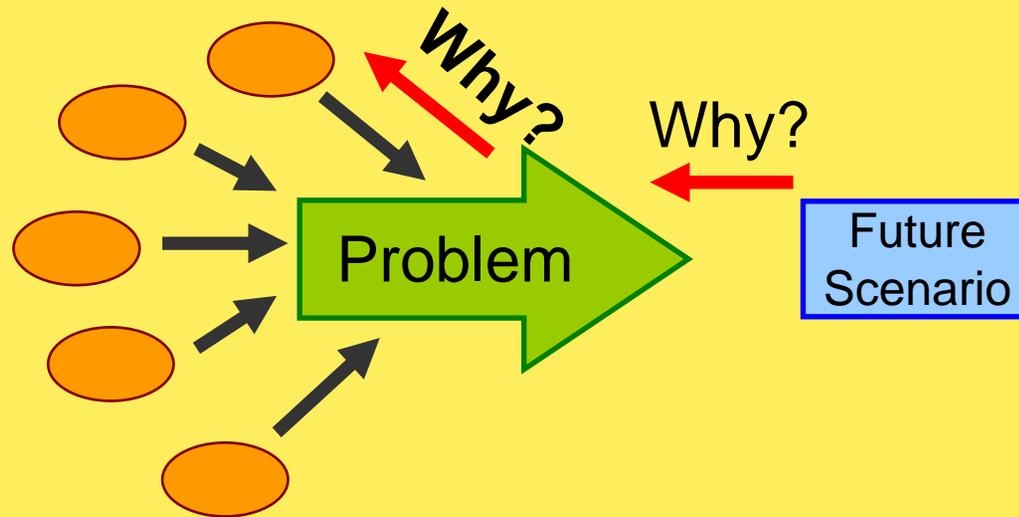


Discovering Assumptions

- Assumptions are beliefs that are behind the causal relations of our frames
- If “**assumption A**”, then “**B**” generates “**C**”
- A possibility for discovering assumptions is to go through the components and the causal relations of the frame asking “why” they are stated in that particular way.
- **The assumptions should be falsifiable.** It means that it should be possible to get information for verifying if an assumption is real or not.



Exploring Assumptions



- If a situation is framed as a problem generated by a group of factors and a scenario that is resulted from the problem, then *the exploration of assumptions may go back through the causal relations of the frame.*



Questions for Exploring Assumptions

- Why the scenario, or one component of it, is generated by the problem or a component of it?
- Why the factor A contributes to the problem?
- Which conditions are required for the work of causal relations?



Questions for Exploring Values

- Why do you think it is a problem?
- Which values are threatened by the problem or by the scenario?
- Which motivations are behind the way the situation were framed?