Political persuasion is a multimillion dollar industry, a major area of academic research, and a critical mechanism for social change. Yet research suggests that political persuasion is very hard, and that most attempts fail. One factor contributing to this difficulty in the U.S. is political polarization. Because partisans interact primarily with like-minded others, they struggle to take the perspective of those who do not already agree with them. This is compounded by liberals' and conservatives' divergent moral values, which make political communication particularly challenging. While people naturally construct persuasive appeals in terms of their own moral values, those appeals could be more effective if they were instead framed in terms of the values of the person targeted for persuasion. In this talk, I present research – conducted by our lab and others’ over the last decade – showing the effectiveness of “moral reframing” for a wide range of polarized topics, including views of environmental protection, same-sex marriage, immigration, and U.S. presidential candidates. I also spotlight studies that do not find persuasive effects and propose boundary conditions of moral reframing. This research highlights that the ability to take the perspective of politically dissimilar others – a scarce resource in polarized times – is helpful for building the popular support needed for social change.

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