



Breaking New Ground

Making the Case for Thriving Together

Dr. Tiffany Manuel
President & CEO

Calling All Justice-Seekers!

We know you're working hard in your communities to build and sustain movements that can achieve a whole, healed, healthy, just, abundant future.

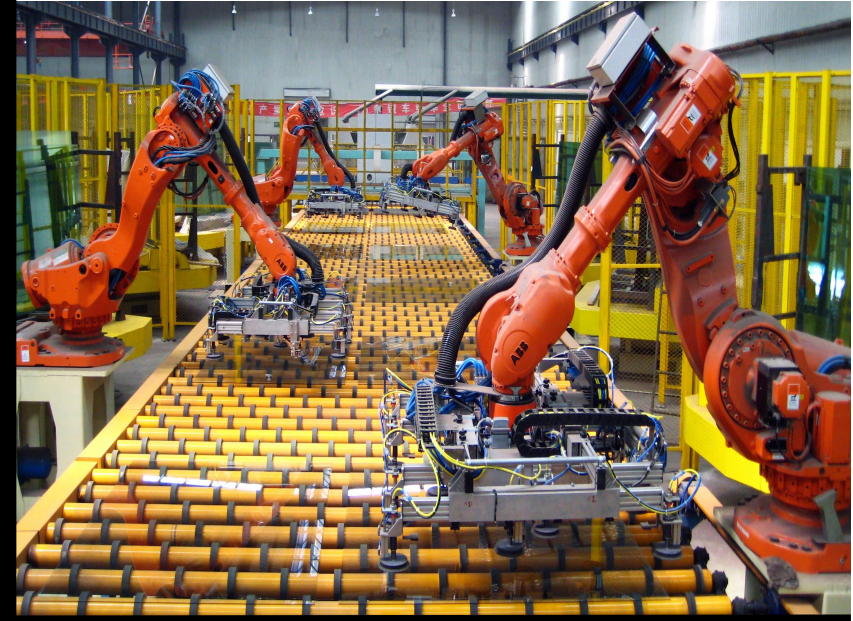
AND we know that even the strongest organizations and coalitions can get stuck if leaders haven't learned how to grow public support for the transformative changes they're working toward.

We can teach you how to get unstuck, and make meaningful progress, together.

Add your team to our growing community of trained Strategic CaseMakers.



Building Public and Political Will is Tough



Our Journey Together

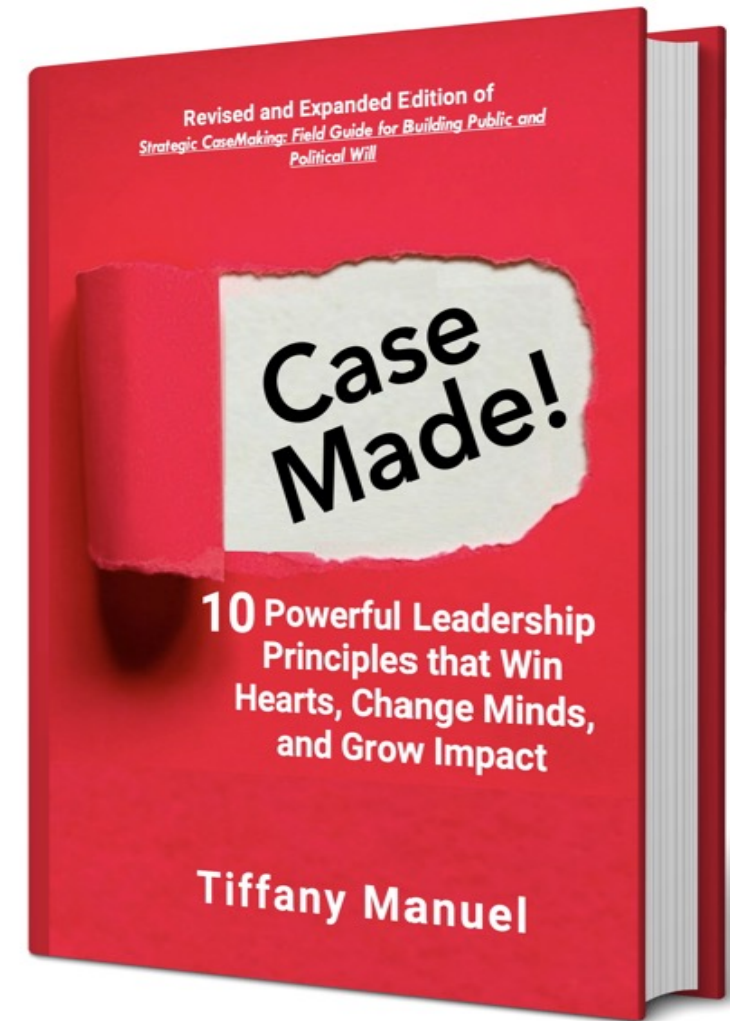
AGENDA

1. **Philanthropy for Good in This Moment**
2. **Building Public and Political Will for Our Big Bets**
3. **Principles of Strategic CaseMaking**
4. **Developing a Strong CaseMaking Strategy**

We Have to Change the Energy of the Rooms We're In

“This moment requires a different kind of leadership... leaders who can harness people’s energies toward bigger aspirations. We’ve got to change the energy in the rooms that we are in and connect to people’s fundamental desire for good and hope for the future.

And we’ve got to be radically inclusive – inviting everybody to be part of the future that we’re building. The latter means engaging people differently, more meaningfully, and more authentically.”



Strategic CaseMaking™

10 Core Principles to Make a Strong Case for Your Work

Tell People What They Lose if
They Sit on the Sidelines

Loss Aversion

Name the Power of the
Moment to Shape the Future

Urgency & Agency

Connect to
People's
Aspirations &
Build a Strong
"We" Around It

Stake

Navigate the Dominant
Narratives
Mental Models

Anchor & Credential the
Solutions, Not Problems

Awareness & Agency

Tell the Story of US

Leveraging the Power
of Storytelling

Make Inequitable
Systems the Villain

Systems Orientation

Foster Collective
Ownership

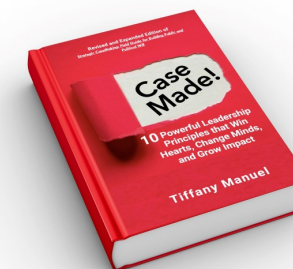
Power Shifting

Clarify Your Value
Proposition

Trust

Share Your
Roadmap and
Metrics for
Success

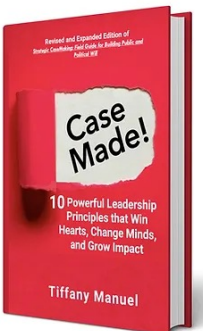
Trust & Clarity of
Purpose



How to Avoid the Backfire and Communicate with Your Community Partners Thoughtfully in This Moment

What truly resonates and helps us move forward is a clear, unwavering commitment to the communities you serve and the work you stand for, regardless of political winds. To get that message across, let us offer a few points to help our colleagues in philanthropy better connect to the community partners who depend on you right now.

- **First and foremost, your message should be grounded in solidarity.** Let your community partners know you see their challenges, hear their concerns, and stand ready to amplify their voices and support their work.
- **Second, express trust in your partners.** They are the experts in their communities, and your role is to bolster their efforts, not dictate them.
- **Third, be transparent about your plans and values.** Community partners want to know that you are not reactionary but proactive. They need to see you as strategic and firm, not floppy and surrendered, before they can call the next play.
- **Inspire confidence and give your community partners grace.** Articulate how you plan to advocate for the policies and systemic changes needed to support your shared mission.
- **Then, give people some grace.** Many of us need to focus on keeping our families, our communities, and our loved ones safe at a time when the rhetoric about who has value (and who does not) is ratcheting up.
- **Be clear:** We all know this is a challenging time, and none of us are exactly sure how to navigate this moment expertly—even if we think we’ve been through it before. But we can show up for each other in an unequivocally clear way: We will not spend our time negotiating with people who do not see our human value.



A CaseMaking Example

To our valued partners,

Solidarity

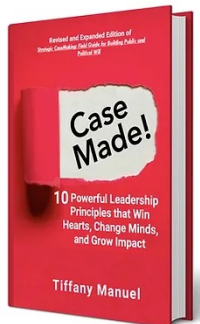
We know this moment is tough for many of the communities we serve. In this moment of uncertainty and transition, we want to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to you and the communities we serve together. We know that the challenges ahead require more than resilience. They demand bold, collective action. They require commitment to justice in all its forms: racial, economic, social, and political. And we are in this with you!

Trust

We want you to know this: We see you, trust you, and stand with you. *You are the experts in your communities, and your leadership is central to achieving the just and equitable future we all seek. Our role is to support and amplify your work, and we remain fully committed to doing so in ways that reflect your priorities, not ours.*

Our Plans & Values

This means that we will continue to provide or help you find flexible, multi-year funding to help you respond to the immediate needs of your community while building long-term solutions. It means we will use our voice to advocate for the systemic changes you have identified as critical, regardless of the political landscape. It means that we will hold ourselves accountable to the same principles of equity and justice we champion, ensuring that our practices align with our shared values. And let us know what you need most right now and how we can help. While we won't be able to meet every need, we are willing to listen and adjust our priorities to fit the needs you are seeing on the ground.



A CaseMaking Example continued

Clarity

Let us be clear: We will not work with any organization, agency, or corporate partner who does not recognize the humanity of the people who live, work, and have invested in this community. We intentionally align ourselves with people across our nation who continue to fight for policies and systems that advance equity, dismantle barriers, directly address racism, and create opportunities for everyone to thrive.

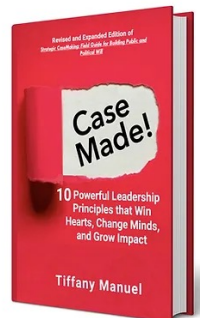
Solidarity

Together, we will push forward, grounded in hope, urgency, and a shared determination to build something better. Our nation will be better because of the work we are doing together, and we're proud to be an ally of justice.

Grace

We thank you for your continued partnership and stand ready to support you, amplify your work, and stay in this fight with you for the long haul.

*In solidarity,
Our Team*



A CaseMaking Example: RWJF Statement on DEI



Rich Besser · Following
President at Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
2d ·

Clarity

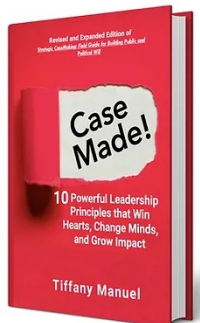
Recent executive orders that roll back health measures and diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts reverse course on the nation's necessary journey toward a more just and equitable future.

Solidarity

It is unconscionable that the Trump administration would coopt the language and vision of the civil rights movement in these executive orders as it attempts to send our nation back to an era of rampant, state-sanctioned discrimination. Ultimately, these measures drive us farther away from a future when health is no longer a privilege, but a right for all.

Values

Everyone wants healthcare rooted in compassion and respect. Research shows that greater diversity among doctors improves health outcomes for people of color, disabled people, women, LGBTQIA+ patients, and others whose identities have long been underrepresented in the healthcare field. Plus, strategies aimed at reducing racial disparities in healthcare—such as maternal health and cancer care—lead to better outcomes for all patients. The evidence is clear: a diverse healthcare workforce and inclusive policies serve us all. These executive orders serve no one.



A CaseMaking Example: RWJF Statement on DEI, continued

Values & Solidarity

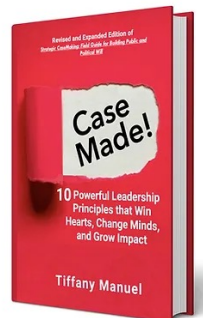
We believe that policies across all levels of government—especially from the White House—should build upon people’s aspirations for better, healthier lives. Instead of sowing division, discord, and fear, our leaders should be strengthening access to healthcare, protecting workers, and supporting families.

Our Plans

At RWJF, we will continue to defend and advance fundamental American values of diversity, equity, and inclusion with the urgency this moment requires. This includes steps such as increasing our investments in efforts to diversify the healthcare professions, as well as supporting legal, communications, and organizing efforts alongside leaders in the field. These actions will improve the health of us all.

Trust & Solidarity

Our grantees and partners have for decades worked relentlessly to build a healthier, more equitable future for everyone. In these days of backlash and backsliding, we at RWJF must match our commitment and resolve to transform health in our lifetime. We will.



Helping Your Community Partners Strengthen Their CaseMaking and Their Ability to Influence the Future

Philanthropic organizations play a vital role in supporting community partners to address challenges through bridge-building. Your support empowers them to navigate conflicts and collaborate with a wider range of stakeholders they need to influence to shape a more inclusive future.

Three things help:

1. **Lead by example and model strategic casemaking.** Be more intentional in how you engage your community partners.
2. **Help them identify the traps they may be unintentionally playing into** and understand how these traps consistently backfire.
3. **Lean into your convening power as funders** – support them in convening their staff, boards, residents, and other stakeholders to **respond thoughtfully, strategically, and in a unified way**, to the opportunities and challenges in this moment.

The Don'ts:

Avoid These Responses at All Costs

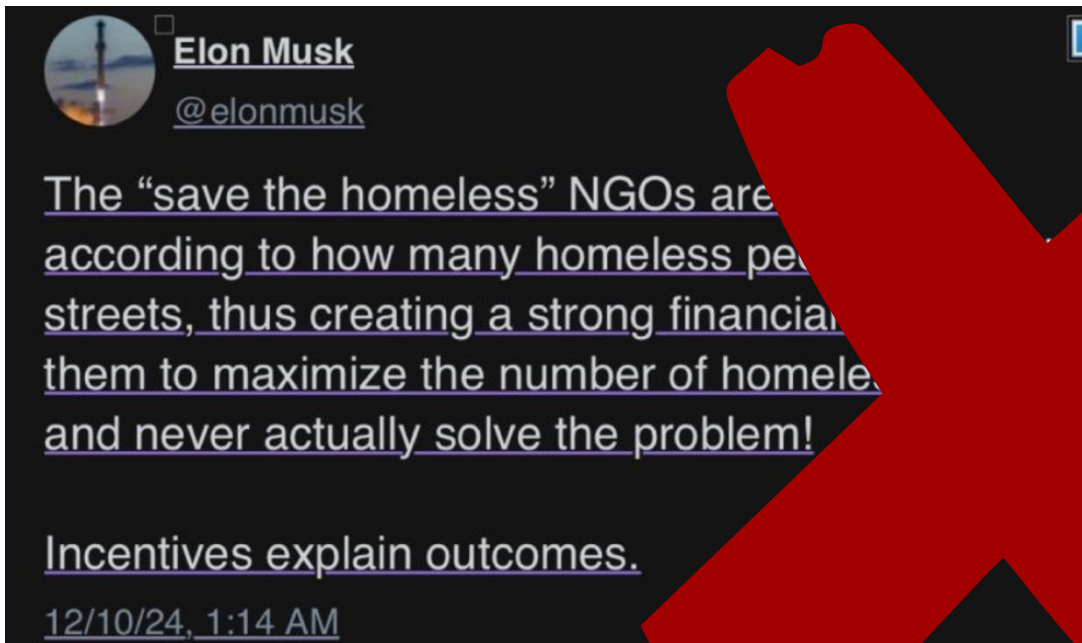
- Myth versus Fact Sheets
- Negatively Framed Data or Data Solely about the Problem
- Crisis Stories and Language
- The “Clap-Back”: Directly Responding to the Negative Disruptors
- History Lessons About the Perils of Systems, People or Groups
- Villainizing the People, Organizations or Groups that You Need to Change Policy and Systems
- Overly Complex Descriptions of Your Work or the Problem
- Overly Partisan Perspectives
- Hardship Stories that to Try to Elicit Empathy, Charity or Shame

IT'S A TRAP!



The Traps

The “Clap Back” and Myth vs. Fact



There is literally no financial incentive to maximize the number of people experiencing homelessness. On the contrary, there are strong incentives to increase all system performance, help people exit homelessness faster, and

But here...
For... that the homelessness sector has the resources to house, 3
For... come homeless for the first time. That's nearly 19,000 per WEEK
...s, veterans, families with children, youth, people with disabilities.
...less services sector is responsible for helping folks that are already
...ess. Unfortunately, they are also the dumping ground for every other
...system that is not held accountable and lets the homeless services sector deal
...with the problem they are creating.

...hetic is going to get worse. This tweet was only one in a series of
...g and fabricated tweets from Musk yesterday. It is unbelievably





...you see messages like this on social media or stated in a press room,
...please use critical thinking and better yet, talk to people doing the work in your
...community or reach out to me. And then get involved in fighting back and being
...part of the solution.

...and the backfire...

It's wild to see people trying to "educate" Elon or the world about his misinformation. His tweet alone hit 32 million views, and his tweets and quotes from his supporters are pulling in tens of millions of views. How many of the responses aimed at correcting him? A generous estimate is a few hundred thousand views—total.






Here's the reality: Most people already think homeless individuals are addicted criminals. That belief runs deep. The homelessness narrative can't shift this narrative or educate the public in a meaningful way without seeing the consequences. But it's not too late. If we act on local and national campaigns to educate and change the narrative, we can make a real difference. Instead, we're stuck recycling the same old stories and sharing overused clichés that don't move the needle.

I get it—seeing misinformation spread makes you frustrated. But if we're serious about creating real change and challenging harmful beliefs, we need to organize and focus on messaging that actually works. The negative narratives are being seen by hundreds of millions of people. Without a unified, strategic effort, we don't stand a chance.

Elon Musk    

..., the word "homeless" is a lie.

...ally a propaganda word for violent drug addicts with severe mental illness.

 **Jeremy Kauffman**     @jeremykauffman · Dec 9

The SF Chronicle covered what happens when you just give the homeless housing:

- They live in squalor
- They fight and kill each other...



[Show more](#)

For two years, this has been Pauline Levinson's home:

A run-down, century-old hotel in the Tenderloin, where a rodent infestation became so severe that she pitched a tent inside her room to keep the mice away.

Residents have threatened each other with knives, crowbars and guns, sometimes drawing police to the building several times a week.

Where, since 2020, at least nine people have died of drug overdoses. One man was discovered only after a foul stench seeped from his room into the hall.



- Residents have threatened to kill staff members, chased them with metal pipes and lit fires inside rooms, incident reports show. At the Henry Hotel on Sixth Street, a tenant was hospitalized after a neighbor, for a second time, streamed bug spray into their eyes, public records show. Last May, less than a mile away at the Winton Hotel, a resident slashed another tenant's face with a knife, leaving a trail of blood out of the building. Much of the instability stems from a small group of tenants who do not receive the support they need.

5:38 AM · Dec 10, 2024 · **32.4M Views**

...what casemaking might have helped...the pivot!

We love that so many people are talking about the need to address homelessness! It's the holiday season and it's cold outside in many places – so the timing is perfect to get our unhoused neighbors housed!

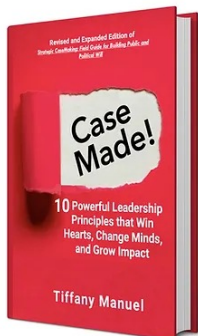
Here's what we know...homelessness is solvable and we need more resources to do it but we know how to do it (*hint*: it's making safe, affordable housing more abundant, not just for those who are unhoused but for the millions of Americans whose housing isn't what they need).

- To the seniors, looking to downsize and want to stay in their communities but can't find something suitable...we see you!
- To the college grads, coming back home to the towns where you grew up, but can't afford a decent apartment, we see you!
- To the families looking for that starter home, but can't find anything remotely affordable or near good schools, we see you!
- To our unhoused neighbors who need both housing and services to stay stably housed, we see you!

We see you and we're working hard everyday to make safe, affordable housing more abundant for everyone who needs it, no matter what brought you to our doors!

WE SEE
YOU

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And we do this work, not out of a sense of charity but because that's what good neighbors do for their neighbors!

Some folks may have forgotten what it's means to be a good neighbor but we have not.

We see you and we're bringing more neighbors to help!



...what casemaking might have helped...

We can create a future where homelessness is never in or a way of life.

Homelessness is solvable.

This is not a radical belief — we work with more than 100 cities and counties making it a reality every day.

LET'S SOLVE IT TOGETHER.

HOMELESSNESS IS SOLVABLE

Communities in the Built for Zero movement are moving forward in their way

142 communities are participating in Built for Zero

189,000+ individuals housed by Built for Zero communities since 2015

145 communities have functionally ended homelessness for a population

50 communities have achieved quality real-time data

36 communities have achieved a measurable reduction



Helping Your Community Partners

Strengthen Their CaseMaking and Their Ability to Influence the Future

Remember that your goal is to get people excited about doing the work to solve homelessness and make affordable housing more abundant. What's the solution, strength, or system change that can inspire them?

✗ Less of This

Osceola County, Florida, tracked **37 homeless people** arrested **1,250 times** over 10 years for **61,896 total days of incarceration**. Here's what they cost:

\$130,000 \$4,951,680 \$1,336,225



Booking costs

Jail costs

Mental-health care in jail

= \$6,417,905

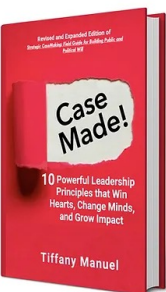
Source: The 2014 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress

Mother Jones

✓ More of This



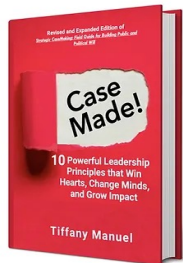
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An underpowered case for support activates the backfires, backpacks, and bedtime stories.

- Backfires
- Backpacks
- Bedtime stories

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Let's refuse to operate out of the
energy of **desperation**.

Don't let the urgency of this moment,
make us solve the **wrong problem.**

Two possible tomorrows are ahead

Poorer, sicker, weaker, less engaged and frustrated and more isolated than ever.

People from all backgrounds will have a fair and just opportunity to participate in our economy and thrive.

Bowling Alone

Not My Problem, Government

Limited Understanding of Systems

Fear and Fatalism

Old Mental Models

“us” vs. “them” / separate fates

Distraction and Exhaustion



Job Training

Education

Workforce Dev

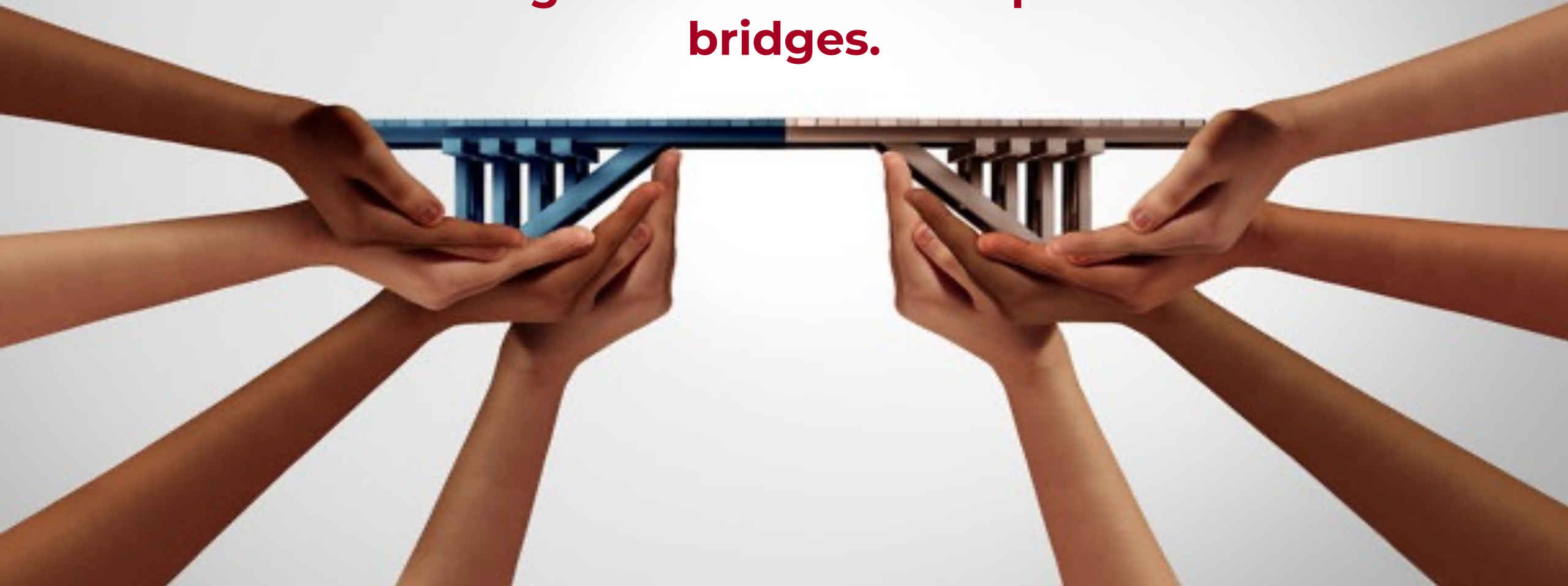
Employment Supports

Transportation

Behavioral Health

We can build bridges of understanding that are strong enough to carry us into an equitable and just future.

We need strong casemakers to help us build those bridges.



Strategic CaseMaking™

10 Core Principles to Make a Strong Case for Thriving Together

Tell People What They Lose if They Sit on the Sidelines
Loss Aversion

Name the Power of the Moment to Shape the Future
Urgency & Agency

Connect to People's Aspirations & Build a Strong "We" Around It
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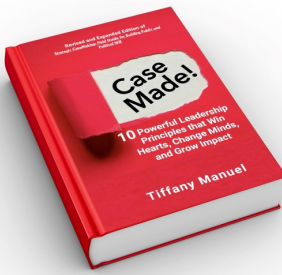
Make Inequitable Systems the Villain
Systems Orientation



Foster Collective Ownership
Power Shifting

Clarify Your Value Proposition
Trust

Share Your Roadmap and Metrics for Success
Trust & Clarity of Purpose



Here's the Good News...

Social Science Can Teach Us A Lot About Pulling People Forward

