

# Alan Johnson:

## Captured by our thinking: reframing the poverty debate

- With George Lakoff's "framing" and Linda Smith's State of the Nation, here are 14 lessons of resistance:
  - Struggle is useful for theorising
  - Important for communities to have an ideal vision or idea of themselves
  - Communities need to define themselves in their own language and terminology
  - Communities need to build something together to nourish social cohesion
  - Mediating radical social change for communities requires a mix of skills eg to translate policy implications, synthesize ideas, identify, and mobilize
  - There is a real role for community entrepreneurs and for activists
  - Social inclusion is a constant process of translation, negotiation, mediation, reciprocity, consent, and readiness
  - In the face of disorganisation and no leadership, sing the same song
  - "Science of muddling through". Solutions don't have to be perfect as improved along the way
  - Solutions are frightening because they impose the risk of the unknown
  - Incremental change will not transform lives or overturn legacies so accelerate the speed of change and use multiple strategies
  - State agencies constantly constitute, target and peel off new groups of the socially excluded and marginalised
  - Communities constantly peel off risky troublemakers
  - If given some capacity, communities tend to work things out on grounds that policy makers often see as irresolvable
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This inspiring foundation is for an open forum or "open space technology", where we have a chance to work together in small groups to address issues raised by participants.