Bush's Sweet Talk

By Deborah Tannen

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"It's government's role to create an environment where everyone can dream and flourish." The purpose of prosperity is to make the American dream touch every willing heart. "The greatness of America is found in the loving and generous hearts of its people."

What is this? An inspirational speech from a New Age guru? No, it's a plea for campaign contributions from george@bush.com. Why all these "hearts" and "dreams" on a political Web site? That's what I wondered.

Seeking women's votes with an emotional lexicon.

until I realized the answer: to appeal to women voters — not through policy proposals to better women's lives, but through emotional language designed to win their "hearts."

Perhaps I should have anticipated this in 1997, when the pollster Frank Luntz gave Republican members of Congress a memo called "Language of the 21st Century." It said that Republicans need not "change our substance or create a separate women's agenda" because "listening to women and adapting a new language and a

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