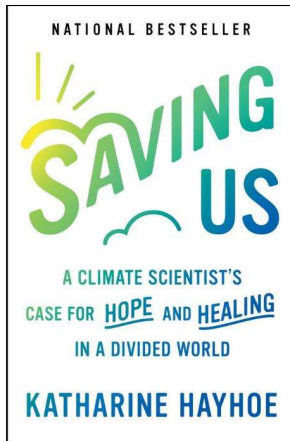


2/6/2024

CLIMATE CHANGE: PUTTING HOPE INTO ACTION

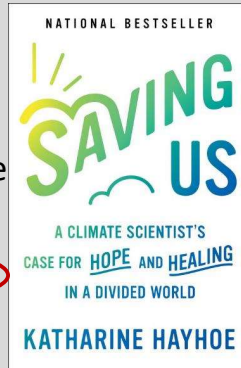


SECTION 3 – THE THREAT MULTIPLIER

THIS WEEK (Session 3)

Sections from *Saving Us...*

- 1- The Problem and the Solution
- 2- Why Facts Matter – and Are Not Enough
- 3- The Threat Multiplier
- 4- We Can Fix It
- 5- You Can Make a Difference

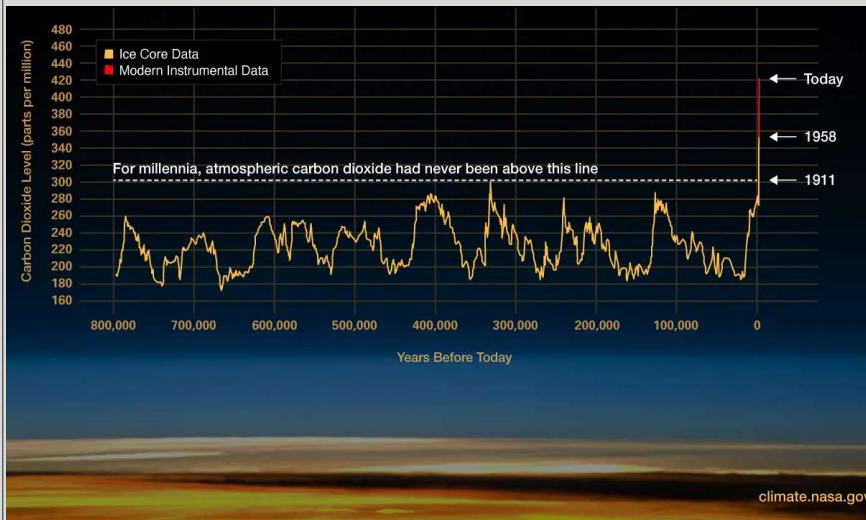


Chapters:

- 8 – A Faraway Threat
- 9 – Here and Now
- 10 – No Time to Waste
- 11 – The Sickness and the Cure

This week we're looking at Section 3 – Threat multipliers. These are the psychological challenges that get in the way of us doing things, and the reason why facts alone are not enough to get people to respond.

LEARN MORE ON CLIMATE CHANGE



**NASA Global
Climate Change
site:**

climate.nasa.gov

or

[science.nasa.gov/
climate-change/](https://science.nasa.gov/climate-change/)

Source: NASA <https://climate.nasa.gov/evidence/>

Last week we looked at the evidence/facts behind climate change. Katharine Hayhoe writes that while facts are important in deciding what to do, they are not enough.

For those who are interested in learning more about what climate change is, how we know it is real, why it's happening, its impacts on us and on earth, and what is being done to address it, go to NASA's Global Climate Change site.

The current web page is <https://climate.nasa.gov/>

This is being updated and the new page can be found here:
<https://science.nasa.gov/climate-change/>

A FARAWAY THREAT? (Ch. 8)

“This very human tendency to ignore certain types of threat is called **psychological distance**.... Climate change falls prey to nearly all the types of distancing explained by this theory. First, it’s **abstract** rather than concrete. ...Then there’s the issue of actual distance, in space and time. **People often think of climate change as something that happens to people and places far away** ...but not to them. ...And finally, there’s the **issue of social relevance**. Global warming is often perceived as a niche issue.” (p. 90-91)

Psychological distance: “...the further away something is from us—in time, or physical distance, or social relevance—the more abstract and unimportant we will consider it to be. In contrast, the closer something is to us, the more concrete and more relevant it appears.” (p. 90)

This is where many of us find climate change: it’s happening to other people in other places, not really to us here (even though it is); the impacts are in the future, not now (even though we’re seeing very real impacts now).

“When we reduce our psychological distance, what we have in common starts to become more important and more relevant than the political ideology that divides us.” (p. 92)

Which means we have to acknowledge the impacts here and recognize our responsibility to respond.

GETTING TO HERE AND NOW (Ch. 9)

“Climate change isn’t a future issue. It is here and now, for all of us. **When we’re able to see its impacts with our own eyes, and understand what we’re looking at, this experience can breach many of the emotional and political frames we’ve built up in our minds.**” (p. 106)



The theme of chapter 9 is moving the impacts of climate change from the abstract (the psychological distance of the previous chapter) to the personal and tangible.

“Ours is the first generation to deeply understand the damage we have been doing to our planetary household, and probably the last generation with the chance to do something transformative about it.” (p. 97)

NO TIME TO WASTE (Ch. 10)

Katharine Hayhoe says **we are not the victim** tied to the train track waiting for climate change to destroy us but are driving the locomotive full throttle toward a bridge that's down. **We can either try to ride out the crash or stop accelerating (stop increasing our emissions) and hit the brakes (decrease our emissions) to minimize the damage.**



This chapter addresses the relevance to us and identifies who is responsible for addressing it – us!

There's a lot of debate as to exactly how much of a temperature change has to happen before climate change becomes 'dangerous' [it already is]. A lot of that is more kicking the can down the road.

"...the difference between a higher versus a lower emissions future is nothing less than the survival of our civilization. In the lower emissions scenario, our agriculture, our water, and our economic systems can continue, albeit with significant and often costly adaptations. The higher emissions scenario predicts the end of many of these systems as we know them." (p. 115)

IF all we do is stop at the status quo – which is what the fossil industries are pushing for – we're still going to crash. We have to go beyond that (we'll take a look at that in the next sections of the book).

THE SICKNESS AND THE CURE (Ch. 11)

“The bottom line is this: climate change is not only a science issue. It is not ‘just’ an environmental issue. It is a health issue, a food issue, a water issue, and an economic issue. It’s an issue of hunger, and of poverty, and of justice. It’s a human issue.” (p. 128)



“The bottom line is this: climate change is not only a science issue. It is not ‘just’ an environmental issue. It is a health issue, a food issue, a water issue, and an economic issue. It’s an issue of hunger, and of poverty, and of justice. It’s a human issue. (p. 128)

This quote sums up a lot of what’s in this chapter. When we engage with others, we have plenty of areas where we can point to very personal and relevant impacts.

IS THERE HOPE?

“We humans are the reason why climate is changing, but that also means our future is in our hands.”

(p. 128)

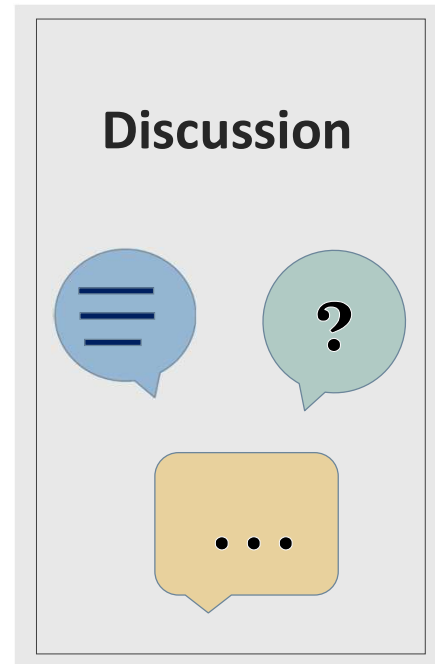


Do you have hope? Maybe it depends on your outlook. But Hayhoe points to what she sees as a promise:

“...we arrive at a simple yet potentially revolutionary realization: **getting people to care about a changing climate doesn’t require them to adopt ‘new’ values.** Gone is the burden of inspiring people to ‘care’ about deforestation and melting ice caps. No need to teach them to hug a tree, respect a polar bear (hugging not advisable), or throw themselves into recycling. And good-bye to partisan divides.” (p. 128)

Offering hope is where we as people of faith have a call. If not us, then who?

What jumped out at you in Section 3?

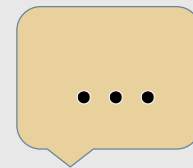


That's the wrap. Before jumping into discussion questions, what jumped out at you in Section 3?

How do you see psychological distancing – the human tendency to ignore ideas that seem far away or not impactful on our own lives (Ch. 8) – at work in your own life or the lives of those around you?

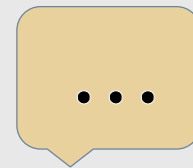
How do you feel about trying to reduce our psychological distance about climate change at this point?

Discussion



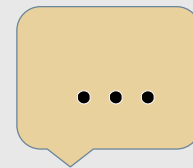
Katharine Hayhoe says we are not victims but are driving the train full throttle toward a bridge that's down. We can either try to ride out the crash or stop accelerating (stop increasing our emissions) and hit the brakes (decrease our emissions) to minimize the damage. What is your reaction to that analogy?

Discussion



Hayhoe concludes Chapter 11 (*The Sickness and the Cure*) with “Climate change is not only a science issue...it is a health issue, a food issue, a water issue and an economic issue. It’s an issue of hunger, and of poverty, and of justice. It’s a human issue.” What speaks to your heart in this statement, and what is your heart saying?

Discussion



In what ways does our faith empower us to respond with hope?

Discussion

