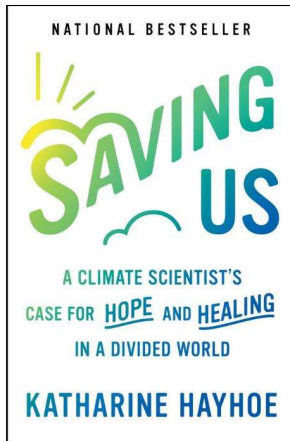


2/27/2024

CLIMATE CHANGE: PUTTING HOPE INTO ACTION

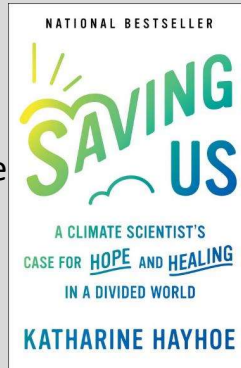


SECTION 5 – YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE (Part 1)

THIS WEEK (Session 5)

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:

18 – Why You Matter

19 – What I Do

20 – Why Talking Matters

The last section of Katharine Hayhoe’s book focuses on how we (as individuals and as a community) can make a difference. We’re breaking this up into 2 sessions so we can spend more time focusing on how we can make a difference and what we can do to move things along.

WHY YOU MATTER (Ch. 18)

Why what you do matters:

“...what we do changes us ...what we do and say changes others” (p. 195)

Self efficacy:

“...if you think you can do something... you’re more likely to. And if you think what you do will make a difference ...that’s even better...” (p. 199-200)



Source: <https://climatescience.org/advanced-personal-action>

Last week we said that individual choices alone won't be enough. Changes have to happen at a systematic level and involve moving away from fossil fuels. That doesn't mean what we do doesn't matter. This week we look more into that.

“...the biggest barriers are emotional and ideological. We may be concerned, worried, or alarmed about climate change, but we don't have a sense of efficacy. ...**we humans constantly fall victim to the motivation trap, waiting until we feel like it until we act.** In fact, ...‘valued action,’ meaning action that is consistent with your values, ‘comes first,’ and motivation follows.” (p. 201)

[We need to see it put into action AND we need to understand those actions as being consistent with our own values before we'll act. The challenge is to find those who are willing to take the first steps and those who can tie those actions back to our shared values.]

How does that resonate with you? What are you doing now? Do you feel like you're making an impact? Why or why not?

WHY WE MATTER (Ch. 18)

Why what we do matters:

“When we feel empowered to act, individually and communally, that makes us not only more *likely* to act, but to support others who do.” (p. 201-202)



Collective efficacy:

“...together, as a community, we can make a difference.” (p. 202)

“...connecting with others imbues us with a stronger sense of collective efficacy and builds a network of like-minded people.” (p. 204)

SEE: Toolbox for Teaching Climate & Energy
NOAA Climate.gov
[Climate.gov/teaching/toolbox](https://climate.gov/teaching/toolbox)

In addition to self efficacy, “...when you see someone else do something or find out about something you can do in your personal life... that increases your efficacy, too. ...[Quote on left above]. ...It also inoculates us against despair...the more we do something, the more it matters to us and the more we care.” (p. 201-2)

“...important problems don’t get fixed until enough ordinary people mobilize to take action. ...a stronger sense of collective efficacy and builds a network of like-minded people. **Sharing our opinions and actions alters social norms...** This in turn makes us more likely to support politicians who want climate action and policies to reduce carbon emissions, more likely to speak out about the need to climate solutions, and more likely to be in favor of the changes required to address climate change at scale. It’s like knocking over the first domino: action eventually changes us all.” (p. 204-205)

In what ways can we at Grace build a collective efficacy?

WHAT I DO (Ch. 19)

“The most important thing every single one of us can do about climate change is to talk about it—why it matters, and how we can fix it—and use our voices to advocate for change within our sphere of influence.” (p. 213)

Image: [MaryAnn McKibben Dana – The Blue Room \(Substack\)](#)



Hayhoe talks about **personal choices regarding low-carbon habits**. It starts with figuring out what our current impact is. Then look for ways to make changes, even if they're small steps. Larger expenditures – an electric car, house updates, new appliances, etc – could be factored in as you eventually replace old items.

Don't succumb to guilt that it is all on you (it's not). It will exhaust and discourage you. And don't succumb to the curse of perfectionism (see image).

Build self efficacy and collective efficacy.

“...what really counts, what really carries the weight, is **when we know we can act, and we share that sense of efficacy with others. That's how social contagion begins.**” (p. 212)

“...**connecting with one another is how we change ourselves**, how we change others, and ultimately, how we change the world. It's contagious.” (p. 213)

What is our sphere of influence as individuals? As a church?

WHY TALKING MATTERS (Ch. 20)

“...here’s the thing: most of us are not [talking about] it. Even people who are alarmed and concerned about climate change tend to ‘self-silence’ on the topic...” (p. 216-217)



Image source:

<https://skepticalscience.com/talking-climate-necessary-uncomfortable.html>

“Talking may sound simple, almost too simple. But here’s the thing: most of us are not doing it. Even people who are alarmed and concerned about climate change tend to “self-silence” on the topic...” (p. 216-217) We introduce the importance of talking in this session and go into it deeper in next week’s session. Don’t be afraid to offer ideas – or to say you have no idea how to begin. How often do you talk to others about climate change? What spurs you to engage in a conversation with someone else? What holds you back?

But... WHAT DO WE TALK ABOUT?

“Things we care about. ...if we don’t talk about climate change, why would anyone around us know that we care—or begin to care themselves if they don’t already? And if they don’t care, why would they act?” (p. 217)

“... **we tend to favor personal stories and experiences over reams of data or facts.** In fact, when you hear a story, neuroscientists have found, your brain waves start to synchronize with those of the storyteller. Your emotions follow. And that’s how change happens.” (p. 217)

This goes back to the early chapters of the book: find the common interests and build from there.

“...you [and not scientists] are the perfect person to have this conversation with the people in your life.” (p. 220)

“...facts about the science are not enough to explain why climate change matters and why it’s so urgent that we fix it. We need more. **We need to understand how climate change matters to us, personally, and what we can do about it in our own lives.**” (p. 221)

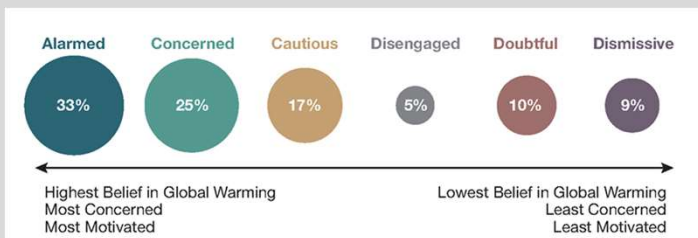
“Create opportunities to interact with people.... You’ll never know what people really think about climate change unless you ask.” (p. 221)

Reflecting back on Section 1, what personal interests do you have that could connect you with others? In what way(s) is climate change impacting those interests? In what ways can you relate that to others on a personal level?

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES TO INTERACT: an example

On a scale of 1 to 10 (or whatever), how do you rank the importance of climate change?

Would you try it?



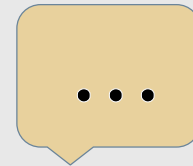
Hayhoe describes a person named Howard who approached strangers by asking them where they ranked climate change on a scale of 1 to 10. “First, he [Howard] learned that people were eager to talk. Second, it was possible to disagree but remain respectful and constructive — easier, often, when you were total strangers rather than close family members. And lastly, everyone had something to share — concerns and solutions, too.” (p. 222)

The figure is from Yale’s Program on Climate Change Communication, which we covered in week 1. Starting out, you may want to build connections with those who are alarmed, concerned, or even cautious. Hayhoe isn’t saying this is how we should do it, only that this is how one person (Howard) approached strangers to start a conversation about climate change. It’s not for everyone. Would you try it? Or is there some other way you might approach starting a conversation?

What jumped out at you in the first 3 chapters of Section 5?

What would you like to follow up on for the next session?

Discussion



That's the wrap. Before jumping into discussion questions, what jumped out at you in these chapters or in our discussion? What would you like to follow up on for the next session?

Hayhoe says believing we can do something and make a difference both individually and communally are key to responding to climate change.

- Where do you see that at work in your life?
- How does that impact your sense of empowerment about climate change?

Discussion



In case we didn't cover these in the discussion:

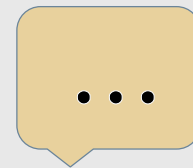
In *Why You Matter* (Chapter 18), Hayhoe talks about self-efficacy (“...if you think you can do something... you’re more likely to do it”) and collective efficacy (“...the idea that together, as a community, we can make a difference”). The belief that we can do something and make a difference is both individual and communal.

- Where do you see that at work in your life?
- How does that impact your sense of empowerment about climate change?

In *What I Do* (Chapter 19), Hayhoe offers a variety of low-carbon habits, noting that while her individual choices won't substantially change things, it helps build a sense of efficacy and empowerment to share with others.

What practices seem achievable for you?

Discussion



In case we didn't cover these in the discussion:

In *What I Do* (Chapter 19), Hayhoe offers a variety of low-carbon habits, noting that while her individual choices won't substantially change things, it helps build a sense of efficacy and empowerment to share with others.

- What practices seem achievable for you?
- While Hayhoe didn't explicitly mention a faith connection with her choices, how do you tie your choices to your faith identity?

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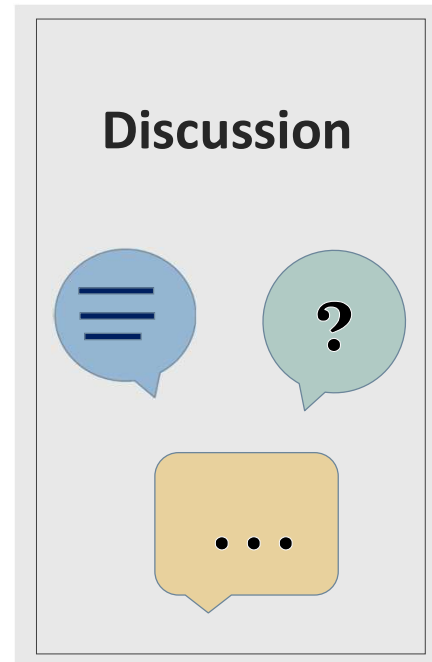


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- What practices seem achievable for you?
- While Hayhoe didn't explicitly mention a faith connection with her choices, how do you tie your choices to your faith identity?

Hayhoe says, “The most important thing every single one of us can do” is to talk climate change using personal stories that connect you and the person you’re talking with to why climate change matters and what we can do about it. What connections can you make with what you love that can be a conversation point with people around you?



In case we didn't cover these in the discussion:

Hayhoe says, “The most important thing every single one of us can do about climate change is to talk about it...” Not with scientific data and facts, but with personal stories that connect you and the person you’re talking with to why climate change matters and “what we can do about it in our own lives.” We’ll get into this in more detail next week but for this week, think back on what you love doing, who you love and care about, and what you believe (from Week 1). What connections can you make with what you love that can be a conversation point with people around you?

Closing Reflection

“Instead of advocating escapist stories of isolation... [Jesus] sent his followers into the world to be agents of positive change like salt, light, and yeast....

“Instead of withdrawing from the world, whether as individuals or groups or nations, we are called to be fully immersed in the places we are. Learning to discern light and shadow, bringing what we have and asking for what we need. Our contemplative practices are always ways of being more alive in the world and more active for the common good....”

- Gareth Higgins, *“Isolation Stories,” Learning How to See*, season 5, ep. 5 (Albuquerque, NM: Center for Action and Contemplation, 2023), podcast.

Reference:

Center for Action and Contemplation, Daily Meditations, February 2, 2024. (<https://cac.org/daily-meditations/from-isolation-to-contemplation/>)

Adapted from Brian McLaren and Gareth Higgins, *“Isolation Stories,” Learning How to See*, season 5, ep. 5 (Albuquerque, NM: Center for Action and Contemplation, 2023), podcast.