

Climate Change, Sustainability and the Environment: Overcoming Denial - Prompting Action!

Mary Lynn Manns

Green Drinks

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What bugs you?



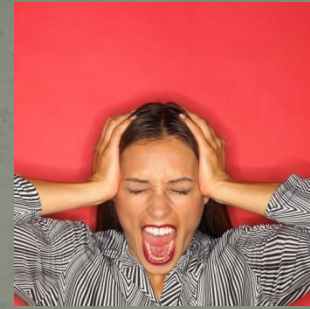
Why is this so difficult?

- Large opposing goals
- The belief that this is not a pressing issue
- A “collective action” issue
- “Others” are in a better position to solve it
- Blame
- Disconnection from our environment
- The “too rational” versus the “too emotional”
- It is a system issue
- Concentrating on the symptoms rather than the beliefs, challenges, assumption, and values that created the problem



Facts

- Difficult to understand
- Information overload
- Conflicting (example: Scientists vs. Media)
- May not be delivered by a trusted communicator
- Can be easily dismissed
- Does not necessarily prompt action
- *Above all, the history of climate change shows that perceptions of the issues are by no means driven only – or even primarily – by facts, evidence and rational argument. (Climate Change: The State of the Debate, Center on International Cooperation, 2007)*



Fear!

- “Learned helplessness”
- Defense mechanisms to protect ourselves from realities:
 - Rationalize
 - Deny
 - Compartmentalize
 - Disconnect
 - Maintain ignorance
- Yeh, there is always something to worry about
- Guilt or shame – dig in your heels
- Can get creepy
- Works in the short term



Logic (facts) and fear aren't working...
You're frustrated, so let's

Fix.....

- Examples: technology, tax incentives
- A solution outside ourselves
- Others are taking care of it -- does not build ownership for the problems
- What happens when the “fix” goes away?

Force



- Examples: laws, policies, etc.
- Let's get mean!.....
- ... yeh, that always works well

Fix and Force

- Treats symptoms; does not fundamentally change behavior
- Not sustainable!

- So, what '*F word*' can create a fundamental change in behavior?

“Above all, the history of climate change shows that perceptions of the issues are by no means driven only – or even primarily – by facts, evidence and rational argument. Images, narratives, relationships and values matter at least as much.”

Climate Change: The State of the Debate, Center on International Cooperation, 2007

Feelings



- **Show a truth that influences people's feelings**
- Match what you're saying to what the person values
- Speak their language
- Use a trusted communicator
- Use stories (and images) instead of statistics
- Concentrate on positive rather than negative outcomes
- Acknowledge what people are losing
- Bust the myths
- Show respect for a person's previous choices
- Propose simple steps – ask for a little
- Show some “social proof”
- Prompt people to imagine the future
- Create group ownership and identity – involve everyone (even the skeptics)
- Make it fun!
- others??.....

Let's play the
“Create Tension Game”



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manns@unca.edu

www.fearlesschangepatterns.com

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