
VIGIL FOR PEACE Monday's Noon-1pm Madison Municipal Bldg. – WK 1601, 8.27.2018

Atmospheric scientist, Peter Kalmus at CalTech Jet Propulsion Laboratory and contributing editor to [Yes!](#) Magazine, admits to being overcome by a wave of climate grief sometimes. He writes that the grief is usually clarifying, inspiring him to work harder than ever. But occasionally it becomes a paralyzing sense of climate anxiety or dread, lasting for days or even weeks. (See 350 Madison Facebook page to read his post of 8/09/018 in [Yes!](#).)

“So much is at stake – our security and normalcy; the futures we'd envisioned for our children; our sense of progress and where we fit in the universe.”

He is not alone. A 2017 report by the American Psychological Association found that climate change is causing “stress, anxiety, depression and relationship strain.... The psychological weight of climate change can lead to feelings of helplessness and fear, and to climate disengagement.”

Psychologist, Renee Lertzman studies the effect of environmental loss on mental health. She writes that “it is important to remember that inaction is rarely about lack of concern or care;” rather it can be the result of **Cognitive Dissonance**, “namely that we Westerners are living in a society that is still deeply entrenched in the very practices we now know are damaging and destructive... Even if people may not be showing it, research shows again and again that it's still on their minds and a source of discomfort and distress.”

Kalmus notes that if Lertzman is correct, **maybe the “sea change in public action we desperately need is closer than it seems.”** and writes that it would certainly be helpful if we could **talk openly about how climate change is making us feel.**

A second important way to cope according to Kalmus, is to **burn less fossil fuel.** This helps eliminate the internal cognitive dissonance by aligning our actions with our knowledge.

A third way is by becoming part of communities who are concerned about climate change, such as **Citizen's Climate Lobby** or **350 Madison**. We can find people talking openly about climate change and develop more connections in the community through activism and outreach.

Kalmus states that he works actively to be hope-oriented. Climate change is not an apocalypse. Ecological annihilation is not inevitable. If humans pulled together as if our lives depended on it, we could leave the fossil fuel age behind. While this may not happen in just a few years, he sees a middle path between sweeping climate action and unavoidable ecological demise – a rapid cultural shift that we can all contribute to through our conversations and daily actions. He finds that to be a hopeful thought.

Environmental activist, Tia Nelson, will speak at the September monthly meeting of 350 Madison. Her topic is “The History of Earth Day and What Lies Ahead: Reflections on Environmental Activism”

***Monday, September 10, 7:00-8:45 PM
Madison Friends Meetinghouse
1704 Roberts Ct. Madison***

“Unless someone like you... cares a whole awful lot... nothing is going to get better... it's not.”

The Lorax by Dr. Seuss

SOME IDEAS ON HOW TO TALK ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE AND HOW TO ACT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

These ideas come from George Marshall's 2014 book, Don't Even Think About It: Why our brains are wired to ignore climate change (and why we are wired to take action), primarily from Chapter 42, “In a Nutshell”.

Climate change is a scientific fact. Scientists are remarkably sure that climate change is bringing major impacts.

Climate change is happening here and now, not as a future threat for people far away.

Trusted, local communicators can **open a conversation about long-term preparedness**. Preparedness and adaptation are routes for people to accept that climate change is real and already happening.

Never accept your opponents' frames, (e.g. fossil fuels create jobs). “Don't negate them or repeat them or structure your arguments to counter them.” (George Lakoff, Don't Think of an Elephant!)

Climate change is science, but it is also a narrative with personal stories, recognizable actors, motives, causes and effects. BUT DON'T LET THE NARRATIVE TAKE OVER: resist simple framings; be open to new meanings; review a wide range of solutions.

Be careful that enemy narratives do not fuel division at a time when we need to find common purpose: build a narrative of cooperation (not necessarily unity); stress what we have in common; encourage a spectrum of approaches.

Climate change is a science, but it is also a conviction (not a faith).

Create communities of conviction but keep an open mind. Be alert to your own biases. Seek a wide range of views and learn from your critics.

Finally, be honest. Be honest about the danger (but encourage a positive vision). Recognize the role of your own emissions. Recognize people's feelings of grief and anxiety. Mourn what is lost; value what remains