

How to have a climate change conversation

#TalkingClimate

Webinar 1, 1 August 2019



#TalkingClimate



@ClimateOutreach



climateoutreach.org

Robin Webster, Climate Outreach



Welcome to #TalkingClimate!

- Citizen science project exploring how to have conversations about climate change
- More than 400 participants from around the world
- First time this has been done
- This is the first webinar
- Second webinar & final guide Autumn 2019

Who are we?



Robin Webster

Senior Climate Change
Engagement Strategist,
Climate Outreach

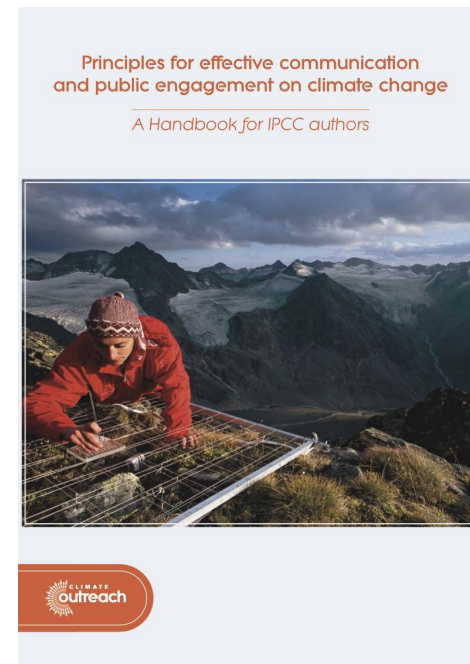


Dorka Bauer

Community builder
for the Climate-KIC
team



Advice, training, research, engagement





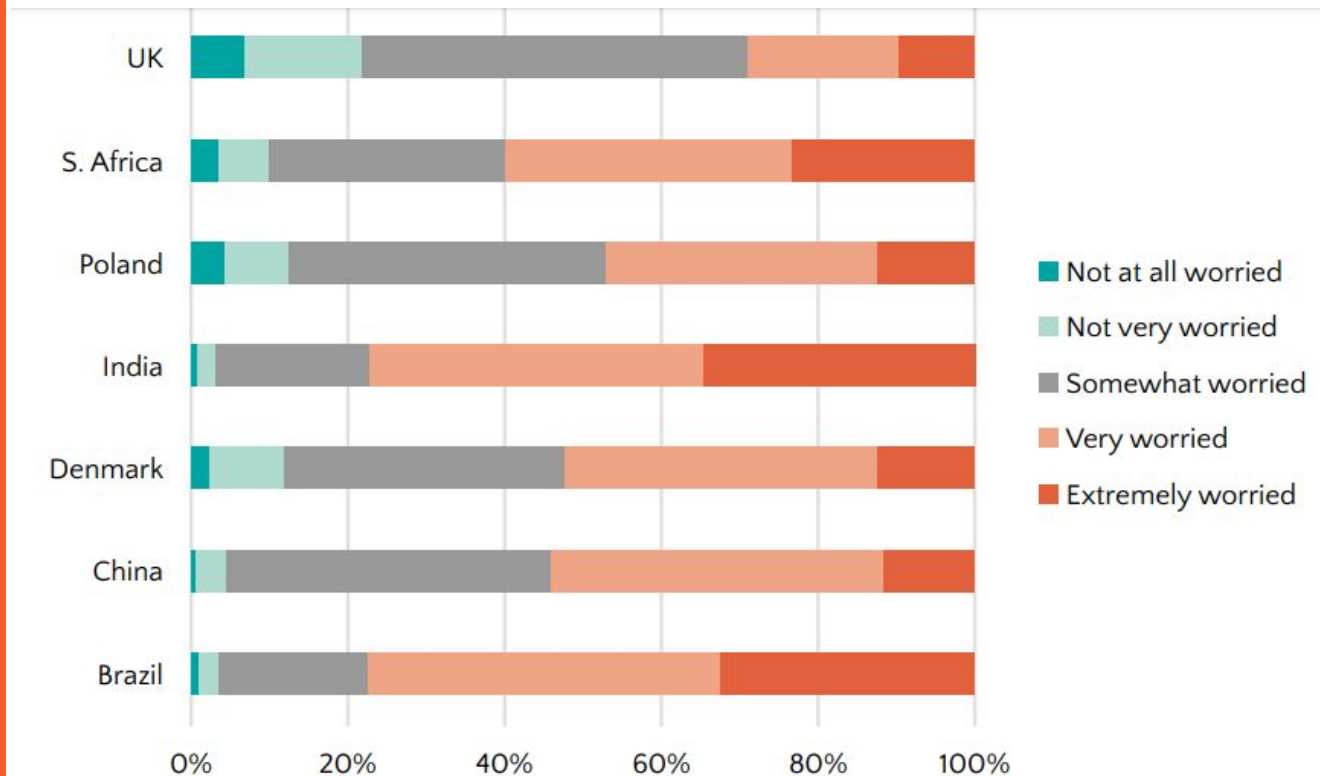
Brief overview of the project

- Having conversations until **August**
- Longer survey - fill in by **September 17th**
- Webinar & report in **October**



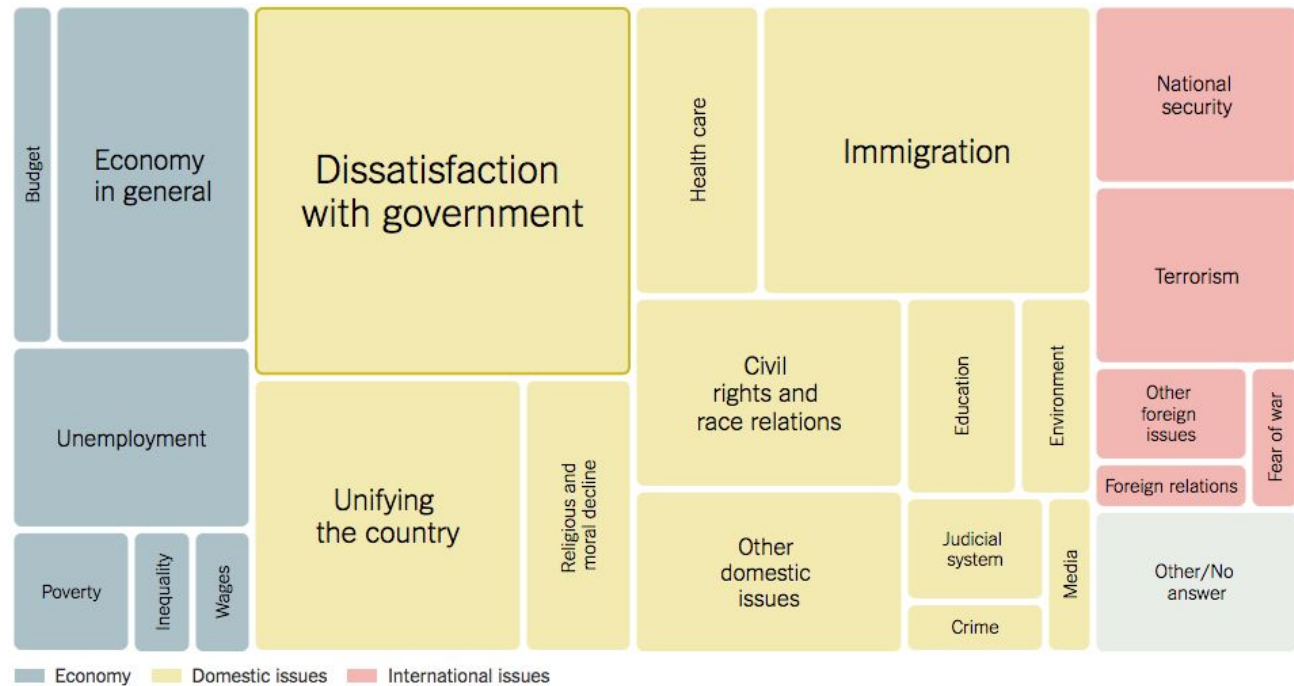
Climate concern and climate silence

People around the world are concerned about climate change

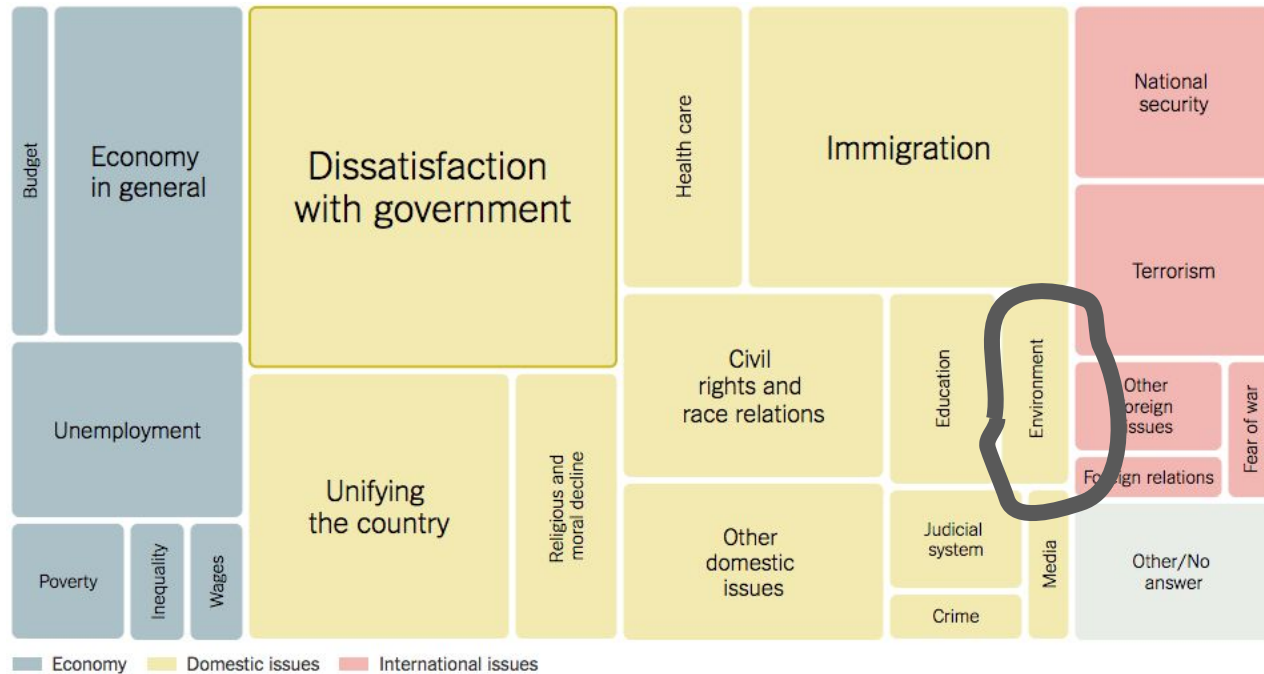


How worried are you about climate change?

But
unprompted, it
figures less

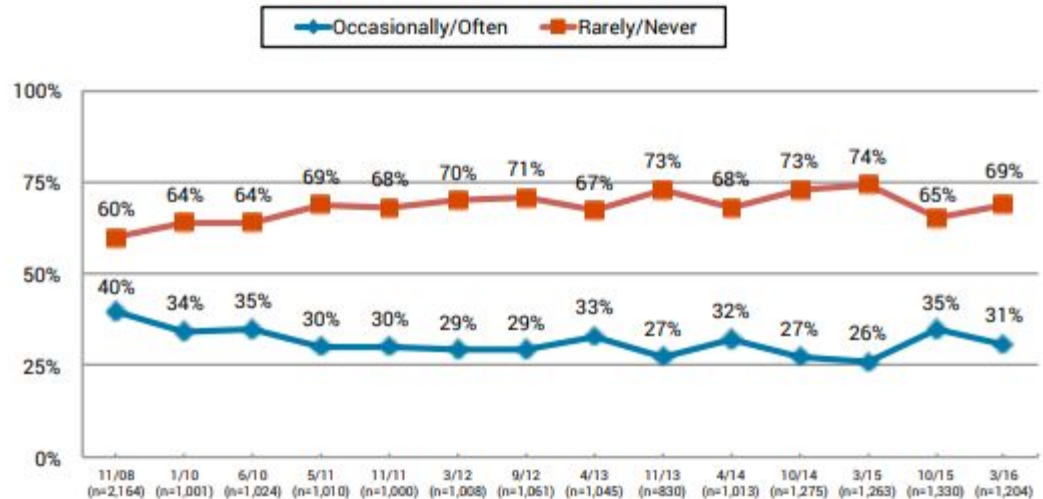


But
unprompted, it
figures less



Climate silence

Seven in Ten Americans Rarely or Never Discuss Global Warming With Family and Friends



How often do you discuss global warming with your family and friends?

Base: Americans 18+.



SPECIAL REPORT GLOBAL W

TIM

BE
WORRIED.
BE **VERY**
WORRIED.

Climate change isn't some vague future problem—it's already damaging the planet at an alarming pace. Here's how it affects you, your kids and their kids as well

EARTH AT THE **TIPPING POINT**
HOW IT THREATENS YOUR **HEALTH**
HOW **CHINA & INDIA** CAN HELP
SAVE THE WORLD—OR DESTROY IT
THE CLIMATE **CRUSADERS**

Overwhelming and disastrous, with no solutions

- 'People don't know what to do about it' (70% of respondents to our survey)
- 'People don't like talking about scary things' (52% of respondents)
- Perception of overwhelming and disastrous problem, with no solutions

It's your fault

(CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)



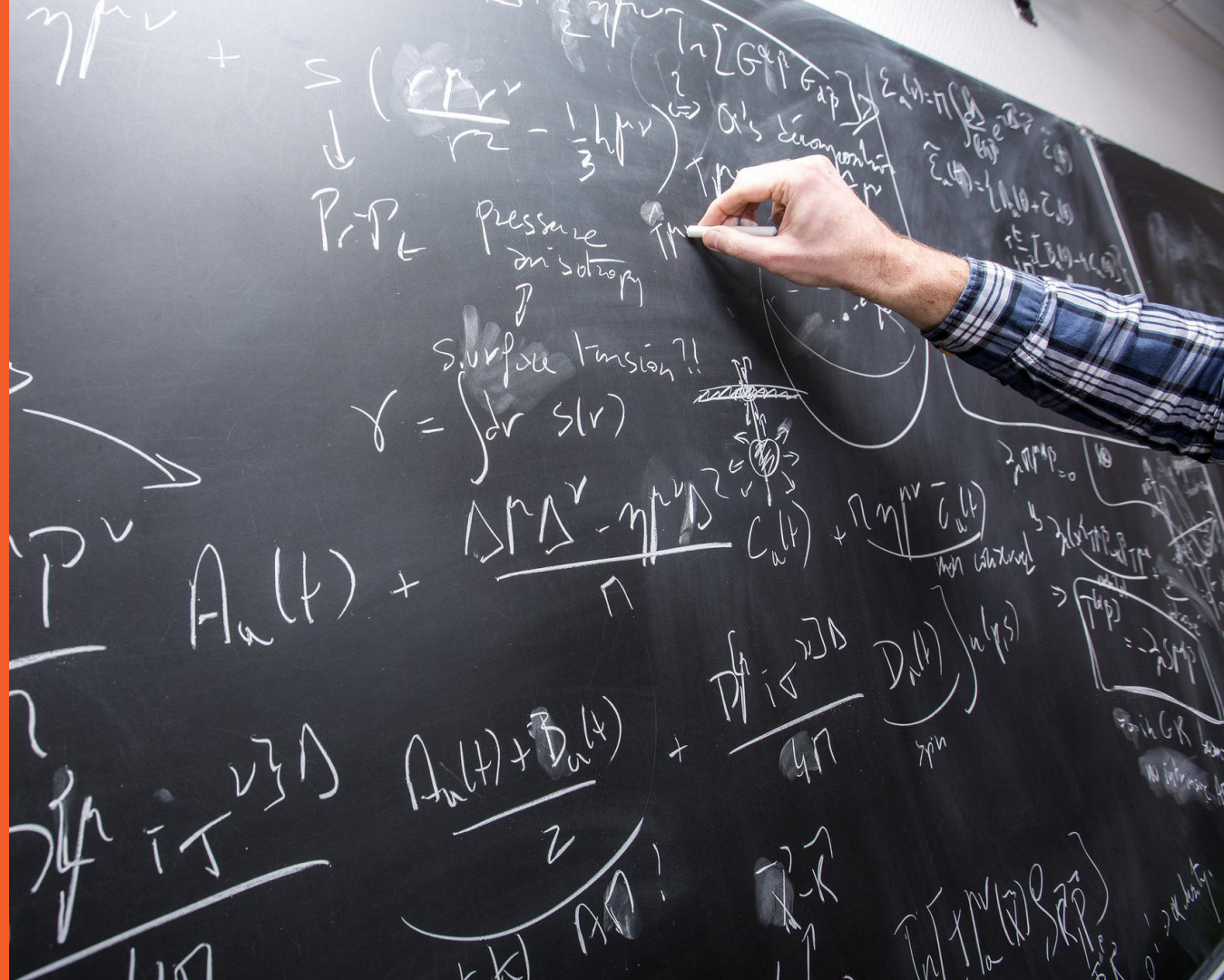


Psychological distance

Distant impacts both in space and time are discounted

Eg "By 2050, four million people, and around 70% of today's Arctic infrastructure, will be threatened by thawing permafrost, the report notes."

**Lots of facts
and graphs - ie
not relevant to
real life**



(But - we're
having a bit of a
moment)





Changing social norms? (UK data)

- 63% of UK public agree we are facing a climate emergency (69% young people)
- 66% willing to make sacrifices for the planet as long as others are doing the same
- In last three of YouGov's polls - 17% put environment amongst top three issues facing the country (24% mid April)



Why does challenging the climate silence matter?

- We are profoundly influenced by the behaviour of our peers
- 'Spiral of silence' theory - people don't speak out for fear of isolation
- Democratic governments won't take significant action without public support
- Limiting temperature rise to 1.5C means profound and rapid change - need social consent



Conversations in practice



Different sorts of conversations

- **Audience:** Who is it with? (friend/ colleague/ stranger etc)
- **Context:** Who started it? Formal/ informal?
- **Depth of conversation:** From shallow exchange to deep shift



A 'successful' conversation could be anything on the scale from 1 to 5...

1. **Shallow:** Mention 'climate change' in passing
2. **Exchange:** You mention 'climate change' and they respond
3. **Explore:** A few exchanges on the topic
4. **Deep:** Meaningful exchange of pre-thought ideas
5. **Shift:** Deep exchange and a shift in participants' level of concern, awareness, knowledge (*"I've not thought of that before...."*)



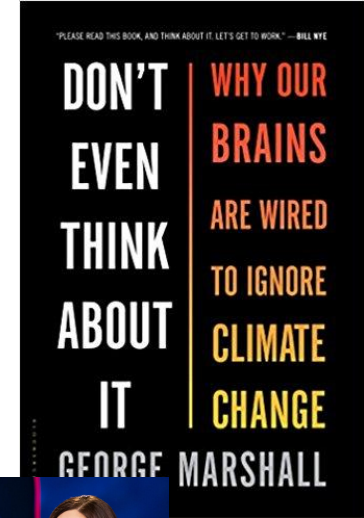
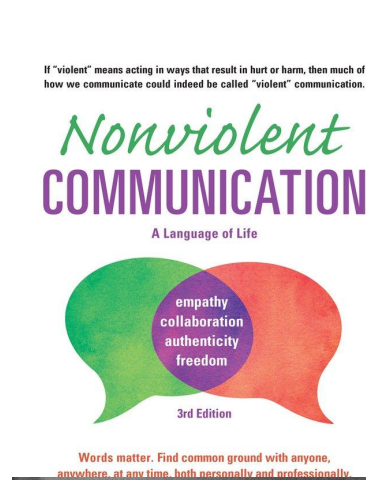
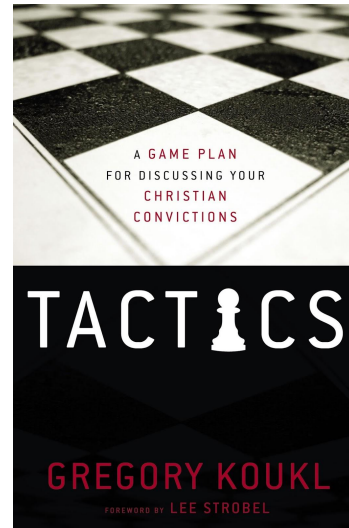
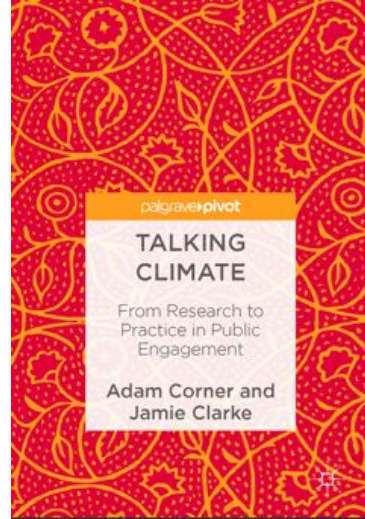
A conversation diary

- Conversations over the summer: **5 to as many as you want!**
- Every time you have a conversation, we'd like you to record some basic information
- What sort of conversation, who with, how it started, which bits of advice were the most useful.



Ground rules for effective conversations

Information sources for the ground rules



In summary

1. Pick your moment
2. Know yourself
3. Tell your story
4. Find out what you have in common and connect
5. Talk about specifics
6. Respect your conversational partner
7. Ask questions and listen
8. Avoid blame and shame
9. Acknowledge grief, but avoid despair
10. Shift towards action and the long-term
11. Enjoy yourself and experiment



Pick your moment

Are you both in the mood to be thoughtful and open-minded?

Asking for consent - "Would you be willing to have a chat with me about this?"

Be a good host - provide snacks if needed!



Tell your story

The importance of authenticity & trusted messengers

Talk about what you know

Create a few lines that weaves your story in with what you know about climate change



What's your story?

When did you become worried about climate change? Have there been moments when your view changed?

Are you doing anything about climate change now?

How do you feel about that?



Know yourself

- Start from the heart
- 'Deepen your faith' (Christian perspective)
- Be confident in who you are hold your views
- Be clear about vulnerabilities - 'this is how I try and live out my values, but I know I'm not perfect'



Ask open questions and listen

Ask about personal experiences

Reflect what you hear, show that you've heard

Don't interrupt

Learn from them

Have an exchange and learn from one another

Even pretend not to know things



Respect your conversational partner

- Don't say good/bad/right/wrong - no blame or shame
- Non-violent communication = empathically receiving and observing feelings and needs of the other
- Avoid fear, guilt, shame, obligation - they compromise connection
- Don't try to win!

“

“The nonviolent resister not only refuses to shoot his opponent but he also refuses to hate him. At the center of nonviolence stands the principle of love.” Love means “understanding, redemptive goodwill”

Martin Luther King



Find out what you have in common and connect

- Find out what you have in common
- Find out what values you share and what you both care about
- Smile and show you are interested in them; use open body language
- Address ideas that are relevant to that person



Talk about specifics

- Climate change is a conversation about....health, agriculture, energy, independence, beer, heatwaves, holidays....
- Talk about how climate change is affecting us here and now, in our everyday lives.

Domino-effect of climate events could move Earth into a 'hothouse' state

Leading scientists warn that passing such a point would make efforts to reduce emissions increasingly futile



NEWS / CLIMATE SOS

Earth at risk of tipping into hellish 'hothouse' condition

World could be entering warmer period that will see average temperatures rise by between four and six degrees Celsius.

itv NEWS

ITV REPORT 6 August 2018 at 7:59pm

Earth 'just decades away from global warming tipping point' threatens future of humanity

Acknowledge grief, but avoid despair

Speak authentically, but try not to drown in it

Think about what creates your own resilience

Shift towards action....



Shift to action

People can cope with negative information if it's 'twinned' with a positive response

Action will look different for different people
Eg joining a community garden; political activism; not driving the kids to school; changing company policy at work etc.



The rewards of taking action

Emphasise your own positive choice *“As someone who cares about climate change this is what I do....”*

Benefits for health, equity, family etc - rather than sacrifices

We're inviting them to join our gang - ambassadors for caring about climate change



Positive engagement to positive end

It's much easier if you are not stressing

Smile, engage, enjoy it

Can we talk about this again? End on a positive note



Some useful tips

Conversation starters

The direct approach:

"I am participating in a project where we experiment with talking about climate change and would love to know what you think?"

A prompt:

Items you are wearing on yourself, posters on the wall etc.

Splice it in:

Introductions - *"This is what I do/work on/this is what I am doing today"*

Lifestyle - this is where I go on holiday and why?

If it comes up

follow up with a question:

Informal "what do you reckon"



Overall structure of a good conversation

Validate the other person
Relate your **own experience**
Ask **open questions**
Have a **conversation!**
Reach **closure**



What happens now?



What the project looks like

- August: Keep a conversation diary
- Social media and support:
 - A slack channel
 - Twitter & video clips
- Longer survey - fill in by **September 17th**
- Next webinar: 3rd October 6pm CET
- We will keep you up to date!

Useful questions and responses

Validation

"yeah you're so right"

"you've put your finger on it there"

"I find that really hard as well...."

Connecting

"I really respect the way you stand up for things"

"You know what it's like when you have small kids..."

"I really hear what you say on that."

Sharing your own experience

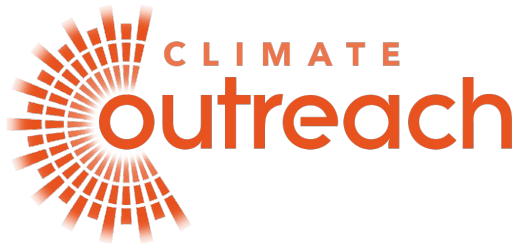
"Last year when we went on holiday we didn't fly, it was great"

"I used to think that, until...."

"We don't agree...."

"I personally really do think...."

"I think this is a problem"



Thank you

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