



Facing the Future: Facilitating Climate Change Conversations at Your Library

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Start your journey here





“Not everything that is
faced can be changed, but
nothing can be changed
until it is faced.”

- James Baldwin





WHAT FUTURE ARE YOU
LIVING INTO BEING?

Joe Brewer

<https://vimeo.com/235829612>

Presentation outline

- “Facing the Future” around New England
- Climate change and communication
- Conversation ideas
- The role of mindfulness in addressing climate change
- Plus...a couple of pair-share exercises

My ultimate goal...to inspire you to facilitate a climate change conversation at YOUR library...to explore values/resources and build the social capital that protects communities



The last 5 yrs of my evolution

At UMass:

- Sustainability across the curriculum
- Contemplative Pedagogy Working Group
- Talking Truth: Finding Your Voice Around the Climate Change Crisis (3 yrs)

Learning on my own:

- SustainRT: Libraries Fostering Resilient Communities (join us!)
- Meditate & Mediate
- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction
- Non Violent Communication
- Libraries Transforming Communities, ALA webinars

Plus community activism with Mothers Out Front

Consider...
Parenting
as social
action



Potential reach of “Facing the Future” (join the online group)

4-hour training:

Northampton MA - 16 librarians - 240 patrons

Marlborough MA - 19 librarians - 285

Middletown CT - 5 librarians - 75

Cumberland RI - 9 librarians - 135

Topsham ME - 15 librarians - 225

Hookset NH - 12 librarians - 180

Today:

Fairlee VT - 30 librarians? - 450

Total = 1,590 New Englanders with eyes-minds-hearts more open and inspiration to protect the more-than-human world.

Why **libraries** for climate change conversations?

- Trusted institutions
- Access to diverse perspectives
- If not us, who?
- Raises the library's profile in the community - a seat at the table
- Relevance!
- Demonstrates sustainability/social change as integral to the library profession

A climate change conversation **isn't** about

- In-depth climate change science
- Deliberation, debating, decision making
- Changing people's minds
- Deciding specific action/solutions (this can be paired with the conversation or offered later on)

Who do you -- as a librarian -- choose to be?

“Who do you choose to be for this time? Are you willing to use whatever power and influence you have to create islands of sanity that evoke and rely on our best human qualities to create, relate, and persevere? Will you consciously and bravely choose to reclaim leadership as a noble profession that creates possibility and humaneness in the midst of increasing fear and turmoil?”

--Margaret Wheatley

- 5 in 10 Americans (63%) are “worried” about climate change.

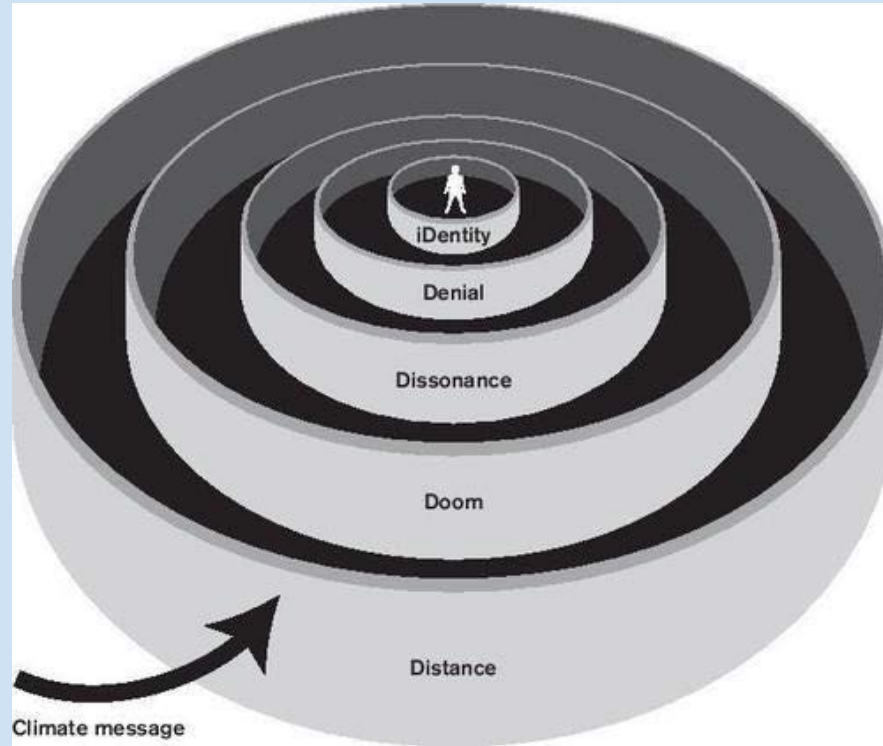
(Up 6 points since May, highest since 2008)

- 1 in 5 (22%) of that group are “very worried”
- **However, 62% say they “rarely” or “never” discuss climate change with friends and family.**

--Yale Project on



Barriers to talking about climate change



The “Five D’s” - Per Epsen Stoknes

Paired discussion - 2 minutes

- Who do you talk about climate change with?
- What happens/happened?

In fall 2015, UMass Amherst Talking Truth started asking.
“How do you feel about climate change?”



Responses...

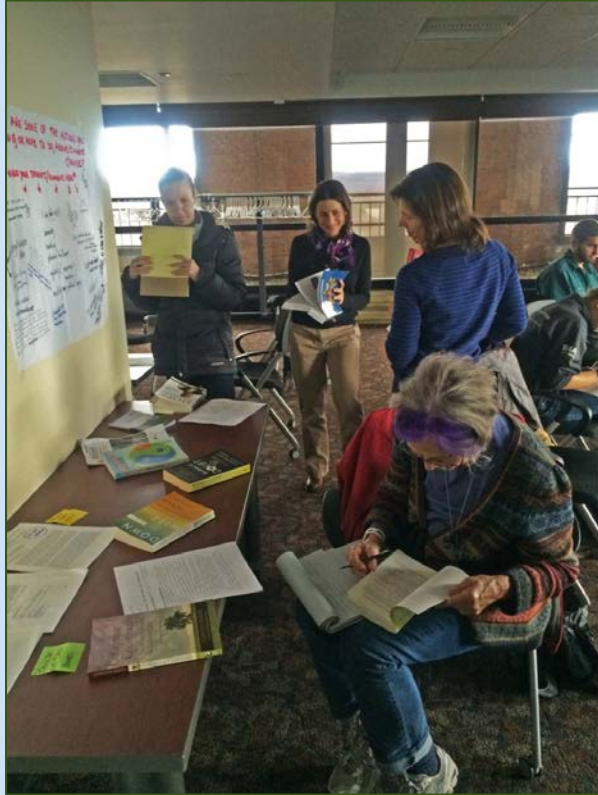
- “I think about our eroding coastlines...due to storms like Sandy...literally wiping out a lifestyle and space which signifies so much for me...A piece of myself is going away.”
– Staff member, 55 years old
- “I feel numb... It’s not so much neutral as emotionally exhausted by it...it makes me sad and angry. Frustrated.”
–Student, 22 years old

Resolve
Inspired
Community
Fight
Capability
Empowered
Hopeful
knowledge
New

“How do you feel...” at the Amherst Sustainability Festival



Other Talking Truth happenings...



- Story telling
- Art making
- Film screenings
- Readings by local authors
- Discussions
- Career exploration

Contemplative exercises woven throughout

Finding Work with Meaning in the Anthropocene



Interactive, intergenerational,
interdisciplinary...



Meeting Our Ancestors: Exploring the Future Through the Present Moment

image : <http://machiavellicro.deviantart.com>



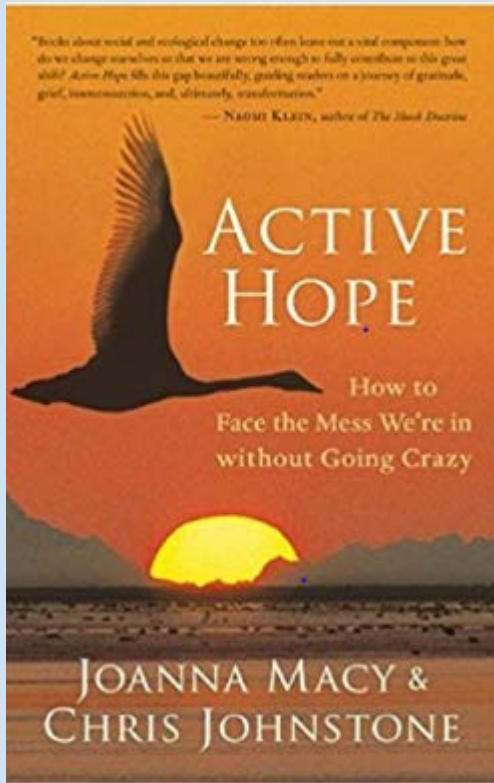
A sacred “deep time” practice session



Climate Change Claims a Lake, and an Identity

Text by NICHOLAS CASEY Photographs and video by JOSH HANER

Gaze for 5 minutes at a difficult climate change headline



Chock full of activity ideas:

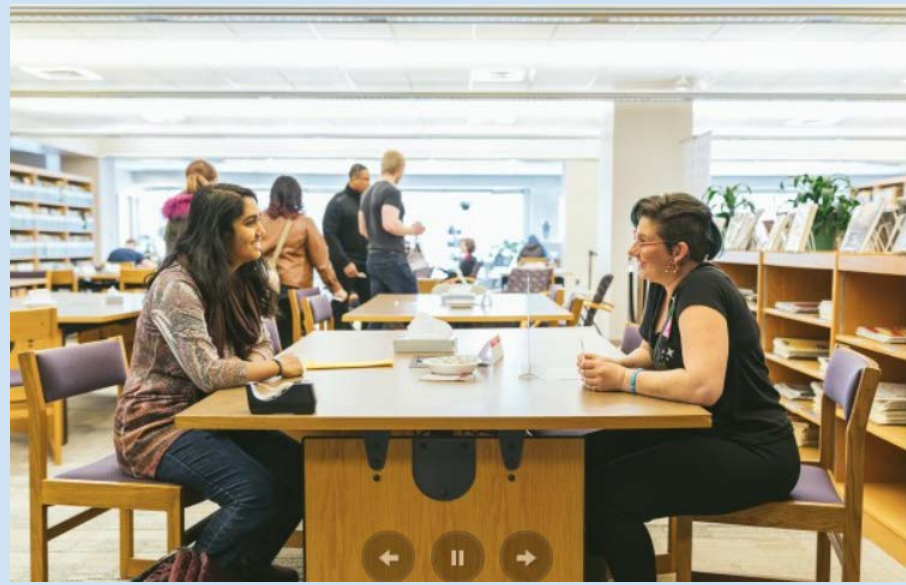
- Open ended questions
- Guided visualizations
- Practices around gratitude
- Identifying goals and resources

Place It!

(James Rojas)

placeit.org





Human Library humanlibrary.org

climate scientist, activist, skeptic, green energy expert,
climate change refugee, non-profit worker, cli-fi writer,
prepper...

World Cafe



SEVEN DESIGN PRINCIPLES





Connect

Diverse

Perspectives

Art. The shining, reflective shield

“...the work of art today is to take the hideous faces of these global crises and transform them so that people can bear to look and respond.”

--Kathleen Dean Moore





World Cafe questions

1. What do you feel called to do re: climate change?
2. To whom would you turn in your local community in the event of a climate change crisis?
3. What tools (inner and outer) would you activate in the event of a climate change crisis -- to support yourself and others in your local community?
4. What do you fear re: climate change?
5. What gives you hope re: climate change?

But what about...? (throwing darts at this stuff)

Aren't you just preaching to the choir?

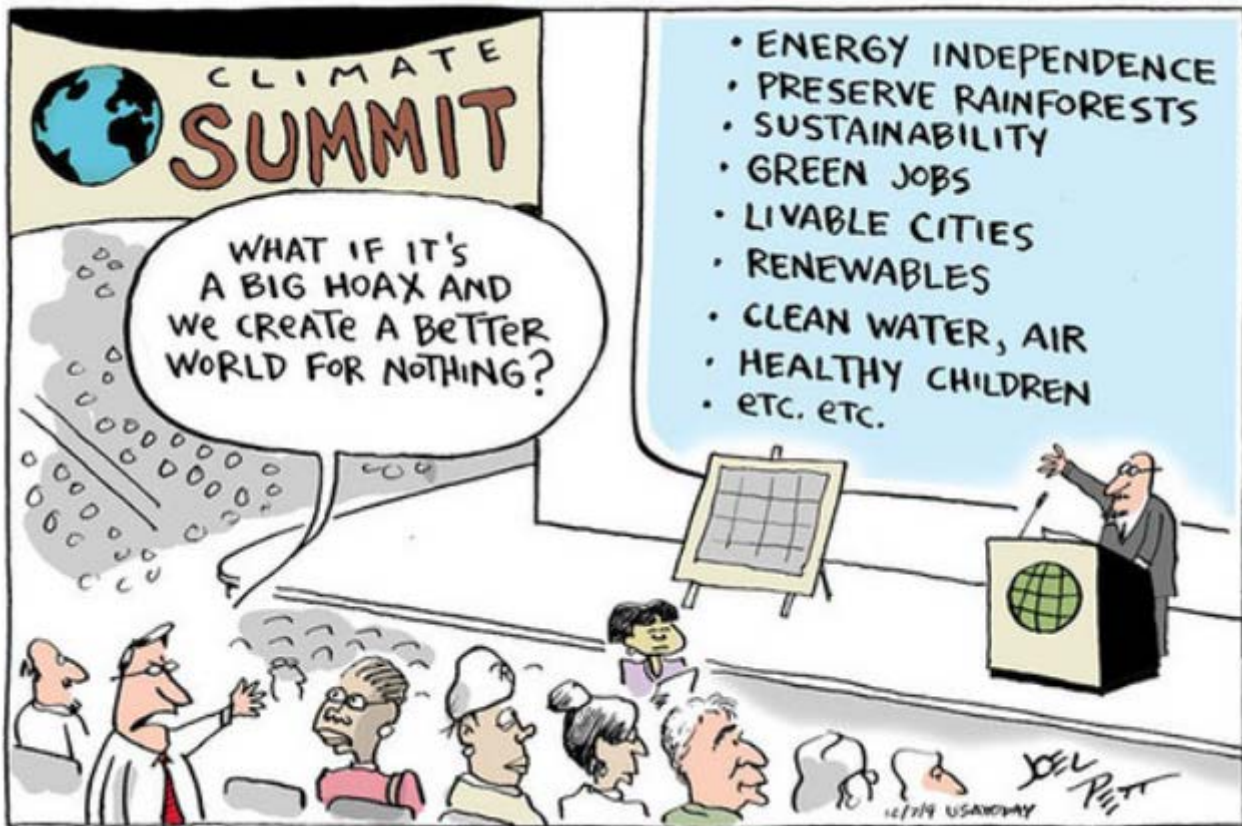
Isn't this just talking? What about *doing* something?

Isn't this just wallowing in despair?

Isn't this too political to talk about in a library?

Is it okay to use public money to hold such a conversation?

What happens if someone skeptical or denying of climate change challenges us?



CLIMATE
SUMMIT

WHAT IF IT'S
A BIG HOAX AND
WE CREATE A BETTER
WORLD FOR NOTHING?

- ENERGY INDEPENDENCE
- PRESERVE RAINFORESTS
- SUSTAINABILITY
- GREEN JOBS
- LIVABLE CITIES
- RENEWABLES
- CLEAN WATER, AIR
- HEALTHY CHILDREN
- etc. etc.

YEL PETT
11/19 USA TODAY

Transformational Resilience





Social Capital

A critical component for building **transformationally** resilient communities which:

- Endure
- Adapt
- Recover
- Thrive, even under adverse circumstances



Mental health and climate change

“A major ecological--turned mental health--turned social-political crisis is underway...the harmful impacts of climate change on personal mental health and psycho-social-spiritual well-being.

Left unaddressed, this crisis will undermine the health, safety, and wellbeing of people worldwide.”

--Bob Doppelt



Mindfulness practices to build *transformational* resilience

- Meditate
- Move
- Breathe
- Write
- Make music and art
- Increase awareness in daily activities (e.g. being a better listener)
- Increase compassion for self and others (instead of “What’s wrong with you?” - “What happened to you?”)

Benefits of mindfulness

- Decrease stress; stabilize nervous system
- Increase concentration
- Improve decision making/problem solving
- Inspire compassion, commitment to social justice
- Expand social/emotional growth
- Foster more meaningful interactions/experiences

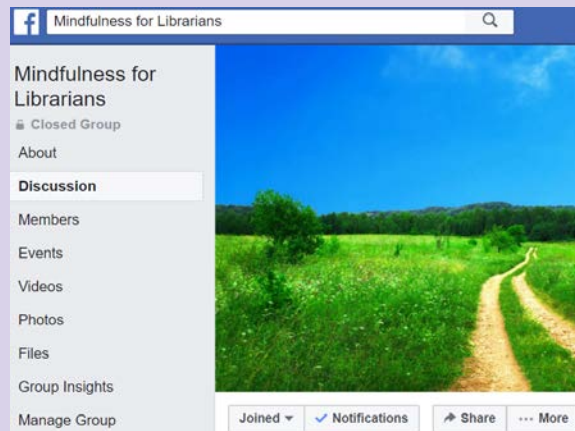
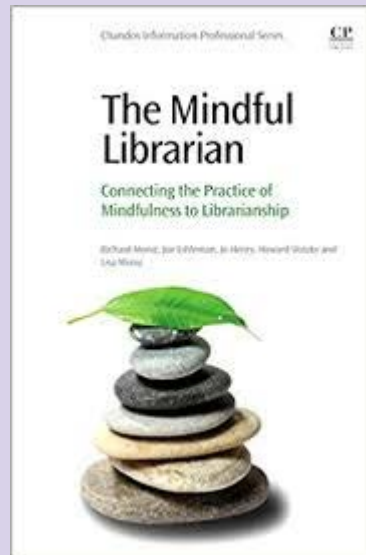


Webinar

How to Implement Meditation and Mindfulness Programming in Your Library

Learn how Luck Public Library uses their mindfulness program to help staff and their community de-stress

Colleen Allen from Luck Public Library in Wisconsin is using her love for mindfulness to help eliminate stress and connect to those within her small rural town. Their mindfulness program provides an opportunity to educate others about the importance of mindfulness and provide a space to practice it themselves. In addition to helping staff and patrons, it has furthered connections to their community.





Libraries Transforming Communities

Webinars are recorded and free!

An ALA initiative offering a variety of engaging models:

- World Cafe EXPLORATION; ROUNDS OF QUESTIONS
- Conversation Cafe EXPLORATION; OPEN DIALOGUE; NO ACTIONS
- Everyday Democracy COMMUNITY ORGANIZING; ACTIONS
- Future Search FOR FAST CHANGING SITUATIONS
- National Issues Forum DECISION MAKING; DELIBERATIVE
- Essential Partners - LONG TERM; MULTI-PART CONVERSATIONS

<http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/libraries-transforming-communities/ltc-models-for-change>



Ideas for documenting your Climate Change Conversations

Archive, physical or digital

Blog

Digital stories

Display

Exhibit

Facebook page

Images

Video

Website

Article in library newsletter, local paper, professional publication

Turn to someone at your table...

Imagine facilitating a
climate change conversation
in your library...

- What excites you?
- What concerns you?



Ideas for Partnerships

Land trusts

Outdoor recreation

Other libraries

Local government and policy makers

Book store

K-12 and higher ed

Climate change group

Mental/public health agency

Community garden; Master Gardeners

Music, theater, dance, art group

Mindfulness center

Community center

Food coop

Farmers, fisherman, clambers, sea farmers, wind farmers, foresters -- and their professional associations

Chamber of commerce

Local businesses

Alternative energy groups and installers and businesses

Social services

Labor groups

Social justice group

Transportation groups

For academia: residential life, dining, student groups, garden groups, sustainability office, different departments, enviro science

Ideas to stay present, sturdy, motivated, enlivened



Join the online community of New England librarians

- Access resources, including activity ideas
- Offer and receive support from colleagues
- Contribute to an emerging Community of Practice

Email me for log on instructions.

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