

# **Our Reactions to the Climate Emergency**

## **Community Alliance Meeting Report**

### **May 27, 2019**

*The May 27, 2019 Community Alliance Circle meeting was focused upon participants' personal responses to the climate emergency facing us all. It was an opportunity for everyone to explore their feelings and reactions to the climate crisis as well as to listen to others to understand and support different perspectives.*

*Thirty-six attended the entire meeting while two others were only able to be there for a portion of the time. It is estimated that over half were not regular Alliance participants. (For many, this was their first Alliance meeting!) There was a high proportion of young adults participating, and approximately 80% of all who attended were women.*

*Most of the meeting was used to explore responses to the climate crisis. The meeting closed with a very brief round (a ten second response was requested) exploring what helps us to reconnect with others, our planet, and ourselves.*

**Be sure to come for the next Community Alliance meeting on Monday June 24<sup>th</sup> at 7pm at the Lions Hall.**

**Topic: Taking Action on the Climate Emergency Together!**

#### **Question 1: Looking back at your responses to climate change, what do you notice about your feelings and thoughts?**

Although the conversation was free-ranging, the following themes emerged:

#### **Anger**

- Anger at governments, grief for the beings from the smallest bug to the biggest mountain.
- Anger at the insanity of the climate emergency.
- Anger at those who do not recognize the connection between driving and our climate emergency. Electric cars are not the solution - taking the bus is.

#### **Despair**

- I am exhausted and depressed because it is apparent that our society isn't capable of coming up with solutions. We don't have the structure that is enabling solutions, and we are past the point of no return.
- I feel sadness and anger. Nature has endless cycles – species that get out of whack, brings on its own demise and then levels out its populations. We are overpopulated and need to cut our numbers. Male sperm counts are down, sexual desire is decreasing.
- At 15 or 16, I woke up to climate change as part of an activist community. I felt horror and anger, yet inspiration and motivation. Somewhere the intensity got lost, that sense of imminent doom. I thought maybe I could just keep going in my unsustainable lifestyle. Realization that this

what was not possible was followed by avoidance and numbness. We are now seeing such major evidence of destruction like scuba diving in sea of plastic. I want to have children – what kind of world would they live in? It is really intense and scary.

- A very idealistic young adult, I have focused on activism ever since, I am discouraged because we haven't been able to change the system. We are now consumeristic and materialistic, and the gap between the wealthy and the poor has increased so much. I feel deep sorrow about the loss and extinction and angry about the injustice to people, the majority of whom have been the most disadvantaged all along.
- We are in disharmony between the spirit and the physical, a place of insensitivity.
- The fires woke me up. I feel angry that our culture is so broken. Humanity is going through initiation into adulthood. To quote Eisenstein, we've used up all the toys in the toy box. This is the moment.

### **Denial**

- I was in denial and thought that it would not happen in my lifetime. I thought that I was doing enough. I like to believe that I was making the world better, but I have actually made some things worse.
- I feel helpless and hopeless and want to ignore it.
- I have been in avoidance. That has not been helpful.

### **Hope**

- The young kids who are demonstrating is encouraging.
- I am trying to get to joy and see the possibility in the transformation. There may be life on plus side
- We DO have the solutions, Why aren't we implementing them? There must be way to have our voices heard. Action needs to be fast. There is slim hope, but hope. I need to ask - "As a grandmother, did I do everything I could?"
- I grew up in the Far North. My father, a geologist, taught me to love the earth. We have talked about our own pain, but we need to also listen to the pain the earth is going through. We've been part of it all for very short time. We must keep a perspective on it – the earth will continue regardless.
- Today I am finding more in the connections to people and to the earth. The rage is no longer there. I am feeling joyful most days through inner work and dedication to connect deeper to the earth and to people.
- I remember being a teen and hearing about environmental issues. I thought that it would be easy. I continued as an activist. Then, I got so discouraged and learned how to farm. It is very

confusing living a country lifestyle on Salt Spring: I hear the despair in the world, but my reality is so different. Salt Spring is the last bastion. Sometimes I feel guilty holing myself up here.

- I am fully happy to be alive with community and connection.

## **Commitment to Action**

- I am working on energy efficiency and am excited about the interest finally being shown. I am writing to every MLA and counselor.

- I want to scream and wake everyone up. Statistics are demoralizing people. We are being fed a message of "no hope" when there is so much to do. We all need to wake up to it. It doesn't feel that we're past the point of no return. The crisis is here and has been here for 8 to 10 years. Do we cry, or do we start being reactionary? How do we step up? Speak to local governments.

- We are in crisis. We have to do more. We want a better life. We must use our circles of influence. Every step of each of the the solutions requires us to go deeper into the issues. Now is the time to act. How do we engage? Local politicians are the easiest to reach. Get going, but keep a positive attitude.

- I have reduced my needs and unlearned bad habits. I have gone back to the roots and relish the abundance.

- So much of climate issue is tied up in ability to grow food and feed ourselves We can each lead to positive action by simply growing a little bit of your own food.

- We need to roar. Use the power of our voices.

- I am a problem solver. I ride a bike. I am off the grid. I make my own biodiesel. I shit in bucket. We have a problem. It is time to get going.

- I want to get to end of my life feeing that I have made things better.

- I am done emailing and petitions. They do no good. I looked at personal choices. I didn't realize how critical the situation was until the IPCC report last Fall. But, the Extinction Rebellion has brought me hope. A regenerative culture is bringing hope. The question is "What can my personal efforts do in the face of governments buying pipelines?"

- I am learning how to live sustainably and intentionally by small things like bringing my own cups to cafes.

- I worked as psychotherapist with trauma and abuse. I now facilitate retreats that allow folks to move through pain to a stronger place.

- I take positive action through art as a way to reach other people and connect.

- Can we open our hearts more to receiving/allowing death into our lives? Do we have to keep everyone alive? Do we have to make life the one and only way? I want to buy nothing new. When buying, I take all the wrapping off and leave it in the store. Stop travelling, stop buying.

- I feel rage, yet also the impulse to roll up my sleeves and become an activist.

- I have worked for 20 years in climate action. I am angry at corporate systems. I have experienced continual frustration trying to get things done that need to be done. My reaction has been to get involved and make a change.
- I grew up with the sense that I would have to be a gorilla fighting and have been activist all my life. It is always about connection and division. Capitalism, which requires all the “isms,” needs to be solved. It is one big package and needs a mass movement to make it happen.
- Doom and gloom doesn’t work. There is so much to do. It is important that we all wake up. We are not necessarily past the point of no return. The crisis is here now. How do we engage the local politicians? It is for us to do. Let’s get going now.
- I get very angry at how our institutions, our leaders, are basically turning a blind eye. How many people are feathering their own nests at the expense of taking serious action? I have begun to realize that governments are not going to do anything.
- My kids need me to stand up and speak out. I was taught to never speak out. I am exhausted from it and am trying to figure out what to do.

### **Glad to be a part of this Circle**

- I am grateful to be here. This gathering feels like medicine. I just turned 20. I feel the grief. Where are the young people? I have so much to say, but it’s beautiful to hear it from others as well.
  - It is nice to talk about it and get inspired.
  - I am touched listening to everybody.
  - I am encouraged by coming to gathering like this.
  - It is gratifying to hear what people have to say.
  - I am finding some comfort and peace in sharing and choosing what’s best to do.
  - Community is important. I have felt sense of isolation. I want to work with people in a way that’s effective
  - I am happy to be part of this circle. The power of a circle is that it extends out and creates respectfulness.
  - We need to keep committing ourselves to listening and connecting and sharing.
  - We will find more answers through connections to people and the earth. Circles are the way – maybe not jumping to solutions but sensing the deeper pain and issues.
  - We need to grieve. It is important to look at how we are feeling.
- This is a journey. Feeling grief is part of creating hope. We have to face grief and get to trust. Trust is full commitment and engagement in our lives.

- I have gratitude for everyone's personal experiences – connections are so important. I am now hoping for more action and coming together to start to walk the talk.
- I am bothered by the lack of respect in our culture. I feel like an alien. Finding people to share this with is important.

**Quick Question #2: What helps you to reconnect with others, our planet, and yourself to move forward?**

- Duck Creek – my dog – my husband - my friends
- Everything we do is an expression of love – for each of us
- Being acutely aware of nature outside my doorstep
- Disconnecting devices
- Jean Claude reconnects me!
- Singing in nature
- Walking in nature
- Singing, crafting, being with people, nature
- Playing with kids, nature, singing, swimming
- People who have lived life and stood up for truth and justice
- Gardening with my son-in-law
- Birds and friends and family
- Harvesting food
- Serenity
- Walking in parks with my dogs – listening to water flowing and the different tones
- Gardening, birds, music, friends
- Living life and loving it, in nature and with loved ones
- Breathing in the earth
- Doing my best to stay out of resistance
- Listening with my heart to people I love
- Meditating and being in nature
- Taking the bus
- Health and happiness for all my relations
- Two amazing boys, community, action, and never flushing the toilet
- Near running water – acknowledging mortality – running
- Being in nature – observing small life – riding my bike
- Being in a state of gratitude, building soil
- Living and working on the land and dancing
- Being on the water, music, singing,
- Connection with the land
- Meeting with people, hearing about possibilities
- Nature and gardening

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