



Forum 2022 Handbook

Session 3

Building Inner Resilience: A Toolkit for Addressing Climate Anxiety

Session 3 featured a talk by Dr. Sarah Jaquette Ray, Chair of the Environmental Studies Department at Cal Poly Humboldt in Arcata, California (Wiyot territory)

Contact information for Dr. Ray:

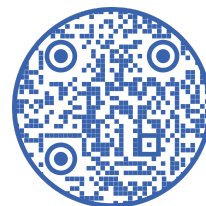
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A Daoist quote opened the program and set the tone for Dr. Ray's presentation:

*Who is it that can make muddy water clear?
If allowed to be still, it will gradually clear itself.*

Highlights from Dr. Ray's Presentation

1. Destructive non-regenerative practices have seeped into our lives in the form of pressure to do more, be more productive/useful, to make action and bigger impacts. To do all faster with regard to the climate crisis.
2. The planet needs us to go slower, smaller. To do less.
3. We jump into activity when we are triggered. Like addiction and distraction, worry and fear.
4. The urgency trap: The global message broadcasted does not encourage us to pause between the stimulus of digesting information and our response to it. Urgency overrides thoughtfulness, attention, and relationships. We speed up slow processes required to figure out the best approach, curtailing other voices at the table.
5. The undercurrents of perceptions derived from fear can perpetuate a sense of urgency. And feeling overwhelmed keeps us in a habit loop of swiping, actively numbing out, or resource consumption to reduce stress.
6. Perceiving the climate crises as a risk can motivate people to act more quickly. But this logic can backfire, and reduce our effectiveness at responding to climate change. And even condition us for burnout.
7. Rush and urgency to change can trigger our perception to imagine time as limited that leads to fractured relationships and pseudo inefficacy, this makes us not even try to tackle small bits of a big problem.
8. We have the power to reduce suffering of the planet and the self and each other. Whether we choose so or not depends on whether we see a problem as too large for us to fix. And if we perceive that we have enough time to do so.
9. When we are attached to action and outcomes, even those derived from good intention, our ability to manage stress and stay engaged in our work decreases.

Resources

Please consider the following resources if you are interested in learning more about current approaches to mitigating climate anxiety.

Films & Program Recordings

Building Inner Resilience: A Toolkit For Addressing Climate Anxiety

Facing the reality of climate change is daunting whether you approach environmental advocacy by making careful consumer choices, working with environmental organizations, or exerting pressure on local and state agencies. View Dr. Sarah Jaquette Ray's [compelling presentation](#) to EFM on January 10, 2023 to gain valuable ideas for managing the emotional fallout of confronting environmental change.

Practice You Podcast with Elena Brower, Episode 139: Yung Pueblo

This [podcast episode](#) provides guidance on letting go and practicing acceptance of life's inevitable turbulence. The context of this episode is not centered on climate change, yet the conversation offers a perspective on how to rest, communicate within our relationships, and mindfully accept what we can and cannot do.

Practice Forest-bathing: Fewer Maladies, More Well-being?

In this [YouTube video](#), Kirsten Dirksen explores the research of Japanese scholars suggesting that forest-bathing can prevent illness and help regulate stress.

Books and Articles

How To Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy

This highly acclaimed [book](#) by Jenny Odell offers a perspective on the connection between technology and capitalism, and outlines a way to find more meaningful political action. From a review in the New York Times: "Odell sees our attention as the most precious—and overdrawn—resource we have. And we must actively and continuously choose how we use it. We might not spend it on things that capitalism has deemed important ... but once we can start paying a new kind of attention, she writes, we can undertake bolder forms of political action, reimagine humankind's role in the environment, and arrive at more meaningful understandings of happiness and progress."

Regeneration: Ending the Climate Crisis in One Generation

This [book](#) by Paul Hawken offers a visionary approach that addresses climate change and biodiversity loss in the context of justice, equity, and human dignity. Hawken has developed a strategy of action, policy, and transformation aimed at ending the climate crisis in one generation. In this [excerpt](#) from the book, Hawken offers a checklist that provides a guide to the small and slow process of addressing climate change.

Want to See Political Change? Look to the Margins

In this [article](#), Rebecca Solnit suggests that change becomes invisible when we forget that significant accomplishments occur as a result of many small but important actions unfolding slowly over time. Taking the short view often leads to defeatism and despair when the valued outcome is not attained quickly. She makes a case for thinking about action in broad terms and viewing change as a slow process. Solnit also offers compelling examples of significant political achievements that built on years of activism, as when, after 31 years of organizing, Native Nevadan and other rural people defeated Las Vegas' attempt to extract water from the desert.

Confronting Climate Anxiety: 8 Scientist Turning Climate Anxiety into Climate Action

How can we balance the advice to move slowly and take a long term perspective with the urgent need to take action? This [series of interviews](#) published on the UC Davis website reveals how eight successful scientists and activists continue their work even as they experience grief and anxiety about climate change.

Peter Moyle, UCD fish biologist, keeps a focus on the many wonderful relationships and activities he has experienced over a lifetime of teaching, research, and advocacy: "It's been a good life. I've had so many good students. I enjoy being outside, telling people about the environment. I've gotten positive and some negative feedback from my involvement in lawsuits to protect the native fish. But in many small ways, I've done what I can to keep the native fish going."

FINAL THOUGHTS

After you've had a chance to watch Dr. Ray's presentation and look through the resources in this handbook, you might want to reflect on the following questions. Can you detect any shifts in your perceptions and emotional responses to climate change and environmental advocacy?

1. Have you become aware of the ways that destructive and non-regenerative practices such as a focus on hyper-productivity may have seeped into your own life?
2. Can you identify whose interests may be served by encouraging a focus on hyper productivity rather than reflection on the common good? What are the effects on you of being hyper productive?
3. What is the effect on your sense of agency and self-efficacy if you define effective climate action solely in terms of achieving a spectacular system overhaul?