

SEVEN IDEAS

to Tackle Climate Change

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July 2010

Summary Version

It's very dis-spiriting to be in the climate movement right now. The big Copenhagen climate conference collapsed in a mess, and so far, no-one has been able to put it together again.

On top of that, the climate deniers think they are in heaven, convinced that global warming is a hoax designed by a secret cabal of European bureaucrats to destroy the world's economy.

New ideas are therefore needed, not so much for the solutions, but for the way we approach the problem. For the full illustrated paper that outlines these seven ideas, click [here](#).

1. Change the Story

For twenty years, our framing of the climate story has been to see it as a problem that we want to make go away. The very verb 'to mitigate' means 'to make less worse', and when applied to climate change, it encourages people to think of the current reality as normal, and just in need of some emissions reductions to make the threat go away.

This encourages a defensive approach, akin to an imaginary Kyoto soccer team playing the entire game in defence in the hope that they can stop global warming from scoring too many goals. Using this analogy, a 0-0 draw would be seen as a victory.

If we look back at our human history, or at any good sports contest, we can observe that success requires that the protagonists must be able to play in attack - and this requires the ability to hold a firm vision of success, whether it is of slavery ended, democracy established, or a war won.

We need to reframe the global warming story as a commanding vision of a world that can flourish and prosper without fossil fuels, deforestation, and wasteful consumerism - a vision that that will make people welcome the new technology and lifestyle changes as harbingers of a sustainable green world, instead of complaining that they are wearisome interferences with life-as-usual.

2. Integrate the Issues

Climate change is only one symptom of a much larger problem, and we can't make the symptom go away unless we solve the core problem, which is our unsustainable way of living, and use of energy.

Our fossil-fueled habits are also the cause of the Gulf oil spill, air pollution, landscapes devastated by coal mining, and foreign policies distorted by dependence on unsavory oil-exporting regimes. On top of this there is the looming problem of peak oil, which the International Energy Agency says will occur by 2020. We need to address the issues together, and be much more confident about the many benefits the solutions will bring. We are entering a great transition into a green sustainable future; this is something many people accept and understand.

3. Break Open the Kyoto Basket

Instead of addressing all six greenhouse gases in one treaty, we should break open the basket and develop separate treaties to address methane and the F gases. We also need a treaty to tackle black carbon (diesel soot), which may be responsible for as much as 21% of global warming. I also have some thoughts about natural gas, which leaks raw methane on a consistent basis.

4: Launch a Series of Global Solutions Treaties

The proposal here is that we should go out and make victories happen in the form of global solutions treaties to accelerate the progress of solar power, geothermal power, auto-efficiency, electric vehicles, best transit practices, and so on. As my friend Alex Boston said, “We need a constellation of treaties — not just a single shooting star that could burn out.”

5: Create Descriptive Models of a Future Green World

If we are to succeed in the transition to a green sustainable world, people must be able to visualize the future as clearly as African-American slaves pictured the promised land. Martin Luther King’s famous speech was not, “Mitigation! I see mitigation for our many woes!” It was, “I have a dream.”

The vision needs to be so clear that people will be motivated to devote their lives to achieving it, accompanied by analysis that shows how energy can be produced, farms operated and goods transported without fossil fuels in waste-free, sustainable future.

6: Communicate with the Public More Clearly

Scientists need to communicate with technical precision, and for many, the black and white clarity and invective of the deniers is much easier to comprehend. It is not the climate scientists who should step up to this challenge, but the journalists, film directors, animators, authors and leaders of civil society who are free to adopt an easier touch in the way they communicate.

7: Organize!

My final idea is that we need six new levels of organization -

- a) A Global Ecological Alliance of nations that will work together to champion the vision;
- b) A Global Alliance of Cities, Businesses & Organizations, unifying the climate leadership that already exists;
- c) A Green Wikipedia;
- d) A Green Internet Portal in every community, as a doorway for people who want to become engaged;
- e) An on-line Climate Solutions 101 course; and
- f) A Climate Deniers Push-Back Network of people who are willing to learn the climate denial arguments, and be able to respond.

We have faced many challenges during the evolution of human civilization on Earth. Some we have lost, but many we have overcome. This new challenge stands in direct line from the Renaissance, the Scientific Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, and all the achievements of the past 200 years. We should address it with the confidence that these achievements inspire, and go out and win our victory.

Guy Dauncey is an independent author, speaker and futurist who works to develop a positive vision of a sustainable future, and to translate that vision into action. He is President of the [BC Sustainable Energy Association](#), and author or co-author of nine books, including *Cancer: 101 Solutions to a Preventable Epidemic*, and *The Climate Challenge: 101 Solutions to Global Warming*. His website is www.earthfuture.com. He lives in Victoria, Canada.