



CLIMATE COMMUNICATIONS AND BEHAVIOR CHANGE

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CARA PIKE

Director, the Social Capital Project

cara@thesocialcapitalproject.org

THE Social Capital PROJECT
The Resource Innovation Group

WHY COMMUNICATIONS & BEHAVIOR CHANGE?

- 1. Low threat saliency.**
 - 2. Behavior changes produce results as policy changes scale-up.**
 - 3. New technologies must be used properly to achieve their potential.**
 - 4. Policy support increases when people are engaged in solutions.**
 - 5. Successful change strategies are driven by emotionally powerful 'frames.'**
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FRAMES DEFINE HOW WE SEE THE WORLD



A frame is a “central organizing idea...for making sense of relevant events....”

Gamson/Modigliani

CHANGE STAGES AND MECHANISMS

Disinterest Deliberation Design Doing Defend

Cognitive and Experiential Change Mechanisms

Disturbances → |

Awareness-building _____▶ |

Choice expansion _____▶ |

Emotional Inspiration _____▶ |

Supportive relationships _____▶ |

**Organizational/
self-reevaluation** _____▶ |

Behavior Change Mechanisms _____▶

Commitment _____▶ |

Helping relationships _____▶ |

Reinforcement _____▶ |

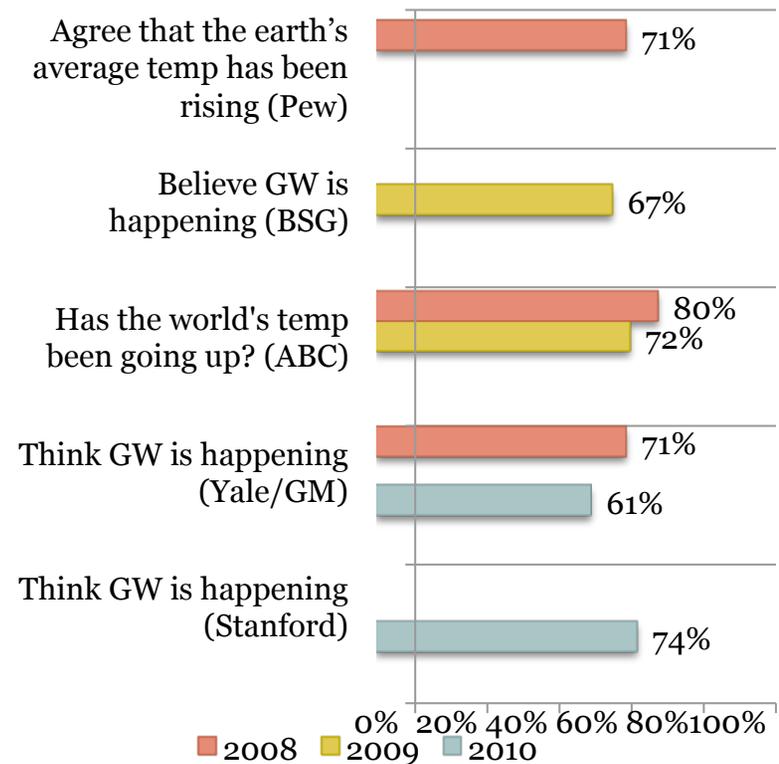
Substitution _____▶ |

Structural Redesign ▶ |

PUBLIC OPINION: IS IT HAPPENING?



Belief that global warming is happening has dropped.

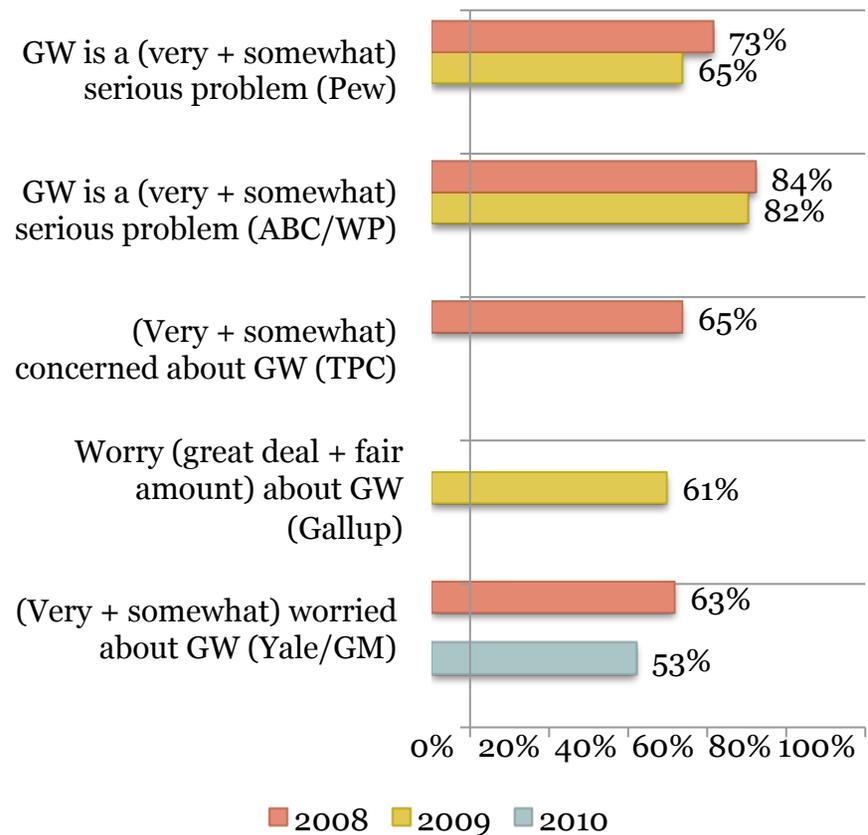


PUBLIC OPINION: HOW WORRIED?



Levels of concern have dropped.

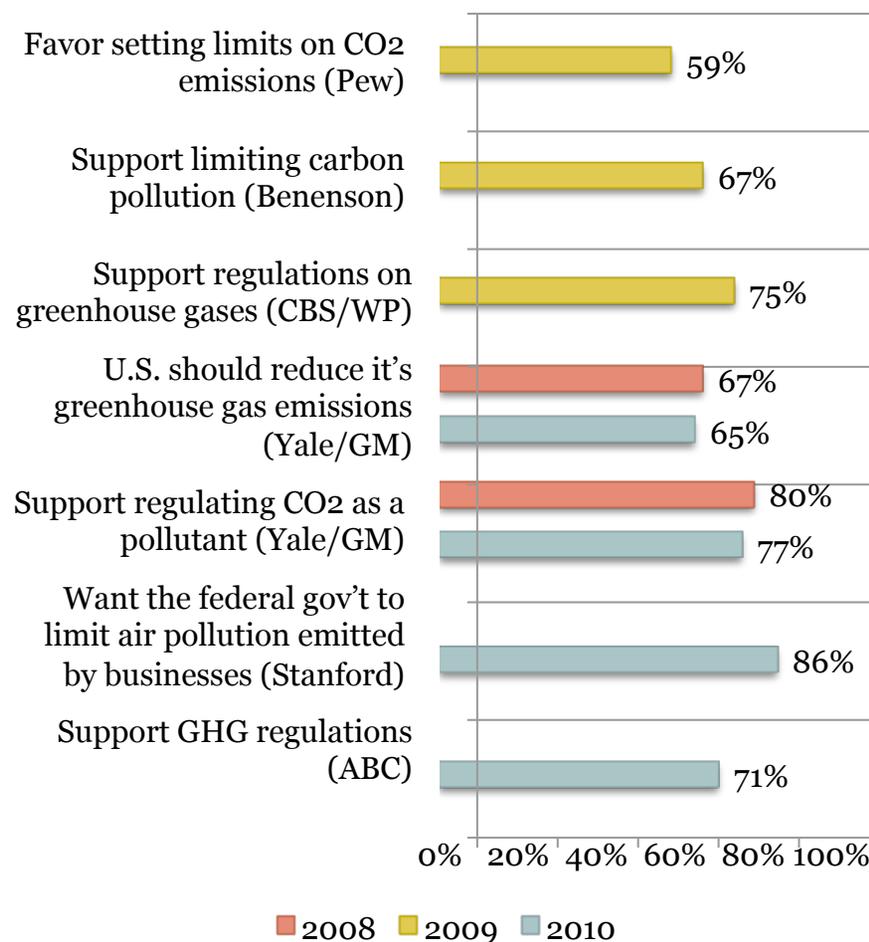
Americans continue to think that global warming is about plants and animals, but not US.



PUBLIC OPINION: REDUCE EMISSIONS?



Most Americans still want to see government action on climate.



HOW DO YOU MOTIVATE CHANGE?



- 1. TENSION:** Dissonance between a desired & current condition.
- 2. EFFICACY:** Confidence in one's capacity to reduce the tension.
- 3. BENEFITS:** Belief that the benefits of new behavior are greater than the downsides of change.

CHALLENGES IN BUILDING TENSION



1. The Terrarium Challenge

Framed as an environmental issue, global warming is about plants and animals.



2. The Weather Challenge

Day to day weather changes versus larger climatic shifts.



CHALLENGES IN BUILDING TENSION

3. The Warming Challenge

Limits the view to a slow, uniform warming that is easy to dismiss or caricature.



4. The Someday Challenge

Associating energy solutions with the future makes them distant and the path unclear.



CHALLENGES IN BUILDING TENSION

5. The "Technology Will Save Us" Challenge

Experts will come up with technological solutions to global warming.



6. The Long List of Impacts Challenge

Lists of frightening impacts can be overwhelming.



4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDING TENSION

1. Illustrate what it means for the climate to change.
2. Leverage the idea of “too much carbon.”
3. Convey the link between energy and global warming.
4. Emphasize that we are facing a moment of choice.



1. ILLUSTRATE WHAT IT MEANS FOR THE CLIMATE TO CHANGE



- ***Global warming is not just about temperature – it is about the basic weather patterns, including wind, rainfall and storms, that make up our climate.***
- ***Weather patterns affect just about everything in our lives – the capacity to grow the food we eat, the ability to keep our homes and families safe from extreme weather, etc.***

2. LEVERAGE THE IDEA OF “TOO MUCH CARBON”



- Use Terms such as: “carbon overload” or “carbon load.”

Simply put, we’re putting too much carbon in the atmosphere, by burning fossil fuels such as coal for energy. The good news is that we can deal with our carbon overload problem with solutions that exist today.

3. CONVEY THE LINK BETWEEN ENERGY AND GLOBAL WARMING



- Make the connection between energy, carbon and global warming.
- Clarify what is meant by “clean energy” and avoid terms like “green” or “sustainable” energy.”

Burning fossil fuels is what puts carbon into the atmosphere – whether it’s fuel for our cars or to keep the lights on. For example, most of our electricity comes from burning coal.

4. EMPHASIZE THAT WE ARE FACING A MOMENT OF CHOICE



- Emphasize a moment of choice and accountability for not acting. Illustrate how ignoring global warming will let the problem get worse.
- Talk about how taking smart and responsible sense now is the common sense approach.

The time for arguing and delaying is in the past. We are at a crossroads, with a choice between responsibly addressing the problem now, or dealing with severe consequences later.

CHALLENGES IN CREATING EFFICACY



1. The Kitchen Sink Environmentalism Challenge

Lack of clarity around the causes gets in the way of seeing the right action to take.



2. The Leaders are Taking Care of it Challenge

If global warming is so serious, then leaders must be acting.



CHALLENGES IN CREATING EFFICACY

3. The "Little Things Make a Difference" Challenge

If individual behavior change is the sole focus, it can distract from the need for collective action.



4. The Perfection Challenge

A bit of skepticism is okay but can also lead to reluctance for solutions that are not 'perfect.'



CHALLENGES IN CREATING EFFICACY



5. The Environmental Overload Challenge

Green is a buzz word. People don't know who trust or how to sort out environmental claims.



4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CREATING EFFICACY

1. Connect global warming to other priority issues.
2. Avoid pollution as a lead idea.
3. Focus on solutions at all levels – individual, organizational & societal.
4. Give the audience a clear role in the story.



1. CONNECT GLOBAL WARMING TO OTHER PRIORITY ISSUES



- Connect global warming to things people already care about (like the economy and job creation) and focus on the actionable solutions they can get involved in.

There are simple things we can all do to get America back on track, such as saving energy at home. We can save money and create jobs by making our buildings and cars run on less energy.

2. AVOID POLLUTION AS A LEAD IDEA



- Connect pollution to carbon-based energy use and other causes of global warming.

Pollution, like carbon dioxide, collects in the earth's atmosphere. It traps the sun's heat, which causes the earth to heat up at an accelerated rate.

3. FOCUS ON SOLUTIONS



- Make it clear that government needs to play a proactive role, rather than waiting for the energy situation to “evolve on its own.”

Business leaders are looking for government to set new standards and invest in carbon-free energy solutions.

- Make the need for collective action apparent, and highlight the importance of citizen action in keeping government accountable.

We need to address global warming together. Driving less helps, but high fuel efficiency standards are as important. Turning off the lights is a good thing, but we also need more carbon-free energy sources.

4. GIVE THE AUDIENCE A CLEAR ROLE IN THE STORY



- Help people to bridge between personal and collective action.
- Lower the bar for “collective action” so that people can begin to get engaged and identify themselves with the issue.

CHALLENGES IN CONVEYING BENEFITS

1. The Economic Benefits Challenge

Economic benefits are important but alone are not enough.



2. The Identity Challenge

Global warming has become partisan and is associated with environmental elites.



CHALLENGES IN CONVEYING BENEFITS



3. The Environmental Fatalism Challenge

Environmental degradation is seen as just an inevitable part of the cost of having the American lifestyle.



HOW TO CONVEY BENEFITS



TWO RECOMMENDATIONS to convey the benefits of change

1. Tie the need for carbon-free energy choices to the full set of benefits related to economic prosperity.
2. Create a connection to people's identities, interests, and worldviews.



1. TIE THE NEED FOR CARBON-FREE ENERGY CHOICES TO THE POSSIBILITY OF ECONOMIC PROSPERITY



- Appeal to higher-level values about energy and economy by emphasizing energy independence, national security, and American jobs.
- Focus on the need for action now, rather than emphasizing a future transformation.

Shifting away from the carbon-based fuels that cause global warming will create good jobs for millions of Americans. The U.S. can lead and take advantage of this shift, or miss the boat as other countries, such as China, act more quickly.

1. TIE THE NEED FOR CARBON-FREE ENERGY CHOICES TO THE POSSIBILITY OF ECONOMIC PROSPERITY



- Provide concrete examples of the types of jobs and economic opportunities that will result.
- Emphasize successful use of renewable energy technologies.
- Illustrate the opportunities associated with energy efficiency as a way to overcome the term's lack of power and urgency.

2. CREATE A CONNECTION TO IDENTITY



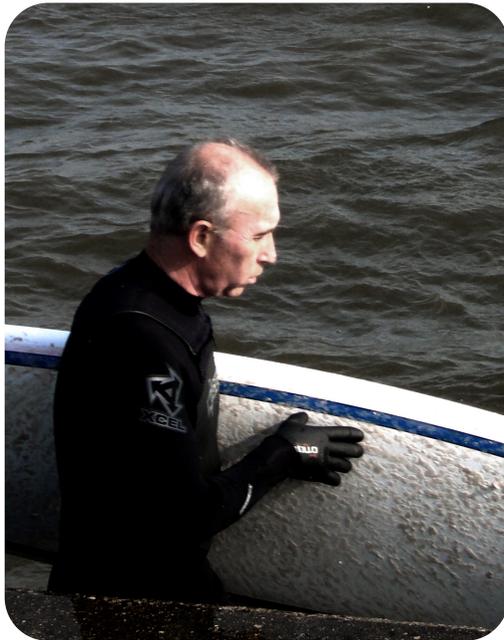
- Connect the dots to community, jobs, families, recreational opportunities and the other issues people care about on a daily basis.

We all care about improving our communities. With smarter decisions about development, we can cut down commute time, save fuel, and reduce carbon that causes global warming at the same time.

Being responsible stewards means ensuring that our children have the opportunity to enjoy the same quality of life that we've had. Global warming threatens that way of life and investing in clean energy can bring economic development to communities that need it.

SEGMENT	% U.S.	WORLDVIEW
Greenest Americans	9%	Everything is connected, and our daily actions have an impact on the environment.
Idealists	3%	Green lifestyles are part of a new way of being.
Caretakers	24%	Healthy families need a healthy environment.
Traditionalists	20%	Religion and morality dictate actions in a world where humans are superior to nature.
Driven Independents	7%	Protecting the earth is fine as long as it doesn't get in the way of success.
Murky Middles	17%	Indifferent to most everything including the environment.
Fatalists	5%	Getting material and status needs met on a daily basis trumps worries about the planet.
Materialists	7%	Little can be done to protect the environment, so why not get a piece of the pie.
Cruel Worlders	6%	Resentment and isolation leave no room for environmental concerns.
UnGreens	3%	Environmental degradation and pollution are inevitable parts of America's prosperity.

GREENEST AMERICANS



9% of adults, 4% of voters
35% make \$100k+
49% have post grad degree
25% are 65+ years of age
89% Caucasian
93% very likely to vote

68% rank GW as one of the most important issues

Tap

Ecological Concern
Comfort with Ambiguity
Civic Engagement
Global Consciousness

Avoid

National Pride
American Entitlement
Confidence in Big Business

IDEALISTS



3% of adults, 2% of voters

34% make >\$100k

44% between 25-44 years of age

29% are students

73% Caucasian

53% very likely to vote

51% rank GW as one of the most important issues

Tap

Enthusiasm for New Technology

Rejection of Authority

American Dream

Avoid

Duty

Saving on Principle

Importance of Discipline

CARETAKERS



24% of adults, 21% of voters

26% African-American

18% Hispanic/Latino

60% make <\$75k

70% very likely to vote

44% rank GW as one of the most important issues

Tap

Group Egalitarianism

American Liberty

Ecological Concern

Avoid

American Entitlement

Unfettered Individualism

TRADITIONALISTS



20% of adults, 24% of voters

81% Caucasian

47% between 25-44 years of age

32% between 45-64 years of age

55% live in a rural location or small town

22% rank GW as one of the most important issues

Tap

Duty

National Pride

Liberal Communitarianism

Altruism

Avoid

Excessive Taxation

Apocalypse

Humans superior to animals

UNGREENS



3% of adults, 3% of voters

63% male

32% make >\$100k

53% live in a rural area or small town

96% identify as conservatives

83% very likely to vote

13% rank GW as one of the most important issues

Tap

National Pride

Importance of Discipline

Confidence in Big Business

Avoid

Ecological Concern

Global Consciousness

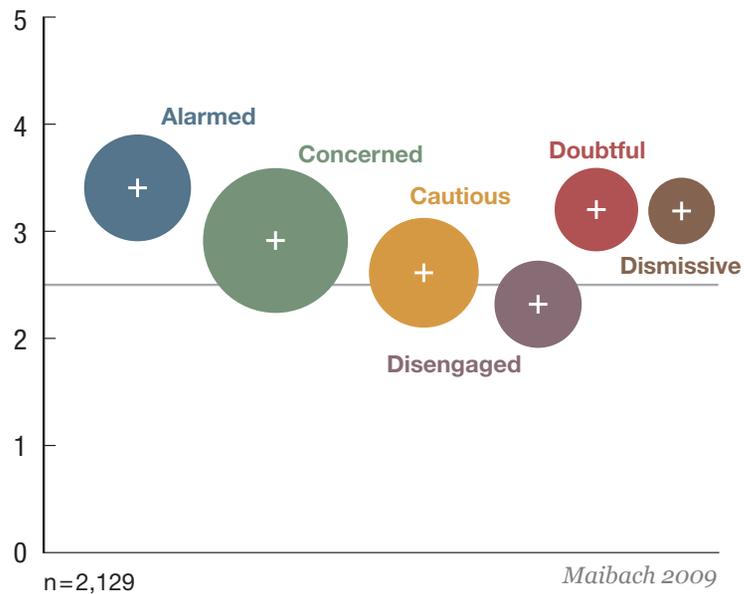
Comfort with Ambiguity

MOTIVATION ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM



Number of energy efficiency improvements made to home

Number of improvements made from the following list of five: Insulating the attic; caulking and weather-stripping the home; installation of an energy-efficient water heater; installation of an energy-efficient furnace; installation of an energy-efficient air conditioner.



Actions Americans want to take to improve the energy efficiency of their homes over the coming year:

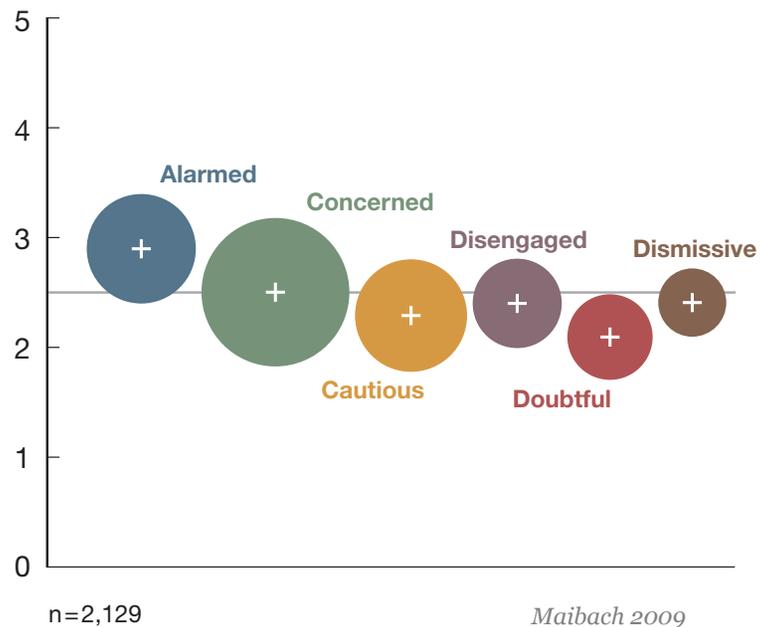
- Insulating the attic (9-17%)
- Caulking & weather-stripping (12-28%)
- Getting a more efficient furnace (12-29%)
- Getting a more efficient air conditioner (14-27%)
- Getting a more efficient water heater (14-30%)
- Changing most of their lighting CFLs (28-51%)

MOTIVATION ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM



Number of habitual conservation actions

Number of actions that respondent does "always" or "often" from the following list of five: turning off unneeded lights; raising the thermostat to 76 or higher or using less air conditioning in summer; lowering the thermostat to 68 or cooler in winter; walking or biking instead of driving; using public transportation or car pools.



Routine energy conservation actions

- Regularly turn off lights (93%)
- Set the thermostat higher or use AC in summer (56%)
- Set thermostat lower in winter (63%)
- Regularly use public transportation or car-pool (17%)
- Regularly walk or bike instead of driving (19%)

Contact

CARA PIKE

250.748.1784

cara@thesocialcapitalproject.org

To download the guide:
www.thesocialcapitalproject.org

