



Worried About Climate? You're Not Alone

You know that old saying – “what you don’t know can’t hurt you?” Well it turns out the opposite is also true. What you do know *can* hurt you, especially if you’re not talking about it or acting on what you know.

And according to a recent study, 89% of the world’s population knows that we desperately need decisive action on climate change. That study surveyed a 130,000 people, in over 125 countries which account for most of the world’s CO2 emissions and the results were conclusive – the vast majority of us know that the climate crisis is an existential threat and that our governments must act now to radically reduce emissions and increase climate resiliency to stave off already unfolding climate disasters.

But here’s the weird thing about the survey results - many of us, in our various corners of the world, seem to think our anxiety about climate puts us in a minority.

What’s even more remarkable is the fact that in all but a few nations, an average of 69% of people surveyed were willing to sacrifice 1% of their income to address the problem. But when asked whether other people would do the same, 57% said “no.”

So why do so many of us believe we’re alone in our concerns about climate? Well, according to another study in the USA, one of the main reasons is that we simply don’t talk about it, so we don’t really know that a majority of people around the world – a staggering 89% - share our anxiety.

The puzzle then is this - why are so many people suffering in silence rather than sharing their worries and acting on them?

One of the reasons for the silence may be the campaign of misinformation – read here, lies – that the fossil fuel industry and certain politicians have spent decades disseminating.

The other reason may have more to do with a pervasive kind of political cynicism and our desire to duck and run from conflict. In other words, why raise a subject with your family friends and community if it could possibly lead to a heated argument? Why demand politicians take decisive action on climate, if you firmly believe they won't, because your opinion doesn't count

Well, here's the thing. We're not asking politicians to act based on our personal concerns but on those expressed by 89% of the world's population. And while there may be a few die hard climate deniers among us, chances are if you raise the subject, whether at the dinner table or in a public forum, most people will validate your concerns.

For others, silence on climate change may also be based in a reluctance to read or talk about anything even remotely approaching a “depressing subject” – and, believe me, I've heard this a million times, in a million different ways. To which I always respond, yes, the inaction and ever pressing reality of climate change is depressing, and it can make you feel helpless. But it will feel a lot less depressing if you actually talk about it and take action with others to demand change.



The kind of change that forces our politicians -including our newly elected federal government - to stop their infernal dithering and bowing to the corporate lords of fossil fuels and do what needs to be done now to reduce emissions.

Because here's the thing - the fact that 89% of world is worried and wants action on climate is actually fantastically good news. Because it means that we're not alone. That person next to you on the bus, the businesswoman hurrying past you on her way to work, your 16 year old kid and 80 year old grandmother are, more likely than not, on your side.

They're likely feeling what you feel, know what you know and want what you want – to secure a safe future for our planet, our communities and our families.

The other piece of good news is this – weak-kneed governments and oil and gas oligarchs can't win if 89% of us stand against them. They can't triumph if millions of ordinary people flood the city streets of the world in peaceful protest to say, "Enough."

Enough of the failures to meet emission goals. Enough with doing nothing to protect the natural world that protects us from climate impacts.

The truth is our governments can no longer pretend they don't have the popular support to do what needs to be done to avert a climate disaster.

We just need to tell them, loud and clear, to do it.



