

My name is Lisa Strickland-Clark.

I'm a psychologist and I have re-scheduled clients at short notice and driven two hours to be here today.

I would like to add my voice to those of people saying that this Bill does not have stringent enough targets and it needs to move more quickly through the legislative process . I will not go into the details of the Bill as I believe others will do that. I would like to focus on some basic principles.

Before I do that, I'd like to remind people of what we are facing here. This is an excerpt from a recently published report by the US Army College called 'Implications of Climate Change for the US Military'

Sea level rise, changes in water and food security, and more frequent extreme weather events are likely to result in the migration of large segments of the population. Rising seas will displace tens (if not hundreds) of millions of people, creating massive, enduring instability. This migration will be most pronounced in those regions where climate vulnerability is exacerbated by weak institutions and governance and underdeveloped civil society. Recent history has shown that mass human migrations can result in increased propensity for conflict and turmoil as new populations intermingle with and compete against established populations. More frequent extreme weather events will also increase demand for military humanitarian assistance.

I want to focus on four key areas:

Firstly, The

Precautionary principle

The **principle** implies that there is a social responsibility to protect the public from exposure to harm, when scientific investigation has found a plausible risk. These protections can be relaxed only if further scientific findings emerge that provide sound evidence that no harm will result. The Principle has central components: taking preventive action in the face of uncertainty; shifting the burden of proof to

the proponents of an activity; exploring a wide range of alternatives to possibly harmful actions; and increasing public participation in decision making.

The precautionary principle is relevant here.

Secondly the conservative nature of the IPCC report

Bill 213 draws upon the IPCC report as a guide. That report is now 1 year old and it is becoming clear that the targets outlined in that report are overly conservative and that swifter more far reaching change is needed.

The IPCC report is known for its conservative nature.

A recently published book by climate scientist *Dale Jamieson, Michael Oppenheimer and Naomi Oreskes* s addressed **Scientists underestimating the speed of change** **The book:**

Discerning Experts: The Practices of Scientific Assessment for Environmental Policy.

STATED THAT

While climate skeptics and deniers often accuse scientists of exaggerating the threats associated with the climate crisis, the available evidence suggests the opposite. By and large, scientists have either been right in their assessments, or have been unduly conservative.

When new observations have provided more or better data, the findings for ice extent, sea level rise and ocean temperature have generally been worse than previously thought.

Scientists actively seek to find their common ground, and to focus on those areas of agreement. In some cases, where there are irreconcilable differences of opinion, scientists may say nothing, giving the erroneous impression that nothing is known.

How does the pressure for un-equivocality lead to underestimation? Consider a case in which most scientists think that the correct answer to a question is in the range one to 10, but some believe that it could be as high as 100. In this case,

everyone will agree that it is at least one to 10, but not everyone will agree that it could be as high as 100.

Therefore, the area of agreement is one to 10, and this will be reported as the consensus view. Wherever there is a range of possible outcomes that includes a long, high-end tail of probability, the area of overlap will lie at or near the low end.

For political leaders and business people, we think it is important for you to know that it is extremely unlikely that scientists are exaggerating the threat of the climate crisis. It is far more likely that things are worse than scientists have said. We have already seen that the impacts of increased greenhouse gases in the atmosphere are unfolding more rapidly than scientists predicted. There is a high likelihood that they will continue to do so, and that the IPCC estimates – that emissions must be rapidly reduced, if not entirely eliminated, by 2050 – may well be optimistic. The fact that this conclusion is hard to swallow does not make it untrue.

Thirdly, the law of physics

How close to the precipice do we want to go? How much of a gamble do we want to take?

What we are dealing with here is not subject to opinion or good intentions. It's not an optional add on that we can take or leave. We are dealing with the law of physics. If I leave an ice-cube on the counter-top and go out for an hour, when I get back it will have melted. It doesn't matter how much I've been hoping it won't melt or how convincing I was when I spoke about it to interested parties while I was out. The ice has melted.

The ice on our planet is melting at an unprecedented speed and drafting a well-intentioned Bill that we hope will do the job is not going to change things.

This is an emergency and it needs to be treated as such, from today onwards.

What are the characteristics of an emergency?

When we are in emergency mode we are focused on..

	Normal mode	Emergency mode
Priorities	Many balanced priorities	Solving the crisis = One top priority
Resources	Distributed across priorities and saved for future	Huge allocation of resources towards solution
Focus	Distributed across priorities	Laser-like focus
Self-esteem source	Individual accomplishment	Contributing to the solution

In an emergency speed of response is crucial. This Bill gives a deadline of Dec 2020 for the creation of a strategic plan. What kind of emergency can wait for a year to be implemented?Another important issue is how do we begin to lead

the public into emergency mode? More characteristics of an emergency include:

Normal political-paralysis mode	Emergency mode
Crises are constrained within business-as-usual mode	Society engages productively with crises, but not in panic mode
Spin, denial, and 'politics as usual' are employed	The situation is assessed with brutal honesty
No urgent threat is perceived	Immediate, or looming, threat to life, health, property, or environment is perceived
Problem is not yet serious	High probability of escalation beyond control if immediate action is not taken
Time of response is not important	Speed of response is crucial
The crisis is one of many issues	The crisis is of the highest priority
A labor market is in place	Emergency project teams are developed, and labor planning is instituted
Budgetary 'restraint' is shown	All available / necessary resources are devoted to the emergency and, if necessary, governments borrow heavily
Community and markets function as usual	Non-essential functions and consumption may be curtailed or rationed
A slow rate of change occurs because of systemic inertia	Rapid transition and scaling up occurs
Market needs dominate response choices and thinking	Planning, fostering innovation and research take place
Targets and goals are determined by political tradeoffs	Critical targets and goals are not compromised
There is a culture of compromise	Failure is not an option
There is a lack of national leadership, and politics is adversarial and incremental.	Bipartisanship and effective leadership are the norm

This Bill needs to contain the most stringent targets possible; zero emissions by 2025. It needs to shorten the deadlines for action. The Premier needs to be involved on a daily basis, not once a year.

It needs to be our number one priority and placed at the centre of the lives of Nova Scotians and to be treated as the emergency which it is. Citizens assemblies should be formed to oversee the process as this cannot be left to one party to implement. We cannot afford to fail.

Thank you.

Leading the Public Into Emergency Mode

Introducing the Climate Emergency Movement



Margaret Klein Salamon, PhD [Follow](#)

May 24 · 44 min read



Imagine there is a fire in your house.

What do you do?

What do you think about?

You do whatever you can to try to put out the fire or exit the house. You make a plan of action.

Your senses are heightened, you are focused like a laser, and you put your entire self into your actions. You enter emergency mode.

The climate crisis is an unprecedented emergency. It is the United States' top national security threat, public health threat, and moral emergency. Humanity is careening towards the deaths of billions of people, millions of species, and the collapse of organized civilization. States under severe climate stress, such as Syria, are already starting to fail, bringing chaos, violence, and misery to the region. The world order itself is crumbling, in significant part due to climatic and resource pressures. The climate crisis acts as a "threat multiplier" making not only severe storms, but also war, nuclear exchange, and epidemics more likely. Britain is leaving the European Union, and America's political system, undermined for decades by corruption and bad faith, is in dire peril.

How we react to the climate crisis will shape centuries and millennia to come. Given the stakes, and the extremely short timetable, it is imperative that we strive to maximize the efficacy of our actions — from ourselves as individuals, from our nation, from the global community of nations, and from the organizations that are trying to avert this catastrophe.

In this paper, I will introduce the psychological concept of "emergency mode" which is how individuals and groups function optimally during an existential or moral crisis — often achieving great feats through intensely focused motivation. I will argue that the *goal of the climate movement must be to lead the public out of "normal" mode and into emergency mode.*

My argument has huge implications for the climate movement's communication style, advocacy, and strategy. Because emergency mode is contagious, the best strategy is for climate activists and organizations to 1) go into emergency mode themselves, and 2) communicate truthfully and emotionally about a) the climate emergency, b) the need for emergency mobilization, and c) the fact that *they are in emergency mode*, as clearly and emphatically as possible.

The initial publication of *Leading the Public into Emergency Mode* in 2016 suggested this approach as a "New Strategy for the Climate Movement." I am absolutely thrilled to report that in the 3 years since publication, this approach — both as a policy program

and as a mode of campaigning and communicating, has been adopted by an extremely energized set of organizations. My claim that embracing the truth and campaigning for an emergency response to the climate crisis would be highly effective is proving true. The climate emergency movement has exploded onto the US and global political scene, and is growing all the time.

This updated and revised essay 1) explains the theory and practice of “emergency mode,” and 2) introduces the organizations and campaigns that comprise the Climate Emergency Movement, as humanity’s best hope.



Breakthrough: a Climate Emergency Movement now exists!

I founded and now direct a national volunteer based think tank and advocacy organization called The Climate Mobilization (TCM) that is based on an understanding of emergency mode, as well as the transformative power of climate truth. We launched in 2014, telling the truth about the Climate Emergency — it is an acute and existential threat to us all — and advocating for a WWII-Scale Climate Mobilization to eliminate emissions in 10 years or less, and initiate a massive drawdown program.

For the first four years of existence our language, vision, and timelines were relatively marginal — though they inspired fierce devotion in our volunteers and supporters. Our

strategy always centered around “inception” and “pollination” meaning that if we could “de-risk” our approach and prove its viability, then other larger groups would begin taking it on.



At the end of 2018, the dam finally burst and the Climate Emergency Movement has emerged, finally, as a powerful force. This movement tells the truth about the scale of the crisis, and demands a “Green New Deal” or a WWII-scale climate mobilization — a 10 year transition to zero emissions plus drawdown. Led by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and the Justice Democrats in Congress, the Sunrise Movement, Zero Hour, School Strikers, and Extinction Rebellion in the streets, this movement has burst forth with tremendous force and momentum. As of the time of this writing, more than 500 cities in 4 countries have declared a “Climate Emergency,” and most of the major Democratic Presidential candidates have stated that they support the Green New Deal.

The Climate Mobilization is proud to have made critical contributions to these breakthroughs, by developing, building, and spreading the Climate Emergency Declaration campaign, through policy development such as the *Victory Plan* and more. (See our “impact page” for more about how we paved the way.)

We have been able to achieve all of this because we have entered emergency mode! We are extraordinarily focused on and dedicated to the mission: spreading climate truth in order to commence WWII scale climate mobilization that eliminates emissions in 10 years, restores a safe climate, halts the 6th mass extinction of species, and creates a regenerative economy.

This paper is based on a combination of theory and practice. I have researched social movements, flow states, and more, to develop the concept of emergency mode, and these ideas have been developed and refined through my experience in running TCM, collaborating with other organizations, and attempting to communicate about the climate crisis to people from all walks of life. I will make specific suggestions for the climate movement in the second half of this paper. But first, we must understand emergency mode.

Emergency Mode: Optimal Functioning in an Existential (or Moral) Crisis

Most psychological and sociological writing about the climate crisis has warned climate “communicators” of the risks of triggering primitive and pathological responses to crisis: “fight or flight,” panic, and the devastation caused by Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Because of these bleak portrayals, many political and organizational leaders have dared not convey the horrifying truth of the climate crisis, since they operate under the mistaken belief that the only response to emergencies is panicked chaos.

But aside from panic, individuals and groups can also respond to emergencies with reason, focus, dedication, and shocking success. Emergency mode is the mode of human psychological functioning that occurs when individuals or groups respond optimally to existential or moral emergencies. This mode of human functioning — markedly different from “normal” functioning — is characterized by *an extreme focus of attention and resources on working productively to solve the emergency.*

We are all, at times, confronted with emergency situations. Children, and adults who are overwhelmed by the situation for whatever reason, enter either panic mode, in which they act without thinking, or are paralyzed and unable to act. Children, for example, will often hide during house fires. However, healthy adults respond to emergencies by entering emergency mode.

	Normal mode	Emergency mode
Priorities	Many balanced priorities	Solving the crisis = One top priority
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Self-esteem source	Individual accomplishment	Contributing to the solution

Emergency mode occurs when an individual or group faces an existential threat, accepts that there is a life-threatening emergency and reorients by:

1. Adjusting their hierarchy of priorities so that solving the emergency is the clear top priority
2. Deploying a huge amount of resources toward solving the crisis
3. Giving little priority to personal gratification and self-esteem enhancement for their own sake, and instead seeking them through engagement with the emergency. People seek to “do their part” to solve the crisis and build their skills to contribute more effectively.

Emergency mode is a fundamental departure from “normal” mode of functioning. In normal mode, the individual or group feels relatively safe and secure, does not recognize any immediate existential or major moral threats — either because there is none, or because they are in denial — and therefore:

1. Maintains a portfolio of priorities
2. Attempts to distribute focus and other resources wisely among them
3. Gives considerable weight to personal gratification, enjoyment, and achievement

Long Emergencies

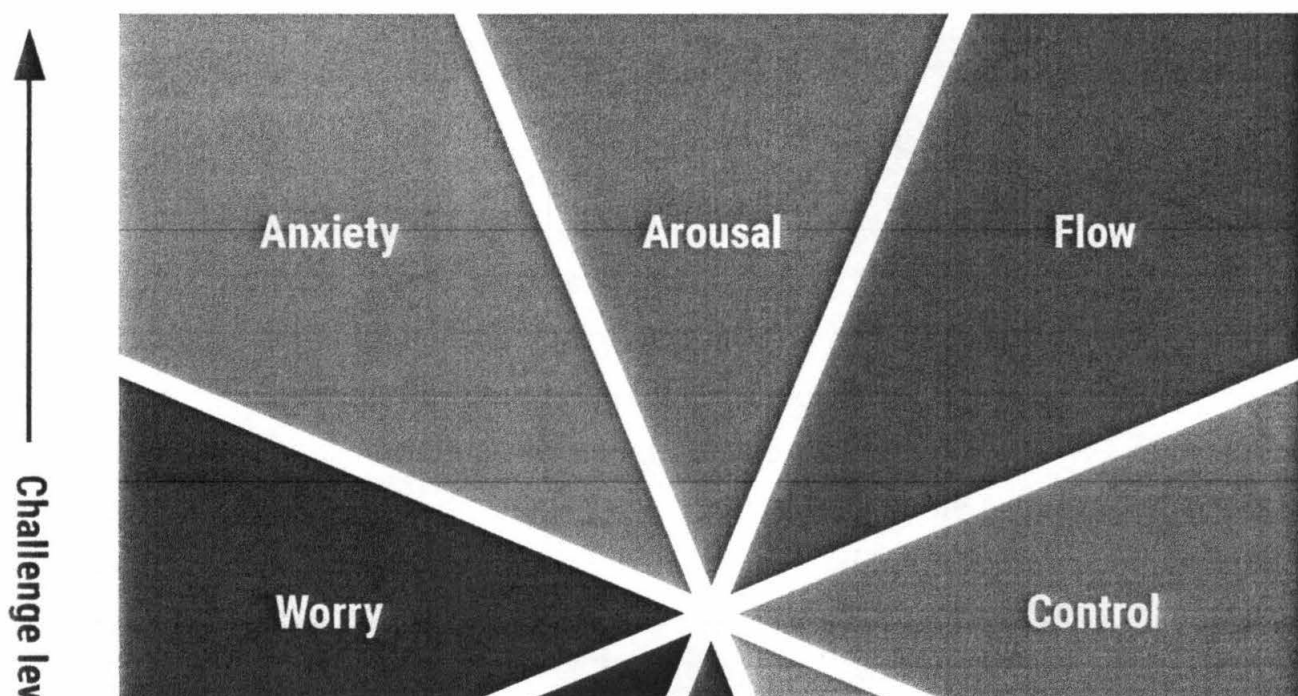
Usually emergencies take hours or days to resolve, but people can and do also enter long emergency modes that last for years. These “long emergencies” include diseases like cancer, which is life-threatening but not immediately curable, acute poverty, in which the person struggles daily with the emergency of meeting basic needs, and war. For these long emergencies, the business of normal life must be integrated into the emergency response. For doctors, nurses, paramedics, crisis counselors, hostage

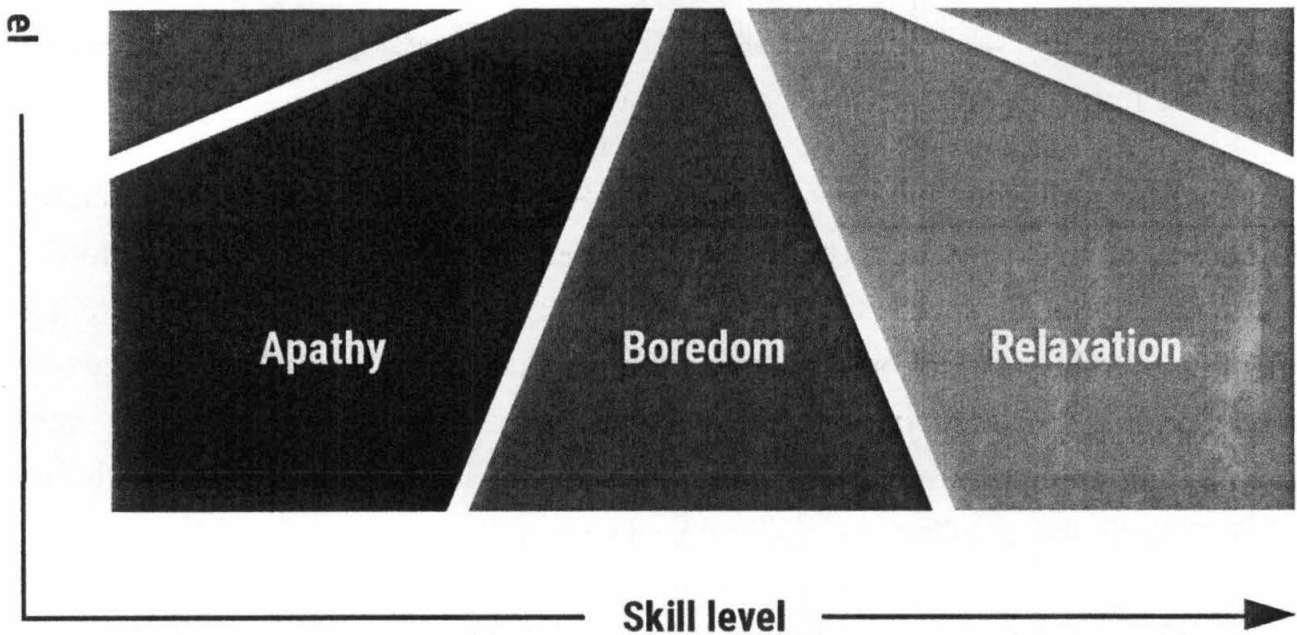
negotiators, firefighters, police officers, soldiers, and (hopefully) climate campaigners, emergency mode is a regular, on-going experience.

There is also *moral* emergency mode, when an issue of grave injustice becomes elevated to the status of an existential threat. People in emergency mode are the driving force behind most, if not all, successful social movements — whether it is moral (fighting for principles, and the safety of others), existential (fighting for your own safety, and the safety of others) or a combination. These people have decided that nothing, not even survival, is more important than the struggle. They dedicate themselves to it fully and utilize all of their capabilities in the service of victory.

Emergency mode is a state of enhanced performance, characterized by flow states. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, the psychologist who discovered flow and pioneered its study calls it the “optimal state of consciousness,” it’s a state in which “we feel our best and perform our best.” When people are in emergency mode, they experience heightened focus, perception, and abilities. A McKinsey study found that executives who experienced flow states are five times more productive. Csikszentmihalyi describes flow as:

Being completely involved in an activity for its own sake. The ego falls away. Time flies. Every action, movement, and thought follows inevitably from the previous one...your whole being is involved, and you're using your skills to the utmost.





Flow is most likely to occur when the task is challenging, but our level of skill is high. Flow can be triggered by facing danger, though it is not a state of high anxiety. Steven Kotler wrote *The Rise of the Superhuman* about flow in extreme sports. Kotler argues that flow can be triggered by situations that involve serious consequences and risks.

In all other activities, flow is the hallmark of high performance, but in situations where the slightest error could be fatal, then perfection is the only choice — and flow is the only guarantee of perfection. Thus, flow is the only way to survive in the fluid, life-threatening conditions of big waves, big rivers, and big-mountains... Necessity, as they say, is the mother of invention. Or, as Danny Way (professional skateboarder) explains: "It's either find the zone or suffer the consequences — there's no other choice available."

Kotler, Steven. *The Rise of Superman: Decoding the Science of Ultimate Human Performance* (p. 22).

In short emergencies such as a fire, individuals stay in an emergency flow state the entire time — they never take their mind off the emergency. If the individual is in long emergency mode, however, these emergency flow states are experienced frequently, but other elements of life, such as rest, recreation, and close relationships, are also maintained. Speaking personally, I entered emergency mode 6 years ago — since my friend challenged me to “actually try to solve the climate crisis,” and have worked, sometimes struggled, to stay close with friends and family, and to relax. Indeed,

balancing one's intensive work on solving the emergency and all other activities can be one of the most challenging elements of facing a long emergency.

On the other hand, living in emergency mode can be extremely rewarding. Flow states in general are sought after, and a key indicator of psychological health. People enjoy being fully engaged in activity — “in the zone” — utilizing their entire capacity, whether they are playing sports, performing musically, studying intensely, or responding to an emergency. As Csikszentmihalyi described the rewards of flow:

The best moments in our lives are not the passive, receptive, relaxing times... The best moments usually occur if a person's body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile.

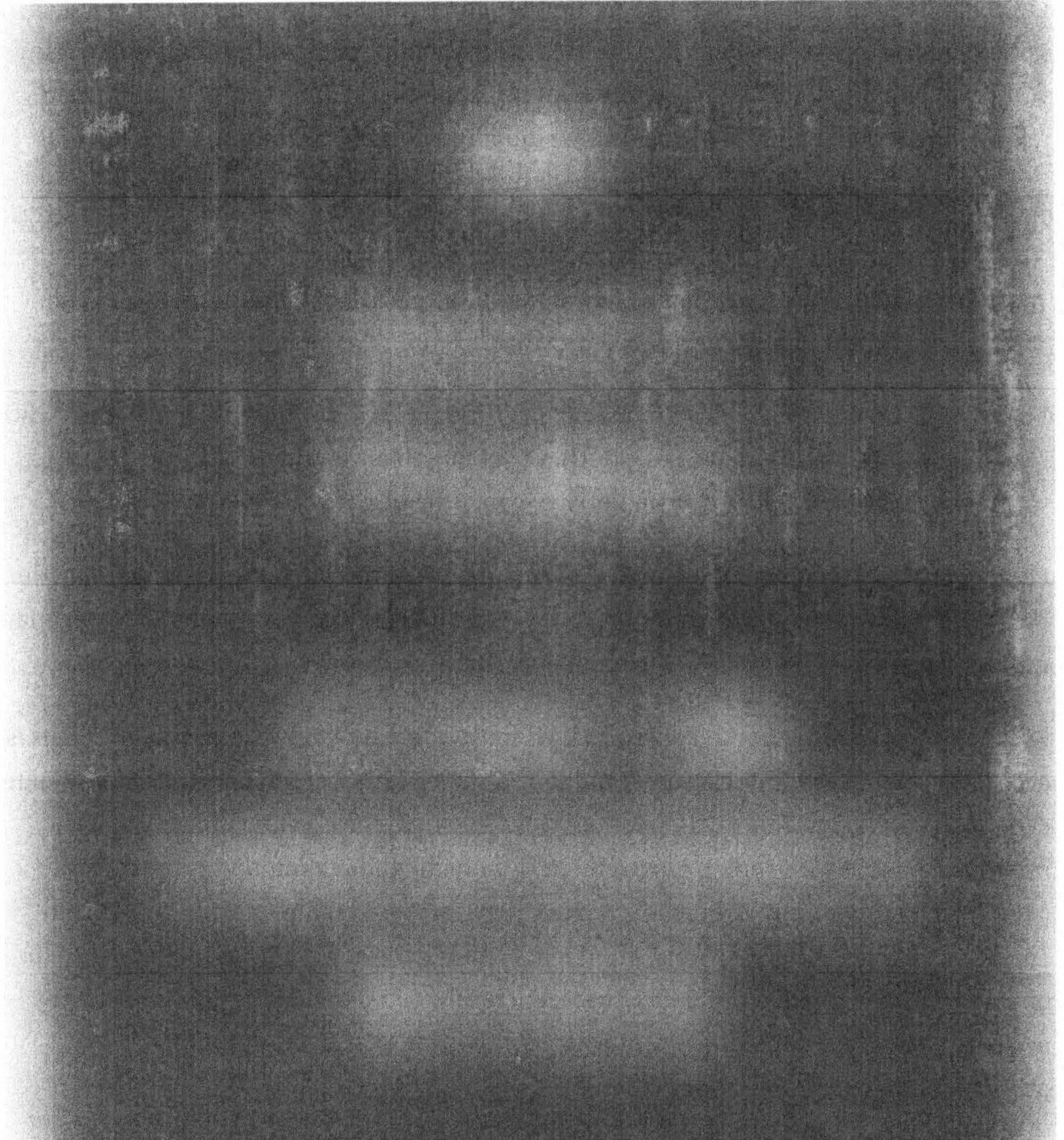
I have spoken with Emergency Room doctors, firefighters, and climate campaigners who report being hooked on the sense of purpose, feeling that they are useful, and the relief from self-involvement that their immersive work provides.

People must feel competent to handle the emergency in order to enter emergency mode. If you are overwhelmed, you may panic. If you feel helpless, you cannot enter emergency mode, regardless of how acute the moral or existential threat.

Bill McKibben reports that the question he is most often asked is “What can I do?” This is accurate to my experience as well — millions of Americans want to help fight the climate crisis, but don't know how to do so effectively. The more the climate movement can provide *structures* for people's engagement — providing directions and support for people who are ready to tackle the climate emergency — the more people will go into emergency mode. Effective, transparent leadership is also critical in enabling people to enter emergency mode. Confidence that leaders and decision makers are competently addressing questions of strategy and policy for the emergency mobilization allows participants to focus on their contribution.

Essential to long emergencies is the human capacity for dedication and commitment — the mind state that brings a person back, over and over, to the emergency issue despite inevitable interruptions and temptation to avoid the issue. It also takes a good deal of courage, and ability to stay calm under intense stress. The famous “Keep Calm and Carry

On” posters from wartime United Kingdom addressed this challenge. We could translate them into this framework as meaning, “Don’t Panic and Stay in Emergency Mode.”



Groups in Emergency Mode

In emergency mode, members of groups — such as organizations, or even whole countries — work productively together in a coordinated way to solve a crisis. The vast majority of people contribute their best effort and available resources. People fill

different roles and take on complementary projects in order to ameliorate the crisis. While the profit motive and self-interested behavior are not eliminated in a long emergency, working for the common good to create solutions, rather than focusing on their own comfort or advantage, becomes the norm. People gain satisfaction and pride from helping the group or the wider emergency project, and they feel motivated, even driven to do so.

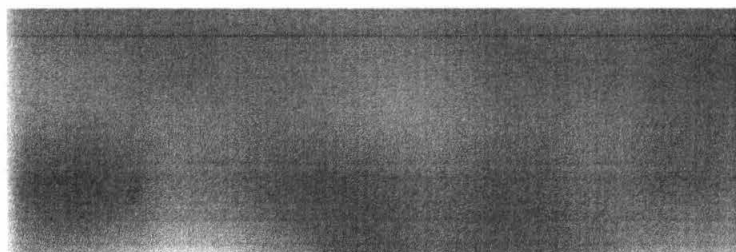
Humans evolved in tribes, and *group* success was vital to the survival of each individual. Psychologist Jonathan Haidt describes human nature as “90% chimpanzee and 10% bee” to illustrate our evolved, combination of social but self-interested (chimpanzees) and group-oriented behavior (bees).

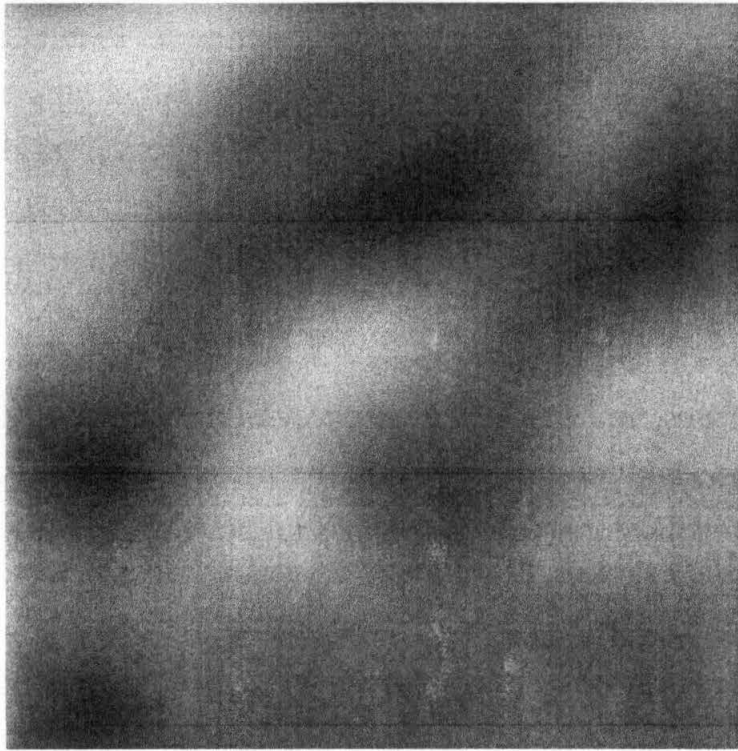
We are like bees in being ultra social creatures whose minds were shaped by the relentless competition of groups with other groups. We are descended from earlier humans whose groupish minds helped them cohere, cooperate, and outcompete other groups. That doesn't mean that our ancestors were mindless or unconditional team players; it means they were selective. *Under the right conditions, they were able to enter a mind-set of “one for all, all for one” in which they were truly working for the good of the group, and not just for their own advancement within the group.*

By far the most powerful trigger for the “hive switch” is a catastrophic event that clearly signals the arrival of an emergency, particularly an external attack. The surprise attack on Pearl Harbor led the United States to “flip the hive switch” and enter emergency mode in an incredibly powerful, productive way.

The United States in Emergency Mode: WWII

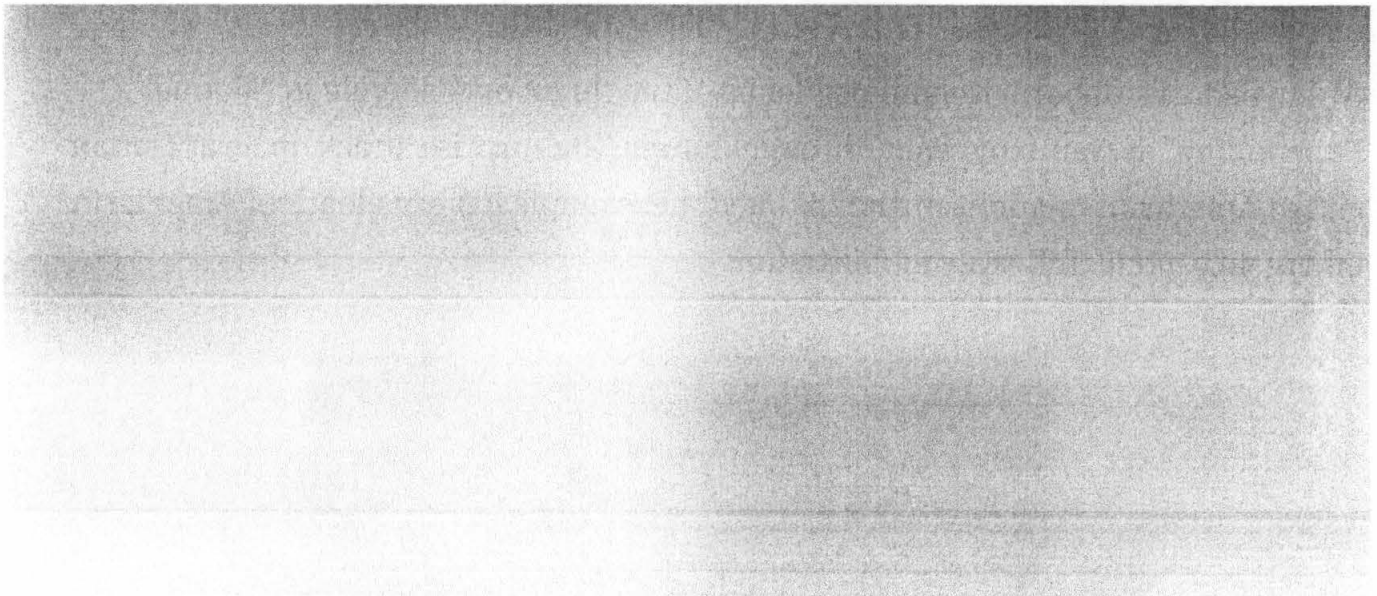
After years of stubborn, isolationist denial of the threat and clinging to “Normal Functioning” as Germany swept through Europe, the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor ended American isolationism and initiated the example par excellence of America in emergency mode: full-scale mobilization.

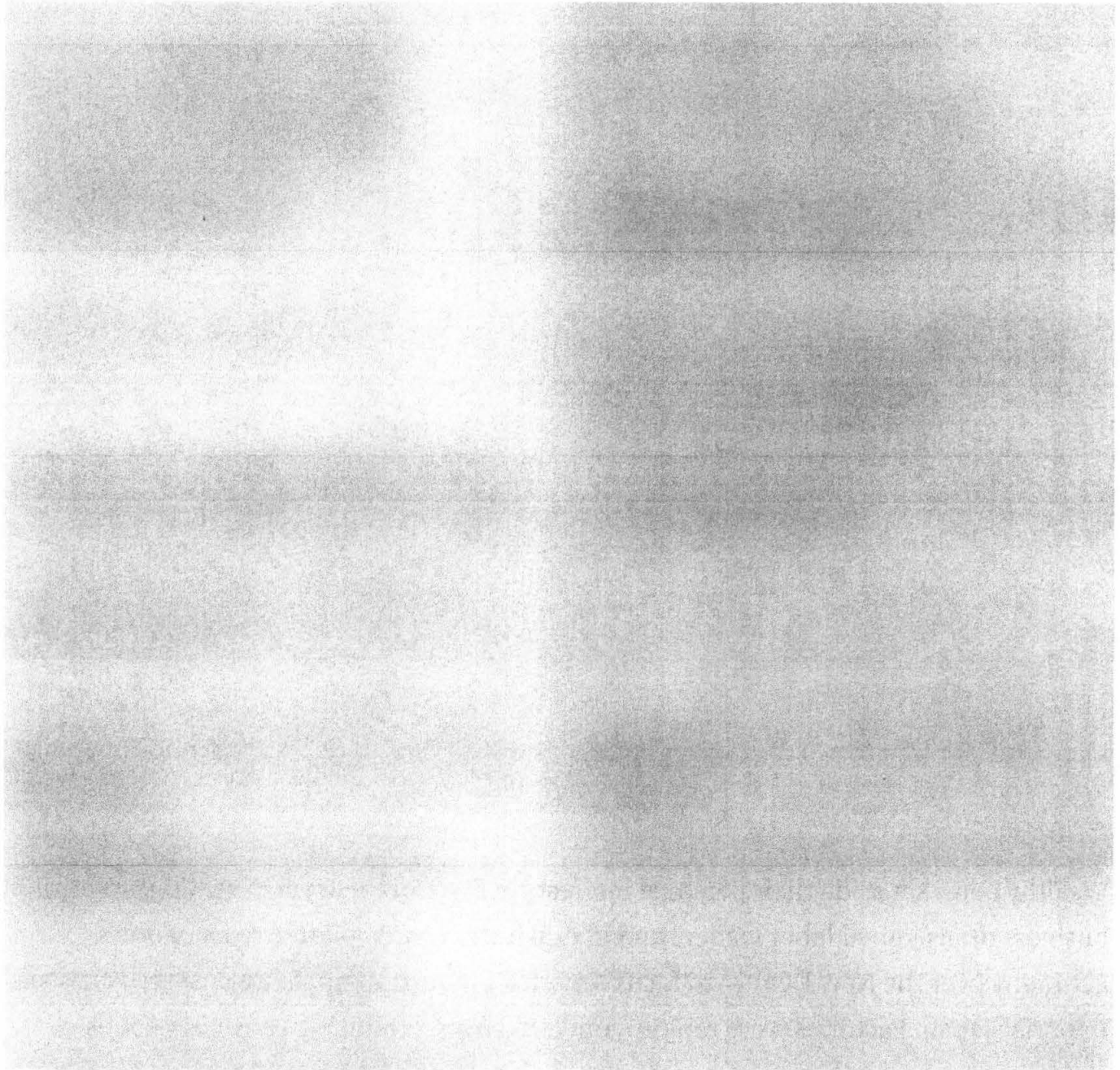




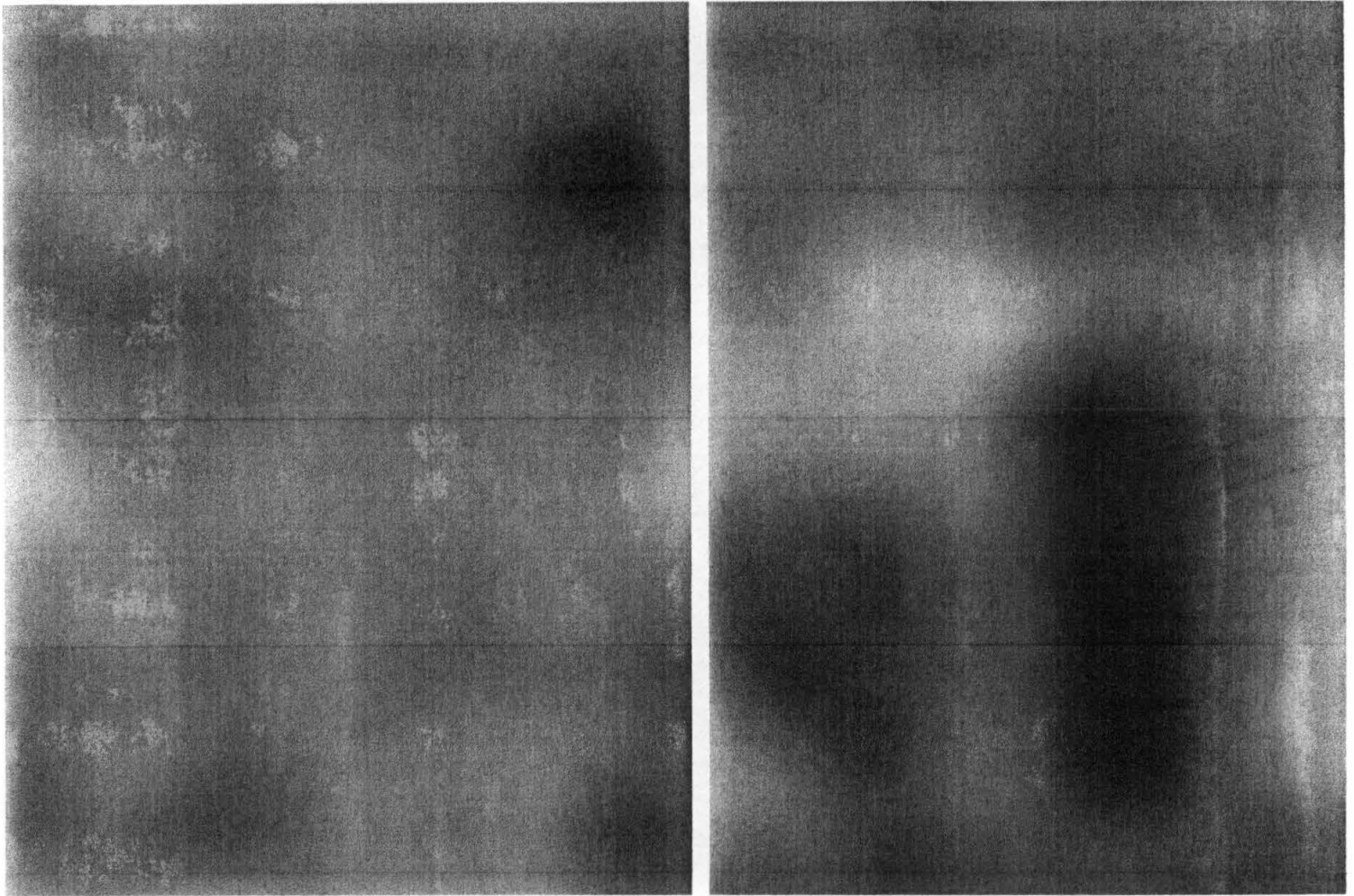
Economic mobilization is an emergency restructuring of a modern industrial economy, accomplished at rapid speed. It involves the vast majority of citizens, the utilization of a very high proportion of available resources, and impacts all areas of society. It is nothing less than a government-coordinated social and industrial revolution. Mobilization is what happens when an entire nation enters emergency mode, and the results can be truly staggering.

In *Climate Code Red*, David Spratt and Philip Sutton highlighted the differences in normal political mode and emergency mode, drawing heavily from WWII:





During WWII, the country joined together with a spirit of unity, sacrifice, and common purpose. Young men sacrificed their lives fighting for their country. Women surged into factories to produce war materiel. Native American “code talkers” helped transmit secret messages for the allies. Citizens invested their available cash reserves in war bonds. The federal government instituted a sweeping rationing program in order to ensure a fair distribution of scarce resources on the home front — and to share the sacrifice equitably. Gasoline, coffee, butter, tires, fuel oil, shoes, meat, cheese, and sugar were rationed, and every American received a fair share. “Pleasure driving” was banned, the Indy 500 was shut down, and a national speed limit of 35 miles per hour was established. Comprehensive wage and price controls were put in place to combat inflation.



Wealthy elites set aside their personal interests in favor of the war effort. Conservative business titans joined labor leaders and liberal bureaucrats — after years of bitter acrimony over the New Deal — to focus America’s industrial might against the Nazis and Imperial Japan. Factories were rapidly converted from producing consumer goods to producing tanks, guns, bombs, and planes — shattering all historical records for war production. Taxes were also increased significantly, particularly on high earners, who paid a steep “Victory Tax,” the most progressive tax in American history. The top marginal income tax rate on the highest earners reached 88% in 1942 and a record 94% in 1944.

By entering emergency mode and mobilizing for total victory, the United States accomplished truly staggering feats. By 1944 the United States had produced 229,600 planes — more than three times the original, highly ambitious, goal set out by President Roosevelt three years earlier. In response to a cutoff of critical rubber supplies in Southeast Asia, the federal government launched a crash program that scaled up synthetic rubber production from under 1% to about 70% of total U.S. production — a

100-fold increase — in about four years. In 1943, reclaimed rubber from citizen scrap drives provided about 50% of domestic rubber production.

We also made huge advances in the sciences. The first computer was invented, as were blood transfusion and radar technology. The Manhattan Project successfully built the world's first atomic bomb in less than three years — a morally fraught but nonetheless stupendous feat of planning, cooperation and scientific ingenuity.

Despite all the resources that were diverted to the war effort during this multi-year emergency, the United States also managed to maintain — and in some cases expand — its basic systems including infrastructure, education, health care, and child-care, and in large measure made sure that the basic needs of the civilian economy were met.

We need not have an overly rosy view of that time period to appreciate its transformative effects, and the transformative potential of mobilization, generally. One glaring problem were racist policies and attitudes — the military itself and many of the industrial mobilization jobs were segregated, and more than 100,000 Japanese Americans were interned. However, during the Mobilization, major strides were made towards both racial and sexual equality, as well as fair employment practices.

Moving Towards Emergency Mobilization

Emergency mobilization on this scale is precisely what we need if we are to prevent a global cataclysm and restore a safe and stable climate. We need to transition away from fossil fuels and carbon-intensive agriculture as soon as possible, draw down all the excess CO2 and cool the planet below present levels. This will happen only with public planning coordinated by the federal government, global cooperation, massive public investment, forceful regulations and economic controls, and full societal participation. The Climate Mobilization provides an in-depth look at what such a mobilization would look like in our *Victory Plan*.

Factors That Prevent Emergency Mode

Given the increasing public awareness of the existential risk posed by climate change, why hasn't the transition to emergency mode happened by now? It turns out the threat posed by climate change is fundamentally different from the one we faced during World War II, making it more difficult for society to enter emergency mode. We can still get

there — indeed we must get there to have any chance of bringing the climate crisis under control — but it will take some planning and effort. To understand what is needed, it will help to take a closer look at the psychology of emergency mode.

The psychological capacity for both normal mode and emergency mode arose over hundreds of thousands of years of human evolution. Individuals and groups who usually manage broad and diverse interests, but are able to snap into intense focus when in danger, have the best overall survival prospects. The challenge is when to enter emergency mode, when to continue business as usual, and how to trigger a switch in mode.

The factors that trigger an emergency response are also products of evolution. Psychologist Daniel Gilbert argues that humans are wired for a reflexive response to threats that are “intentional, immoral, imminent, and instantaneous.” When threats, such as terrorism, contain all of these characteristics it can trigger significant over-reactions. But if a threat, such as the climate crisis, does not contain these elements and is instead unintended, caused by actions that are regarded as normal and moral, with the worst impacts in the future and the disaster unfolding over decades, then an emergency response will not immediately be triggered and the risk of under-reacting is very high.

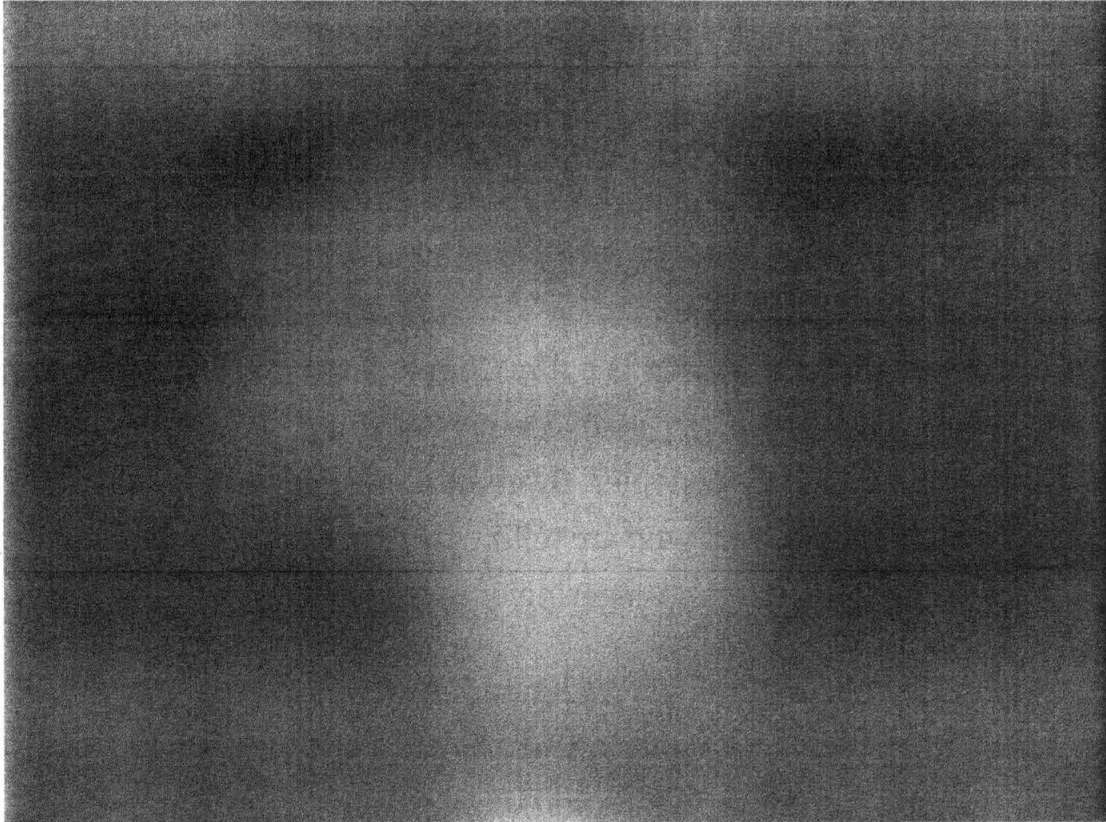
We cannot count on people entering emergency mode reflexively. Rather, we need to accomplish it through education, organizing, and setting an example. *Thus I argue that the role of the climate movement should be to enter emergency mode themselves and lead the public there.*

Pluralistic Ignorance (ie Social Proof)

The way we respond to threats — by entering emergency mode or by remaining in normal mode — is highly contagious. Imagine the fire alarm goes off in an office building. How seriously should you take it? How do you know if it is a drill or a real fire? Those questions will be predominantly answered by the actions and communications of the people around you, particularly people designated as leaders. If they are chatting and taking their time exiting the building, you will assume that this is a drill. If people are moving with haste, faces stern and focused, communicating with urgency and gravity, you will assume there is real danger and exit as quickly as possible.

Psychologist Robert Caladini describes the concept of pluralistic ignorance:

Very often an emergency is not obviously an emergency...in times of such uncertainty, the natural tendency is to look around at the actions of others for clues. We can learn, from the way the other witnesses are reacting, whether the event is or is not an emergency. What is easy to forget, though, is that everybody else observing the event is likely to be looking for social evidence, too.



Or as researchers Bibb Latané and John M. Darley put it, “Each person decides that since nobody is concerned, nothing is wrong. Meanwhile, the danger may be mounting to the point where a single individual, uninfluenced by the seeming calm of others, would react.”

This is a critical point, with grave implications for the climate movement. To evaluate whether we are currently in a climate crisis, the public will look to each other — and particularly to the climate organizations, writers, and leaders. Are they calling it an emergency? Does the tone of their writing and statements convey alarm and a passionate desire for massive action to avert imminent crisis? Are they demanding an emergency response? Are they acting like it’s an emergency? Are they themselves in

emergency mode? If the answer to these questions is “no,” the individual will conclude that there must not be an emergency, or that emergency action is hopeless because the leaders are apparently unwilling to coordinate emergency action. This suggests the sad, dangerous conclusion that NGOs who communicate with euphemism and advocate carbon gradualism are actually preventing the public from entering emergency mode.

Gradualism

The mainstream environmental movement, and Democratic Party, has been stuck in gradualism for decades, calling for a multi-decade reduction of fossil fuel use through policies such as the Clean Power Plan and carbon pricing. Furthermore, virtually no mainstream environmental groups call for actions to draw down (or sequester) excess greenhouse gases, which must begin now on a massive scale and are essential if we are to avoid a climate catastrophe and restore a safe climate.

Gradualists use euphemistic assessments of the Climate Emergency to make their policies seem appropriate, and advise people to use “positive” language when communicating, and not to “scare people.” Gradualists will go as far as to “tone police” organizers, authors, or filmmakers who are telling the truth about the Climate Emergency, criticizing them as fear-mongering or hysterical.

This attitude misleads the public and blocks Americans from entering emergency mode. We cannot expect the public to support policies that are more aggressive than what Greenpeace or the World Wildlife Foundation is calling for. Organizations that claim to be protecting the climate have a special duty to reckon with climate truth, and advocate the only solution that could *actually protect humanity and the natural world*: emergency mobilization.

Helplessness

A sense of helplessness is preventing many people from entering emergency mode in response to the climate crisis. Our political system seems beyond repair, the culture in the thrall of denial, and the scale of the crisis is staggering. Widespread feelings of helplessness also represent the failure of leadership from official climate movement leaders and politicians to offer an honest assessment of the crisis, advocate for solutions that actually stand a chance of working, and invite individuals to take part in that

solution. The advocacy of obviously inadequate solutions worsens the despair and cynicism of the public.

Massive dissatisfaction, anger, despair, and fear lie beneath the surface of the American electorate on the climate crisis. A recent poll by Randle and Eckersley investigated how people from the US, UK and Australia evaluate the current threats facing humanity with some staggering results:

Overall, a majority (54%) rated the risk of our way of life ending within the next 100 years at 50% or greater, and a quarter (24%) rated the risk of humans being wiped out at 50% or greater. The responses were relatively uniform across countries, age groups, gender and education level, although statistically significant differences exist. Almost 80% agreed “we need to transform our worldview and way of life if we are to create a better future for the world.”

A quarter of respondents think that humanity has a 50% chance of near-term-extinction, and almost all respondents agreed that transformative change is necessary — yet we are continuing with business as usual and daily life as usual! This suggests a paralyzing degree of helplessness across society.

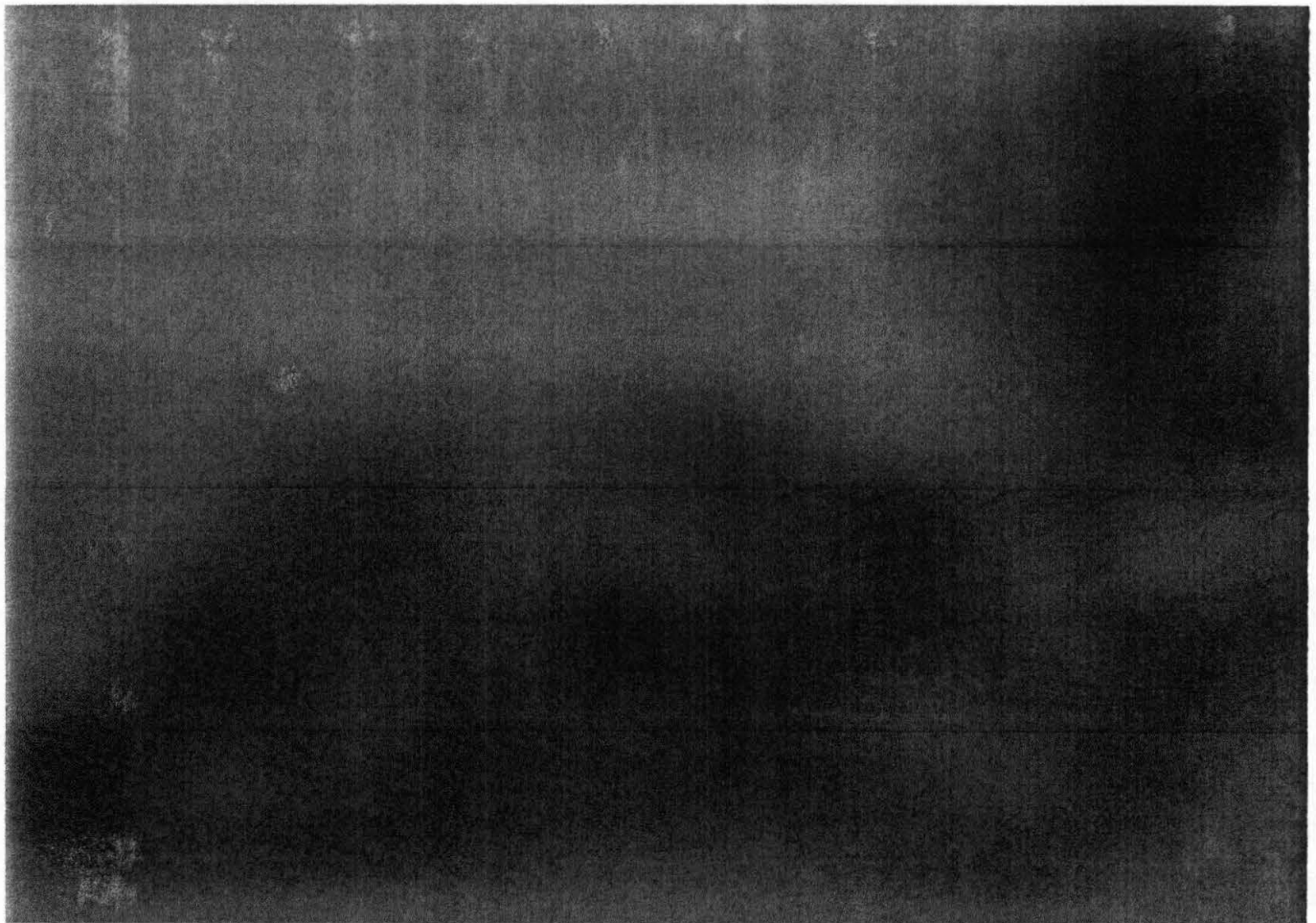
Rise of the Climate Emergency Movement

It's clear our mainstream politicians and climate organizations are not up to the challenge of leading the public into emergency mode, and are therefore not capable of mounting an adequate response to the climate crisis. Fortunately, a new front is rapidly emerging on the global stage that is geared toward doing just that: The Climate Emergency Movement.

The Climate Mobilization was a pioneer in this movement, spending years promoting maximal intensity mobilization in relative obscurity. In fact, at the beginning of 2018, we were the only national organization advocating for a 10-year transition to zero emissions plus drawdown. Our “Move the Movement” campaign focused on getting the broad climate movement to accept the climate truth — the fact that we face an extinction-level ecological breakdown and that we are massively behind schedule to address it — as a core principle and to use truth-telling as tactic for achieving the changes needed to restore a safe climate. We approached this goal with a variety of tactics, including

thorough public and behind-the-scenes criticism of insufficient policy proposals, as well as our general messaging focused on the climate emergency.

Up until recently, standing for this position was unpopular and made for a lonely reality, with the big nonprofits, foundations, and so-called "Climate Communicators," all of whom urged organizations like TCM to avoid "fear tactics," recommending that we instead communicate optimism in order to avoid scaring the public into paralysis or chaos. But today, the Climate Emergency Movement has captured the public imagination and is rapidly gaining power. As the reality of climate breakdown sets in, the old paternalistic strategy is dying off. Along with it, the fetishization of markets as some kind of mythic force that must not be disturbed by government action is also starting to dissolve. It is becoming clearer by the day that we must tell the truth, that we must act boldly, and that we must do so at incredible speed.



The shift away from incrementalist goals and toward a real fight for the survival of our species has been so rapid that it is almost hard to conceptualize the change in tone and

seriousness. In some assessments, it began in earnest in 2016 at Standing Rock, where the Indigenous Water Protectors showed the country what heroism looks like, as they withstood months of abuse from police and private security forces, and continued their nonviolent, highly spiritual direct action of blocking the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Today, there is a militant movement of young people marching in the streets and occupying the offices of elected officials, embarrassing representatives who refuse to act with urgency. The street theater and direct action tactics of Extinction Rebellion have changed the consciousness of the United Kingdom and have helped achieve declarations of Climate Emergency in 53 local government jurisdictions, including London, the biggest city to date to declare and commit to a 10-year transition to a zero-emissions economy. Overall, 500 local governments, representing over 50 million people around the globe have joined the Climate Emergency Declaration Campaign. In the United States, the Green New Deal is shaping the Democratic Party platform around a 10-year national mobilization to achieve a carbon-neutral economy.

The Climate Mobilization has played an integral role in shaping and supporting these efforts, both directly, through our organizing and influence network and our successful campaign to inform the Democratic Party primary and platform in 2016, and indirectly, through sector-leading publications like the Victory Plan, which describe the necessary goals of a serious climate movement.

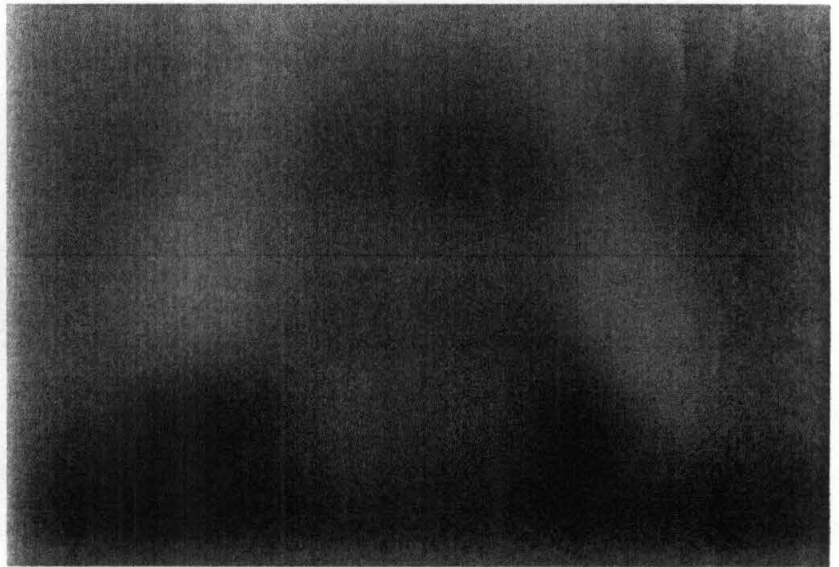
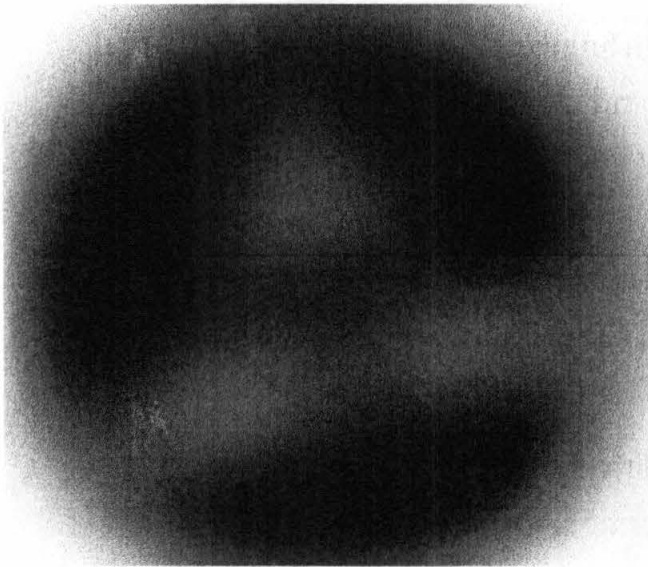
Successful Social Movements Utilize and Spread Emergency Mode

Although The Climate Emergency Movement is relatively new, it is part of a proud, extremely effective tradition of social movements that have levered emergency mode to confront existential threats, and its leaders can draw inspiration and guidance from past movements that have achieved great success using this approach. For example, In the 1980s, HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, was decimating the gay communities in New York, San Francisco and other large cities, and it was spreading at a horrifying speed. The government was failing the victims — giving them virtually no help, and failing to research and treat this growing epidemic. The government's failure to act swiftly and effectively, or even acknowledge the epidemic, was largely due to pervasive homophobia.

Larry Kramer — the now iconic AIDS activist — founded ACT UP because existing AIDS groups had failed to enter emergency mode and were continuing to seek solutions through business-as-usual channels, such as holding meetings with government officials and asking for help — strategies that were not working. Kramer helped found and build the Gay Men’s Health Alliance — but broke with them over disagreements about strategy and tactics. Kramer criticized GMHA as wanting to be “the Red Cross” because they were focused on appearing mainstream and upstanding and “a morgue” because they were helping people die rather than fighting “for the living to go on living.”

Emergency Communication

Kramer knew that he was fighting for his own life and the life of his friends. He had no interest in “business as usual.” Kramer treated AIDS with deadly seriousness and encouraged as much (realistic) fear as possible. He told crowds of gay men that if they didn’t fight back, they would be dead in a few years. He was inviting others, especially other gay men, to join him in emergency mode, focused intensely on solving the crisis.



ACT UP’s slogan, “Silence=Death” referred not only to governmental and media silence on AIDS, but the entire cultural silence around homosexuality. Many gay people were closeted, hoping to protect their careers and avoid discriminatory, dehumanizing reactions from a homophobic culture. The silence around gayness — with most people keeping their sexual orientation at least partially private — posed huge problems for the movement. Gay men, including gay doctors, were *not able to work together with*

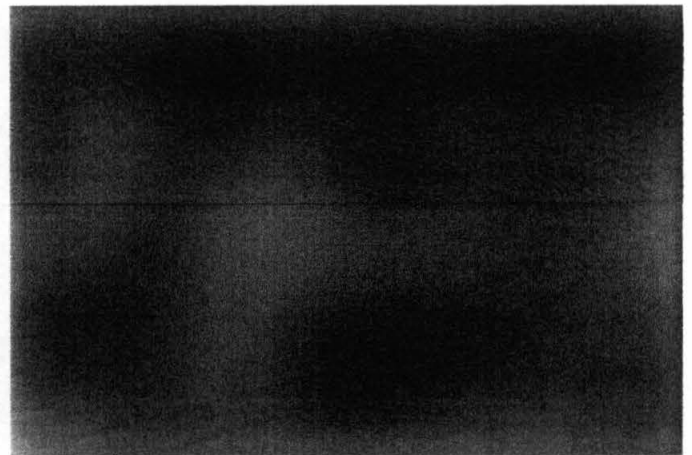
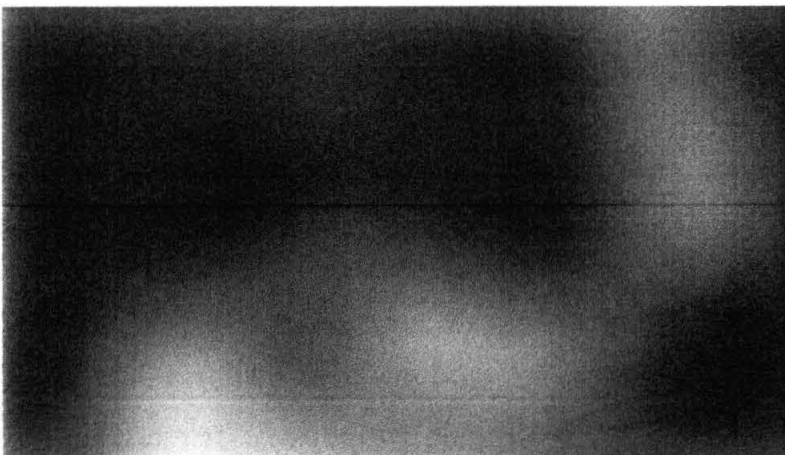
maximum impact, or communicate the emergency to the public, while still in the closet. Larry Kramer wrote in his prescient, biting, landmark essay 1,112 and counting:

Why isn't every gay man in this city so scared shitless that he is screaming for action? Does every gay man in New York want to die?... I am sick of closeted gay doctors who won't come out to help us.... I am sick of closeted gays. It's 1983 already, guys, when are you going to come out? ... As more and more of my friends die, I have less and less sympathy for men who are afraid their mommies will find out or afraid their bosses will find out or afraid their fellow doctors or professional associates will find out. Unless we can generate, visibly, numbers, masses, we are going to die.

The push to come out and live out of the shadows had a profound impact as the public learned that people they loved and respected were gay, and in danger.

Education and Advocacy

Because the government was failing to provide answers and effective treatment, ACT UP took on significant educational work as well. The Treatment + Data Committee took on the task of becoming experts in the biology of HIV/AIDS — seeking to understand the virus and various treatment options. A glossary of AIDS treatment terms was created and passed out at meetings. ACT UP also produced and advocated *A National AIDS Treatment Research Agenda*, which laid out ACT UP's specific demands for what drugs should be developed and how the process should unfold.



Protest

By demonstrating their courage and tenacity, ACT UP grew in size and power, drawing more people into emergency mode. New members contributed their skills, resources,

and networks to the cause. By keeping their protests non-violent, ACT UP invited participation from a larger group. Erica Chenoweth has demonstrated that non-violent campaigns are much more likely to be successful at involving significant portions of the population, and more successful at accomplishing their overall goals.

(Partial) Success!

With its combination of public protest, private acts of courage, and education & advocacy, ACT UP accomplished many of its aims. AIDS patients won the right to participate in every phase of the drug development process. They won major funding for research, which led to the discovery and deployment of antiretrovirals, a class of drugs that is very successful in treating HIV, potentially keeping the disease from ever becoming AIDS. ACT UP's success laid the groundwork for mainstream acceptance of homosexuality, as well as the continuing struggles for gay rights and equality. It also forever changed the way pharmaceutical drugs are researched and developed.

ACT UP's work has not been completed, however. AIDS has become a global epidemic, with more than 36 million people currently infected, and 1 million people dying from AIDS every year. There is still no cure and no vaccine, something that Larry Kramer and many others continue to work on. But what ACT UP did accomplish was to get people and institutions, especially the Federal Government, and also local governments, hospitals, universities and more — to treat HIV/AIDS like the crisis it was.

Implications for the Climate Movement: Lead the Public into Emergency Mode

Like ACT UP, the climate movement is responding to a direct existential threat. Understanding that emergency mode allows individuals and groups to function in an enhanced, optimal way, delivering their peak performance, has critical implications for the climate movement.

People who understand the climate emergency must exit normal mode and abandon the gradual policy advocacies and enervated emotional states that accompany it. Instead, we must seek *to restore a safe climate at emergency speed*. To accomplish this, the climate movement must lead the public into emergency mode. First we must go into emergency mode ourselves, and then communicate about the climate emergency and need for mobilization with clarity, dedication, and escalating assertiveness.

Those of us who have entered emergency mode — who understand the mobilization imperative — need to get talkative and loud. We need to spread our message as far and wide as possible. We must not stay “closeted” and appear that we believe everything is fine, or that the the Democratic Party are well on their way to containing the crisis, once the Republicans and the Supreme Court get out of the way. Rather we need to “come out” as being in emergency mode and in favor of a WWII-scale climate mobilization that rapidly sweeps away business-as-usual — to our friends, family, neighbors, fellow climate activists, and the public. Like ACT UP we need to spread our message as clearly, loudly and in the most attention-grabbing ways we can.

Big Green, with their hundreds of millions of dollars of funding, and other gradualist organizations, should follow the lead of Sunrise, Extinction Rebellion, and the School Strikers, or they will find themselves facing a different type of existential threat: total irrelevancy.

Seeking Consensus

While we must seek to learn as much as we can from ACT UP and other successful social movements, we must also recognize that the climate crisis poses a challenge unlike anything humanity has ever faced. Full-scale emergency mobilization requires a higher degree of participation and consensus than treating AIDS, implementing civil rights legislation, or even toppling a dictator. In order to initiate the WWII Scale Climate Mobilization that we need, I believe we need a *national consensus* that we are directly threatened by the climate emergency.

ACT UP didn't bring the entire public into emergency mode, but because they entered emergency mode themselves they were able to apply pressure very strategically. ACT UP could be something of a gadfly — alienating many and still achieving their agenda. They were an oppressed minority that needed to move huge bureaucracies, and they did. The climate movement faces a larger task. We must effect change throughout our entire society. We want to “wake America up” to the scale of the threat, and the need for mobilization, as America woke up to the need to mobilize for WWII immediately following the attacks on Pearl Harbor.

Thus we must seek to be as inclusive as possible, while unwaveringly demanding WWII-scale climate mobilization. Our tone must balance emergency-mode, steadfastness,

assertiveness, and inclusiveness. Pope Francis calls for people to have an “ecological conversion,” and we must adopt the attitude of understanding and forgiveness for individuals past denial or climate-damaging activity.

Addressing Helplessness

Many people who understand the scope of the climate crisis are paralyzed by fear and helplessness. Empowerment, the solution to helplessness, is a key element of all social movements.

In the case of the climate crisis, we must educate, or remind people that:

1. Social movements can cause immense, rapid change, and the Climate Emergency Movement has tremendous momentum.
2. During WWII, America mobilized and achieved a transition more rapid and complete than anyone thought possible.
3. We as citizens have the power to change the direction of this country, and if we successfully build political will for full-scale climate mobilization, the results will be staggering.

The best thing that we can do to confront the pervasive sense of helplessness and despair is to rapidly build an effective and public Climate Emergency Movement.

Truth Based Communication

After decades of politicians and environmental organizations downplaying and soft-pedaling the threat, The Climate Mobilization and the Climate Emergency Movement proposes a corrective: *tell the truth*. Yes, it’s scary. Yes, the challenge before us is immense. But as James Baldwin wrote, “Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.”

While considered “too hot to handle” by gradualists, the truth is actually our movement’s greatest strategic asset. The truth is that no human endeavor can succeed on a planet beset by catastrophic climate change. None of our values, joys, or relationships can prosper on an overheated planet. There will be no “winners” in a business-as-usual scenario: Even wealthy elites are reliant on stable ecosystems, agriculture, and a functioning global civilization. For that reason, among others, solving the climate crisis

has the potential to be the most unifying endeavor in human history. I explore this concept in depth in my essay *The Transformative Power of Climate Truth*, and my forthcoming book *Transform Yourself with Climate Truth* will help readers emotionally process climate truth, and integrate it into their identities.

Indeed, Having candid conversations with our friends and family is something that everyone can and should do. If we are silent, our understanding does not become power. 2018 Polling from Yale's Climate Communication Center found that only 9% of Americans hear people they know talk about climate change at least once a week, and only 17% once a month! 74% of Americans hear about climate change from someone they know "several times a year" or less. And yet the same study shows that 29% of Americans are "very worried" about climate change!

Disrupt pluralistic ignorance! Break the silence! Come out of the "Climate closet" and let your friends and family know how you feel about the climate emergency. Many people worry about the social awkwardness of bringing up the climate emergency — but keep in mind, many of your friends and family are also worried, and will be relieved and appreciative when you do bring it up, especially if you can offer them support and guidance. Be personal, be emotional, be authentic and empathetic. Hear people out and make them feel listened to. Talk about the climate emergency and need for climate mobilization every day, multiple times a day if possible. Consider wearing T shirts, pins, etc from Climate Emergency organizations so that you can communicate your affiliation with the movement without saying anything.

You can communicate climate truth in other ways, depending on your skills and networks. Everyone can and should talk about the climate emergency and need for mobilization on social media, and, depending on your access, I also encourage you to do so on email lists, on blogs, or in mainstream publications. If you make art, or music, you can incorporate these messages.

Emergency Threat.

The climate movement must fully adopt the language of immediate crisis and existential danger. We must talk about climate change as threatening to cause the collapse of civilization, killing billions of people, and causing the extinction of millions of species. These horrific outcomes await us during this century, possibly even in the first half of it if

things truly slip out of control. This is not a matter of “protecting the planet for future generations” but protecting our own lives and those of the people we care about. We are in danger now and in coming years and decades. The climate crisis is, far and away, our top national security threat, top public health threat, and top threat to the global economy.

Emergency Solution

In order to lead people into emergency mode, and avoid panic mode, it is critical that the emergency threat is paired with an emergency solution.

Climate groups must match their emergency rhetoric with an emergency advocacy. Suppose that someone told you, “Help! The house is on fire! Can you please pour a glass of water on it? One glass is all it needs!” You would be confused. If we are really dealing with a house on fire, how could a solution be so simple and easy? You would suspect that there was no crisis, just exaggeration. Likewise, when the scale of the necessary response to the climate crisis is minimized, it prevents people from entering emergency mode. We need to “come out” as being in emergency mode — climate “alarmists,” as horrified by the crisis, and as ready to make major changes in our life and the economy, for the duration of the emergency.

I have had the disconcerting experience of advocating that a climate event adopt the ambitious “zero in ten years” timeline, to be told by others on the planning committee, “We agree with you! We totally agree that is what needs to happen. But we can’t say that — it will turn people off!” As the popularity of the Green New Deal shows, and the momentum it is generating, advocating a massive response to the Climate Emergency does not “turn people off.”

We cannot be silent about the fact that emergency mobilization can only be coordinated by a “big” government that is granted the power to ban ecologically destructive practices and spend without limit to save as much life as possible. We must acknowledge that gradual approaches that prioritize political expediency and the alleged wisdom of the “free market” over the common good are doomed to failure.

We need to eliminate net greenhouse gas emissions in **years, not decades**, and remove excess greenhouse gases from the atmosphere until a safe climate is restored. This will take a whole-society, all-out effort.

Let go of False Narratives

Representing the truth, and moving the public into emergency mode means letting go of false or misleading narratives that shield the public (and ourselves) from the frightening truth. Instead, we must fully accept and communicate the truth no matter how difficult it may be. Popular narratives that must be refuted include the idea that we have a significant carbon budget remaining, that 2°C or even 1.5°C of warming above pre-industrial levels represent “safe limits”, or that climate change will be a problem only in other places or for future generations. We must replace these narratives with the truth that dangerous climate change is already here and presents an existential threat for all of us. However, we must be careful not to encourage an unwarranted sense of hopelessness. We still have an opportunity to change course on climate, though urgent action is needed in all sectors of human activity, including transportation, industry, agriculture and land use. We can and must transform our society, and each of us can help lead the change process. See more overcoming false narratives at the end of this essay.

Overcome Affect Phobia and Welcome all Emotions

Communicating with the required level of honesty will require an emotional shift in the climate movement. For decades the climate movement has emphasized facts and avoided feelings. This is probably in part because scientists report the unfolding climate crisis to us in their objective, often emotionally detached style. Also, because the emotions that the climate crisis inspires are so intense, the climate movement, it seems, has tried to avoid them as much as possible.

My forthcoming book, *Transform Yourself with Climate Truth* is a radical self-help book for people struggling to come to terms and cope with the climate emergency. Yes, the feelings are intense and overwhelming, but we can *use* those feelings as fuel to create rapid and dramatic change. They are part of the solution.

Affect phobia is often official. For example, Columbia University’s popular CRED Guide to Climate Communications contains a section, “Beware the Overuse of Emotional Appeals,” in which they caution presenters to avoid telling the whole truth about the climate crisis, as this would cause “emotional numbing.” So presenters are given strategies including choosing a specific “portfolio of risk” to communicate — such as the link between climate and disease — rather than the whole, frightening truth.

Affect phobia can also be found in almost any discussion within the gradualist climate movement about what to say or what to advocate. “Fear doesn’t work as a motivator” so we shouldn’t “make” people afraid as it might “turn them off.”

While it is accurate that climate truth overwhelms some people, the climate movement should be focused on *turning people on* — getting more people to enter emergency mode as activists. Further, some people will be “turned off” by climate truth *temporarily*, but will process it over time and then enter emergency mode later. With the truth, we give people the opportunity to face the facts and their feelings, and move forward productively. Without the truth, we deny them this chance.

Another critical reason for organizations and leaders to overcome affect phobia is to provide a safe space to discuss the crisis in the fellowship of others who understand. People who understand the climate crisis are often alienated, feeling that they must act “as if” things are OK in order to get along. Climate advocacy organizations should create a place where people can process the reality and implications of the climate crisis, together. This kind of supportive, generative atmosphere can only occur when the truth is embraced, and we are able to tolerate the emotions that the truth inspires. If the organizational culture is to stay perpetually cheerful and stay away from the horrifying truth of our situation, people will not feel free to express their true feelings.

If you feel the urge to say, “But people can’t handle the truth,” question whether you may be reacting to your *own* anxiety and your own difficulty processing the climate crisis. Of course it’s difficult! Of course people will feel afraid, angry, and grief-stricken. Those are rational, healthy reactions to the surreal and nightmarish reality we find ourselves in. The climate movement should encourage people to acknowledge these feelings and learn to see them as a call to action.

State of The Climate Emergency Movement Ecosystem: May, 2019

The Climate Emergency Movement has gained so much momentum in the first few months of 2019 that it’s hard to keep up. Here are a few of the recent developments and the organizations behind them, though by the time this essay is published the list is sure to be out of date.

The Green New Deal. In February, 2019, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Ed Markey introduced a House Resolution 109, *Recognizing the Duty of the Federal Government to create a Green New Deal* calling for a 10-year “National, social, industrial, and economic mobilization on a scale not seen since World War II and the New Deal” that achieves zero emissions, 100% renewables, full employment, a just transition for workers and frontline communities. As of May, 2019, 104 house representatives and 12 Senators co-sponsored this resolution, including most of the top Democrats contending for the presidency in 2020.

While Ocasio-Cortez was a candidate, she signed The Climate Mobilization’s “Pledge to Mobilize”, committing to organize with others to spread the truth of the climate crisis and build the power necessary to start maximal intensity mobilization. Ocasio-Cortez has subsequently called for trillions of dollars in investments for that Green New Deal so that it can mobilize on the scale of WWII. Since their inception, The Justice Democrats, who recruited and supported Ocasio-Cortez’s election, have been interested in a 10 year mobilization to transform our energy sector. The Climate Mobilization and myself have been dialoguing about this program — which became the Green New Deal — for years. It contains many elements of our *Victory Plan*.

The Justice Democrats is a grassroots Political Action Group that recruits and supports candidates who run a unified platform, featuring the Green New Deal. Current Justice Democrats in Congress include Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar, Ro Khanna, and Pramila Jayapal. The Justice Democrats are recruiting their 2020 candidates, many of whom will primary corporate, gradualist democrats.

The Sunrise Movement is a US based grassroots movement group led by millennials and targeting young people. It seeks to stop the climate crisis and create millions of new jobs in the process. Since the introduction of the Green New Deal, Sunrise has exploded in interest and popularity, and the organization is now shaping up to coordinate the grassroots social movement for comprehensive emergency and maximal climate mobilization in the United States. They are a major new political force and are poised to continue growing in size and influence. They have already succeeded in bringing the climate, and Green New Deal, to the forefront of the 2020 Presidential primaries.

Extinction Rebellion (XR for short), emerged in November 2018 as a major force on “Rebellion Day One”, when thousands of rebels occupied five bridges in London. XR

encourages its members and the broader public to accept the hard truths of the climate crisis, and this approach is proving to be remarkably successful. In the last six months XR has expanded globally, especially in Europe, and as of April 2019, it has initiated 2 weeks of rebellion. The nonviolent, open-affiliation group demands that the government “tell the truth about the climate and wider ecological emergency,” that the government “enact legally binding policy measures to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2025 and to reduce consumption levels,” and that a national citizen’s assembly is convened “to oversee the changes, as part of creating a democracy fit for purpose.”

The principle of Climate Truth has been central to XR’s approach from the start. One of their slogans is, “Tell the truth and act like that truth is real.” XR emphasizes civil disobedience as its key tactic, and way of expressing that they are in Emergency Mode.

XR also recognizes the importance of grief and mourning. Another slogan is “We welcome everyone and *all parts of everyone*.” Your fear, grief, anger, and despair are all welcome. XR supports organizers in acknowledging and responding to the climate crisis and offer seminars on brokenheartedness and grief. Their standard 1-hour talk, “Headed for Extinction and What to do about it” contains several breaks for silent grief.

One important piece of this social movement history is that both Sunrise Movement and Extinction Rebellion were trained by the same person and organization — Carlos Saavedra, the founder of the Anyi Institute. Anyi teaches movements to “frontload their DNA” for rapid growth. In other words, to develop a clear set of goals, demands, and way of operating that can be picked up by *anyone*. If you want to organize an XR or a Sunrise movement event — you are empowered to do so, and do not need permission, as long as you act within the group’s stated guidelines and values.

School Strikes The school strikes are a prime example of how transformative climate truth can be, as well as the power of 1 individual to wield it with maximum efficacy. Greta Thunberg, Swedish Teenager, began striking her school every Friday, going instead to Swedish parliament to stand on the stairs and demand an emergency response on climate. Greta has spoken at UN climate gatherings, at Davos, and at other official meetings, offering scorching rebukes and calls to arms, such as telling Business leaders at the World Economic Forum in Davos:

At places like Davos, people like to tell success stories. But their financial success has come with an unthinkable price tag. And on climate change, we have to acknowledge we have failed. All political movements in their present form have done so, and the media has failed to create broad public awareness... Adults keep saying, "We owe it to the young people to give them hope." But I don't want your hope. I don't want you to be hopeful. I want you to panic. I want you to feel the fear I feel every day. And then I want you to act.

Greta's fiercely truthful approach has proven enormously successful, spreading globally. In Belgium, after more than 30,000 students struck, their environmental minister resigned in February, 2019. On March 15, 2019, 1.4 million students left schools around the world demanding, among other things, a Declaration of Climate Emergency and an emergency speed transition to zero emissions.

Greta is firmly committed to spreading climate truth:

I often talk to people who say, 'No, we have to be hopeful and to inspire each other, and we can't tell [people] too many negative things' . . . But, no — we have to tell it like it is. Because if there are no positive things to tell, then what should we do, should we spread false hope? We can't do that, we have to tell the truth.

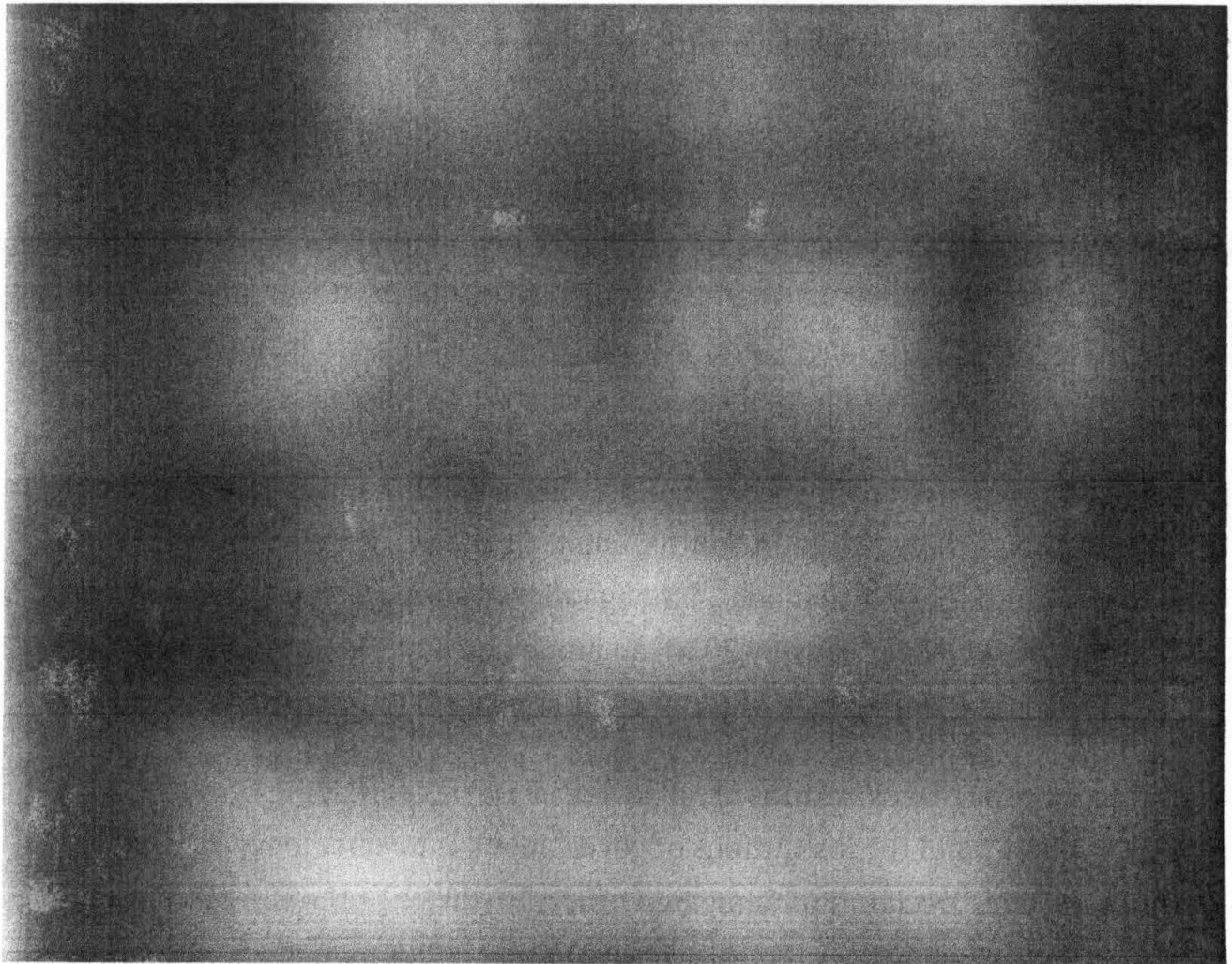
Indeed, Greta's approach to communication is so aligned with my own, in terms of bluntly conveying the truth of the emergency and demanding transformative change, that certain conspiracy-minded bloggers have claimed that I am somehow one of Greta's puppet masters. I have never had a one-on-one conversation with Greta (tho I was on a panel with her over Skype, once), and, while I would be immensely honored if my writing has influenced her, I have no evidence that that is the case.

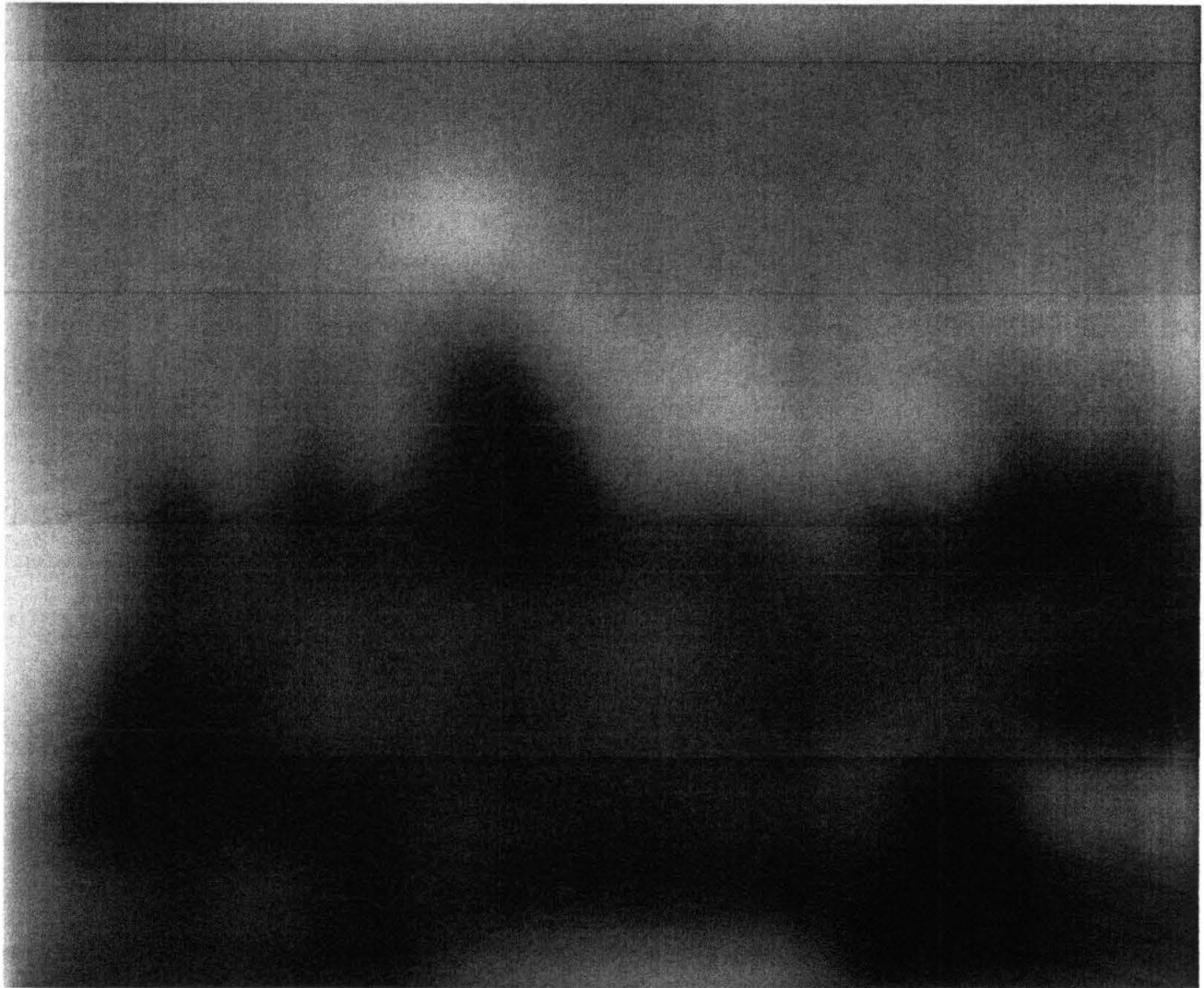
The School Strikes have taken on much of the character of their truth telling initiator. The student-founded organization Youth Climate Strike US, which has brought the strikes to the United States, demands, among other things: a Green New Deal and a just transition to 100% clean energy by 2030, an immediate halt to new fossil fuel infrastructure, and a Declaration of Climate Emergency at the national level.

Climate Emergency Declarations are a powerful tool for spreading Climate Truth and leading the public, and the institutions of government, into emergency mode. The Climate Emergency Declaration Campaign officially started in the city of Darebin,

Australia — whose city government passed the first declaration of climate emergency in December 2016. Because of our local Climate Mobilization chapter, Hoboken New Jersey became the first U.S. city to declare a Climate Emergency in November, 2017.

Working in coalition with international allies and on-the-ground leaders, The Climate Mobilization has helped to spread this campaign to 500 local governments around the world, representing over 50 million people; it is now growing at a compounding rate. Because of Extinction Rebellion's impact, as well as the work of the British Green Party, more than 50 UK cities have declared climate emergency and commit to emergency speed decarbonization. London declared a climate emergency in mid-December, committing to transform its economy to carbon-neutral by 2030. Non-governmental organizations have also declared Climate Emergency. University of Bristol became the first university to declare a Climate Emergency. The XR-affiliated campaign Culture Declares a Climate Emergency has supported hundreds of British cultural institutions and artists in declaring a climate emergency. The Climate Mobilization plans to help spread this into the US as well.





As of May 2019, The campaign is moving to higher levels of government: the United Kingdom, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales have all declared a Climate Emergency. The Climate Mobilization plans to continue supporting Climate Emergency Declarations on every level of government, looking to get one introduced into the House of Representatives in coming weeks.

After a city has declared a Climate Emergency, we advise councilors to not just enact local policy but to become champions for Climate Mobilization — educating the public, working with other local governments to spread the campaign and collaborate on climate approaches, and pushing higher levels of government to declare Climate Emergency and commit to rapid decarbonization. Often, new government bodies must be created in order to complete that work.

Local Chapters of National Groups and Local Climate Justice Organizations

Local and state level chapters of some big green national organizations have joined the

Climate Emergency Movement, through pursuing the Climate Emergency Declaration campaign, joining with the School Strikers, or in other ways.

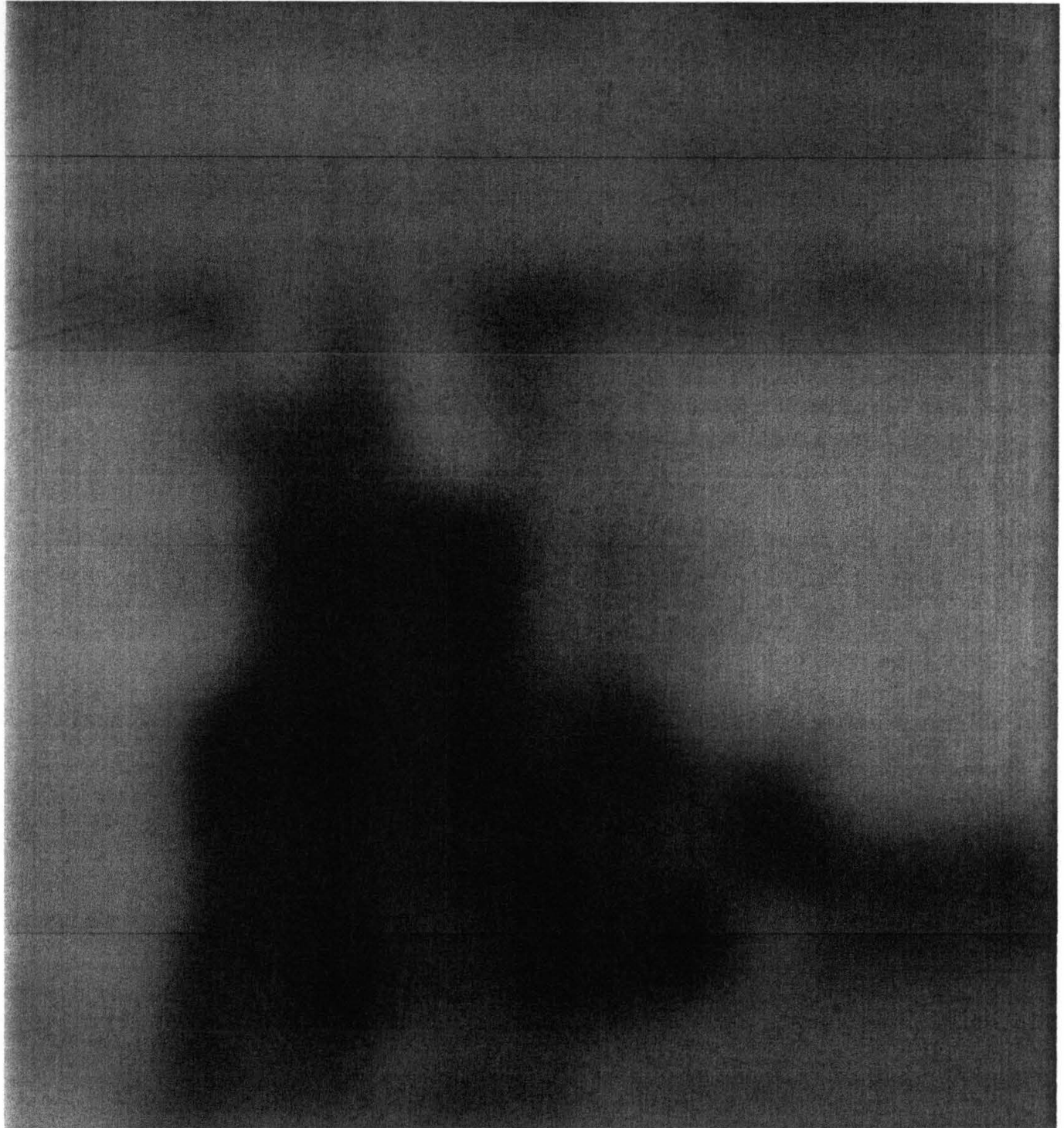
Further, many climate and environmental justice organizations that have been defending their neighborhoods, cities, and rural areas from fracking, oil extraction, mountaintop removal, and other toxic activities, are realizing that the larger climate emergency fight is aligned with their local fights. The LA Leap coalition is an example of how these groups achieve huge wins when they work together in the Climate Emergency frame.

The Climate Mobilization was founded 5 years ago, on the principle of telling the truth and demanding a response that could protect humanity and the natural world: WWII scale mobilization. We have three major programs: Climate Emergency, Climate Truth, and Climate Mobilization.

Our Climate Emergency campaign was described above — we support local TCM chapters, and partner organizations such as chapters of 350.org and the Sierra Club — in winning Declarations of Climate Emergency and making them as effective as possible.

Our Climate Truth campaign is based around my psychological work. My forthcoming book, *Transform Yourself with Climate Truth* is about helping people work through the emotional and psychological blockers to entering emergency mode personally, turning their terror and grief into action, and joining the movement. I am piloting small group conversation formats with the goal of welcoming pain and turning it into action.

Our Climate Mobilization thought leadership team focuses on intellectual production for the Climate Emergency Movement. This work ranges from political and economic analysis to determine optimal pathways to a fully renewable energy system; policy development designed to move governments of any size into an emergency mode of response to climate change; and research into the industrial strategy development and bureaucratic restructuring required to fully mobilize America's economy as we entered World War II. At times this work felt like a thought experiment; it has recently become an essential and influential body of knowledge. We now have an opportunity to directly support serious candidates and influence climate policy at the highest levels.



Join the Movement to Protect Humanity and All Life

I hope that this essay has convinced you that: 1) the Climate Movement's job is to *lead the public into emergency mode* 2) that the Climate Emergency Movement is doing that by entering emergency mode themselves and that 3) This young movement has tremendous momentum and is growing all the time. However, relative to the epic nature of the challenge, the Climate Emergency Movement is still small, and broke. We need all the support we can get. We need you.

The forces arrayed against us are mighty. But on our side is the extremely potent truth — what science tells us and is becoming more apparent all the time — as well as the human desire to survive and protect other people and species. Another important strategic advantage is the WWII experience with the home front economic and social mobilization, which provides a recent historical example of extraordinary, improbable American success through mobilization. It's hard for most people to imagine how we could possibly tackle the climate crisis because of the scale and urgency of what must be done, but the WWII-scale mobilization concept makes it much easier.

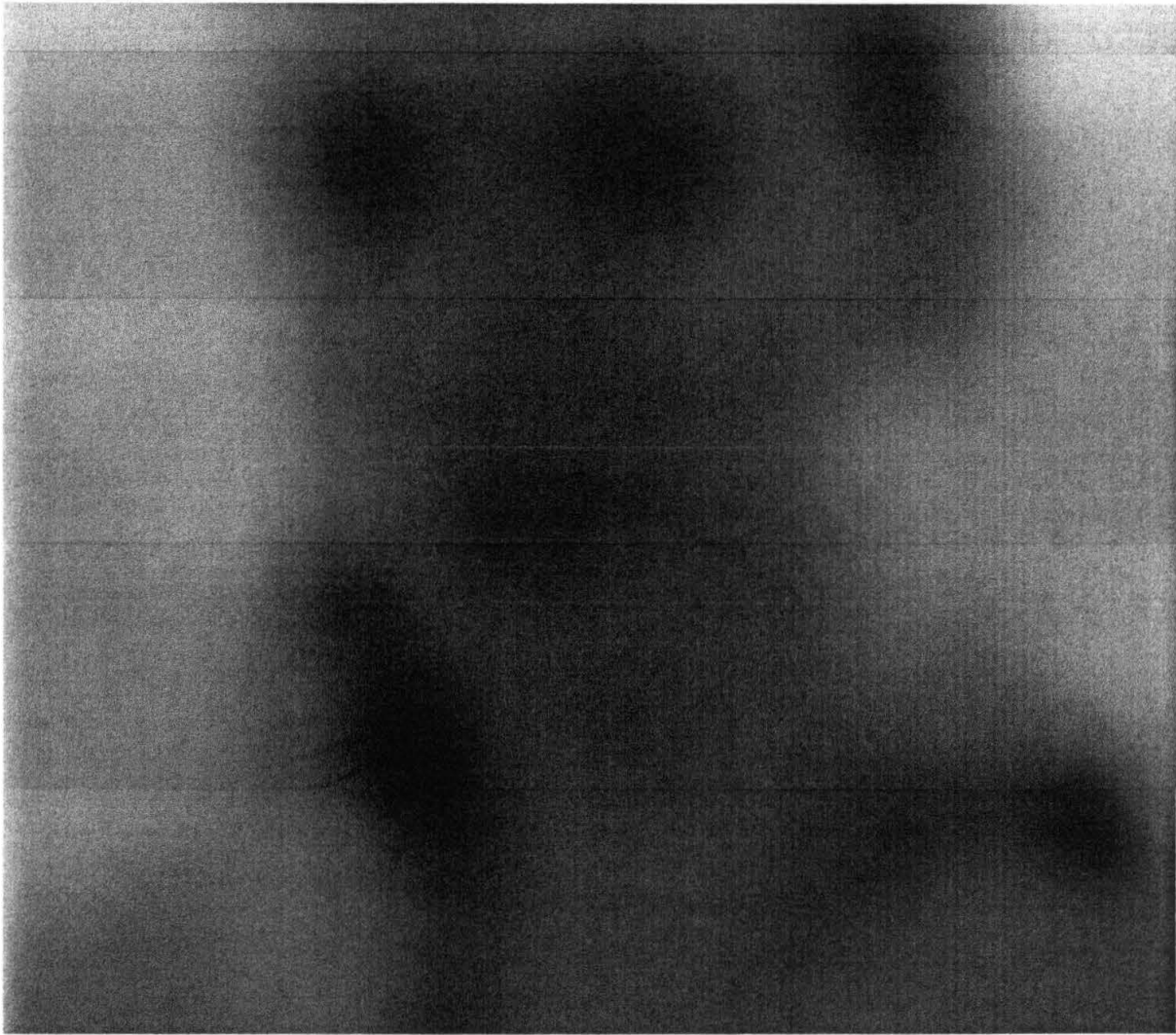
We are now in a time of tremendous consequence. Incredibly, the choices we make now and in the near future matter a great deal to the future of humanity and all life on earth. It's time to leave gradualism, business as usual, and normal mode behind until we have solved the climate problem. The time has come to enter emergency mode, both as a society and as individuals. The stakes could not be higher.

Next Steps

1. Volunteer with a Climate Emergency Organization! Extinction Rebellion, Sunrise, the Justice Democrats, the School Strikers, or The Climate Mobilization. Or work to bring your current organization into “Emergency Mode”
2. Have frank conversations with people you care about and respect about the climate emergency.
3. Support The Climate Mobilization's work with a **Donation**.

About the Author

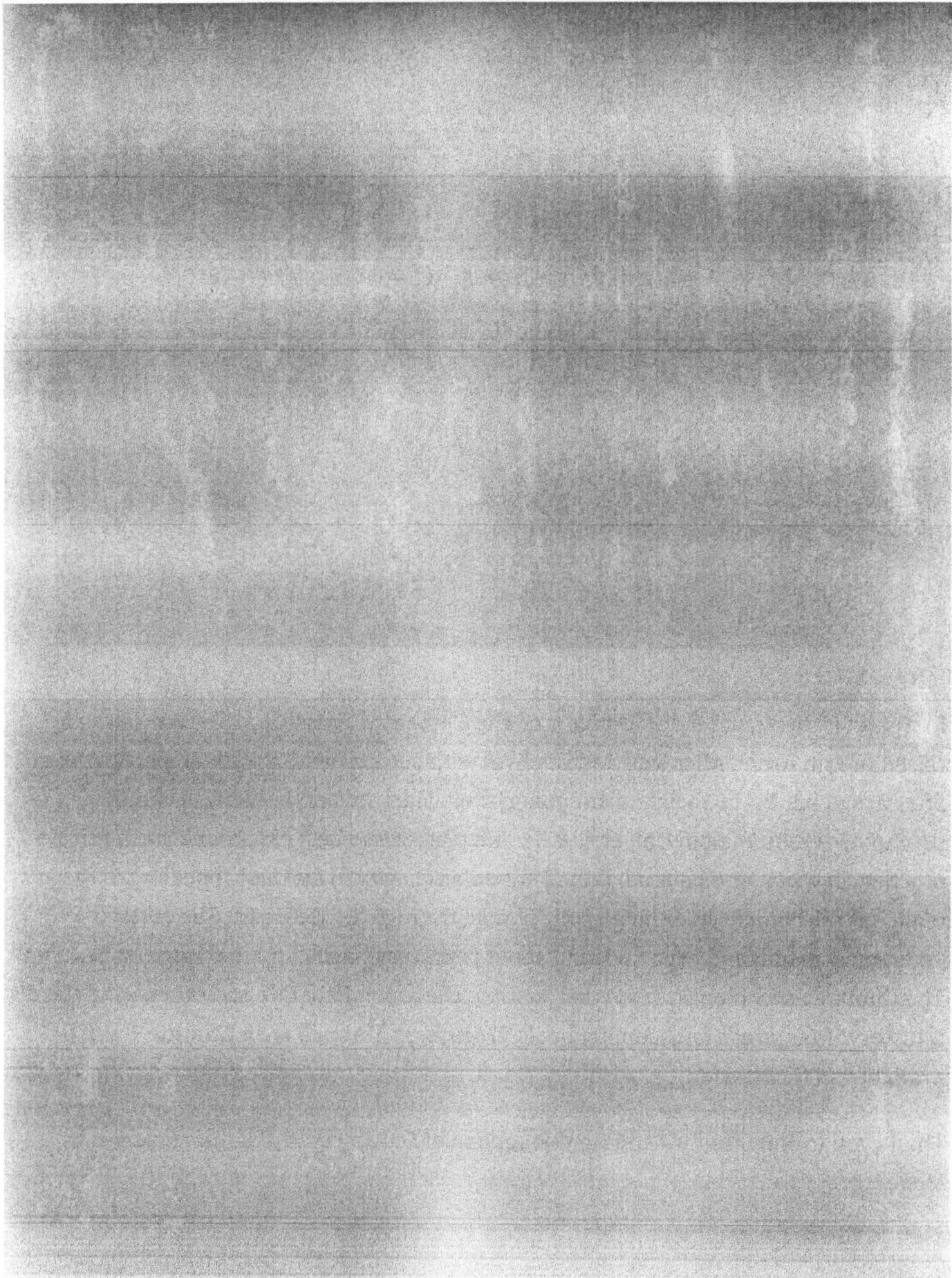
Margaret Klein Salamon, PhD

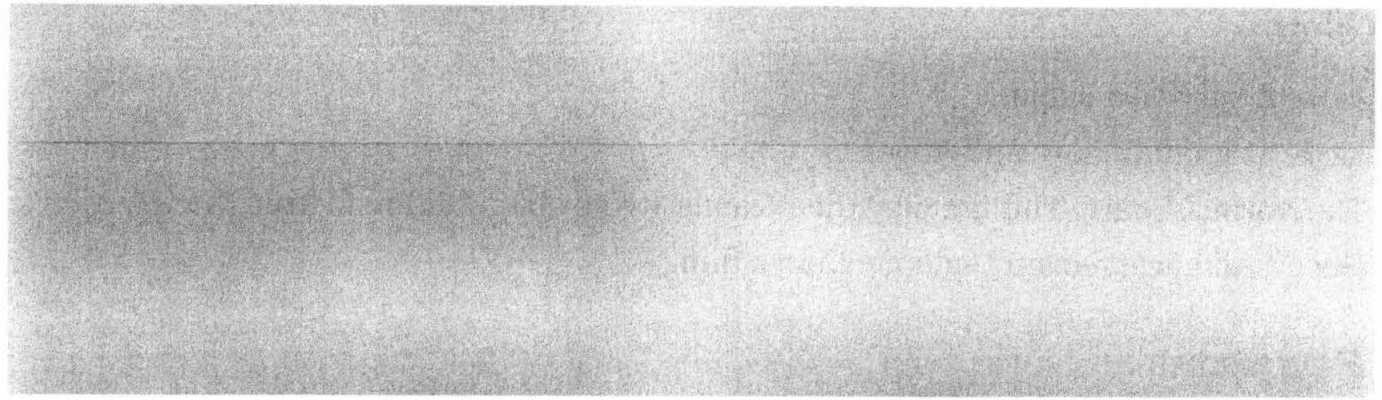


Margaret is the Founder and Director of The Climate Mobilization. She was born and raised in Ann Arbor, Michigan and she lives with her husband in Park Slope, Brooklyn. She earned her BA in Social Anthropology from Harvard and her PhD in clinical psychology from Adelphi University. Her life plan was to be a psychoanalyst in private practice, a writer, and have a family. Those plans began to feel less appealing as the reality of the climate crisis increasingly broke through her defenses. She entered emergency mode, and began writing about psychology and climate change on her blog The Climate Psychologist. From that writing, she found Ezra Silk and others, and the rest is history! Margaret's forthcoming book, *Transform Yourself with Climate Truth* is available on Kickstarter.

Thank you to Jim Streit for editing this version of *Leading the Public into Emergency Mode*.

Overcoming False Narratives





Further Reading

The Climate Crisis

Climate Reality Check and Recount by David Spratt

The Uninhabitable Earth by David Wallace Wells

WWII Homefront mobilization

No Ordinary Time by Doris Kearns Goodwin

Freedom's Forge by Arthur Herman

WWII Scale Climate Mobilization

The Case for Climate Mobilization by Ezra Silk and Margaret Klein Salamon

Unprecedented by David Griffin

The Great Disruption by Paul Gilding

Striking Targets, Philip Sutton

Climate Emergency

Road to Cop 21 and Beyond: the Missing Lessons of Paris by Michael Hoexter

Climate Code Red by Philip Sutton and David Spratt

Social Movements

This is an Uprising by Mark and Paul Engler

The Power of the Powerless by Vaclav Havel

From Dictatorship to Democracy by Gene Sharp

ACT UP and Larry Kramer

1,112 and Counting, Larry Kramer

Films

How to Survive a Plague

Larry Kramer: In Love and Anger.

The Normal Heart (This is a play that Kramer wrote about his break from the Gay Men's Health Alliance, recently, adapted into a film.)

Flow States


Flow by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

Flow Genome Project

The Rise of Superman: Decoding the Science of Ultimate Human Performance, by Kotler, Steven.

. . .

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The Guardian

The real reason some scientists downplay the risks of climate change

Climate deniers often accuse scientists of exaggerating the threats associated with the climate crisis, but if anything they're often too conservative

Dale Jamieson, Michael Oppenheimer and Naomi Oreskes

Fri 25 Oct 2019 08.00 BST



Although the results of climate research have been consistent for decades, climate scientists have struggled to convey the gravity of the situation to laypeople outside their field. If anything, the wider public only recently seems to have awakened to the threat of the climate crisis. Why?

In our new book, *Discerning Experts: The Practices of Scientific Assessment for Environmental Policy*, we attempted to illuminate how scientists make the judgments they do. In particular, we wanted to know how scientists respond to the pressures, sometimes subtle, sometimes overt, that arise when they know that their conclusions will be disseminated beyond the research community - in short, how scientists are affected when they know the world is watching.

We explored these questions with respect to assessments of acid rain, ozone depletion and sea level rise predictions from the west Antarctic ice sheet.

While climate skeptics and deniers often accuse scientists of exaggerating the threats associated with the climate crisis, the available evidence suggests the opposite. By and

large, scientists have either been right in their assessments, or have been unduly conservative. We noticed a clear pattern of underestimation of certain key climate indicators, and therefore underestimation of the threat of climate disruption. When new observations of the climate system have provided more or better data, or permitted us to re-evaluate earlier conclusions, the findings for ice extent, sea level rise and ocean temperature have generally been worse than previously thought.

One of the factors that appears to contribute to this trend of underestimation is the perceived need for consensus, or what we call “univocality”: the felt need to speak in a single voice.

Many scientists worry that if they publicly air their disagreement, government officials will conflate their differences of opinion with ignorance and use this as justification for inaction.

Others worry that even if policy-makers want to act, they will find it difficult to do so if scientists fail to send an unambiguous message. Therefore, scientists actively seek to find their common ground, and to focus on those areas of agreement. In some cases, where there are irreconcilable differences of opinion, scientists may say nothing, giving the erroneous impression that nothing is known.

How does the pressure for univocality lead to underestimation? Consider a case in which most scientists think that the correct answer to a question is in the range one to 10, but some believe that it could be as high as 100. In this case, everyone will agree that it is at least one to 10, but not everyone will agree that it could be as high as 100. Therefore, the area of agreement is one to 10, and this will be reported as the consensus view. Wherever there is a range of possible outcomes that includes a long, high-end tail of probability, the area of overlap will lie at or near the low end.

We are not suggesting that every example of under-estimation is caused by the factors we observed in our work, nor that the demand for consensus always leads to underestimation. But we found that this pattern occurred in all of the cases that we studied. We also found that the institutional aspects of assessment, including who the authors are and how they are chosen, how the substance is divided into chapters, and guidance emphasizing consensus, also generally tilt in favor of scientific conservatism.

Knowing this, what do we do?

To scientists, we suggest that you should not view consensus as a goal. Consensus is an emergent property, something that may come forth as the result of scientific work, discussion and debate. When that occurs, it is important to articulate the consensus as clearly and specifically as possible. But where there are substantive differences of opinion, they should be acknowledged and the reasons for them explained. Scientific communities should also be open to experimenting with alternative models for making and expressing group judgments, and to learning more about how policy makers actually interpret the findings that result. Such approaches may contribute to assessments being

more useful tools as we face the reality of adapting to the climate crisis and the disruptions that will occur.

For political leaders and business people, we think it is important for you to know that it is extremely unlikely that scientists are exaggerating the threat of the climate crisis. It is far more likely that things are worse than scientists have said. We have already seen that the impacts of increased greenhouse gases in the atmosphere are unfolding more rapidly than scientists predicted. There is a high likelihood that they will continue to do so, and that the IPCC estimates - that emissions must be rapidly reduced, if not entirely eliminated, by 2050 - may well be optimistic. The fact that this conclusion is hard to swallow does not make it untrue.

And for ordinary citizens, it is important to recognize that scientists have done their job. It is now up to us to force our leaders to act upon what we know, before it is too late.

Dale Jamieson, Michael Oppenheimer and Naomi Oreskes are authors of *Discerning Experts: The Practices of Scientific Assessment for Environmental Policy*. This piece is largely excerpted from that book

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