

Why should we be hopeful?

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The choice of hope over despair is all important

When I give talks on climate change, a few get angry when they realize we are endangering the well-being of the Earth, and our children and grandchildren. Some audience members react with despair, because the challenge seems so great and our political systems so paralyzed that they feel overwhelmed. Others resonate with the fact that I am speaking from a position of hope, as I map out what is happening to the Earth and to Vermont. Then someone will look up from their despair and ask with burning clarity: “Why are you so hopeful?”

This is a much deeper question than understanding and responding to climate change. For us as human beings, hope opens doors to possibilities that expand our vision, and deepen our sense of communion. Imagine the hope and joy of a summer sunrise immersed in the dawn chorus. Hope opens doors and frees us to be creative and joyfully work with each other and with the Earth. In contrast, despair closes us off from the real world of possibilities into a dark and isolated world.

Climate change presents humanity with many difficult choices. If we first recognize the truth and choose hope over despair, this frees us to work together to do whatever needs to be done.

Remember, we are active participants in the creation of the future - it not a given. There is great strength and joy when we act with moral integrity - doing what is right simply because it is right. What uplifts the human spirit also uplifts the Earth.

