

Let's talk about climate!

Be nice

The climate crisis is both urgent and unjust. As we become aware of the seriousness, we might feel frustrated and scared - because people around us might not care as much as we do. To feel anger and fear are reasonable, since the climate crisis is a substantially and real threat. At the same time, we need to consider the purpose of our conversations and how to best achieve results. With accusations, we risk putting the recipient on the defensive, causing both outward aggression and discomfort. This, on the other hand, can complicate the dialogue or result in a blamegame. A pleasant conversation is more likely to be a good one. If we look at the sustainable transition as a personal journey of development it's easier to keep dialogs humble.

Ask - and listen

Having a strong belief about something can often lead us to impose them on others, which can turn the conversation into a monologue. For the conversation to be rewarding, we need to include and understand the person we are talking to. With open-ended questions we invite to discussion. How do they feel about the climate? What transition challenges do they see? Open-ended questions, also encourage us to formulate our reasoning. This may force us to confront our own arguments or conflicting goals. Follow-up questions like "What do you mean by that?" or "Can you tell me more?" help us go deeper. In order to better understand each other in the transition, it can also be helpful to change perspectives and try to understand other people's everyday lives. If that is you living in the countryside or in the city, working or are retired, are financially comfortable or not. And everything in between.

Promote climate transition

If someone were to tap you on the shoulder and list everything you have to give up, without mentioning the benefits, would it increase your motivation to adapt? Probably not. The climate crisis is difficult to grasp, and when we struggle imagining the goal, or the consequences of not acting, we might better focus on the journey. Adapting and living within the planetary boundaries does not mean a life worse of. On the contrary! What's good for the planet is also good for us. By highlighting the benefits of a sustainable life, we can more easily encourage the transition. A life with high emissions is often both expensive and unhealthy. Consider who the recipient is and what can make life better here and now. Better health through changed dietary habits? Increased savings with energy efficiency and reduced consumption?

Shame, guilt and peptalk

After a lifestyle with high emissions, the climate crisis can become an inconvenient truth. Feeling shame or guilt doesn't have to be bad. It's a quite natural feeling if one perceives that their actions have led to negative impacts. It can also act as a driving force for behavior change, as the will to do differently can cure shame and reduce guilt. Feelings of shame sometimes arise when we discuss things that have an impact on the collective, like climate change. It can create a kind of social conscience that also might link to our morals. However, shaming or blaming to influence transition is not that simple, as it can feel uncomfortable and awkward for both parties - not least because we dislike bad vibes! At the same time, it seems that it's mainly uncomfortable in the moment and that emotions and reflections that follow can contribute to transition. Encouraging already climate-smart behaviors can also be successful, even though they might be small. That way, we support each other in the challenges!

The easiest target

Climate deniers may be loud, but the fact is that they are few. Most people are aware of the climate crisis, and despite the lack of act and adoption, it's most likely somewhere in their consciousness. However, our time and energy are limited, and to influence transition and empower change, we should primarily focus on the people around us that are about to change, or those who have begun. Think about people in your network- who would listen and also be prepared to do adjustments to a more sustainable life? These people are the one to focus on. Simply because these conversations are the ones with best chance of impact, and true change. Humans are social animals, which means that we attend to do what our friends, neighbours and colleagues do, and when more and more people engage, it becomes difficult and also kind of boring not to join. Connect with your future allies! Being many, we can carry the conversations forward

Inspire

As a greenfluencer, you don't need to be able to recite the latest report from the IPCC or live a flawless life with minimal emissions. It's about inspiring others to a sustainable lifestyle by sharing passion, commitment, and experiences - on all levels, in all areas. Maybe you've tried some new recipes, joined an group on Facebook or discovered the positives of travelling by train? What challenges did you face, and what lessons did you learn on the way? Science and facts are important, but to change people's mindset and encourage new habits, we need more people inspiring others with their stories and insights into their lifestyle choices. Humans are influenced by other people's stories. Please tell yours!

Affect

Touchpoints are important when it comes to a sustainable transition, as they help create a more personal and relevant connection between people and climate. When we can relate climate issues to something people care about on a personal level, it becomes easier to engage them and inspire action. Therefore it's important to consider different personalities, and which messages are most likely to resonate. **Children, places, economy, global context, and values** are all touchpoints that might help us in conversations about climate and transition.



5 touchpoints to use when we talk about the climate

Children

Today, all children are affected by the climate crisis, some more than others. Most of us would say that we do everything for our children, but do we really? As grown ups we are the ones causing the climate change. Therefore we need to widen our view and consider how our society and our choices affect both short-term and long-term outcomes. How we act, or fail to act, on the climate crisis will impact children now and in the future. The desire to be able to look our children in the eyes and honestly say that we did what we could is a strong argument for transition. Therefore, children become a powerful point of connection in conversations about the climate.

Places

In Arctic countries like Sweden, global warming is occurring twice as fast as the global average. It affects and causes changes to our landscape. We all have places that we care about, places we love. Talking about these places and together considering different outcomes of global warming might be one way to reach out and encourage action. For example, how will coastal cities be affected by rising sea-levels or how will our melting glaciers affect the possibility of skiing?

Economy

The climate crisis comes with a hefty price tag. Forest fires, floods, and other extreme weather causes huge damages on our infrastructure and affect people's everyday lives. Highlighting the economic aspects and discussing how emissions cost both people and planet might be convincing for people who are not directly engaged in environmental issues.

Global

We are all part of the planet, and when one part of the world is affected, we will probably be affected too. Sweden is directly dependent on international trade to ensure a stable supply of various products. When periods of drought increase and crop failures devastate harvests, people are also forced to flee and becomes migrants. Receiving and managing integration leads to significant challenges for recipient countries. To encourage the person you're talking to to zoom out and reflect on themselves as global citizens might help see the bigger picture.

Values

We all have values that largely influence our attitudes, decisions, and actions. These can play an important role in our transition, but then we also need to connect them with the climate crisis. How does equality and solidarity come into play? Are we and society living up to our values? Raising values that are important to us might help us navigate and make decisions that feel good even tomorrow. Values are also closely linked to our emotions, which can make the conversation less rigid.