

“Holding Together” During the Climate Emergency Era

Climate Emergency Questionnaire

in association with the

“Brainstorming 100% Reduction in Greenhouse Gases (GHG) ASAP Campaign” <http://bit.ly/321sn60>

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Do We Have the Inner Resilience, Character Strength and Mutual Understanding
Necessary to Stay Focused and Cooperate During the Climate Emergency Era?

Introduction

This writer believes there are time-tested guidelines and codes of conduct, which have accumulated over centuries of human experience, and which have been confirmed again and again as essential to individual well-being and social harmony. And he believes there are times when we need to re-affirm what such time-tested guidelines and codes of conduct are. Now seems like one of those times.

Even if we--collectively--succeed in limiting Global Heating to 1.5°C, there will be many disruptions ahead, associated with both our efforts to stay at or below 1.5°C, and our efforts to adapt to what climate and planet habitability eventually become (i.e. on way or another, there will be significant changes in food production; migration; financial systems; the nature of local, regional, and international economies; employment opportunities; transportation options; energy accessibility; etc.).

This is the time, before there are too many crises at once, to think about the people we will need to cooperate with in our local communities, and how likely it is that they will think carefully, act honestly, work diligently, and have compassion for their fellow human beings for the duration of the emergency.

The 14 questions in this questionnaire are offered to encourage a process of re-discovery and re-affirmation of our inner resources--and encourage a process of re-discovery and re-affirmation of our capacity to “hold together” during what could be *decades of cultural transformation*. Hopefully, this questionnaire will also help many of us realize what is really most important--for us, for our families, and for our communities.

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1) Inspiring Role Models in the Community

The cross-country torch relay for the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta, Georgia (USA) began April 27 in Los Angeles and ended July 19 in Atlanta. Of the approximately 10,000 torch-carriers, about 5,000 were "community heroes selected by local United Way panels based on nominating essays." Thirty-seven of the eighty-five torch-carriers in the Greater Washington D.C. area were "community heroes." A graphic-- in the newspaper article where this story appeared--listed all thirty-seven "community heroes." What follows are some of the brief descriptions, included in that graphic, of those "community heroes"--

“who does volunteer work with the elderly”; “who is active in the Big Brother program in the District”; “who does volunteer work with AIDS patients and people infected with HIV”; “who does volunteer work at hospitals”; “who is active in literacy programs for children”; “who does a range of neighborhood volunteer work”; “who helps abandoned, orphaned and disabled children”; “who does volunteer work with children and elderly in poor neighborhoods”

[Note: the article “Blazing An Olympian Trail” by Paul Duggan in The District Weekly section of the Washington Post (June 13, 1996) can be accessed in the Washington Post archives (at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1996/06/13/blazing-an-olympian-trial/b5ac37fa-e2af-4e12-bbd8-9c46a1a31b77/>)]

Please name 5-10 examples in your community of the kind of inspiring role models which would qualify as a torch carrier. Please provide a description of what they do, like the descriptions above.

2) Genuine Goodwill--Countless Numbers of Examples in Communities Around the World?

Please consider the following statement--

“Even now, as you are reading this, truly inspiring contributions of genuine goodwill are being generated in a variety of ways--and in a variety of circumstances--by countless numbers of people in communities around the world.”

Please choose the response below which best represents your view of the above statement.

- I believe it, and there is much evidence to support it
- I believe it, and there is sufficient evidence to support it
- I would like to believe it, but there isn't enough evidence to support it
- It is difficult to believe it, with the way things are going now
- I don't believe it, and there is no evidence to support it

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3) Time-tested Guidelines--Are They in Our Community’s “Tool Box”?

This writer believes there are time-tested guidelines, and codes of conduct, which have accumulated over centuries of human experience, and which have been confirmed again and again as essential to individual well-being and social harmony. And he believes such guidelines include the following:

- a) sacrificing personal desires for the greater good of the whole
- b) finding contentment and quality of life while consuming less material goods and ecological resources
- c) preferring peacebuilding which supports and actualizes mutually beneficial understandings, forgiveness, and reconciliation--and which *abstains from violent conflict resolution*--as a way of bringing cycles of violence to an end
- d) using resources carefully, so that there is surplus available for emergency assistance
- e) supporting community life and cultural traditions which “... bring to the fore how many good people there are, how many ways there are to do good, and how much happiness comes to those who extend help, as well as to those who receive it”.

Please choose the response(s) below which best represent(s) your view of how scarce, or how visible, such wisdom is in your community?

- () Most people in our community understand the importance of these guidelines, and apply them regularly in their daily lives
- () Most people in our community understand the importance of these guidelines, but have so much to do just to get by that they have little time for applying such guidelines
- () Some people in our community understand the importance of these guidelines, and apply them regularly in their daily lives
- () Most people in our community don’t think about these kinds of things
- () Most people in our community live however they want to, without any concern for others

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Climate Emergency Questionnaire--continued

4) Many Unprecedented Challenges Ahead--Evaluating Community Resilience

There are many unprecedented challenges ahead, all of which will directly or indirectly impact Climate Breakdown mitigation, and all of which require urgent attention during the unprecedented cultural transformation which we must make in the coming decades.

Examples:

Cultures of Violence, Greed, Corruption, Cynicism, and Overindulgence

Beginning of 6th Extinction Event

Global Inequities and Cycles of Malnutrition, Disease, and Death

Toxic Air Pollution

Health Care and Education Accessibility

Accelerating Migration and Displacement

Water Deficits

Widespread Sanitation Issues

Protection Against Floods at Chemical Sites

Creating Acceptable Radioactive Waste Disposal

Ocean Health Management

Reducing Cyber Threats

Increasing Media Literacy

Please choose three statements (one from each of the three categories below) which most closely represent your view of your community's plans to resolve each of the 13 challenges listed above. Then write the letter associated with the category, and the letter associated with your choices, next to the challenges listed above.

[Ex: Cultures of Violence, Greed, Corruption, Cynicism, and Overindulgence Rc, Pd, Cc]

Resources (R) (category)

- a) I believe we have more than enough resources to resolve this challenge.
- b) I believe we have sufficient resources to resolve this challenge.
- c) I am not sure if we have enough resources to resolve this challenge.
- d) I am sure we do not have enough resources to resolve this challenge.

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Climate Emergency Questionnaire--continued

[Question 4) continued]

Plans (P) (category)

- a) I believe we have a relevant, practical, and doable action plan for resolving this challenge.
- b) I believe we are taking the steps necessary to develop a relevant, practical, and doable action plans for resolving this challenge.
- c) I am not sure if we know how to resolve this challenge.
- d) I do not believe we know how to resolve this challenge.

Confidence (C) (category)

- a) I am confident we can resolve this challenge
- b) I believe we are moving in the right direction to resolve this challenge.
- c) I am not sure if we will be able to resolve this challenge.
- d) I have no confidence in our ability to resolve this challenge.

5) Who--or What--Do We Place Our Faith In, on a Regular Basis?

During the course of any given day, each of us consciously or unconsciously places our faith in a variety of people, institutions, organizations, businesses, beliefs, principles, practices, commonly agreed upon codes of conduct, etc.

Please consider carefully the ‘things you do in the everyday circumstances of your life’--and then list 10 people, institutions, etc. which you personally place your faith in. Then, please mark or arrange the list so that #1 is the most significant person, institution, etc. which you personally place your faith in, #2 is the second most significant, and so on.

6) Who are the Most Valuable Peacebuilders in Your Local Community?

Please name 5-10 people you would identify to others as the most valuable peacebuilders in your local community; and then please describe 5 qualities, skills, experiences, knowledge, etc. which you believe are essential to identifying someone as a most valuable peacebuilder.

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Climate Emergency Questionnaire--continued

7) Arriving at Working Definitions of “Right Livelihood”

Please consider what ways of earning a living you would identify as “right livelihood.”

Now imagine a local community resource guide relating to employment, apprenticeships, training, and volunteer opportunities associated with “right livelihood.”

And further: imagine a committee commissioned to produce such a “right livelihood” resource guide... and the individuals who make up the committee commissioned to produce such a resource guide...

- a) What background (qualifications, experiences, etc.) would you like such individuals to have?
- b) What local institutions would you consider most appropriate to commission such a resource guide, and oversee its production?

8) Small Towns, Large Cities

Please consider the following statement--

“It is possible to create, support, and sustain (small towns/large cities) which can minimize resource requirements, achieve zero carbon emissions, maintain ecological sustainability, maintain a high level of compassion for fellow human beings--and which represent what a significant majority of community residents surveyed would describe as a high quality of life.”

Please choose the phrase below which best represents your response to the above statement with “small towns” in it--and the above statement with “large cities” in it.

- () I believe it, and there is much evidence to support it
- () I believe it, and there is sufficient evidence to support it
- () I would like to believe it, but there isn’t much evidence to support it
- () It is difficult to believe, with the way things are going now
- () I don’t believe it, there is no evidence to support it

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9) Limiting Unexamined Desires at the “Root”

Please consider the following statements—

a) “If many people can learn to find contentment and quality of life while consuming much less, this limiting of desires at the “root” will save much trouble trying to respond to the symptoms of unrestrained and/or unexamined desires--as they materialize worldwide.

b) [(referring to statement a)] “This part of the value and benefit of spiritual teachings is often overlooked.”

i) Do you believe many people can arrive at understanding, believing, and applying the point of view expressed in statement a)?

ii) Why do you think so--or why do you think it is not possible?

iii) Do you believe statement a) is part of the value and benefit of spiritual teachings--or is it part of the value and benefit of some other kind of teachings?

10) Global Drugs Trade and Global Arms Trade

Please consider the following excerpt from the “World Report of Violence and Health” [in Summary -- (Recommendations for Action)] by the World Health Organization (2002):

“The global drugs trade and the global arms trade are integral to violence in both developing and industrialized countries. Even modest progress on either front will contribute to reducing the amount and degree of violence suffered by millions of people. To date, however--and despite their high profile in the world arena--no solutions seem to be in sight for these problems.”

a) Please choose the phrase below which best represents your response to the following question.

How much daily contact with the treasured wisdom of religious, spiritual, and moral traditions do you feel people in general would need before we would see noticeable progress on the above mentioned problems (the global drugs trade and the global arms trade)?

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[Question 10) continued]

- a little more
- a lot more
- a profound increase from current levels
- more than is likely to happen
- additional solutions will be essential to make noticeable progress
- Y have a different view, or a different understanding of our present circumstances

b) If you checked box(es) X or/and Y, please describe below any solutions to the above two problems (global drugs trade and global arms trade) which you feel would be helpful contributions to making noticeable progress on resolving these problems... or describe your different view, or different understanding of our present circumstances.

11) Cultivating Sympathy and Compassion in Your Community

a) Please name 5 people who live in your community--who you know personally, and/or who you have been influenced by--who have inspired in you the qualities of sympathy for the suffering of others, and willingness to express compassion in ways which might alleviate some of such suffering.

b) What does your local community do--specifically, as a community--to nurture, encourage, support, and inspire--to cultivate--such sympathetic and compassionate persons?

12) Increase in Trust Among People from Different Faith Communities and Cultural Traditions?

Please consider the following statement-- “There will be a noticeable increase in trust among people from different faith communities and cultural traditions (i.e. Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, etc.; Asian, African, Hispanic, American, etc.) in the next 20 years.”

Please choose the phrase(s) below which best represent(s) your view of the statement above.

- would actively contribute to making it happen
- with some assistance it could happen
- it would take a lot of effort to make it happen
- even with a lot of effort it might never happen
- it will never happen
- would actively prevent it from happening

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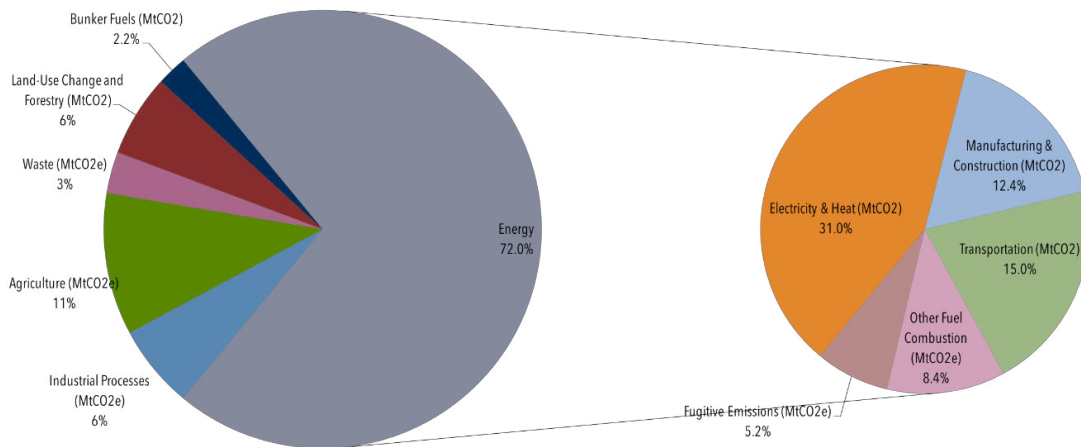
13) In the best of times...

Please complete the following statement--in as many ways as you can.

In the best of times, even the most profound challenges can be overcome; for in the best of times, _____ is/are nurtured, supported, and sustained by family, teachers, mentors, elders, and the everyday influences of community life and cultural traditions.

14) Brainstorming What We Can Do to Reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions?

Please consider the following pie charts which--though they represent 2013 data--can serve as a rough estimate for the sectors where Global GHG Emissions come from. [Personal View (which can be perceived as an effort to sway respondents' choices): the graphs below suggest to this writer that one of the most difficult problems with much of our global economy is that *we use too much energy to do what we want to do.*]



[above pie charts, titled “Global Manmade Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Sector, 2013” (via Climate Analytics Indicators Tool at World Resource Institute website) from the “Global Emissions” section of the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions webpage (C2ES) (at <https://www.c2es.org/content/international-emissions/>)]

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[Question 14) continued]

We are living in the Climate Emergency Era.

We need this Era to be as short as possible.

We need people, especially people in communities around the world which have much more than they need, to:

- a) sacrifice personal desires for the greater good of the whole
- b) find contentment and quality of life while consuming less material goods and ecological resources
- c) use resources carefully, so that there is surplus available for emergency assistance

Please describe, so others could learn from your ideas

- a) what people in your community are doing to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions
- b) what people in your community could be doing
- c) what you personally are going to do, to reduce GHG Emissions.

Concluding Comments

This version of the “‘Holding Together’ During the Climate Emergency Era” questionnaire is example of the kind of questionnaires which this writer believes would be very helpful at this time. If this was a formal questionnaire, there would be more information about the questionnaire project; more questions to identify the respondents age, place of residence (county, state), etc.; ways of certifying that there are no duplicate responses from the same person; and other questions which would help to clearly focus on what the key challenges are, and what are the key solution priorities.

As simply an example, however, this questionnaire may be sufficient just by itself, to highlight the following observation about our current circumstances: it is possible that many people, around the world, have become disoriented and disconnected what we really value the most--for us, for our families, and for our communities. The remedy: get oriented, and get connected. We need this Climate Emergency Era to be as short as possible.