**Framing an approach to climate change challenges**

October 2023 Posted on Wordpress

[Edit Post ‹ Abbey Strauss, M.D. — WordPress.com](https://wordpress.com/post/abbeystrauss.wordpress.com/2905)

Much superb work is active, but the grander approach needs to be classified into tiers. This allows a better focus. A medical group desperately wanted to work with climate change but needed to choose a concentration of priority for their work, while accepting the importance of the other tiers.

We need the power of a climate Emperor, who, benevolent in every manner, is also like a schoolteacher who knows what we need in the long run, and is not afraid to inconvenience us in order to achieve that end point. Such an Emperor is not a reality yet. We must keep the ‘emperors perspective’ alive in all our work.

Therefore, I propose five tiers. Each tier has a focus point. Overlaps between tiers exist, but the overlaps do not dilute each others primary focus.

One. The political system must endorse and legislate such that climate change necessities are not hindered by inadequate, archaic, or short termed policies and laws.

Two. The economic system must modify itself in concert with the realistic and necessary changes in the economy to accommodate the climate change needs. Much of our economy rests on how we consume things. Laws will not necessarily change activity or influence of the economic tier. Consider, as with the case of mental health parity, though widely required by law, it is widely not actually done. A good law but limited action.

Three. There must be scientifically solid research and data to support the proffering of these changes, its effect on our biosphere, and the development of scientific mechanisms to mitigate the climate change impacts on the earth and in our life styles. These mitigations extensively intersect all the other tiers.

Four. Each of us must study and accordingly modify our own consumption patterns and expectations to meet the long-term climate change realities. It is often a matter of inconvenience, perhaps some new financial costs, to meet the requirement of various new lifestyle adaptations. This feeds into and is fed by tier five.

Five. The community at large, including psychological, educational, religious, and other proponents of our interactive lifestyles, must better understand the impact of climate change on all our lifestyles. This includes the inner mental health realities of an existential change that cannot be stopped, though  it must be allayed. We need to work on developing, testing, educating, and delivering survival modes that carry the weight of universal modes, recommendations, and preparations. There must be non-panic reviews of climates and psychosocial movements, equally an unstinting respect and knowledge of the history of earth’s climates and of human pressures on the climate,  and in a non-fad or overly narrowly fastidious manner, use, develop and provide solid emotional preparations for the inescapable changes.

The emotional swell of fears about climate change is that it is inescapable in the manner of divorcing from a bad marriage, leaving a psychologically dysfunctional home, political shifts, etc. Our emotional interventions and resiliency trainings have the task of elevating ego strengths such to accept the global universality of the changes and threats. This includes an assessment  of how hardy and buoyant an individual is because there are no non-inconvenient psychosocial-geographical cures. Nihilism, ennui, fatigue, and panic need to be avoided or minified with concrete tools. Mental health providers now treat their lives for the same challenges that exist in their patients. Doing psychometrics to evaluate climate change concerns helps, but merely adds a label without a cure.  Labeling without interventions can worsen the anxiety. Doing psychotherapy requires a well thought out approach, an understanding of the psychosocial dynamics, and the appreciation that unmodifiable fear or anger may be one of the passages through which the psychotherapy must pass. Psychotherapy is known for its multiple manifestations, from merely being a supportive friend or parent, to coaching, through other styles and philosophies, and of through more profound psychodynamic remedies. We must prepare those who provide any of the services with appropriate skills for their treated consortia.

Tier 1 is possibly the easiest to participate in, but potentially the most ineffective or slow. At least it brings the topic to discussion. Too often it depletes the time and energy needed for the passions necessary to work on the other tiers. The mere fact that arguments have to be made to enact legislation to save our climate speaks to the disappointing and at times frightening realities of how people disagree or minimize, for whatever reasons, what is happening to our home.

I suspect Tier 4 is the most difficult challenge, and much of that is fed by the abilities to deal with the challenges dwelling in Tier 5. I believe real changes in Tier 4 will ripple into real changes in Tier 2.

And so, with a scaffold to surround us, we begin.

More later