

# Changing Climates @ Colorado State University

## 100 Views of Climate Change



### **SOME THINGS WE'VE LEARNED**

#### **ABOUT COMMUNICATING WITH NON-SPECIALISTS**

#### **1. MANY PEOPLE WANT TO UNDERSTAND CLIMATE CHANGE**

They will come to talks, and they'll listen to speakers who seem both neighborly and knowledgeable. They'll be working to fit new information into the frameworks they've already built.

#### **2. MOST SPECIALISTS ARE HAPPY TO SHARE WHAT THEY KNOW**

A little coaching helps—they need to know who they'll be talking to.

#### **3. IT'S ALL ABOUT TRANSLATING FROM UNFAMILIAR TO FAMILIAR**

Specialized to ordinary English, Celsius to Fahrenheit, academic to daily, abstract to concrete, far future to soon, general principles to specific examples.

#### **4. IT'S BEST TO BE SIMPLE AND DIRECT**

Most people don't care about the details that occupy specialists. They want to understand the most important things—and feel why those things matter.

#### **5. MOST PEOPLE CARE MOST ABOUT PEOPLE**

They respond to stories, emotions, and the things other people care about.

#### **6. IT'S EASY TO TRIGGER DEFENSES**

There are so many of them! It's overwhelming; it can't be real; it's not my fault; I can't fix it; I'm too busy; I'm too poor; somebody else will fix it; nobody can fix it; we're doomed; I'll think about it tomorrow.

#### **7. REALISTIC OPTIMISM & THINGS TO DO CAN COUNTER DEFENSES**

Nobody likes to feel helpless, but there are always constructive actions to suggest and do. Joining the community of people who are working to help energizes and cheers everyone.

#### **8. THE PRINCIPLES ARE EASY; EXECUTION IS A CHALLENGE**

For instance, you have to really understand something to simplify it well.

#### **9. COMMUNICATING WELL IS A SKILL, AN ART, AND A PRACTICE**

Writing and speaking are forms of creativity and expertise; they improve with attention and practice.