



HOW TO BE AN ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGEMAKER



TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	4
II. SELF-ASSESSMENTS	5
III. VIDEO EXAMPLES OF CHANGEMAKERS	5
IV. SELF-CARE & RESILIENCE	5
How to Avoid Burnout	6
How to Get Rid of Your Inner Negative Critic	6
Reduce Your Stress	6
Growing Through Disappointments and Loss	7
Learn to Set Healthy Boundaries	7
How to Cope With Stress	8
How to Create a Supportive Best Friend (To Yourself)	9
How to Bring More Love & Positivity Into Your Life	9
Educate Yourself	10
Avoiding Climate Doom	10
V. CREATING & IMPROVING RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS	11
Learn to Connect with New People and their Organizations	11
How to Persuade and Convince Others	11
Finding Common Ground Across the Political System	12
Good Listening Makes People Feel Heard and Builds Trust and Connection	13
How to Express Your Emotions So Others Can Hear Them and Not Get Defensive	13
How to Interview and Be Interviewed	13
Show Gratitude to People You are Speaking To	14
Understand Your Audience (One Size Fits All Doesn't Work)	15

TABLE OF CONTENTS

How to Build Engagement and Support	15
How to Maintain a Healthy Emotional Climate for a Meeting/Campaign	16
Understand Your Environment (Socially, Politically, Naturally) Because Activism Isn't the Same Everywhere	17
How to Create a Narrative and Use Storytelling	17
How to Be An Ally	18
VI. COMMUNICATING INFORMATION EFFECTIVELY	19
Public Speaking	19
Writing and Analysis	20
How to Run a Social Media Campaign	23
VII. CREATING SYSTEMATIC CHANGE	24
How to Engage in Policy and Systems Change	24
How to Work "Within the System" to Create Change	25
Look for Similar Groups to Be Part of Locally or Nationally	26
VIII. JOBS & CAREERS - HOW TO FIND A SUSTAINABILITY RELATED JOB	26
IX. LEARNING & LIFE TIPS	28
Procrastination	28
Active Participation	29
Effective Note-taking	29
Using Emotional Intelligence	30
Managing Anxiety	31
Succeeding in Group Projects	32
X. CLOSING COMMENTS	33

INTRODUCTION

This toolkit is to empower you to be who you want to be in the world, to help you become more effective at making the world a better place, and reduce your worries about climate change by helping with the solutions. The first step in changemaking is learning how, and you are ready to start. These are generalizations that might not completely match your situation but can be used as inspiration for your individual changemaking journey. Enjoy all the wonderful ideas in here. If you use them, they will absolutely help you improve the quality of your life, and make the world a better place.

We collected these ideas from students, educators, and long-time activists, asking them to share what has been useful to them. These contributors are volunteers at [Change the Chamber ★ Lobby for Climate](#), a bipartisan youth coalition taking on dark money, pro-fossil fuel groups in the United States, and advocating for the climate solutions we all need for a better future.

LEAD AUTHOR

Emma Vagelos

CONTRIBUTORS

Raquel Alivez

Ethan Barragán

Priscilla Dyer

Livia Etter

Evey Mengelkoch

Hunter Mundy

Amber Reader

Debra Rowe

Shen Shen

Logan Solomon

Morgan Thibodeau

Abby Waldron

SELF-ASSESSMENTS

Self-assessments are fun to take because they help us learn about ourselves as we define aspects of our mindsets that are often hard to pin down. They help us understand our strengths and the areas where we need more practice to grow our skills. Nobody has all the skills to be a changemaker, and we are all growing in our skill sets. So don't let it hold you back. We all got where we are today by starting somewhere; we want to define where that somewhere is.

The following resources are different online quizzes on your changemaker archetypes and style:

1. [Ashoka: Changemaker Index](#)
2. [Project Inside Out: What Kind of Changemaker Are You?](#)
3. [Force of Nature: Changemaker Quiz](#)
4. [The Story of Stuff Project: What Kind of Changemaker Are You?](#)

VIDEO EXAMPLES OF CHANGEMAKERS

To gain inspiration and see changemaking at work, you can look to these [videos](#) of changemakers from 9 countries on sea-level rise and climate activism. This work is daunting yet completely possible and we have these amazing people as proof.

SELF-CARE & RESILIENCE

An essential first step to changemaking is the betterment and understanding of oneself. In taking care of ourselves, we can put our best efforts into changing the world around us.

In addition to the below, check out the topics section of the [American Psychological Association](#) website. Psychologists know a lot about how to build healthier relationships and self-care.

HOW TO AVOID BURNOUT

Activism work (specifically environmental) is existential with many frustrations, and impossible perfection so is prone to burnout. Many believe in such crucial work that there is no time for a break, which only contributes to a toxic sense of self surrounding work and intense burnout.

Enjoy viewing this short video on [how to avoid burnout: from crash course business-soft skills](#). Whether you work in a business or not, this video is filled with valuable tips.

HOW TO GET RID OF THE INNER NEGATIVE CRITIC

The only person who is going to be with you every moment for the rest of your life is yourself. It is important to learn how to be your own best friend.

1. Notice when you are judging yourself negatively with generalized statements like “I am not XXX enough” (XXX could be smart, pretty, successful, or several other expectations you put on yourself).
2. Would you actually say that to your own best friend? Be at least as supportive, kind, and encouraging to yourself as you would want a great best friend to treat you.
3. When you start to get down on yourself, say to the voice in your head, “STOP” and then say something nice to yourself.
4. If you cannot think of nice things to say, use books of positive affirmations. Continue to practice being kind and supportive while stopping your internal negative criticisms. Over time and with practice, you will have a much better outlook on yourself (and on the world).

REDUCE YOUR STRESS

Don't Sweat the Small Stuff for Teens by Richard Carlson is a great book and you can peek inside the book for free at Amazon to get some beginning ideas.

Three ways to deal with stress in a constructive way:

1. Be a proactive problem solver - solving the threat will reduce stress.
2. Think of challenges as opportunities instead of threats if possible. When you no longer see something as a threat, the stress decreases. Change your perspective, and you can change your feelings.
3. If 1 and 2 are not possible, then manage your stress response with relaxation times, exercise (cardio reduces stress and lifts your mood), and consuming more healthily - take care of yourself.

GROWING THROUGH DISAPPOINTMENTS AND LOSS

1. We carry around the pain and disappointment from previous things in our lives. We can stay stuck in those feelings, OR we can run from them (but they will not go away that way).
2. Better to acknowledge and accept those feelings. They don't have to take up all the space in your life. Even when going through grief and loss, you can still take moments to enjoy the daily beauty around you.
3. Continue to act curious about life.
4. If you need external help, ask for it from a health care professional or look into grief and loss groups at your community mental health center.

LEARN TO SET HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

Look at the book *When I Say No, I Feel Guilty* by Manuel J. Smith.

1. Let go of perfectionism - nobody is perfect! Perfectionism is a trap since nobody is perfect. It is an unrealistic expectation, making you feel lousy about yourself. You are good enough and you are lovable. Learn to be self-loving and self-encouraging. Learn to accept who you are.
2. Do some yoga or other exercise to help let it all go. Cardio exercise builds brain cells and reduces stress while lifting your mood.

-
3. Try to enjoy some simple pleasures every day. For example, drink your favorite non-alcoholic drink and take time to enjoy it. Even when life is challenging or frustrating, or sad, you can still have daily moments for simple pleasures.
 4. Keep a planner, fill in the calendar and use it. This will help organize your day. Books on time management can help too. You can even have a journal to write down your thoughts.
 5. Listen to some calming music to help manage stress. Listen to some happy music and dance like nobody's watching.
 6. Take a break and find an outlet.
 - a. Exercise.
 - b. Spend time in nature.
 - c. Spend time with your hobbies.

HOW TO COPE WITH STRESS

1. Reflect on failures and how you can grow from them. A failure is a good opportunity to learn from it and move forward. It is not useful to spend a lot of time getting down on yourself. Be kind and encouraging to yourself.
2. Name your feelings and the situation that brought you there ("I don't know" is an ok answer.) Understand that situations can be unexplainable and unreasonable and that's normal and any reaction to that is normal. Everyone gets overwhelmed sometimes. Don't let the feeling shut you down. Just notice it and then take the next step. Moving forward is the way to go! There are also great self-help books on reducing anxiety and worrying too.
3. Remember your successes and victories.
4. Tell yourself you can do it, even if you don't believe it.
5. Accept your weaknesses.
6. Change what you can about the situation. Doing something is better than doing nothing and however small the change is, the act of making a change is often the most important. We can't change others' behavior or the circumstances that we fall under. Understanding this and letting the things we can't change go is essential to moving forward.

HOW TO CREATE A SUPPORTIVE BEST FRIEND (TO YOURSELF)

You are the only person who will be with you for the rest of your life. Treat yourself like you would treat a best friend. Be kind, caring, and supportive of yourself. Don't know how?

Get a book on positive affirmations. A good one on healing your inner child is Affirmations for the Inner Child by Rokelle Lerner. Practice reading yourself the pages to help build the inner healthy voice.

HOW TO BRING MORE LOVE & POSITIVITY INTO YOUR LIFE

1. Instead of learning how to love others, we should learn how to love ourselves first. This is the first and most important step to bring more love into your life.
2. [How to Practice Self Love](#)
 - a. Self-love is gaining an appreciation for yourself through the physical, emotional, and spiritual support you provide yourself with.
 - b. Establishing self-love can be a long journey, but it's a vital step to improving your mental health and overall happiness.
 - i. Forgive yourself - the step towards practicing self-love.
 - ii. Be mindful/ introspective.
 - iii. Act on what you need - Knowing what you need and acting on those needs is a form of self-love.
 - iv. Set boundaries.
 - v. Protect yourself.
 - vi. Live intentionally.
 - vii. Show up for yourself.
 - viii. Practice self-care - taking care of your basic needs is an act of love.
3. Internal happiness can last much longer than from material things.
4. Learn to let it be and let it go. There are few things that we can control. We don't need to worry about uncontrollable things, like the weather, but we can prepare for it. We just need to take care of what we can control to make the right choices, like our own behaviors, health, and your attitude.
5. Learn to understand others, if you cannot understand, just respect each other.

EDUCATE YOURSELF

1. Try to define your background and biases in the specific subject and at large.
Ask yourself:
 - a. What do you know?
 - b. What do you think you know?
 - c. What do you avoid?
2. Stay up to date with current events, but also look to understand what happened in the past and what brought us here.
3. When looking into a specific group of people or a specific issue, look to those who are affected (we want to learn from people telling their own story rather than it being told for them.)
 - a. The phrase that “history is only written by the winners” is true in most major media.
4. Look for mentors or peers in the subject for leadership and dialogue.
5. Seek out different types of sources and learning from diverse perspectives.
 - a. Don't surround yourself with only people who agree with you as you won't grow in an echo chamber.

AVOIDING CLIMATE DOOM

1. See [How to Bring More Love & Positivity Into Your Life](#).
 2. Doing something (eg. being part of a campaign or even talking about positive change) can dramatically benefit your attitude.
 3. Pay attention to positive news in the climate justice movement.
 4. The tiny actions you can do that help every day, when part of campaign can build up to large impacts.
 - a. Some people think they can't do anything because they're just one person or that it's a full life style change (show a gradual lifestyle change.)
 - b. This can be green actions like recycling/biking or activism steps such as having small discussions or positive on social media.
-

CREATING & IMPROVING RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS

The essence of changemaking is making a difference in people and as changemakers, we need to be able to communicate effectively. Changemaking also isn't an act done individually and we need to work with others to create this lasting change.

LEARN TO CONNECT WITH NEW PEOPLE AND THEIR ORGANIZATIONS

1. Reach out to people by telling them what you are doing and the input you need from them. Use the engagement section below to get them involved. If you are nervous, practice on your own what you will say before making the call. Only some of your outreach will be successful. When it doesn't work, learn what you can from it and keep moving on.
2. Find seminars, lectures, or networking events you can attend.
3. Keep track of contacts, taking notes on what was said and some of the personal things you heard (e.g. what they enjoy or what is going on with them) so you can reconnect personally on the next call.
4. When reaching out to superiors, it always helps to start with a compliment (something specific you admire about them) then ask them for their input (e.g. If you were going to do XX, how would you approach it) then thank them for their insights.
 - a. Starting and ending with something positive is known as the sandwich technique and is helpful to maintain a positive emotional connection.

LEARN TO PERSUADE AND CONVINC OTHERS

1. Persuasion Skills
 - a. Learn to read people as you use different communication styles with different people.
 - b. Listen first to understand peoples' needs and motivations. Relate what you want them to do (e.g. help with climate solutions) by relating it to what they care about.

-
- c. Understand we are being persuaded by what's around us.
 - d. The ability to empathize: [The Importance of Empathy](#).
 - e. When it is time to get a commitment from someone (like the close of a sale) it is important to ask them to commit, and if they say no, ask them what is holding them back from saying yes. Listen to their concerns, and ask “So when we address all these, then you would be willing to do it?” Continue to ask about their concerns until you get a yes to this question. Then list all their concerns and answer each one. Then ask them again, “Are you ready to go ahead with this?” On average you have to ask 3 to 7 times before peoples’ concerns are addressed and they are ready to say yes so be supportive, kind and continue the process.
2. Match their communication style. See [Understand Your Audience](#) and [Good Listening](#).
 3. Know the different backgrounds (different cultures and areas) to understand others better. See [Educate Yourself](#).

FINDING COMMON GROUND ACROSS THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

1. Conservatives and progressives both feel that people should be able to own their own clean energy sources. Conservatives often feel this from a libertarian perspective stating “my rights and I don’t want to have to deal with government-regulated monopoly or oligopoly utility companies.” Progressives often focus on the environmental benefits and that they want energy to be owned by people to make it more affordable. So even when their reasoning is different, they can build a coalition for clean energy policy.
 - a. Look for these similarities in political views or focus on the desire to preserve the nature that we all love.
2. Use these conversation guides:
 - a. [The Sierra Club: The 2021 Holiday Dinner Discussion Guide](#)
 - b. [U.S. Partnership for Education for Sustainable Development: Dialogue](#)

GOOD LISTENING MAKES PEOPLE FEEL HEARD AND BUILDS TRUST AND CONNECTION

1. Do not give your opinion or judgement.
2. Repeat back a few words that they just said.
3. Match their tone.
4. Sometimes, name their feeling: "So you are excited."
5. Do not ask questions that direct the conversation.
6. It's about them feeling heard and feeling safe.
7. Let them lead the conversation.
8. Look to *Nonviolent Communication* by Marshall B. Rosenberg for in depth teachings on the importance of compassion as a facet of listening, and more techniques on how to do so.

HOW TO EXPRESS YOUR EMOTIONS SO OTHERS CAN HEAR THEM AND NOT GET DEFENSIVE

Do not nag and push people with your words. Use the following resources:

1. [6 Healthy Ways to Express Your Emotions](#) (beginning at 2'34")
2. [How to master your emotions | emotional intelligence](#) (beginning at 7'16")
3. [Don't neglect your emotions. Express them-Constructively!](#)

HOW TO INTERVIEW AND BE INTERVIEWED

1. General practices from either side of the process:
 - a. Face to face is best (zoom call or in-person) and then phone and then email.
 - i. It is best to see their reactions and hear their cadence as well as forming an emotional connection.

-
- b. Both sides need to prepare!
 - i. Do your research on who they are and what they have done, an interview shouldn't be about the simple black and white information of what their job title or where they live is, you need to get beyond that.
 - c. Look to showing gratitude

2. How to Interview

- a. Schedule early and send reminders
- b. Record (make sure to ask consent beforehand) so you can be present instead of frantically taking notes.
 - i. Write notes right after when your reactions/emotions are still fresh
- c. Don't talk about yourself, but don't be silent (this should be a dialogue.)
- d. Do some research.
 - i. This does two things: First it doesn't waste the interviewer's time asking questions that could have been easily answered via a quick internet search. Second, it can help you get to know them a little more and help you come up with the right questions to ask.
- e. Plan your core questions before the interview and make sure to ask those.
 - i. The conversation can wander if the interviewee has a plan or wants to share something specific, but remember your goals and the reason for this interview.
- f. Frame questions to reveal information about their personality and how they will fit into your team rather than just the facts of their experience.

3. How to Be Interviewed

- a. Express willingness to learn.
- b. Smile, it's contagious.
- c. Be enthusiastic and friendly.
- d. Match the communication style of the one interviewing you.
- e. Ask questions (Ex: What are you looking for in a candidate for this position?)

SHOW GRATITUDE TO PEOPLE YOU ARE SPEAKING TO

1. Thank them for their time, their contributions, their thoughts (whatever is appropriate) and tell them you appreciate them.
2. Use empathy and compassion by identifying common ground with them.

-
3. Listen for people's interests, passions, curiosities, and motivations and try to build off of that to get them involved.

UNDERSTAND YOUR AUDIENCE (ONE SIZE FITS ALL DOESN'T WORK)

How to talk to climate deniers, fossil fuel supporters, etc. constructively:

1. Match the language (use of words) and the styles of communication specifically with those who disagree.
 - a. For example, for some conservatives, the phrase “social justice” means building a dependence on government programs and does not have a positive connotation as it does to liberals.
2. There are different ways to ‘frame’ your message based on the audience's knowledge, values, beliefs, and interest.
3. It's important to build trust and credibility.
 - a. If possible, this relation should be had before a difficult conversation
4. You can't “fix them” in one conversation, any conversation is a step in the right direction.

HOW TO BUILD ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

1. Ask people individually to help you do something by saying, “You're really good at this.” and/or “I think you would be good at this.” and/or “You seem to have such a gorgeous brain. We want your input on this.” and/or invite people to be official respondents to an event and/or say “You are in a unique and important position to help create a more sustainable future. We can't imagine doing this without you.” - *Dr. Debra Rowe (professor of renewable energies and career mentor on green careers for over 40 years)*
2. Leadership Skills
 - a. Sell your ideas - act confident even if you aren't feeling that way. Confidence in and enthusiasm for your ideas can be contagious.
 - b. Build Climate Conversation
 - c. Write to a newspaper, post a blog, or even just talk to those around you
 - i. Pick your decision maker
 - ii. Get to the point
 - iii. Make it personal

-
- iv. Be precise
 - v. Don't be too aggressive (don't want your target audience to feel attacked)
3. Find how your supporters would benefit.
 - a. Listen first, and speak to the benefits they care about.
 - b. Gives a sense of direction.
 - c. Cultivate a climate team.
 4. Show your supporters how they are making change in the system.
 - a. Set them up for success.

HOW TO MAINTAIN A HEALTHY EMOTIONAL CLIMATE FOR A MEETING/CAMPAIGN

How to build community:

1. Raise awareness of the campaigns mission, values, and goals.
2. Create a culture of support.
 - a. Take some time in meetings for people to do a check-in with how they are doing.
 - b. Appreciate/praise community members and the group as a whole.
 - c. Ask them to share what they enjoy the most being part of the community.
 - d. Check in on people with personal notes (one to one) to thank them for their contributions and to ask how they are doing with the group.
 - e. Encourage them to continue.
3. Conduct regular team meetings where different working groups are brought together.
 - a. Keeping the core team updated on all progress that's being made so they feel as if their efforts are contributing to the overall goal.
 - i. Celebrate small/big accomplishments.
 - ii. Recognize outstanding work- let others know they are valued and appreciated.
 - iii. Offer up help/guidance.

UNDERSTAND YOUR ENVIRONMENT (SOCIALLY, POLITICALLY, NATURALLY) BECAUSE ACTIVISM ISN'T THE SAME EVERYWHERE

1. Know the environment of where you want to make change (economic actors, political actors, social groups, the makeup of the voters, the people affected, general mindsets and beliefs, etc.)
 - a. An example being that the coal industry might have lots of jobs so people are afraid of renewables (despite the data on new jobs.)
2. Know what people need and what they won't give up based on culture, history, etc.

HOW TO CREATE A NARRATIVE AND USE STORYTELLING

1. For climate communications, check out this great resource - [Climate Change Communication](#).
 2. Stories are essential to culture and bring real people into politics/science.
 - a. Science backs this up as our brains are more engaged when a story is involved, not just facts - [Why Tell Stories for Social Change?](#)
 3. If we aren't creating the story around our movement, other people will (even if we do, other people will try to tell our story in less helpful ways.)
 4. Elements of storytelling: conflict, characters (a protagonist), imagery, foreshadowing, and underlying assumptions - [Transom: Ira Glass](#).
 - a. Be able to find the essence in a sentence or 2.
 5. Be very conscious about who is included and excluded in the narrative (environmental justice.)
 6. Involve community members affected by your cause. Share their stories (with their consent and aware of the tokenism of minority groups.)
 7. Think of your target audience (be specific) and how the story connects to them.
 - a. Think about if your audience are the exact people who make change (politics) or who influences them (the public).
-

-
8. Engage your current supporters, reach out to passive supporters, use pop culture and media to engage neutral people, neutralize the power of your opposition ([How to Reach New Audiences](#)).
 9. Be specific on how to disseminate the narrative (tone, medium, audience, etc.)
 10. Story Types:
 - a. [How to Create Nonprofit Stories That Inspire](#)
 - b. [Specific Environmental Narratives](#)

HOW TO BE AN ALLY

An ally takes the time to read, listen and deepen understanding first. Take the initiative to find the information and resources you need to grow and learn more.

1. [Being An Ally to Communities That Aren't Your Own](#)
 2. BIPOC
 - a. [Antiracism Toolkit for Allies](#)
 - b. [Be a Better Ally](#)
 3. Disabled
 - a. [Become a Disability A.L.L.Y. in Your Community](#)
 - b. [What it Means to Be a Disability Ally](#)
 4. Environmental Justice/Social Justice
 - a. [How to Be An Effective \(Online\) Ally for the Social Justice & Environmental Justice Fight](#)
 5. Indigenous People
 - a. [Indigenous Ally Toolkit 1](#)
 - b. [Indigenous Ally Toolkit 2](#)
 6. LGBTQ
 - a. [Allyship in Action](#)
 - b. [Ally to Advocate](#)
 - c. [PFLAG Ally Information](#)
 - d. [Trans Ally Toolkit](#)
 7. Women
 - a. [How to Become An Ally for Women's Rights](#)
 - b. ["It's Not About You" - How to Be a Male Ally](#)
-

COMMUNICATING INFORMATION EFFECTIVELY

Communicating information and emotion is essential to changemaking. These are details on the specific forms of modern communication.

PUBLIC SPEAKING

1. Look to community needs, find stories of success, stories are more compelling and transformative than just facts. You don't have to create your message from scratch. You can build on what others have said.
 - a. Anecdotes are only as good as how they are used to frame your argument; being concise and connecting the story to what you're presenting is necessary.
2. Practice and prepare not only the words themselves but speech clarity and pace.
 - a. Recording yourself and watching it back helps you to see from the audience's perspective.
 - b. Practicing in a mirror will help you have a full view of what the audience is seeing in a live setting.
 - c. Instead of including filler words "umh" "like" etc. take a pause and collect your thoughts. Effective pauses give your audience a chance to consider what you've said and absorb your meaning more, and gives you time to collect the next point.
3. Use an outline or bullet points to help stay on track. Don't read from a script, you will lose your audience by focusing too much on exact recitation instead of tone, emphasis, and inflections.
4. Match the language you use to the verbiage typically used by the audience. Many of us have learned how to present the importance of clean energy and climate solutions to audiences that are progressive, liberal, conservative (fiscally or socially), libertarian, apathetic, religious or something else. Talk to people different from you to learn how to connect. See livingroomconversations.org for more ideas on this.

-
5. Using hand motions and body movement to emphasize points (not fidgeting, but instead directing the eye). This helps keep your audience engaged and able to follow your thought progression.
 - a. Making eye contact with the whole room, looking at each section of seating helps your argument connect. If you are presenting online, looking at the camera helps simulate eye contact and connect with the audience.

WRITING AND ANALYSIS

There are many different types of writing styles...Scientific Writing versus Social Media Writing versus “Normal Speech” etc.

1. Think of who will be reading, their general knowledge base, what they care about, and what context they will be reading.
2. What medium will your writing be presented in? What language fits this medium?
3. Clear sentences that communicate the point you’re writing about will keep people engaged. Write succinctly, big words aren’t always helpful for the general public to understand your point quickly and clearly.
4. An op-ed or a blog: Get straight to the point, your reader should know what it’s important and why it’s important, so they continue reading.
5. Utilize the [Inverted Pyramid](#) (HINT: It’s reversing a research paper format)
 - a. First paragraph will be viewed the most. Put the conclusion first or “front load” the most attention grabbing aspect of the whole article (core message).
 - b. “Make your point first, explain later” or front loading each paragraph. The first sentence of each of your paragraphs should have the main point of the entire paragraph. Make sure to make clear how each paragraph ties to the larger core message of the blog.
 - c. Hypothetically, this style makes it easy for someone to get the whole message of your article from skimming the first sentence of each paragraph or just reading the first paragraph.

-
5. Don't just use words. "Pictures are worth a thousand words." Diagrams can make statistics pop.
 6. How can you also make your op-ed pop?

Making a "boxed insert" makes an idea pop.
These are especially effective for your first paragraph.

7. Sub-headers help to divide up sections, allowing the reader to narrow in on what they want to focus.
8. **Bolding makes specific ideas pop.** Remember be very selective. Our suggestion is **bolding** one phrase per sub-header.
9. *Italics* work in selective situations, especially for quotes.
10. Word Count can influence SEO or search engine optimization. Op-ed's under 1500 words are less prioritized on google's algorithm.
 - a. This doesn't mean one should definitely write an op-ed less than 1500 words.
 - b. It's a balance of too little words deranking your op-ed in an algorithm. Too many words may be overwhelming to the reader, leading to them clicking off.
11. Make sure to explain multiple views, but convey your perspective clearly.
12. Include Call For Actions, something your reader does because of reading.
 - a. Be considerate of your readers time, but also consider what will get your audience's attention.

Including Research and Analysis In Your Blog/Op-Ed

1. A reputable source is one that is trustworthy and has standards to ensure truthfulness.
 - a. This can be challenging but one tip is "being in your audience's shoes". If they clicked on this source, would they think it is valid?
 - i. If not, best to shy away from this resource.

-
- b. Some sort of authority on a subject is great “professionals, experts, institutional figures etc.”
 - c. Website design may have some clue ins.
 - d. Doing research on your source is valuable.
 - i. To account for bias, do some research on the source of your information, look up different coverage of the same story, look for bias in yourself as a reader, look for logical fallacies, think about what is excluded in the story.
 - ii. Crosscheck with other sources to see how a particular piece of information is stated.
 - iii. If a source withholds a piece of information that other sources mention, then it might be trying to mislead you.
 - e. See what the purpose of your source is.
 - i. A research paper, versus a blog post, versus mainstream news, can have quite different motives.
 - ii. A source’s purpose is often (but not always) reiterated throughout the entire source.
 - iii. If a source’s purpose is not clearly identifiable, it might be best to not use it.
4. “.edu .gov .org” tend to be more reliable than “.com”
- a. This may change depending on your purpose and audience.
5. Citing data depends on your medium, audience, and purpose.
- a. Hyperlinks on op-eds is recommended, considering that the reader can instantly view the source
6. Sources not only provide facts to support your writing, but they can also lead readers to investigate and discover new ideas on their own.
7. Plagiarism: quoting and citing is not a bad thing (it actually makes your argument more sound!), intellectual property (what is common knowledge and what influenced your thought), proper formatting, there can be consequences for you personally or the group you are writing under
-

HOW TO RUN A SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

1. Social media should be used to support work outside of social media so that it isn't just performative. This can be work that is done individually or as a group, offline or not. It can be used to uplift other creators who you support with similar audiences through tagging, replying, and sharing their posts.
2. Different posting tones and associated videos, GIFs, or images may be appropriate for different social media platforms. This also depends on their audiences. For example, formal-sounding posts on LinkedIn will likely be more successful with their older audience than on TikTok and similar.
3. Be creative with emojis, pictures, GIFs, and videos in your usage of social media to draw more views and build your platform. GIFS, pictures, and videos take up more space in a user's feed and will catch their eye.
 - a. Specific formats are more appropriate for certain platforms. For example, images and GIFs can be used for Twitter, images and videos for Instagram, pictures, videos, or GIFs for Facebook, etc.
4. Finding/creating content - source, info, framing
 - a. The sources you use for information and links in your posts will bring more attention to those sources. Use links for what you want to promote and think about this consequence if using those that you would rather not highlight
 - i. Fact-check your sources before using them, and stay accountable and transparent about correcting false information.
 - b. What's trending? Use trending memes, trending words, popular post formats, etc., and apply them to your cause. A lot of trends can be used for climate and activism with creativity, for example.
5. Paid versus earned media: Paid media involves buying your own advertising and earned media is recognition and promotion through news outlets and well-known people.
 - a. Both are important for name recognition and gaining influence.
 - b. As media consumers, we need to look out for the difference in media types we see as they can have different agendas.

c. Like promoting other media through linking outside sources, your earned and paid media may create associations with your readers to the outlets and people who promote you. This may influence your audience demographics.

6. Build your social media following:

- a. While using the above considerations, establish your goals for your post content for each platform. Promote your accounts within your connections, and cross-promote your accounts on different platforms to encourage followers to view your content on each platform you use.
- b. Follow other users and influencers that post similar content to you.
 - i. Tag users and use hashtags that are relevant to your posts (especially on Twitter) to reach more followers of your tagged users and hashtags.
- c. Engage with your followers. Comment and post regularly. A more active page will gain more exposure.

7. How to track results:

- a. Different platforms have different tools to measure the growth of your social media platforms. There are also external tools, like sproutsocial.com to measure. The easiest measure is the growth rates of your followers, likes, and shares.
- b. How to calculate more metrics: [Social Media Metrics That Really Matter](#)

CREATING SYSTEMATIC CHANGE

After learning to work with yourself and others, there needs to be action to cement these changes and bring them to a broader audience.

HOW TO ENGAGE IN POLICY AND SYSTEMS CHANGE

1. Find where to put your efforts and impact. Look for leverage points for systems change. Try to understand the formal and the informal power structure you are trying to change. Try to find champions within that system for what you want to change and understand their motivations. Frame your

own message and follow groups that speak to the overall direction you as an individual want to move in. Build coalitions of support. Don't leave key votes to chance. Count your support and build it outside of meetings and ask people to show up and support during the meeting (if there are meetings) to build the atmosphere for change.

- a. Understand the extent of your own capabilities and where you can make an actual change (be realistic).

2. Evaluate the outcomes.

- a. Don't expect to be successful. Be involved in more than one strategy so if one doesn't work, you can still work on the others.
- b. Recognize that change can take time. Be persistent and celebrate the process. Short-term vs. long-term outcomes.

HOW TO WORK "WITHIN THE SYSTEM" TO CREATE CHANGE

1. "Know" your system: what their views are, how those views are imparted on you (what do they want you to think), who is involved, identify the issue.
2. You don't always have to work completely against the system as it can be too much to start with. You can find leverage points for systemic change within existing organizations or processes.
3. We don't all have the luxury to completely disregard the systems that aren't climate-friendly (it can be a risk that takes time, money, etc.)
4. Look for allies with similar viewpoints to work with (or to just have discussions with) as there is more power together and you can share information.
 - a. They can be viewpoints on the issue you are trying to change (ie climate) or a shared social connection where you can bring your climate views and help them understand.
 - b. Family and friends already have shared connections with you and can be a network of information sharing.
5. For Students: Promote university environmental policies (such as sustainable purchasing, reducing the use of resources, reducing waste, reusing, composting, and recycling, at dining halls and in dorm halls).
 - a. This can be done in the workplace as well.

LOOK FOR SIMILAR GROUPS TO BE PART OF LOCALLY OR NATIONALLY

1. We are not the only ones working for the climate, and people working together is often better than alone.
2. Bring together different skills and knowledge sets.
3. Look for different groups (with different backgrounds or opinions) that share the fight for your cause, Such as conservative-leaning youth groups that are fighting climate change.

JOBS & CAREER - HOW TO FIND A SUSTAINABILITY RELATED JOB

Not only can changemaking be a lifestyle and a hobby, it can be your career!

Read [this short and very useful article](#) about how to approach creating a sustainability related career. It also includes a list of useful career and job posting sites.

The following is an edited version of a [podcast](#) about **Creating a Green and Inclusive Workforce** featuring Dr. Debra Rowe.

Every job can bring a sustainability lens to it. Any time you're using resources, you can make more sustainable choices, and this happens in almost every job. You can look at any process to ask the following questions to help make it more sustainable:

1. How can you make that value chain and the supply chain more sustainable?
2. How do you utilize or transfer the materials in the product when you're done with it so that the materials can be part of a circular economy instead of a waste product?
3. How can you improve the product design or the procurement of any resources you use to support a more circular economy with less waste and less pollution?

One solid approach is to move beyond competing for the jobs that are listed by phrases like sustainability and climate solutions. Go get any job and tell them once you are there that you are interested in sustainability, pollution reduction, cost savings and going green, and then talk to the other people that work at the company. Put together an interest group of those of you that care about the environment. And then find out like any good change agent does, who holds the power in the organization. Find out who makes the decisions and who influences those decision makers. You know what the formal power structure is by looking at the organizational chart. That's the structured hierarchy in the organization. But there's also a very important informal power structure made up of relationships and influencers. Find out who the influencers are and invite their input into your environmental group. Look for leverage points for systemic change. There's always leverage points where you can, by changing this one thing, help to shift the whole system. So now you've got a group of people at the organization that care about the environment. Maybe they just eat lunch together to discuss it, or maybe there is an online discussion group that you form so you can brainstorm and talk about how you could suggest good changes. Think about opportunities to turn that interest group into a more formal advisory committee or even a new department. You or one of your environmental colleagues may end up being the sustainability person for that department. In any case, share the suggestions and nudge actions. Once you have gotten a few things accomplished, that is the track record you'll need to be able to either grow your career inside their company or then go to those other posted jobs.

So you've got those two strategies for a green career, right? 1) Apply for existing jobs. 2) Get a job anywhere and bring your sustainability interests to it. There is a third approach, and that is to be an entrepreneur. For example, are you aware that the job of energy managers started out with some entrepreneurs. Energy managers didn't really exist when I started my career, but then they walked into buildings and said, "Pay me a percentage of what I save you on your energy bills. I'll show you how to be more energy efficient." Other entrepreneurial people said to companies, "Hire me as your energy manager. If I don't save you at least my salary in your energy bills, I'll pay you back the difference." And now being an energy manager is a great job, often with a very good salary that energy managers earn around the world and it's an established profession. We have lots of jobs that don't exist yet that we're going to need. And you can start a business

which is not easy, and you should make sure you've got the skill set for that, and the support mechanisms for it. But you could be an entrepreneur by helping to create those kinds of jobs that we need but don't exist yet. Those are 3 of the ways and we give you how to build a green career. As suggested above, see more resources in [this article](#).

LEARNING & LIFE TIPS

These tips below can be used to both improve your learning as a student and improve your changemaking.

PROCRASTINATION

Some level of procrastination is normal, but when it interferes with our ability to finish our schoolwork on time, it can be detrimental to our learning and our health. Follow some of these steps to help overcome procrastination.

1. Think about the **feelings** behind why you are procrastinating. Are you anxious? Do you fear failure? Are you bored? Reflect on these and then come up with some positive reasons not to procrastinate. Write these down and put them on your wall.
2. What kinds of **activities** do you like to procrastinate with? Instead of using these activities (i.e. reading, social media, TV, cooking, working out) before you do your work, think of them as a **reward** for after you finish your work. You will probably enjoy them more too!
3. Use **self-affirmations** to remind yourself that you are capable of completing your schoolwork, that you are intelligent, and that the goal is not perfection. Come up with your own self-affirmations to say when you want to procrastinate to help motivate you to start working.
4. **Organize!** This can be difficult for many students, but creating a monthly calendar and a structure for each day and some goals of work you want to finish can be helpful. Write down all your deadlines for the semester as you receive them. Checking off boxes can feel very empowering. If you have

difficulty with this yourself, ask a friend or teacher to sit down with you and create a weekly or daily schedule.

5. Use **social support**. Surrounding yourself with friends who are diligent students and who will motivate you to keep focused can be helpful. You can also try partner studying, which is often more interactive than solo studying. Be careful to choose friends you know will keep you accountable.
6. Just **start**. One of the most difficult steps is beginning an assignment or study session. You may be surprised how much you can accomplish once you start putting words on the paper!

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

For some students, participating in class makes us fearful and anxious, even if we enjoy a class. Finding the courage to speak up can quickly overwhelm even the most intelligent of students. However, practicing the skills we are not as confident about can make us better learners. Remember that if you speak up and answer a question wrong, you will probably never forget the right answer, and no teacher expects every question they ask to be answered correctly. Other students may also thank you if you ask a question that others are too afraid to ask. It is ok to struggle with a concept, but asking for help is key to eventually understanding it. Participating may also increase your level of attention and enjoyment of a class. Finally, by expressing your own voice in class, you may connect with other peers and your teacher in unique ways.

EFFECTIVE NOTE-TAKING

Do you struggle to keep up with taking notes in some of your classes/activities? Here are some tips to help you become an effective notetaker:

1. Think about what type of **medium** suits you and the class best. For example, using typed notes for a history or literature class with a lot of information, or paper and pen/ iPad for a science class with lots of diagrams. Sometimes, using **mixed media** can also be beneficial.
2. Focus on taking notes on what the **teacher says**, rather than on the information on the slides. Most teachers post the powerpoint slides so you can always go back after class and take notes on these slides if you need.

-
3. **Synthesize.** Take a few minutes after class to synthesize the key points and takeaways from class in a few bullet points. You can also write down concepts you are still unsure about or questions you still have and email the teacher or bring them up in the next class or office hours.
 4. If you struggle with speed, just take notes on the **main points** and reach out to other **classmates** who may take notes faster.
 5. If you have a learning disability or other difficulties that make it challenging to take notes, reach out to the **student support center** at your school. Most schools can find you a student notetaker that can take notes for you.
 6. **Re-watch** lectures if possible. Many professors record their lectures. Try to re-watch and pause when needed to take notes or slow down their talking speed. If they don't record their lectures, you can ask permission from your professors to do so yourself. Then, you can just focus on listening during lectures and taking notes during the recordings. This repetition will also help you fully absorb the information from the lecture.

USING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional intelligence is another key type of intelligence that is critical to succeeding in school and beyond. Here are some ways you can practice emotional intelligence in school and beyond. (adapted from Daniel Goleman).

1. Learn how to **handle your emotions when under stress**. Practice positive coping strategies to reduce stress like spending time with and confiding in friends and loved ones, practicing mindfulness, engaging in movement, eating well, and finding creative ways to express yourself.
2. Resist **distractions**. Finding creative ways to prevent distractions and increase productive work time is essential. For example, turn your phone off or block social media while studying, set timers for 'study time' and 'break time,' and use some of your favorite activities and distractions as rewards for completing work.
3. Become a **better**, more **active listener**. In class and with your friends, practice listening attentively to people without thinking about what you will say next. Listen for the deeper meaning behind what others are saying. This will help

you become more compassionate with others and yourself, and understand concepts more deeply. Active listening also makes others feel heard and builds trust and connections. When people feel heard by you and trust you, they will be more likely to support you if you are struggling.

4. Avoid **micromanaging**. We all have to collaborate and participate in group projects at school. Resist the urge to micromanage others, particularly if you are leading an initiative. Provide clear and structured goals but also give others the freedom to ask questions and achieve the goals in their own way.

MANAGING ANXIETY

Many students struggle with test and schoolwork anxiety, you are not alone in this. Here are some general tips to follow when you are experiencing anxiety about school.

1. Practice **self-affirmations** and focus on your strengths as a student that will allow you to succeed. Examples: I have worked hard in this class; this feeling will pass; I am capable of performing well; it is ok to feel anxious; my brain is powerful, etc.
2. Find your **passion** in your work and focus on this too.
3. Take **breaks** to practice **mindfulness** (like a meditation, breathing, or yoga practice), **movement**, and fuel yourself with nutritious food and drinks.
4. Confide in others. Use **social support** from your friends, family, or school. Reach out to your student support center to find mental health support.
5. **Advocate** for yourself. Reach out to your professors or student support center to explain your struggles and come up with solutions.
6. Leave **time**. Plan ahead for the times you will feel anxious and need to take a break.
7. Let go of **perfectionism**. Remember that there is more to you than succeeding in school and that perfection is not the answer. Do your very best you can and focus on performing well in the areas you are confident in as a learner in each class.

8. Before **tests**: The night before, plan to go to bed earlier than usual and plan a relaxing night routine. Make sure you are well fed and hydrated before the exam. Practice positive visualizations of succeeding in the exam. When you arrive at the exam hall, take deep breaths and repeat positive affirmations. If you become stuck and anxious during an exam, take time to breathe or go to the bathroom to clear your head. Read questions over again and come back to them if you are stuck. Focus on what you know, not what you do not know. Remember that one single exam will not impact the rest of your life or career.

SUCCEEDING IN GROUP PROJECTS

Group projects are an inevitable part of being a student, but they can often cause tension and added stress. Here are some ways you can avoid conflict and succeed in group projects and presentations.

1. Set a daily or **weekly time** to meet that works with everyone's schedule. Try to meet even if it's just to touch base and there are no assignments to do.
2. Take time to share individual strengths so you can assign members to take on tasks that align with their **strengths** and passions.
3. Set **expectations** and **deadlines**. Come up with a shared set of expectations you all agree on and set firm deadlines for each group member to complete their share of the work.
4. If you are a natural leader, try to take a step back every once in a while and encourage quieter members of your group to speak. Avoid micromanaging others. If you are shy, **practice using your voice** and speaking up more often. You probably have valuable ideas that will help your group out!
5. Be **patient**. If there is a group member that seems to be slacking off or not completing their fair share of the work, be patient and use gentle encouragement. Ask them if they need some help or support. Remind them that this project is important to you.
6. **Check in** with your group members to see how they are doing emotionally and outside of school. Spend some time getting to know them as people and find shared similarities and interests.

7. Set **internal deadlines** in your group a few days before your project(s) are due to leave time for mistakes and for group members who do not complete their share of the work.
8. Have **fun!** Find the joy and passion in your group project and let your creativity shine.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Congratulations on learning about how to be a more effective environmental changemaker. Thank you for all your efforts!

Please provide your ideas for how to make this document even more useful by emailing ChangeUSChamber@gmail.com.