Why We Must Vividly Illustrate the Consequences of Inaction on the Climate Emergency
and Show the Vision of the World We Must Create
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1. Premise: The biggest barrier to creating the needed sense of urgency on the climate emergency, and stimulating massive action on the scale needed to address it, is the inability of most people to imagine, to clearly picture the consequences of inaction and of crossing an irreversible climate tipping point.

2. It is imperative that people fully grasp, both emotionally and intellectually, the catastrophic reality of a post-climate tipping point world, and can vividly picture in their minds the consequences to themselves and their families, in order to feel the necessary urgency to motivate them to act on the climate emergency. However, it can be difficult to fully grasp the urgency of the climate emergency when many of the impacts and consequences are not yet affecting people personally.

3. Humans are visual thinkers - we think in pictures. Our brains are largely image-processors - half of our cerebral cortex is devoted to processing visual information. To deeply understand an idea, it is essential to have a clear visual representation of the concept. According to a study on visual perception and climate change, "realistic landscape visualizations may offer special advantages in rapidly advancing peoples' awareness of climate change and possibly affecting behavior and policy, by bringing certain possible consequences of climate change home to people in a compelling manner."

4. What would it look like, feel like, sound like, smell like, and what emotions would we feel when we can clearly 'see' the devastating and apocalyptic consequences of inaction leading to runaway global heating? Without answering these questions, half of our brain is being excluded from the conversation. Because our brains evolved to address immediate survival needs and not global scale problems such as the climate emergency, we need significant help to visualize the problem and consequences, and to translate the hypothetical into the tangible. No visual hyperbole is needed to amplify the projected reality of the post-climate tipping point world - simply projecting forward from the latest accepted climate science from IPCC will be more than compelling and dramatic enough.

5. Without clearly understanding the consequences of our actions, or inaction, our decision-making abilities are compromised. Making an important life decision without understanding the personal consequences of the potential choices represents a sort of intellectual and emotional blindness. Like the teens in the 2012 Yale University study on risk-taking behavior, it's not that we like danger, the danger of continuing on the suicidal path of burning fossil-fuels, we just don't fully understand the consequences. And when there is ambiguity about the consequences of the climate emergency, it leaves the door open for retreat into denialism. This is called 'denicidal' behavior.

6. As Ralph Nader said, "Nothing can stop the power of an informed citizenry when it is empowered, organized, and motivated." Particularly with the climate emergency, citizens need to be informed and passionately motivated to demand that their government take urgent and necessary action. When citizens do not fully understand the severe consequences of inaction, they are ill equipped to act with the urgency required to pressure their government to respond. The U.S. media is currently not sufficiently equipping citizens with the needed breadth and depth of knowledge and sense of urgency. In fact, a large segment of the U.S. populace is consuming media that actively presents inaccurate information and often denies the serious urgency or even the existence of the climate crisis. All major

social change movements have had as their major message, "Enough!". To engage enough citizens to a point where they draw a new social boundary requires them to clearly picture, feel, and understand the negative consequences of continuing on the status quo path. Both the Yale Project on Climate Communication and the George Mason Center for Climate Communication are instrumental in gauging public climate change knowledge, attitudes, and behavior, and the underlying psychological, cultural, and political factors that influence them.

7. So, to help people understand the urgency of our situation, we must vividly illustrate both the societal and personal consequences of inaction on the climate emergency. Through the power of compelling visual imagery that shows known landscapes dramatically altered in a post-climate tipping point state, and through the telling of an engaging human story, we can transform people's perception of the climate emergency and the severe consequences of inaction. Like a blind person seeing for the first time, epiphanic moments can be created to allow people to 'see' clearly for the first time. Moments of revelation, and hearing others' personal epiphany stories, will trigger the biggest transformations. Likewise, we must vividly illustrate the vision of the world we must create, to provide a safe path to the other side of the climate emergency, which is essential to sparking peoples' imaginations and giving them the positive mental pictures to hold in their minds.

8. While climate tipping points must be avoided, there are social tipping points that could lead to sudden shifts in human perception and the trajectory of the "unprecedented transformational change" needed to prevent catastrophic global heating. A recent study in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences outlines the positive "tipping elements" that could trigger massive societal transformation. "Social tipping interventions", small changes that pave the way for rapid transformative change, would be designed to maximize impacts and drive rapid decarbonization at the needed rate of 8% per year between now and 2040.

9. One of the most powerful "social tipping interventions" is widespread dissemination of a new idea or story. Stories connect us, stories give context to information, and stories are how we make sense of the world. One of the most effective vehicles to inject a story into the public consciousness is film. Movies have the unique power to give voice to social and global problems people may have difficulty dealing with, and they can open a window of possibilities for viewers. Movies can create and spread awareness, influence our thought processes, engage our emotions, awaken our sense of responsibility, and move our hearts toward greater empathy and understanding. A movie can take you on an immersive journey into others' lives, potential future realities, and alternate perspectives and help to create new frames of reference - new paradigms. Virtual reality, when integrated into the film medium, can bring the added power of an "empathy machine" to help open hearts and transform long held beliefs. Increasingly, virtual reality technology is helping to make the climate emergency real, immediate and personal, and is a powerful tool for helping people to care.

10. Ultimately, it's all about telling a compelling story - a riveting tale of human experience that will emotionally resonate with everyone, regardless of their political affiliation. It's about bringing the climate emergency home - transforming it from an abstract concept, in time and space, to something that is immediate and highly personal. The best way to understand the climate emergency is by experiencing it. Disruptive and transformative, the message and the medium is all about making it personal, about empowering people to think and feel differently - and then motivated to act!