

TOOLKIT

# Stories for Our Planet—How Story-tellers Can Help Our Climate

Behavior spotlight: Adopt a plant-rich diet



SONY PICTURES  
A GREENER WORLD

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## Acknowledgments:

We are grateful to our partners at Sony Pictures Animation and Sony Pictures Entertainment for their support and contributions to this toolkit.



# Forward: The power of storytelling on climate change

If you read headlines or watch blockbusters on climate change, it's understandable if you feel both afraid and powerless. You're also not alone if you feel both that climate change is a big deal and that you are very small—so small that it seems like whatever you do may not make a difference. But the data tell a different story—our individual actions matter. We can be a part of the solution.

As storytellers, you have the platform to reach millions of people with your creative work. The messages you share and how you share them can change how people think about climate change. They can also spur people to take actions that make an impact on the climate. You can help create new norms, habits, and views about the most important issue of our time.

You've already done it with smoking, gay rights, gender roles, and more. Why not climate change? This toolkit will provide you with the context and inspiration (we hope!) to seed ideas about climate-friendly behaviors in your creative work. While research shows us that a handful of behavior changes in just ten percent of the population could significantly impact climate change, this toolkit focuses on eating a plant-rich diet.

What you will see in these pages is the result of a workshop on March 30, 2021, with 40 creative industry professionals, a combination of writers, producers, and creative executives working in film and television from inside and outside Sony Pictures Entertainment. Here are the core sections you'll find:

- Behaviors that can make a difference on climate: This section argues that if 10% of Americans adopt seven behaviors, we can close the gap to reaching our emissions targets. Eating less meat is one of the most impactful behaviors, and we share some research on that here.
- Making change stick: An introduction to behavioral science: This section is all about the science of human behavior, including what to do differently and why it works to change behavior.
- Your tools for change: This section offers behavior change strategies, checklists of what to look for, and examples of how to apply behavior change tools on-screen.

We hope that this toolkit will inspire you to take steps within your creative work to help combat climate change. Look inside to find out why and how.

Onwards,



**Alex Schwartz**  
Producer  
Sony Pictures Animation



**Karen Toliver**  
Executive Vice President, Creative  
Sony Pictures Animation



# BEHAVIORS THAT CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE ON CLIMATE

Recycling is great, but it isn't going to help us reach our climate goals. Let's put our efforts where they count most.

## There are seven behaviors that can make a big difference on climate in the U.S.



**Adopt a plant-rich diet.** This means reducing your weekly meat consumption by the equivalent of 1 burger or 2 pieces of chicken.



**Electrify your vehicle.** This means that new car buyers should seek out electric vehicles instead of gas-powered ones.



**Buy carbon offsets.** This means donating money to projects that take carbon out of the atmosphere—like planting trees or capturing emissions.



**Fly one less time.** This means frequent business travelers spend less time in the air and more time at home.



**Contract for green energy.** This means more households choose to power their homes with solar instead of gas or coal.



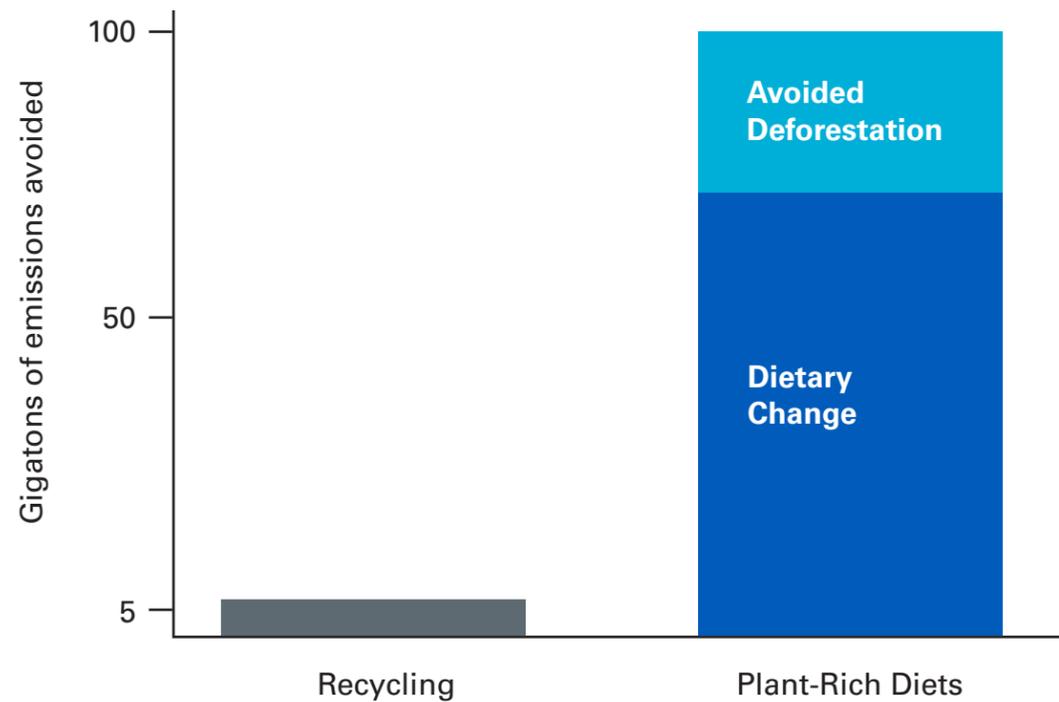
**Get engaged.** This means talking about these changes with your friends, colleagues and family is one of the biggest contributing factors to reducing your carbon impact.



**Don't waste food.** Reducing food waste means using fewer resources to get the food to your table and sending less food to the landfill.

# Adopting a plant-rich diet is one of the most impactful and accessible solutions to climate change.

Adopting a plant-rich diet is about 15x more impactful than recycling when it comes to reducing emissions.

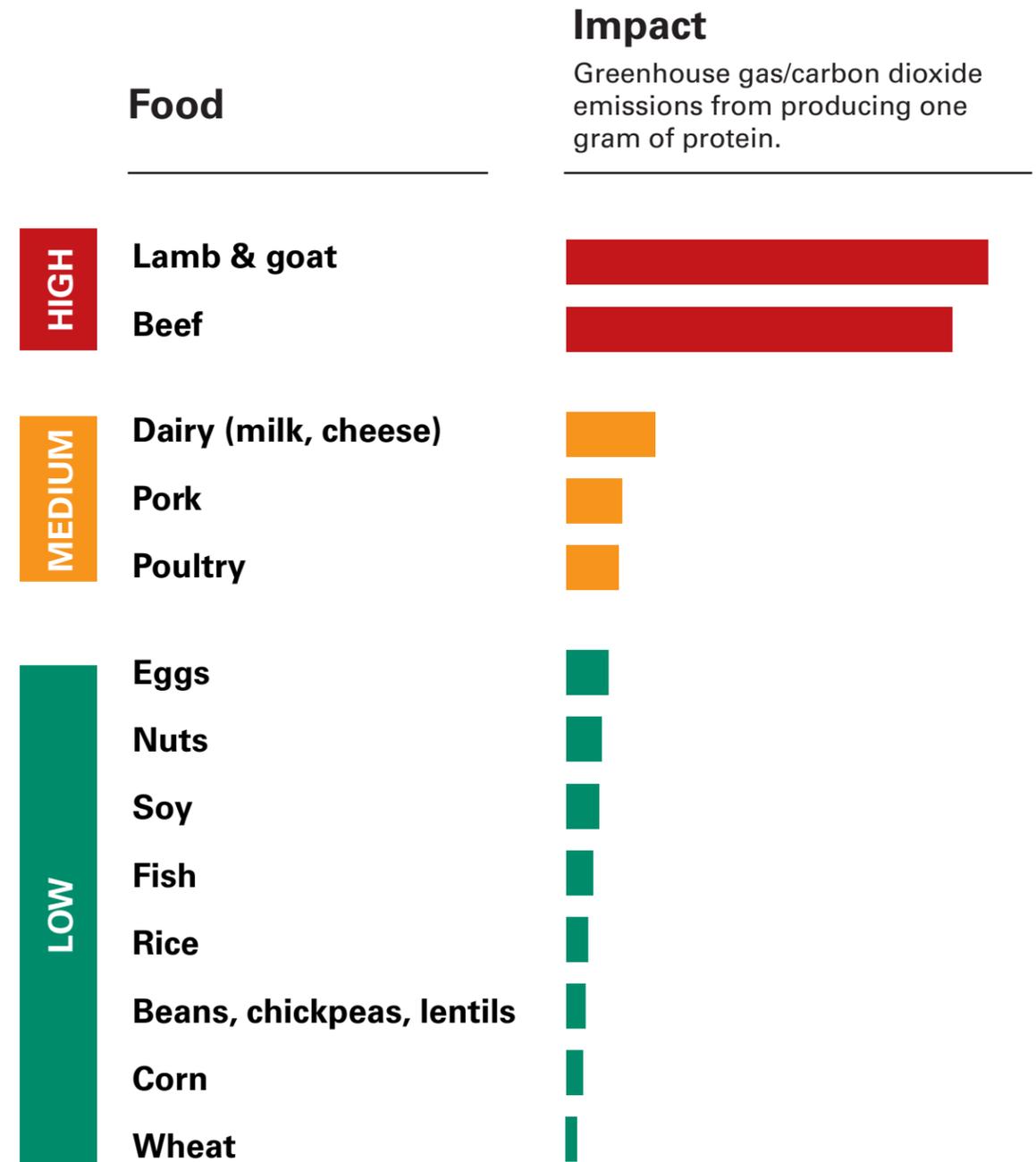


The results shown here are based on the projected global emissions impact. Data from (Hawken, 2017).

## How does meat production create emissions?

Meat production leads to greenhouse gas emissions, created both by the animals and the conditions needed to sustain them. Clearing land for raising livestock means cutting down trees and releasing carbon dioxide. Feeding these animals often involves growing crops with fertilizers or spreading manure that both release harmful gases. Ruminant animals, like cows, also produce a potent greenhouse gas, methane, during digestion.

Meat consumption plays a large role in generating emissions compared to other foods, such as grains, vegetables, and even dairy.

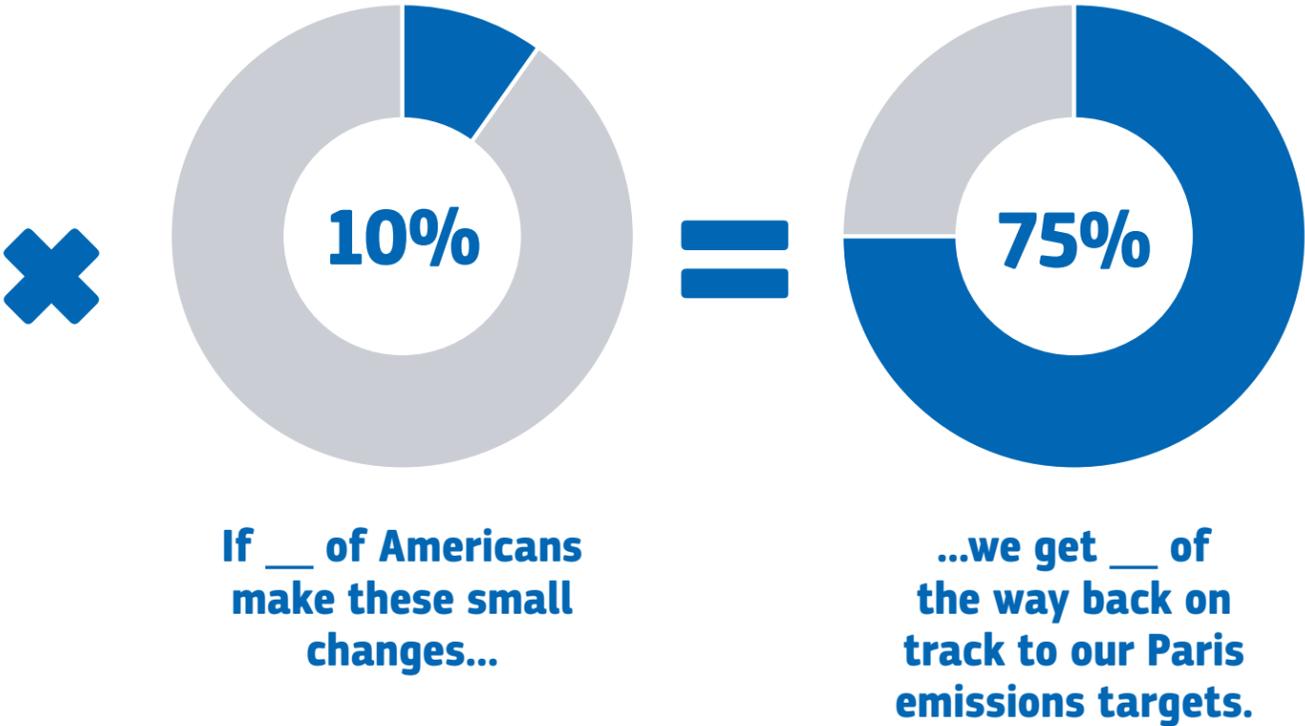


Adapted from (GlobAgri-WRR model developed by CIRAD, Princeton University, INRA, and WRI)

# Meaningful change is not as far away as we might think. Individual action matters.

-  Adopt a plant-rich diet
-  Electrify your vehicle
-  Buy carbon offsets
-  Fly one less time
-  Contract for green energy
-  Get engaged
-  Don't waste food

**There are seven behaviors that can make a big difference on climate in the U.S.**



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**Americans want to make a difference and do more to combat climate change. Why not start with plant-rich diets?**

**72%**

Believe that climate change is happening: an all-time high.

**54%**

Are **alarmed or concerned** that climate change is a significant threat.

**55%**

Believe they should **do more personally** to make a difference on climate change.



# MAKING CHANGE STICK: AN INTRODUCTION TO BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE

Using key insights about people can help drive behavior change.

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## We don't have to care or know a lot about something to change.

When it comes to behavior change, how we go about doing it matters. And it turns out that the science of human behavior gives us a lot to work with when trying to figure out what's going to work best to motivate people to change.

It probably comes as no surprise that people are complicated. We have a broad spectrum of ways in which we process information and make decisions.

On one end of the spectrum, are our thoughtful, deliberate, calculating selves. This is where we take our time, weigh the pros and cons, and try to be as rational as possible. But in reality the majority of our decisions happen somewhere near the other end of the spectrum, which involves our quick-thinking, quick-acting, reactive, and autopilot selves.



**Weighing options,  
calculating costs and  
benefits**

**We often assume and  
like to think that our  
decisions are mostly  
made here.**



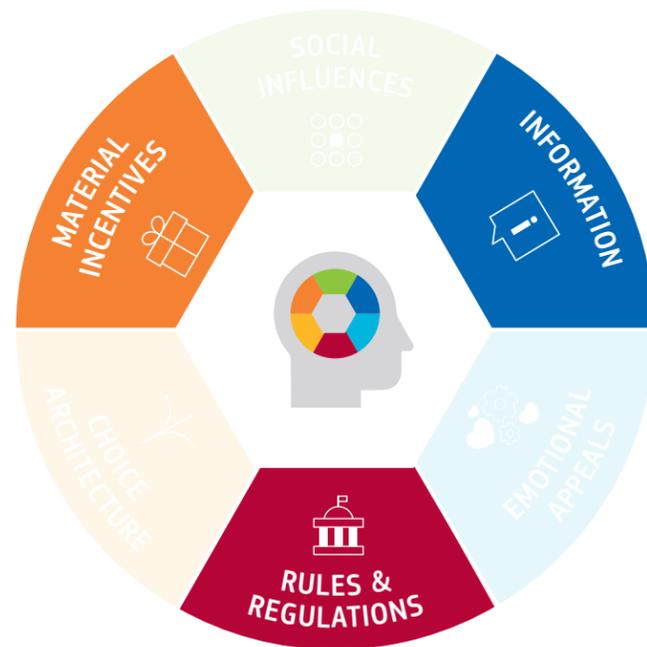
**Reacting automatically,  
quickly**

**But in reality, most  
of our decisions  
happen on this side  
of the spectrum.**

## The most common tactics for behavior change are designed for one kind of thinking.

Strategies for designing change are overwhelmingly reliant on a calculated, deliberate way of thinking and processing. They include:

- Material incentives ('pay them')
- Rules and regulations ('stop them')
- Information ('tell them')

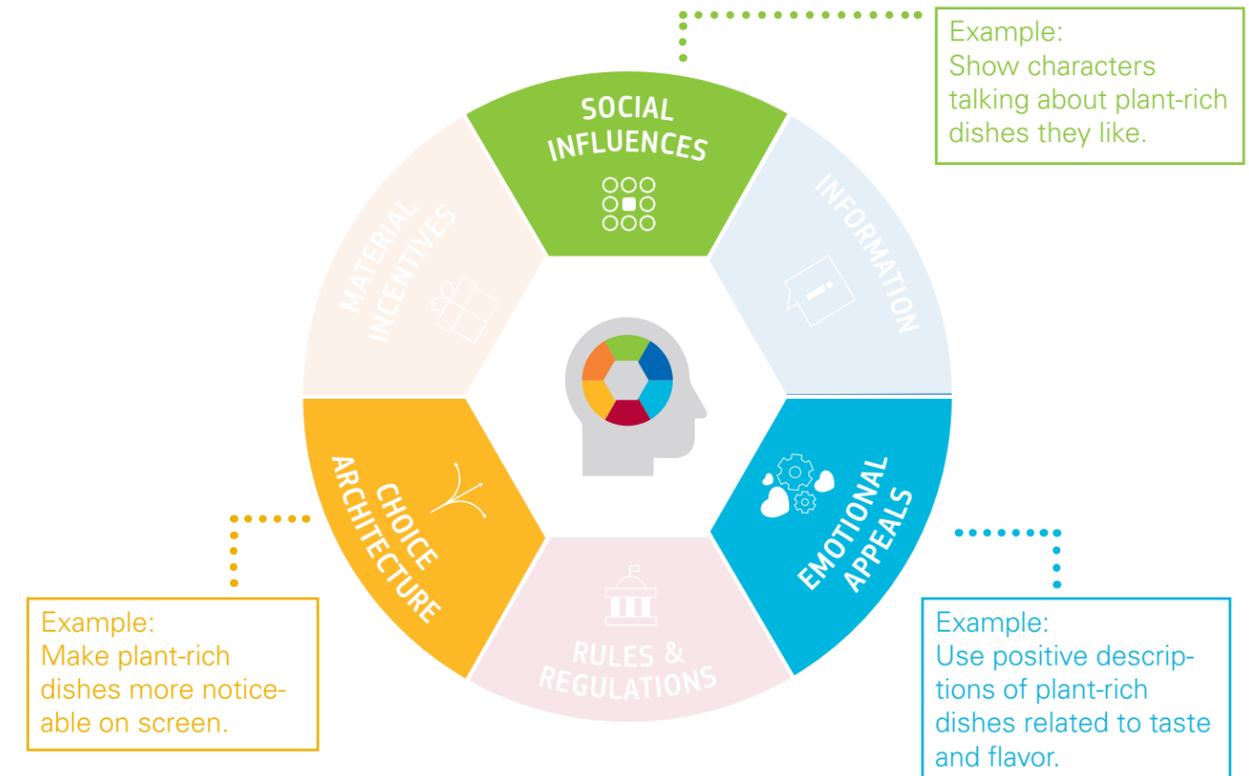


But we know that there are other levers of change. Emotions are incredibly powerful and drive us to act. We are a social species, and we take our lead from the social influences of our herd. And the design of our decision-making and choice environment is often just as influential as the actual choices right in front of us.

## Let's design more solutions for adopting plant-rich diets that capture the full spectrum of our decision-making.

Research from behavioral and social science tells us that other significant levers also influence us:

- Emotional appeals (emotions drive us to act)
- Social influences (people take the lead from others)
- Choice architecture (the context in which we make decisions matters)



### The Levers of Behavior Change

Rare's behavior change framework emphasizes six levers that address our different ways of thinking. They can be used in various combinations for different effects.

# YOUR TOOLS FOR CHANGE: PLANT-RICH DIETS

Cultural and social norms are constantly changing, and the entertainment industry has a large part to play in affecting them. How can we harness it for good?

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## Behavioral science tools for storytellers

### Social Influences

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1. Show people where others are going, and they'll want to go there too.
2. Choose the right messengers.
3. Show the reputational benefits of certain behaviors.

### Emotional Appeals

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4. Meet people where they are and connect on what matters to them.
5. Avoid doom, gloom, and fear-based messages.

### Choice Architecture

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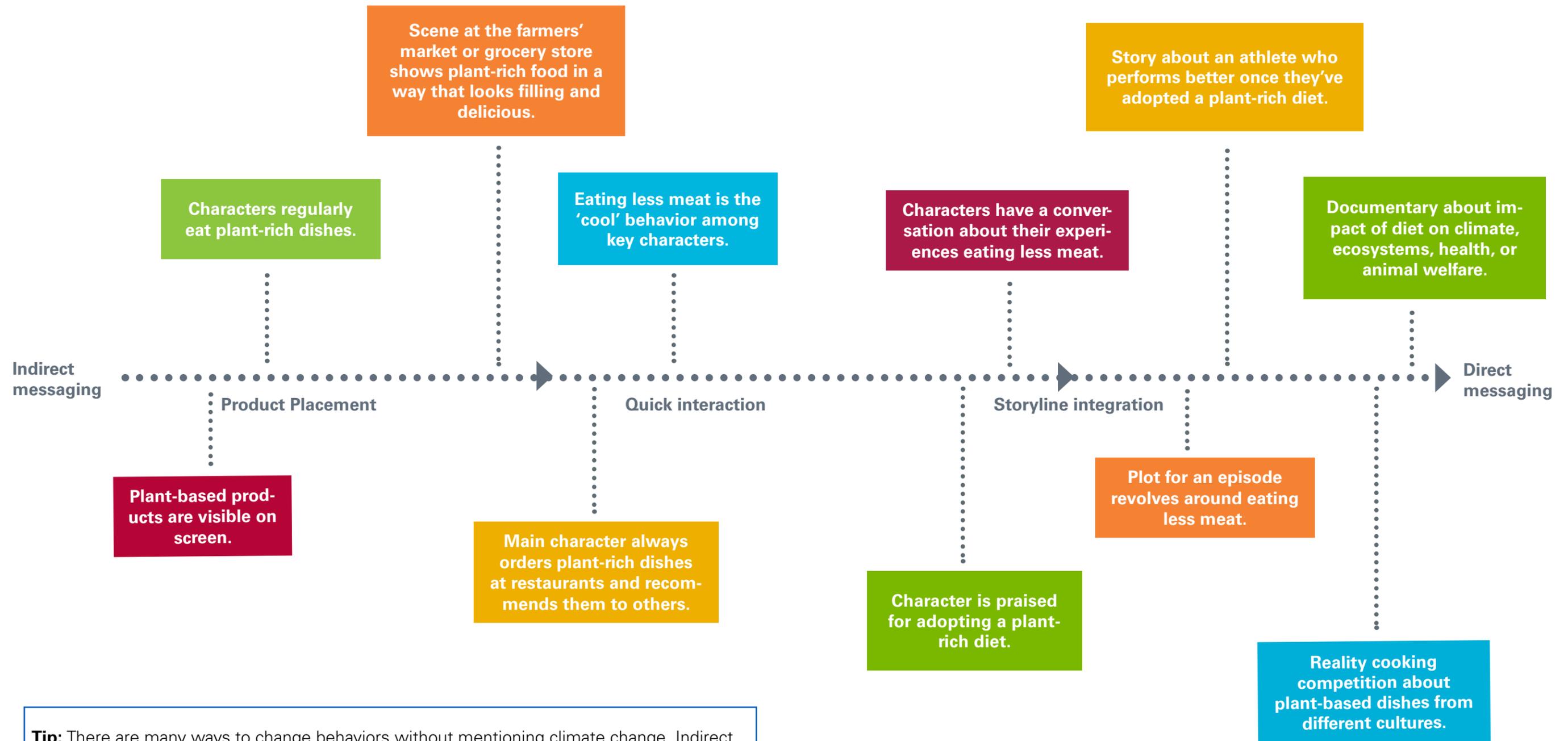
6. Make the behavior noticeable.
7. Keep messages simple, relatable, and easy to remember.

# The tools ‘behind the scenes’

Tool	How to use it
1. Show people where others are going, and they’ll want to go there too.	Make eating a plant-rich diet behavior seem normal and something that most people are doing.
2. Show reputational benefits of certain behaviors.	Show that there are social rewards (like a status boost) for characters who eat a plant-rich diet.
3. Choose the right messengers.	Pick spokespeople for plant-rich diets who characters look up to and trust.
4. Meet people where they are and connect on what matters to them.	Tell real stories and experiences about adopting plant-rich diets that aren’t about the environment but other values.
5. Avoid doom, gloom, and fear-based messages.	Use messages that signal hope, joy, or pride when talking about plant-rich diets.
6. Make the behavior noticeable.	Make eating a plant-rich dish the highlight of a key scene or something that characters do often.
7. Keep the messages simple, relatable, and easy to remember.	Share key messages about plant-rich diets that are easy to understand and can answer ‘So what?’

Why it works	What it looks like on screen
People tend to follow the crowd, so showing behaviors as common can encourage people to join.	Characters regularly eat plant-rich dishes in their everyday lives.
People want to be recognized for doing things that others perceive as good or right.	The show’s coolest characters are the people eating a plant-rich diet.
Ensuring that trusted and well-respected people are promoting the behavior can help increase its credibility.	Elite athletes talk about how plant-rich dishes help them gain an edge on the competition (e.g., <i>The Game Changers</i> )
When trying to introduce a behavior, it helps to first find common ground and identify values, beliefs, and circumstances that align with the behavior.	Characters have a conversation about their struggles and triumphs eating less meat (e.g., <i>Black-ish: Jack’s First Stand</i> ).
Pessimistic messages can distance or disengage individuals from climate change and leave them feeling helpless and overwhelmed. Positive emotions are more likely to get people to try out something new and/or share their success with others.	Character has life transformation after switching to a plant-rich diet that changes things for the better.
Putting a behavior front-and-center or increasing how many times it’s mentioned can draw attention to it so that it feels more important.	Characters select a plant-rich dish at a key moment during a movie (e.g., <i>Ratatouille</i> ).
People can only process so much information at one time, especially when something is new to them, so messages that are simple and straightforward are more likely to stick.	When talking about why a character chose a plant-rich dish, they talk about the health benefits.

# There is a spectrum of implicit and explicit ways to drive behavior change on plant-rich diets.



**Tip:** There are many ways to change behaviors without mentioning climate change. Indirect messaging strategies offer an opportunity to reach individuals who may not seek out information on climate, environmental, or dietary change. Give them a try!

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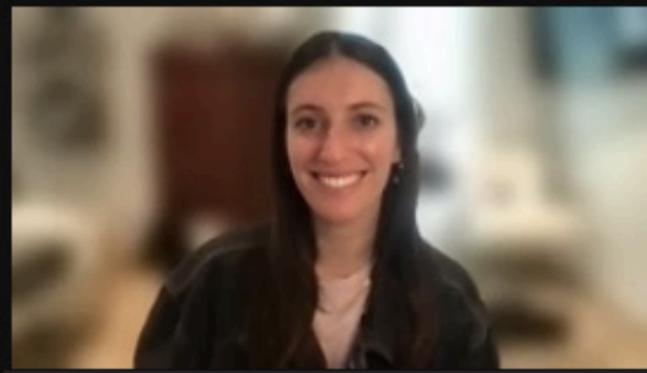
## When in doubt, remember these tips when showing plant-rich diets on screen.

### DO:

- ✓ Show characters eating plant-rich food.
- ✓ Have a cool or likable character eating plant-rich foods.
- ✓ Include conversations related to shared beliefs about why characters are eating plant-rich diets.
- ✓ Show individuals on a journey to eat more plant-rich foods.
- ✓ Make the plant-rich food easy to see and noticeable.
- ✓ Describe plant-rich foods as tasty, cool, healthy, filling, inexpensive, accessible, and comforting.

### DON'T:

- ✗ Show characters eating only meat options.
- ✗ Have unlikable characters eating plant-rich foods.
- ✗ Use niche viewpoints to rationalize a character's choice to eat a plant-rich diet.
- ✗ Portray plant-rich diets as something someone adopts wholly or without flexibility.
- ✗ Hide the plant-rich food in the scene.
- ✗ Describe plant-rich options as bland, niche, self-righteous, expensive, feminine, or lacking protein.



**THANK YOU!**





**I have joined the movement  
of storytellers who  
are infusing behavior  
change into film & tv for  
our planet, to make a  
difference on climate.**

**TAKE THE PLEDGE**

[rare.org/bcd-hollywood](https://rare.org/bcd-hollywood)

# APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

## Explore studies and research on increasing the adoption of plant-rich diets.

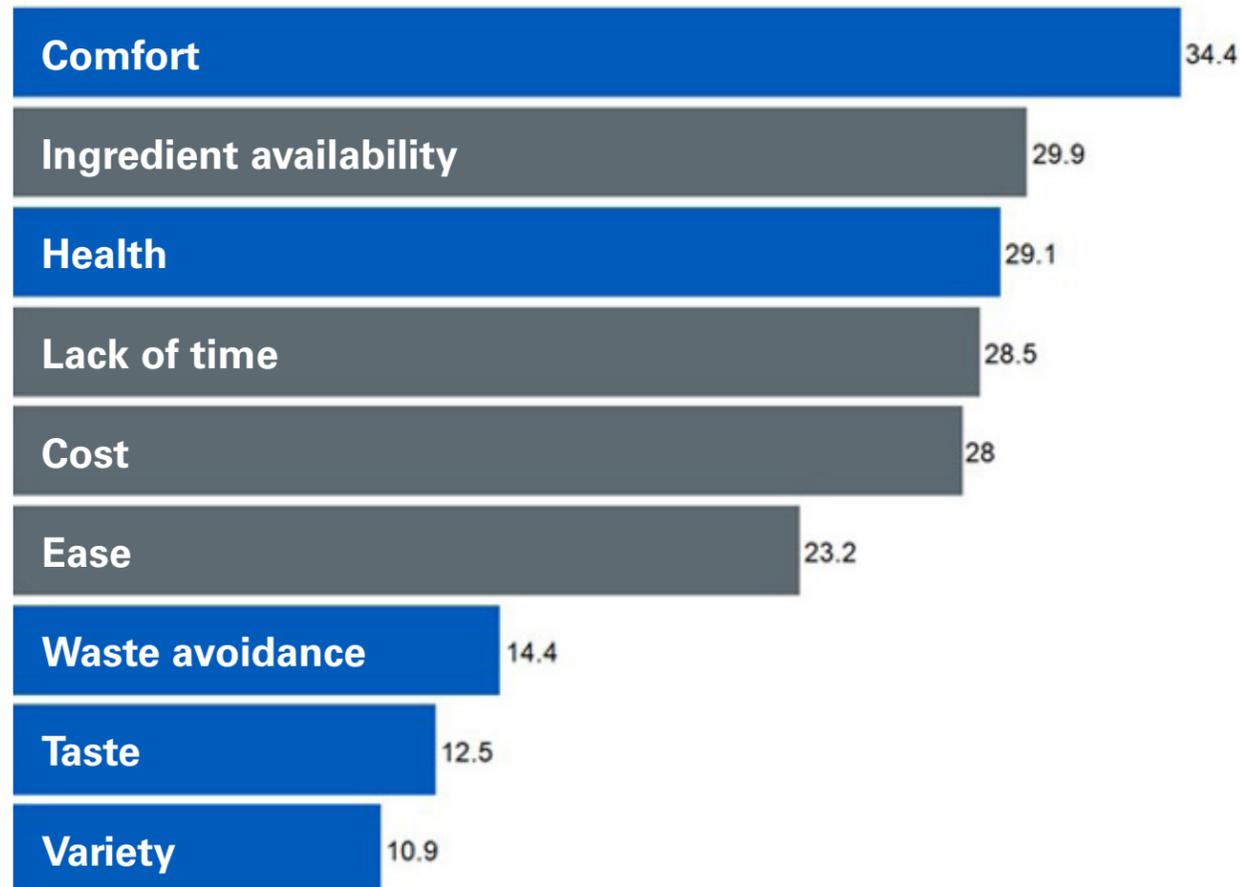
**Show people where others are going:** Telling people about what other people are 'starting to do' helps signal that a new trend is forming.



(Sparkman & Walton, 2017).

## Additional Research

**Meet people where they are:** There are several [motivators](#) and barriers in day-to-day decisions about food.



Data from diary entries collected and analyzed by (Rare, 2020). Numbers indicate % of video diary entries (n = 350) that featured at least one barrier or motivator. For example, 34.4% of all diary entries featured 'comfort' as one of the motivators.

## Additional Research

**Make the behavior noticeable:** At the University of Cambridge, doubling the vegetarian offering increased the proportion of plant-based sales by up to 80%.



(Garnett, Balmford, Sandbrook, & Pilling 2019).

## Additional Research

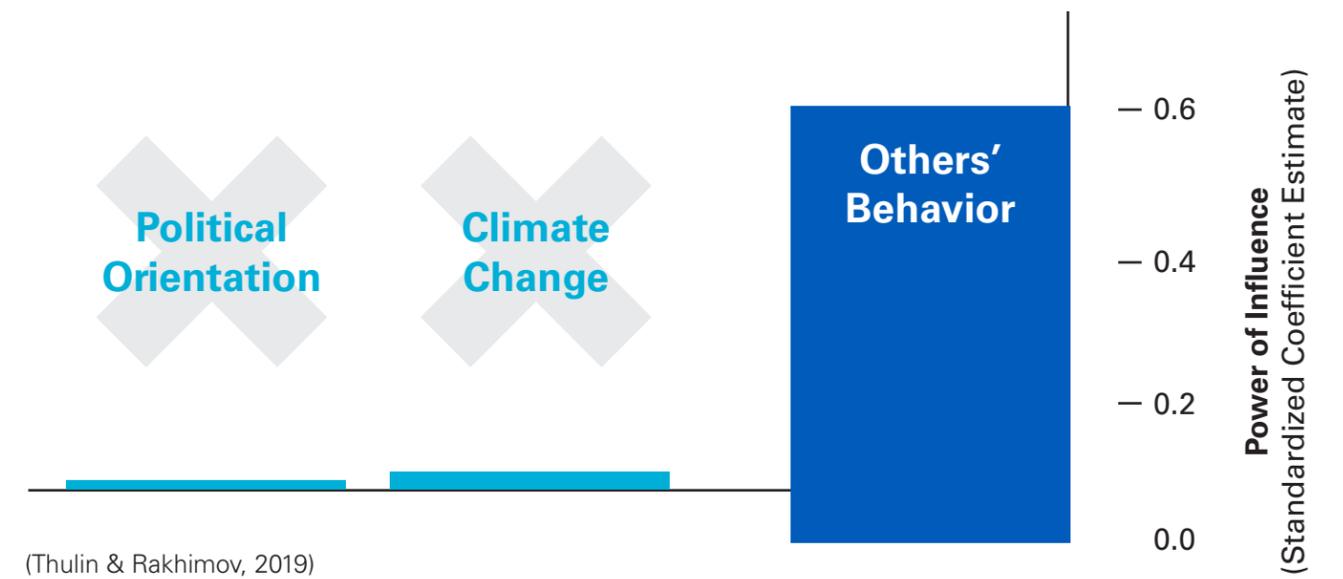
**Meet people where they are:** At Sainsbury's United Kingdom grocery store, using alternative names to "Meat-Free Sausage and Mash" increased the sales by up to 76%.



(Bacon, Wise, Attwood & Vennard, 2018)

## Additional Research

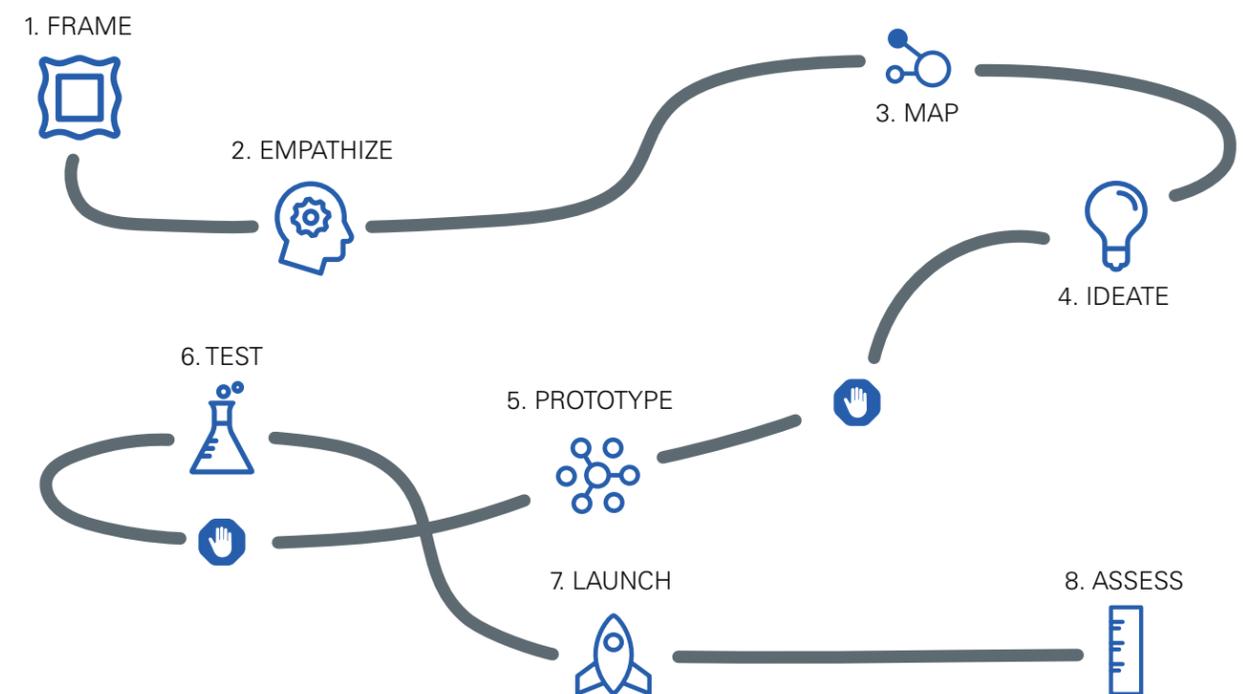
**Show people where others are going:** A study of Americans showed that beliefs about others' behavior are more influential on green behaviors than beliefs about political orientation or climate change.



# APPENDIX B: THE BEHAVIOR- CENTERED DESIGN JOURNEY

## The behavior-centered design journey

With all of the science and research out there on behavioral science, it's hard to know what to do with it in practice. Behavior-Centered Design is a human-centered approach to designing solutions with behavioral science in mind. Through a step-by-step process of learning about what motivates and constrains people from taking action, we can be more effective in changing behavior. Visit [behavior.rare.org](http://behavior.rare.org) for more information and tools on this approach.



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54% are alarmed or concerned about it:

- [Global Warming's Six Americas. Yale Program on Climate Change Communication](#).

55% believe they should do more personally:

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## Rare inspires change so people and nature thrive.

Rare is a global leader in catalyzing behavior change to achieve enduring conservation results. For over 45 years and across 60 countries, Rare has motivated individuals, their communities, and their local leaders to adopt behaviors that benefit both people and nature. Now, through our Make It Personal program, we seek to inspire people to take actions that have the greatest potential for measurably moving the meter on climate change right now.

**rare.org | @rare\_org**

Check out our website to learn more about [Make It Personal](#) and the [Center for Behavior & the Environment](#).

For more information please contact Monique Baron at [mbaron@rare.org](mailto:mbaron@rare.org).

