

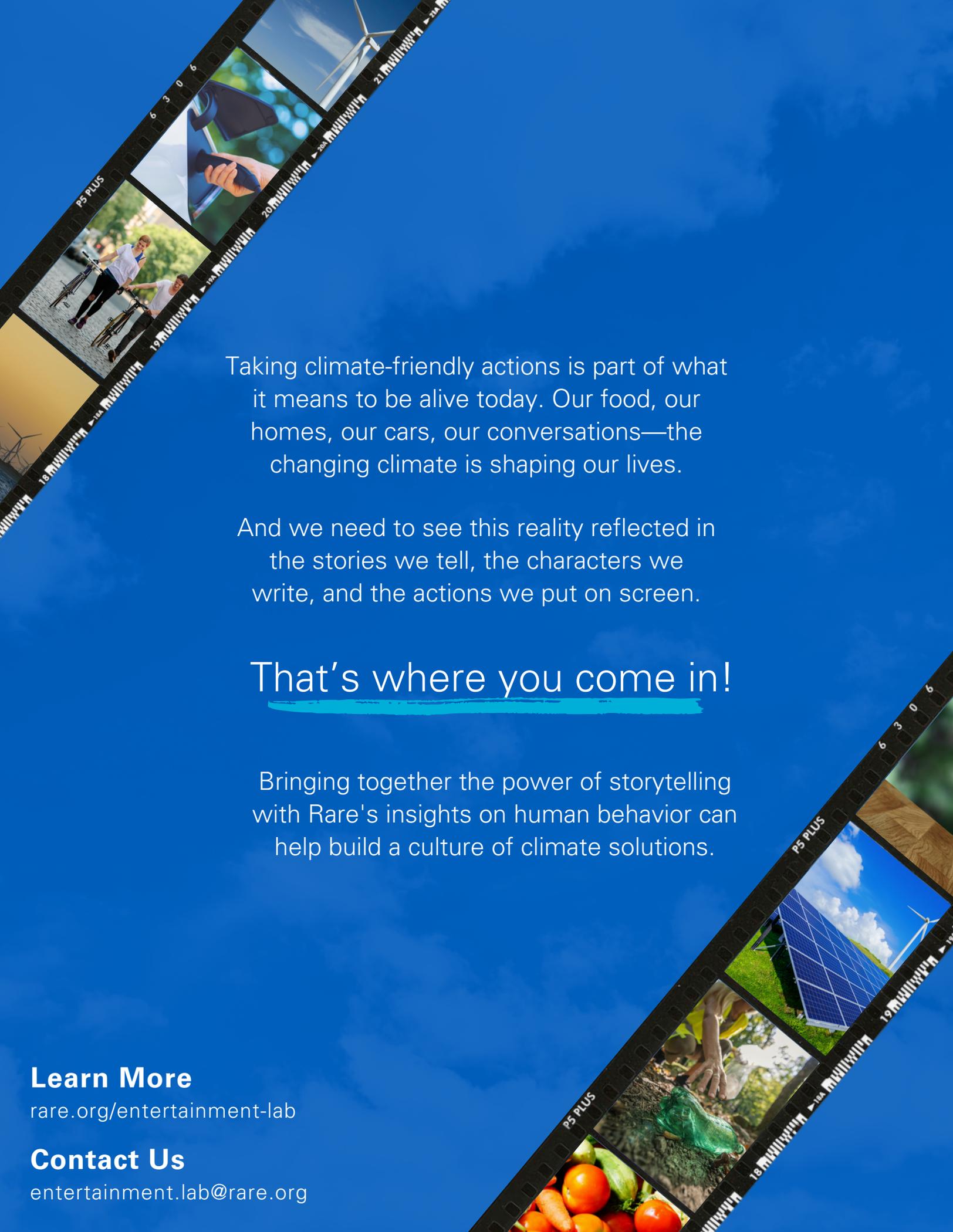


June 2023

Scripting the Change

How to Integrate Climate-Friendly Behaviors on Screen





Taking climate-friendly actions is part of what it means to be alive today. Our food, our homes, our cars, our conversations—the changing climate is shaping our lives.

And we need to see this reality reflected in the stories we tell, the characters we write, and the actions we put on screen.

That's where you come in!

Bringing together the power of storytelling with Rare's insights on human behavior can help build a culture of climate solutions.

Learn More

rare.org/entertainment-lab

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Climate-Friendly Stories

We get it—“climate” is a big word. But, climate in storytelling is more than just epic climate sagas or eco-docs. Any story can be a climate-friendly story, because climate-friendly actions can fit into any genre or format in big ways or small. Here are some ways to make your story climate-friendly:



Background Placement

Production design, locations, set dressing, and featured extras. Think solar panels on roofs or a scene at a chic plant-based restaurant.

Climate Cameos

One-off dialogue, day players, and single-episode arcs. Imagine a meet-cute at an electric vehicle (EV) charging station or a line about what's for dinner on a Meatless Monday.

Characters and Storylines

Supporting Characters: supporting characters and storylines can introduce a behavior, serve as foils to core characters, and influence the core character's actions.

Core Characters: by engaging the core characters, climate-friendly actions can be explicit, emotionally-engaging, naturally recurrent, and a vehicle for plot development.

TIP

Think about the various pathways a character or storyline might be connected to a climate-friendly action. Embrace intersections!

A character may eat less meat for health reasons; a storyline on racial justice can intersect with climate themes; or a character may drive an electric vehicle for performance power.

Actions that Matter

It can be hard to know what behaviors and solutions to show on screen. Many people default to low-impact actions like recycling or planting trees.

That's ok! Rare has identified the high-impact behaviors that people can adopt to significantly reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, including:



OUR FOOD

Plant-Rich Diets

Even if we eliminated fossil fuel emissions today, we would still have to change the way we eat to tackle the climate crisis—there's no getting around it. And, if we succeed, the payoff is huge: a shift to plant-rich diets could stabilize greenhouse gas levels for 30 years. Your characters don't have to be vegans; let them be like the 1-in-3 Americans who are already eating less meat for various reasons: climate concern, animal rights, health, cost, racial justice, and more.

Food Waste

Did you know more food reaches landfills than any other type of material? Not only does that waste the resources it took to create the food, but food in landfills emits gasses that contribute to climate change.

Since food waste occurs most at the end of the chain within households, you can include food waste reduction naturally into stories: your characters can discuss or model eating leftovers, meal prepping, or composting.

OUR HOMES

Solar Panels

Solar panels reliably provide emission-free electricity for everything from smartphones to homes to entire cities. The same can be true on screen: from dialogue to set dressing, solar panels can fit into films and tv shows across most genres. And clean power is urgently needed—the emissions from making electricity in America are greater than all emissions from Japan.

[Read More](#) →

Actions that Matter

OUR RIDES

Electric Vehicles

Think about your character and the car they drive. Pick-up truck? SUV? Sports car? Mini-van? Chances are, there is a fully-electric version on the market today, and they're going faster and further than ever before. Today, driving with electricity makes 63% fewer emissions than a gasoline car—and it'll get even better when more of our electricity comes from renewables.

Green Transportation

Transportation alone accounts for nearly 30% of greenhouse gas emissions in the US, and well over three-quarters of that comes from personal vehicles. Beyond EVs, there are plenty of ways characters can get around greener on screen: carpooling, cycling, public buses and trains, even walking. And just like in the real world, these climate-friendly modes of transport mean more time for characters to talk, plot, or maybe even fall in love.



TIP

These behaviors can fit naturally into any story, and don't need to be explicitly tied to climate (after all, greenhouse gas reduction by any other name would smell as sweet).

However, if you do want to connect these actions to climate, it's helpful to know that talking about climate change is a powerful action in itself.

No matter where your story is set, chances are your characters would believe in or have worries about climate change. After all, that's true in the real world.

This can create opportunities to explore powerful emotions like fear, anxiety, joy, and hope, while also highlighting solutions.



Just like in life, little changes on the screen can make a big impact.

We've compiled some of our favorite behavioral insights to help. →

Behavioral Science: Tips and Tricks

Psychology not only adds powerful creative depth to the stories we tell, but it can help ensure savvy messaging in subtle yet effective ways. Here is a small selection of behaviorally-inspired tips and tricks to keep in mind:



1. Normalize Climate Action

What is the best predictor of climate action? Political orientation? Climate concern? Nope. By far, it's whether you believe that other people are already taking action and you think they expect you to take action too. All of which means that when we depict climate-friendly actions on-screen as common, normal, and expected, viewers will be more likely to change their behavior.



2. Positive Reinforcement

If other characters receive climate-friendly actions on screen with interest, support, or acceptance, then audiences are more likely to adopt the behaviors themselves.



3. The Messenger Matters

Audiences care about who is adopting a behavior. People are a lot more likely to adopt a climate-friendly behavior if they see it done by a character they identify with, care about, or whose perspective they value.

Behavioral Science: Tips and Tricks



4. Show the Struggle to Change

Showing your characters facing down their barriers to change and growing in the process helps the viewer imagine themselves doing the same. It makes audiences feel more capable, which makes them more likely to try something new.



5. Help Break Down Stereotypes

People have genuine doubts about climate-friendly behaviors—but more often than not, they are stereotypes.

- The star athlete can eat plant-rich foods just like Colin Kaepernick, Novak Djokovic, or Venus Williams.
- If your character needs to get stranded, have a gas car run out of fuel rather than an EV run out of charge.
- When the neighborhood loses power, let it be the grid that fails rather than the solar panels.



6. Aspiration Makes Behavior Attractive

Low-carbon lifestyles can be glam, high-end, and sexy too. These actions don't have to be chores, and aspiration is a powerful lever for audiences.

Climate, entertainment, and creativity are not in conflict.

Rare's Entertainment Lab provides the entertainment industry with behavioral insights and scientific best practices to help creatives tell stories that reflect our world and drive change for our planet.



Learn More

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