Coping with inevitable changes

TYRO WOLFE

UNDERSTANDING OUR CHANGING CLIMATE

Climate change is an inevitable self-inflicted extinction event. When I think about a future where we head into further climate change, never diverting our course, I think of one where there are less humans, and the rest of life on earth has either adapted, or fallen off to the wayside. Honestly, I find it almost romantic. But, it isn't romantic and it isn't inevitable. Yet, somewhere in my upbringing, I accepted it as both of those things.

In spite of the feeling of a looming unstoppable apocalypse, you'll find me doing as many little things as I can to help. As l brush my teeth, I think about turning the water off in between rinses. I think about shortening my showers, walking more and relying on local agriculture. I act on many, if not all, of these thoughts, believing my acting actually will do something.

I spend much of my free time brainstorming solutions, specifically around the topic of sustainable agriculture. However, I feel powerless to enact any of my ideas. I am left without a way to prove myself so that others will listen. I often wonder how many people are as secretly passionate as I am about the topic? How many others have new ideas and solutions but no voice?

If you gave me a voice, or the ability to enact change by directly speaking to leaders, I'd have no idea what to say. Not because I am without words but because I feel like everything I want to say would be absolutely pointless. Politicians and corporations don't care what some Gen Z in rural Oregon has to say. I haven't any money to back up my words, and I have no power. I'm not talking to world leaders though, I am talking to you. I feel like maybe it will matter more if everyday regular people talk to other everyday regular people, and make change within, where we are, however we can.

I encourage each person to take control of their resources. Gather your own water, grow your own garden. You can make a difference, whether you grow your favorite salad green in a pot on your porch, or you till up your quarter-acre plot to plant corn and squash. Make change within your own personal system. Make your needs as local, and in your control, as possible. Rely on something other than the system that orchestrates its own disaster. Take power back in the little ways you can, in everyday things, and strive for localized self-sufficiency.

Most importantly, try doing things in new ways, research and learn, and expand your horizons. Maybe you've always tilled the back acre, but you've done some reading and you looked into no-till. You decided it's better for you, the climate, the soil and your bottom line if you start the garden off this year by deep mulching instead of tilling. That is a good example of a change from within.

When I asked my friends what they thought about climate change, most of what they had to say was aimless and confused. They were unsure about what to even believe. Quite a few also expressed dreams aligning to some ideal life environmentally, but admitted it was just a dream; because, let's be real, how could they even dream to afford a house, let alone have time for a garden, composting or space and money to make their ideas into reality and test them?

When I think of climate change, I think of solutions, and I desire to make a difference for my lifetime and the generations to come. But I also feel lost, confused and like most of it is inevitable. I feel like we missed the boat. Most of my peers seem to feel similarly. However, our hope lies in many individuals making changes on personal levels. We know the science. We need to live it now. Maybe another boat is coming by.

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Tyro Wolfe, 21, was born and raised in Pendleton with a lifelong interest in the outdoors. She first learned about climate change in elementary school and it hasn't been far from her mind since. She has been coping with both the inevitable changes that will happen in her lifetime, and racking her brain for solutions she can enact.