

## How Do We Make Change in Response to Living in the Climate Crisis?

*Red Hook Farms*

Speaker 1:

The birds think it belongs to them and they allow us to come in.

Speaker 2:

They're probably right.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. They are. That is their space and they allow us in. Because some days you sit here and they're talking, and they're talking to each other and they... Sit here, yeah?

So I found the two little birds were outside on the sidewalk. We don't know how they got there. So people were, "What are we going to do?" So I took off my hat, my cap, and I threw it over him, picked up one, brought him back and I put him over here. Inside, that way, he won't be in any danger. If his mommy comes up, she'll find him.

And I go back and I get the other and then we... So we've rescued birds. We've rescued cats. Mark and I came here one morning and there was a cat on top of the fence, little tiny thing. So we took him as Mark. We still live with Mark today and that was like 10 years ago.

Speaker 2:

Wow.

Speaker 1:

And then we rescued another and then we rescued people in this garden, people that needed something, some type of to fill that void in their life, something they wanted to do and find something gratifying. And this was it.

Speaker 2:

Have you ever taken political action around the issue of climate crisis?

Speaker 3:

No, I don't think so.

Speaker 2:

And why not?

Speaker 3:

Mostly because I didn't really know much about it, so I didn't really know how to start taking action, more so because I think all of the political action leaders, I don't really know where they are.

Speaker 4:

Well, I have done marches around what's going on in my neighborhood. Like Amazon coming and building three Amazon warehouses. Like, like what is this?

Speaker 5:

Well actually they're actually building air quality sensors here. They're basically building air quality sensors with the youth pine networks and they're going to test it and basically use it in their argument against climate change.

Speaker 6:

But I just don't know what I can pro... What can, what can I give if I were to participate?

Speaker 7:

One of the things that I'm learning from my meditation practice is to act and then let go of the result. It's a different... It's a shift and it, because it doesn't let you off the hook. You still have to act, you still have to do things, but it gives you a chance to breathe around it all because otherwise it's never enough. It's never enough. Like, no matter how much we do. Right? That's what it can feel like.

Speaker 8:

You know, like I'm always really cognizant of like, this is really small scale. Like most of my work has been in this garden and it's just hyper local. It's really small scale. And sometimes it's like, "oh, should I be, you know, working for like a bigger nonprofit" or whatever. And for me, the answer is no. I think being here, for me, it was such a gift. It was in this space, we can do anything we want to do.

Speaker 9:

Every little bit helps. Yeah. Kind of thing. If everybody had a green roof, I wonder how much more that would be. Because that would be equal planted space for all the paved space that we have.

Speaker 10:

Plant more, plant more, plant more trees, plant a tree.

Speaker 8:

We might not reap the benefits because it takes so long sometimes to make change effective at the top. But our children will, or our grandchildren will. So if we can think more on that level, I think we could not get frustrated and give up so quickly.

Speaker 11:

I was, for example, as a performer, I was doing performances about the planet topic, not only the warming, but about protect the trees.

Speaker 12:

I just did my first political volunteer for a local politician, giving out flyers.

Speaker 13:

Collective action and being part of [inaudible 00:04:20] with like-minded people, that's been really great for me.

Speaker 14:

My next thing that's coming up is basically finding young blood that feels the same way that I do and get them to start to have a conversation between each other. Then in 30 years, they'll carry the torch.

Speaker 15:

On a day to day level, have I changed my life? Not necessarily. I mean, I think I try to do very small things like reducing plastics and composting and trying to just live a lower impact lifestyle. But I'm sort of very conscious that's not doing that much.

Speaker 10:

But I'm realizing now that I should have taken more responsibility. So I regret that. I could have become a vegetarian, still could I guess, but I'm... It's not me.

Speaker 16:

It seems like an issue that's too large. Like what do you want me to do?

Speaker 17:

So I don't like feeling numb, and I think that numbness is the thing that pulls us down into apathy.

Speaker 18:

It's not up to me. I tried to do something, but I can't. Usually, the only thing I can do is that I recycle. What can I do? Recycle, because that's all I can do.

Speaker 19:

Politically and economically, we are pushed to think that we are the solution to climate change, when I feel as the solution, we are maybe 5%.

Speaker 2:

What does this moment ask of us then? What are we sort of asked? How are we asked to step up?

Speaker 10:

That's one of the reasons why I think like what I do in city government is important because I think this is where policy is important and getting certain legislation, rules, policies pushed through, that the political process of making change in the country is I think probably the most important thing.

Speaker 9:

So the big question is why aren't we doing something bigger on a policy level? And on a there's always the questions of why I'm not more involved.

Speaker 2:

Why aren't you more involved?

Speaker 9:

I don't know. It seems like a huge overwhelming task.

Speaker 10:

So I went to the management. I was like, "Hey, why don't we plant some trees around here so we can cool off the building, the cars and the asthma rate in that area is high as well." So I went to my community board and I told them my project, can we have the city plants on there on my block? In 6 months they came and they planted, I think between 72 or 74 trees. After 11 years now, when you go there, the there are really big. And so I feel like I did my little part.

Speaker 20:

I know. Yeah. I mean, there's so many things people do, but we have to get up, we have to protest, we have to vote for the right people.

Speaker 6:

I just want to know what we can do now. You know, what do you do when it's too late? What can you do?

Speaker 2:

What can you do?

Speaker 7:

Well, my participation in this garden has been a part of it.

Speaker 10:

The community gardens across the city, I think serve an important role in educating people who live in New York city about nature, ecology, life cycles. And that in and itself, is not like, a direct climate change, like action point necessarily. But I think it brings awareness to sort of the natural ecosystem that you might not have a chance to be aware of living in an urban environment.

Speaker 1:

You see those little ones there?

Speaker 2:

Yeah.

Speaker 1:

And the other little ones that come in here? That's how we make change, by bringing them, and starting them. And as they start growing, they start learning and they become part of that. And they are able to understand. Oh, give them one of those things to pick up the trash. She likes doing that.