Climate Change and The 12 Step Framework

Is there a “there” there?

Julie Hayes
November 13, 2012
Where on earth did this crazy idea come from?
What I learned on my symposium vacation…

- 3 days in a converted monastery inspires
- The most delicious organic food nourishes
- Thought leaders from around the world motivate
- Practitioners allowed to participate adds context
- A hot tub on every floor rocks!
- So much to see, do, hear, talk about – all good
- Sleep deprivation – can lead to wild ideas
Behavior Change

There were multiple presentations that supported key elements essential for people to embrace new ideas and pursue lasting change:

- A step approach
- A simple, clear path
- Community specific
- Support from “your people”
- Keep it simple
- A connection to spiritual/religion
- The power of story
Real Time Collaboration

Group 7

- Skip Laitner – Energy and Resource Economist
- Kathy Kuntz – Cool Choices
- Linda Shuck – California Institute for Energy and Environment
- Tim Warman – National Wildlife Federation
- Susan Bodnar – Columbia University
- Cara Pike – The Social Capital Project
- George Marshall – Climate Outreach Information Network
- Fred Osbourne – EASTER Foundation
Over-consumers Anonymous

The CMB program might develop a 12-step-like program of over-consumers anonymous that helps us understand that I am/we are part of something bigger than myself or ourselves. This should include a framework and a toolkit that leads us to both daily and spiritual practices that can be replicated across social groups and cultures.
Can a 77 year old, behavior change institution add structure to individual behavior related to climate change?
More in common than you may think

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Success of Alcoholics Anonymous

- Started in 1935
- 54 + fellowships
- 50% success rate among alcoholics who attend meetings for a year*
- 2,133,842 members worldwide*

Bill W.
Climate Change and The 12 Step Framework | The Elements

- **12 Steps**
- **12 Traditions**
- **Meetings**
- **Sponsorship**
- **Literature**
- **Service**
- **Fellowship**
- **Anonymity**

**Spiritual Connection**
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A simple, progressive path to changing behavior

- Societal structure of the group
- Guiding principles for the group
- Role of the fellowship in public
- “Principals above personalities”

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12 Steps

12 Traditions
Meetings

- Accessible community
- There are others like me
- Share feelings, experience, strength and hope, ask questions
- Replace the destructive habit with a new one

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Sponsorship

- Guidance through the 12 steps
- Being of service
- Reduces isolation
- Support and guidance
- Someone who has already benefitted from the program

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Literature

- The Big Book – this is used in every program, regardless of the featured addiction. It is the roadmap to sobriety.
- Area specific books – Debting, Overeating, Gambling etc.
- Pamphlets
- Daily meditation books
- Audio and visual recordings of speakers at other meetings
- Slogans for behavior specific recovery

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- Community and friendship
- Workshops – Conference
- Sense of purpose
- Helping others takes the focus off of your problems
- Commitment to a weekly meeting can help insure going to a weekly meeting

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Spiritual Connection to something greater than yourself

- Simple path – Steps 1, 2, 3
- Trusted source delivery – Higher Power as seen by the individual
- Compelling visual story – Restored to sanity
- Community Design – everyone sees it the way that is meaningful to them
- Engagement tool – prayer and meditation

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Is there a “there” there?

- Is this idea worth further investigation?
- Could “Something Greater Than Myself” be the missing piece to sustainable behavior change around climate action?
Julie Hayes
Senior Project Manager
Milepost Consulting
julie@milepostconsulting.com
323-445-2320