

## **Coping with Climate Grief.**

### **Become part of a Sustainable Economy or “Being a Responsible Citizen rather than a Consumer”.**

Many of us are of an age that we can remember a time when single use plastics were not ubiquitous, when appliances lasted much longer and were repairable (often by our dads or mums if not local repair shops) and when spending on food was a much higher proportion of our family income.

A return to such times may be quite imminent, whether because of increased energy costs due to world markets, war in Ukraine leading to restricted supplies of gas and other fossil fuels while at the same time threatening global food supplies or because enough responsible individuals recognise that drastic changes in our life-styles are required to slow down the rapidly approaching climate crisis.

We can help address any feelings of helplessness, grief and anxiety about the future by engaging as individuals. By embracing life-styles that are less consumer oriented and focussed on quality of life rather than standard of living we become more empowered, more in charge of our own futures and those of future generations and becoming part of the societal changes needed to address and reduce climate change and loss of biodiversity.

Most of us are probably already tinkering around the edges. Buying a little more local seasonal food if we can afford it, recycling our plastics when possible or choosing loose fruit or vegetables, switching to green energy suppliers, maybe flying on fewer occasions, perhaps thinking of buying an electric car. These actions can make an important small difference and perhaps such personal actions might exert consumer power on businesses or slightly influence politicians to make responsible decisions. We might feel a bit better about ourselves but we still face a future where much greater changes are forced upon us.

The bottom line for much of society is that we have grown to equate consumerism with quality of life. We have been trained to think that our sense of self-worth and satisfaction depends on what we consume, upgrading to the latest mobile phone or car or buying the latest fashion in clothing (more of this in a future episode of “Dealing with Climate Grief”).

How do we break away from this conditioning?

### **Change our life-style habits.**

Embrace the old adage of reduce, reuse, recycle to reduce waste.

Avoid upgrading to the latest technology unless it offers real benefits to the planet.

Keep that car longer. Maybe give up car ownership by joining a car share club and make use of public transport.

Take broken items to your local Repair Café to see if they can be repaired.

Give new life to an old garment by mending or upcycling.

### **Use our consumer power.**

Choose to buy from companies that have explicit values and commitments to sustainability and that use certification schemes.

Look for companies that have engaged in a circular economy.

If you can afford to do so, buy better quality appliances which will last longer and which can be repaired.

### **Educate Ourselves**

Find out more about Circular Economies and about companies that reduce their use of materials and embrace recyclability. <https://ellenmacarthurfoundation.org>

Engage more with our local community so we feel valued by what we do rather than by what we have.

### **Lobby and Protest**

Ask your local MP to ask for the UK 2021 “Right to Repair” legislation to be made more effective.

<https://greenallianceblog.org.uk/2021/07/06/the-uks-new-right-to-repair-is-not-a-right-to-repair/>

Sign the Re-start Petition or use some of the points made in it when writing to your local MP and Councillors. (Make sure to mention our local Repair Cafes. There are 7 within Worcestershire alone!)

<https://therestartproject.org/petition-right-to-repair/>