KEYNOTE · TUE, OCT 13 · 6:20-7:00 PM

Opening Night Keynote: Climate Wayfinding

Dr. Katharine Wilkinson, Author

Katharine Wilkinson argues that people are the most critical infrastructure of climate transformation, and many are overwhelmed and burning out. Her answer is orientation, not more information: deliberate spaces where staff, teams and communities find their footing, their contribution and the energy to keep going.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. **People are the critical infrastructure.** Every climate goal, from clean energy to resilient communities, hinges on people. Wilkinson asks leaders to tend that human infrastructure as seriously as any other.
2. **Overwhelm keeps people stuck.** People who care often feel overwhelmed, burn out and play smaller than they might. More information can make it harder, not easier, to see where you fit.
3. **Small, intimate spaces power movements.** Quaker meeting houses, the Black church and consciousness-raising circles in living rooms were essential to past movements. Climate work has had too few.
4. **Rest is this room's weak spot.** In a live poll of summit attendees, motivation scored highest. Working with climate emotions and accessing healing and rest scored lowest.
5. **Joy is a movement-building strategy.** Nobody wants a dour lecture on what they failed to do. People come to a party where they feel welcome, their gifts have a place and they matter.

WHAT LOCAL OFFICIALS CAN DO

- ☐ **Check in on your team's human infrastructure.** Use the free 8 Dynamics tool with staff or community groups to see which needs aren't being met. In every cohort so far, scores rose on all eight dynamics.
- ☐ **Start meetings with the why.** Have colleagues share, in pairs, why they do this work while the other just listens. Knowing each other's motivations builds trust, even when values differ.
- ☐ **Make room for sense-making.** Small, regular, quiet gatherings help staff and residents stay energized and committed when progress rolls backward and the boulders roll down the hill.
- ☐ **Launch a reading group or a citywide read.** Wilkinson invited the first mountain town library to make Climate Wayfinding its citywide read. A reading group model is built into the book, used by teens to lawyers.
- ☐ **Ask "who can I be?" not only "what can I do?"** Help people find where power and joy meet, even outside climate work; that is where their gifts and strongest contribution live.
- ☐ **Bring joy in on purpose.** Music, art, poetry and human connection. Joy is all the more necessary in hard times; where conflict-heavy work drains it, rebuild it in other spaces.
- ☐ **Invite people off the sidelines.** Many people think they don't know enough to belong, or feel intimidated by climate people. A welcoming small group can bring them into the conversation.

BY THE NUMBERS

8
Dynamics that build deep, sustained climate engagement

400+
Climate Wayfinding reading groups underway

100+
Colleges and universities with trained facilitators

8 of 8
Dynamics that grew in every cohort run so far

~190
Summit attendees who took the live 8 Dynamics poll

5 days
Length of a full Climate Wayfinding retreat program

WATCH OUT FOR

- ! More information isn't always better: as people learn the full range of solutions, their own role can get murkier. Clarity of contribution often scores lowest of all eight.
- ! Don't try to centrally network every group: Wilkinson found efforts to link reading circles without shared context tend to fizzle. Equip people, then let them run.

RESOURCES

Climate Wayfinding (book, programs and monthly newsletter)
climatewayfinding.earth

Reading groups, monthly orientation sessions, facilitator trainings and retreats
climatewayfinding.earth/reading-groups

8 Dynamics Quiz (free self-assessment for teams and groups)
climatewayfinding.earth/resources

All We Can Save Project, the nonprofit behind Climate Wayfinding
allwecansave.earth

Watch this and every SV26 session recording
mt2030.org/sv26sessions · Use the attendee password.

Summarized from the session recording and presenter slides. Figures are as presented; confirm with presenters before citing.

CONTACTS

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