

choice

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**Climate
Consciousness
& Coaching**

Making the connection

Climate Coaching Alliance

A global coaching movement addressing the climate crisis

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Imagine a coaching community where participants volunteer their ideas and skills for a goal much bigger than themselves or their clients. A community where wisdom is actively sought from other cultures, including Indigenous people. And one where nature is an ever-present guide in facing up to the greatest threats of our time.

Welcome to the Climate Coaching Alliance (CCA), a global movement of 4,000 coaches, psychologists and other professionals who are deeply concerned about the existential threat to humanity and committed to working with each other, and with those we coach, for a future in which all life forms can flourish.

At just over five years old, the CCA has been making waves with its year-round events, connections with professional coaching bodies and organizations in the wider climate sphere, and initiatives by its members on six continents.

A WIDER ECOLOGICAL LENS FOR COACHING

Founded in November 2019 by three leading coaches (the late Alison Whybrow, Josie McLean and Eve Turner), the CCA provides a space to learn how to apply a wider, ecological perspective to coaching. There are three inter-related missions: transforming our practice, transforming our impact, and transforming the profession.

Attending my first CCA gathering in 2021, I was struck by how different it was from standard meetings. The host began with an open invitation to anyone wanting to lead a grounding exercise. One member stepped forward, inviting us to close our eyes, breathe deeply and imagine ourselves in a forest, hearing birdsong and raindrops.

This guided visualization made me feel calm, connected to the others present – most of whom were strangers – and ready for whatever might emerge. It was my first taste of how the CCA operates with generosity, warmth and “living systems principles.”





LIVING SYSTEMS PRINCIPLES

The CCA aims to mimic the ways in which living systems behave and evolve, adapting naturally and regenerating each member as well as the larger system. It is free to join, and events are also free, making it accessible to the greatest possible diversity of members to mirror the biodiversity on which life flourishes.

It is largely self-organizing, growing organically with guidance from a volunteer global coordinating team. An expanding number of communities – known as pods – have emerged based on language, geographical location and special interests.

Newer language-based pods include Arabic, Brazilian Portuguese, Hungarian, Polish and Turkish, on top of English, Japanese, French, German and other European language pods.

CCA Africa is one example of a geographical pod, connecting coaches to integrate climate awareness into their practices and collaborate on climate initiatives. “This helps coaches become more informed advocates for action in their communities, creating a ripple effect for meaningful change at both local and national levels,” says Denis Opio, a Uganda-based coordinator.

Issues of climate, ecology and justice are vast and often overwhelming, and the special-interest pods enable members to focus where they can have most impact. There are groups centered on young people and education; politics; coaching in and with nature; deep adaptation; work and green careers; and other special interests.

CCA events are now clustered under four “Seasonal Heartbeats”: Connection, Community, Collaboration and Compassion. “These represent distinct energy pulses that reflect nature’s changing cycles through the year,” explain the global coordination pod’s Hazel Farrer and Stuart Pickles. Browse the CCA website and you will also find a learning hub, known as The Hive, buzzing with innovative tools and opportunities to collaborate.

WHAT IF CLIMATE IS NOT ON MY CLIENT’S AGENDA?

At this point, you may be asking one of the most common questions raised by coaches joining, or thinking of joining, CCA: “How can I bring the climate crisis into coaching if it’s not on the client’s agenda?”

There are many ways to do this (see sidebar). A starting point is to reframe the question to, “How can I ignore the crisis when it is impacting, or will impact, my client, their children and grandchildren, and everyone on earth?”

If you were working with a client and noticed water dripping through their ceiling, you wouldn’t think, “I can’t mention that because it’s not on my client’s agenda today.”

EVOKING A LARGER AWARENESS

Climate concern is rising globally. More than half (56 percent) of people think about it daily or weekly, according to the People’s Climate Vote 2024, a survey of 73,000 people in 77 countries by UNDP and Oxford University. An even greater 72 percent say they want their countries to transition quickly from fossil fuels to renewable energy, and fully 86 percent want countries to set aside disagreements and work together to address climate change. Most are unconvinced by big businesses’ climate efforts.

Many coaches work with influential leaders and teams. We offer them fresh perspectives and awaken their consciousness. Helping leaders to gain a bigger and longer-term view of what's happening to the planet can be a catalyst for the urgent action that people globally want and need.

Questions to open up these wider perspectives include: "How are extreme weather events disrupting your supply chains, staff and future plans?" and "What do your current and future customers want?"

As CCA co-founder Eve Turner encourages us to ask ourselves as coaches: "Is our role to maintain, support and anchor how things are at present, or to be part of deeper transformations?"

A SHIFT IN THE COACHING PROFESSION

While a pioneer, the CCA is not alone in promoting a transformative shift in the profession. To date, 13 leading professional coaching bodies, representing 300,000 people, have signed the Joint Global Statement on Climate Change. This states that we have "a significant role to play in fostering new ways of being in service to a healthy human society and a healthy planet" and that "learning at pace is now critical."

Turner has played a leading role in this. She contributed to the updated Global Code of Ethics for Coaches, Mentors and Supervisors, which says that "members should be guided by their client's interests and at the same time raise awareness and responsibility to safeguard that these interests do not harm those of sponsors, stakeholders, wider society or the natural environment."

SUPPORTING COACHES' RESILIENCE

As well as enriching coaches' learning, the CCA plays an important part in nurturing the well-being of its members. As an active volunteer, my experience is that it's a place where I can safely express my feelings of anger, sorrow, guilt or anxiety when I look at the crisis head-on.

It is also a place to hold and value the emotions of others. I've found it particularly fulfilling over the past year to co-facilitate rich conversations with other coaches, through the inspiring book *Ecological and Climate-conscious Coaching*, edited by the CCA founders and Peter Hawkins, and *The Week*, a profound climate action group experience.

When we fully acknowledge our grief and love for what is being lost, it strengthens our resilience, hope and determination to make the best contribution we can. ●

REFERENCES:

- Climate Coaching Alliance – climatecoachingalliance.org
- People's Climate Vote 2024 – peoplesclimate.vote/document/Peoples_Climate_Vote_Report_2024.pdf
- Global Statement Group on Climate and Ecodiversity Crises – jsgs.one
- Global Code of Ethics for Coaches, Mentors and Supervisors – globalcodeofethics.org
- Ecological and Climate-conscious Coaching – climatecoachingalliance.org/ecological-and-climate-conscious-coaching
- The Week – theweek.ooo

EIGHT ACTIONS for Coaches

These are some of the actions I've gleaned from the CCA book and from many conversations with fellow eco-conscious coaches.

- 1 Contract with your clients to bring wider systems, including nature, into your coaching. A starting question for chemistry or discovery sessions or client questionnaires is, "Who or what does your life serve?"
- 2 Include the Joint Global Statement on Climate Change and the Global Ethics Code in your coaching agreements. Sharing your own values with prospective clients can deepen the coaching relationship.
- 3 Consider your coach training, mentoring and supervision. How do the climate emergency and related social justice issues show up, if at all? What would you like to be different? Invite your trainers, mentors and supervisors to bring in greater ecological awareness – or find some who are doing this.
- 4 Offer coaching outdoors in nature. Invite clients to take a wider perspective of their challenge, using all of their senses. You could ask, "What can nature teach us here?"
- 5 In group coaching or group supervision, invite someone to step into the perspective of nature. (Companies like Faith in Nature and the Better Business Network are setting an example by appointing Nature to their board of directors.) When considering different stakeholders, invite someone to represent future generations.
- 6 Consider your own practice. Check your carbon footprint and consumption patterns and make whatever changes you can. There are many resources available online about the most impactful actions you can take.
- 7 Join the CCA. You will be very welcome.
- 8 Read this book: *Ecological and Climate-Conscious Coaching: A Companion Guide to Evolving Coaching Practice*, edited by Alison Whybrow, Eve Turner and Josie McLean with Peter Hawkins (2023). All author royalties, matched by the publisher, go to an ecological charity.