

CHATELAINE

LIVING

6 Things I'm Doing To Calm My Climate Anxiety

I've found that I handle it better when I know I'm doing my best to live a more sustainable life. Here's what's helped and might help you, too.

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(Photo: iStock)

Every few months, headlines announce the latest natural disaster occurring somewhere in the world. When I was in the early 2000s, hurricanes and wildfires didn't seem to happen all that often. But as we approach the 2030s, when Earth [could exceed the 1.5 C warming limit](#), extreme weather events will become more frequent.

I've always been anxious about the climate crisis; I remember worrying about the future of the planet when I was in elementary school. But this summer in particular, my social media feed was flooded with news and pictures that spark anxiety and sense of doom.

across B.C.—where I live—turned bright orange during the day and night because of wildfires, while the sun in On shone an angry red for the same reason.

It's also difficult to quell doomsday thoughts when every instalment of the [IPCC report](#) reveals the severity of climate change, even if there's [time to fix some of the damage](#).

While it's great to embrace feelings of fear and worry (wise words from my therapist), I've grown tired of cycling between feelings of helplessness about the state of the world and resentment towards the politicians who aren't doing enough.

Trying to live a more sustainable life may be self-serving but it's the only “solution” that calms my climate anxiety. I've learned anything from therapy, it's that I need to focus on the things I *can* control.

I still deal with an overwhelming sense of doom. But personally, it's easier for me to deal with it when I know I'm *doing* my best to live a more sustainable life. Here are some changes I've made that have helped quell my anxiety—and might help the same for yours, too.

Out with impulse, in with intention

Yes, industry and government need to be held accountable for their massive environmental footprints, but one change I made in my life that has made me feel less environmentally anxious is being more intentional with what I buy. For example, I buy my clothes second-hand, whether it's from Poshmark, Depop or the thrift store. If I don't, I make sure to purchase investment pieces that will last me a long time and [aren't fast fashion](#). The less [textile waste](#) I contribute, the better.

In the past few months, I also switched over to buying fresh produce without plastic packaging. I used to put my vegetables in plastic bags at the grocery store. But after feeling fed up with the excess plastic as well as the guilt, I now use my own produce bag (the veggies will get washed anyway).

Say goodbye to single-use goods, and hello to reusable ones

I clean when I feel anxious. It's a great de-stressor, except when I started to realize how many paper towel rolls I went through in a week. My guilt led me to seek out reusable alternatives, like microfibre cloths and reusable Swiffer pads. A pack of six paper towel rolls will last me three months, sometimes more.

Read books about Indigenous knowledge and its role in climate action

When we're thinking about climate action, it is essential to stay informed with the work Indigenous communities are doing because the environment has always been the backbone of Indigenous culture.

As author Robin Wall Kimmerer argues throughout her 2013 book [Braiding Sweetgrass](#), Western science needs to respect Indigenous knowledge to find solutions to this climate crisis because “to love a place is not enough. We must find ways to heal it.”

...ing the same and so goes to committed customers, as goes that we accept that company. The reasoning different in practice for everybody. My interpretation involves being cautious of how much water I use in the show and not [wasting food](#).

Share your anxiety

In the past, I never shared my climate change concerns with my therapist. But when the ocean caught on fire and I only fuelled my grief, I knew I needed to start talking about about it. My therapist didn't say anything in particular my anxiety, but for me, it was enough that she listened to my worries and validated my fears for the future.

Buy a plant

I never used to be a big plant person, but there's something therapeutic about having a routine related to nature, li weekly watering schedule. While I can't say I've been able to keep all my plants alive, I find the act itself similar to meditation.

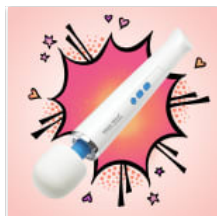
Join a local, climate-action initiative (or stay up to date on what they're doing).

Let me repeat: Industry and governments must be held accountable to create meaningful change. I dislike crowds, first climate-action rally I went to was inspiring and energizing. While I haven't attended any more due to my COV stay up to date with the work being done by climate action groups on social media. Doing so makes me realize that people care about the same things that I do, and want to change. Seeing that kind of mobilization and passion help less alone.

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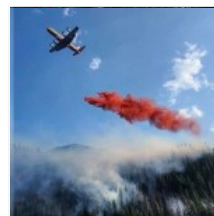
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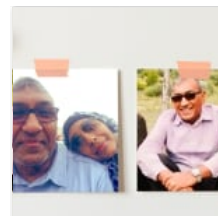
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