

# Season 3.17 Andrea Learned

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## SPEAKERS

Gage, Rachel, Andrea, Eric Benson, Narrator

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Narrator 00:00

This podcast is a project of the climate designers network.



Eric Benson 00:03

Hey, this is Eric. Only two more episodes to go in season three. I started working on this season back in November of 2022. And despite that, it's been nine months. It seems like season three is ending so fast. There was a tweet I read a few months ago. Wait, can we still call them tweets, Zeet? I don't know. Doesn't matter. But it said something like, time seemed to crawl by as a child and then you hit the college years. And the next thing you know, you wake up with a beer gut and everything in life is just moving way too fast. That's kind of how I feel with without the beer guy. Well, anyways, anyway, before we get back to our guests today, Andrea Learned, I wanted to share what's coming in season four. Yes, Season Four already, we're looking to speak with six design educators who are working on climate justice in action. In their own research and teaching. The entire next season will be focused on you to design educator. We all felt that the episode was Rebeca Mendez and Holly Robbins was really practical, yet inspiring. And we wanted more of that. So if you are interested, reach out to me at [ebenson@illinois.edu](mailto:ebenson@illinois.edu). or message us to climate designers over on Instagram or LinkedIn. Today I'm joined by a climate powerhouse. Andrea Learned a Michigan alum, go blue, and a Climate Leadership adviser. She helps anyone recognize their social capital influence to be change agents in the climate activism and entrepreneurship areas. Her manifesto starts with the power of reflecting your lifestyle to affect change can not be undersold. This is true. I totally agree with that. She goes on to say that the masses no longer pay attention to big professionally crafted global climate stage moments. Stop wasting your budget their climate emergency requires strong individual leadership and influence. Time for leaders like you to step up and boldly. Others are noticing your personal choices as a corporate leader, start using your personal power and values to get louder about climate action. Lead the way in Pioneer on apologetic change. Her manifesto helped me in this discussion realize that I can do more to help the climate by just simply being more open about what I do and how that personal message of change is way more powerful than an expensive campaign by a big company. And even though she talks about corporate this and corporate debt, really, anyone can do this. This

climate leadership can happen in one on one conversations, or using your social media platforms as megaphones for climate action. I hope you are as inspired by Andrea, as I was and become the climate leader, you are always meant to be.

A

Andrea 03:09

Hi, I'm Andrea Learned. I am the Living change climate leadership podcast host and I am a communications strategist and advisor on how to build climate influence specifically for leaders, people that are corporate leaders, political leaders, or cultural influencers. I am talking with you today out of lovely lovely Seattle and happily been here for about 11 years. Where can you find me? Twitter until it is no more. LinkedIn. I'm on Live. I'm on Instagram at Andrea living change. I'm on Tik Tok and Andrea is living change. Those are newer platforms for me, so bear with me.



Eric Benson 03:54

Well, welcome, Andrea to Climify. I'm happy to have you here. And I'm headed out to Seattle actually next week. So I'll be in your neck of the woods.

A

Andrea 04:06

Great timing. Would you care for recommendations?



Eric Benson 04:10

We can talk about that right after rerecord? Yes, that would be wonderful. I'm

A

Andrea 04:15

gonna say something I'm gonna say something while we're recording though, because it has become part of my brand. And that is you must visit at exp, the community radio station, a lower Queen Anne, and I will leave it there and we can talk about it later.



Eric Benson 04:28

Sure. Well, thank you. Yeah, I hope the weather isn't too hot there because I know air conditioning is limited right in this Pacific Northwest but

A

Andrea 04:38

actually pretty cool. So hopefully, if that continues, you should be okay. Compared to the Midwest, which I know well for my child. But



Eric Benson 04:45

yes, yes, I am in the Midwest. I'm in the state of Illinois where I've been for about 16 years. So happy to have you on and you're another podcaster I'm talking to another live podcaster here and What was the name of your podcast? Again? Because I remember listening to two of the episodes, but now, the name has escaped me.



Andrea 05:07

Yeah, it's and I will repeat it over and over maybe because it's actually a phrase that I use in my work, which is living change. It's the title. Right. That's the subtitle is a quest for Climate Leadership. But I'm often sort of sub, you know, kind of adding some subtext to that, which is, I am looking for unusual suspects and surprising validators who are Climate Leaders. And so if I could have a really long subtitle, that's what it would be. So it's unusual sidestep surprising validators because I'm not talking about the same old and I say this often 70 year old white guys who are on stages that cops are climate week,



Eric Benson 05:45

yes, yeah, I'm with you there. This is why this season is so important, because we're elevating so many voices that don't usually get heard in the climate sphere and your podcast name would be with the big subtitle would be perfect in academia, but probably not for a mass audience.



Andrea 06:05

Well, and already, I will say that coming up with the name living change was, it was hard because we kept thinking with my producers, large media, we kept thinking do we have to throw the word climate in. And sure enough, if you look up living change on Apple podcasts, you get a whole bunch of stuff, living change, you know, all this stuff. And so I'm constantly saying, okay, when you look it up, look up living change climate, and that it will come up. So it's an interesting game that you play. But the living change part, I think, for me, and if you look at podcasts overall, is unique. It's where I'm really typing about living the change if you're going to be leading in climate. So that's a key point.



Eric Benson 06:45

Yeah. And that's a huge component of the mission of this podcast. And that is we're trying to help design educators become those Climate Leaders in the classroom and make new climate leaders. And so I am extremely interested in your work because you're doing something similar, but not necessarily in the design classroom. So that's why you're here today. And I want to talk to you first, actually, about your climate change manifesto, and the what you call the theory of change, and what led you to create those, maybe you want to explain what they are first for our listeners?

A

Andrea 07:25

Yeah, yeah, basically, the idea of the manifesto is the power of reflecting your lifestyle to affect change cannot be undersold. So people are on stage leading and tighten about what they're doing policy wise, or their corporations. But if they aren't also, you know, thinking about driving less, or things that can be seen by their stakeholders that they're doing and being public about that. It you're, you're losing some credibility, and there is to trust. And so everything I'm doing is saying, leaders, step it up, and telling us what you're up to as a human. Because that will help you build resilient trust. And that's much more impactful as a leader. And so leading the way and pioneering unapologetic change. And then the theory of change, which is counter to a lot of stuff you see with regard to climate, and even people say when they come to listen to my podcasts for the first time, they're like, well, it really isn't the doom and gloom, you know, the typical doom and gloom. So my theory of change is to emphasize the Yes. And not the No, we can't do it that way. Right. Right. Better, right. Improv comedy, right?



Eric Benson 08:33

Yes. And,

A

Andrea 08:34

exactly. And then the other things sort of related is this idea that I really emphasize naming pain. So I will say that politically, or when fossil fuel companies are up to their old shenanigans, and all these reports are coming out, I get mad, you know, and I will name and name and shame, right. But this is the thing that very few organizations and leaders remember to do, which is name and fame. The good. Yeah, so waiting for the bad news, which man it's like a fire hose, right? name and fame. You know what there is this one mayor in this small town in the Midwest who is doing this, which is the whole point of my guests. It's like, and to your point, your future design leaders and in schools? Yes, they are going to be total influencers and we should name in vain. Even now, as they're teaching whatever classes are teaching, keep your eye out on these people name and fame them now to elevate and make more of a relevant the people who are actually doing stuff as opposed to the masses of people who are not.



Eric Benson 09:38

That's right. I mean, this is something I think so many people have learned since probably the failure of like, some of the early environmental movements is it's not doom and gloom that gets people to act. It's it's the focusing on the solutions and giving them inspiration from People who aren't doing it. And so if you're listening to the show, and you are a design educator, doing this good work, we want to name and fame you. So reach out to us, either on LinkedIn or, or Instagram so we can celebrate the work that you're doing in the classroom. I love that entry name and fame.

A

Andrea 10:18

Well, it also I would say, these people who are doing this part of this also is I want them to

name and face one another. Right? So we can do it from our platforms, because we've been building them. But also, if you start naming and shaming each other on whatever social platform, right, if you're on Facebook, if you're on I don't know, right, where the majority of your audience is hanging out, but call out each other and say, good job, this is part of the thing that I'm talking about with my theory of change is leaders even or competitors, right should be saying, wow, you know, the head of this company, who is a competitor of mine is doing amazing stuff. And that's really inspiring. There's no downside to that. Yeah. Yeah, naming and shaming one another, I think, well,



Eric Benson 11:02

we are also all about practicality here on the show. And you you have some startling statistics, I would say on in some of the things I was reading and listening to and when it comes to people wanting to be Climate Leaders, and you talked about climate impact, right, and, and something around like less than half feel equipped to lead. I think it's like 45%. And so I'm wondering, you know, what are these knowledge gaps look like, specifically for Climate Leaders and communities working in and systems change? And and maybe how can we maybe name and fame like, how do we continually try to overcome those?



Andrea 11:45

I think one of the things that I come across a lot is organizations, corporations, they do their messaging and their communication strategies, kind of the same way that they've always done it. They aren't maybe helping their leaders are the people who are publicly speaking about these topics, kind of keeping them up to date on the latest and really informing them on the things that are working. One of the reasons I think podcasts are so good, right, broadly, is that education, I don't think that a lot of leaders, CEO lovable or, you know, executive director of a nonprofit are going to be sitting down and just trying to study up, you know, huge big papers or white papers write much as we all are producing white papers that we hope that people are reading the reality, as we know, very few people are. So how do we get education information, new ideas, things that are actually working in the air, right or worse. And part of that is they need to go Oh, my goodness, I had no idea, whoever right, who's also a mayor in some small town has tried that out. And it's worked, or I had no idea that whatever corporate leader was trying that out, and that works. So interviews on podcasts and sharing information, and this sort of more informal way. And getting those little tidbits, I think in through podcasts seeping in, right, rather than a big chunk and a big document you have to read. I think there's huge power in that.



Eric Benson 13:11

You're preaching to the choir here, I, the thing that got me right is talking to a lot of climate scientists in particular, who are writing super important stuff about climate in these white papers, peer reviewed journal articles, that's not getting out. And in an informal way, like you said, and so I think the power of podcasting, some of the other work that you've talked about in your consulting work, I think is more powerful. I mean, you and I have to read all this stuff to get to get it out there. But I'm right, I'm with you on that.



Andrea 13:48

Yeah, well, and the other thing is, this is one of the reasons that with the corporate and political clients that I work with, choosing a social media platform, I mean, again, I'm gonna say, Who knows where people are going after Twitter. But finding a social media platform where you can again, be sort of seeping out or leaking out these bits of information and building out of engagement, because key to mindful theory is that you have to build social capital, in order to then allocate it when you need it. And so being on a social platform and just becoming the person who's like sharing, hey, right, I just read a really interesting article on whatever, right and this climate scientist, this behind it, it doesn't have to be a 40 page white paper, if you start to help people think for themselves and identify little nuggets of blog posts or whatever written by climate scientists that they can read to at least get vaguely up to speed. So I think there's power in content sharing and engaging on social media and really building a community. And then also being on podcast, listening to podcasts and helping your friends find podcasts that you're really getting a lot of information from in an enjoyable way. You it out.



Eric Benson 15:00

Oh, yeah. And reading between the lines here, it sounds like, this is why you're on tick tock now as one of your new platforms.



Andrea 15:07

Yes, I'm on tick tock, one of the things is, it seems I'm a person who's from an, you know, an older generation and and I was just like resisting it, right? That's for kids. And I don't, and, and I went on, and I'm still not super comfortable with it. But I understand it from exactly that perspective, which is the smaller little tidbits, ie something like, did you know that blah, blah, and you can put a link, you know, in the copy of that Tiktok and say, for more information go here. But I've said this a lot recently, there's some study about, you need to hear an advertising message seven times in order for it to sink in. And they've never said seven times exactly from the same radio station or whatever. It's just like seven times something has to be seeping into your brain. And so if you're reading stuff by me or other people, and then you hear a tick tock and I say something, you know, one of my big causes is a food systems transition more towards a plant based, where we can talk about that later, we will, you know, if you're hearing little bits and pieces about that from all sorts of other sources, you hear it seven times, you might be likely to give plant based eating a try, you know, sort of thinking of how advertising messages get, you know, received or received well, and having us use that with our pilot messages.



Eric Benson 16:26

Yeah. And in your consulting work, and I guess, also in your podcast, I'm wondering what you're finding as climate, educational needs, to help build more Climate Leaders and the community and maybe in corporations that maybe traditional like going to school type frameworks struggled to meet.



A Andrea 16:53

I think, I think part of my thing is that I always sort of step another 30,000 feet above the situation, which is when you look at and I monitor climate media a lot. And so when you look at climate media, just really basically what you see is a lot of coverage of energy, right? It's very energy and oil, and kind of all this. And the the thing that I think starts to get people more interested. And they find their way in is if you go by the way, transportation, food systems, you know, these are some things that are also huge that if you address them, they will make a big change. Oh, I had no idea. I like to think about food, right? I have a garden, like helping people find other ways in to the significant ways that emissions can be reduced, that are not getting the sexy love of all the media coverage. And there's two educators and people in curriculums this sort of learning how to be Climate Leaders is going you know what, you don't have to talk about renewable energy. Talk about the thing that you're really into, and brydge help us out bridged understanding about how that's important and why that makes a difference.



Eric Benson 18:03

Yeah, storytelling is is extremely important. And I've had, gosh, man, I can't even remember how many guests have brought this up. Maybe almost all of them. I'll just say that if, at some point, storytelling around climate, very important. And so you've done some work with a group 50 by 40. And you spoke about climate conversations and storytelling. Can you give us a kind of a quick crash course. been particularly interesting in this phrase? I'm not sure of where it came from, but surprising validator?

A Andrea 18:43

Yeah, well, so I was working with multibuy 40, which is a food systems transition organization. A couple years back, and one of the things I did was a workshop and online workshop that people can find, and we can put in the notes too, if you're interested. I talk about climate, the power of climate conversion stories, and the conversion stories are the unusual suspects of the surprising validators. So I'll give you an example from a food front that would be somebody who is a cattle rancher. And then they had an awareness, they had a health thing, they realized the climate implications as somehow they decided to make a transition and start to move away from livestock and animal agriculture. Another example of a surprising validator or an unusual suspect, with a is this good conversion survey would be Mayor Eric Adams of New York City is vegan. He talks about it a lot when you and it's very visible about it. He actually wrote a book with his conversion story, right, which was his health got so bad, that he had a major incident that he just woke up one morning and was like, I'm done. You know, I'm going to do this. The power in terms of storytelling, of not again, hearing over and over again, the executive director or the CEO of climate related organizations or corporations say And we're gonna, you know, go renewable for whatever, but, but people saying their personal conversion moment, their personal moment, and I've heard from people that the word conversion sounds sort of religious so so we don't need to say that. But that moment when someone had the realization, and then how their life transformed from their related kind of is I come from a deeper background of marketing to women and looking at them as consumers and how they make decisions. So I'm, I'm constantly sort of aware of the gender differences in and how people take on information. And the, if you a lot of times with the going plant based or something, you'll assume that it's all a bunch of women who are working out at health clubs, like it's very sort of, right. Yeah. And so when you think about the best conversion stories for storytelling and climate stuff is white

people will often males in the middle of the country, who if they saw an example, or if they heard of an example, or heard a podcast, get interviewed somebody who was a white guy from the Midwest, right, who me, say, drove a big truck or something right, and now uses an ebike for local transportation. That is an incredibly powerful story. And that was really worth telling. And that's one that will get a lot of listeners sort of going what?



Eric Benson 21:31

That that's the surprising validator, right. The second thing



Andrea 21:34

you're looking for support, so you can look at, and I listened to a lot of journalism podcasts? Because the question is always, how do you find your guests, right? And websites they write and what they say is really interesting. And if you look at and I've said this to for climate conferences, if you're looking at who you're in, invite to speak or be on panels, look at the whole list, and then look really closely and go, Oh, who's the most interesting, surprising validator about because when they say what they've done, it's going to really resonate with the audience and be a big wow moment.



Eric Benson 22:08

So in your work, do you find or do you have really some interesting stories about this kind of, we'll say conversion that you you want to share?



Andrea 22:19

Well, one of them is recently, I was a moderator for a panel at a conference called GreenBiz, verge. And it was about a pilot project that LinkedIn did in terms of moving their food service in their San Francisco headquarters. I think it's during posts, or just post COVID. When they're starting to get more people back into the cafeterias and stuff. They did a pilot project where they converted the meals, say there were eight meals served every day, it used to be that five were had meat and dairy more traditional. And then three were vegan, what they did was they shifted so that five are vegan, and three were meat, dairy, etc. And they worked with an organization called the better food foundation that really knows how this process works. When we were talking on the Dyess the panel about this, the LinkedIn that Chef behind it, I thought this was really interesting. Prior to the panel, I was talking to her and she said, the interesting thing is that I come at this from being a butcher. She said, I'm not she said, also, I'm not vegan, right, which is fine. I mean, I'm here to say, I'm not this person that says you have to go vegan overnight, because I firmly believe that once you start, your body's gonna say, yeah, keep doing that. Exactly. But this woman is not vegan. And she said, coming from being a butcher, and I just thought, oh, my gosh, I said, that's the story that has to be told more about what you're doing here. And she said, and this is a point. But it's harder to harder for someone who's a vegan to tell, but it's really interesting. And that is, prior to being a vegan, they would get big kind of chicken wings wrapped up in, you know, two per pack is in for making meals and stuff. And she said, when they decided to do this, then they really double down and understood that



if they were going to serve meat for the meals, that they were serving meat, they would buy a whole animal and really use all the pieces of that animal very, very wisely and efficiently. Rather than just getting wings cut up in little packages, and whatever. And so kind of more of an indigenous people's approach, interested in food anyway, that my surprising validator is having a chef who's not vegan, who used to be a butcher, talk about the success and how tasty these plant based meals were. And kind of what happened. I feel like I want to have all sorts of people like her on a podcast.



**Eric Benson 24:47**

Yeah. Well, I might be a surprising validator. And I don't know if I've ever brought this up on the show before but I am a vegetarian. And I also used to be a butcher. When I was in college I Murthy. Yeah, so I saw and well not just saw I was actively involved behind the scenes of preparing the meat that you would take home. And if I fast forward like 10 years from that I met a cattle rancher down in Mexico who became vegan. And the whole reason why is because he went to one of his killed floors. And he was just mortified. Right? I mean, it wasn't how he butchered cattle growing up, they do it in a completely inhumane, terrible way. And just listening to his story. And thinking back to what I did. Working in the butcher shop, right? That's when I switched to become a vegetarian, just just thinking about everything that I knew was like, Okay, wait a second. Well,



**Andrea 25:57**

and I would say, Eric, that yes, I would. I mean, in my mind, it would be great if you mentioned that a little bit more. Right. So and you what I talked about the plant base or the vegan conversion, a lot of people go in become plant based for different reasons. You had a really powerful moment, which was the realization of the animal, you know, and how that is, other people go into it from health like Eric Adams, I kind of went into it. Partially from health, I was really influenced by a person. Well, it's the person that I interview for my first episode of living change, John Richards, who's a pretty well known DJ at k xp, I was in a marketing meeting there and realized that he was vegan, and I thought, Oh, why am I not vegan? And I just went vegan, understood what mediatly felt the health and then later, I was like, Oh, my goodness, the climate implications. What is this? What authentic climate for like 10 years, right? So all that is to say that people get into moving in a plant based direction for a variety of reasons. And your reason is really interesting. And we touch a lot of people like you with your background to hear it. So you are Yeah, ASIC, surprising validator for that, and I encourage you to get louder.



**Eric Benson 27:13**

Okay. All right. I'll try to do that. We'll take a quick commercial break here, and then get back to the conversation.



**Rachel 27:24**

Where do young designers see themselves at the intersection of climate change and innovation? And how can we teach that intersection in the classroom, designers are problem solvers capable of imagining solutions for a more sustainable future? My name is Rachel suffer

solvers capable of imagining solutions for a more sustainable future. My name is Rachel Suter, Ellie, and I'm part of the climate designers New Wave team. In the past few years new wave has released two reports exploring students experiences of climate design, education, or lack thereof, and what they hope to see in their classes. Now we want you design educators to use this research in your classrooms. And this summer, we're giving educators a chance to talk to the new wave team directly, twice a month, the new wave researchers will be available to walk you through our findings, answer any questions you have, and help you implement actionable project briefs directly into your classroom. We'll also show you how to use our media kit to easily share the research with your students, and how they can sign up to be a participant, head to [climate-designers.org/edu/new-wave](https://climate-designers.org/edu/new-wave) to sign up for a call with the new wave team. Help us inform a new wave of design education, one that teaches every designer how to be a climate designer.

G

Gage 28:32

Do you want to help design a better world? Start by subscribing to evolve CPG a podcast featuring the purpose driven entrepreneurs, executives and consultants behind the most impact driven brands in the world. You'll learn how innovative leaders are leaning into their purpose. How better for the world brands are scaling positive impact, and how the product industry is solving some of the world's biggest problems. Be part of the evolution, find evolve CPG wherever you get your podcasts and visit [evolvecpg.com](https://evolvecpg.com) to learn more.



Eric Benson 29:08

So yeah, so let's talk about your work with plant based diets. I think that's a great transition. Yeah, yeah. So there's a lot of I think, out there, you know, you can go online, you can find a lot of websites, the UN the NIH, listing the benefits of a plant based diet, whether it be vegetarianism or veganism. Can you maybe talk more about some of the more surprising insights that you found into that world maybe working with 50 by 40, and some of the dialogues that's been going on?

A

Andrea 29:46

Yeah, well, to that point of kind of how I got into it, and then I realized the climate stuff, you know, I started working with 5040 Not long after I went vegan myself and it was all along that path. also said I learned more and more. One of the things is the land use stuff, which is there was a phrase that I love as a communications person that I heard to that group of people when I was working with them is stopped growing food to feed food. So stepback stopped growing food, which is crops, right, that are commodities to feed livestock, right, because we're wasting land to feed, right, when we could just be eating plants directly. And so I found that really powerful. And then if you want to link to it, in the notes later, there's an amazing visual map of the country of the land, you know, what is land use for in the US, and it's just like gigantic percentage to feed livestock, the land Row, row crops that feed us like, once you see that, that's another point where if you're, it gets to the thing that's really interesting, Eric, and that is, I find it hard to kind of take in that so many people in climate action, advocates leadership or climate aware organizations at all, I haven't really intentionally moved toward a plant based diet, and are talking about it more loudly. Because once you look at this land use, and here we

are in this horrible food security situation now with Ukraine, right and Russia, us walking the grain. Once you see the map of the country, and how much land is used to grow crops for livestock, you almost I would think that you would have to go minimally vegetarian



Eric Benson 31:34

overnight, we'll have to share that, that map



Andrea 31:37

that, I'll make sure that you get that. The other thing with that is the biodiversity. Kind of so going back to the Amazon and deforestation, the deforestation in the Amazon forest is because they're making room to raise cattle like that it is, and it's if you look into it at all, you'll be blown away. And you will not want to eat any meat or animal products that come out of the Big Four industrialized agriculture. So one of the ways that we get to people moving plant base is we talk about industrialized agriculture, and how it's just a, it's a big mess. And you don't want any part of it. When you start to dial in, you look at the meat at your grocery store, you're not going to be able to buy like much of anything at the grocery store in the meat aisle, because it's all produced by one of these big four, many of whom are involved in deforestation of the Amazon. And that is a huge problem for the climate crisis, as we know. So everything is interconnected, right? Yeah. So and back to talking about, you know, how the big sexy topic tends to be energy. But if you look at food systems shift, oh, my goodness, there are all these ways that we can act as humans and ways that we can make a difference by not buying or participating in it.



Eric Benson 32:52

Yeah, I saw a stat recently where I always feel guilty about flying somewhere. Especially Yep, yeah. And I saw the statistic and I think it's about 4% of our carbon emissions come from aviation. And if you really wanted to make a statement, and a big bigger impact, it's giving up meat. You can fly. You don't have to feel as guilty anymore. Because you have made such a like you describe they're growing food for food. Right. You're You're DeForest, deforestation. Yeah, there's so many interconnected problems with just the beef industry in general.



Andrea 33:35

Yeah, yeah. So I would, you know, tell folks to pay attention to the food conversations that climate week coming up in September, and again, pay attention to food conversations at COP 28. As far as I'm concerned, those kind of groups and gatherings have not convened enough or loudly enough on food. And so pay attention. And that, I would say also, yeah, it's a wonderful thing to build a curriculum around, right, or to think about teaching more effectively, in classrooms at every level, you know, because I don't, I think this movement is finding some success in helping universities, you know, address food systems through their catering and their food service stuff. And that's college students, right, who are interested in climate can jump on this. So there's hope and institutional shifts and things like that. But if you see them name and fame on it as what program and thank those people who are spearheading those changes,



Eric Benson 34:35

I'm going to name and fame, the Sustainable Design coordinators here at the University of Illinois who for an event where there was catering we eliminated meat from the from the catering and actually save the money because that was the most expensive component of the catering.



Andrea 34:55

Fantastic I named and I didn't name them to put that in your notes like Go and shout out



Eric Benson 35:01

Congratulations University of Illinois!



Andrea 35:03

Yes, yes. See, because it's, it's to that point, there's an organization, I belong to an organization called Women and climate that has a Slack channel and has events across the world. And there's, they make a point of if they're going to be hosting a dinner, it's going to be vegan. And so same thing with Greenville, it's like really shifting so that there's a lot more of a plant based offering. And all these places, this is the way you do it, this is living change, right? My podcast is named at an organizational level, a living change at an organizational level is making sure that you have a plant based heavy catering, if not all plan pays, right? And that you think about transportation to your venue, not having to all be, you know, big black SUVs, you know, etc, like that you're in a place where you could take a bus so that it's, you know, easy to take transit to get to the site, etc. So, living change is a really interesting filter through which to see kind of things that are happening around you. And again, I would say name and fame, any living change examples you see in the world, as loudly as you can, on whatever platforms you're on.



Eric Benson 36:05

Yeah. And speaking of transportation, you work in that area as well. And I'm wondering, with living change, are you finding besides yourself, of course, some living change going out of that intersection of plant based diets, and in particular bicycling infrastructure in communities, and then cities, or just in some sort of policy that might be developing where you live?



Andrea 36:34

Yeah, well, I'm seeing it in that if you are awake to transportation emissions, enough to start to think about bikes for local transportation, which is my emphasis, which is within like, I mean, I obviously do it for like five or six or seven mile radius. But if you start to ride a bike or a bike for your two mile, or a regular bike for your two mile radius level transportation, it's a huge deal.

What I'm seeing is that once you take a step, to kind of dial in and go, Wait, do I need to use my SUV to you know, get this Can I, once you take a step like that, then you do become more aware of the little things that you can change in your life and are a little bit more open to being intrigued about maybe going Meatless Monday. So they are, right. The other thing is that it's this thing that people in climate No, but the IPCC talks about how the four biggest things you can address, right are buildings, energy efficiency, food, agriculture, and transportation, I believe you can kind of correct me on that. food and transportation are the two topics that I really dial into in my work. And where I find there is crossover because my interview again with John Richards, also with Alex Fisher was the second interview for living change. They both like John was coming in the interview was really about his plant based bar. And then he was like, and then he started on his own accord talking about the amazing thing that IE biking his son to school, that change in his life has been amazing. I was talking with Alex fish, who at the time was a city council person in Culver City, he rides an E bike for local transportation as much as possible. And he said that in the course of our conversation, he decided that he would go Meatless Monday with his families. And so there's an opening kind of entry. Once you do one, you are like, Oh, you kind of are reverse hacking. So you don't need a super high tech or really expensive tool. It's really fun to just go, oh, I can refuse to kind of be in that system. By riding a bike rather than driving my car by eating more plant based as opposed to meat and dairy. It's very interesting. It's very empowering. To feel not guilty. The impact Yeah.



Eric Benson 38:51

Well, I'm not someone who rides my bike often. And it kind of goes into public safety is is our safety on why I don't And recently, the Boston Globe, couple others published articles on basically like the politics of like, or the bike lane controversies and then the conversation around that around politics of public safety and traffic. And you wrote an article recently, an interview you had with Bowen, Ma, I think British Columbia leader, City Leader about ways that you can break that cycle. Can you talk more about how we can break that cycle of that? I guess, it's I don't feel super safe, riding my bike where I live. How can we move forward really to make it easier for people like me to feel safe, riding my bike to work every day?



Andrea 39:51

Well, it's gonna involve naming and shaming and it's going to involve finding political leaders in small towns like similar to where you live and helping Your leaders see that it's a good political move for them to help people get out, achieve and be able to ride a bike or choose less car transportation. So you name in vain leaders, or you help your political leaders see that this is possible, and that other political leaders across the country who ride their bike are getting a lot of good press for doing it. Right. So kind of appeal to vanity in a leader. And then the other thing is, there have been studies and there are ways to present this in a non super right left, etc, political manner, which is less car living, you can pitch that and you can message that to people who will continue to drive anyway, right? Because the idea is that there will be fewer cars on the road, right? Because so you position Safe Streets. As for everybody and you, there's all these messaging tools that you can use. And the idea is that this change, this sort of change is already underway at lots of communities across the country already find one, if you start using that as a tool to tell your political leader. And then anytime there's a safe streets or Healthy Streets, I don't know if you guys had any of that in your town during COVID. In Seattle, they blocked not enough but a couple of main drag streets down so that it was really

accessible, more for walking, biking, etc. And it was a huge hit. Yeah, so anytime a thing like that happens, where they close down the street for any event, right? Or a party or they love that thing up, tell your city man, I love that close street, I got to know my community better. Tell your city leaders, I shop at those businesses more when there isn't like a 45 mile per hour speed limit out in front. Another organization that I have done some work with that I'm still, you know, really pushing people is this Livable Communities Initiative, which is based in Los Angeles. And in my interview with Alex fish and my podcast, we talked about that. And the whole idea is the livable community versus making it about bikes and transportation, talk about livable community overall. Right, which goes SDG, 11, sustainable communities, and all the pieces that make a livable community, it's really hard for people to argue with that. So that's another kind of frame.



Eric Benson 42:25

Yeah, I see this a lot, actually, with some recent changes in how I've seen petitions being distributed. And if it's successful, right, there's this additional thing to thank your state senator, your local mayor. So it's not just that we should be advocating for the change. But if it happens, we should be thanking them. And naming Nick with naming and shaming them, I guess, right?



A Andrea 42:55

Well, add to your wait, I actually had a conversation with communications person for another, I think it was more of a food system thing. I was talking to somebody on Capitol Hill and about their boss, you know, a representative or a senator. And I said, does this thing where you post? Thank you, or you post like a message? I'd support XYZ D? Does it really add up in kind of how they add things up as a number and then presented? It said, yeah, so if you are posting on Twitter or Facebook, and you say thank you for forwarding, Bill 1234. Senator, whatever, right? If you do that, they can count that and say constituents love this right. 3000 of them said they loved it on Twitter. So I had been under the kind of impression that it was ridiculous, and they weren't looking at it anyway. Right. And, and the point is, is that if you tag them, literally tag, your leader, whatever platform you're on, and use a hashtag or whatever, for that bill, or that policy or whatever happened, it will count. And the other thing about all this is this idea of building social capital. And this is a little secret, right? Which is if you start to be a Neymar and Samer and a thinker, your name will be warmed by the staff of your political leader. So that if you ultimately one day email them and say, Hey, can I have a meeting? Or hey, could I express an interest in this or that topic that you'll take seriously? Yes, they will. Because they're familiar with your name. And you've been appreciative for what they've been doing so far and really honest. That's you're building social capital. They're interested in building trust with you. It's a circular love fest, right? So build connection only helps you for future connections and kind of input and feedback with your political leader.



Eric Benson 44:43

And that makes sense. But the next question I have for you is one that my co producer Bianca wrote, and I love it, and I can see it as a design project. Right. So it's a multi part question here. But the first really is like I Wonder how green sustainable cycling is? As something that I've been thinking about bike, Reiter found that while making bicycles, and the food to power them,

carries a carbon cost as you would imagine, right? Like you have to make something you need energy you need materials. However, cycling is among the lowest carbon per kilometer mode of transportation, even better than walking. So, wondering what your as a rider yourself, I'm assuming an activist and a consultant, what's your take on that analysis? is, do you think it's accurate or, or and compared to walking, because I'm, I'm surprised by it as well.

A

Andrea 45:48

Oh, I am not someone who would understand quite how that statistic came about. But I will say that getting back on a bike and I've been riding a bike for transportation, a regular bike for transportation, since I started out of practicality, in Portland, Oregon, before they had infrastructure, I just realized it was so much faster than taking a bus even. So I've been riding a bike for a really long time. And now I have an E bike, I ride both and I hardly ever drive the car that I have. The idea of beginning to use a bike for transportation completely opens up your world, you start using it so much more you efficiently get around everywhere. Your the health benefits, you know, the kind of externalities or the full system of things that that impacts. And you can travel longer distances. Right, then if you're Yeah, I think I think when you look at the whole package, and all the value chain, or everything that's in it, it makes sense. The other thing that I talked about a lot in my work is this idea of joy. And when you are on a bike again, after so long, even if you're you only feel safe riding a mile to take your child to school and back, the joy in that syncs in with you, and you remember from being a kid, and then you start to go, wow, how can I bring more of this to my life? I think it's a little harder for walking maybe to do that. Right? Maybe when they're right. Or maybe it's that you can go from one neighbor to the other hood pretty quickly. Also being on a bike it just as with walking, but you just get this totally different view of your community and understanding of businesses you may want to visit later, et cetera. There's something about the time the speed, yes. Right? And then the joy is embedded in your body for when you were however old you were, I don't know, how old are we when



Eric Benson 47:41

we Oh, I loved riding bikes as a kid. So I

A

Andrea 47:43

write for whenever you learn to ride a bike, there was this joy thing that stuck in you. And it's waiting to get out. So let's get back up again. It completely changes your life. So I it's this whole package, I think of biking that gets to that number that you were talking about?



Eric Benson 48:00

Yeah, when I'm thinking about this, from like a design educator perspective, I'm thinking about the whole story or the whole system that you mentioned in that if the students were able to map or out the system, right, they will probably see the time component there in that. If I typically walk to work, and it takes me 30 minutes, but biking takes me 17 minutes, and I look at the weather and it's gonna rain and 20 minutes, then I'm thinking I bet her bike because I

can get there in time. And if I'm just the continual Walker, I'm like, Well, I better drive. Right? Because I'm so I can see like the time becoming crucial and minimizing sort of that. Maybe that's how they got up with that carbon per kilometer number based on that whole system of, of how humans are, right, because yeah, we're we're weird creatures.

A

Andrea 48:55

Yeah. And I think the timing is the other thing, because we live in this society where it's like Rush, rush, rush, one of the things that just does not get mentioned enough about riding a bike for transportation is it is completely and utterly consistent. If you take if it takes you 10 minutes to ride your bike to x, it's always going to take you that long and don't pay for parking, you don't you get your way around traffic. So the consistency in time is unbelievable. And if you talk about joy, you just know it's gonna take you 10 minutes to get there. There's nothing like it. And I don't think people are aware of that they have access to that they can get that they start to think about riding a bike. And if your location is unsafe for riding a bike, now's the time to start working on your political leaders, not in a name and shame way. Right but in a name and fame way. Have them be seen standing next to a bike or give them a try on an E bike at some festival and take a picture of it, like give them the way to position themselves as being vaguely open to bikes as infrastructure and then work that you know. Yeah, well



Eric Benson 49:55

in Seattle, I know they have a bus or they have public transportation and I'm wondering, because it again, it opens up my design mind here for like information design. But what's the cost to carbon cost of riding a bike versus riding a bus? For instance?

A

Andrea 50:12

I I'm not, I'm not, I don't know all the statistics on that. So that would be a really good thing for your design thinking,



Eric Benson 50:18

you know, just find out. Yeah, it's

A

Andrea 50:20

a find out. But it might be interesting. Also, I've taken there's a carbon accounting kind of software called clever carbon that somebody I know Michelle Lee, founded, it's really interesting. It's one of those things where you plug in, are you vegan? How do you what's your main form of transportation, et cetera, et cetera? Those are so interesting. And there may be something to kind of doing that, or maybe talking to them at some point. But I



Eric Benson 50:40





ERIC BENSON 50:49

What was the name of the group again,



Andrea 50:50

clever carbon



Eric Benson 50:52

Clever carbon



Andrea 50:52

shell D, and I'd love to introduce you because it's a cool thing. And there is design thinking, which also makes me I want to ask you a question, which is how much does communications strategy and messaging come into design thinking? Or does what you're talking about?



Eric Benson 51:10

Yeah, that's a great question. I don't think it comes in enough in the way that you've been talking about it. And that is like that name and fame? I think there, I think a lot of designers fall into the trap of what are they used to creating? Let's go back to those type of, I guess, comfortable solutions, to make something where I think that idea of design thinking or systems thinking can push you outside of that comfort zone? At least, that's been my experience. And so I don't know if that answers your question. But that's kind of where I like immediately went to?



Andrea 51:55

Well, I think there's an opportunity there, then in with, you're looking at the whole system's thinking about the messaging and framing as part of that. Because one of the things even an example of looking at COVID, with These Healthy Streets, things, do you know, what was the signage? What were the campaigns, like? How did they not do? What were the percentage of people that took that on? That whole kind of communications campaign part was huge to that, and then it does contribute to the number of people who are biking or walking, etc. So the other thing I would say is a tool for me and something I refer to a lot is that book by Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein nudge and the idea of the nudge, and if you think about, it's like more plant based options versus dairy and meat options, what is that going to do? Well, yeah, it's going to help a lot more people pick that option, right? And then if there's signage, or if you see a lot of people suddenly riding their bike on X Street, you better believe a lot more people are gonna go, I'm gonna try biking. So how that nudge works, and really incorporating that nudge into what your students have the curriculum, what's going on in kind of education here, I think would be really powerful.



Eric Benson 53:03

Yeah, that leads me to ask about thinking about like, these, these unconventional paths into climate, that you've been talking about the surprising validator are there with with biking in particular, some maybe some surprising validator statistics, right, that might help people think about it more. And I'm trying to go into the idea of not just environment here, but vanity like you're gonna get really nice quads. Or there's some things that I mean,



Andrea 53:36

I, to your point, Eric, I think that the vanity stats would be really good. I don't think that they exist. But I think the nice quads would totally appeal. I have ABS, the ABS. The other thing is the competition. So one of the things I see because I've been monitoring this for years are It sure does look to me, like a lot more women mayor's get this biking thing. Interesting. So if you look at Anna Hidalgo or Michelle Wu in Boston, oh, yeah, she's great. I had Barbara buffalo who I interviewed for living change. Another amazing example, the women mayors. And there are a lot of guys that get this too. But women mayor's seem to be bolder, Anna Dalgo in Paris gets written up all the time for her just saying this is the way it is. And I think that that can leave some people in Paris. But it's really interesting to look at what she's brave enough to do. So I think this political will. We need people that are ready to push it a little bit. And be brave about that. Because what happens is, constituents will be like, well, they're brave enough, right? They're gonna pull more people along by being a teeny bit bolder, and I think women mayor's are making a really interesting difference here.



Eric Benson 54:48

That's great to hear. And of course, you know, this season we're talking with, we're naming and shaming women and and climate and so it's great to continually bring up those who I haven't talked with but who are doing great work to? And unfortunately, we're running out of time, but we're getting to. Now one of my favorite question, and that is, you're a design educator. You're not just a podcaster and climate leader, but you're also a designer educator now. And what would you ask a class of designers to tackle in part of a project, or or semester?



Andrea 55:30

I think that we just mentioned it, which is I think it would be really interesting to look at the vanity factor. Oh, yeah. And how that nudges. So going back to that term, nudge, what are some nudges that we haven't yet tried? And that are unusual suspect nudges? Right? Right. usual suspect nudges would be vanity, I think if you look at podcasts, you know, health and wellness podcasters. And again, typically a lot of male health and wellness podcasters, like, how did they get there? Audiences are huge and deep and rich. And it's really interesting. What if they started to talk a lot more about riding a bike for transportation, and I'm gonna say, for transportation, because a lot of times people will like I ride a bike, which means that they cycle for a long trip, you know, 20 3040 mile trip on the weekends? That's not what we're talking about here. Right. Right. So I think, a muting for a class or a curriculum or kind of a project, I think that pulling in the vanity stats would be really interesting. And then looking at the messaging, you know, the A B testing or whatever, on the messaging that really helped that in terms of looking at the whole system.



Eric Benson 56:41

Yeah, and then the outcome of that, right, a personal outcome of that is obvious. But then if it increases the amount of bike traffic, right, then it also can expediate more policy change in that community where hey, well, now we have like 10 times more cyclists, our bike lanes need to be rethought. Or we need to add bike lanes or, you know, a list of different things for increasing public safety around cycling as a way of commuting.



Andrea 57:15

Right, I guess, to your point building for the fact that if it starts to be if it starts to gain any momentum at all, what is the trajectory? How much faster? Are they gonna need to be ready prepared for more people biking and all that? Like, what how quickly does the scale and what how? What are the phases in terms of its scaling, that can then end up happening so that you can be ready for it? An interesting case study I know we got to leave in a second is this idea of thinking about mobility and transportation in Los Angeles during the Olympics and 2028. Right, so they have got to get out of the stick because their transit, their transportation, right? It just, they can't deal. It's a car culture in there, right? They got to get on the stick with buses, etc, etc. So looking at them as a case study, what they could potentially lead if they did things right. And moving from there, I think has a lot of fun as a story and as something to examine.



Eric Benson 58:09

I agree. And thank you, Andrea, for coming on clarify today. And I really appreciate your time. And before you go, I'd love to know again where we can find you online, including your living change podcast.



Andrea 58:25

Yes, thank you so much. It was really a pleasure. I love talking with you about a topic that isn't like immediately on my brain all the time, but I can see how fun it is. People can find me I'm pretty easy to find on LinkedIn. Andrea learned I'm in Seattle I supposed to put Andrea learn in Seattle, it'll pop up. The podcast is you can get it on any platform you're on. If you search on living change climate those three words it should come up right away. The other thing is you can get to it on my site where all the episodes are embedded and the transcripts are there at if you go to living change pod.com And then I'm on Twitter Andrea alerted I'm on Tik Tok. Andrea is living change. I just started being on Instagram Andrea living change one day though. I'll be coordinated but now they aren't. Anyway, and I'm just about to launch a newsletter on substack. So please follow me and stay tuned. And I really appreciate this conversation. And it's been so fun learning about climate fire, Eric.



Eric Benson 59:25

Thank you. Yeah. And on LinkedIn, I learned that you're an a Michigan alum. Is that Is that true? I am. Go Blue. Me to go blue. Go Beau blue. Yes. All right. Thank you. Andrea. And I look

I am. Go bid. Me to go bid. Go bid. Yes. All right. Thank you, Andrea. And I look forward to listening more to your show and seeing more that you're doing and all the white pleasure.



Andrea 59:45

Thanks so much.



Eric Benson 59:47

This podcast is co-produced by Bianca Sandiko and me. A big special thanks to Ellen Keith Shaw and Christine Piolet for their gorgeous work on our new branding. Batul Rashik and Marc O'Brien for the Our continued design out Brandee Nichols and Michelle Nguyen, for their strategic guidance and always supporting me on this podcast. If you enjoy the work we all do here and you have a spare minute or two, we would truly appreciate it. If you left a rating and review over at Apple podcasts. The more folks that review our program, the higher the algorithm pushes up Climify in the search results. And in turn, the more likely we all can learn how to become climate designers.