

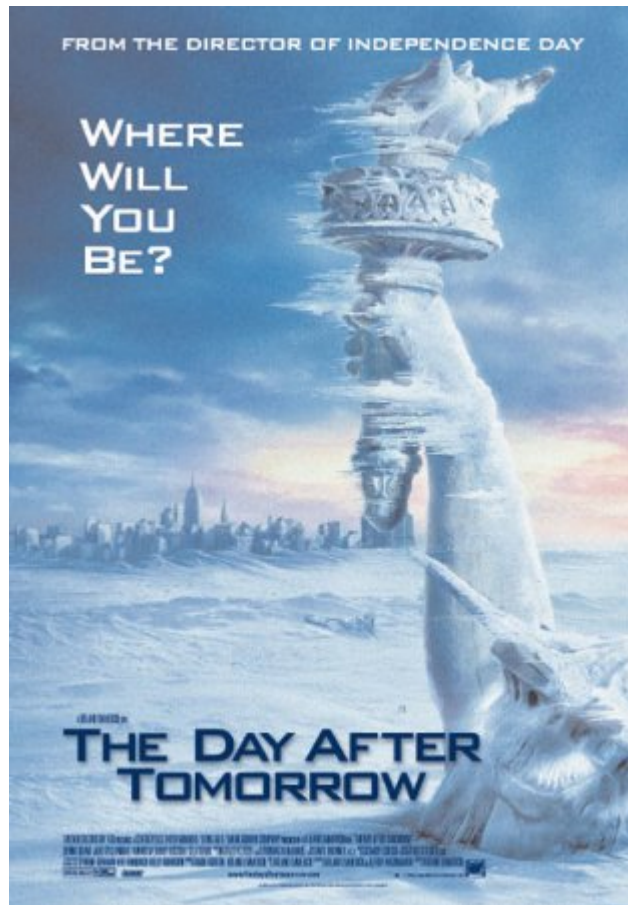
Changing the Script on Climate Change: Transformative views on humanity's role

Walter Orr Roberts Public Lecture, May 22, 2012

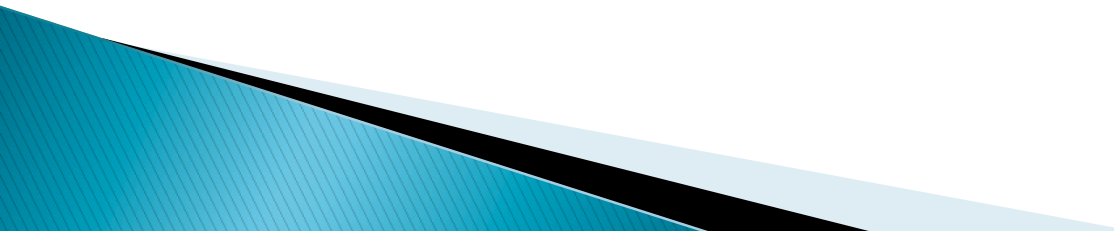
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OPTIMISM

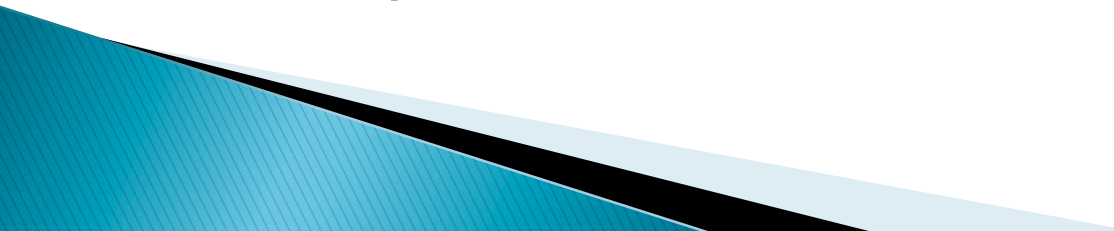


Script 1

- ▶ *Genre*: Thriller
 - ▶ *Setting*: Planet Earth
 - ▶ *Time period*: The Anthropocene
 - ▶ *Villains*: Uninformed humans, skeptics, oil companies, etc.
 - ▶ *Heroes*: Scientists and activists
 - ▶ *Plot*: The climate is changing and it could be catastrophic for humanity. A small group of concerned scientists and activists tries to warn everyone, change everyone, and save the day. Nobody gets it, and the release of methane clathrates kills everyone, except pine bark beetles.
- 



Script 2

- ▶ *Genre*: Drama/Love story
 - ▶ *Setting*: The Kosmos
 - ▶ *Time period*: The Anthropocene
 - ▶ *Antagonists*: An out-of-date worldview, fear of everything
 - ▶ *Protagonist*: Human beings
 - ▶ *Plot*: The climate is changing and it could be catastrophic for humanity. Humans recognize that they are both the problem and the solution. They challenge their assumptions and limiting beliefs and work collectively to rapidly transform society to create a thrivable world.
- 



"I'm afraid you've had a paradigm shift."

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Thrivability

A Collaborative Sketch
Curated by Jean Russell

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How can we change the script?

Technical problem



One that can be diagnosed and solved by applying established know-how and procedures; amenable to authoritative expertise and management of routine processes.

Adaptive challenge



Requires a change in mindsets; priorities, beliefs, habits and loyalties. Involves shedding entrenched ways, tolerating losses, gaining new capacities.

Climate Change as a technical problem

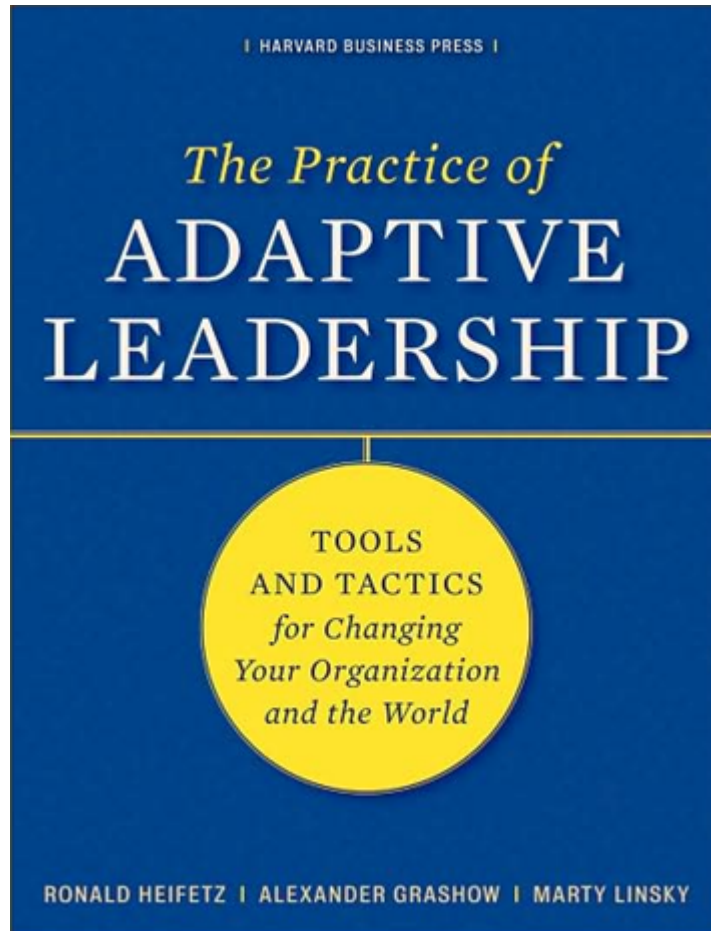
- ▶ Problems that can be diagnosed and solved, generally within a short time frame, by applying established know-how and precedures. Amenable to authoritative expertise and management of routine processes, through current structures, procedures, and ways of doing things.

(Heifetz et al. 2009)

Climate change as an adaptive challenge

- ▶ Characterized by the gap between the values people stand for (that constitute thriving) and the reality that they face (their current lack of capacity to realize those values in their environment).
- ▶ Can only be addressed through changes in people's priorities, beliefs, habits and loyalties. Involves shedding some entrenched ways, tolerating losses, and generating the capacity to thrive anew.


(Heifetz et al. 2009)

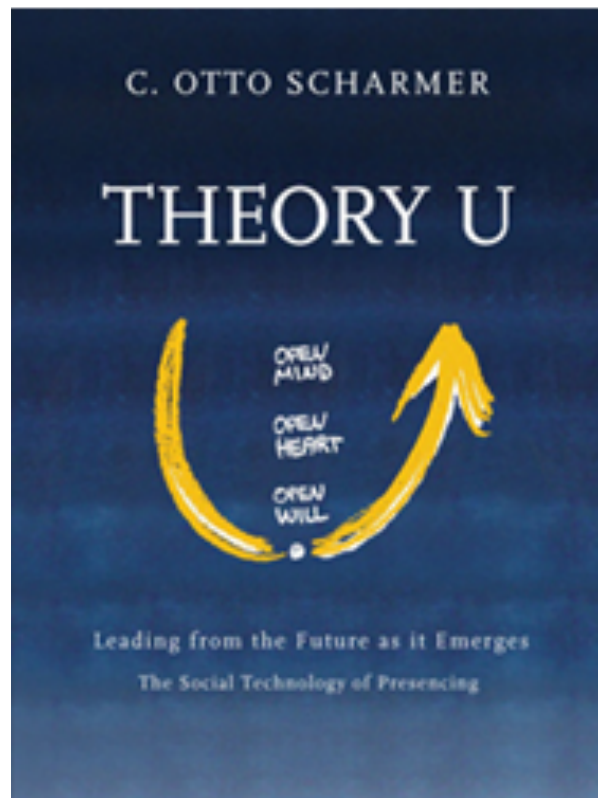


- ▶ "the success of an intervention depends on the interior condition of the intervenor"

(Bill O'Brien)

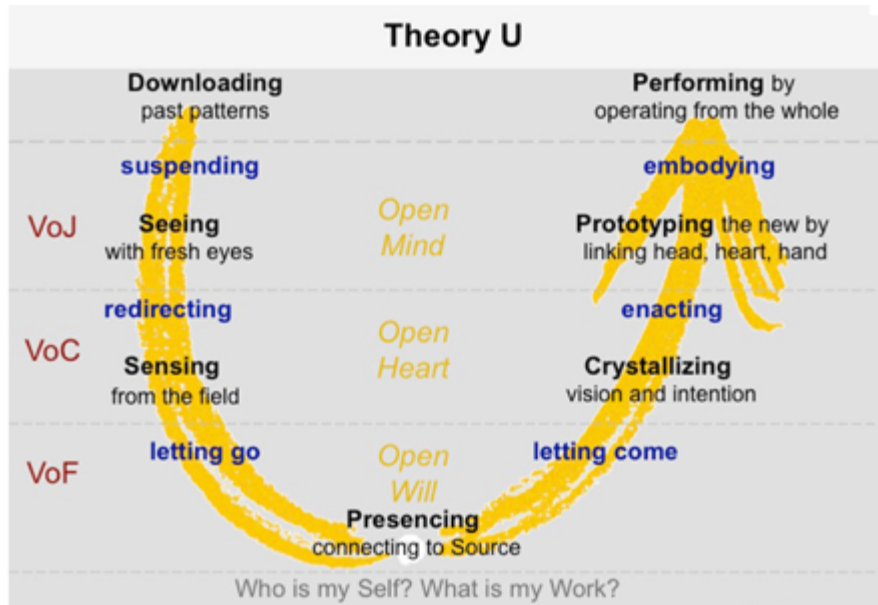
Adaptive Leadership

- ▶ Requires connecting with the values, beliefs and anxieties of the people you are trying to move (who are not often convinced by logic and facts);
 - ▶ Recognizes that for many people, the current situation is often preferable to trying something new where the consequences are unpredictable and likely to involve losses for key parties;
 - ▶ What you see as dysfunctional works for others in the system. Focus on how to mobilize and sustain people through the period of risk, rather than trying to convince them of the rightness of your cause;
 - ▶ Involves helping people to "navigate through a period of disturbance as they sift through what is essential and what is expendable, and as they experiment with solutions to the adaptive challenge at hand."
- 



- ▶ "we don't yet have a reliable problem-solving methodology for dealing with complex challenges"

The U Process



- ▶ "we have to abandon our conventional ways of reacting and operating" (i.e., the dominant mode of downloading that causes us to continuously reproduce the patterns of the past)
- ▶ "The blind spot of current social science, social systems, and field theory concerns the sources from which the social systems originate."

Climate Change and Hyper-complexity

- ▶ **Dynamic complexity** (defined by cause and effect being distant in space and time)
- ▶ **Social complexity** (defined by conflicting interests, cultures, and worldviews among diverse stakeholders)
- ▶ **Emerging complexity** (defined by disruptive patterns of innovation and change in situations in which the future cannot be predicted and addressed by the patterns of the past)

Scharmer, C.O. 2009. Theory U. Leading from the Future as it Emerges. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers. pp. 342–343.

- ▶ "The greater a system's hyper-complexity, the more critical it becomes for organizations, companies, and communities to develop the capacity to operate from the deeper streams of social emergence and to access the power of the open mind, open heart, and open will."
- ▶ "Instead of continuing to do more of the same it is often better to address the same issue differently, at the next deeper level of complexity and emergence."

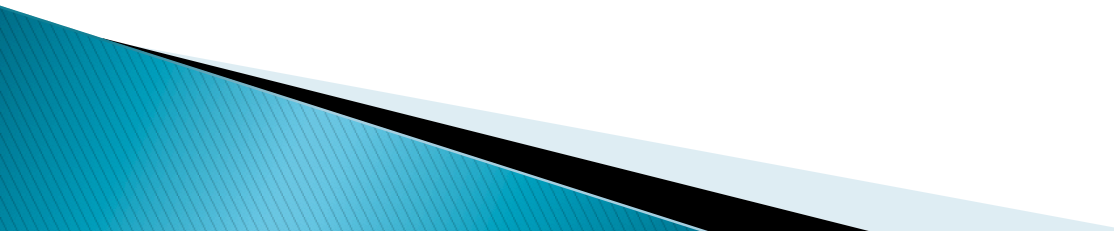
Rewriting the script

- ▶ Examining our own blind spots, shadows, and projections;
- ▶ Challenging our own assumptions and beliefs (psychology research shows that we see what we believe);
- ▶ Developing capacity to do «adaptive work» by connecting with people's core values.

(We cannot rewrite another person's script...)



Adapting from the Inside-Out: Beliefs, Values and Worldviews

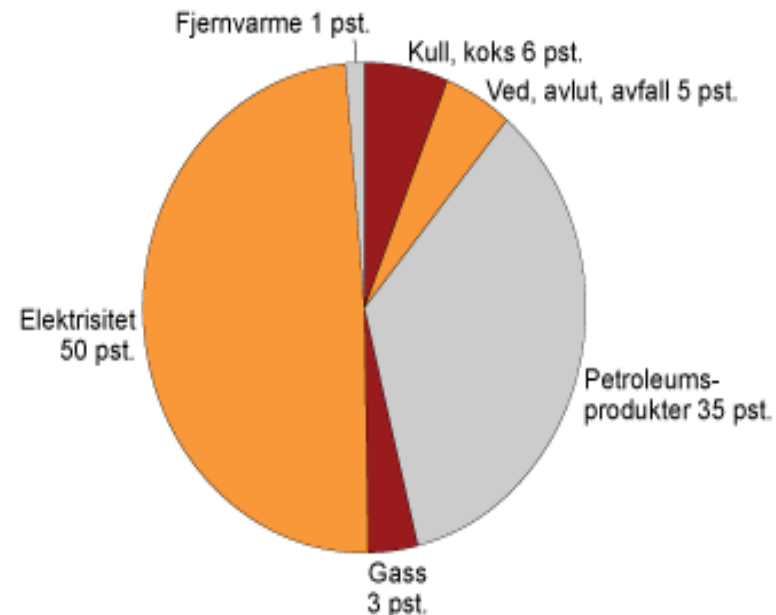
- ▶ Responses to climate change are influenced by peoples attitudes, which are linked to values and worldviews.
 - ▶ A focus on values and worldviews draws attention to the possibility that efforts to satisfy one group's values through climate policies and responses can create conflicts with the values of other groups. Responses are not neutral.
 - ▶ Acknowledging that people see the world differently and may prioritize different values makes it clear that climate change cannot be assessed, interpreted, and responded to in one particular way.
 - ▶ It enables us to connect better with people where they are at, rather than where we are at.
- 

Norway



- ▶ Population: 5 million
- ▶ GDP \$421.99 billion
- ▶ GDP per capita \$96,591
- ▶ UNDP HDI: #1 in 2011
- ▶ 5th largest oil exporter
(2.3 million barrels/day 2010)
- ▶ CO₂ emissions = 10.54
tons/person

Totalt sluttforbruk av energi fordelt på ulike energitype.
2008. Prosent



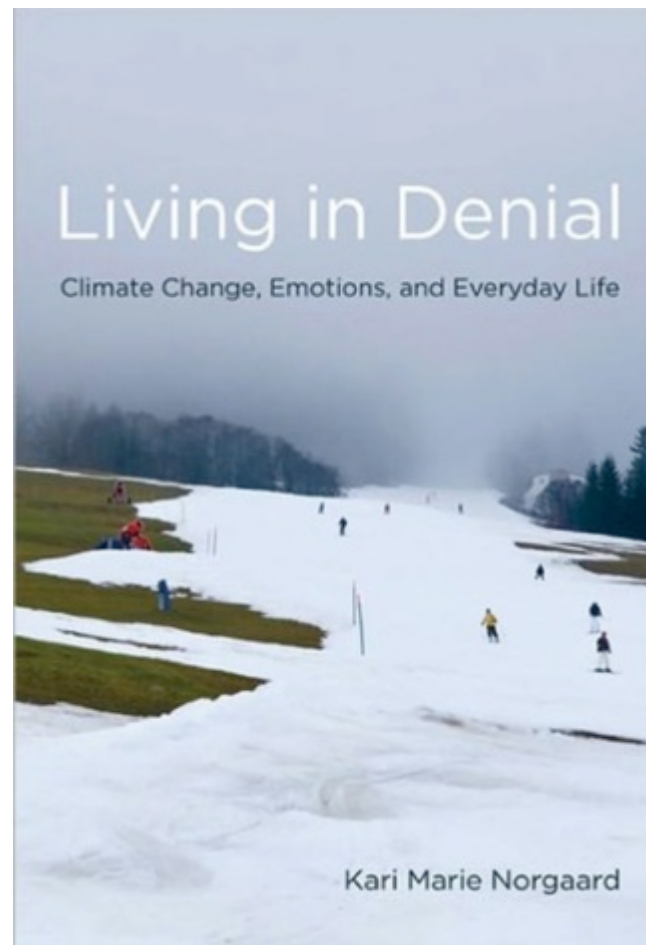
Norway's Paradox



Economic legacy

Ecological legacy





«I describe socially organized denial as the process by which individuals collectively distance themselves from information because of norms of emotion, conversation, and attention and by which they use an existing cultural repertoire of strategies in the process.»

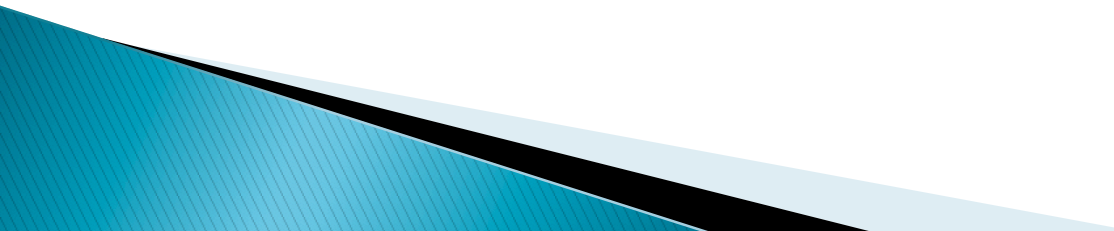


Consequences of Climate Change in Norway:

- **Higher Temperatures**
- **More Rain**
- **Shorter Snow Seasons**
- **Higher sea levels**
- **Increased runoff**

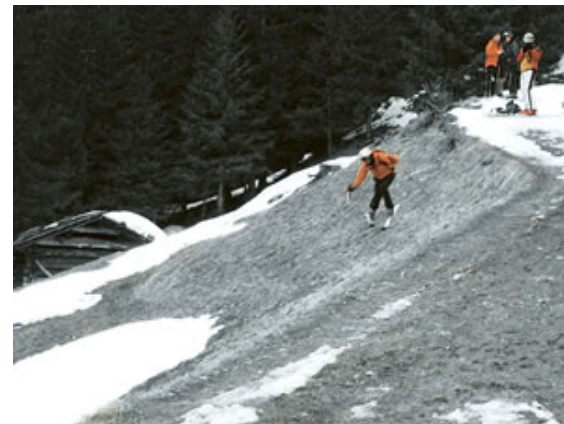
HEY! THIS WILL
BE GREAT
FOR NORWAY!

Values in Norway

- ▶ *Traditional*: rural areas, nature, family
 - ▶ *Modern*: individualism, economic development, material wealth, technology, scientific progress
 - ▶ *Post-modern*: Rejection of social hierarchies, promotion of equity across gender and class, rural and urban areas, and at global scale.
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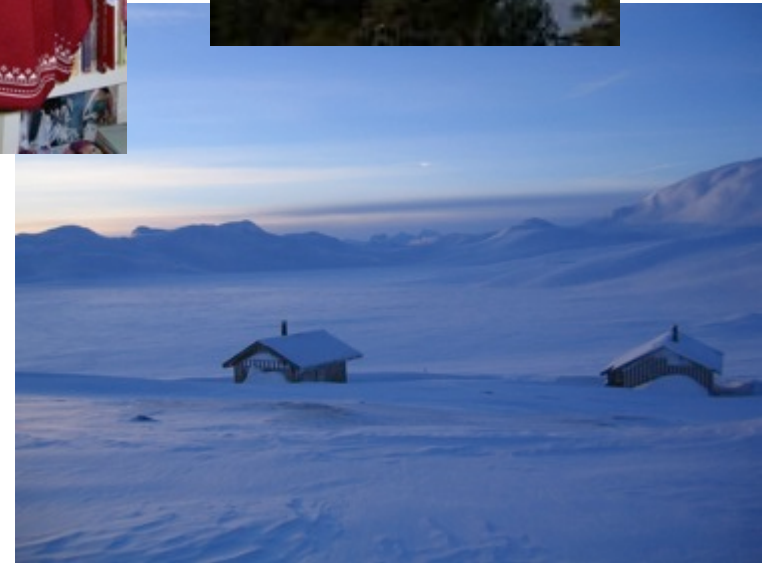
Snow cover changes in Norway

- ▶ Winter temperature increases of 2.5 – 4°C by 2100;
- ▶ More winter precipitation in eastern Norway;
- ▶ 40% decrease in number of days with suitable skiing conditions by 2050 (compared to 1981–1999 period)



Traditional values

- ▶ Snow cover is important to local and national identity
- ▶ Prioritized adaptations might preserve cultural heritage, traditional sectors, local knowledge;
- ▶ Challenge: to transform livelihoods *and* maintain identity



Modern values

- ▶ Snow cover as a medium for winter sports (an important economic sector)
- ▶ Prioritized adaptations might focus on snow-making technologies, indoor snow domes, artificially cooled ski tracks; new sports.
- ▶ Challenge: reconstruct or reinvent identity (identify new or niche markets)



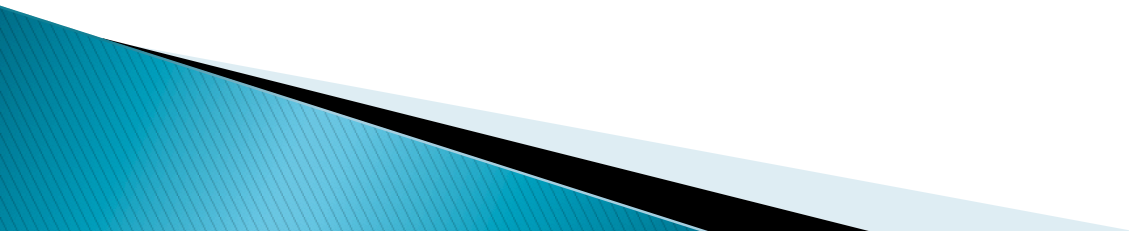
Post-modern values

- ▶ Snow cover as a component of ecosystem integrity; distant impacts of climate change also a concern
- ▶ Prioritized adaptations might focus on adaptive management, building resilience, promoting sustainability.
- ▶ Challenge: promote mitigation as a form of adaptation



Key questions

- ▶ Whose values count? Who decides?
- ▶ What about the voices of future generations?
- ▶ How can value conflicts be resolved?



Making climate change matter in Norway



..... 6.
 Det Korn og Rug som Vort Aar er Avlet paa Gaarden Gode
 fik hem i Brug.

1818	73 Tønder og 5 Høller
1819	105 do " "
1820	124 do 4 do
1821	104 Tønder 3 Høller
1822 Solgt 20 Maal	110 af det Øvrige "
1823 Kuns Svagt	88 Tønder og 3 Høller
1824	131 do 8 do
1825	124 Tønder 9 Høller
1826	101 Tønder 5 H:
1827 Solgt 12 Maal	87 Tønder 9 H:
1828	120 Tønder ---"
1829	130 Tønder 6 H:
1830 Kuns Svagt	96 Tønder 3 H:
1831	83 Tønder 6 H:
1832	135 Tønder ---"
1833	82 Tønder ---"
1834	125 Tønder 9 H:
1835	155 Tønder 2 H:
1836	50 Tønder og meget Svagt

You and I are creating the future right now. The choice, then, is ours.

Will we continue to take steps to sustain our planet as it is, one by one eliminating what is wrong? Or will we tether our steps to a future that will allow our heirs to thrive?

If we aim at thriving,
and create a path to thriving,
we will thrive
because every step we take
is creating the future
right now.

Hildy Gottlieb,

