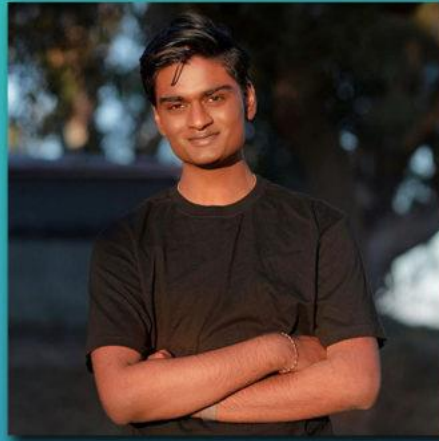


Leslie Davenport
Climate Psychology
Educator

October 21, 2021

YOUTH RISING



Kevin J. Patel



Josephine Becker

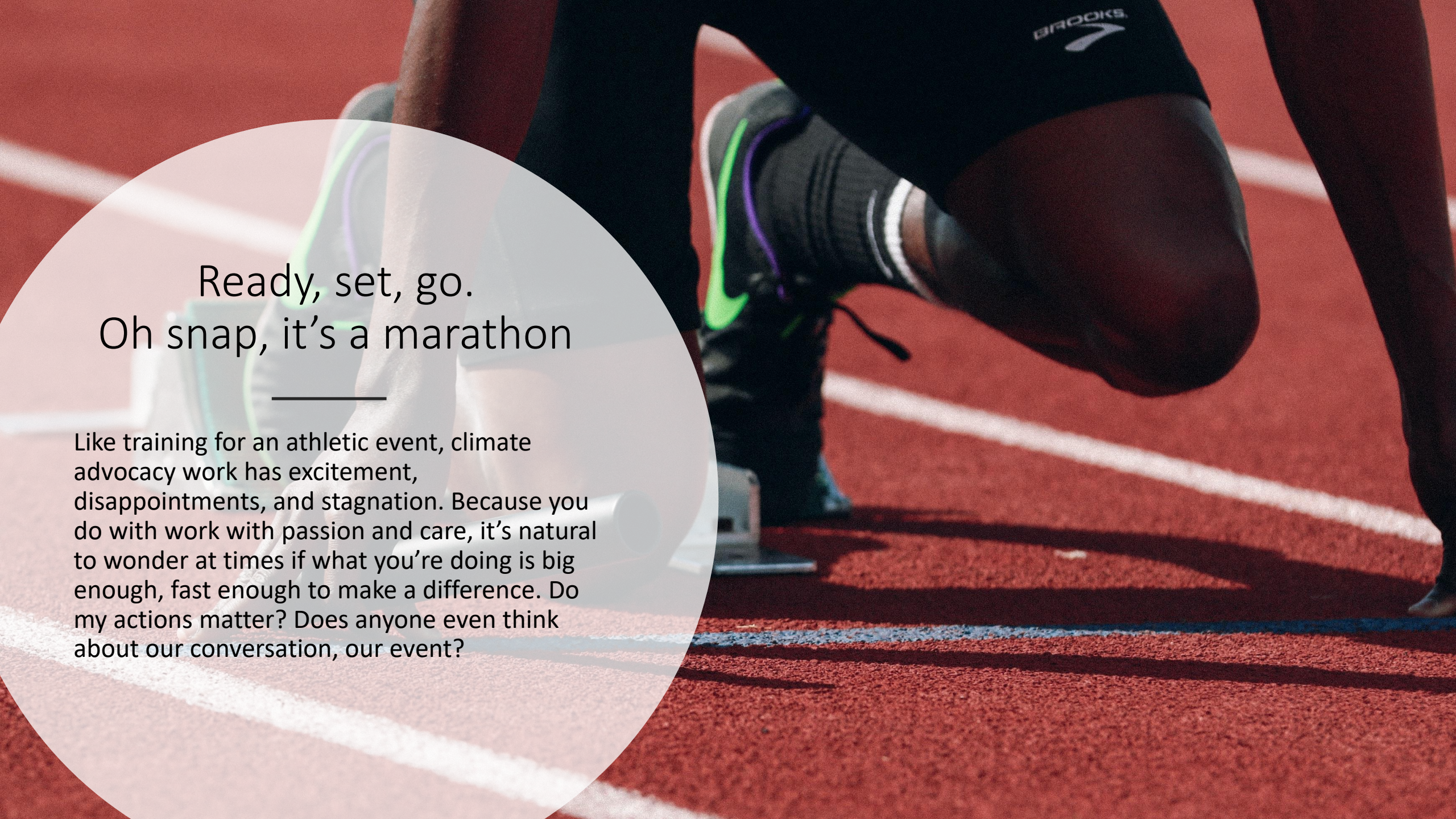


Leslie Davenport

The Next Generation of Climate Leaders and How We Can Help



post carbon institute



Ready, set, go.
Oh snap, it's a marathon

Like training for an athletic event, climate advocacy work has excitement, disappointments, and stagnation. Because you do with work with passion and care, it's natural to wonder at times if what you're doing is big enough, fast enough to make a difference. Do my actions matter? Does anyone even think about our conversation, our event?

Recovery is part of training and endurance

The majority of research in athletic performance enhancement centers around how to optimize workout variables like frequency, intensity, and volume. It's only been in the last 20 years that science has turned some attention to rest and recovery.

It's not just muscular recovery. Your brain needs a mental break from training to be able to push forward. Many of the signs of overtraining relate to mental exhaustion and cognitive changes.

These same principles apply to advocacy work.





Or would you do mountaineering...

...without adequate training, equipment, or enough food or water.

Not only may you not reach your destination, but it's also dangerous for you and your team.

We are learning that this kind of deep advocacy work requires a more comprehensive approach that includes **INTERNAL** and **EXTERNAL** resources to be most effective.

Working skillfully with our emotions makes us more **EFFECTIVE** and give us **ENDURANCE**.

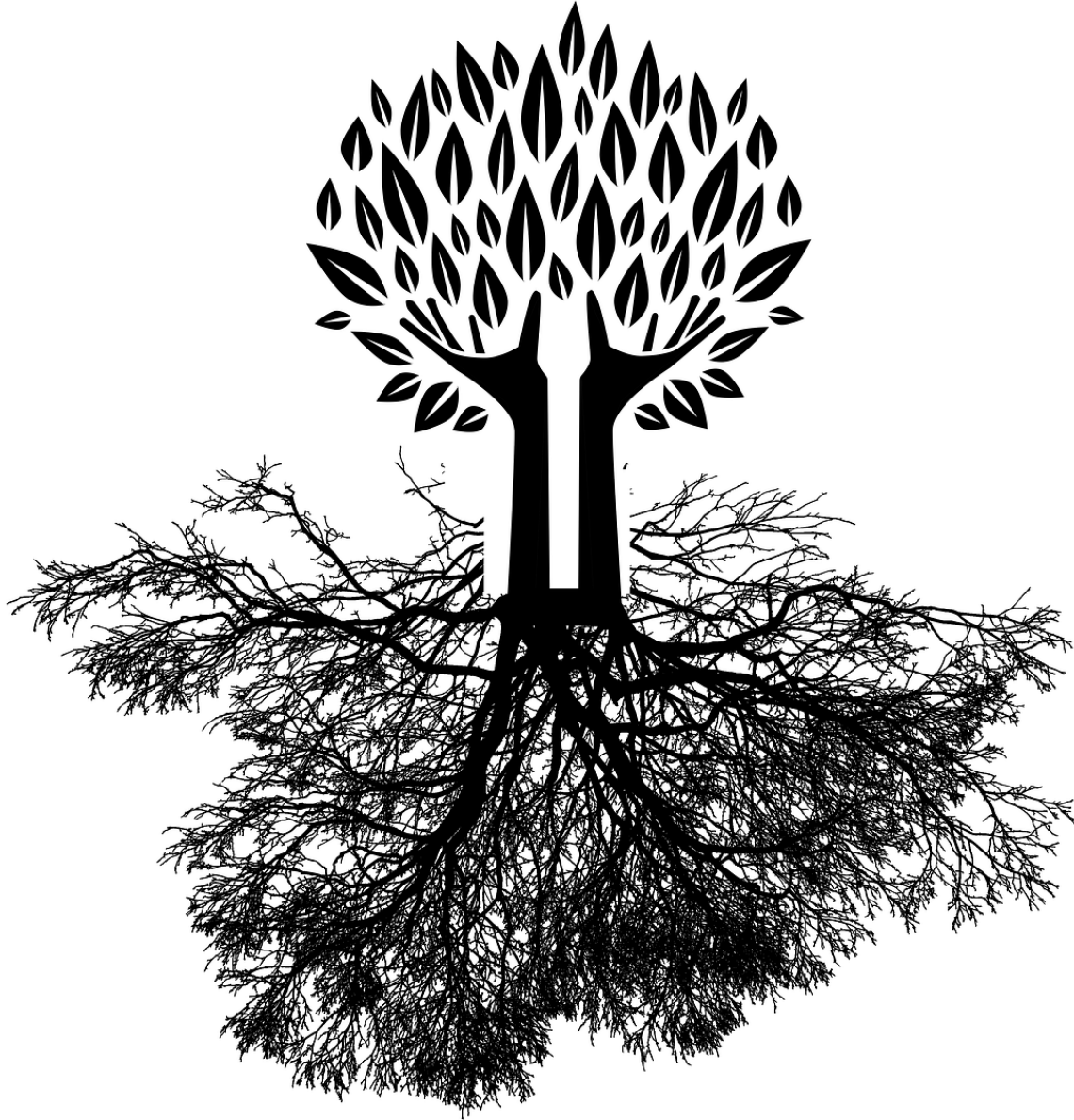


When it comes to feelings, we get it backwards

CULTURAL MYTH: If I let myself feel or express my emotions, I'll fall into a pit of sadness or anger and I'll never get out. It's a waste of precious time, (especially when it comes to climate change and social justice.)

NEUROSCIENCE tells us that just the opposite is true: It's when we deny or push down our feelings that we get into trouble. It erodes our energy and often comes out sideways in anger or depression.

Healthy feelings are ones that **FLOW**.



Growing up & Growing Down

“We need to not only *grow up* in the climate crisis by cultivating our imaginative, creative, determined and hopeful capacities, we also need to *grow down* by building our tolerance for guilt, shame, anxiety and depression.”

Caroline Hickman
University of Bath, UK

This is no ordinary challenge.

It's so unsettling...
How do we even talk about it?



There is often more than one conflicting thought and emotion at once.

Empathetic Blench: The visceral reaction of receiving a gesture of generosity that is fraught with environmental or social consequences, which the recipient may be more sensitive to than the giver.

Blissonance: The blissful short-term experience of sunny, dry, pleasant weather that can accompany severe drought or other long-term climate changes— for which, the experiencer, has long term concerns and consequences for all living creatures that depend on water in that area.



Why talk about emotions in our work?
Because they are here, real, and impactful

"The physical and economic destruction (of climate change) surely boggles the mind, but what is not being addressed are the human psychological consequences of all this devastation."

There are a similar range of experiences in all environmental work.

The U.N. sponsored Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

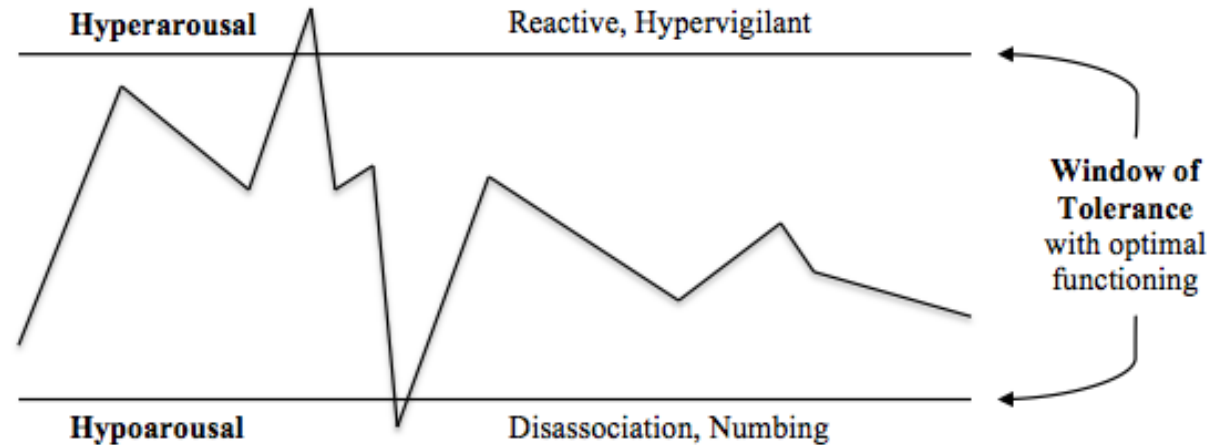
Befriending our Nervous System

Zone of Resilience

is a term used to describe the zone of attention in which a person is able to function most effectively. When people are within this zone, they are typically able to readily receive, process, and integrate information and otherwise respond to the demands of everyday life without much difficulty.

Toggling

is cultivating an ability to move back and forth between difficult information and tools to self-soothe and calm emotional reactions





Emotional Resiliency

Conventional definition: The ability to “bounce back” from a stressful experience.

Redefined in the face of climate breakdown:
Emotional resiliency is cultivating the ability to remain present, open-minded, and empathic, in the face of increasing stress--the ability to bear witness to and be with more.



We're in this together

Co-regulation: According to Polyvagal theory, our feelings are contagious. Our very nervous systems attune to each other and can be nourishing and regulate others around them.

In other words, the more you can embody qualities you value – such as being grounded, clear, calm – you transmit this in your relationships and community in a visceral way that supports their ability to experience that as well. And of course, distress is contagious too.

It is a biological imperative to seek interpersonal connection. Now that we understand co-regulation realize that **self-care is community care.**

Emerging Experiences

- **Pre-traumatic stress disorder:** Anticipatory anxiety about climate disasters that are projected to occur in the future.
- **Ecological grief:** Intense feelings of grief as people suffer climate-related losses of ecosystems, landscapes, and human and animal life.
- **Eco-anxiety:** An experience of dread, helplessness, and/or existential anxiety triggered by the seemingly irrevocable impacts of climate change.
- **Solastalgia:** The feeling of longing or being “homesick” as your familiar environment changes around you. (Coined by Australian researcher, Glenn Albrecht.)



Burnout

Have you become cynical or critical?

Do you drag yourself around and have trouble getting going?

Have you become irritable or impatient with co-workers or clients?

Do you lack the energy to be consistently productive?

Do you find it hard to concentrate?

Do you lack satisfaction from your achievements?

Do you feel disillusioned about your job or the world?

Are you focused on worst-case scenarios?

Are you using food, drugs or alcohol to feel better or to simply not feel?

Have your sleep habits changed?

Are you troubled by unexplained headaches, stomach or bowel problems, or other physical complaints?

Burnout leaves us vulnerable to a range of illnesses.





Look to nature's rhythm
of ebb and flow:

The tides, breath, moon's
waxing and waning, seasons...
All these fill and empty and
repeat the cycle.

WE...

...Burn OUT

...Lash OUT

...Check OUT

...Numb OUT

What do you invite **IN**?

Self Care

Individual and Work Culture

COMMON MYTHS

Self-care is indulgent.

Self-care includes mindful changes in patterns of thought and behaviors that contribute to your well-being and those around you.

Self-care is selfish.

When you take time for yourself, you will feel more energetic, and will be able to do more for and with others.

Self-care is a one-time experience.

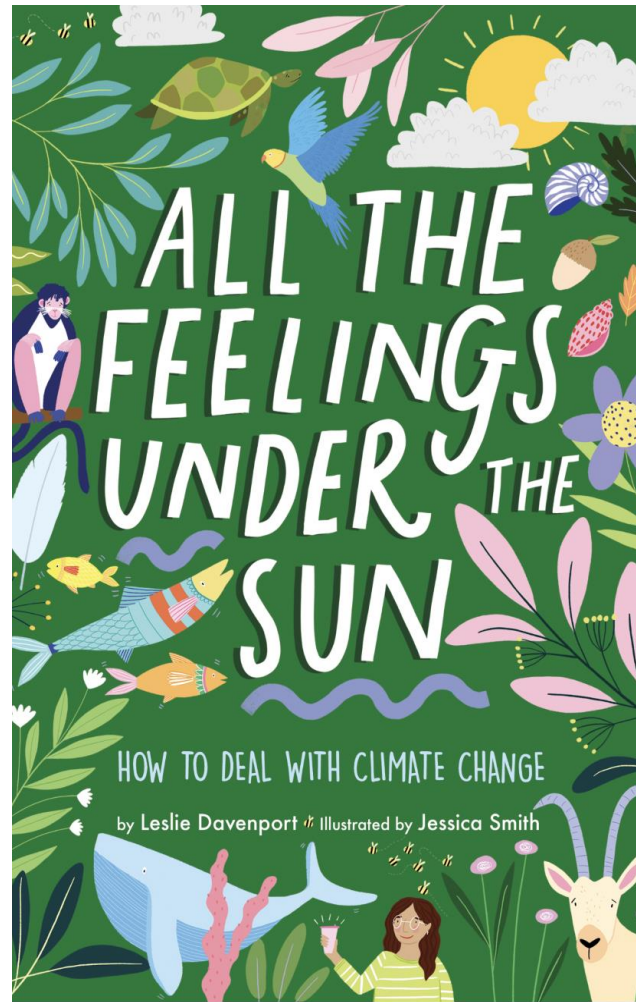
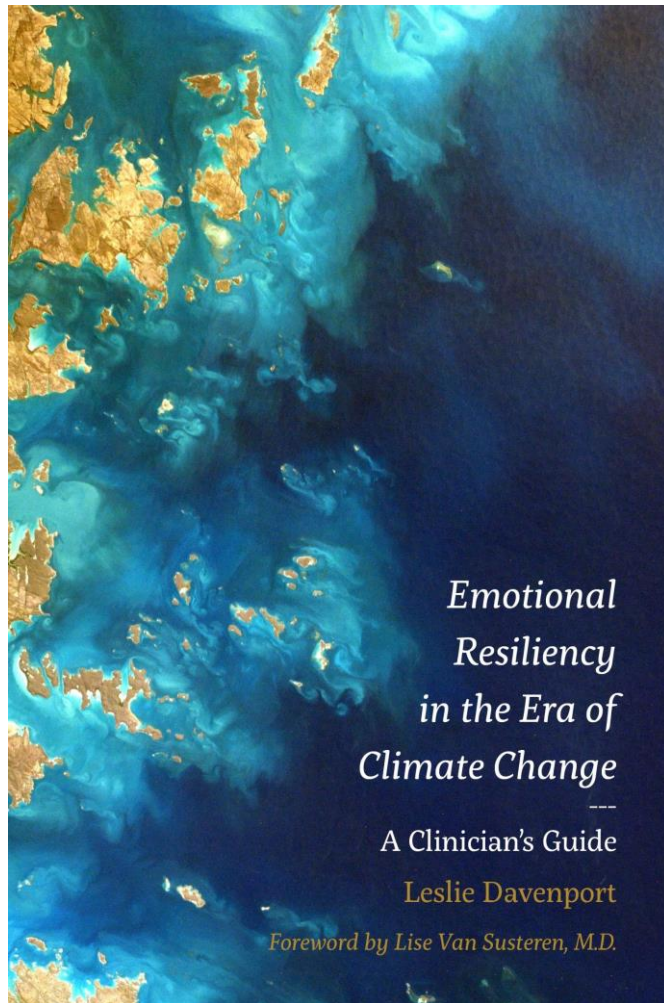
Nourishing yourself is an ongoing practice to build resilience and prevent burnout.

Self-care is time consuming.

You can learn simple ways to tend to yourself in day-to-day moments.



Let's stay connected. www.lesliedavenport.com



*Emotional Resiliency in the
Era of Climate Change*

All the Feelings Under the Sun
For middle school kids