



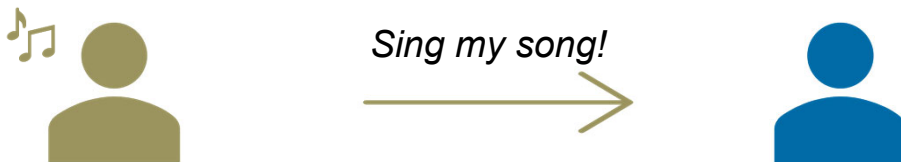
master
conservationist

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension and Outreach

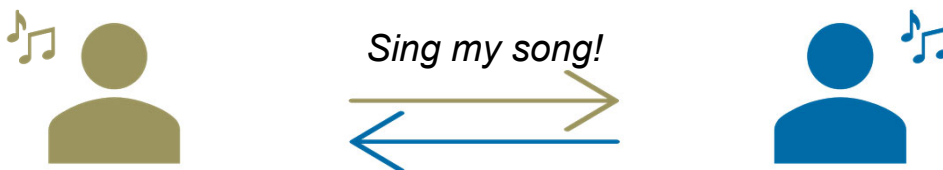
Module 4

Communicating Conservation

Knowledge deficit model of communication



Two-way communication





Four rules for **Communicating Conservation**

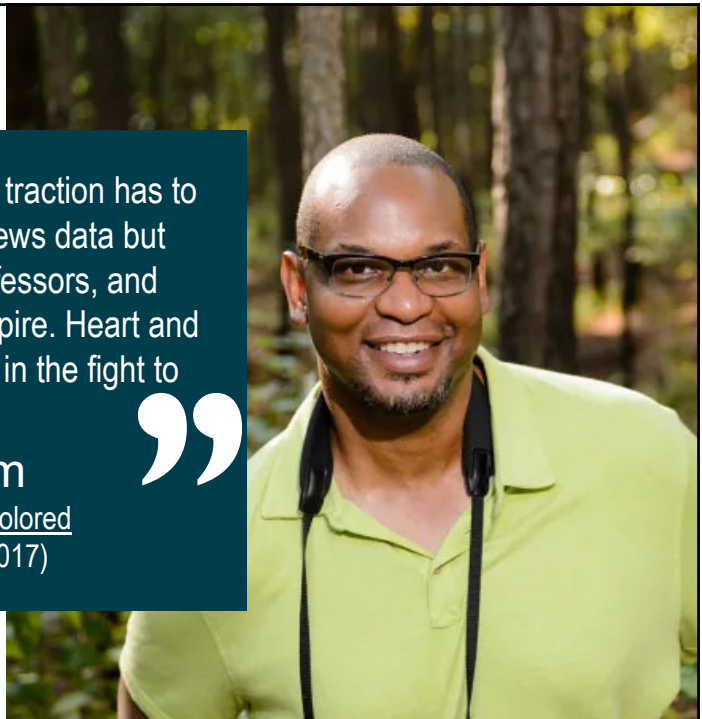
- 1** Go beyond the facts.
- 2** Find common ground.
- 3** Start small.
- 4** Focus on the good.

“ To save wildlife and wild places the traction has to come not from the regurgitation of bad-news data but from the poets, prophets, preachers, professors, and presidents who have always dared to inspire. Heart and mind cannot be exclusive of one another in the fight to save anything.

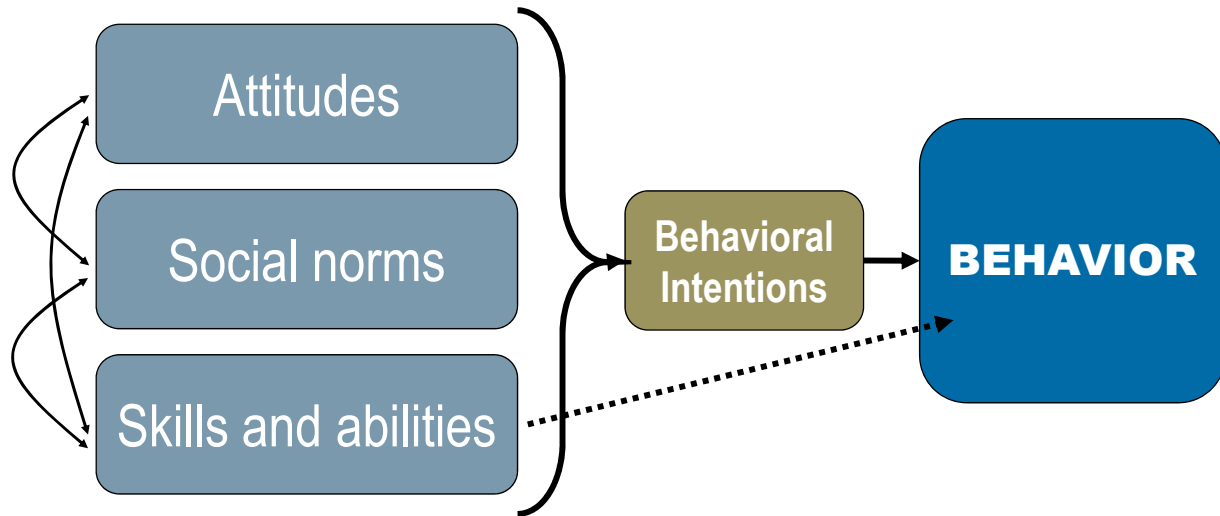
-J. Drew Lanham

The Home Place: Memoirs of a colored man's love affair with nature (2017)

”



Theory of Planned Behavior



Source: Kan, M. P. H., & Fabrigar, L. R. (2017). Theory of Planned Behavior. In V. Zeigler-Hill & T. K. Shackelford (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences* (pp. 1–8). Springer International Publishing.

Motivations and Barriers: river and dam analogy

→ *behavior*

MOTIVATIONS

- I think it's the right thing to do.
- I can make a difference.
- It's what others expect of me.
- People like me do it.
- Someone I respect appreciates it.
- I get something out of it.
- It's fun.

BARRIERS

- Am I able to do it?
- I don't have the confidence to do it.
- I don't know how.
- I don't think it makes a difference.
- It's not for people like me.
- It's not possible.

Source: Routman et al. 2022 "Beyond inspiration: Translating zoo and aquarium experiences into conservation behavior." *Zoo Biology* 41.5: 398-408.



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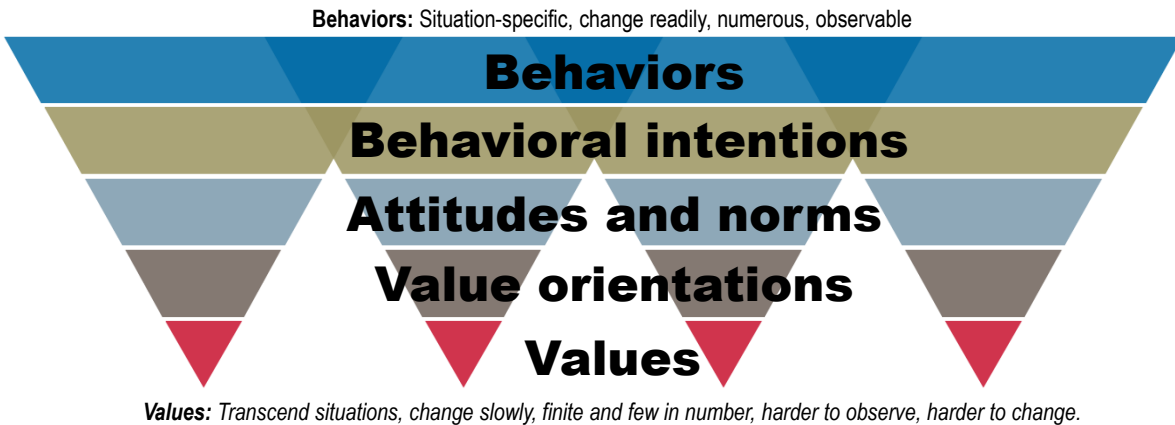
“ It is my task to try to change their attitude in this matter. They will not listen if I raise my voice and point an accusing finger. Instead, they will become angry and hostile and that will be the end of the dialog. Real change will only come from within. Laws and regulations are useful, but sadly easy to flout. So I keep the anger, which of course I feel, as hidden and controlled as possible. I try to reach gently into their hearts. ”

-Jane Goodall

[Reasons for Hope: A spiritual journey \(2000\)](#)



Cognitive Hierarchy Theory



Source: Fulton et al. (1996). "Wildlife value orientations: A conceptual and measurement approach." Human Dimensions of Wildlife 1(2): 24-47.

Examples of value systems

- **Wildlife values orientations** (Fulton et al. 1996)

Mutualistic

Humans and wildlife are to co-exist or live in harmony

Utilitarian

Wildlife should be used and managed for human benefit

- **Environmental value systems** (Marshall et al. 2019)

Biospheric

Appreciation of biodiversity and scientific heritage benefits.

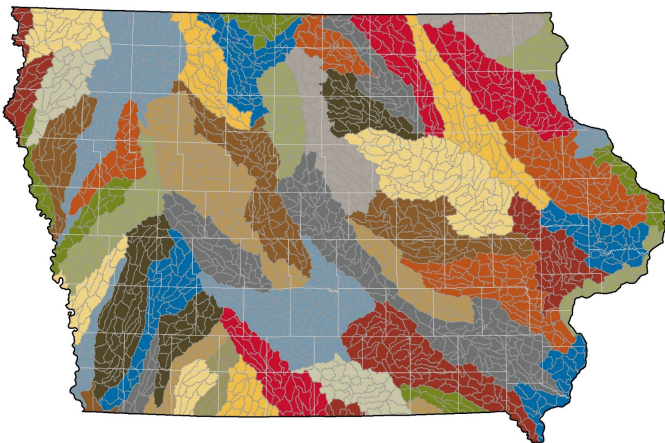
Egoistic

Appreciation of health benefits, wisdom and way of life, economic values, wellbeing, and lifestyle.

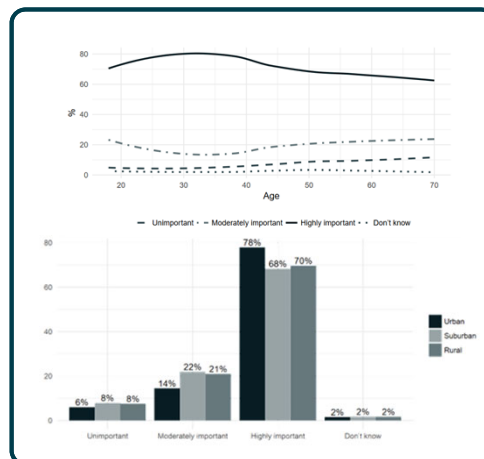
Sources: Fulton et al. (1996). "Wildlife value orientations: A conceptual and measurement approach." Human Dimensions of Wildlife 1(2): 24-47. Marshall et al. 2019. "Our environmental value orientations influence how we respond to climate change." Frontiers in Psychology 10:938

We're on common ground*

*[literally and figuratively]

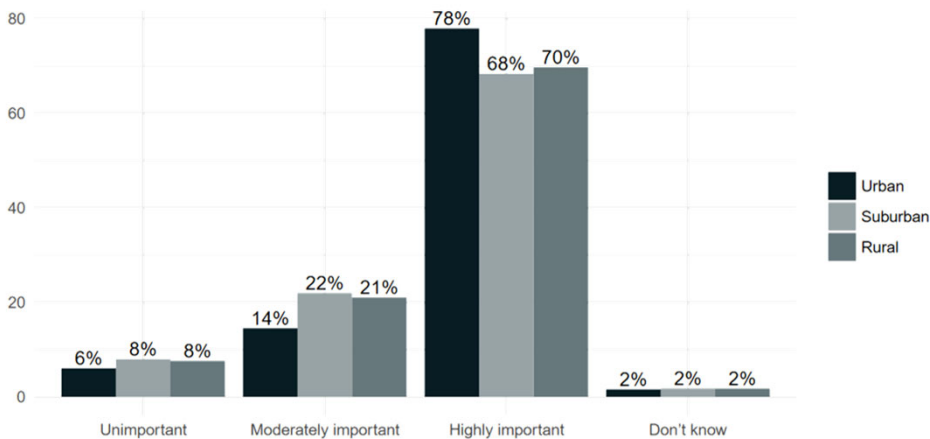


We all live in a watershed!



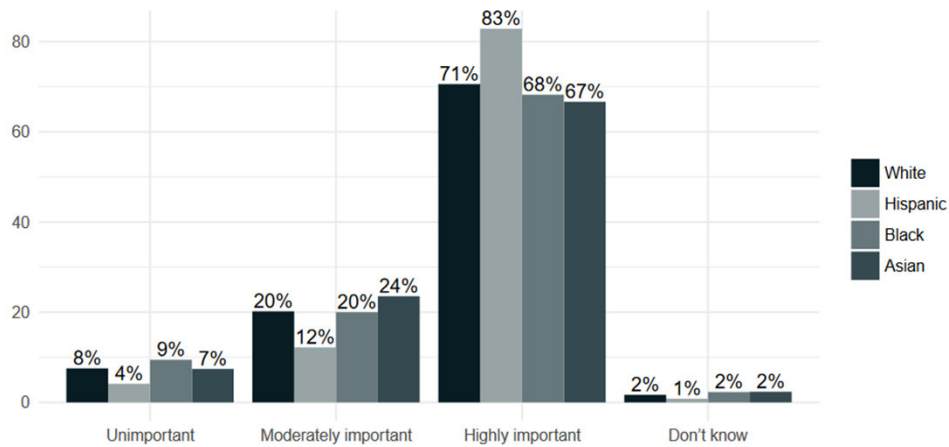
We all care about nature!

In your opinion, how important is getting outdoors and into nature for helping your physical health?



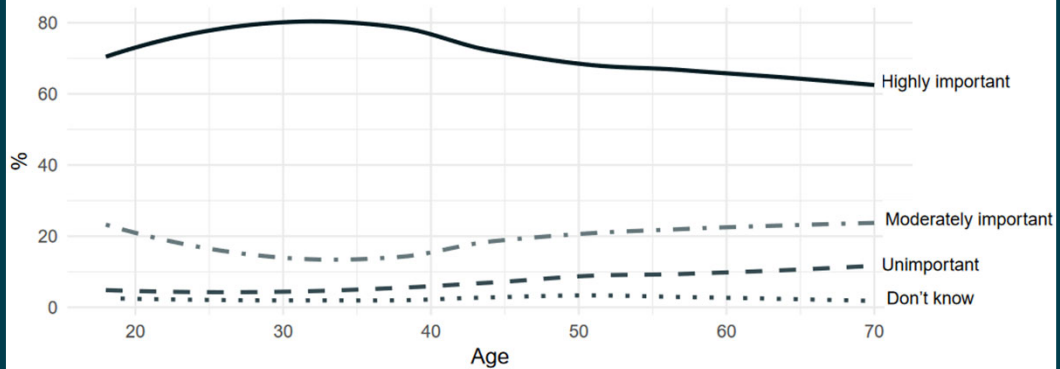
Source: Kellert et al. 2017. *The nature of Americans: Disconnection and recommendations for reconnection*. D.J. Case and Associates. www.NatureOfAmericans.org

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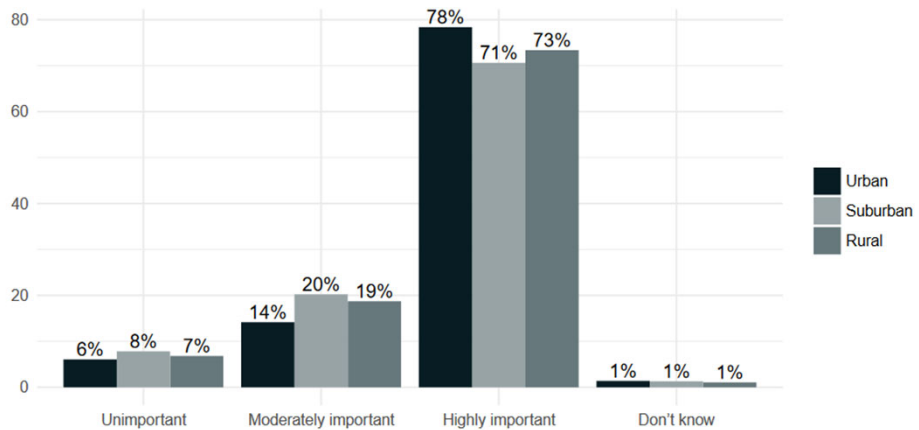
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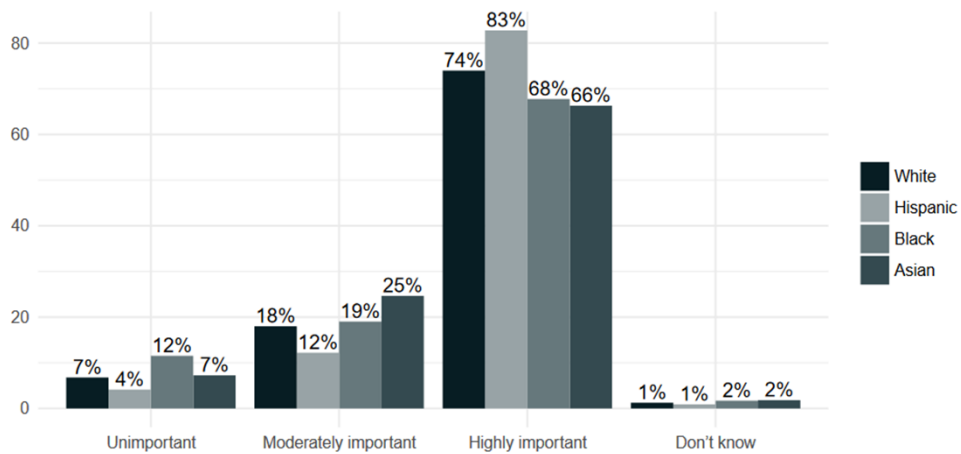
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*In your opinion, how important is getting outdoors and into nature for helping your **emotional outlook on life**?*



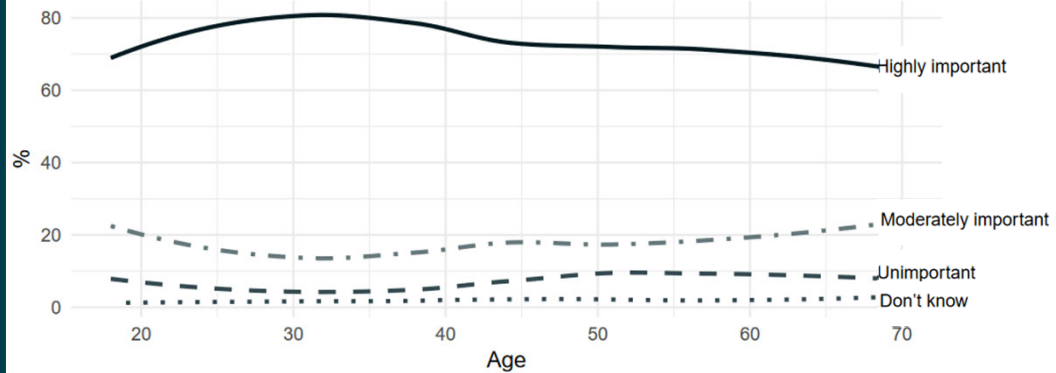
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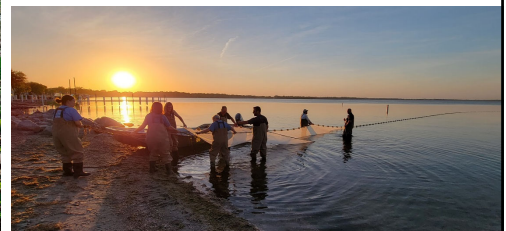


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Photos courtesy: Steven Hardina, Amy Bengel, Sue Boettcher, and Carter Oliver.



Four rules for **Communicating Conservation**

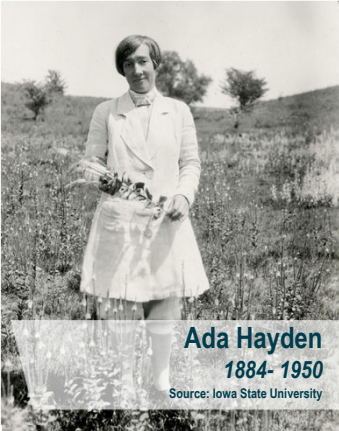
- 1 Go beyond the facts.
- 2 Find common ground.
- 3 Start small.**
- 4 Focus on the good.

“ Despite our daily frustrations...and fractured world, there’s still far more that connects us than divides us. So, whoever you are, wherever you live, look for opportunities to have a conversation. Be confident you can make a difference: you can, even if you never see or hear the results yourself. ”

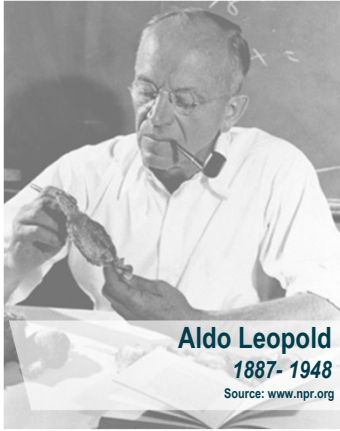
-Katharine Hayhoe

[Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World \(2021\)](#)

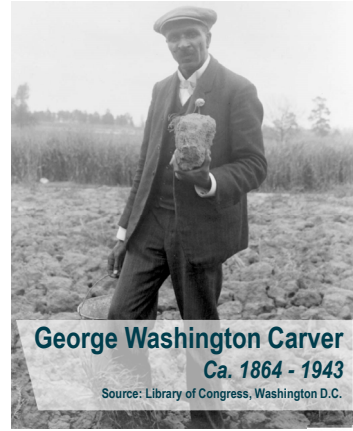




Ada Hayden
1884- 1950
Source: Iowa State University



Aldo Leopold
1887- 1948
Source: www.npr.org



George Washington Carver
Ca. 1864 - 1943
Source: Library of Congress, Washington D.C.



The conservation continuum

- Pick up trash outdoors.
- Plant milkweeds.
- Volunteer to collect seed.
- Do timber stand improvement.
- Put in a riparian buffer.
- Clean, drain, and dry your boat.
- Use no-till.
- Plant native plants in your yard.
- Mow less.
- Create less waste.
- Support conservation organizations.
- Pull garlic mustard.
- Use rotational grazing.
- Test your drain tile water.
- Plant native trees.
- Build a wood duck box.
- Build a wetland.
- Restore an oxbow.
- Use less fertilizer.
- Serve on public boards.
- Volunteer to take care of a garden.
- Reduce your carbon footprint.
- Put in permeable pavers.
- Build a rain barrel.
- Cut down invasive shrubs.
- Do prescribed a burn.
- Collect citizen science data.
- Plant cover crops.
- Time nitrogen application right.
- Use less plastic.



The conservation continuum



Four rules for **Communicating Conservation**

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“...it is not enough to weep for our lost landscapes; we have to put our hands in the earth to make ourselves whole again. Even a wounded world is feeding us. Even a wounded world holds us, giving us moments of wonder and joy. I choose joy over despair. Not because I have my head in the sand, but because joy is what the earth gives me daily and I must return the gift.”

-Robin Wall Kimmerer

Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants (2013)





Forum

Everyone Loves a Success Story: Optimism Inspires Conservation Engagement

DOMINIC MCAFFEE, ZOE A. DOUBLEDAY, NATHANIEL GEIGER, AND SEAN O. CONNELL

In this era of unprecedented environmental change, optimism could help unite people to act. In the present article, we bring together insights from psychology, business, politics, and media to illustrate humanity's innate attraction to optimism and the influence it can yield in driving positive change. We advocate for greater use of optimism in the communication of conservation and provide practical steps to help conservation biologists use optimism more effectively. However, to avoid denialism and remain grounded in reality we also acknowledge the need for balance between optimism and pessimism. Such balance could not only enhance public engagement with pressing environmental issues but also encourage effective collaboration among science, government, public, and industry sectors to address environmental issues.

Keywords: collaboration, conservation psychology, efficacy, optimism, pessimism

Optimism is infectious. It is characterized as the persistent expectation for positive outcomes, interpreting negative events only as temporary setbacks (Seligman 2006). Anticipating a positive outcome is a key motivator for committing to a cause and can spur individuals to action and improve group performance (Bailey et al. 2007; Luthans et al. 2008). Because human motivation and action are products of what one believes, rather than the objective truth, optimism infused with a sense of personal efficacy can inspire the unimpaired and help maintain hope through gloomy times (Bandura 1997; Seligman 2006; Ojala 2012).

Although an individual's perception of environmental issues is swayed by their personal stake and societal values (Steg et al. 2014; Bain et al. 2016; Chapman et al. 2017), the infectious nature of optimism can create an atmosphere of hope that motivates people to engage and cooperate on shared goals (Barsade 2002; Karademas 2006; Luthans et al. 2008; Cvitanovic and Hobday 2018). The magnitude of society's appetite for positive environmental news has caught many by surprise (e.g., the #oceanoptimism movement reached more than 76 million twitter users in just 3 years; Knowlton 2017). With broad societal appeal, communicating optimistic conservation stories may enhance public engagement with environmental issues, whereas conservation stakeholders (i.e., government, researchers, industry) may find incentive to collaborate by building optimism

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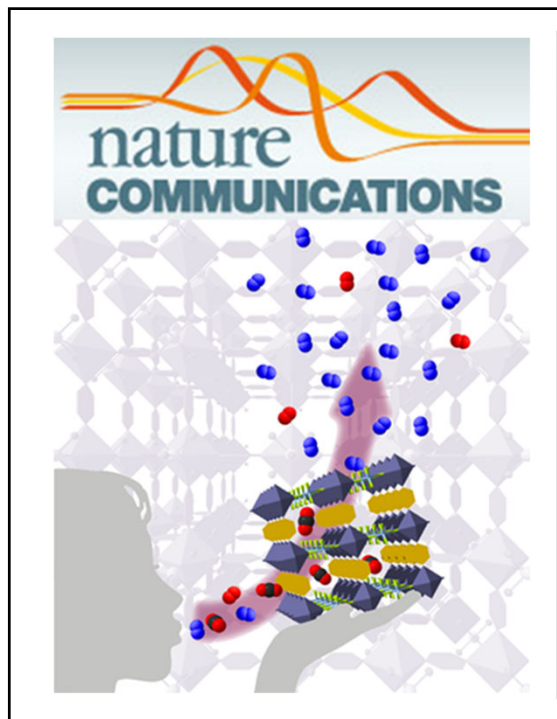
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“Optimism and pessimism inform our expectation that events will turn out positively or negatively, but although optimism is infused with achievement, helplessness is at the core of pessimism.”

BioScience 69: 274–281. © The Author(s) 2019. Published by Oxford University Press. All rights reserved. For Permissions, please e-mail: journals.permissions@oup.com. doi:10.1093/bioscience/biy019

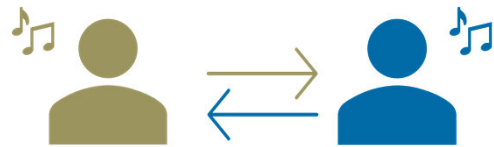
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“increasing the influence and impact of environmental science on policy and practice necessitates moving beyond the ongoing diagnosis of challenges and barriers—towards the study of bright spots.”

¹CSIRO Oceans and Atmospheres, Hobart, TAS, Australia; ²Centre for Marine Socioecology, University of Tasmania, Hobart, TAS, Australia. Email: cvitanovic@utas.edu.au

Two-way communication



Listen to understand. 

Then craft **[Simple
Personalized
Action-oriented
Repeated]** messages.