



## Tips for Discussing Climate Change Peacefully

*Climate Crisis Group of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton, New York*

### Tip #1

Realize that, while everyone seems to have an opinion on climate change, there is relatively little discussion between people who have different views. Discussion of the topic is needed if we are going to come closer to mutual understanding. But tread gently, as the feelings of some are very strong, and most are not used to discussing this with people who share different views. That may include you.



### Tip #2

There are some who are absolute climate change deniers, and will not be open to any other view. But in reality, this is a relatively small percentage. Most at your holiday gathering are likely somewhere in the middle on climate change. Focus on that group, and do not be drawn in to a battle of wills with those who are not open to change.

### Tip #3

Do some listening yourself. Do not preach. Listen actively, don't attack, don't counterattack, do not respond with anger. Make sure you are the one who is calm, listening, and relaxed. You really do want to understand how others see the topic.

### Tip #4

Introduce "sticky facts" – simple facts that are likely to remain in the minds of others. For example, in Glacier National Park, there were approximately 150 glaciers 100 years ago. Now, there are 26. For some people, the shared experience of loss of waterfront property at their favorite vacation spot, or the increase in severe hurricanes, may hit home.

### Tip #5

It can be helpful to mention a myth in order to debunk it, but introduce a sticky fact at the same time: 97% of climate scientists agree that human activity is causing climate change. It's a myth that there is controversy among scientists about it. It's based on cherry picking the very few scientists who disagree.

### Tip #6

Have modest expectations. People's thoughts on complex matters do not change instantly. You are trying to convey your concern, and a few facts that back up that concern. And, you really are trying to understand how others view the topic.

**BONUS TIP:** Now that you've had a peaceful conversation, congratulate and toast yourselves that there were no arguments!