

**The Future we Choose**  
**Surviving the Climate Crisis**

**By Christiana Figueres and Tom Rivett-Carnac**

This book is a heartfelt invitation for everyone to be a part of the solution to the problem of climate change. It is written by the main architect of the Paris Climate Agreement and her political advisor. The theme that runs through the book is “chose.” We chose to be educated about climate change. We chose to do something about it. We chose to be optimistic and hopeful. We chose to change our habits. We chose to engage with the systemic causes of climate change. Ultimately, we chose to tap into the power of human ingenuity, will and concern for others to steer the ship of our species away from disaster.

Basic statistics are presented to set the scene. Then the authors effectively bring the impacts of those statistics to life by telling two stories. The first story describes the world in 2050 with no changes, business as usual. It is a dire situation. They describe the air, the food, the sense of despair. The second story describes the world in 2050 with Paris Agreement goals in place. They describe a hopeful, realistic (but not idealistic) view of a healthy planet – many trees, big cities with nature all around, rooftop gardens, walkable cities, fewer roads and cars, more electric trains. A real sense of community is imagined.

With those possible settings presented, the reader is asked to choose the future they want.

We have the technology and capital to bring about a safe future, but without the will of the people and governments, it won't happen. We are lucky and honored to be alive when we can make a difference to the future. Before jumping into how to tackle this immediate, worldwide problem though, the authors have us take a breath and make sure we have the tools to handle the long road ahead. It is a refreshing and empowering exercise to reflect on our attitudes and change our mind sets. They explain the importance of relying on a healthy sense of stubborn optimism, of living from a sense of abundance where it is possible for everyone to win, and drawing on the practice of mindfulness to continually replenish our spirit.

Given the possible attitudes, we choose who we want to be.

Next, practical actions are presented and surprisingly, the first few deal with allowing for an ecological change of heart and mind. By letting go of some expectations, we have room and energy to tackle actions that use our hands, education, citizenship and money.

The authors conclude with the call for a new story, “when the story changes, everything changes.” Prior to a lengthy section of notes with references to all the factual statements made, the authors summarize some very practical actions that can be done immediately, in the near future, within the year, by 2030 and by 2050. They challenge the reader to develop a specific plan to reduce emissions by more than 50% by 2030. And, to share that plan with someone else so we are accountable.

The reader is left with a sense of noble responsibility, not out of a sense of duty, but out of a sense of honor. We now see that we are fortunate to be here, to be part of the solution. Instead of answering the question of “what did you do?” with “all we could,” we are now emboldened to answer “everything necessary.”

Submitted by Janet Broderick