

Welcome to this week's presentation & conversation hosted by the **Canadian Association for the Club of Rome**, a Club dedicated to intelligent debate & action on global issues.

The views and opinions expressed in this presentation are those of the speaker & do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of CACOR.

## How to Live in a Chaotic Climate.

Our speaker today is LaUra Schmidt. She is the founder of the Good Grief Network and the brain behind the “10-Steps to Resilience & Empowerment in a Chaotic Climate” program. She is a lifelong student, curator, and practitioner of personal and collective resilience strategies. LaUra's new book on eco-distress, *How to Live in a Chaotic Climate: 10 Steps to Reconnect with Ourselves, Our Communities, and Our Planet*, is available through Shambhala Publications.

### DESCRIPTION:

The world is full of disruption, turmoil, and trauma. It can feel easier to shut down, avoid, or distract ourselves to avoid the pain of living through what Francis Weller calls "The Long Dark." This talk will provide a pathway to open-heartedness, connection, and generative action that is not outcome dependent.

CACOR acknowledges that we all benefit from sharing the traditional territories of local Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Métis, & Inuit in Canada) and their descendants.



Website: [canadiancor.com](http://canadiancor.com)

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2023 Dec 13 Zoom #175

CACOR

# How to Live in a Chaotic Climate

LaUra Schmidt, Founding Director



[goodgriefnetwork.org](http://goodgriefnetwork.org)

# What is Good Grief Network (GGN)?

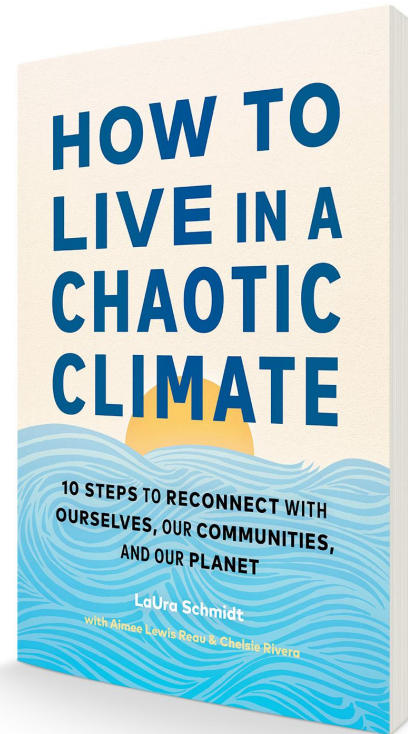
- **GGN creates spaces** where people gather in community, process the painful feelings and realities of our time, and orient our lives toward meaningful action
- Facilitates support groups;  
**peer-to-peer model**
  - 10-Steps, Journaling Program, Facilitation Trainings, GGN-Z, Workshops/Webinars
- +75 facilitators trained in 15 countries
- Mentioned In/Covered By: Time Magazine, NBC, CBS, USA Today, Today Show, NY Times, LA Times, Forbes, Washington Post, CBC, and more

# *How to Live in a Chaotic Climate:*

*10 Steps to  
Reconnect with  
Ourselves,  
Our Communities  
& Our Planet*

[goodgriefnetwork.org/book](https://goodgriefnetwork.org/book)

*“How to Live In A Chaotic Climate offers not merely perceptions but nuts and bolts practices for living with passion, compassion, and purpose as we navigate the present moment and a future that we probably can’t even fathom in real time.” —Carolyn Baker*



## [How to Live in a Chaotic Climate Book Trailer](#)



# An invitation to embodiment

“The time has come for us to reimagine everything.” —Grace Lee Boggs

- We don't need more knowledge/information/studies
- Need reconnection: our inner worlds, people, and the more-than-human world
- Need to reintegrate our thinking brain with our bodies/sensations/feelings/intuition
- Slow down. Pause. Willingness to feel it all.

# Complex Predicament

**Interconnected problems** of the climate emergency, rampant social justice issues, vast income inequality, ecocide, war, & more...

Vanessa Machado de Oliveira, *Hospicing Modernity: Facing Humanity's Wrongs and the Implications for Social Activism*:

**problems** - “things that can actually or potentially be fixed”

**predicaments** - “things that must constantly be dealt with, won't be solved, and won't go away.”

“There is a difference between something **complicated** that can be sorted with careful planning or engineering (e.g., a long car trip with toddlers) and something **complex** that is moving, multidimensional, and largely unruly, unmanageable, and unpredictable (e.g., raising children).”

How do we be with a complex predicament?

# The Long Dark

- Francis Weller:  
psychotherapist, writer, and  
soul activist
- Time of endings, breakdown,  
sheddings, composting
- Certain things can only  
happen in the dark
- Alchemical transformation



# Weller's Questions

- How do we become skillful in navigating our walk in the dark?
- How do we cultivate imagination?
- How do we cultivate collaboration?
- How do we cultivate fields of reciprocity with the Earth, within human and more-than-human communities, so that we're not extracting more than what can be replenished?
- How do we cultivate the spiritual values of restraint and mutuality?

# **FUNERAL FOR A FUTURE**

**by Brooke McNamara**

**I held a funeral for a future  
I had always thought was coming,  
and buried the world's face as yet.  
The silence then  
turned me so tiny  
the only way forward was to dream  
downward  
to an early day on earth  
before a single heart beat.  
The atmosphere filled  
with an abiding, cataclysmic knowing —  
that if everything  
could be born,**

**every  
thing  
could  
be  
born.**

**Love promises no less.  
But a future is gone now.  
All we are is this.  
Our way could be  
to fall toward the medicine  
seeded right inside  
the untamable, fertile grief  
remaking things.**

# Importance of Community

**“Rarely, if ever, are any  
of us healed in isolation.  
Healing is an act of  
communion.”  
—bell hooks**

- We cannot do it alone
- Support
- Breaking patterns, living into new (& ancient) ways of being
- Connection & Safety:  
Attunement and  
Co-regulation
- Idea generation

“Acceptance does not mean surrender. It does not mean resignation. Acceptance means I am finally available to the entire spectrum of creative response.”

—Trebbe Johnson, *Radical Joy For Hard Times*

Accept the Severity  
of the Predicament

- Require spaces to “get real about it”
- Systems aren’t serving most people/planet as a whole
- Aim is to exist between unrealistic optimism and overwhelming pessimism
- “If we do not figure out how to **acknowledge the reality** that we are **experiencing great losses**, and if we do not find ways to witness each other as we **grieve** and **hold the tenderness of being alive during a pandemic, civil unrest, systemic oppression and climate change**, we will **continue to harm one another**. If we **stuff our tears** down into our bodies, **repressing what most needs to be expressed**, we will **die from broken hearts and unprocessed grief**.”

– Michelle Cassandra Johnson, *Finding Refuge: Heart Work for Healing Collective Grief*

# Be With Uncertainty

**“No one can possibly know what is about to happen: it is happening, each time, for the first time, for the only time.” —James Baldwin**

- Certainty is an illusion
  - Privilege for those who the systems are working for
- Choices about how to be in these times
- Universal human experience, though uncertainty impacts us differently depending on the bodies we inhabit, the cultures we exist in, and the places we live
- Let go of outcomes; Connect with values & be with the present moment

**“A civilization that denies death  
ends by denying life.”**

**—Octavio Paz**

## **Honor Our Mortality & The Mortality of All**

- Dying is normal/natural/healthy part of all life cycles
- Tension between natural death/injustices
- How do we honor death as a teacher?
- Courage to keep hearts open during so much loss

**“If you begin to understand what you are without trying to change it, then what you are undergoes a transformation.”**

**—Jiddu Krishnamurti**

**Do Inner Work**

- **Feel full range of feelings**
  - We are not necessarily thinking machines. We are feeling machines that think.  
—Antonio Damasio, MD, PhD
- **Engage in trauma healing**
- **Build distress tolerance** - the ability to be with discomfort without engaging survival responses  
Resmaa Menakem - like reps @ gym, we build the muscle

**“Your assumptions are your windows on the world. Scrub them off every once in a while, or the light won't come in.”**

—Isaac Asimov

## **Develop Awareness of Biases & Perception**

- Permission to be wrong
- Limited perception & ways of knowing
  - Cognitive biases, cultural/familial biases, limited sensory awareness
- Cultivate curiosity & openness
  - What else is true?
- Humility & compassion



# Practice Gratitude, Witness Beauty, & Create Connections

“The more clearly we can focus our attention on the wonders and realities of the universe about us, the less taste we shall have for destruction.”

—Rachel Carson

- Resilience Strategies always available to us
- Gateways to meaning & joy
- Noticing what’s still here
- Present moment awareness
- What are the “whys” that help us hold on during tough times?
  - Viktor Frankl, psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor, taught that those who have a “why” to live, can endure almost any “how.”

# Take Breaks & Rest

**“Caring for myself is not a self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.” —Audre Lorde, A Burst of Light**

- **Rest is a human right**
- **(Dr. Dalton-Smith) 7 types of rest: physical, mental, sensory, creative, emotional, social, and spiritual**
- **Bayo Akomolafe: “The times are urgent; let us slow down.”**
- **Requires community care: Be a part of the band**

**“Walls turned sideways  
are bridges.”**

**—Angela Davis**

**Grieve the  
Harm I Have  
Caused**

- We're all harm doers & harm receivers
- Power over systems create impossible choices
- Slow down to tap into our grief and heal by moving toward accountability, remorse & repair
- Realize intergenerational trauma
- Transformation starts within

**“The moment that you feel that, just possibly, you're walking down the street naked, exposing too much of your heart and your mind and what exists on the inside, showing too much of yourself... That's the moment you may be starting to get it right.”**

**—Neil Gaiman**

**Show Up**

- Invitation into authenticity & vulnerability
- Where is our energy best placed?
- Why are we showing up?
- What is our quality of showing up?
- What are our personal/collective boundaries?
- How are we showing up for your community?

# Reinvest in Meaningful Action

"Ours is not the task of fixing the entire world all at once, but of stretching out to mend the part of the world that is within our reach." —Clarissa Pinkola Estés

- **What openness/energy/insight is available now that we've gone through the other Steps?**
- **Compassionate/Insightful Actions**
- **Superpowers: Intersection of skills, passions, experiences**
- **Generative actions - live-giving, healing, connection**

# The Arc of the 10 Steps

## 10 STEPS TO RESILIENCE & EMPOWERMENT IN A CHAOTIC CLIMATE

- 1 Accept the Severity of the Predicament
- 2 Be With Uncertainty
- 3 Honor My Mortality & the Mortality of All
- 4 Do Inner Work
- 5 Develop Awareness of Biases & Perception
- 6 Practice Gratitude, Witness Beauty, & Create Connections
- 7 Take Breaks & Rest
- 8 Grieve the Harm I Have Caused
- 9 Show Up
- 10 Reinvest in Meaningful Efforts

# What's Next

“When you're in the middle of a big adventure, you don't have time to decide whether you're hopeful or hopeless; all your energy should be right here, in the moment.”

—Joanna Macy

- **We don't know - we've never been here before**
- **Stay open/curious/connected**
- **Planting seeds for new paradigms that are just & life-focused**
  - **What comes after The Long Dark?**
  - **What embodied knowing are we carrying?**
  - **No answer in this lifetime, what are our values, what are we committed to?**

# Practices: Grounding Exercises

- **We're always practicing something**
- **Helping us know our nervous system**
- **Allows for response instead of reactivity**



# Types of Ground Exercises

## **Mindfulness/Meditation:**

Tonglen Meditation

Lovingkindness Meditation

## **Orientation Exercises:**

5-4-3-2-1 senses exercise

Naming types of categories (types of dogs)

## **Embodiment Exercises:**

Butterfly Hug

Chair Yoga

Body Scan

## **Breathing Exercises:**

4-7-8 breathing

Box breathing

## **Exploratory Exercises:**

Journaling

Identifying your resources

# Upcoming Offerings

- 2024 10-Step programs:  
<https://www.goodgriefnetwork.org/10steps/>
- FLOW Facilitation Training:  
<https://www.goodgriefnetwork.org/flowtraining/>
- Rest of Activism Membership Program:  
<https://www.climateemergence.co.uk/rest-of-activism-membership>

Discount code LAURA50 for £15/month.

# Links & Connection with GGN

- **Instagram:** @GoodGriefNetwork  
@HowtoLiveinaChaoticClimate
- **Twitter:** @GoodGriefNetwk
- **Facebook:** Good Grief Network
- **Mighty Networks:**  
[goodgriefnetwork.mn.co/feed](http://goodgriefnetwork.mn.co/feed)
- **LinkedIn:**  
[linkedin.com/company/good-grief-network/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/good-grief-network/)  
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/laura3schmidt/>
- **Spotify Playlist:**  
[www.goodgriefnetwork.org/howtoliveplaylist](http://www.goodgriefnetwork.org/howtoliveplaylist)
- **Book Trailer:**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZB7Vk5qs8AY&t=4s>

On Another Panel About Climate, They Ask Me to  
Sell The Future and All I've Got Is A Love Poem

Written by Ayisha Siddiq

What if the future is soft and revolution is so kind  
that there is no end to us in sight.

Whole cities breathe and bad luck is bested by a  
promise to the leaves.

To withstand your own end is difficult.

The future frolics about, promised to no one, as is  
her right.

Rage against injustice makes the voice grow harsher  
yet.

If the future leaves without us, the silence that will  
follow will be an unspeakable nothing.

What if we convince her to stay?

How rare and beautiful it is that we exist.

What if we stun existence one more time?

When I wake up, get out of bed, my seven year old  
cousin

with her ruptured belly tags along.

Then follows my grandmother, aunts, my other cousins  
and the violent shape of their drinking water.

The earth remembers everything,  
our bodies are the color of the earth and we  
are nobodies.

Been born from so many apocalypses, what's one  
more?

Love is still the only revenge. It grows each time the  
earth is set on fire.

But for what it's worth, I'd do this again.  
Gamble on humanity one hundred times over

Commit to life unto life, as the trees fall and take us  
with them.

I'd follow love into extinction.

Questions,  
Comments,  
Reflections



*"Ours is not the task of fixing the  
entire world all at once, but of  
stretching out to mend the part of  
the world that is within our reach."*

**—Clarissa Pinkola Estés**

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