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Anya Kamanetz: I embarked on a journalistic career as a person who was very idealistic. And in college, I came from a creative family. My father's a poet. My mother's a novelist. But I also had this very strong drive towards social justice and really transforming the world. Journalism emerged to me as a place where I could meet both of those ideas at the same time.

And I also had this—I mean, I smile to sort of think about it—but I studied in college the new journalists, you know, the folks of the late 60s, early 70s, like Joan Didion, Tom Wolfe—was that Tom Wolfe? Tom Wolfe to a certain extent. I mean, Joan Didion was my hero, but yeah, I mean, Hunter S. Thompson, people that showed up as themselves and who were chronicling, but also being a part of this immense cultural and political transformation, right?

And I also took Russian for four years and I was captivated by the Silver Age and the poets and writers who became dissidents really because the world changed, right? The dawn of the Soviet era. And they found that they were poets, they were interested in art, but their work had become political and they found themselves in almost a sacred position of needing to bear witness.

So these are very lofty ideas, but the basic idea is you want to be a writer and have a craft, and you also want to have a service to the world or be a part of something through that craft.

And so in journalism, of course, it meets reality and you find yourself doing a whole bunch of different things. And I had some successes and I was, you know, close to 40 and thinking more and more about climate change, and couldn't quite figure out how to combine my work.

At that time, I was a beat reporter. I was a national correspondent for National Public Radio for eight years covering education. And the way that NPR is very old school, right? The way it's laid out—I think it's almost a unique institution in America in the sense that it is the media business. In terms of radio, in terms of audio, that's the game.

So most people start as interns and stay there for their whole careers because you get to a certain point and there's nowhere else to go. That has changed with the advent of podcasting—it's changed massively—but that's how it had been. And by a similar token, people don't come in because if you've built a print career, you don't necessarily have that audio experience. It's a different kind of storytelling, a different set of technical skills.

So I came in late. I came in at 33. And so I had to kind of learn things from the ground up. And I started in a different way than other people because they had actually hired me as a writer originally because they were trying to figure out the whole digital thing.

Long story short, I'd been there for eight years. It was a really traditionally organized place, very traditional rules around your political expression outside of work. It was a time I was there during Black Lives Matter to Trump's first election. We had covered Parkland, school shootings—and not saying how I felt about what was happening in the world seemed increasingly kind of stifling and difficult.

And I had all of these feelings about what was happening in the world. Didn't really feel like I had a way to talk about them. And that really was what built the foundation for me figuring out that I needed to separate from that way of working and do a different thing.

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Matthew Green: But it sounds like you had—my hearing is that you had a relatively smooth transition out. Because in my own experience at Reuters, I had a pretty painful experience where I realized that I just couldn't stay any longer. And it was certainly one of the most difficult periods of my career.

And maybe it had to be like that because if it hadn't been that way, I may have stayed. I almost felt like I was spat out. I did resign, but I honestly felt chewed up and spat out. I left before I felt I was going to be pushed.

But it sounds like you had a slightly more genteel recognition that it was time to move on—or maybe I'm missing something.

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Anya Kamanetz: I'm talking about the internal process. It was 2019 when I hired a career coach and I was thinking about my next steps. Then the pandemic hit.

What happened was the pandemic created a coda to my experience at NPR. It was incredibly intense. I was covering school closures. All of a sudden, it was a national story. It was rocketed to the top.

We went from producing three or four stories a month—and our stories were considered feature stories, like “that’s a cute story with kids in it”—to suddenly: we need you on the morning show three days this week because this is happening.

And so I felt wanted. I felt urgent. And I felt it was incredibly intense. Of course, I also had my own children at home—they were three and eight years old—so we were juggling them, putting them in front of screens, trying to make it work between me and my husband, both working from home.

So it was just a sprint. But I liked the intensity, and I felt like I'm here for a purpose. I have a set of contacts and knowledge that is preparing me very well for this moment.

And I also reported and wrote a book at the same time. I had an editor who was really supportive—we'd done two books together before—and he said, this is really important what's happening now. It's happening to kids around the country, you're in a position to tell this story right now.

So I started following a group of five families throughout the first year of the pandemic.

And after all of that was done—the pandemic was winding down—my editor knew that I was bored, and he knew that I wanted to work overseas.

I had a proposal to cover a big initiative around refugee education. And he said: great, you can take six months if you want. Basically, I'll give you whatever you want if you stay—but you have to take NPR's hostile environment training.

The next one was in four months. So March 2022, there I was at hostile environment training. Putin had just invaded Ukraine. Everyone else at the training is going to Ukraine.

I had taken four years of Russian in college, so I thought—hmm, I wonder if they would send me to Ukraine. I put my name in, and they sent me in May 2022.

That was an incredible experience. You've done war reporting—this was the baby level—but it was still very intense. And it also solidified my decision to leave, because I saw how ill-supported everyone felt.

You were there with career people—25 years at NPR—and they still felt the same frustrations: lack of leadership, lack of vision, lack of safety. It was very ad hoc. Unclear sometimes why we were doing certain stories.

And I thought: this is it. If you don't treat your war reporters better than your education reporters, then you don't treat people very well.

So I quit within a few weeks after coming back.

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Matthew Green: Wow. And did you already have a sense of what you were going to do when you left, or did you have to improvise?

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Anya Kamanetz: I did improvise. But I was lucky because I'd been laying the groundwork in different ways. It was the first time in my career that I had more of a sense of directives and a mission statement versus “what is the work you're going to be doing.”

So it wasn't like I was applying for jobs—I had been in conversation.

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Matthew Green: I'd love to pick up on that, because you've just named a distinction I hadn't articulated as clearly. When you work for a media organization, at some level you are told what to do.

You may have autonomy in your beat, but the values and worldview you operate within are not necessarily your own—you inhabit them within the institution.

And when you step outside, it all falls away. That can be disconcerting. I think that's why a lot of journalists don't leave—they're cocooned within this scaffolding, which is supportive but also confining.

So then the question becomes: what do I stand for? Where do I apply these skills?

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Anya Kamanetz: That's exactly right. And I had, in some form, that clash between my values and the values of the news organizations almost everywhere I had been.

I spent eight years at a business magazine. And while I covered sustainability and social entrepreneurship and a lot of interesting startups and smart people and cool ideas, I fundamentally thought it was bullshit.

I didn't think finance is good. I didn't think billionaires are good. And that attitude stopped me from becoming as successful as I could have been as a business reporter—because you have to take those people seriously on their own terms.

And if you're skeptical of capitalism as a system, it's going to show through.

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Matthew Green: Well, that's right. I mean, this is it, isn't it? When you go and work in an organization like that, you know, I worked at Reuters, obviously, and the Financial Times, very similar companies. I mean, you accept a certain set of propositions about how the world is and how things should be that you're not really invited to challenge. In fact, you're not allowed to challenge them. You operate within those constraints. And within those constraints, you can have what appears to be quite a lot of freedom if you're lucky. But there's a grey zone and then a hard edge that you don't cross over. And that's where it becomes interesting.

Anya Kamanetz: And if you want to know what people's values are, you look at where they spend their money and where they spend their time. And even in NPR, which has, I believe is a mission-driven organization on the mission-driven end of things, they spend their money and their time on politics and business. That's what they cover. That's what gets the time. That's what is updated at the top of the hour. So, you know, no matter how important they say, and as I got more and more sort of climate pilled, I was like, this is actually insane because the climate crisis is going to destroy your economy. Why are you not providing updates on PPM at the top of the hour? Why are we not leading every show with this? You know, it's way more important than what the Senate did today. It just, just on the terms, just to your own terms, whether you're talking about power, political order or economics, it is more important.

And so that that felt crazy to me. And it started to undermine my ability to be invested in school stories, which also are, you know, they go in cycles. And I have after 20 years covering

education, I've been through many, many posts on that cycle. And so it's very hard to bring the same energy to that coverage.

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Matthew Green: Yeah. I want to just pause on what you said about climate, because it's exactly the way I felt. And I mean, this was 2019. Actually, 2018, I rejoined Reuters and I worked on a big project on the impact of rising ocean temperatures on marine life and communities, which was actually a really amazing period in my career in many ways. I look back on that very fondly. And then I was hired as a climate correspondent in 2019, which was, of course, when there was a huge upsurge in climate activism, Extinction Rebellion in the UK, Greta Thunberg was all over the news. And there was a real sense that this was a moment.

And as you say, like when you're like your climate pills, when you actually ingest the science and integrate that understanding, It shakes your world. And then you have to go into an office where it's, oh, climate's just another sort of story down the agenda somewhere. It's like an environment story. It's a science story. And there's no capacity or even real interest in the organization actually responding to the implications of what you're writing. And that was exactly the position I found myself in. And it was super uncomfortable and became untenable. actually.

Anya Kamanetz: 100%. And it led me directly to where I am now in two different ways. Fundamentally, it's like, well, why aren't people grokking this? Why aren't they paying attention or really ingesting it? I think it's because it's really scary. And it's also earth shattering. I mean, it is destroying of your worldview. And people don't want to do that. Right? And so that's why I think a lot about the mental health. And like, that's why I think about the emotional aspect of the climate crisis, because we have to kind of deal with it.

The second thing that happened was in terms of like, where's my position here in this, in terms of everything I've done in my career, was the 2021 Lancet study by Carolyn Hickman and others showing that, you know, of 10,000 young people around the world, 75% believe the future was frightening. And I devoted so much of my work to talking about what young people need and how to promote their well-being. It snapped for me into place that this is actually climate change is a youth well-being issue. It's a youth justice issue. And therefore, I have a position and a role to play in the stories that we tell about it. First of all, the emotional dimensions of climate change. Secondly, climate change as a youth, as I said, youth justice issue.

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Matthew Green: And so how did that translate into your current offering through your newsletter?

Anya Kamanetz: Yeah. So I've done a few different things. I was lucky when I first came out at 2022, there was a woman I'd met with a similar set of concerns who was starting at the Aspen Institute. An organizational effort to convene leaders in education around climate. So we had worked for her doing that. I also started working at Climate Mental Health Network in an advisory role, helping them work on communications.

And I started the I figured my next step was going to be a book. Um, and I had my same editor who was also getting, I, I actually helped climate pill him. He actually left publishing now he works in climate. Um, but he told me to start a sub stack. Um, and, uh, that's what I did. So in 2023, about a year after I got out.

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Matthew Green: And for those of the people listening to this who aren't familiar, could you say a little bit more about the principles that inform your work? Because you send these weekly updates, right? You're kind of, as I understand it, speaking to people who are actually so overwhelmed and turned off by the news that they've actually stopped engaging. And my sense is that you're kind of inviting people that audience back by presenting news in a slightly different way from perhaps how we probably were both serving it up when we worked for these huge organizations.

Anya Kamanetz: Yes, absolutely. So I have two offerings in the newsletter. I have a weekly essay, which processes what's going on through this lens of being trauma-informed, emotionally intelligent, but also dealing with the things that we have to deal with each day. And sometimes it's about you know, children and parenting in the midst of global crises is about how we manage our emotions and relationship to disasters like the fires in Los Angeles or the ongoing disaster in Gaza. So that's sort of my writing aspect.

And then starting with the inauguration, On the inauguration day, I published a piece called What Really Happened on January 20th. And it was a catalog of events that people weren't paying attention to because they were paying attention to this obviously enormous event. And many of them were positive, like the release of Leonard Pelletier, the Native American activist who was pardoned by Biden after Biden. I don't know how many years framed for a murder. And then people really responded to that.

And I followed on with some work that I'd actually, a piece that I'd, based on research I'd done for a long time ago, reporting on media literacy. And it was really just about how I approach reading the news and understanding how you qualify your responses to what's going on and how you manage those feelings and not to get overwhelmed. And so that piece did really well. And I decided to do a weekly news roundup.

And in that roundup, I am trying to just as much as I can help people read the news the way that I read the news, but in a more controlled way. I mean, I read the news voraciously and sometimes more than I should, but the filters that I apply based on these principles of media literacy, you know, is this a real event or is it a pseudo event, right? Is it something we're going to forget about in a week, like a press conference, or is it an actual event? What are the impacts on real people? What are they right now? Is this happening right now or is this speculative?

You know, we can really you know, we need it's not like you should never look ahead, but it's important to think about what's really happening versus, oh, who might get elected mayor of New York City? Well, that's an interesting story. There's a lot going on. So let's not worry about who might get elected.

And then, you know, I try to cover a little bit more of. Obviously, we've had to deal with a massive onslaught on the Constitution, on federal workers, on science. But I do try to mix in some of the global responses. Americans are very bad at following global news. And then the climate as well, because the climate doesn't care about who's president, except to the extent that he can cause more damage or help.

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But actually, one of the interesting things, and I wonder what you think about this, is the looking at how it seems like the energy transition has picked up enough momentum that Trump's policies may not slow it down as much as feared. Do you find that to be the case?

Matthew Green: Well, I love the question because I think I'm not following it blow by blow in the US to give like a perfectly polished analyst answer on that. But I think at a high level, Thinking about the energy transition as a technology transition is super helpful. You may have come across the work of Kingsmill Bond, who was an analyst that used to work in banks back in the day as a financier. And then he moved to Carbon Tracker, which was a think tank that made its name more than 10 years ago now, before the Paris Agreement, or maybe around that time earlier. arguing that huge amounts of the oil and gas reserves of fossil fuel companies could never be burned and therefore represented a huge financial risk to their investors, the carbon bubble.

So he kind of moved from working in finance to pointing out or to really pointing out the speed of the energy transition and the implications. And I was talking to him recently and he said exactly this, that we need to frame the transition as a technology transition. Because talking about climate obviously is polarizing. And even energy transition now has become politicized. And you have people, farmers putting up solar panels, receiving death threats in certain parts of the US because the amount of disinformation and propaganda that's being pumped out online. But technology is a far more neutral term. And technology. So I believe that actually it is a

technology transition. It's moving so fast. It's getting so cheap that it's going to be impossible really to hold this back.

So I think I really appreciate what I'm hearing is your desire to give your readers the signal rather than the noise around this, because you can hear the headlines and think that Trump has slammed on a brake on the transition. But I don't believe that that is the case on the ground.

Anya Kamanetz: I agree. And I think that we talked about sort of what is the purpose of journalism or how it's perceived. And I think that part of this ability to step back and work independently has been reflecting on the practices of journalism that are designed to produce more anguish and more distress in the name of engagement.

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Matthew Green: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Well, I mean, if it bleeds, it leads, right? I mean, I was told that very early on in my career. And I guess what's really inspiring to me is how I feel like you found a way of you're producing a bulletin, essentially, which on the surface is very parallel to what NPR or Reuters or other organizations do. But it's coming through you, through your own sensibility, through your own sensitivity. And it's that, as I suspect, what your readers can sense and feel into. And that's why it's growing. And that's why you're getting beautiful feedback from grateful readers who've, as I've read on your sub stack, you know, who've kind of come back to the news as a result of what you're offering.

And it's a it's like that to me is very heartening that a journalist can kind of extricate themselves from the machinery of the media industrial complex and produce this kind of almost like bespoke cottage industry version of the news. But I guess that's the question, isn't it? Like, is there some way to take this model? this discovery that you've made and others like you are also kind of working on and bring it back into the old system and somehow reform it? Or is it a case of, as Buckminster Fuller said, you know, forget about fighting the old system. We just need to crack on with building the new one.

Anya Kamanetz: Well, it's really interesting. I mean, I can, for my old world, which is covering education, there's a constant sort of struggle where people chafe at the strictures of the public system. And it's a machine, it's a factory, it's mass producing people. And then they want to pull apart and they want to make their own micro school interventions or home, you know, radical and experiments. And they're very beautiful people. But they're not as accessible. You're right. They're not publicly supported in the same way. And so people don't have union protections. They don't have health insurance. They don't they can't make a career out of it.

And it's very similar. I mean, cottage industries are not not not as that's why they're cottage industries. And so for me, I mean, I'm cobbling together a living here, to be clear. And I don't have health insurance like I did at NPR. I don't have travel funds. I don't have a lawyer to call if I

get into trouble on something I reported. And there, you know, and I don't have a social media person to help me.

So I do see this as a transitional mode and I think that there hopefully needs to be new structures that arise. Maybe they'll be more horizontal where people, you know, together and together cultivate audience together, cultivate subscriptions. And I would, you know, there's some very successful examples out there already. And a lot of them have followed this model. Tim Mack, who I was with in Ukraine, left NPR, stayed in Ukraine, started a substop counteroffensive and employs young Ukrainian reporters to cover the human side of the war and does it really successfully. So he has built, you know, he's taken it from cottage industry to small business. And I think that's a wonderful model.

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Matthew Green: Wow. I hadn't actually heard about that, but that's incredible. I'll obviously add a link in to that. And yeah, I mean, I guess the impetus of this conversation is partly to build these horizontal networks. And I do always enjoy being in conversations with fellow, I don't know, are we refugees, exiles, or maybe pioneers?

Anya Kamanetz: Yeah. That's another way to think about it. You know, we like I certainly knew that I couldn't stay where I was and I'm feeling my way through this new landscape. But there's something also very exciting about that frontier spirit and building something and creating something new.

Matthew Green: And I'd love to hear a little bit more as well about your work around. the climate and our, our emotional psycho spiritual responses to the crisis. Cause I should name that. It was a Brit Ray who connected us originally, who, uh, is familiar to many readers of resonant world who wrote an amazing book called gen generations read about climate anxiety um and obviously also runs the unthinkable times newsletter which explores these topics um i mean it's also obviously as a former well i'm and i still now work in climate at the smog um as an editor uh as a former climate correspondent at reuters as well i'm very familiar with reality of the situation and at the same time we're now in this totally new landscape in the us in this authoritarian moment which is rightly taking everyone's attention and it can just feel like crisis on top of crisis so i mean i've been almost pushing the climate crisis out of my mind over the last five or six months i recognize that

Because I've found a whole set of other things to worry about. But I'm curious about where you are in your own process of finding out how to live and work through the situation that we're in on all those levels.

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Anya Kamanetz: Yeah, yeah. Well, first of all, really big fan of Britt's work, really inspired by her, you know, her position and the kinds of interventions that she's making in this world. And just everyone that I've gotten to know in the field of eco psychology, climate emotions have all been so generous and so interested in, you know, advancing the conversation, including yourself. So I just appreciate that very much. I.

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Anya Kamanetz: So how to answer this question. First of all, is climate fading into the background? This is why I really use the term polycrisis, and I find it really helpful just to understand. And polycrisis, you know, Adam Tooze, right, The Economist, I think, has popularized it. The World Economic Forum every year produces a risk map. And it shows, you know, these entangled and mutually reinforcing crises. Conflict, resource, resource conflict, armed conflict, just extreme weather, the other, you know, direct disruptions of food supply. Then you have the economic, you know, distress and inequality happening. And you have information, you know, AI risks and technological risks. And also I would include within the polycrisis, the nest of snakes, as you will, there is the crisis of meaning, the crisis of information, crisis of knowledge and crisis of meaning. So isolation, the mental health problems, the people that are endemic, deaths of despair, you know, and addiction and that kind of thing.

So the reason I find it helpful, while it's a huge, it's an enormous bummer, it's a very, very big bummer. It is helpful to understand that it's always, climate is always there. It is entangled and mutually reinforcing. Many of these other ills have been with us since time immemorial, but climate has a timeline that makes it different. And it's part of what makes this time feel different.

And so when I think about our feelings in relationship to the climate crisis, I really think much more now in terms of our feelings in relationship to polycrisis, because this is about how we as a species and as individuals deal with collective existential risk, which we also perceive differently, I would argue, than previous generations. because of our information environment and the technologies that connect us and that are algorithmically designed to surface the most disturbing possible thing to you 24-7.

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Matthew Green: That's why we need to be reading The Golden Hour instead, right? Because it's a little bit more titrated, at least, right?

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Anya Kamanetz: I do think in terms of titration, I think in terms of permeability, I think in terms of having a really, the type of metabolism you can have for this type of information, you know, I don't think that limiting it alone is the answer. I think there's a lot of people that will tell you to

take breaks from the news and I think that's fine, but actually knowing what's going to happen can be really helpful or having some sense of what might happen. Even though, you know, I don't wanna talk too much about speculation, but I think just being relaxed about our reactions and having a space for them, I find to be enormously helpful.

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Anya Kamanetz: And I often present that to people in the terms of their loved ones and especially their children and grandchildren, because a lot of people are forced to confront the enormity of the terrible things in the world by their children's fresh horror. We are inured.

And I remember just as a very small example, walking with my toddler by a bus shelter, and there is an unfortunate soul slumped by the bus shelter. And my child who just learned to walk goes over to him with this concerned face, puts her hand on his little knee, her little hand on his knee and just is like, what's wrong here? And of course she's right. Why in this country do we have people that have to sleep outside? It's a terrible problem, but we all learn not to look until children show this.

And their reaction to climate as they learn about it, as they learn about environmental destruction does show us how to feel about it. And a lot of parents are really in reeling from that and figuring out how to have that conversation. And my invitation is figure out how to manage it. Like do you can, you can manage it better than you think, and it will make your life better if you learn how to talk about this.

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Matthew Green: Wow. That's such a powerful, image that you just brought of your child your child consternation at something that we just take for granted and as you say we learn not to look yeah and i my daughter's seven and uh you know i'm dreading really the moment which is probably not that far off now where this starts to dawn on her.

And it's something that I find very difficult to contemplate. I mean, I recognize the wisdom in your words that we need to bring this into relationship in some way the answer is not to pretend it's not happening or because that's not a viable option but I'm also encouraged that you feel like there is a way to hold this and I wonder if you could say a bit more because obviously a big part of your work which we've only really just touched on is with is writing for parents and about obviously education as we've discussed but about that parent-child relationship so I'd love to hear you say more about this

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Anya Kamanetz: Sure, I mean, so yes, I actually, I'm doing a piece this week, which is really, the basics and sort of what I've refined from giving presentations and that sort of thing.

But so, you know, the first thing you kind of have to do is you have to put on your own oxygen mask and you have to have a place for your own climate emotions. And it sounds like you've done some of that, you know, have your support system and your child can't be the person that you talk to about these things. You have to have other people.

And then as you broach the subject with your kids, and this is a long project in parenting, how do we manage big emotions? What do we do? What do we do when we're sad? What do we do when you're angry? Do we know how to repair if there's a blow up, right? And that's, that's just a big task of parenting, right? So that we're not, you know, we're not undone by our children's expression of distress. We have to be able to help them co-regulate.

and then you kind of go in and you say like okay what do you know about climate change what do you think of when you hear this and can we talk about the basic facts together if you have any questions you know can we look something up can we watch a video um

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Anya Kamanetz: really important to talk about the solutions and what are people doing to help, right?

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Anya Kamanetz: We don't spend enough time talking with kids about the solutions.

The U.S., Aspen just released a survey of high school students, and they just have no clue about the major causes or about the solutions. Everybody mentions recycling, which is such a horrible failure of our yeah education system

Matthew Green: that's extraordinary in 2025 i mean that is pretty extraordinary isn't it it really is it really is so i mean i remember learning about this when i was 10 probably you know i can i can remember being worried about climate change on my way to the junior school i i can vividly remember

And I'm not saying that's a commentary on the UK system versus the US, but because I'm sure there's many in the UK who also are, who also are behind, but it's pretty amazing, isn't it?

Anya Kamanetz: Well, it's, you know, because kids don't just learn in school, they're learning from lots of different things. And the media, go back to if it bleeds it leads, media spends way more time talking about the problem, which they don't spend enough time talking about, but then versus the solutions, the actual changes that are happening have happened in just the last five years.

And I remember I was a couple of years ago, you know, I was in a high school in the Bronx where they'd done an amazing job teaching about environmental justice. They had taught a David Wallace Wells article, which is, you know, based around the uninhabitable earth times. And I said, but did you know that actually in the last five years, projections have been revised downward and these like apocalyptic six degree scenarios are thought to be less likely. And now we're looking at three degrees, which is still really terrible, but the progress is amazing. And they had no idea. I mean, they learned one piece of it, but they hadn't learned the other piece.

So talking to our kids about solutions, who is working on the solutions, where are the helpers, right? Really important, really important. And I don't want to say it softens the blow, but it's complimentary because we do want to have space for our kids and for ourselves to say quite honestly you know what it does make me sad that we're not getting as much snow in the winter I miss the snow and it's okay if you miss the snow it's it's it makes me worried I'm not really sure what's going to happen and I am and you know and not that you they see you completely being a mess but they you can empathize and you're not shutting them down because these feelings are okay their feelings about climate change are not the problem climate change is the problem and so we're

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Matthew Green: Yeah, please. No, actually, as you were speaking, I was remembering that when I was, and this is going back to the first part of our conversation, when I was leaving Reuters, it was a dilemma because actually, I mean, although this might sound like a tempting fate, it was quite a secure job and it was a well-paid job and it had the kind of benefits that you mentioned as well about NPR.

And I realized that it was not going to be possible to cover the climate story in the way that I felt was Reuters responsibility, actually, at this point in time. Could I continue and take the check and be complicit in that failure? Or would I leave?

And... leaving definitely did involve a pay cut and it definitely involved the loss of status on a one level because i mean let's face it when i tell people that i work at DeSmog unless they were in the climate well most of them look at me blankly and have no idea what i'm talking about which isn't the case when you're working for huge organizations that everybody knows so there are a lot there are there is a cost to following that um that or responding to that principle but i remember thinking actually

Working at DeSmog, I can actually, when Matilda is old enough to understand this, I can tell her, well, actually, yeah, I work for an organization that is actively recognizes the problem and is doing its best to illuminate the forces that are standing in the way of the solutions that we know are necessary. I mean, whether I'm still working at DeSmog by the time she's old enough to have

this conversation, I don't know. But even as I was leaving, three years ago, I was really thinking, actually, yeah, I can look my daughter in the eye, at least at some level.

I mean, there's a collective element to this, which is a whole nother piece, but it was definitely part of my own logic that it would be better to suffer the short-term pain and inconvenience and the anxiety that goes with that loss of status and security, quote unquote. It was worth it if I could say, actually I did, I acted on principle because I acted according to what I knew was true.

Yeah. Which was the great invitation of extinction rebellion in the UK, like act like it's true. Cause it is true. And what can we do? I mean, it's hardly, you know, me joining these more, it's not going to reduce the concentration of CO2 in the earth's atmosphere, but at least I can feel like I'm aligned with the truth.

Anya Kamanetz: Very much, very much. And I mean, I think that's obviously, having children, not having children doesn't make you a more moral person, but the invitation to parents in this crisis is to take action. And as you said, transform your life so that you can look your children in the eye.

And I believe that a lot of the distress that parents express around this is because they expend energy in distancing themselves from the reality rather than facing up to it, which would require that they change their lives. I mean, I'm still on the edge of that. I've changed my life in certain ways. There's other changes I haven't been willing or able to make. But if we're having an honest conversation with our kids about the climate crisis, it's going to lead to action.

[00:42:30]

Matthew Green: Yeah, and maybe there's opportunities there in all kinds of ways that are only beginning to be explored.

And my hope is that the kind of work you're doing is creating the conditions where that is more likely because your work is providing a framework that can encourage parents to move towards the discomfort rather than dissociate or turn away.

And that's the first prerequisite for something else to start to emerge out of this situation because it is a situation we've not been in before. We don't know how we're gonna respond. And in any system, there's always that moment where there's a tipping point where the system shifts very rapidly from one state to another, where novelty begins to appear around the edges in unexpected ways.

And I feel like by moving out of the big... system that you were in with its compartmentalization and kind of rigid or its rigidity. You're in a much more fertile and emergent kind of environment. where you can play a role in really midwifing this process.

And I guess I'm trying to do the same in a slightly different way. It's a similar spirit that we can be, by leaving these big institutions, we can become available for something to happen that would not otherwise happen if we just stayed following the script.

[00:44:03]

Anya Kamanetz: I hope that you're right. I think that you're right. I know that there's been a lot of people in the last few years who have asked me for one-on-ones, reached out, acquaintances, friends of friends who want to know how I did it and how can they maybe do it, make their life more about climate or be more independent in both of these ways. And so you do see that change.

And it just struck me while you were saying this too, is in terms of intervention points for social transformation, journalism can be one and education can definitely be one. And you always see this. You certainly see with this authoritarian push, schools are in the crosshairs because the right wing in America understands very well and all fascist regimes have always understood that you need to remake the schools if you want to control society because you're really shaping young minds.

And I think that But I also think that the climate movement is very strong in education. Teachers recognize this and they're working in blue and red states and around the world to get this into schools because they believe that they are not preparing their children for the future if they don't. And so we as parents also, you know, we're complementary with other places that are trying to prepare our kids.

I mean, it's just small practice to not help have your kids understand the implications of the fact that we need to change our energy system and our economic system and how we make food and how we get from place to place. And by the time they're adults, it needs to be completely different. They need to understand that.

[00:45:47]

Matthew Green: Yeah, it's beautiful to hear how your years of reporting on the education beat and that impulse to bear witness and write about what you witnessed that you described at the beginning of our conversation has really evolved into this new configuration. which is allowing you to be in this role, this midwife role of this change that we can sense is necessary, even though we can't see the shape of it yet, but can perhaps feel emerging in some way and to be in that foment.

I think of like, is it the word, I think they're called ecotones or ecotones where two ecosystems converge. And it's always like the forest and the field or the, Freshwater and saltwater, that's all the edge of the ice. It's always the most abundant, productive part of nature.

And I feel like you're really inhabiting that ecotone between journalism, education, parenting, and producing and creating something that would never have existed were you to have stayed in the safe zone, so to speak, in the kind of monoculture, the intellectual monoculture of the big media that we've run away from.

But... On that note, and as we kind of draw to a close, I'm wondering, like, what's next for you? Like, where do you see your work go? I mean, maybe by definition, you can't see where it's going, which is what makes it so emergent. But I'm just nevertheless curious about where you see your next steps.

[00:47:23]

Anya Kamanetz: Well, I do have my book, speaking of midwifing, and I'm, you know, just talking-

Matthew Green: A painful process in the, usually, but I think even, I wouldn't know, but I can imagine that even more painful than the real thing, you know?

Anya Kamanetz: It's been a process. I've been working in various versions of this particular proposal for longer than any other in my career, and that's just in the last couple of years. So yeah, so hopefully I'll have more news about that soon, but I am certainly excited about the whole publishing cycle and what it might mean to do it while having the Substack at the same time and being in contact with the audience about what they need and how I can help

I continue to kind of craft programs and interventions where I'm sort of teaching or I'm leading groups. And it's a little bit more in the old, in the old world, it was more me giving a speech or a keynote and what's been really fun. And this world is more about leading discussions or devising interactive pieces.

So I actually, you know, I taught a I co-taught a climate emotions meditation class last year, and I did two versions of an eco art therapy workshop based on the climate emotions wheel, which we didn't even talk about, which is the, I produced it with Panu Pihkala, and it's just a visual guide to the feelings people feel.

Matthew Green: Yes, yes, of course. Yeah, yeah. And I'll obviously add links to all of these things. As well. Yeah, everyone can see that.

Anya Kamanetz: Yeah. And that's just been so fun because, you know, as someone who's usually a writer to have a piece of visual communication and to see how people interpret it is so fun. So I'm continuing to experiment. I might be teaching a class next fall online that sort of combines spirituality and climate feelings. And I might be, I produced a podcast last year with the legendary Joanna Macy.

Matthew Green: Yes, amazing.

Anya Kamanetz: Who's been just, you know, absolutely my biggest inspiration in this work. And her co-host, her host, who I work closely with, we're talking about possibly doing another project together. So audio remains really interesting to me. That's the shape of things.

[00:49:50]

Matthew Green: That sounds like more than enough to be pursuing. And yeah, I mean, the work you're doing is so directly related to the, well, the motivation for why I created Resonant World, which was really to look at this intersection of individual intergenerational and collective trauma and the climate crisis and how this all connects together into the poly crisis and looking to trace the roots of that in ways that as journalists we just weren't really encouraged or able to do i don't think we had to leave those structures to be exploring these kinds of avenues and it's really inspiring to me to see

how productive that path has been for you and all these different offerings, visual arts, workshops, podcasts, and how that's all exploded out of that decision to walk away from that institution.

And another big interest of mine is actually supporting people in that same dilemma. I ran a workshop. I co-facilitated a workshop with Steffi Bednarek, who is an amazing climate psychologist in the UK, a few months ago for climate-conflicted professionals who were kind of a little bit in positions that we've described experiencing ourselves, recognizing that their institution or company or organization wasn't responding in a meaningful way, and yet recognizing the potential to do so and being kind of caught in that dilemma.

So yeah, I guess if anyone's listening to this and wondering about making that leap, hopefully what we're sharing is encouraging. Without brushing over the challenges, because there are challenges at times, and occasionally it can feel like, what am I doing? This is all a terrible mistake.

But when you wake up in the morning, it's all... There's always an opportunity to start to continue this process of just hosting this emergence. And I feel like the conversation we just had has been part of my own process in that regard. So I really appreciate your time and very excited to share your work with readers of Resonant World.

ENDS/