**2nd**

**I don’t care about plastic and you should not too…**

I am not a person with unique morning routine. That day, as usual, I made some coffee, seat in my chair and started checking social media, especially the account of my close friend in Russia.

“.. I don’t like nature and any type of outdoor activity. All this BBQ and Zen searching in the mountains are not for me. And I am sick off getting judge look from a barista like I am the most selfish..b..person in the world each time I buy a coffee in a cup to go. I really do not care how this particular plastic lead or straw or whatever will affect the life of one dolphin or a turtle.

Why I should even care? They are not my close relatives and I will never see them in my life anyway. Common, I live in a freaking cold Siberia. The chance of seeing these marine creatures here is zero…”

Wow…

It is hard to explain how shocked I was reading this at my close friend’s Instagram page. Because usually I believe close to me people have more or less the same opinion about things that matter for me the most and Climate change is one of them.

We had quite an unpleasant discussion with my friend that morning. But later I realized that she was actually right about the fact that some individuals can’t really relate to climate change emotionally even though they understand and accept the science behind it. These people have an emotional barrier to adopt more sustainable lifestyle and they just need a different approach in terms of promoting climate changing mitigation actions.

About phycological barriers that limit climate change mitigation I am going to talk today.

In total there seven main categories of phycological obstacles that stop environmental behavior change. Today I am going to talk about the first three: limited cognition, ideology, and comparison with other people.

Let’s look closer at each of them

1. Limited cognition

What does it mean?

It means that as human beings we are Actually not that rational as we used to think.

Our brain has not developed much in the last thousands of years and that is why most of the time we really think about how to cover our current immediate desires, protect ourselves from the immediate danger or satisfy primitive necessities. This ancient brain behavior makes it really difficult to deal and truly understand the problem we don’t feel the effect right away. From Climate Change perspective we are all like frogs in gradually heating water. For us it is mentally easier to adjust to a new gradually rising temperature and be cooked one day that to fight it

Limited cognition also includes ignorance. It includes the situation when a person really has never heard about the problem before or when a person knows about the problem but has no idea what he or she can do and what is the real impact of these actions.

For example, it would be logical to assume for a consumer that local products have smaller carbon footprint than the imported ones…But actually it is not always the case. One research showed that the UK citizens who prefer lamb raised in New Zealand make smaller Carbon impact than those who prefer lamb raised in the UK.

Another example of limited cognition is environmental numbness and phenomenon “less is more”.

If something does not cause immediate personal difficulties, we tend to not care about the problem and postpone the solution. I usually don’t go to a dentist if I don’t feel any discomfort. Even though I know that regular checks in general is a really good idea.

And talking about less is more. Listening about the same problem too often, especially using the same message, causes a numbness to the message itself or a negative response.

The last example of limited cognition is tendency to discount the problem. We believe that our area is the only one who is doing more or less OK and there is no necessity to think about our own or someone else far future.

For the sake of experiment, ask your friends who does not work at NREL what do they think about disappearing of island country Tuvalu because of climate change. First it is highly possible that they have never heard about it and second they barely believe that their everyday choice to use car instead of public transportation will somehow affect the survival of the whole country.

The second phycological barrier is ideology. It includes religious, political and economic views, and personal beliefs.

As human beings we believe that world belongs to us and we have all the rights to use the resources, kill animal and cut forest in order to develop our economy.

From religious point of view, we might believe that our Mother Nature or God will save us from extinction or from a great flood.

And the last example here is that we believe we are privileged to consume as much as we can (we even believe that we really need it) if we were born in a certain country and used to a certain lifestyle. This problem is especially sharp in developed and oil producing countries.

The third and the last phycological barrier for today is comparison with other people. This barrier can be described the best with one question “Why should change if they won’t change?”

These are the first three barriers that limits adaptation of more sustainable lifestyle: limited cognition, ideology and comparison with others.

And before introducing other four in my upcoming speech I would ask you to think about your own behavior. Don’t forget our future is coming fast.