



CLIMATE CLUB

ACTIVE HOPE

Based on the work of Joanna Macy & Chris Johnstone

1. What Is Active Hope?

Active Hope is not about optimism - it's about choosing to act for the world we want, regardless of how hopeful we feel. It means facing the truth of our situation, finding meaning, and participating in the healing of our world. ***"Active Hope is something we do, rather than something we have."***

2. The Three Stories of Our Time

We can understand our world through three overlapping stories:

1. Business as Usual - The world is fine; keep growing and consuming.
2. The Great Unraveling - Acknowledging ecological and social breakdown.
3. The Great Turning - A transition to a life-sustaining society, based on connection, justice, and regeneration.

Active Hope invites us to place ourselves in the story of The Great Turning.

3. The Spiral of the Work That Reconnects

Macy's core model for inner and collective resilience moves through four stages, forming a spiral we revisit again and again:

- 1 Gratitude – Ground ourselves in appreciation for life.
Focusing on what we love gives us energy and motivation to protect it.
- 2 Honouring Our Pain for the World – Face our feelings of fear, grief, and anger.
Acknowledging pain reconnects us to compassion and shared humanity.
- 3 Seeing with New Eyes – Realise our interconnection with all life.
Shift from "I am alone" to "We are part of the living Earth."
- 4 Going Forth – Act from love and purpose.
Choose one meaningful action — large or small — that contributes to the world we wish to see.

4. Principles for Staying Active and Positive

- Trust the process – Change happens through many small acts, not one grand gesture.
- Work with others – Community turns anxiety into agency.
- Stay present – Balance awareness of difficulty with moments of joy, gratitude, and rest.
- Nurture what you love – Let love, not fear, guide your action.
- Celebrate progress – Recognise every act of courage and care.

5. The Heart of Active Hope

Active Hope helps us stay resilient, connected, and creative — transforming despair into purpose. It invites us to act, not because we're sure of success, but because our actions express who we choose to be.

"The heart that breaks open can contain the whole world."

In short: **Feel deeply. Connect widely. Act boldly. Keep going.**

That is the practice of Active Hope.

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How Can The Practice Of Active Hope Help Combat Climate Anxiety?

Anxiety is a natural response to witnessing ecological breakdown. Active Hope provides a way to transform that anxiety into clarity, connection, and purposeful action. Instead of trying to suppress fear, it teaches us how to work with our emotions in a healthy and empowering way.

★ **1. It reframes hope as something we do**

- Active Hope does not require optimism or certainty. Instead, it says that Hope is a practice, choosing to take part in creating the future we want.
- This shift reduces anxiety because you no longer feel powerless or dependent on “good news.” You focus on actions that align with your values, restoring agency and steadiness.

★ **2. It validates difficult emotions**

- The model explicitly encourages us to honour our pain for the world. This makes climate anxiety feel normal, shared and meaningful.
- Instead of bottling up fear, grief, or anger, which heightens anxiety, you process these emotions in a supportive framework. Facing reality relieves the pressure that comes from avoidance or denial.

★ **3. It provides a structured process for emotional resilience**

The spiral of the ‘Work That Reconnects’ helps manage anxiety in four steps:

1 Gratitude

- Shifts attention from overwhelm to what we love and want to protect.
- This stabilises the nervous system.

2 Honouring Pain for the World

- Turns anxiety into compassion and connection.
- Feeling our emotions, safely, reduces their intensity.

3 Seeing With New Eyes

- Replaces isolation with interconnection and shared purpose, widening our perspectives.

4 Going Forth

- Small achievable actions build confidence and reduce helplessness

★ **4. It roots us in community rather than isolation**

- Climate anxiety often comes from feeling alone. Active Hope emphasises working with others, belonging to movements and seeing yourself as part of “The Great Turning”
- Community transforms anxiety into empowerment.

★ **5. It shifts identity from ‘consumer’ to ‘life-participant’**

- Many people feel anxious because they’ve been conditioned to believe their only job is to consume. Active Hope reframes our identity as connected to the living world, capable of meaningful influence and part of a much larger evolutionary shift.
- This gives a deeper purpose that counterbalances fear.

★ **6. It builds long-term endurance, encouraging:**

- Cycles of rest, collective reflection and gratitude practices
- Recognition of progress, emotional honesty and sustainable activism
- This reduces burnout and keeps anxiety from escalating.

★ **7. It transforms anxiety into motivation**

- Active Hope doesn’t deny the seriousness of the crisis. Instead, it channels our energy into creativity, courage, connection, and meaningful action. Anxiety becomes fuel rather than paralysis.

In Essence, Active Hope helps combat climate anxiety by giving people:

- a framework to process emotions
- a sense of agency and purpose
- community connection
- a pathway from fear to constructive action
- a vision of themselves as part of The Great Turning

It teaches that we don’t need to feel hopeful to act — we act to create hope.