

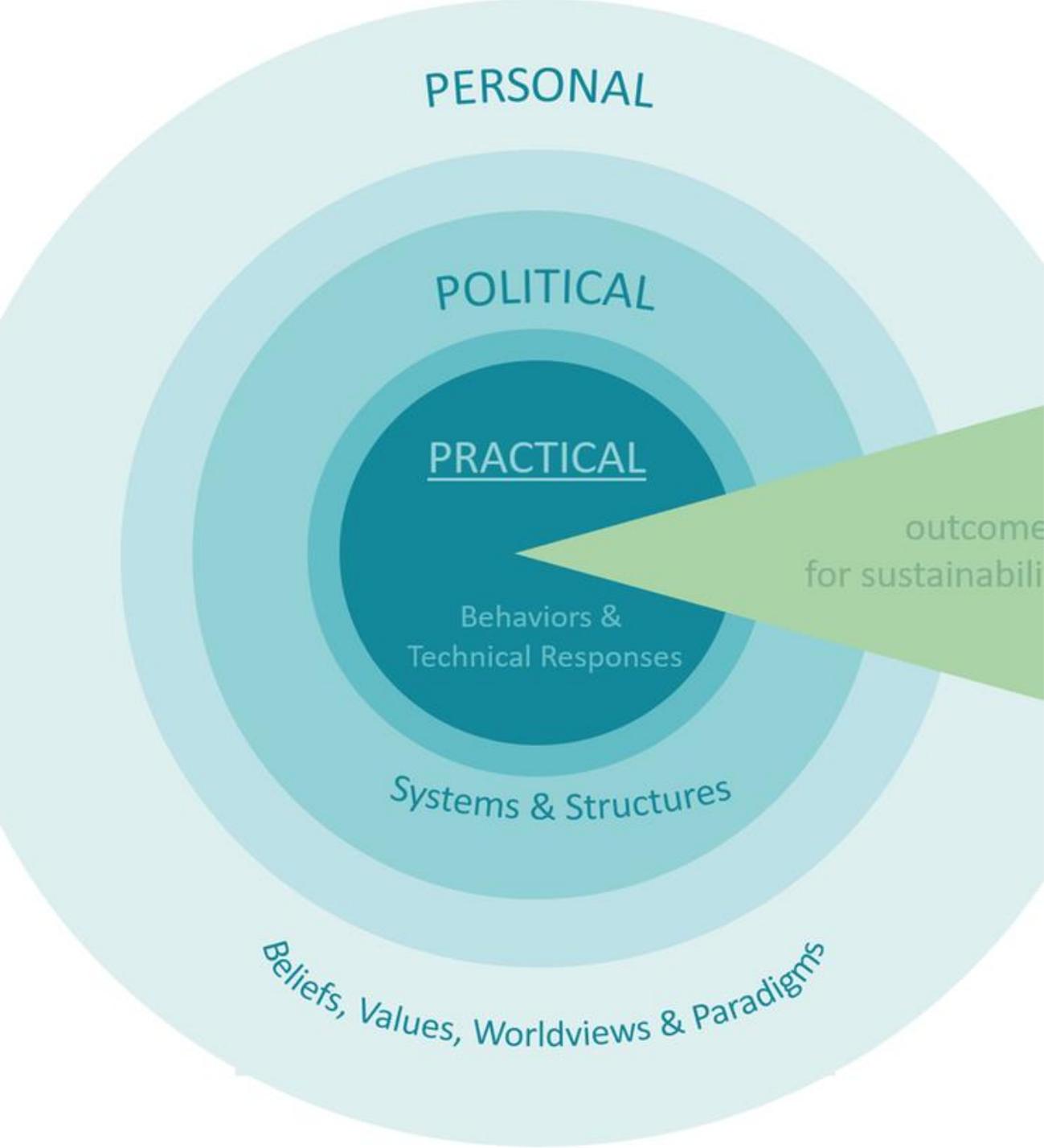
# Cultivating a sustainability mindset

Annukka Vainio

Some notions from the field: many people (incl. researchers) have a grim view of sustainability transformation

- tend to doubt that sustainability transition is feasible
- tend to doubt that future can be changed
- tend to underestimate the prevalence of environmental concern, and overestimate the prevalence of denialism





# Three spheres of transformation

- Personal sphere influences **the framing of issues**
  - which questions that are asked/ not asked
  - solutions that are prioritized in the political and practical spheres
- Changes to beliefs, values, worldviews influence the types of actions & strategies considered possible in the practical sphere
- Greatest leverage from interactions between the spheres
  - Exclusive focus on the personal sphere remains too abstract to have an impact!
- Most legitimate changes in the personal sphere are made through **transformative education/ voluntary changes** by individuals/ groups interested in expanding their own “spheres of influence” (Schlitz et al., 2010; O’Brien, 2013)

# Examples of mindset barriers

## Beliefs

- Systemic transformation is not possible
- Behaviour change is difficult
- Reducing the carbon footprint of consumption will make life miserable
- People are not willing to change
- People have information deficit

## Worldview

- Individualism
- Focus on short-term consequences

## Self-efficacy

- A belief that individuals' behaviour does not make a difference to resolving global problems



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**Self-efficacy:** people's belief in their ability to control their functioning and events that affect their lives (Bandura 1997).

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**Collective efficacy:** beliefs about collective action to achieve desired changes (Bandura 2000).

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More citizens would take environmental action if they were convinced that their action matters and that others are doing the same.

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In Finland, citizens' environmental efficacy beliefs were at a moderate level (Vainio et al. 2020).

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Self-efficacy/ sense of agency was a stronger determinant of climate action than knowledge in Germany & Austria (Kuthe et al. 2019)

# Building environmental efficacy

How to build self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997)	How to build environmental efficacy
<b>Mastery experiences</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>experiences one gains when one takes on a new challenge and is successful in it</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Help people notice pro-environmental behaviours that they already are doing</li></ul>
<b>Vicarious experiences (social role models)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Seeing people like oneself succeed by sustained effort</li><li>raises observers' beliefs that they too possess the capabilities to master comparable activities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Tell stories about people, groups etc. who have succeeded in resolving environmental problems</li></ul>
<b>Social persuasion:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>influence by encouragement and discouragement pertaining to an individual's performance or ability to perform (Redmond, 2010)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Demonstrate confidence in people's (collective) ability to reach pro-environmental goals</li></ul>
<b>Emotional and physiological states:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>interpretation of one's emotional and physical reactions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Do not medicalize "negative" emotions (e.g. anxiety)</li><li>Emphasize benefits of pro-environmental behaviour (self &amp; others)</li></ul>



# FrameWorks Institute

- “Non-profit research organization that helps mission-driven organizations build public will for progressive change”
- The problem:
  - more space is given to describing social problems and very little on solutions
  - problems are introduced in grim terms (“catastrophe”) to evoke powerful emotions
    - but strong emotions will not motivate change!
    - crisis framing feeds fatalistic thinking
- The solution:
  - Balancing problem statements with proposed solutions
  - Forward-looking, aspirational thinking about how to strengthen social systems

Source: Nyhan et al. (2014); FrameWorks Institute (2020)

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