



## Fear or Hope: Which Motivates More? (This group tried both.)

The question inspiring this month's newsletter is one I hear with regularity during our workshops and webinars. My response, which I stand by even though it sounds like a dodge, is "It depends." Just a few weeks ago, however, I was compelled to rethink that answer when I received an end-of-year solicitation from [Climate Resolve](#), a Los Angeles-based nonprofit.

Climate Resolve works to put a local face on climate change, and they are small (14 full-time staff, annual budget of \$1.7 million) but effective. They convinced the city of LA to update its building code so that all new or refurbished buildings will include "cool roofs," and in 2019 they killed plans for a new 8-12 lane freeway that would have created even more sprawl in a region that already defines the term.

Jonathan Parfrey founded Climate Resolve in 2010 and serves as its Executive Director. Parfrey knows his way around the nonprofit world in general and the environmental community in particular. He served as the LA Director of Physicians for Social Responsibility for 13 years, as a commissioner at the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power for 5 years, and he cofounded the statewide Alliance of Regional Collaboratives for Climate Adaptation. When Jonathan and his team try something new, it gets my attention, so I called him last week to find out why they decided to use both fear and hope in their solicitation, and more importantly, if it worked. (Story continues [here](#).) *Please note: Apple Mail users may need to scroll down manually.*



Jonathan Parfrey

## Hate Meetings? You'll Love This Webinar (7 seats left)

Ever sat through a meeting and wondered, "Is this *really* the best use of my time?" (Or perhaps you've had darker thoughts. Trust me: you're not alone.) Bad meetings are a waste of time and money, they can send messages to your team that undercut performance, undermine loyalty, and lower morale. In short, bad meetings are a real problem.

So why not invest two hours next week to improve your meetings and end your suffering. "Meetings for People Who Hate Meetings" is a brand new 2-hour webinar that teaches:

- **Why Bad Meetings Happen to Good Causes:** An analysis of the most commonly experienced problems in meetings.
- **The Agenda: It's Not a List of Topics:** Why meeting leaders should think of the agenda as a mini-strategic plan, and why a well-constructed agenda remains the single most important predictor of a successful meeting.
- **Meeting Leadership:** How effective meeting leaders bring everyone into a discussion, direct its flow, handle conflict, and guide groups through different kinds of decision-making processes.
- **Brainstorming** (and other creative forms of interaction): Many meetings will include brainstorming without following time-tested rules that make them more productive. In this segment, we review the rules and also discuss other techniques to creatively engage participants in idea-generation and similar group activities.
- **What to Do When You're Not All There (Literally):** How to observe different protocols for teleconferences, videoconferences, and webinars.

Class size is limited, so register [now](#) and join us on January 16th and 17th (from 2-3p Eastern each day) for this highly interactive webinar. Because bad meetings are so 2019.

## I'm Feeling Frank in February. How About You?

Frank, the annual gathering designed specifically for people using strategic communications to drive social change, is scheduled for February 4-7 at the University of Florida in Gainesville. This time around, speakers and attendees will be exploring the science of emotion, with a deep dive into the power that feelings such as awe, anger, love, pride, fear and hope hold to inspire us to act (or not.) And this year, I will be co-curating one of the speaker blocks to ensure that you'll see both the science behind emotions as well as specific examples of how people have used those emotions to drive real-world change. (You can check out the full speaker list [here](#).)

As always, downtown Gainesville will be the site for frank2020, and the festivities will start at 6 p.m. on February 4 with the Welcome Rally. The program begins Wednesday, February 5 and concludes Friday, February 7 at noon. All the sessions will be in the Hippodrome on the UF Campus and in downtown coffee shops and restaurants. As I've told you before, this is my favorite conference of the year, so I hope you'll make plans to join us. Register today at [frankgathering.org](#) or be prepared to explore another important emotion: remorse.



*Upcoming online classes at The Goodman Center*

RUN MEETINGS	TELL STORIES	GIVE PRESENTATIONS
<b>Meetings for People who Hate Meetings</b>	<b>Storytelling: Tapping the Power of Narrative</b>	<b>Why Bad Presentations Happen to Good Causes</b>
January 16 & 17 11am - 12pm PT	Feb. 21, 28, Mar. 6 & 13 9am - 10am PT	March 4 & 5 11am - 12pm PT

## Fear or Hope: Which Motivates More? (This group tried both.) (Cont'd)

From the outside, the letter from Climate Resolve that arrived in early December looked more like a holiday card than anything else, right down to the stamp. This was entirely intentional. The solicitation targeted 5,000 likely donors, mostly in Southern California, and the primary target was millennials. Parfrey told me that using direct mail was influenced by an article he read in [Forbes](#) that said millennials pay more attention to snail mail because they get so little of it.

The card inside was designed by Ride or Cry, a marketing firm that works mostly on rock concerts. Parfrey thought they would be an ideal partner for this project because "the aesthetic we get working with them is tilted towards a younger audience," he said. Here is the cover they designed for the card:



When I opened the card, which has the look and feel of a standard greeting card, rather than seeing a blank area on top and a message on the bottom, I saw two messages of equal length filling the interior. The message on the top panel of the card, dated "December 31, 2049," read as follows:

Dear Andy,

It's another blisteringly hot day - our second killer heat wave this December.

And we thought our summers of 30 years ago were hot. Little did we know.

Some days, it's 100% dangerous to go outside. And indoors, too, our house doesn't stay cool for long, due to the rolling blackouts. Most days the AC is useless.

I dream about how it used to be... we simply did not act in time. We saw sea levels slowly rise, wildfires burn more frequently, and droughts last longer. We saw the decline before our eyes and still, we just didn't understand the gravity of it all.

Back in 2020, our leaders failed us - perhaps better put, we failed to sufficiently push our leaders. We had the solutions. We had the technology. Why did we passively accept this miserable future? I wish we'd pushed harder to make a difference.

Anyway, best wishes for the new year...

Your Loving Grandchild

The message on the bottom panel of the card, which had the same date and was also sent to me (by name) from my "loving grandchild," said this:

Getting ready for next year's Olympics in Los Angeles. (Our fourth time! I know it's a little embarrassing.)

The days are warm here in LA but we've taken quite a bite out of the heat as a result of our cool city program. Cool pavement. Shade trees. Cool walls. Cool roofs. Green spaces - all together we've lowered temperatures significantly. LA isn't the post-apocalyptic city that "Blade Runner" predicted. In just a few short years, we were able to transform this jumble of dark asphalt and tree-impooverished neighborhoods into a thriving healthy network of livable communities.

I'm thankful for you. You worked to make cooling solutions possible. You saw the signals of climate change and saw it as a challenge that we could overcome. You listened to the wisdom of scientists and indigenous people in the right ways to handle wildfire, drought, and heat waves - all the things that used to plague us. You helped Los Angeles become a beacon for cities across the world.

Thank you. And hey - happy new year.

So there it was: a shot of fear with a chaser of hope. The idea for presenting alternative visions for Los Angeles was one that Climate Resolve had been kicking around for several years. "We thought presenting these two alternative LAs would make a great comic book. Or what if James Cameron used his CGI skills to show two different versions of our fair city? It'd be powerful," said Parfrey.

When the organization decided to do a year-end solicitation - the first in its ten-year history - Parfrey was convinced that the moment had finally arrived to give the dual-vision concept a try. Michael Parada, Climate Resolve's manager of communications, wrote the first draft of the text and Parfrey provided the final polish.

"Our people are unaccustomed to getting solicitations from us," said Parfrey, "so this was part of a larger effort. Getting money was only part of the goal. The other part was communicating that we're smart, we're creative, we can be trusted, *and* we're going to ask for money." That said, the piece did pretty well, raising somewhere between \$15,000 and \$20,000 on an investment of \$5,000.

And as to the central question of using both fear *and* hope: "I think we're in a moment where fear is a stronger motivator than hope," Parfrey began. "I'm looking at the evidence. I'm looking at Greta Thunberg. There is a tinge of the apocalypse in her framing." But Parfrey was quick to add that fear, by itself, isn't the only button to press.

"The data is clear on this," he said. "The more dire the messages sound, the more individuals will tune-out. And I say this with full-knowledge that the climate picture is dire. You have to be honest, you have to present the sobering information, yet we still have the choice before us to dramatically improve the situation or make it worse. The choice is still ours."

Before our conversation was over, Parfrey qualified his comments, saying that this analysis pertains only to messaging around climate change, and that it is not necessarily appropriate for all causes. So noted. But as you, dear reader, prepare for a new year, ask yourself this: If your organization has been wielding the carrot or stick exclusively, has the time arrived to try both?

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*free-range thinking* is written by Andy Goodman and edited by Celia Hoffman. To read back issues, download free publications, and to learn more about our work, please visit [www.thegoodmancenter.com](http://www.thegoodmancenter.com).

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