



Season Three Episode One- released February 2023

A roundtable discussion hosted by Jeff Dewing, with Jeroen van de Waal, Rita Carbo and Katrina Christopoulos

The first of a two-part discussion, exploring what the climate crisis means for us and how we can begin to engage as individuals in the actions that make the change possible.

How to save the planet (Part one)

Jeff Dewing:

Hi, and welcome to Doing the Opposite: Business Disruptors, the podcast where you get to meet leaders who have swum against the tide, thrown out the rule book, and changed the way their sector does business. I'm Jeff Dewing, and I'm the founder and CEO of Cloudfm, a business where we thrive on taking risk so our clients don't have to.

For our third season, as well as a brand new collection of one-to-one interviews. We're excited to bring you a handful of bonus episodes where we dig into some of the biggest issues facing organisations today with a select group of experts. I'm also excited to share with you that you can also watch these discussions on [YouTube](#). Today we're talking about can we save the planet?

*Now, this is a huge subject with a vast array of viewpoints. It's about climate responsibility, it's about corporate social responsibility, and it's about ESG. But most importantly, it's about the impact it has on the population of the world. Joining me today are three people who know and feel equally passionate about this subject. We have **Jeroen Van de Waal**, who is a **co-founder of The Reef Company**, an organisation which builds engineered reefs and seeks to revitalise localised economies. He's a multi award-winning campaigner for oceans, focused on bringing a like-minded people together to turn the tide on the destruction and pollution of the seas*

*We also have a **Rita Carbo** who works for **the Bluebeat Group** and based in Argentina. Rita works with Jeroen as part of the same group of companies. Rita has been working on environmental issues within the government of Argentina before she moved to join the Blue Beat group.*

*We also have **Katrina Christopoulos**. Katrina is based in Spain, although she's English, and has recently joined **Cloudfm as head of ESG**. Now, Katrina comes with a wealth of experience in environmental issues, carbon offsetting, carbon sinks, carbon emissions, and various other myriads of subjects within the ESG framework, Welcome to all of you.*

Let's get things kicked off. I'm gonna go around the table. What I'm interested in is just a quick one minute overview from each of you on what you think the state of the nation is today. Where are we today? What's the temperature check from your perspective today? And let's start with Rita.

Rita Carbo:

Okay. I think we are trying, and we are in this learning process that maybe is taking a while, but I think we, we will get there. I like to be optimistic about what we are doing at the moment, and that's why also I'm involved in these kind of topics and these kind of solutions.

Jeff Dewing:

Great stuff. Thanks, Rita. Jeroen?

Jeroen van de Waal:

We are in a situation at a moment where we have a global population of 8 billion people racing towards a count of 10 billion. Our energy consumption over the next 20 to 30 years is going to double on this planet, and we need to radically reset how we use our planet's resources, the oceans and the planet itself to put things under control and reverse the climate change process that we got stuck in.

Jeff Dewing:

Great stuff. Thank you very much, Jeroen. And Kat?

Katrina Christopoulos:

Well, you know, since my degree I've been watching the climate crisis unfold. I learned about climate science and I was told, you know, what would happen if we carried on this trajectory? And unfortunately now I'm seeing the reality and the, the things that were predicted then are, are actually happening and coming out in, you know, the climate change and the high frequency of like weather events. And the, you know, the, some, I sometimes despair at the pace of change. But I am an optimist. And so I do believe if enough of us can pull together in the same direction and have these conversations, the number one thing an individual can do is have a climate conversation. So, you know, hence why we're here today.

Jeff Dewing:

And on that note, Kat, I think I'll keep you on, on mic and we'll go into a bit more detail.

Katrina Christopoulos:

Well, I feel that we're at a point where we, you know, the, the math is clear in that we're putting too much carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and the, you know, the natural carbon sinks that we've got have been doing a really good job over time of keeping the climate stable. You know, you've got your land-based sinks, your soil and your plants taking around 30% of the carbon emissions that we emit out of the atmosphere. And then you've

got, and the ocean sinks around sort of 26, 27% taking, taking that out. But we have, we are emitting too much carbon for them to handle. And so they, and in sometimes we are undermining them and they're actually becoming carbon sources. You know, we've got the Amazon rainforest, which is now in places a net emitter of carbon. And that, you know, they're, that's touted as the lungs of our planet. So for that to now start emitting carbon is, is, is terrifying, really. And so I think that, you know, we have to, we can't go on as, as normal. We have to reduce our emissions, but we have to also protect the natural carbon sinks that we have left. And then we have to look at how we can restore, you know, what, what we have lost in, in that space.

Jeff Dewing :

For, for those people that perhaps are not so indulgent in understanding the detail. You know, let's talk about what it is that actually causes the problem. We've obviously got cars and vehicles and ships and planes that are emitting carbon. What other source of emissions are there that people may or may not really understand?

Katrina Christopoulos :

It's mainly fossil fuels. As we are burning, we're digging out carbon and we're burning it. So there's many ways that that is burnt. But now when we deforest an area, for example, that emits carbon you know, as the forest is burning when you're burning wood. So there, you know, there are, there are many sources, but it's predominantly burning of fossil fuels and we need to decarbonize the energy that, that we are using. But I think the point is we can't also keep the same level of demand on the system at the same time as well. You know, there's still, even with renewable energy, there's still issues. You, we need to reduce what we're using and be more efficient with what we were using, and we need to burn less fossil fuels.

Jeff Dewing:

So for those people that will be sitting back and saying, you know, 'we believe all this, we get that and we understand really that we should and we could do better, but it's the lesser

of two evils. You know, we've got a Ukraine war going on, we are completely starved of, of some of the energy and renewable energies that we would normally enjoy. And we are being forced to go down the fossil fuel route again until such time, as these other constraints and barriers sort of disappear or go by the wayside. And then we can focus again'. You know, there's gonna be people without idea or that attitude, I guess.

Katrina Christopoulos:

Yeah, I mean, you know, I think the technology is there, the solutions are there with renewable energy. It's not perfect. But it is a low carbon solution. And I think maybe, you know, money talks and, and that's maybe why we're where we are.

Jeff Dewing:

So Rita, what I saw you sort of showing a bit of interest in commenting on this piece mm-hmm. <Affirmative>,

Rita Carbo:

So of course I agree completely with Kat, and I think we can remove tonnes of carbon. That's, that's not the, the main issue. I think we need to review our unsustainable practices and behaviours. The interesting thing about it, the environment, is that we're all connected. So it doesn't matter if you care or not, you'll be affected by, by your own actions or by someone's action. So I like to see this crisis as an opportunity and to really embrace and live by the idea that we are all one and we need all together to work on this. So I know there are pressing issues nowadays, but everything is important. And when it comes to climate it's in our own home, so we shouldn't like just overlook it

Jeff Dewing:

No, of course. And I think what's interesting because you tapped on a statement there, which is really, really important, and that is, it doesn't matter how much technology you've got, how many wind farms you've got, how many sort of solutions are in the making. Unless we change our behaviours, there's gonna be very little change.

Katrina Christopoulos:

I, I, I was just gonna add to that, Jeff. In that, in order to get people engaged at an individual level, it's, it's trying to make it easy for people to do the right thing and, and just, just using cars as an example. If towns and cities are designed in the right way then you don't need to use a car. You know, it's not all about electrification. It's actually about let's not use a car in the first place. And, and at the moment it's not always easy to make the right decision. You, the infrastructure isn't there to do the right thing. And so, you know, there's this, there's a bottom up and top down, you know, it needs to come from both both sides.

Jeff Dewing:

Of course.

When you listen to any sort of debate or you read any article on, on stuff like this, we tend to be talking about the big thing. So you just mentioned there, the infrastructure's not right. The problem is to get the infrastructure right is a 10 or a 20 year cycle, that's assuming you can get people to actually buy into it anyway, I think what we've gotta try and do is to, is to find these, these little wins and many, many, many of them that takes us on that journey. And then the more people actually believe that the impact that they're having is positive, then the people will drive the infrastructure change at a much faster pace, maybe. So it is all about, for me, it's all about psychology. It's about how you get people to believe. Anyway, I'm gonna move on now a little bit.

I'm gonna move on to Jeroen, I'm, I'm, I'm interested in hearing Jeroen either one, if you wanna pick up some comments on the last bit, Jerome, but more importantly, I want you to move into the importance of the ocean that people may or may not appreciate.

Jeroen van de Waal:

Thank you, Jeff. Yeah. Before I talk about the oceans. I I would like to share a couple of facts that are, that are super important. It's not only the infrastructure that we need to adapt, I just want to give you some statistics. The average use of cars is less than 4% per owner. So we have millions of people that own cars own cars, but they use their car typically less than

4% of its usable time. So all these cars, they need to be produced and they create a production footprint already in their production. It's not only about burning fossil fuels, there's a very big misconception at the moment on the planet that we have to electrify everything, but all this electric energy also needs to be generated. If you talk to the top five biggest oil and gas companies on the planet, they have very, very reliable statistics predicting that by 2050, the electricity consumption will double compared to today.

When we talk about our footprint and the way we live, we have to think about how can we adapt our lifestyles? How can we travel from A to B in a more intelligent way by using Uber or similar platforms? My wife and I sold our cars in 2016. We grew up with both owning a car. We are still alive. Imagine the population will grow by 2 billion people from today till 2050. And all these people want to have the same as I have, right? A car, a house, etc. etc.

In the United States without singling out the US as a bad kid on the block. But in the United States the average household has 3.5 pets, cat or dog. So you have 330 million people, about 150 million households. So that's about half a billion pets that need to eat, you know, dog food and cat food. Think about the footprint of all these people that own these dogs and cats, right? When the population grows, the pets will grow as well.

Now, the oceans are greatly invisible for most humans because, you know, the water masks, everything that happens on the water for most people is unknown and invisible. What you basically can say is that 70% of all anything and everything that happens on the planet is directly correlated from what happens from the water in the oceans. Oxygen production, carbon sequestration, food production etc. etc. etc. And for centuries, we have ignored the oceans completely. Now this is very negative and very doom and gloom. The positive side from my perspective about the oceans is that they are also incredibly more powerful than land-based systems. So there are also huge solutions and opportunities in the oceans and protecting the oceans, and that is what we really need to teach the entire global population. I'm an optimist and I believe that we can counter climate change by operating in an intelligent manner and by creating what we call nature-based solutions to help sequester carbon.

At the same time, we have to make education to the global population more widely and easily affordable or, or available. And many people on the planet are deprived from education, so they don't have a clue what we are talking about at the moment, and we need to give them access to that information.

I think the ultimate responsibility of climate change and, and changing climate change, controlling climate change lays with us individuals.

Jeff Dewing:

Well, I think that leads on to the fact that when, you know, some of the things I say quite frequently, and that is you can have the most intelligent and most influential people altogether across the globe in one room. The problem is, even with that information from that room, nothing will change because the only time anything is gonna change is when the population take the action to change it. And the key is how you engage the population and the engage the population from my perspective is 1- with education. Education enables people to 1- believe and connect.

And when they believe and they connect, they'll take action. And I think if, if you can create an environment that, that, or, or using technology or other methodologies, if you can create an environment where someone takes some action and then they can immediately see the benefit of the action they've taken, that creates momentum and therefore they'll do it more and more passionately and more thoroughly and more deeply and so on and so and on.

Jeroen van de Waal:

Exactly. Yeah. And I also believe on top of that, that many of these threatening factors on the planet now have been known to, to us for 30 or 40 years, for decades, and people continue to postpone the day of, let's call it execution. And I think that is ridiculous. You know I'm doing this for our children. I think they have the right to have a beautiful future and a wonderful outlook on what's going to happen on this planet in the next centuries. And it's our responsibility to give them the opportunity to have that nice life, right? We can't

continuously postpone action. And initiatives, and that's why I believe that ultimately this, this has to come from us and not from any government, because governments are changing all the time.

Jeff Dewing:

Yeah, no, it is, it's, it is about being disruptive. It's about taking, you know, taking what matters and what's important to you into your own hands and, and taking action. The key is getting that movement.

So, Rita, tell me what, tell me about you're in Argentina. Tell me about you know, Argentina's attitude when compared to when you look at China's behaviour and Brazil and so on. I mean, what, what does, how does Argentina as a culture feel about climate change?

Rita Carbo:

I think we're doing a great effort, but not everybody's engaged yet. So I used to work at the government it was a nice experience, but I also see what you mentioned before, it's difficult to tell people what to do if they just don't engage on the topic or don't care. So there can be many policies and many things can be done from the government, but people really need to take action and really feel responsible for the consequences of what they do.

Jeff Dewing:

Of course, of course. Kat,

I'm, I'm interested in your view about the sort of link between what we do in everyday life and what the ocean's contribution is into managing that and what we think and we believe we could do to reignite that, we still, as, as I think as you pointed out when you said, even if we solve today's problem, it doesn't solve tomorrow's problem unless we change our behaviour.

Katrina Christopoulos:

Yeah. You, you know, we can't go, in my opinion, on business as usual. It, it, we, we have to change as well. We can't just expect, expect that these natural sinks to just store

everything for us. There, there it has to be on both sides as, as I was saying, you know, and I, I think the, the, the issue that we've got at the moment as well is that as climate change accelerates, it, it undermines the ability of these sinks to store more and more. Not just because of clearing of the Amazon, but just because the temp as the temperature rises, it, it impacts the ability of the oceans, for example, to store as much carbon and so on. And that, you know, there's this kind of domino effect where more and more carbon is released. So we, we have to slow down and we have to do it, you know, quite, quite quickly.

Jeroen van de Waal:

What I believe is that to, to address these challenges and problems at a massive scale globally is that we need to put purpose in the heart of the vision of any type of organisation.

Companies that are driven by purpose proven become more attractive from an employer perspective. The retention rates to keep employees will go up. The profitability of purpose-driven organisations is 10 to 15 times higher, typically on par on average, compared to companies that don't have a purpose in their vision. And I believe we also need to show people that sustainability in any aspect, whether it is energy or food or, or, or other core parameters has to be profitable. Once you can show people that sustainable movements also are generating profits it becomes a no-brainer for institutions, for banks and other big multinationals to invest in purpose-driven events or activities or organisations, right? Once we can deliver that concept to the world, I think we will get gigantic global movement a force for good making people all support to countering climate change shortage of food and all those things that are impacting economic social wellbeing of the population.

Jeff Dewing:

Thank you for that Jeroen Right. So what we're gonna do now is we're gonna wrap up. Now I'm gonna ask each of you a question.

what one action do we think that is well within businesses reach to do now that would have a material impact on the subject matter? I'm gonna come to you first, Rita.

Rita Carbo:

So thank you, Jeff. I think talking about education and getting closer to nature, everybody should check Tomás Saraceno, he's an Argentine artist, and all his work is inspired by nature. He has exhibitions around the globe, so maybe you are near one of his exhibitions, so please go and visit them. He has great projects. One is a balloon that floats in the air free from Carbon, so it's exactly what we've been talking about. And the other one is related to spiders and spider webs. I really love that project. I think maybe you also get some inspiration from him, and in the next project you develop, you can include some of nature's magic.

Jeff Dewing:

Wow. Fantastic. Great information. Well done. Thank you Jeroen.

Jeroen van de Waal:

I would like to invite and provoke everybody that listens to this podcast to watch the documentary on Netflix called *My Octopus Teacher*. I think it's one of the best documentaries that I've ever seen about the interaction between a human being and a little single octopus. Yeah, it's heart wrenching and it shows you how extremely beautiful and intelligent mother nature is.

Jeff Dewing:

Yeah. yeah. Brilliant.

Jeff Dewing:

Great stuff. Thanks, Jeroen and Kat.

Katrina Christopoulos:

I think it's about making a start. You know, as a business, we just need to get on with it and understand your biggest environmental impact because each business is different and it's just understanding where you have the biggest impact and you can make the biggest

change. And laser focusing on that, you know, trying to keep it simple, but doing one thing really, really well. And I think it's also about going beyond your business. And you know, gone are the days where we're competing and saying, my business is greener than yours. It's about collaboration. You know, it's about sharing best practices, being, being open, because we've got to change industries, right? To get the rapid change that we need. It's, it's not just about keeping it in your own business, it's about going beyond that and working with your, your customers and your, your suppliers.

Jeff Dewing:

Yeah, no, great stuff and great. Yeah, great, great last statements from everybody.

Everyone tries to eat the elephant. You have to eat the elephant one bite at a time, therefore find the thing that you can address now quickly and thoroughly and as cat quite rightly says laser focus on it. And then of course, the next big buzzword that's come out of the way we all tend to start behaving now and working now is collaboration. This is not about you know, I'm greener than you, or I've got a bigger building than you, or a smaller building than you. This is about how do we learn from each other at speed and how do we embrace it and, and not be agitated by the fact that someone's copied us. Because if we're all doing the same thing, we get momentum, don't we? So yeah, great, great words of wisdom there from everybody.

And thank you very much. We're gonna wrap it up today. It's the start of hopefully numerous conversations of this type.

It's been great to see you. Thank you very much for your time and your contribution. And I can't wait for us to get back together again, which we will to delve even deeper into some of the ways we can solve this humanity crisis. Thank you very much.

Jeroen van de Waal:

Thank you.

Jeff Dewing:

A big thanks to all three of my guests today, Jeroen van de Waal, Katrina Christopoulos and of course Rita Carbo.

It is obvious when listening to my guests, the absolute sheer belief and passion, not only in the problems and challenges we face, but also in the optimism they have of overcoming these challenges. But the one common thread through all of them was that we have to get the people and the population engaged. If we don't achieve this, we are just not gonna move forward. And of course, achieving engagement begins with understanding and education.

If we can truly collectively collaborate, there is so many things we can do. Individually and collectively. And what seems more and more apparent to me as every day passes is that this planet is not gonna be saved by any governments. It's gonna be saved by the people on the planet: It's the population, it's the Gen Zs, it's the millennials. It's those people that have a genuine care and belief that we can do something about it. But one of the common threads that went through the conversation today was the fact that until we all realise the power of the collective, very little will happen. When we do realise the power of the collective, we can achieve incredible momentum.

I'm Jeff Dewing, author of bestselling book, 'Doing the Opposite', and CEO of Cloudfm. You can also find out more about the podcast and my incredible guests at podcast.cloudfmgroup.com, and you can also watch these episodes on [YouTube](#).

A big thank you to my team, Nichola Crawshaw at Cloudfm, Thinking Hat PR and of course my production team What Goes On Media. Thanks for listening.