

CARBON BUDDY PROJECT MANUAL

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What inspired you to start The Carbon Buddy Project?

I've been working on substantial cuts to my carbon footprint over the last 13 years. It has been surprisingly demanding. I've found that many others feel the same. Many are struggling, feeling stuck or overwhelmed. Some never start. Some give up.

But we know we must find ways to motivate new swathes of ordinary citizens to act. And to act fast. The 2018 IPCC climate report made that starkly clear. But not just any action; the priority has to be actions that have a significant impact in the near term. Time is short. We are in a hole, and we have to find ways to dig ourselves out.

Using both my practical experience and my background as an organisational psychologist specializing in change management, I found myself trying to throw light on these many obstacles, and more important, thinking how they could be overcome. The Carbon Buddy Project, and *The Carbon Buddy Manual* are the result.

Q. Why a manual? Who is this book for?

Most climate change books are a pretty solid read. But many people who won't read a 'serious' climate change book will happily read a Haynes manual, a cookery book or a gardening book. Why? Because they are practical, well designed and approachable. *The Carbon Buddy Manual* draws inspiration from those traditions.

It's a climate change book, but it's also a carbon footprint workbook and a personal climate action diary. It's a manual because you read it, you reflect on it, and you write and draw in it. You dip in and out of it and you use it. Its great graphic design draws you in and helps you to navigate through step-by-step. And it produces a result: your personal climate action plan providing your roadmap towards green living.

Q. What's different about the manual's approach?

Traditionally we try to change peoples' behaviour by giving them information (books, media, facts, warnings). There are now many proven practical ways to reduce your

carbon emissions but for many over time this becomes overload and leads to people switching off. Too much such information can become counterproductive.

But virtually none of this flood of information highlights the obstacles that play such an important invisible role in slowing down the response. The information also frustrates many because it is generic. It can't deal with the realities of each person's situation which is unique.

What's special is that the manual confronts the obstacles head on, helping individuals to arrive at a plan which fits their reality. It helps to provide a clearer rationale for action, based on the best available research, rather than on personal passions or the latest trending idea. It crucially helps the reader to understand how to make the biggest, quickest impact to their individual behaviour and lifestyle.

Q. How does it work?

The manual is all about processes. It provides:

- a process for clarifying your goals
- a process for measuring your personal pollution
- a process for highlighting priorities
- a process for breaking down a complex task into bite size chunks
- a process for spreading these tasks over time to make them manageable
- a process for identifying and overcoming obstacles
- and processes for seeking additional information, support, and the motivation to keep going.

The outcome is a realistic and motivating plan specifically tailored to your situation, your constraints, and your opportunities.

Q. And where does propagation fit in?

Think planting vegetable seeds, nurturing them, transplanting them. Feeding and watering them, watching them grow, and then harvesting the fruits. It's a fertile metaphor for scaling up, drawing more and more people into the collective effort. You can propagate locally, and thanks to the likes of Zoom you can propagate internationally. (p52 of the manual tells you how to do it.). Propagation is the spark. Others, many others, will carry the flame.

Q. Tell us about how groups can use the manual?

Dysfunctional groups are bad news. But good groups are great. Smaller groups (max four people I suggest) work better. *The Carbon Buddy Manual* provides a structure for productive and enjoyable group work. Think of the manual as a textbook, a curriculum, a road map, a series of topics for discussion. (p58 gives you tips on how

to make your Carbon Buddy groups successful). The main thing is to empathize and be supportive of each other. Criticism is not particularly good at producing behaviour change.

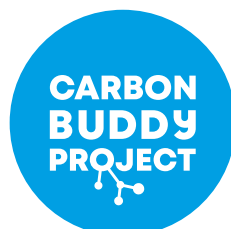
Working on this stuff with others you know and like provides vital support, different ideas, and new energy! The cross generational family or household is a natural place to start. Or try it with a group of friends in your neighbourhood. Alternatively form groups within a membership organization or a workplace. Use it in adult education classes or other learning environments. And make use of the technology to do it with friends in different parts of the country or in other countries. Virtual Carbon Buddy groups. I love it!

Q. What's next for The Carbon Buddy Project?

- The paperback locally printed and distributed in 14 major polluting countries.
- The manual available as an e-book on Amazon/Kindle complete with graphics.
- The project as a catalyst for rapidly propagating a global network of quiet, purposeful climate doers.
- *The Carbon Buddy Manual* widely used as a tool, used in many different ways by different people in different situations and countries
- Ideas from the *Carbon Buddy Manual* being refined, developed and shared not by me, but by those using it at the sharp end.

Q. What do you like to do for fun?

Growing vegetables, riding my electric bike, "slow travel" taking my Brompton folding bike on trains or ferries to explore new areas, hiking, music of all sorts, watching rugby, and finally enjoying the privilege of living by the sea in Cornwall, as beautiful a place as you'll find in the world.



quietly powerful: be part of it