

The Carbon Code: How You Can Become a Climate Change Hero

By Brett Favaro. 2017. John Hopkins University Press. 224 pages, 22.95 USD, Cloth.

The Carbon Code is for readers frustrated with the slow pace of political will when it comes to taking action on climate change. Brett Favaro, a marine scientist at Memorial University of Newfoundland in St. John's, fills his book with actions that individuals can take today to lower their carbon footprint. By adopting a personal carbon code of conduct, a 'do as little harm as possible' approach to daily life that aims to cut down on total greenhouse gas emissions, we can all be models of how living sustainably can work for the average person. Most of the information in this book, from the value of biking to work or the benefits of LED light bulbs, will not be new to readers already dedicated to a sustainable lifestyle. This will be most useful for readers who are not yet climate change activists, but who are genuinely interested in incorporating sustainability into their daily lives.

The Carbon Code is structured in three parts. The first covers the science of climate change, the widespread and disastrous implications for the planet, and how individuals can make a difference in decreasing

global greenhouse gas emissions (and by extension, slowing down climate change). Favaro wraps up Part I by introducing his carbon code of conduct that consists of four R's: *Reduce* carbon output as much as possible; *Replace* carbon intensive activities with less carbon intensive activities; *Refine* the activity to get the most out of the carbon that is used; and *Rehabilitate* the atmosphere by purchasing carbon offsets (p. 51).

Part II details four areas of daily life that can be modified to follow the carbon code of conduct: electricity, transportation, diet, and long-distance travel. In each chapter, we learn about more (or less) simple actions that homeowners can take to lower their individual carbon footprint, including: install a smart thermostat or a solar panel; consider purchasing an electric car; take public transit or, best of all, bike or walk to work; stop eating beef and other ungulates; reduce air travel in favour of trains, buses, and carpooling for vacations; and avoid taking a cruise. Never does Favaro bully or shame the individual into any of these actions. He is unfailingly positive throughout the book and consistent-

ly boosts the economic benefits to the individual alongside the environmental benefits.

The last section is perhaps the most useful and unique of *The Carbon Code*. It first outlines how to “win the conversation” for climate change action against various types of skeptics and deniers, and then provides an explanation of nine pro-climate policies that coincidentally are also good for the economy, our health and our communities. Throughout this section (and the book), Favaro purposefully empowers the reader to advocate for these sustainable initiatives, even if they are not an ‘expert’ on climate science or economics. As the author stresses, a great majority of credible scientists agree that climate change is occurring at an unprecedented rate, so to argue in favour of lowering greenhouse gas emissions is to be on the right side of history.

Overall, *The Carbon Code* makes a strong case that climate change is an urgent problem that must be tackled immediately by every individual on a daily basis. Some sections are a little weighed down by detailed explanations that sometimes become pedantic, and a few figures or references to useful websites and other resources would have made it more accessible. Fortunately, Favaro’s strident positivity and hope shine through and carry the reader along to the important final chapters, where realistic policy changes are discussed. This would be an ideal book for anyone who would like to learn about climate change and what they can do as an individual to lower their carbon footprint.

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