

URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/podcasts/transformative-climate-leadership-in-business-patrick-flynn/>

Patrick Flynn, a leader in climate action, discusses the essentials of transformative climate leadership in organizations, drawing on his seven years as head of global sustainability for Salesforce as well as extensive experience advising organizations. He shares how big companies can leverage their purchasing power, the need for bold action, and why he thinks climate and sustainability is a good career path. Hosted by Mike Lepech, professor of civil and environmental engineering at Stanford's School of Engineering.



Transcript

Patrick Flynn:

When you push a supplier on their sustainability journey, there's somebody in that company or maybe many people in that company who are thrilled about it because they've been trying to build the case for greater action. They've been trying to say that customer demand is coming for cleaner and greener versions of our products and you've just identified yourself as that very customer.

Mike Lepech:

Hi, and welcome to the Move Fast and Fix the Planet. I'm your host, Mike Lepech, professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Stanford. I'm also an associate faculty director of STVP, the Stanford Engineering Entrepreneurship Center, where we empower aspiring entrepreneurs to become global citizens who create and scale responsible innovations.

Of course, one of the biggest global challenges we face is climate change and the sustainability of our planet. In each episode of this podcast, we'll talk to a different expert about entrepreneurship in climate and sustainability and what's different about it, if anything, from entrepreneurship in other spaces.

On today's show, I'm thrilled to welcome Patrick Flynn. Patrick is on the board of the Ocean Foundation, which raises millions of dollars each year to promote healthy ocean ecosystems. He spent seven years in sustainability roles at Salesforce, including senior vice president and global head of sustainability. His portfolio included engaging customers and suppliers on their own climate journeys, the decarbonization of infrastructure, travel and real estate, advocating for equitable climate policies, disclosing environmental data in financial and ESG disclosures, and scaling investments in nature-based solutions like forests and oceans. Patrick was captivated by sustainability early in his career as a mechanical engineer, which led to positions in cleantech investing. Thanks for being here, Patrick.

Patrick Flynn:

Thanks, Mike. It's awesome to be here. I'm going to hone in on climate intrapreneurship and entrepreneurship, and I think the first piece of advice is side by side with what makes it, I think harder than traditional entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship. Now, coming ahead will be the parts that make it easier. Some of the things that make it harder is you really have to be selective about what you focus on. If you had a magic wand and you could surface all of the best business ideas out there that you could focus on as an entrepreneur or all of the best things you could do inside a business to be a rock star employee, only a small fraction of them would overlap with climate. So in that way, right out of the gate, you have a limited set of options that you need to focus on.

And I think therein lies the first bit of advice, which is to really focus on those things that can deliver big impact, that are good for business and good for climate both at the same time and can deliver impact at a scale and speed that meet the urgency of this moment. Once you've found that subset of great ideas, it's time to get to work changing the future. And here too, entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship are really similar, and I think honing in on climate opportunities comes with some elements that make it easier.

So one way to think about creating change is you're trying to put forward a vision of the future that stakeholders around you are excited to be part of, that's better than where they were headed before you walked into the room. And when you're talking about climate, you're inherently talking about fresh air and clean water, healthy ecosystems, equality, bringing justice to the world, supporting a habitable planet for future generations. All of those things are at your fingertips when you're walking into that room to put in front of the person you're trying to convince to get on board, and they just inherently make for a more compelling version of the future than they were already headed towards.

Mike Lepech:

I think that's incredibly inspirational for folks that are wanting to get into this change leadership within their organizations. We talk a lot about the different backgrounds of successful entrepreneurs. Some of them are business backgrounds, some of them are technical backgrounds, engineering sciences. Do you

think that there is a certain part of a large organization where it might be easiest to start with this change? Is it the more technical side of an organization, if there is one? Is it more of the compliance side, or maybe the answer is the opportunities are different in each one of those parts of the organization, but there are real opportunities for change leadership in each one? What are your thoughts?

Patrick Flynn:

Well, unfortunately, I think the answer is, it all depends, but I can give more than that. The first thing is I think there's a misconception that to be a climate leader, you need to go back to school and become a climate scientist. And true, you need to know a bit about what's going on, but the most important tools that you can use are the ones you already have. So if you're a lawyer, if you're a general counsel within an organization or if you're the head of procurement or if you're a data analyst, we need all of that. Your organization needs all of that. So the first best place to start is right there with what you're doing.

Another piece of advice there for those listening is think about the power that your purchasing decisions have. I think it comes to mind to us pretty naturally when we think about the next shirt we're going to buy or the groceries that we pick, but for many of us, we're making much bigger purchasing decisions with much bigger environmental implications in our professional capacity. So talking to your vendors, getting them on their own sustainability journey, pushing climate requirements to your suppliers like we did at Salesforce, that's a huge lever for change and it doesn't sit necessarily within one team, but it does put the procurement team really front and center as a key stakeholder in all lot of that.

Mike Lepech:

Yeah. I think that's a great insight and kind of leads me to my next question that builds off of some of your experience at Salesforce. It is certainly one thing to lead and scale change within your own organization, but it's certainly another to do it with your customers and suppliers, sort of getting to the scope 3 types of impacts that we talk about. How did you approach this at Salesforce and what advice do you have for other companies looking to have an impact beyond their own organization? How do you bring those vendors, those partners, those stakeholders on board to want to do this with you?

Patrick Flynn:

Yeah. Well, all of that was put right in front of me right at the very beginning days working at Salesforce. That's because we had really strong green building programs and data center programs back then when I first joined. And we didn't own any of our data centers, we didn't own any of our offices except one. So it was working through the property managers and the data center providers. That was the pathway to get impact. And there's a nice thing that happens there. Sure, it's unfortunate and it can be harder when you don't have full control, but whenever you have limited control or you're influencing a supplier, there's leverage there. So if you can get that data center provider or the office manager to get on with their journey, you just might change things, not just for your own use, but for all of their customers as well. And that was a really appealing part of really leaning in.

And then we took that much, much further. So back in 2020, we notified all suppliers that effective immediately climate would be part of all standard purchasing agreements at Salesforce from that day forward, requiring them to really do a bunch of things, set science-based targets, have emissions reduction goals, deliver all their products and services on a carbon-neutral basis or pay. It wasn't meant to be a big scary stick moment, it was just try to be as clear as possible with all of your suppliers that this is important. This is how you build a resilient supply chain. We're telling you now as clearly as possible

that we want you on this journey and we're here to help. And the response was incredibly positive. We had all sorts of suppliers reach out to say, "How do I sign on first?" Or, "I'm so glad that you did this because I've been trying to advocate internally myself and you sending this demand signal really helped me build the case." So that's the supplier side.

Mike Lepech:

Did that surprise you that they came back that way?

Patrick Flynn:

I was so thrilled, yes. And you'd never know how something like that will be received, right?

Mike Lepech:

Sure.

Patrick Flynn:

But that last bit I think is really the most inspiring thing and something we need to remember. When you push a supplier on their sustainability journey, there's somebody in that company or maybe many people in that company who are thrilled about it because they've been trying to build the case for greater action. They've been trying to say that customer demand is coming for cleaner and greener versions of our products, and you've just identified yourself as that very customer. And so that's sort of the customer angle. Suppliers and customers are just sort of two sides of the same coin. And with Salesforce as the leading customer relationship management company out there, we really were attuned to that demand signal that a customer can make in helping Salesforce's own customers reach those customer demands, but also being a very good customer ourselves, upstream towards all of our suppliers from the standpoint of demanding climate leadership.

Mike Lepech:

And I like how you talked about clarity of signals and how when working with customers, how you demonstrate to them very clearly that this is important to us, important enough that we will find other vendors, other suppliers if you don't want to come along. And that's not always an easy discussion to have, but it's one that I think when you're clear about it, you can really start to enact change.

The other thing that you mentioned that I found so important right now is resilience in supply chains. Firms that engage in climate and sustainability initiatives have shown to often be better managed, certainly cleaner operations, more efficient operations. They tend to be able to move through due diligence faster. And so when we're in an era where the resilience of supply chains has been tested, having really great connections where everyone is aligned, not just on the money but on the values of both of the firms, can really lend the relationship to a much more resilient supply chain in addition to the benefit of increasing the sustainability and reducing the impact throughout the customer value chain. Did you find that to be the case at all when you were at Salesforce?

Patrick Flynn:

Well, I think it's true. A couple of ways to think about resilience there that you mentioned. One is there's a stronger relationship when you're not just talking about an arm's length transaction, but one that has

some additional collaboration and shared values. You're with each other on the journey in a different way.

Mike Lepech:

Transaction to relationship.

Patrick Flynn:

Yeah, that's right. And then the other is if you're focused on climate, you're doing things like the recommendations of the task force for climate related financial disclosures. You're looking at climate related risks and opportunities. You're attuned to the way the world is changing ahead and you are more resilient for that. Building climate fluency into any supply chain is a key way to make it more resilient inherently as well.

Mike Lepech:

Yeah, I couldn't agree more. So as an entrepreneur yourself, what are some of the things you've been most proud of? I mean, you've had a lot of successes, but what would you highlight as one that you'd want to share?

Patrick Flynn:

If I again look back to the Salesforce experience, I think simply helping to build, helping to build a great team of leaders who could use their superpowers to help the planet and to try to encourage and enable them to spend as much time as they could on those sorts of big initiatives that could deliver impact at a speed and scale that planet Earth would actually notice. That's the hopefully a lasting contribution. And then more specifically, probably the biggest entrepreneurial endeavor was to develop and build and commercialize Net Zero Cloud within Salesforce. So that's a tool that my team and I built for ourselves first, bootstrapped it. We've got a little more funding, got a little more headcount, demonstrated that there was customer demand, and ultimately incubated it out and into the big machinery of Salesforce, the real product and engineering, sales, marketing service teams.

That was always really the big goal. And I think there's something there that anyone focused on entrepreneurship in their company can take as a important goal, which is figure out what your company does best and have it do that for climate. So very analogous to what I shared earlier about your individual skills are incredibly relevant, your company's core competency is relevant. If you're in automotive, if you're in insurance, if you're in banking, if you're in law, figure out how to get that core competency of your company geared towards climate action.

Mike Lepech:

Well, that fits so well with some concepts that are in the book, *Scaling Excellence* by Bob Sutton and Hayagreeva Rao from Stanford here, where they talk about you cannot scale something to an excellent state if it's not excellent to start with. And so what you just said absolutely builds off of that, that if you're looking to get into making a change at your firm from a climate and sustainability standpoint, think about what you already do well in the business of doing business and then apply that to a climate and sustainability challenge because it will give you a leg up on trying to address that. I think that's a really interesting viewpoint.

Patrick Flynn:

Yeah, I agree with that. A way to think about why what you said is true about the leg up is, to me, climate's the most certain predictable, pervasive change to the competitive landscape of capitalism that we've ever seen. With physical certainty, the sun's going to shine on Earth tomorrow and the Earth's going to get hotter, and the world is going to experience the devastating impacts and rise to the occasion. And the rise is the inspiring part, and it's full of opportunity across every industry, every geography, every community. And so if you want a glimpse into what your industry will look like in the future, it's one that has responded to climate change. And that could mean different products. It could mean your competitive advantage has to do with sustainability. It could mean there are substitutes out there that you really need to watch out for and maybe embrace yourself. So looking forward through that very certain crystal ball is a way to see the future where you can have great opportunity.

Mike Lepech:

Yeah, that's a good way to think about mapping your future trajectory for both yourself and for your company.

Patrick Flynn:

Yeah. One way I've put it in the past is if you look at any major decision, like a new business to start, a new product to launch, a new city to move your family to, a new degree to get, any big life decision, any big decision ought to be held up against a world that responds effectively to climate change and gauge whether it's consistent with that or not, because that's going to be a huge variable about whether that decision you make is future-proof or not.

Mike Lepech:

Patrick, you've had some great successes, but as every entrepreneur or intrapreneur knows failure is part of change and doing new things. What would you have done differently?

Patrick Flynn:

That's a really good question. Anytime I'm looking back, or one of the tricks I do to stay really bold and motivated is to look at today through the lens of 10 years, 20 years down the line. And what I know is all of us will wish we were even more bold today on climate. And that's the thing. If I look back, the feeling I have is, "Man, I wish I was able to speak even more clearly, aim even higher, because day by day it's clearer and clearer that we need big change, big fast change for climate. And so maybe the regret is, could have had even more conversations about big bold change as I look back.

Mike Lepech:

One of the things that we'll often tell folks who are thinking about how to allocate their time, because there are always priorities about how you allocate your time and what you do. We'll advise them to think five years from now, will you be proud or will you have felt that that was a good use of your time? Or five years from now, will you still be doing the same thing, wondering, "Oh, what should I do with my time?" You could sit there and say, "Oh, I want to do a new startup. I want to start a new initiative. I want to move to a different opportunity in the company." You could either do that today and five years from now

look back and say, "Wow, that was a great decision." Or you can five years from now say, "I still want to change to a new job. I still want to get involved in climate sustainability. I still want to do this."

Patrick Flynn:

Yeah.

Mike Lepech:

And so I like your approach of saying, I want to put myself in the future and look back and is this something meaningful to do today?

Patrick Flynn:

Yeah, today's the day to start. It's not going anywhere. So if you've got a tugging sensation that climate's going to be important for you, it may ebb and flow a little bit, but the main trajectory is going to be upwards. So you're not late either. It feels like some of us have been in this for a while, and that's true, but all of the adventure is still ahead. We still have 50 billion tons of emissions each year. It's all still ahead of us to do. There's going to be great opportunity here, and I think it may feel a little bit like a leap of faith or a risk, but I've seen countless people have their careers accelerated by focusing on climate change. It's a growing industry. It's relevant to your skill set like we talked about, and it's maybe the biggest factor.

It's full of people who are really there for your success, because if you're in this, you're in it for something bigger. And so you meet somebody else on their journey, they're lit up and motivated, they're ready to help you. Careers are uncertain. You want to load the dice as best you can. Here, we have two really good ways that the dice can be loaded. One, a growing industry that's exactly relevant to your field, and two, a community of supporters like no other that'll help you through the bumps in the road.

Mike Lepech:

Yeah. If we want to try to talk about future-proofing your career, betting on the climate change and sustainability wave as it'll continue to grow is probably not a bad one.

Patrick Flynn:

I agree.

Mike Lepech:

So not to focus too much about Salesforce, but one of the things you had mentioned with Net Zero Cloud was that originally you bootstrapped, kind of demonstrated customer demand, and then you rolled it into the larger product segment of Salesforce. One of the common critiques, and maybe it's a bit of an excuse, is that sustainability is expensive. And particularly for companies that are startups, that are young, they might say, "Look, we have to focus on profitability at this point in time. We'll invest in sustainability when we have the resources, the time, the people, and insert any other resource that any startup or project within a big company might need." Do you think that's true?

Patrick Flynn:

It depends. And no, there's a better answer too.

Mike Lepech:

Because you did bootstrap this to start with, and you found a niche and then you demonstrated customer demand and then grew it.

Patrick Flynn:

Yeah. Well, I guess everything's a balancing act. How you spend your time between your personal life and your work life, how a company allocates resources between sustainability or more traditional endeavors, you got to get the balance right. And the balance is going to be a little bit different for everyone in every context, but there are outsized returns for climate leadership. So aim to be the best and aiming that high may mean starting with small steps, building momentum like a fly wheel, but don't lose sight of the very much outsized returns that come from being the climate leader in your sector, in your industry.

Mike Lepech:

I guess a few thoughts about that, and I'd love to hear your reactions. In the grand scheme of sort of what we would consider to be scope 1, scope 2 emissions, those coming from your operations or sort of direct inputs, a company like Salesforce is not going to be as large as a large manufacturing outfit or a materials company or a chemical companies, things like this. But as with anything, putting your money where your mouth is so to speak, assures you a seat at the table when decisions are made, because it's very difficult to, as a firm, to have credibility in this space without really doing it yourself. And even though your impact might be small, that doesn't mean it's unimportant to be able to, as you had said, outsize your voice to be a leader in this space. Is that what you found?

Patrick Flynn:

Yeah. Let me say it this way. I think the planet needs everyone and every organization aiming for big change to meet the urgency of the moment. One point of reference to understand the pace we're talking about is we need global annual year-on-year emissions declines to be greater than the decline we saw in the pandemic year, every year from here on out. Like, economy changing huge scale. And so that's the most important thing to stay focused on.

Like we touched on earlier, oftentimes, that biggest swing that a company can make is to use its core competency, but that's another way of saying commercialize it. A company's core competency is how it approaches the market. And so if you just jump straight to that, some might call you out for not doing the real hard internal work that's necessary to be a credible leader. First of all, I think that's a little bit misguided because truly logically, we need companies aiming as big as they possibly can for change, but there's still that reality.

And so one of the balancing acts that you have to take on as a sustainability leader in a company is some of the time needs to be building that credibility, walking the walk, doing the things that, I think of it sort of like armor, building up your armor of credibility. Yes, we're focused on buildings, data centers, renewable energy, carbon credits, on and on and on and on. Yes, we're doing everything we can there and we're swinging really big and we're trying to help all of our customers on their journey. So it is a balancing act. I think we need to take it easy on some companies that go just straight for the big swing commercialization, build a product around climate and go for it. But it's a necessary part of the balancing act of the job.

Mike Lepech:

Yeah, I think that's right. It's going to take all kinds of solutions to think about the scale and the time at which we have to address this problem. If we think about the urgency, then we need things that are much closer to being able to scale now. And then if we think about the scale of the problem, it may take a little more time, but we're going to need additional products, services, innovations that will bake in that significant industrial change that you had alluded to in saying we need to do the reduction that we saw in the pandemic every single year going forward.

Patrick Flynn:

Yeah.

Mike Lepech:

And this can happen both at startups and our big companies, you can say, "Oh, we're already too late to the game." Or, "The things that we would do are too small to matter." And I don't believe either of those to be true. I don't think you're too late to the game. We're only getting started because if we're not only getting started, then we're not going to get anywhere close to where we need to be. And every single piece helps because the problem is so urgent and so large, but it's those small actions that you can do that make it very tractionable where you do feel like you're making progress. I don't think you can be too late. I don't think you can be too small.

Patrick Flynn:

Yeah. Well, every bit helps. So we need more people, more companies doing as many incremental things better as possible. But we're at the point now where everyone simply doing their next right thing probably doesn't create change fast enough. We need a lot of experts aiming for really big change. So one way I think about it is yeah, everybody needs to take that first step, but don't plan to go on a journey of just walking to the destination. Take that step to a bicycle, take the bicycle to an electric vehicle and make sure you're moving faster all the time.

Mike Lepech:

Yeah, I think that's a very important point that don't just do the small things. Yes, they're important to get you moving, but that's to overcome the activation energy, if you will.

Patrick Flynn:

That's right.

Mike Lepech:

And then pull forward from there.

Patrick Flynn:

That's right. And as you move up the expertise curve, you have at your fingertips more and more high leverage actions, so don't get complacent. There's always the next bigger, broader, systemic change to focus on. Even if it's just getting other people to do that thing that you did across your community, that's

a way to upscale at 10,000x right there. But keep looking for your next gear as you go through this journey.

Mike Lepech:

One of the things that we also think about when we talk about change leadership in this space from established companies, big companies that say, "No, we can't really afford this." You talked about how one of the things you did was you demonstrated customer demand for it, and if indeed there is a demonstrated customer demand that will grow, I think the question changes to how can we not afford to do this? And at large companies, if you're trying to, and I'm looking to see if you agree or disagree with this. At a large company, one of the easiest ways to change minds is to say, there's a market here, there's a customer here, and there is a P&L to be had in this space. So yes, we should go forward.

Patrick Flynn:

Yeah. The Kodak new digital cameras were coming for a long time and couldn't avoid it, couldn't avoid the impact of that on their core business. Blockbuster video, new streaming was coming and couldn't get out of the way. So those are examples of companies that weren't digitally native, getting dinosaured by the digital revolution, and there's a sustainability native or not element to every company out there now as well. And I think that dinosaur meteor is going to hit every industry. So you want to be building sustainability fluency into your organization, and you need to watch out for the upstarts out there that are starting with climate first.

You mentioned I'm now an advisor to Watershed. Talk about an awesome entrepreneurial team. They started first with, how do we build a company of any type to address 1% of global emissions? Any idea is on the table. Let's figure that out first. They arrived at software to help big companies out there measure, reduce and report their greenhouse gas emissions. But the climate leadership is at the heart of what they do, and it's one of the reasons I'm so inspired to be helping them.

Mike Lepech:

That's a very inspirational story because it shows that yes, if you're passionate about this, because the market is there, product market fit does exist, you just have to get it right.

Patrick Flynn:

Yeah. And it's not easy if it is not native to your company. Take Kodak and Blockbuster, they had all the resources and all the foresight. It's not easy. It's not easy. And you may skate through, it depends by industry, but examine it really closely. Climate risk and climate opportunity, what your competitors are doing, what the substitutes and the upstarts are doing to try to take your piece of the pie. This is the biggest, most predictable change to the competitive landscape for every industry, every geography, every company.

Mike Lepech:

Patrick, let's say that you're at your organization and you want to start a climate and sustainability focused initiative, but you get some pushback. Pushback that our company doesn't do ESG. How might you handle something like that?

Patrick Flynn:

Well, there's an old saying from the E of all of this, from environmental sustainability was, "Oh, that thing you're looking for, we never called that sustainability. We just called that good business." Doing more with less, focusing on resource efficiency, energy efficiency, good environmental responsibility, good social policies and behavior and exemplary governance are good for business. It's unfortunate that the label ESG to some stakeholders is all of a sudden a bad word. In reality, it's good for business.

And so the advice I'd give to somebody who's facing that pushback is use the language that the business does respond to, cost efficiency, diverse workforce, proper oversight, and whatever it is. And there's a bigger lesson there that I like to share with folks, which is outside of this question, just in general, if you're trying to create change at your company, look at other big changes the company has taken on over its history and dissect them a little bit. Figure out, was that a real hard business case evaluated over years? Was it more of like a heartstrings' passion decision. Whatever that is, there's an example there. Replicate that big shift, but for sustainability.

Mike Lepech:

Culture at firms is so important. Leverage whatever that culture is.

Patrick Flynn:

That's right.

Mike Lepech:

If it's one of a hard business case, then use that.

Patrick Flynn:

That's right.

Mike Lepech:

It's one of getting an ear of a senior leadership, then use that. Whatever has worked in the past in the culture of your firm, then use that.

Patrick Flynn:

Yeah.

Mike Lepech:

I also like how you put it in terms of this is also just risk management. Risk management is an important part of running a firm. Resource efficiency, or if we want to call it the Toyota production system or Lean, that's not at all controversial. It's doing more with less and every, not only stakeholder, but shareholder appreciates that.

Patrick Flynn:

Yeah.

Mike Lepech:

And so I like the way that you've framed it that way. But before I let you go, we have a series of questions that we're asking all of our guests, we call it, Forward to Fix the Planet and it's a chance for you to shine a spotlight on some things that are important to you and might be helpful to others. You ready?

Patrick Flynn:

Cool. Yeah, I'm ready. That's fun.

Mike Lepech:

All right, so what's on your bookshelf, your playlist or your feed right now?

Patrick Flynn:

All We Can Save by Wilkinson and Johnson as editors, but it's a collection of essays and poems from climate leaders who happen to be women. It's a great way to recharge the batteries. Another is Paul Hawken's 2009 Commencement Address to the University of Portland. You can find it on Common Dreams. And to me, that's one that I'll go back to, to get reinvigorated, re-inspired. And then last, I'd say Bill McKibben has The Crucial Years is his blog. That is a great way to keep up to date.

Mike Lepech:

Those are some great resources. What's keeping you up at night?

Patrick Flynn:

Time, the pace of change. We need to see for climate, the time it takes to move the economy, sort of the inertia at play here, the time related to the delays in the impact that we feel from the emissions today and my own time. I want to maximize my lifetime impact on climate and to do that, I know I need to spend as much time as possible focusing on those big initiatives that have a chance to deliver impact at a speed and scale that planet Earth will notice, and so I'm constantly trying to make sure I'm aiming that high.

Mike Lepech:

Yeah, that doesn't leave much time for sleep.

Patrick Flynn:

Yeah, that's true.

Mike Lepech:

What's giving you hope?

Patrick Flynn:

This work can be very heavy, and I'm one of these people that actually gets motivated by the doom and gloom of it. A new report comes out and it's got just bad news. I'm like, "Game on. Challenge accepted." I know that's not how most people are wired. The most inspiring bit of this type of work is the people

you meet along the way. Eyes lit up, passionate, there to help you, on the same team as you, even if they work for your competitor. Really the people you meet who are really going selflessly towards a better future give me so much hope. There are more and more of them every day that I'm meeting and it's just beautiful to see.

Mike Lepech:

Yeah, that's amazing. As someone who's in higher education, seeing our young people want to rise to this challenge is truly remarkable.

Finally, what's your favorite sustainability hack? What's something that our listeners could add to their day-to-day lives that you think would be meaningful?

Patrick Flynn:

I got two. One, if you're looking to make sure you're being bold enough, look at today from the vantage point of the future, or the example I think of is someday, many years down the line when a young person comes to interview me for a middle school project about what was I doing in the 2020s when all of the climate held in the balance, and trying to make sure I have a great answer for that person.

The other hack is a tip I love to use to help people plug in to their community, their superpower and create big change. Here's what you do. You open up a web browser and you type into that search engine one word that you identify with, could be electrical engineering, it could be New Yorker, whatever it is, and then you write, "for climate", electrical engineers for climate, New Yorkers for climate, moms for climate, doctors for climate. There is a community out there waiting for you that taps into who you are and what you can do, and it's a pathway to figure out how to have big impact.

Mike Lepech:

If you enjoyed this show, be sure to subscribe to Move Fast and Fix the Planet wherever you get your podcasts and help others find it by rating, reviewing and sharing. Learn more about this podcast and related work at stvp.stanford.edu/sustainability. Move Fast and Fix the Planet is hosted by me, Mike Lepech and produced by STVP, the Stanford Engineering Entrepreneurship Center. This episode is supported by Stanford Ecopreneurship programs. Our producers are Holly McCall and Anthony Ruth. Editing is by Stanford Video. For more podcasts, interviews, and articles, please visit stvp.stanford.edu/ecorner.