

Brief Encounter with the Taos Institute August 2023

Irresistible climate conversations

By [Alexandra Arnold](#), Executive Consultant for the Taos Institute



My first encounter with social construction was at an AI (Appreciative Inquiry) Jam event. I was asked to consider that a weed is a weed simply because people agree that it is a weed. In a similar vein, people have negotiated that a flower is a flower (and not a weed). A weed, a flower, and all else are social constructions. This view changed my outlook dramatically. I have never looked at my garden, or life, the same way since.

That event, hosted by the [Cooperrider Center for Appreciative Inquiry](#) in Burlington, VT, USA, is also where my journey with the Taos Institute started. It was a natural step after completing an MS in Organizational Psychology and graduating from Champlain College with a certificate in Positive Organization Development—the program that first introduced me to the life-changing philosophy and practices of AI.

I grew up in the corner of France bordering Switzerland and Germany and moved to the U.S. to intern with the International Institute for Peace through Tourism. I then developed walking vacations for an international tour operator for a decade. I have always been in a multicultural context. Today, at the Taos Institute, I contribute to our ongoing efforts to grow a global network around social constructionist, relational, and appreciative ideas. Some of these initiatives include publishing [free WorldShare Books](#) in many languages, offering [Spanish-](#) and [Portuguese-speaking](#) groups in the [Taos Institute Commons](#) (free) online community, assisting with the upcoming launch of [Taos Institute Japan](#), and thanks to our Australian Associates, hosting our first Asia-Pacific Commons Meet and Greet.

Along my journey, I became an accredited coach with the [International Coaching Federation](#) through a training program that, similar to constructionist practices in many contexts, emphasizes deep listening from a not-knowing stance, co-creating possibilities through the use of language, generating change through curious inquiry, and moving from deficit-based narratives to solution-focused dialogue. Appreciative Inquiry and Social Construction have brought depth to my coaching practice. I encourage all coaches and change agents to consider our upcoming [Introduction to Social Construction course](#) and [Relational Process Theory workshops](#) to enrich your work. “Discovering social construction has changed the way I see the world” says one of our Associates.

I am particularly interested in how coaching has the potential to alleviate grief, anxiety, hopelessness, and many complex experiences that arise from our changing climate. Through training, activities, or contributions to [Climate Change Coaches](#), the [Climate Coaching Alliance](#),

the [Climate Psychology Alliance](#), and the [International Journal of Appreciative Inquiry](#), I learned that climate resilience is a necessary resource for climate action. According to climate scientist [Katharine Hayhoe](#), the most important action one can take concerning climate change is to engage in climate conversations. Young activist, [Clover Hogan](#) asks, “how do we make climate action irresistible?” As a Taos community, how do we make climate *conversations* irresistible?

One way is to tip the scale from doom and gloom messages and catastrophic news headlines to stories of climate solutions and innovations. These can foster hope, agency, and imagination. What is your source of positive news? What is the latest creative endeavor you have heard about? What example do you know of a recovering or flourishing community, habitat, or species? Please share your inspiring stories and resources in the [Climate Topic](#) of the Taos Institute Commons. Imagine the positive ripple effect we might create if each of our thousand community members from around the globe posted just once... Words create worlds. To get started, I invite you to join me in launching a series of monthly [Irresistible Climate Conversations](#) on September 15. See you there!



The Taos Institute presents

Irresistible Climate Conversations

**September 15, 2023
3:00-4:00pm EDT**

Sharing stories of innovation,
collaboration & flourishing.

www.taosinstitutecommons.com