

A WORLD FREE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

A Narrative Research Project for the Nuclear Threat Initiative

September 2021



Kirk Cheyfitz/**Political Narrative**

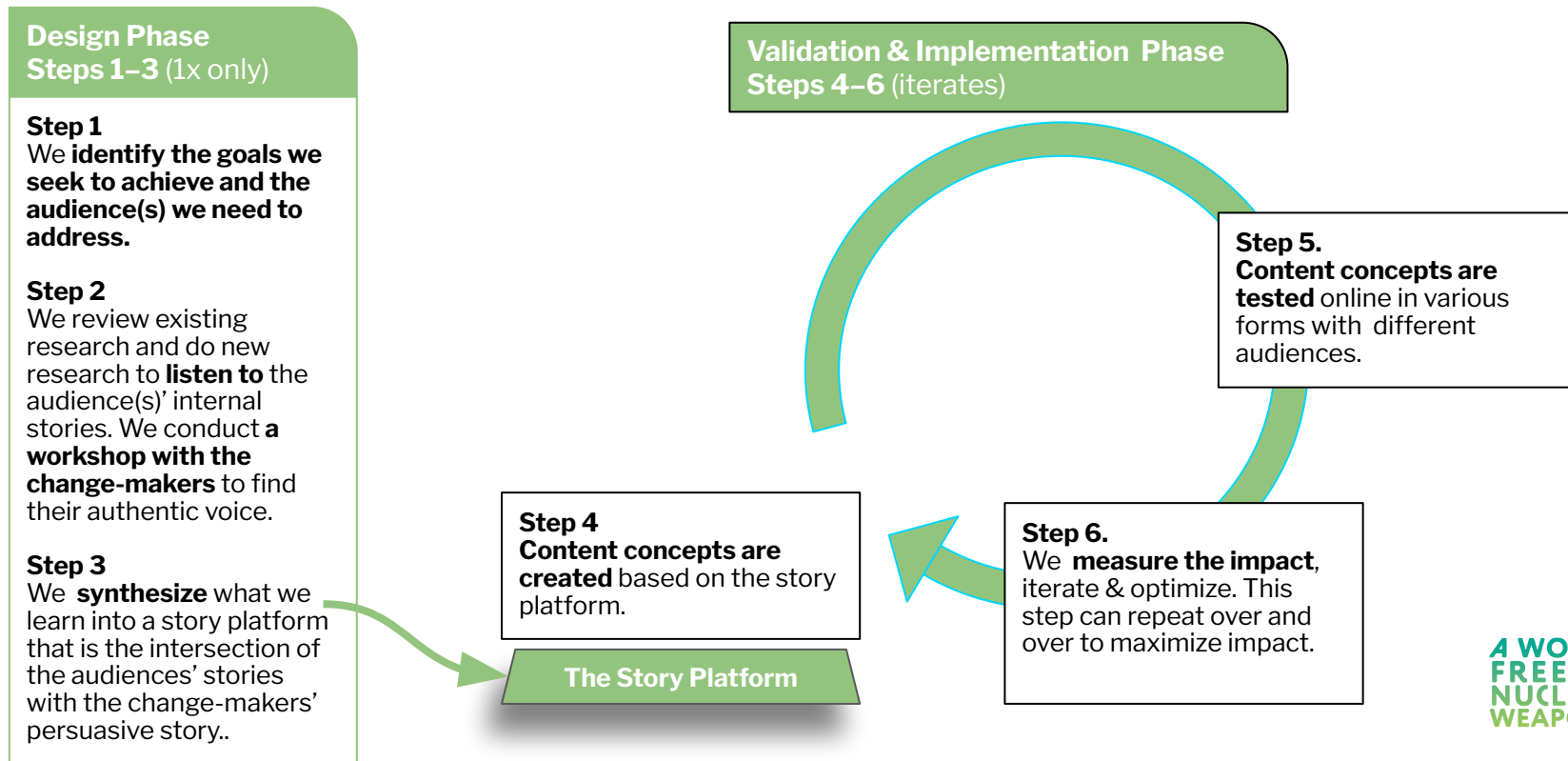


NTI NARRATIVE PROJECT OVERVIEW

Uncovering and Using the Deep Stories Americans Hold about the Future

The Approach: The Story Platform Process

A tested 21st-century branding tool — audience-focused and research-driven



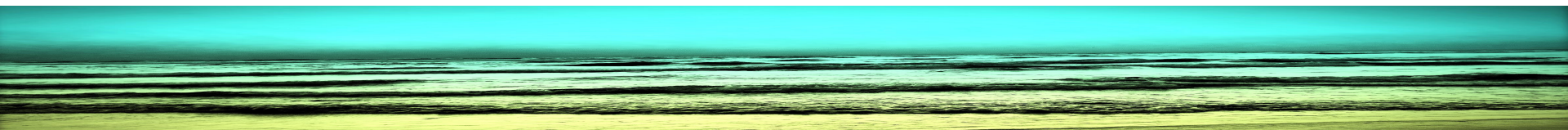
THE POWER OF STORIES



ORIGINAL QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

In-depth Interviews

April 2021



METAPHOR

ELICITATION

WHY THE DIFFERENCE: THE POWER OF DEEP LISTENING



In traditional focus groups, participants speak for an **average 3-10 mins total**, sharing whatever thoughts they feel comfortable sharing publicly and are aware of, consciously.

With **polls**, researchers get off-the-cuff responses to closed-ended questions **for at most 10 minutes**.

With **Metaphor Elicitation**, participants asked beforehand to spend **several hours** gathering images that resonate with them. Trained interviewers then met with them for **up to two hours** for an open-ended discussion on their thoughts and feelings, in what often feels like a therapy session. Then, **hundreds of hours** are spent analyzing what participants have shared.

What this process does is **unearth the raw, unvarnished truth - what people truly think and feel.**

“please collect 5-7 images that represent your thoughts and feelings about **the future for generations to come.**”

Participants were recruited for remote, one-on-one interviews for which they were asked to bring in a series of images that metaphorically represent their thoughts and feelings about the topic.

Trained interviewers spent 70 minutes discussing these images with participants, and then 20 minutes exploring two scenarios that tested the participant’s sense of agency and ability to imagine a future free of nuclear threats.



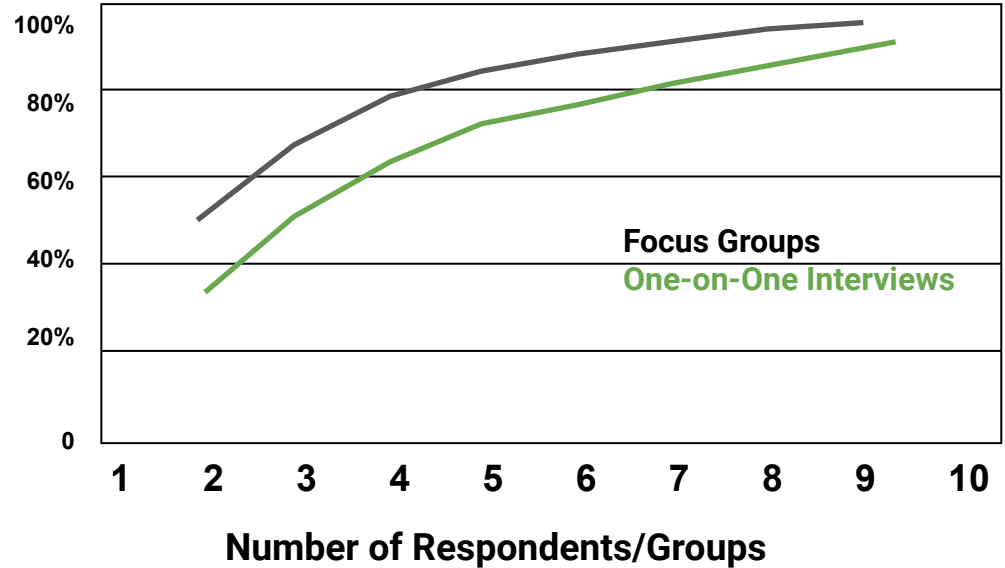
The Participants

Who: We spoke to **32 Americans** - People Power, Don't Tread on Me, If You Say So, Tough Cookies - who represented the spectrum of values Americans hold on social issues.

Where: Participants came from across America - and were a representative sample across measures of race, income, education, location, and gender, with an equal split of parents and non-parents represented.

THE SCIENCE BEHIND OUR SAMPLE

Our segmentation schema was used because of its ability to cover the breadth of attitudes across the United States in policy areas and values.



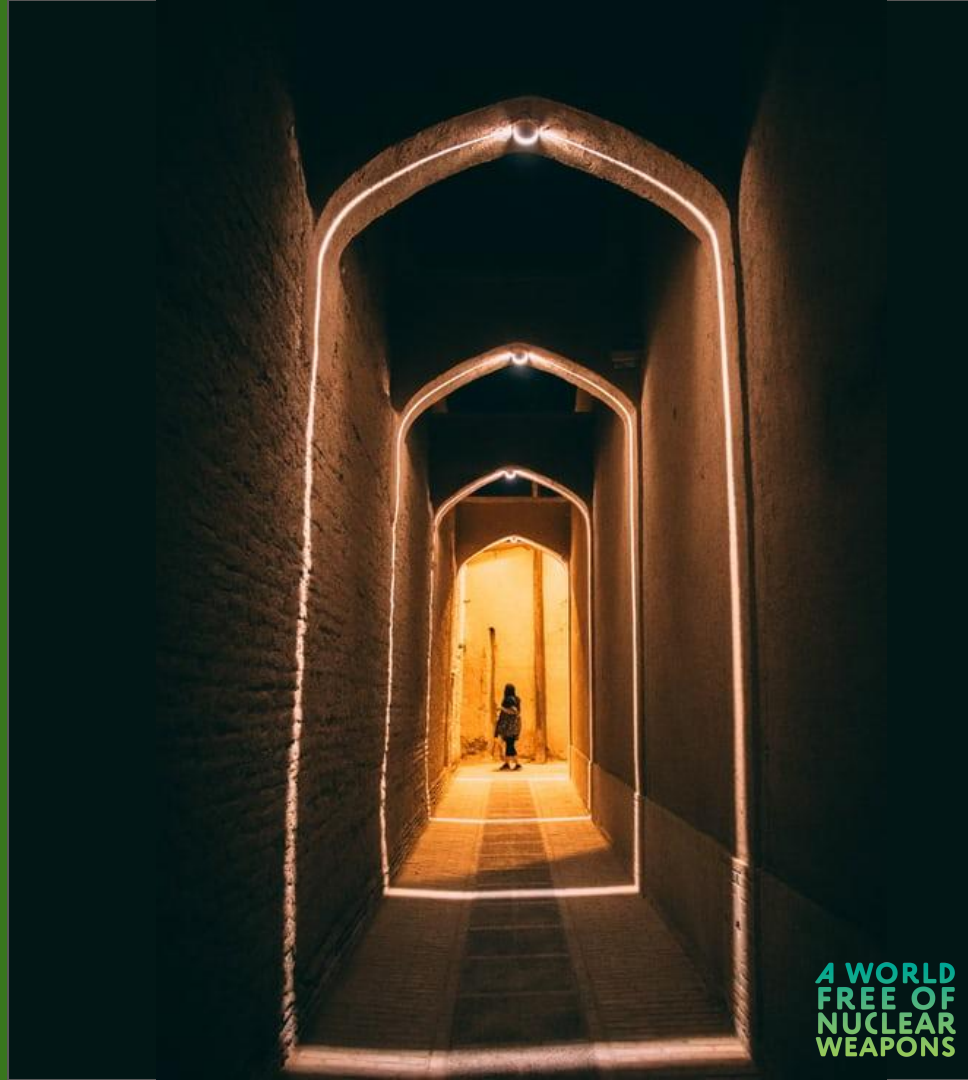
From "The Voice of the Customer" by Abbie Griffin and John R. Hauser, Marketing Science Institute, March 1992

Unless otherwise indicated, all imagery that follows
was carefully sourced and selected by the
participants in our study.

On the Precipice of Possibility...

At this moment, we face a future that feels uncertain.

When we asked participants to bring in images about the future for generations to come, the metaphorical images and stories we got back were filled with hope and fear, stories that were simple and beautiful and stories that were complicated, filled with a myriad of ideas about who we are and who it's possible to be.



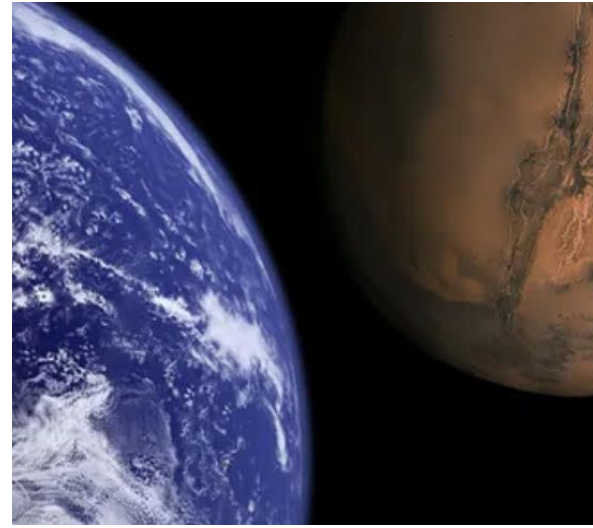
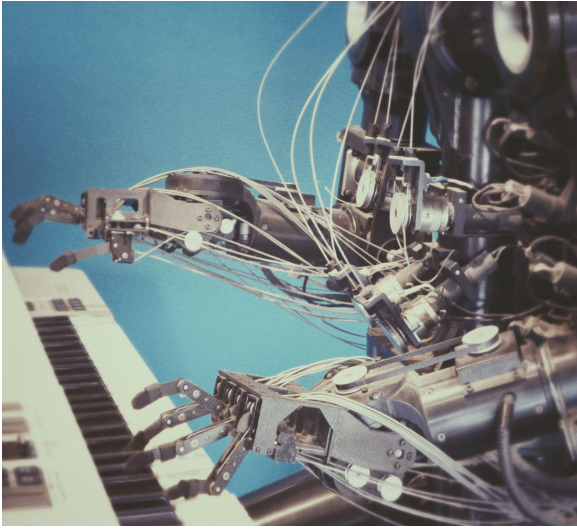
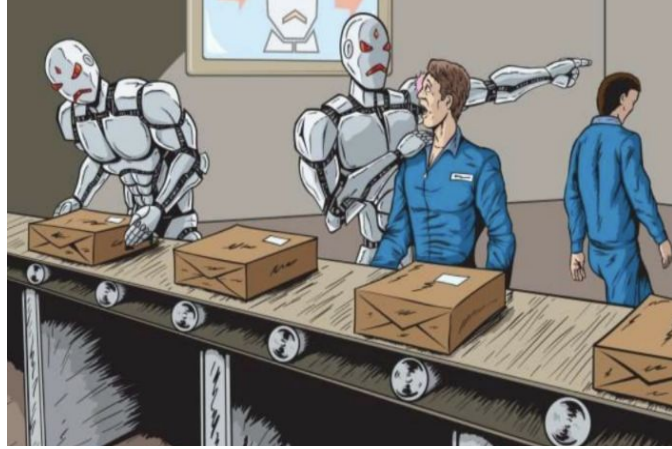
For participants looking to the future, they saw a world hurtling towards the apocalypse, while hoping for utopia.

The Apocalypse

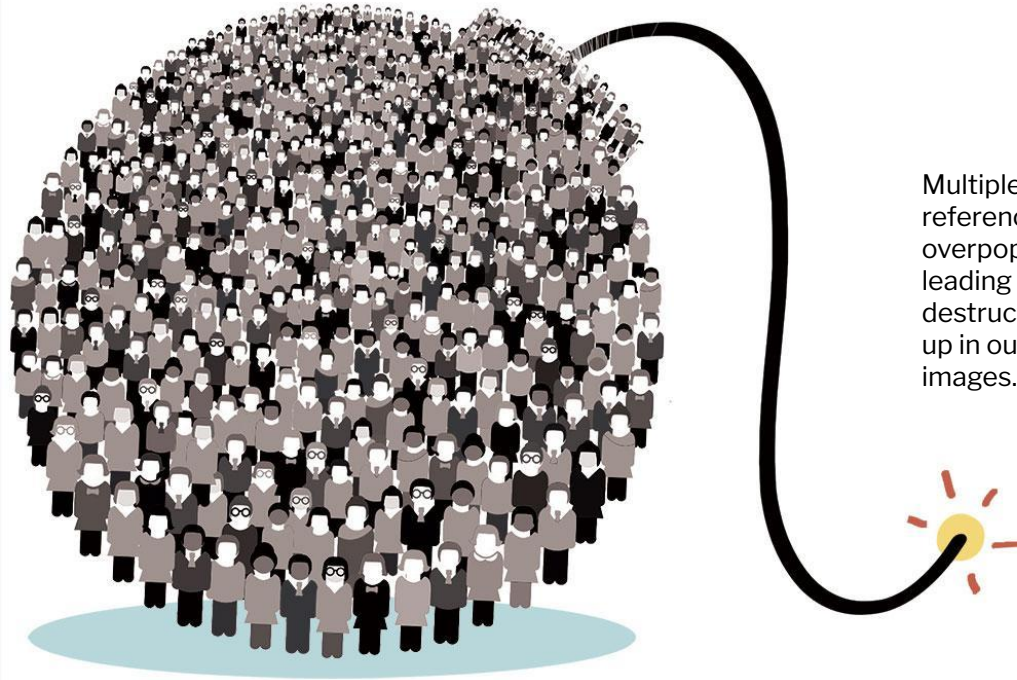
Utopia

**The Path to the Apocalypse is paved with
good intentions and inevitabilities...**

The Rise of the Machine and Moving Too Fast



For many, the apocalypse was **not** a matter of **if, but** **when...**

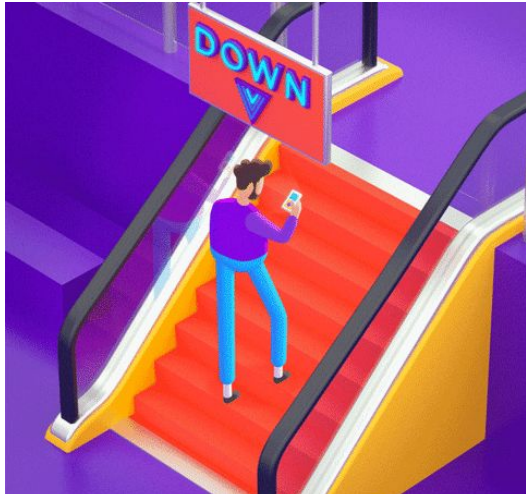
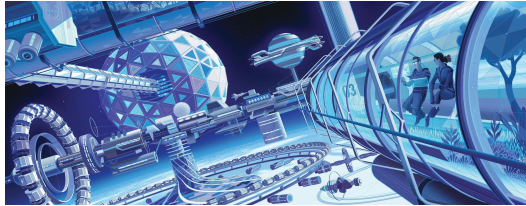


Multiple images
referencing
overpopulation,
leading to inevitable
destruction, showed
up in our participant
images.

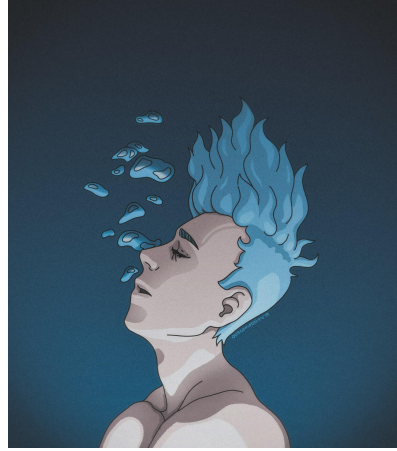
Making the Earth Sick with Our Bad Choices



The Loss of Connection with What Matters Most



Losing Freedom and the Loss of Agency



Our Lost Youth



The Path to Utopia is paved with good intentions and big dreams...

The Ability to Go Anywhere, and Do Anything



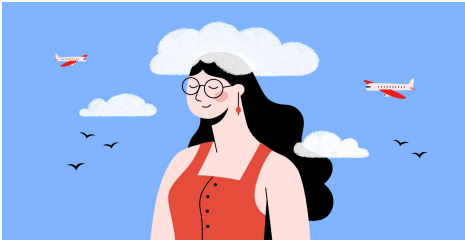
Restored, Abundant Resources for All



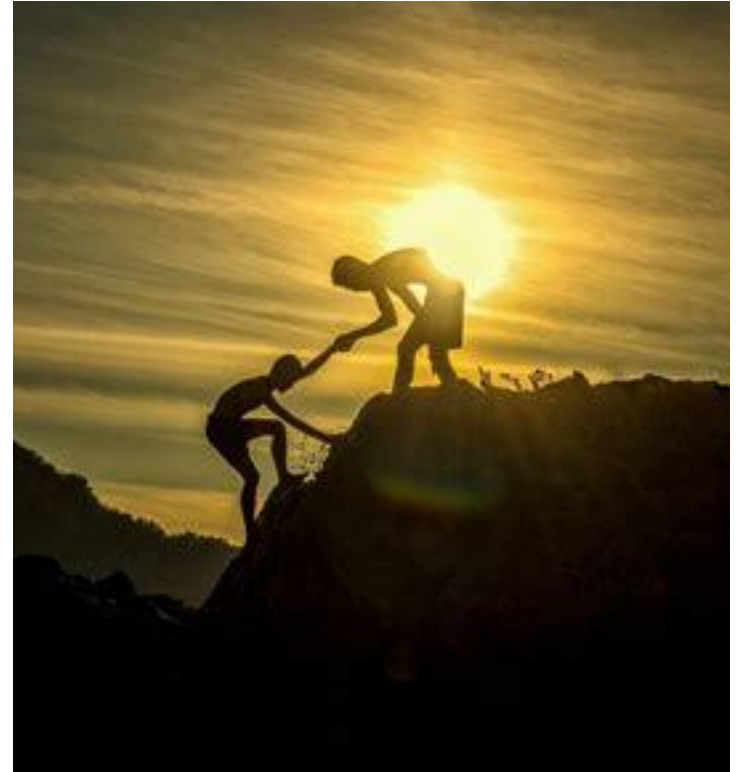
Slowing Down and Reconnecting with the Earth and Each Other



Dreaming Big and Flying Free



Moving Forward with the Wisdom of the Generations



A WORLD
FREE OF
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WEAPONS

Participants held dichotomous views with both a sense of despair at inevitable disaster and hope for an abundant, free future.

The Apocalypse

Utopia

Considering Cultivation

The most effective communications align with the deep frameworks that participants hold. It is because of this that it seems particularly important to consider cultivation that idea that you should do what you can to make the world right, whether it's exercising your power as a consumer, cultivating a better future through your community or raising the next generation to be ready to meet the future.

Cultivation speaks to finding and intentionally establishing a sense of control in a world that feels increasingly chaotic, reconnecting with others, and with the earth.

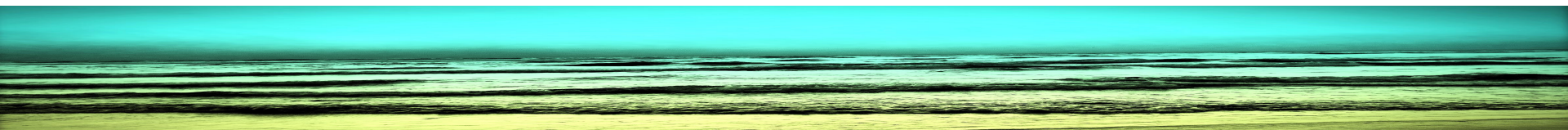
With these findings in mind, we move onto our next phase of research, establishing a Story Platform and Creative Concepts to test with our four audiences.



Cultivating a Better World, One Person, One Community at a Time...

“We all have to take a hand, do our part, in making or preparing a foundation for a better future. You know, there's no "I know you," we all need to take responsibility and take our part in making sure that we are taking this slippery terrain and making it travelable for our future generations.

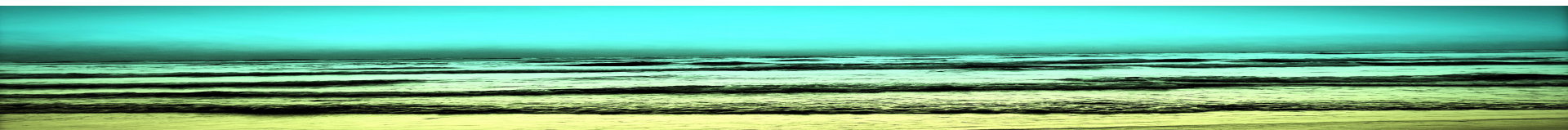
[When you do this], the world becomes a better place. It becomes a better place to live. It becomes a better place to function. Our communities become better. Our families become better, which is the foundation of our communities. Our communities become better, which is the foundation of our townships and our cities. And our cities become better, which is the foundation of our states. And our states become better. And it just keeps going on and on. It's like energy, when the energy is positive, it matriculates through the ages and it reaches the masses.” (Ty, IYSS)



THE STORY PLATFORM WORKSHOP

**Finding the core narrative to drive support
for eliminating nuclear weapons**

June 2021

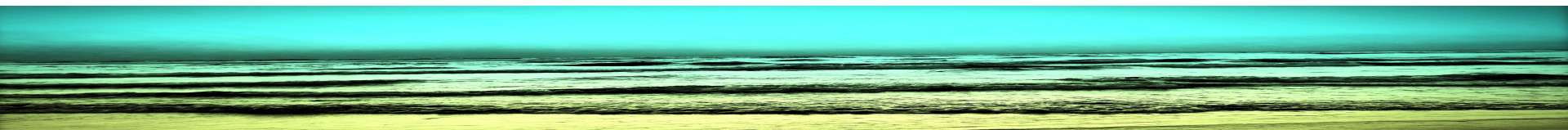


NTI's Story Platform Workshop brought together...

The “community” working to reduce and eliminate nuclear threats

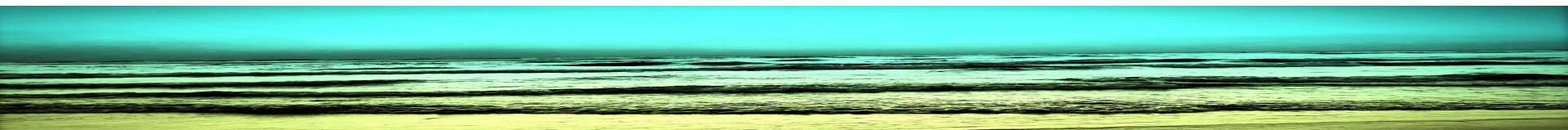
- 18 participants from 9 organizations
- NTI and its consultants formed the majority
- 7 participants represented independent entities

The Workshop's Decisions



Our shared goal...

The eradication of nuclear weapons.

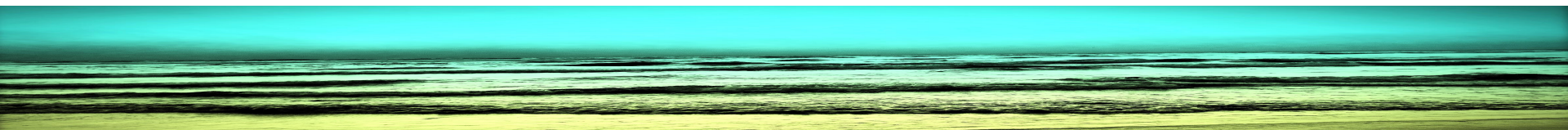


Our shared goal...

The eradication of nuclear weapons.

Our future vision...

A collaborative world where WMDs have no use.



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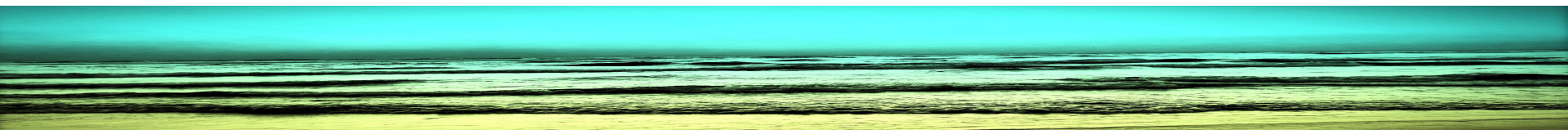
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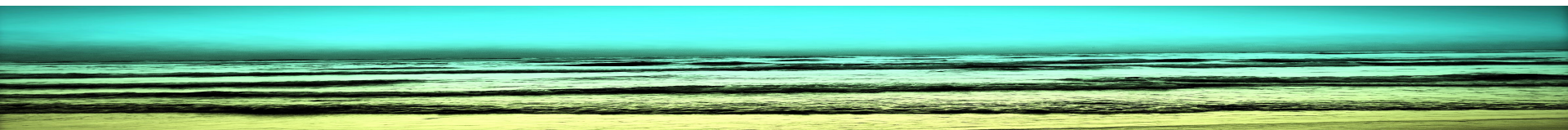
Our unifying approach:

**Achieving a collaborative world means
changing the culture.**



3 BIG TAKEAWAYS

ABOUT HOW TO DO THAT CULTURE-CHANGE WORK



**1. TELL A STORY ABOUT A FUTURE
WHERE WMDs HAVE NO PLACE.**

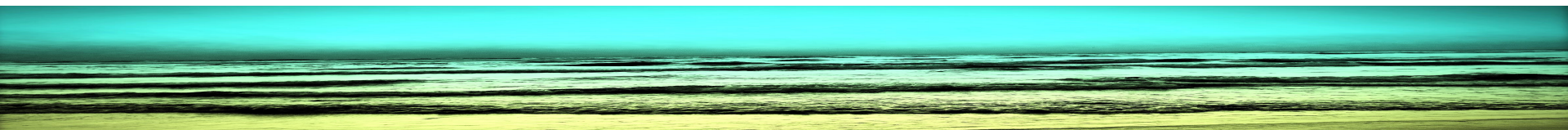
- 1. TELL A STORY ABOUT A FUTURE WHERE WMDs HAVE NO PLACE.**
- 2. LINK EXISTENTIAL THREATS TOGETHER.**

- 1. TELL A STORY ABOUT A FUTURE WHERE WMDs HAVE NO PLACE.**
- 2. LINK EXISTENTIAL THREATS TOGETHER.**
- 3. NAME A SPECIFIC, DOABLE STEP YOU WANT PEOPLE TO TAKE.**

**AND ONE MORE THING...
DON'T USE IMAGES OF
MUSHROOM CLOUDS.**



OUR STORY PLATFORM



The Story Platform

**Cultivating control
to end threats
to our future;
Seeing clearly to
grow what's good
for a world where we're free.**

OUR STORY PLATFORM'S MAIN PATHWAYS

Our Plentiful Future

Stories of a future where resources—natural and manmade— are never wasted or wantonly destroyed. This will mean there's plenty for all: Good-paying jobs, schools, health care, good food, transport, and more. Not wasting our resources means we can afford the future we want.

Cultivating Control

Stories that show how each of us can grow goodness in small ways that will help secure a better, safer, freer life for everyone. Step by step, individuals and communities can make a huge difference if we just step up and do the right things.

Freedom from Threat

Stories of how existential threats—nuclear weapons, climate disaster, and more—confine and coerce us with fear of intentional or accidental catastrophe. Stories of all that could go wrong so long as world-ending weapons exist. Once free from world- ending threats, we can be the people we're meant to be—truly free to live our lives, travel the world, speak our minds, and...

Wisdom through Generations

Stories of progress—how humans have made great strides because each generation learns from the ones before and passes on more knowledge to those who come next. We need to preserve our future. We can't break the chain of growing human wisdom. We need to recognize the rights of future people to inherit a stable, healthy planet on which they can live.

Our core story conveys a joyful vision.

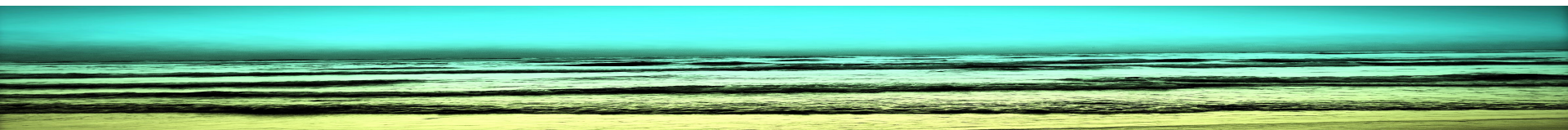
Recognizing the rights of future people as well as our own, we will achieve the future that most long for but believe they will never see. In this future, world-ending threats of our own making are behind us. The nations have given up nuclear weapons. They cooperate to prevent climate catastrophe.

People and countries still compete and argue. But we are not hostages to mass destruction.

We have won this future because so many took small actions, doing and saying what was right.

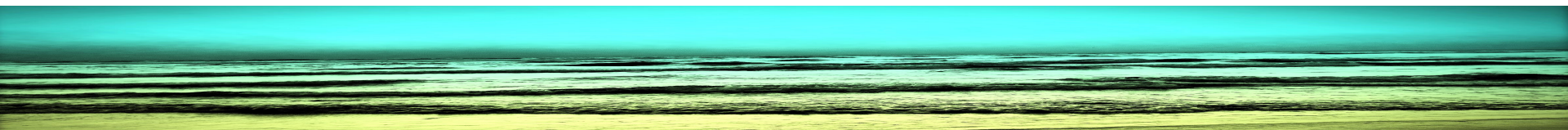
Now, the human race faces no deadlines. We've bought the time to fulfill our obligations to future generations and create the world we want.

We use our resources to create better, more prosperous lives, not deadlier threats. Technology does not control us. We control technology so it frees us to live our dreams. Generation after generation of children will grow up safe and free here, with strong values. Our world is abundant, our future unlimited.



TESTING

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THE FUTURE

The most important story feature

Despite having a large audience that desires a nuclear weapon-free future, it was hard to get people to imagine how we could get there or to imagine themselves as protagonists in the story.

We can end our world. Or free ourselves to live our dreams.



Each generation is supposed to teach the next. Don't let that end.



This works

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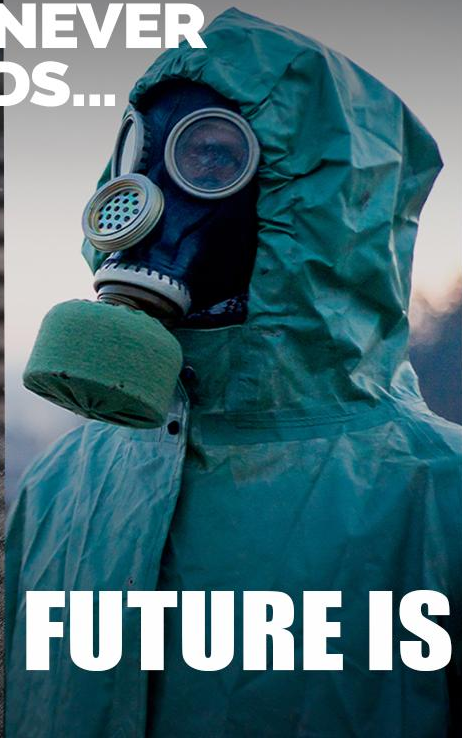
We can end our world. Or free ourselves to live our dreams.



This doesn't

This works

Y'ALL THOUGHT
2020 WAS BAD.
THINK ABOUT A
MASK MANDATE
THAT **NEVER
ENDS...**



THE FUTURE IS OURS...

**WE CAN CHOOSE A
BEAUTIFUL FUTURE
FOR US AND
GENERATIONS
TO COME.**



#NoNukes

This doesn't

Y'all
thought
2020 was
bad?

2020

2030?

#youhaveachoice

This Doesn't Work

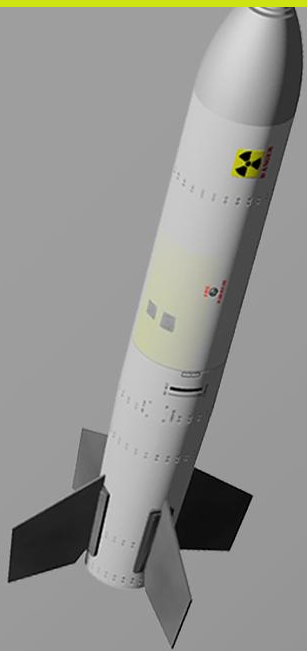
Nuclear Weapons



HOW IS
THIS
STILL A
THING?

#MakeNukesNotAThing

But This Definitely Does



Nuclear Weapons

HOW IS
THIS
STILL A
THING?

HAVEN'T WE LEARNED
FROM THE PAST? WE'LL
BUILD A JOYFUL FUTURE...
IF WE HAVE THE TIME.



STOP THE THREATS. SAVE THE FUTURE.

#WisdomOfGenerations

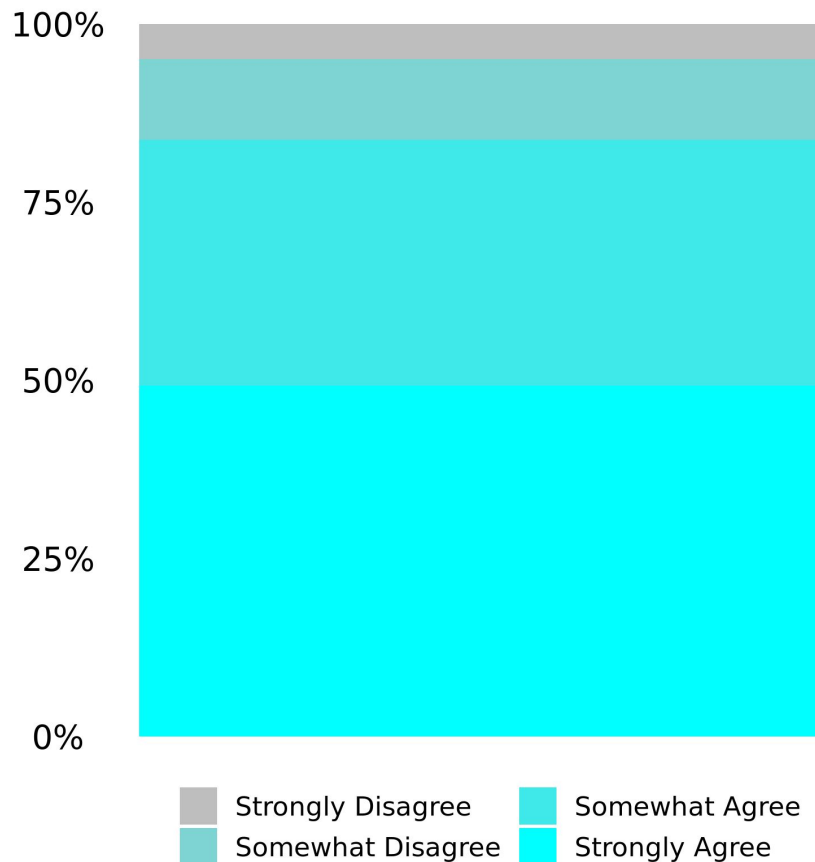
People already want what NTI is selling.

Advertisers selling toothpaste and margarine need to convince their audiences that they need the products.

But this isn't advertising; this is narrative. 75% of the audience already wants a nuclear weapon-free future.

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"I want to live in a world where no country, including the United States, has any nuclear weapons."

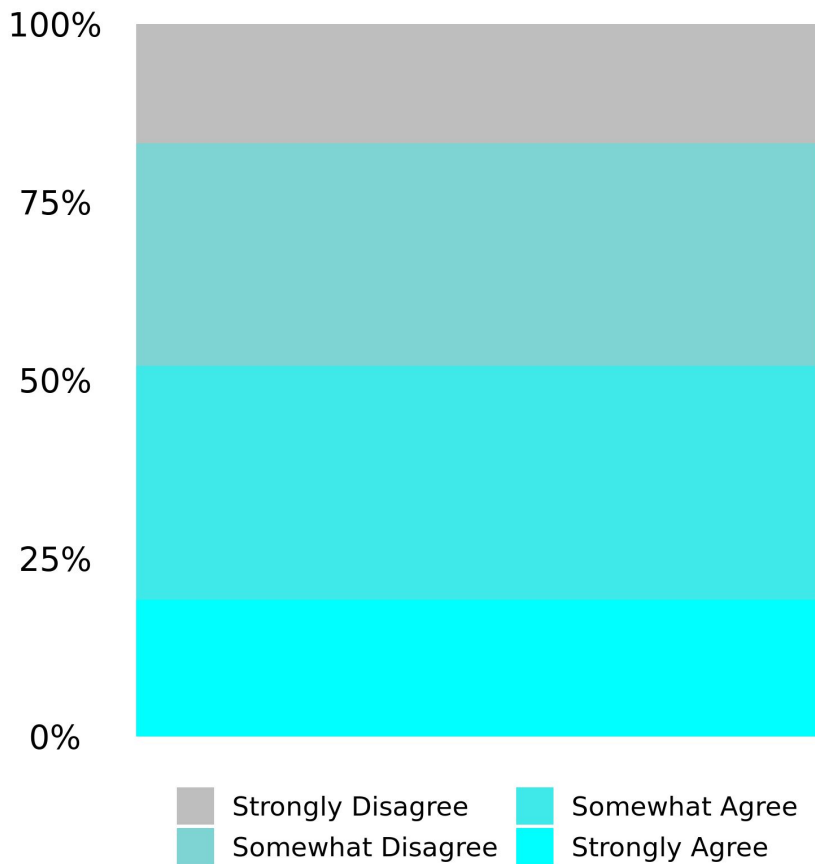


They just don't believe in it.

Just 50% can imagine what that future looks like.

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"I can imagine a future where every country eventually eliminates all nuclear weapons."

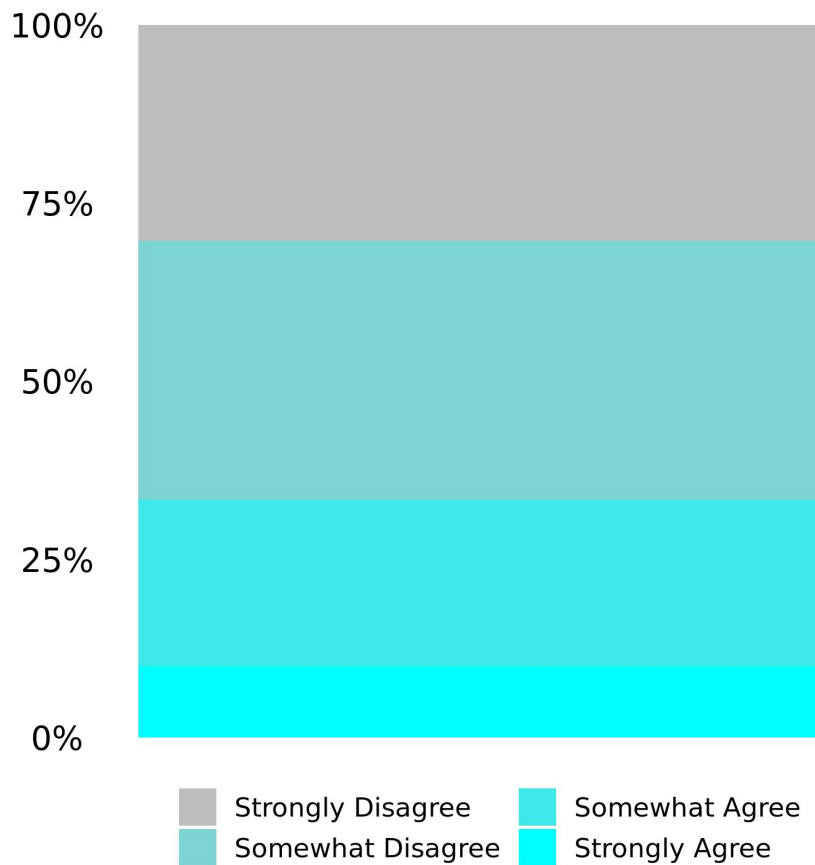


And they really don't see themselves in the story.

Just over 30% understand where they fit in.

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"I personally can do something that gets us closer to a world without nuclear weapons."



DIVERSE PROGRESSIVES

The persuadable audience

We conducted almost 10,000 testing surveys with 19 separate concepts and almost 2,000 control respondents.

We used these data to create a profile of the base audience and the audience readiest to move toward this narrative.

Political Party

	Dem	Rep	Neither
Less Persuadable*	1%	79%	20%
More Persuadable	86%	1%	13%

Much of the narrative change opportunity exists among Democrats and in the large proportion of Americans who do not identify with either of the major parties. The “neither” group was about 30% of this sample.

*The survey samples included slightly more women than men.

Persuadable Vs. Less Persuadable Audiences

	White	Black	Latino
Less Persuadable	97%	0%	3%
More Persuadable	50%	27%	18%

People of color make up at least half of the persuadable audience in this sample.

Makeup of Persuadable Audiences

	Women		Age <30	30 - 50	50+
Less Persuadable	56%*		6%	34%	53%
More Persuadable	67%		26%	43%	36%

The persuadable audience is younger and mostly women.

It's tempting to reduce the persuadable audience to “young, progressive women of color” because the topline demographic patterns are so striking. But knowing the audience's demographics doesn't tell you what they actually care about.

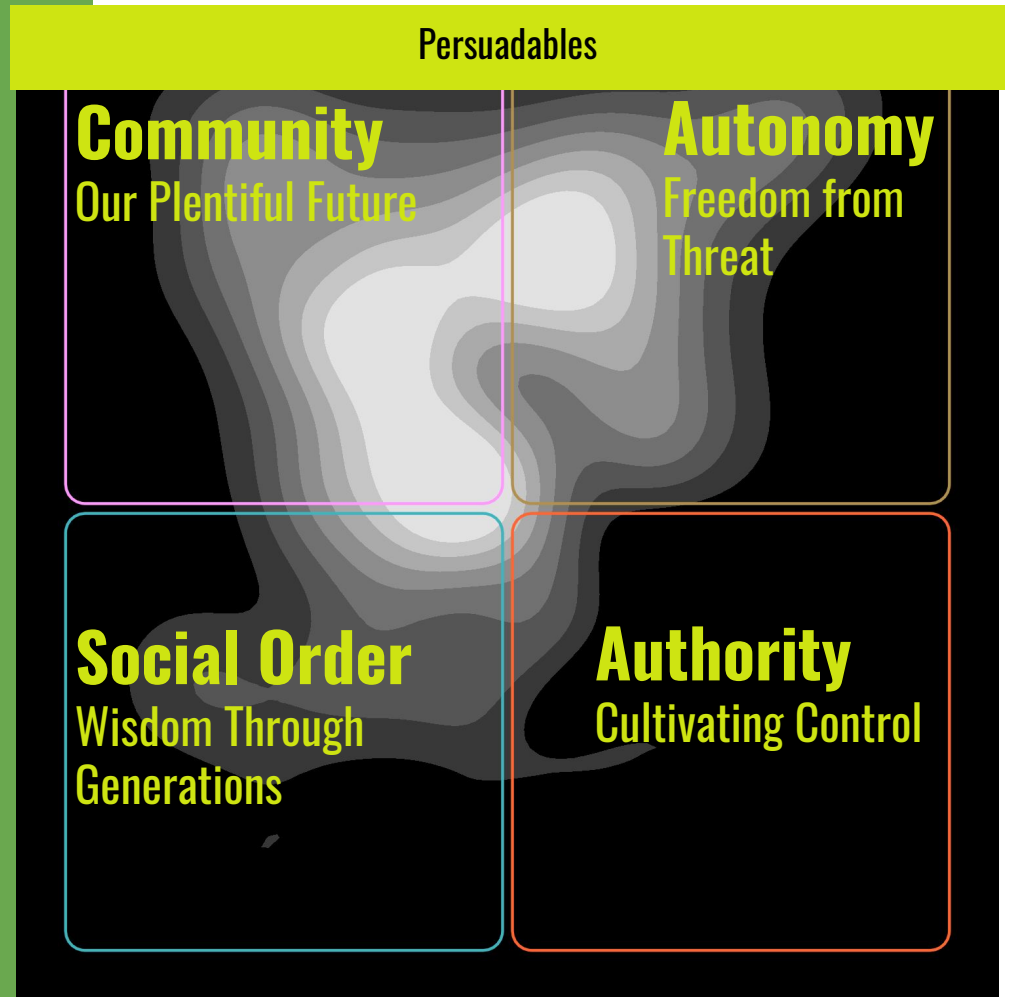
Persuasion Opportunity Zones

Each of the four audiences has core values that represent their core story needs.

While every story pathway can generate stories that appeal to these core values, some story pathway seem intuitively to “fit”.

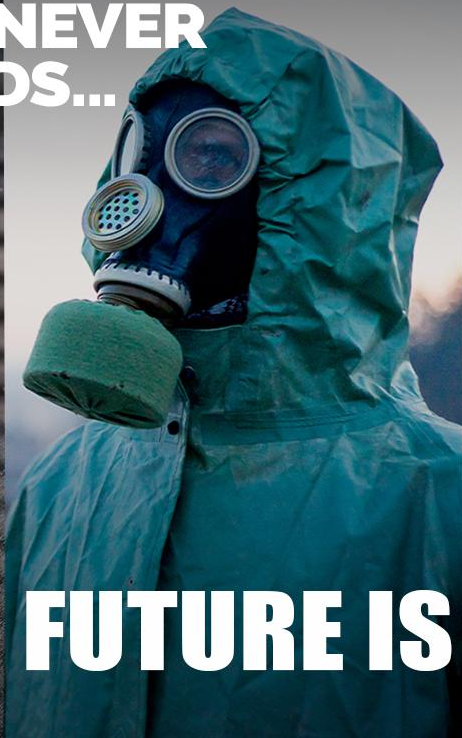
We explored which specific pieces of content appealed most to which audiences.

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