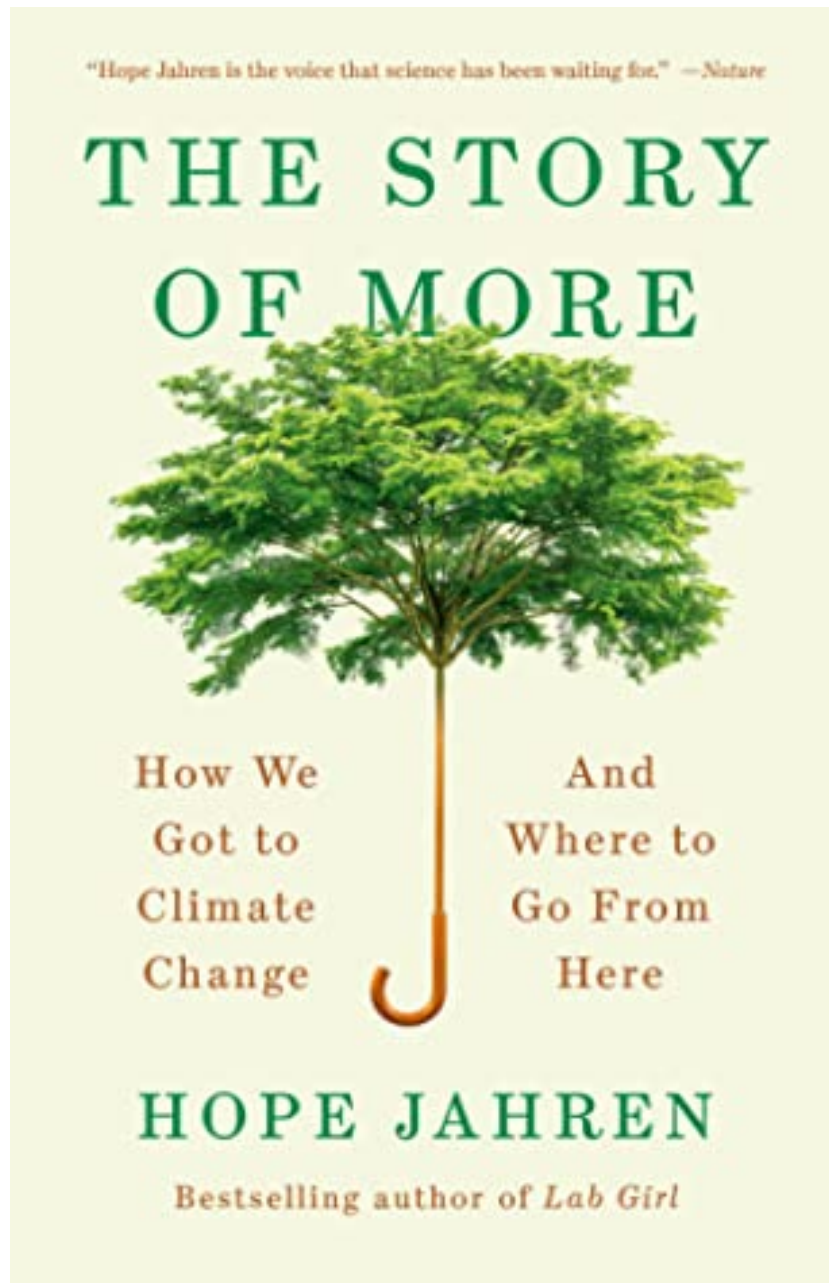


# The Story of More: How We Got to Climate Change and Where to Go from Here Book PDF Download



**By:**  
**Hope Jahren**

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### Kelly

One-sixth of the global population uses “ of the world’s energy and half the world’s electricity. They’re responsible for “ of the world’s carbon dioxide emissions, “ of the world’s meat consumption, and “ of the world’s sugar consumption. It’s statistics and data like this that Jahren breaks down for readers in a book that’s meant not to terrify readers about the overwhelming scope of global warming and climate change but instead, to instill hope that indeed, small changes add up over time.

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“œHaving hope requires courage“ is her big message throughout the book, which was inspired by the classes she’s taught at universities. The book breaks down big topics, such as meat consumption, carbon dioxide emissions, energy creation and consumption, the growth in the use of plastics, and more, and looks at how just over the course of her own life the richest countries in the world have consumed more than their fair share and how that’s impacted less-wealthy countries, as well as the world as a whole.

Unlike a number of climate change books, this one is data-driven and extremely accessible for the average reader. It doesn’t feel overwhelming -- in fact, Jahren is reassuring that doing even the tiniest things adds up over the long haul. Can you go one night without eating meat? That can make a difference. Can you swap a flight for a trip on a train? What about purchasing lower-energy appliances, washing clothes with cold water, purchasing less stuff including food that you ultimately end up throwing away?

By using less, we allow more resources to be better distributed among those on Earth. That, in turn, reduces creation of more, which can and does impact the overall vitality of the globe.

Encouraging, accessible, and written conversationally, Jahren’s book should be a first stop for anyone interested in reducing their own footprint. It’s short, too, making it feel completely doable, as opposed to overwhelming and complicated. Start small, as she does with her students: dump open your briefcase or purse and count up how many of those items are made from plastic. What can you swap out for something not plastic when it runs the course of its life?

And more, change in your own life doesn't need to be global in scope, either. Choosing one area in your life to target for change is good work. If you change your consumption habits and swap soda for water at more meals, buy fewer processed goods, consume less meat (and she never says you need to go vegetarian or vegan, like other books preach), that does make an impact.

The book doesn't overlook the realities of living in a capitalist society and that it's big corporations that have done this to us. That's the binding thread throughout. But, by choosing to battle back with changes in our lifestyle as dictated by capitalism, we can better help our fellow inhabitants on Earth by sharing resources.

## David Wineberg

A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down is a concise description of The Story of More. Hope Jahren has written a passionate, direct and searing indictment of what Man has made of this planet in just her lifetime (She repeats at least 20 times she was born in 1969). And yet, every chapter (there are 19) begins with a nostalgic look at her childhood in Minnesota, her parents, family rituals, and life at that time. She had a pet chunk of ice she named Covington that she kicked all the way to

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Minnesota and her later home in Iowa have changed dramatically over her lifetime. The increased amount of corn per acre is stunning, but pales before the amount of fertilizer and pesticides used to get those better yields. She says we have pushed plants to produce as much as they physically can, and where we go for more is unfathomable. Not that we make good use of it. About 20% is simply burned up in biofuels, and most of it goes to feed domesticated animals for meat. The amount actually consumed as food comes dead last. She backs it up with figures, both global and American, that demonstrate the really poor connection between then and now. (She lists them all again at the end, because frankly, it's all very hard to believe one at a time.)

Americans eat 15% more food today. It shows. They throw out 40% of the food they buy, enough to feed all the undernourished in the rest of the world. By 2004, Americans were consuming a pound

and a half of sugar - a week. In sum, Americans, who make up 4% of the global population, consume 15% of the food, 15% of the energy and 20% of the electricity in the world. If the rest of mankind were to rise to that level - the world could simply not work.

Already, half the fish we eat are farmed because there aren't enough left in the wild. The amount of excrement they produce is way more than the oceans can deal with. Similarly, cattle and our other domesticated animals produce 300 million tons of feces a year, far in excess of the amount humans produce as a result of eating them. It's not a beneficial tradeoff. To make that manure, those animals consume a billion tons of grain, in order to give consumers (just) 100 million pounds of meat. This math leads nowhere good, and Jahren soon switches from dispassionate scientist to frustration:

"The amount of fruits and vegetables that is wasted each year exceeds the annual food supply of fruit and vegetables for the whole continent of Africa. We live in an age when we can order a pair of tennis shoes from a warehouse on the other side of the planet and have them shipped to a single address in less than 24 hours; don't tell me that a global food distribution is impossible."

All this overconsumption seems to have done Americans no good. They are no happier now that they work more, eat more, drive more, fly more and consume more. Quite the opposite, according to the figures. She says we need to consume less and share more. But neither of those are American values any more, and she has no stats for trends in sharing - just aspirations. More is a one way street, an addiction and a plague on the planet. Americans have yet to notice.

Meanwhile, there are (still) a billion people with no access to electricity.

Her 19 chapters cover the gamut from plastics to cars to species extinctions, passing through global warming and greenhouse gases. She has unkind words for both deniers and alarmists; neither is doing any good. She is all about reducing consumption, and concludes with how each individual American can reduce consumption and actually make a difference. "If we want to take action, we should get started while it still matters what we do."

David Wineberg

## Steve

A beautiful (yet terrible) little book, well worth reading ... and sharing. A sobering yet accessible and empathetic introduction ... a gentle yet jarring dipping of one's toe into the water ... on climate change. And (during the era of coronavirus social distancing, as opposed to, say, the holiday season ... as you do your best to support your local independent bookstore), potentially, an excellent gift for a relative, friend, or neighbor open to learning something new and doing some hard think

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: the book's strengths - to my mind - derive from the (1) splendid, comfortable, almost languid prose; (2) the author's knowledge and experience - she's the real deal; (3) broad and creative research, eloquently presented alongside, and building upon, endearing anecdotes; and (4) a reader-friendly, easily digestible, "sequential nugget" (or very short, thematic chapter) organizational rubric.

While I expect that, for some, I'd be inclined to recommend Wallace-Wells'

instead, I'm guessing that, due to Jahren's lighter (gentle? soft? silky?) touch, for most readers, this will

them more directly, or prove less likely to turn them off and simply shut down on the topic.

Ultimately, I increasingly think ... nay, fear ... that no topic is more important to the future of our planet ... and the world my children (and their children) will inherit and inhabit ... than climate change. We need to broaden and emphasize the discussion and apply leverage to our governments, at all levels, to make difficult decisions, embrace sacrifice, and change (many types of) behavior. If this book furthers that discussion and opens (or, dare I say, persuades) minds on that score, then Jahren has done us all (and those that will follow) a great service.

## Heather

I received an early release copy of The Story of More by Hope Jahren.

In her latest book, The Story of More, Hope Jahren provides all the warning sirens people paying attention would expect in a book on climate change, and she does it with equal amounts of careful research and human experiences. The book is broken into four sections with an appendix that provides resources readers of the first three will want to explore.

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As a human, and especially as a parent, I came to this book looking for answers I could share with my children, and steps we could take as a family toward positive change. Each section of the book is broken into short chapters. It is a book anyone interested in climate change can digest while on a bus commute, or while waiting for an appointment. Jahren's approach to each topic is replete with research and data, yet because the data is connected to personal experiences, I believe both my children (12 and 14) could read it and glean what I did from the text. Her words put the responsibility for change on each of us, but as a yoke we will want to take up, not a chastisement for what has been done.

Though the topics of environmental stewardship and climate change are daunting, Jahren urges, "Fate has placed you and me at the crossroads of environmental history." Her tone is one of enthusiasm for what humans can accomplish when we commit to a task. As she writes, she also imparts that she has hope for humankind and that readers are welcome to take some of her hope to spur them toward personal changes for the planet's and all of humanity's betterment. She writes that we need only be "doomed if we believe ourselves to be."

As a result of reading The Story of More, my family and I are making changes. We are walking or biking more, and commuting by car less. We are consciously consuming less plastic. We are plotting to plant more trees and help organizations to do the same. After my husband and children have read the book (or listened to an audio version when it becomes available), I hope they make recommendations for our family so we can further dedicate ourselves to actions that will make a small difference. I hope individuals and families who read Jahren's book all begin making similar changes.

**Patricia Murphy**



I had the great privilege of reading

over the same course of days as reading

, and finishing them both on the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, which also would have been my mother's 81st birthday had she not dropped dead of a heart attack in 2009.

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I actually stopped reading the Foer book to read the Jahren book because I was frustrated with the tone and the focus in the former. I had a good few days where I switched back and forth, marveling at the messages (similar), versus the rhetorical approaches (different). Jahren (50) and Foer (43) both draw upon their connections to the places that shaped them. While Jahren focuses more on her small agricultural town in Austin, Minnesota, Foer focuses on the life of his grandmother, a Holocaust survivor born in Poland. Both personal histories lend extraordinary weight to the arguments in each book.

For me the deal-breaking difference came in voice and tone—Jahren's message calls for large scale solutions that embody empathy, innovation, education, and the redistribution of wealth and resources. Foer's book is more of a collection of personal essays about his personal struggle with making small choices that could make tiny notches in the fight against climate change. For example, Foer obsesses over his desire to eat hamburgers. Solipsistic much? And isn't solipsism a germ of the bigger problem?

My mother held degrees in Political Science and International Relations from Stanford (class of 1961) and became a leader in the Communist Party USA during the 1990s. The distribution of wealth was a value she held close, and I believe she would have embraced Jahren's notion that the pursuit of "more" has endangered not only our health and our ecosystems but our political and economic lives as well.