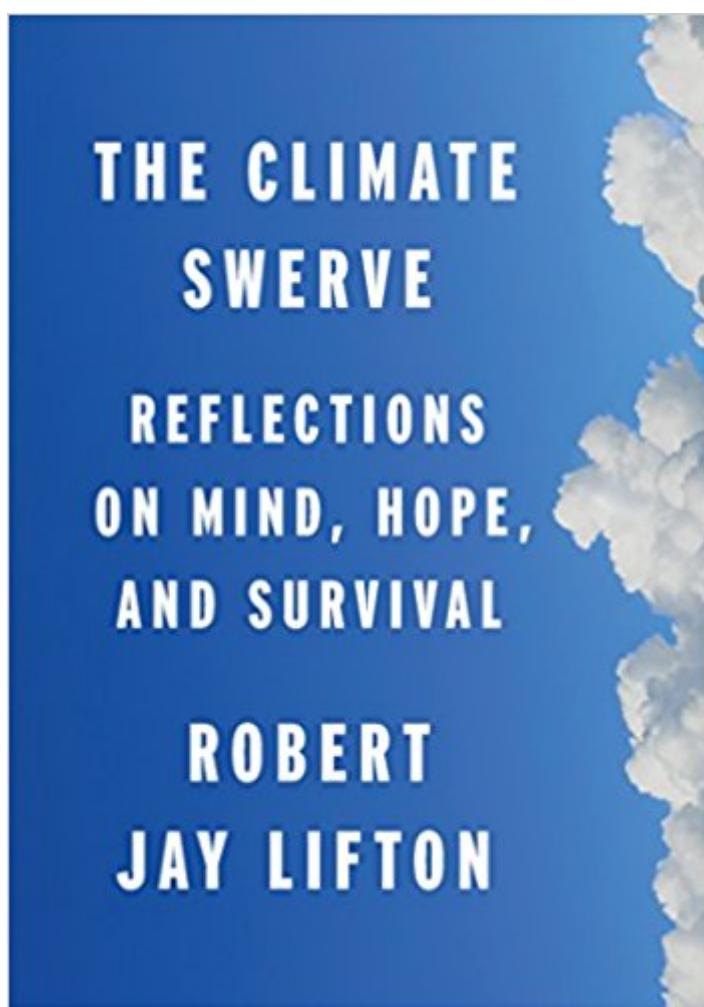


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The Climate Swerve: Reflections On Mind, Hope, And Survival



Synopsis

Over his long career as witness to an extreme twentieth century, National Book Award–winning psychiatrist, historian, and public intellectual Robert Jay Lifton has grappled with the profound effects of nuclear war, terrorism, and genocide. Now he shifts to climate change, which, Lifton writes, "presents us with what may be the most demanding and unique psychological task ever required of humankind," what he describes as the task of mobilizing our imaginative resources toward climate sanity. Thanks to the power of corporate-funded climate denialists and the fact that "with its slower, incremental sequence, [climate change] lends itself less to the apocalyptic drama," a large swathe of humanity has numbed themselves to the reality of climate change. Yet Lifton draws a message of hope from the Paris climate meeting of 2015 where representatives of virtually all nations joined in the recognition that we are a single species in deep trouble. Here, Lifton suggests in this lucid and moving book that recalls Rachel Carson and Jonathan Schell, was evidence of how we might call upon the human mind—"our greatest evolutionary asset"—to translate a growing species awareness—or "climate swerve"—into action to sustain our habitat and civilization.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Praise for The Climate Swerve: "Thoughtful, intelligent, and deeply human, Lifton will not disappoint his fans and will hopefully draw new readers with this deeply informative work." —Booklist "A powerful and well-reasoned call to action." —Kirkus Reviews "From one of the foremost chroniclers of the twentieth century's other great dilemma, we now have these powerful reflections

on climate change—“they set in useful and vivid context this great crisis, and will be of use to all as we try to think our way through it.” Bill McKibben, author of *The End of Nature*

“Robert Lifton’s brave life, and his succession of masterful books on the most urgent questions of our time, have prepared him for this—perhaps the most urgent and timely of all his works. A rare combination of clear-eyed realism and chosen hope, *The Climate Swerve* comes just in time to move politics and resistance to the next, necessary level. A treasure still, Lifton is a prophet again.” James Carroll, author of *House of War*

In the 1980s, Robert Jay Lifton gave us the term ‘psychic numbing,’ to explain how people coped with the threat of nuclear annihilation by denying or at least discounting it. While denial might be beneficial to an individual, it was potentially catastrophic to society if it led us to fail to act to address the threat. In this important new work, Lifton addresses the existential threat of our day: climate change. He offers us the ‘climate swerve,’ not as explanation but as source of hope. We can swerve: we can become aware, change our ways, and avoid disaster. For one of our great qualities as humans is that we have the capacity to anticipate the future and act accordingly. Most important, the heart of the swerve is the commitment to telling the truth about climate change, which Lifton does unflinchingly in this courageous and crucial book.”

Naomi Oreskes, author of *Merchants of Doubt* and *The Collapse of Western Civilization*

Praise for Lifton’s *Witness to an Extreme Century*: “Written with the verve of great storytelling and the precision of history, this memoir is a moral meditation that illuminates the age. An exquisite example of how intelligence, erudition, and depth of feeling combine to make redeeming wisdom. A stunning book.”

James Carroll, author of *Jerusalem*, *Jerusalem*

Robert Jay Lifton has long served as one of the most important, and profound, witnesses of the 20th century.”

Greg Mitchell, author of *The Tunnels*

A call for a moral awakening by a deeply compassionate chronicler of our times.”

Kirkus Reviews (starred review)

“Robert Jay Lifton has profoundly illuminated the human dimension of the 20th century’s most destructive events.”

Steven Pinker

Robert Jay Lifton is a psychiatrist who has written more than twenty books and edited many others, including many seminal works in the field such as the National Book Award—winning *Death in Life: Survivors of Hiroshima* and *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide*. He lives in New York City.

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