

Our Human Moment

Cracking the Code:
Life-centric Archetypes
for mainstreaming
sustainability



In trying to make sustainability relevant for people, most organizations have missed something critical.

Sustainability. A word with a big job to do, and high hopes invested in it. The ‘S word’ has dominated organizations’ attempts to influence people’s behavior when shifting towards more sustainable forms of consumption. To date, that approach has had limited success – it hasn’t motivated most people, nor has it mobilized mass demand for sustainable consumption.

But what happens if we broaden the lens?

In this report we reveal the crucial puzzle piece we’ve been missing: how people view the world and their role in it, and what this means for how they relate to sustainability. By capturing this dynamic with six Life-centric Archetypes, we show how organizations can help people live more sustainably to reinvent consumption and themselves for the better.

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All photography within this report features
Our Human Moment research participants.





People overwhelmingly want to live more sustainably.

Most people want to see the world take significant and speedy steps to become more sustainable. In fact, as our recent global research¹ attests:

- ▶ 96% of the 8,000 people we surveyed across 11 markets want sustainability to be a part of their lives.
- ▶ Even 90% of the people who are not currently taking any actions to live sustainably share that hope.

But we need to rethink what this particular ‘S word’ means.

People identify more with the concept of living sustainably than with the word itself, revealing an opportunity to broaden the definition and portrayal of what it means to act sustainably.

In fact, when we asked the individuals in our survey what “living in a way that considers the impact on other people and the planet today and in the future” means to them — deliberately omitting the word “sustainability” — the results were telling.

When masked from the term “sustainability,” 69% of respondents claimed to be taking action to live in ways that benefit others and the planet.

When the word “sustainability” was included, that number dropped to 54%.

Clearly, narrow definitions of sustainability, focused closely on the environment, are limiting. Yes, sustainability absolutely includes recycling, electric vehicles, and climate change.

But ultimately, to compel change, it is far more effectively defined as creating an equitable present and future in which people can thrive on a *thriving* planet.

Why? Because looking at sustainability more broadly means that it can and should encompass how people intuitively think about their own lives and the impact they have on people and the planet.

Human goals are as relevant as planetary goals when it comes to driving people’s sustainable behaviors.

In fact, our research revealed that 83% of people consider human goals as reasons to live sustainably, which is nearly equivalent to the 86% who cite planetary goals. While people continue to care deeply about the environment, planetary concerns don’t capture the full picture of what it could mean to live sustainably.

As we write, the rising cost of living, geopolitical instability, and the ways in which the very word “sustainability” can trigger strong and heavily politicized reactions make this broader, more human perspective essential.





Organizations have a crucial role to play.

Through their efforts, organizations could unleash a virtuous and expanding cycle of increasingly sustainable behavior.

We found that the more people do to live sustainably, the more they aspire to do.

- ▶ Among those who said they were not taking any action to live sustainably, just 51% said they were willing to begin.
- ▶ Yet among the 69% of people who claimed to take action to live sustainably, 83% were willing to do more.

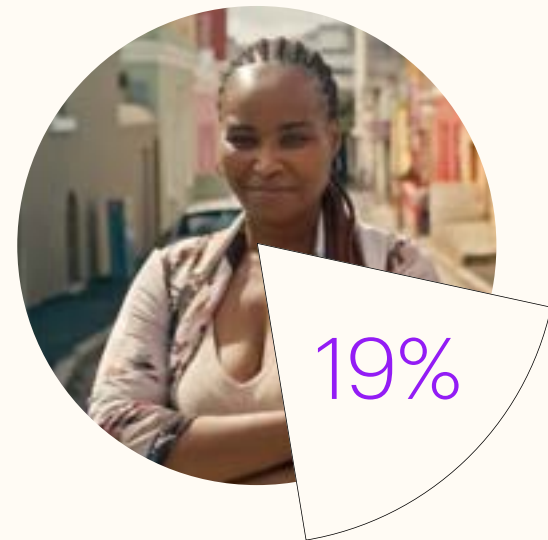
If they do things differently.

Only



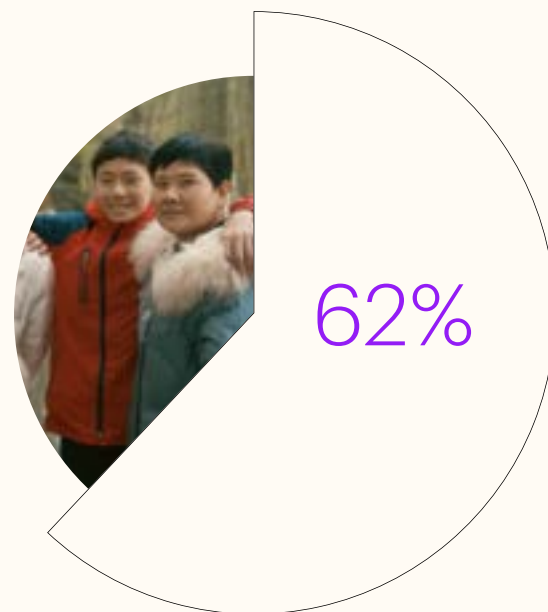
are encouraged by businesses, large or small, to take sustainable action.

and



are inspired to live sustainably by brand messaging and advertisements.

whereas



are encouraged by friends and family to take sustainable action.

Recognizing this current lack of influence, most people want organizations to do things differently — 74% expect companies to find innovative ways to engage with them toward sustainability.

Executives also recognize the need for businesses to do things differently. Confronted by heightened levels of disruption globally, Accenture's [Total Enterprise Reinvention](#) survey of C-suite executives found that 67% claim to be accelerating organizational reinvention efforts due to shifting consumer preferences — 46% are doing the same due to the impact of climate change². And with the emergence of new regulations that amplify corporate sustainability requirements, and related financial penalties for non-compliance, the imperative to reinvent sustainable consumption is now hard to ignore.

How can companies prioritize and transform their actions for the greatest possible impact? How can we create a more just and equitable present while laying the future-proof foundations of a healthy planet where people can thrive too?

Becoming more relevant.

Our research has uncovered a highly promising course of action.

In the [first chapter](#)³ of Our Human Moment, published in April 2023, we said that if businesses expect humans to become more sustainable, they need to make sustainability more human. Sustainability initiatives, products and communications need to become more relevant and accessible to people and how they live their lives. Our findings indicate that if people are to act more sustainably, more consistently, then their actions must align with their values, needs and desires. To that end, we identified a way forward that can serve as a north star for any organization striving to make its sustainability efforts and offerings more relevant and reflective of people's everyday lives — a more [life-centric approach](#)⁴.

The [Life-centric Entryways](#) are the keystone of this approach:



Resourcefulness: Maximizing the value or use of what is available to us.



Empowerment: Protecting and standing up for the causes and communities that matter most to us.



Openness: Striving to discover, experiment, and learn how things could be different.



Belonging: Pursuing a sense of acceptance, support, and connection in the communities in which we live.



Self-fulfillment: Seeking to survive and thrive by taking steps to protect our well-being, security and status.



Caring: Looking after ourselves, our loved ones, and the places or things that hold meaning to us.

Our latest work built on those findings. Specifically, in our current study, we sought to understand how 8,000 people across 11 markets relate to sustainable living and perceive the world and their role in it — their worldviews.

See [About the research](#) for more detail, including the safeguards we took to ensure that people's responses reflected their actual lives, rather than only their aspirations.

By responding to people's relationship to sustainable living.

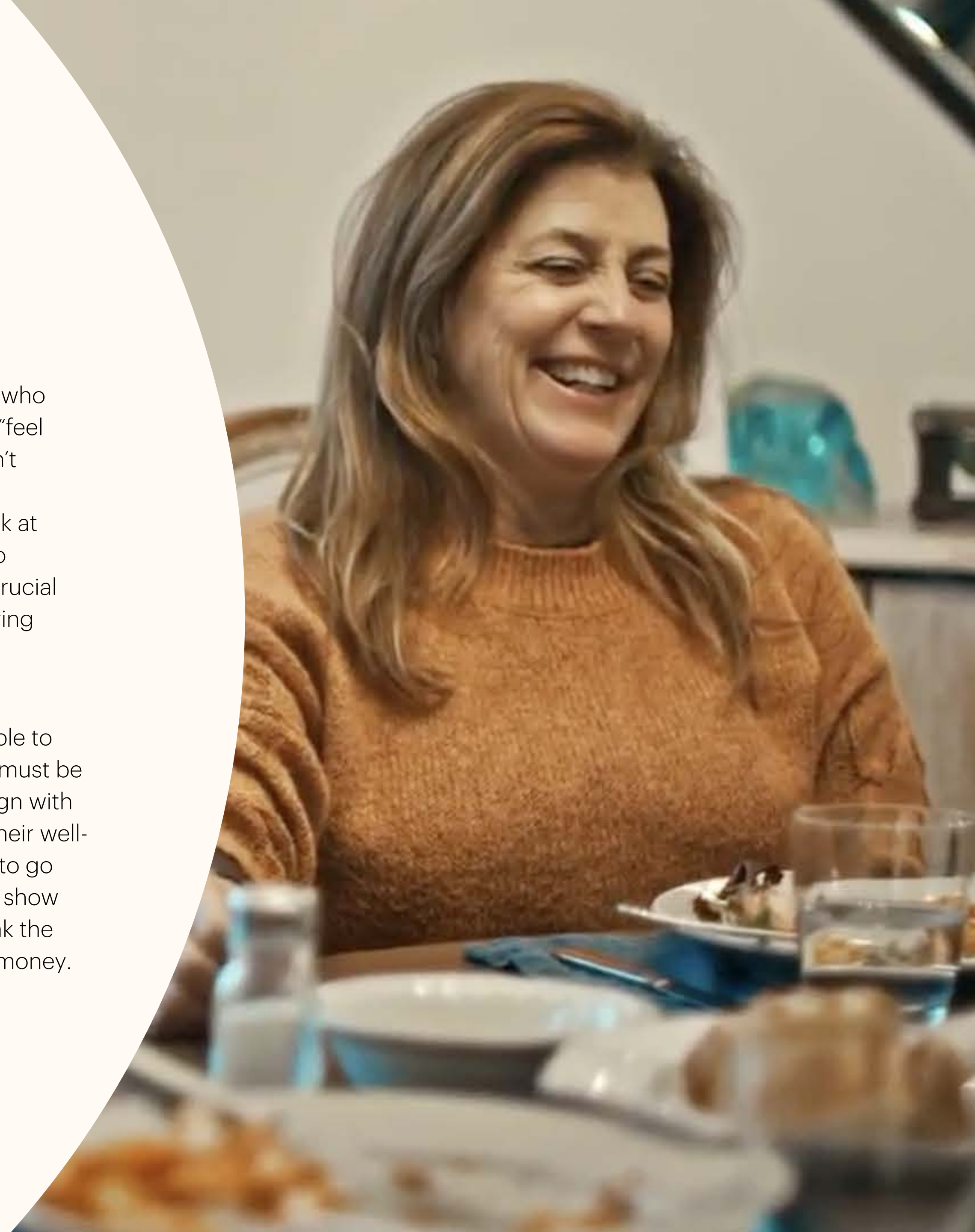
In our study we found that people relate to sustainable living in significantly different ways. They have different perspectives about whether they're taking action and doing enough already, and whether they're willing to do more.

We measured these differences and used this data in the construction of our Life-centric Archetypes. We also measured several factors that influence these differences, such as what people expect from society and organizations and how they're influenced by them.

Additionally, we considered the motivators that propel people toward action and the barriers standing in their way. As part of that process, for example, we confirmed the importance of identity and affordability. It's not an either/or tradeoff.

Living sustainably, we found, makes people who are taking explicit actions along those lines "feel happy with who I am". And people who aren't taking actions to live more sustainably feel strongly that "it's not for them". But if we look at what separates people who feel they can do more from people who feel they can't, the crucial variable isn't identity; it's affordability — varying ideas about whether sustainability is too expensive or saves us money.

The takeaway? To get more people to take action to live sustainably, it must be made clear that doing so can align with their identity and contribute to their well-being. But to encourage people to go further and do more, we have to show that living sustainably won't break the bank and can, in fact, help save money.



And by factoring in their worldviews.

Traditional metrics such as generation, gender, education, and income are not enough to explain what drives people’s engagement with sustainable living nor people’s lives more generally (in [Accenture Life Trends 2024⁵](#), see *Decade of Deconstruction* for a complementary view regarding the limits of traditional data and audience markers). Instead, how people perceive sustainability — and consequently act or not — is influenced by their take on everyday life. Their worldviews. Why? Because, at its core, sustainable living relates to how people think about the future and the past, and to their perception of their roles, responsibilities and opportunities for creating better circumstances for themselves and others.

Considerations around people’s disposition, agency, outlook on life and responsibility towards others represent critical predictors of sustainable behaviors.

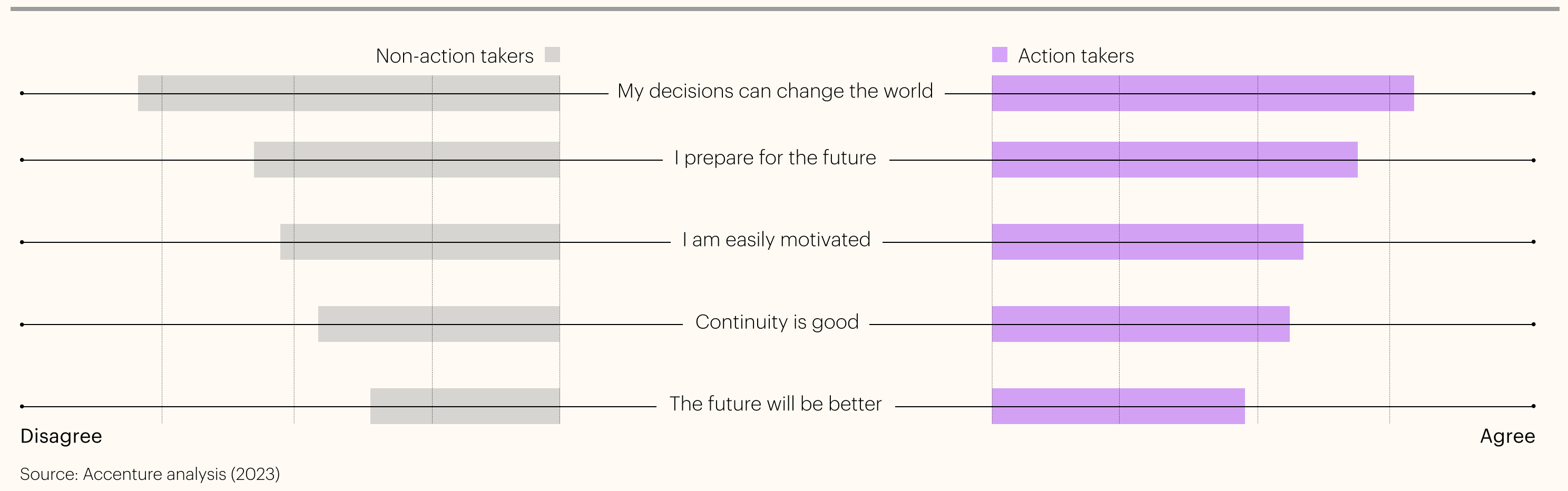
In fact, the worldviews of people taking action to live sustainably are very different from those not already acting.

They have more positive attitudes and dispositions as well as stronger personal agency compared to non-action takers — with the largest differential being the belief that “their decisions can change the world”.

With opposing worldviews separating action-takers from non-action takers so dramatically, it becomes clear that only when worldviews are fully incorporated into understanding people’s relationship to sustainable living does a complete picture come into focus.

People’s worldviews reflect how they feel about their role in the world, and the ability and authority they believe they have (or lack) to have an impact. Understanding worldviews, together with how people think about sustainability, unlocks opportunities for organizations to address different people in a way that makes sustainable consumption and living more relevant and practical for them. This is how companies can crack the code.

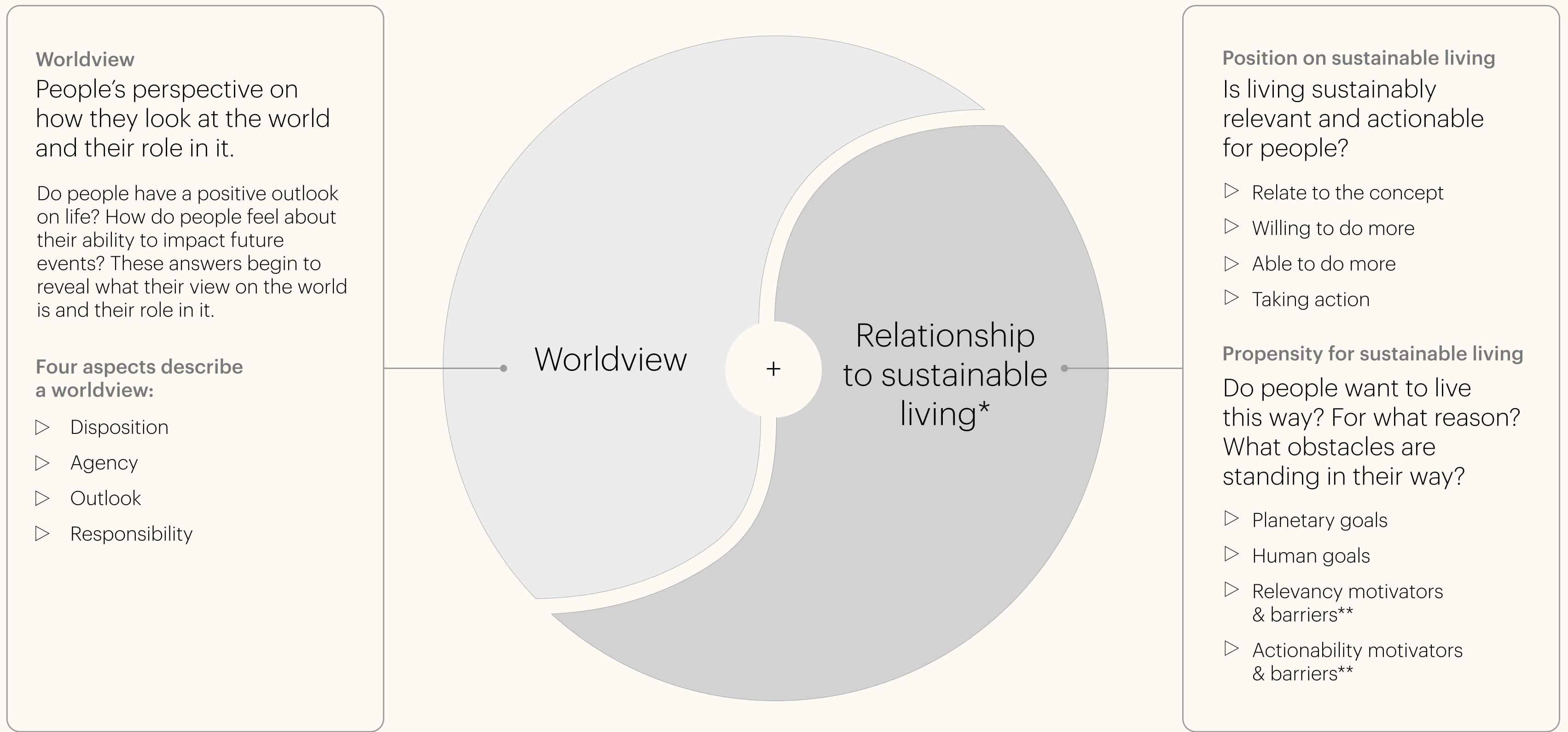
Level of agreement with top five worldview beliefs: Action takers vs. Non-action takers



Life-centric Archetypes are a great place to start.

Six Life-centric Archetypes — each with their own view of the world and unique relationship to sustainable living — characterize the different starting points for people’s paths to sustainable living and shed light on the tailored modes of engagement needed for each.

At any moment in time, these archetypes capture people’s worldviews and relationship to sustainable living at a high level. Think of an archetype as a “best-fit” model for any individual. Most people will be stable in a single, primary archetype for years, switching only in the face of a powerful, life-influencing event – such as the birth of a first child, a first-person experience of a climate-related disaster, or migration.



*Sustainable living refers to “living in a way that considers the impact on other people and the planet today and in the future”.

**For more details about the motivators and barriers please refer to the [About the research](#) section.

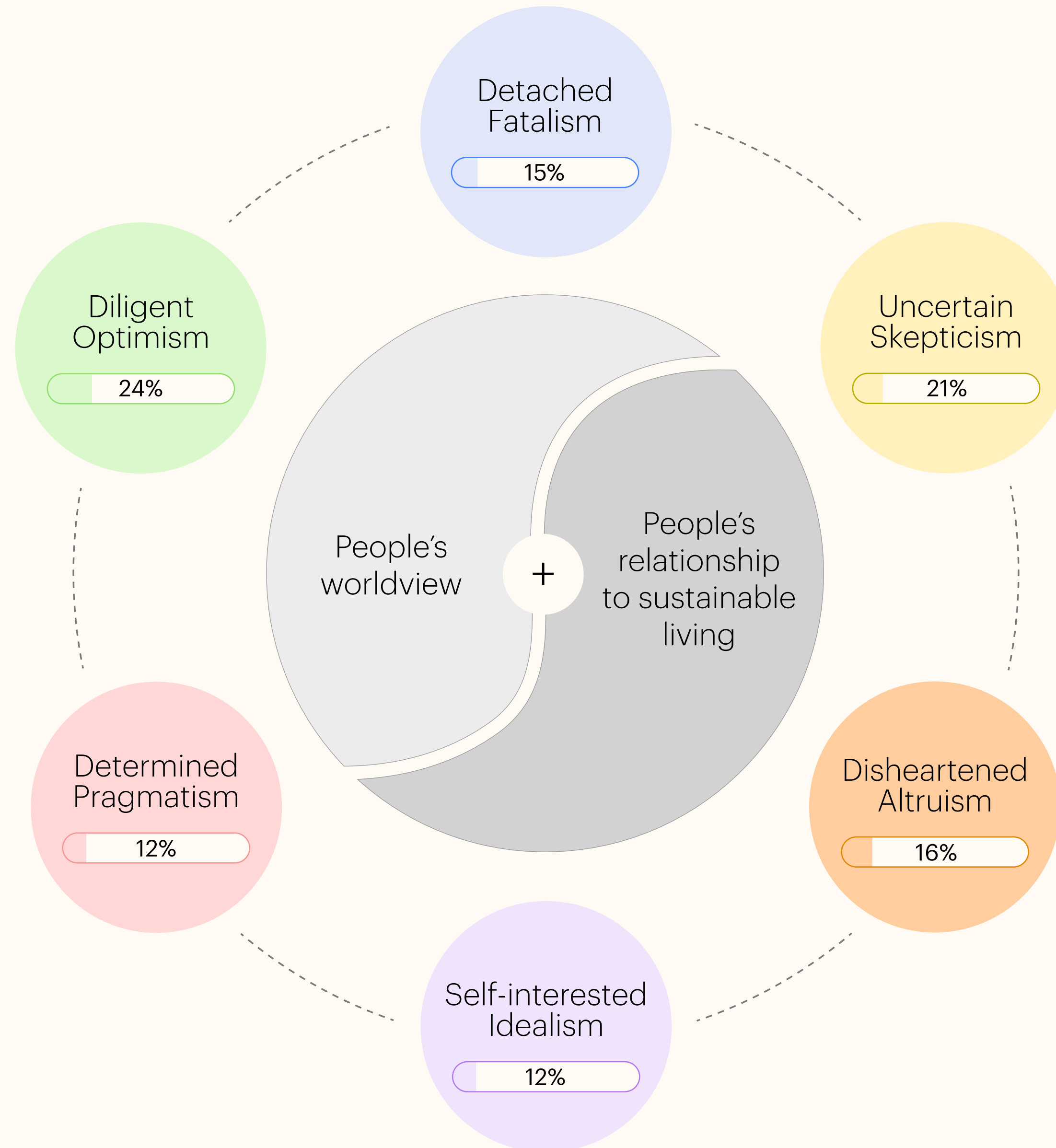
The Life-centric Archetypes at a glance

- The belief that you can't change the course of events**

We don't have the power to change things and the future looks bleak, so we may as well live in the moment and prioritize ourselves. There's no good argument for living sustainably, especially because it's pricey. I don't know what's in it for me, and I'm not interested in hearing anything different, especially if businesses are doing the talking. Best to stay on the sidelines.
- The belief that you can change the world for the better**

We should all have hope because our individual actions can change the world. Sustainability is the right thing to do – it matters for the planet and our environment. Also, a sustainable life is more fulfilling. News from around the world compels me to live sustainably. I'm in this fight. Businesses need to fight with me.
- The belief that real challenges exist, but can be tackled**

Life is predictable and there will always be enough to go around, so I never despair, but we must act to create a better future. Climate change impacts me personally – we have to save the planet and protect people from natural disasters. I'm committed to this fight and draw inspiration from those around me, but I need help. I'm juggling my effort to live sustainably with other priorities and want businesses to step up and work with me.



- The belief that the future is blurry and uncertain**

The future is blurry and uncertain, but not unpredictable, so we don't need to overthink things. It's OK to act on impulse, but I do struggle to become motivated. I'm not sure about living sustainably and think it's isolating and ill-defined. Perhaps 'being sustainable' will make others think differently about me or distance me from them. It might damage my ability to care for other people too.
- The belief that others' needs come before your own**

I put others first and worry there's not enough for everyone. This makes me worry about the future and I become discouraged easily. I know we have to keep going, so I try to live for today, but I'm not sure I'm in control of what comes next. I'm open to the idea of living sustainably but want to make sure it doesn't stop me from caring for others.
- The belief that quality of life is the priority**

The future will be better than today, as has always been the case. I'm fully in control of my life and think my decisions make a difference. I believe health and well-being are crucial and don't hesitate to put myself first. Living sustainably can help me realize these goals, I just need to make sure it improves my quality of life and helps me protect loved ones at the same time.

Source: Accenture analysis (2023)
 Note: Percentages represent share of global sample

Worldview

Detached Fatalism is the belief that you can't change the course of events, no matter what you do or what choices you make. Chance dominates life, and more often than not, things take a turn for the worst.

Key characteristics

- ▷ There's no point preparing for tomorrow
- ▷ Easily convinced there's no reason to take action
- ▷ There's never enough to go around – everyone must look after themselves



Worldview

We can't determine the future, no matter what we do

Relationship to sustainable living

Not in the sustainability game

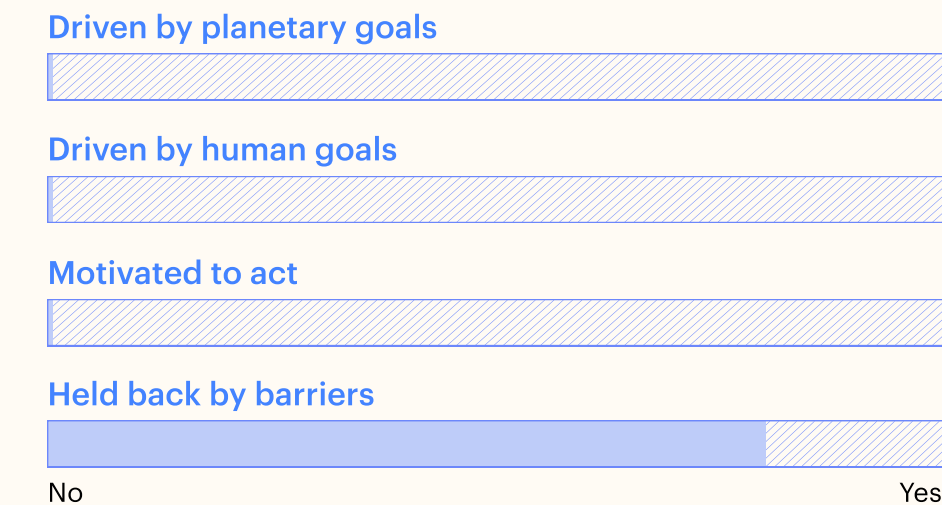
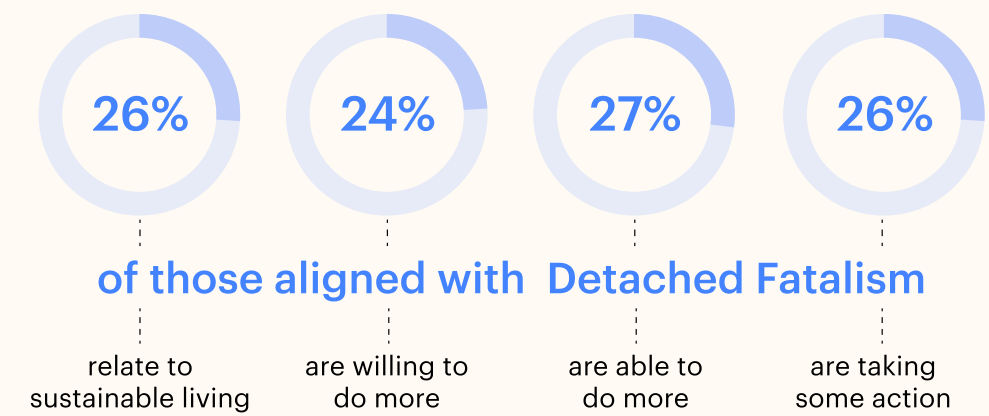
Detached Fatalism

Relationship to sustainable living

Detached Fatalism makes people feel disconnected from the concept of living sustainably, leading them to question if it fits into their lives at all. In the end, it ignites no desire to live for people and planet.

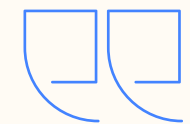
Key characteristics

- ▷ Not the right thing to do and provides no personal benefit
- ▷ Takes too much time and energy and costs too much money
- ▷ Uninterested in hearing opposing views, particularly from businesses



How to engage this archetype

- ▶ **Define** sustainability
Communicate with everyday words and phrases unassociated with Sustainability with a capital “S”
- ▶ **Connect** with people
Demonstrate how sustainable living can help save money, especially over time
- ▶ **Stimulate** action
Deliver immediate short-term benefits and bake in sustainable outcomes

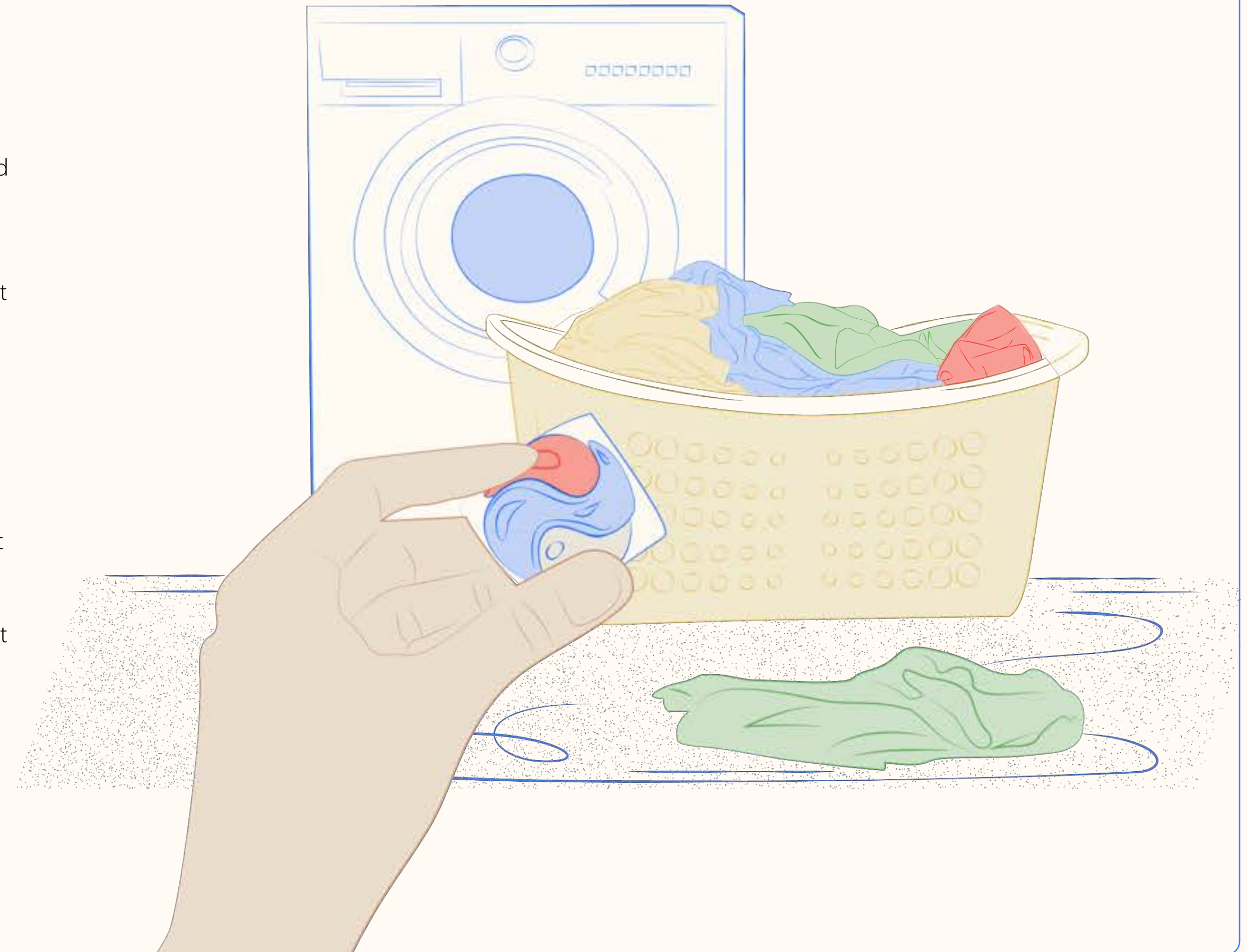


It's everyone for themselves. A thread usually breaks from where it is thinnest. We have plenty of nature. What we don't have is a robust economy.

Manuel, Brazil

Cracking the Code in action

Unilever marketers know that a quick or cold wash⁶ saves energy when doing laundry, which cuts emissions and is good for the environment. But when it comes to getting people who fit the Detached Fatalism archetype on board with innovative laundry solutions, it's important to emphasize the money-saving potential and the promise that performance won't be sacrificed. This archetype doesn't like change and wants to deal with the current challenge at hand: making sure the clothes are clean and that the answer is affordable. That level of efficacy and ease is the type of immediate benefit that this archetype looks for, and this is what Unilever successfully promotes in its new laundry detergents and capsules. The fact that it also delivers invisible sustainable outcomes is a bonus to customers, but it isn't the draw.

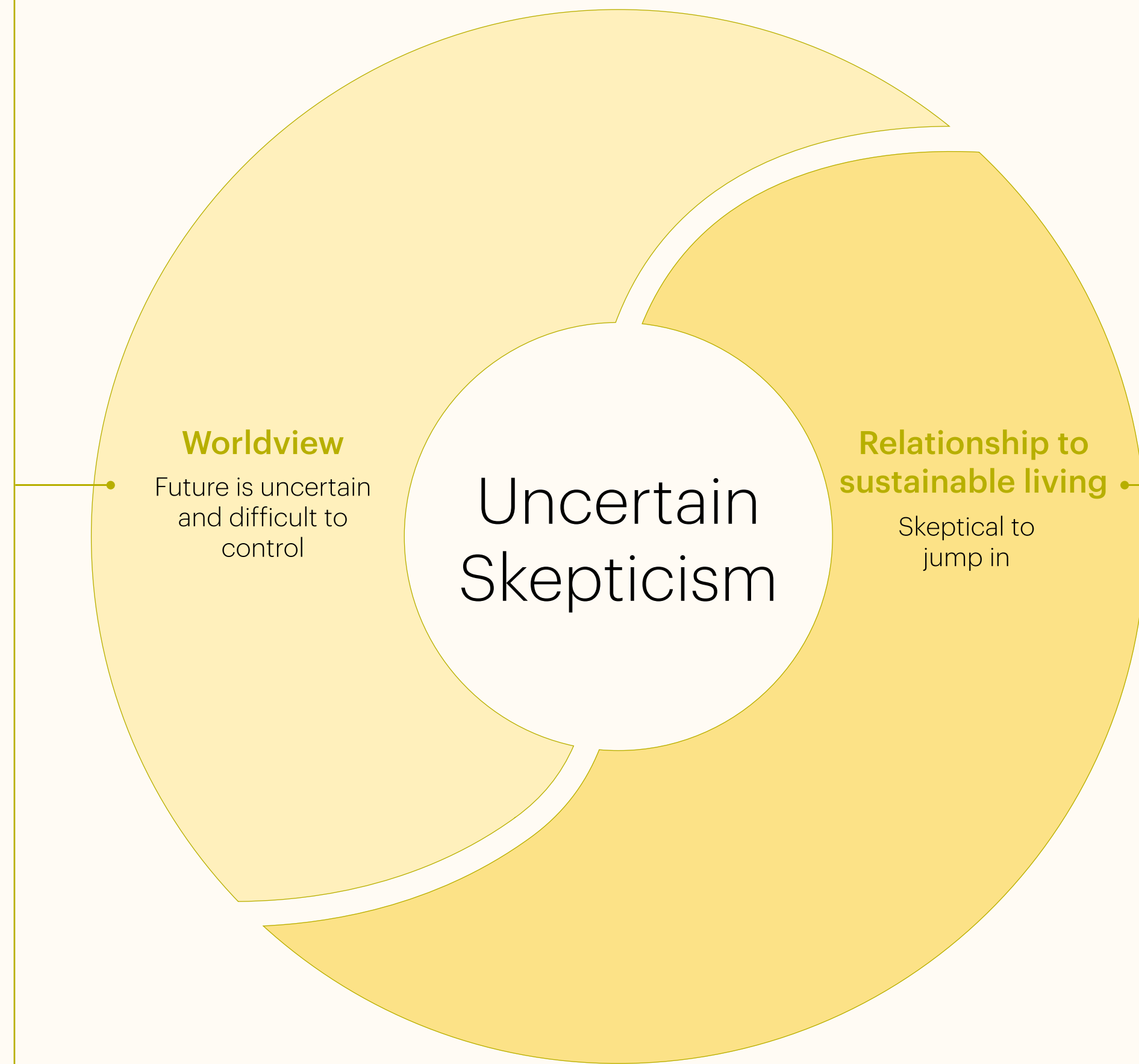
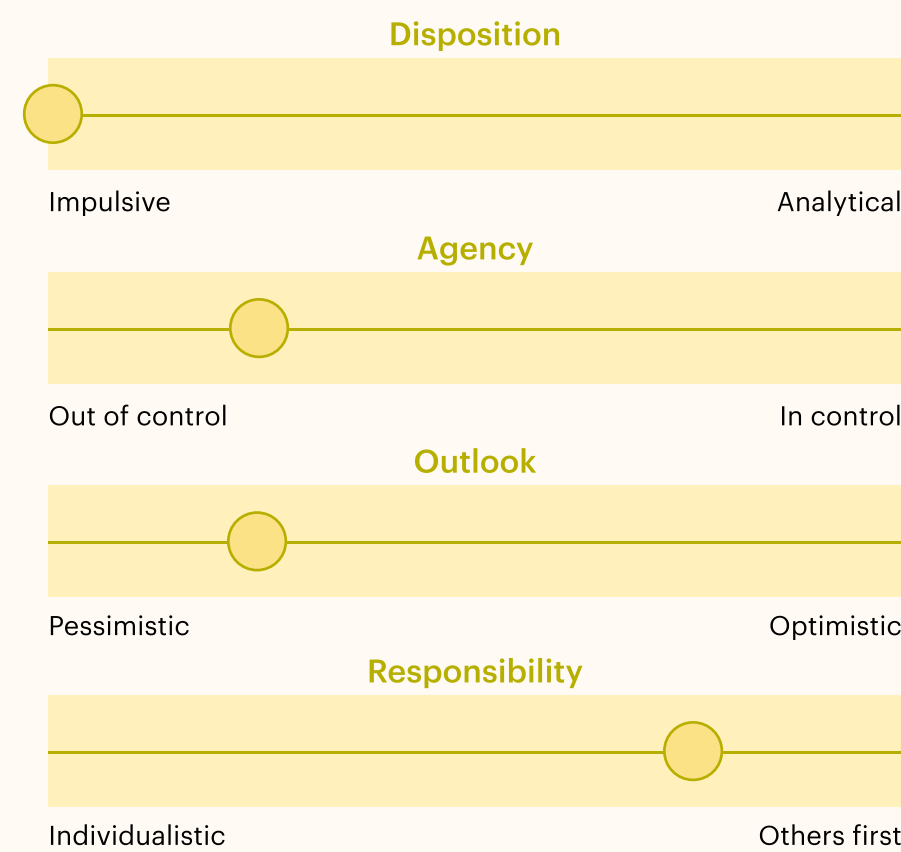


Worldview

Uncertain Skepticism approaches the future with hesitancy, seeming to only be sure that the future won't be better and can't be controlled. It doesn't necessarily mean things will be worse though, it just means that motivation is hard to come by.

Key characteristics

- ▷ Little sense of control and unsure if it's possible to change the world
- ▷ Life is neither unpredictable nor completely predictable
- ▷ Caught between living in the moment and preparing for tomorrow

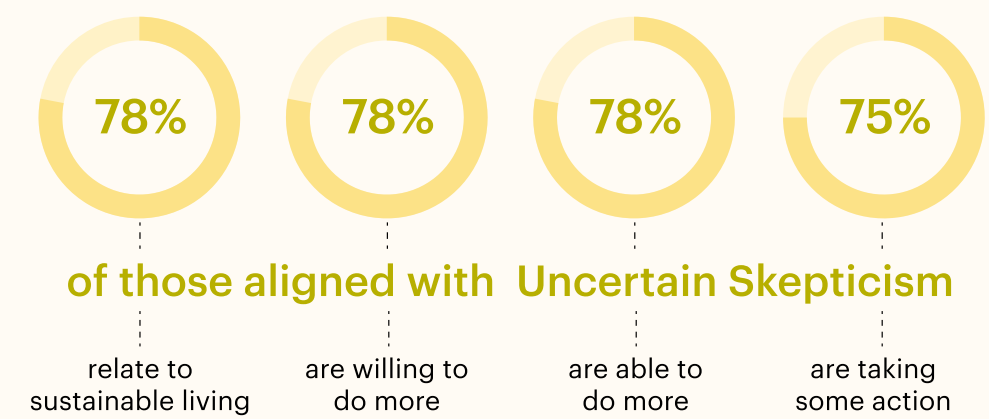


Relationship to sustainable living

Uncertain Skepticism questions if living sustainably has a significant role to play in people's lives, but doesn't completely rule out its potential relevance. The problem is that it can come with costs that aren't necessarily worth it.

Key characteristics

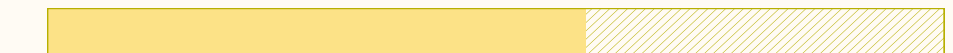
- ▷ Can help important causes and is something to share with others
- ▷ Ill-defined, isolating, and not core to one's identity
- ▷ It conflicts with other needs and might impact people's perceptions and relationships negatively



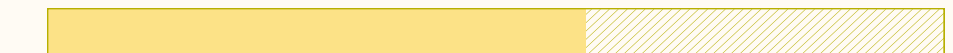
Driven by planetary goals



Driven by human goals



Motivated to act



Held back by barriers



How to engage this archetype

- ▷ **Define** sustainability
Communicate through trusted voices to demonstrate that sustainable living is perceived positively and welcomed
- ▷ **Connect** with people
Create space to converse with others, speak about thoughts and concerns and experiment with new behaviors
- ▷ **Stimulate** action
Offer products and services where social connection is the point and community is built through continued use



I think the future will become more sustainable. But I don't think it will be up to me. Where I can guarantee my own basics, I will do whatever I can to help change things. Being the bird at the front of the flock can sometimes come at huge personal cost.

Chao, China

Cracking the Code in action

AGL Energy's free service, Energy Insights⁷, uses data from people's smart meters, home profile information, and weather metrics to help them take control of their energy consumption and save money. The service reveals which products use the most electricity (e.g., lighting, home entertainment) so that customers can make informed decisions about their energy use. Countering the perspectives of the Uncertain Skepticism archetype, this practical tool puts people in control of their energy expenses, demonstrating how our actions can make a difference while suggesting the future isn't always uncertain or difficult to control. The service's 'Similar Homes Comparison' feature also provides 'social proof' of reduced energy use. That helps this archetype break down the perception barrier that sustainable living is isolating, but rather can be a means of bringing people together through collective action. It gives them the ability to experiment with new affordable and sustainable behaviors to see what works best for their lifestyle.

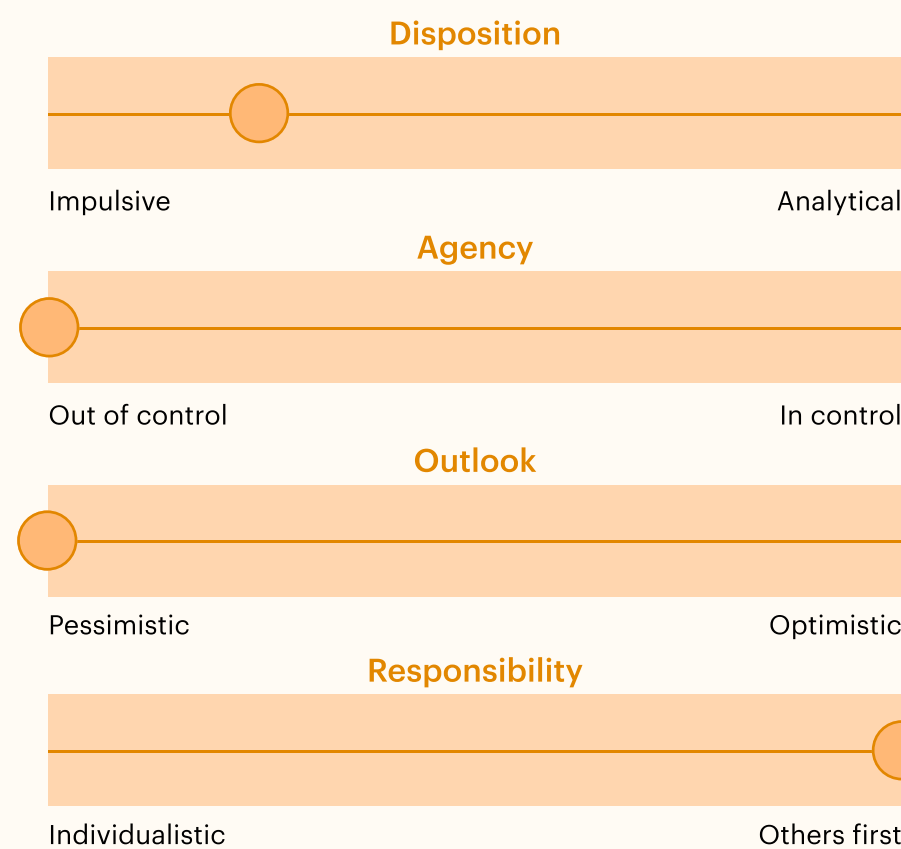


Worldview

Disheartened Altruism approaches the world with an “others come first” mentality, worrying that the future is out of their hands and trending in the wrong direction. This is particularly troubling as there already isn’t enough to go around.

Key characteristics

- ▷ Looking towards the future is daunting and bleak
- ▷ Difficult to find motivation to act since life is determined by chance
- ▷ Small-scale impact may still be possible



Worldview

Others come first, always

Disheartened Altruism

Relationship to sustainable living

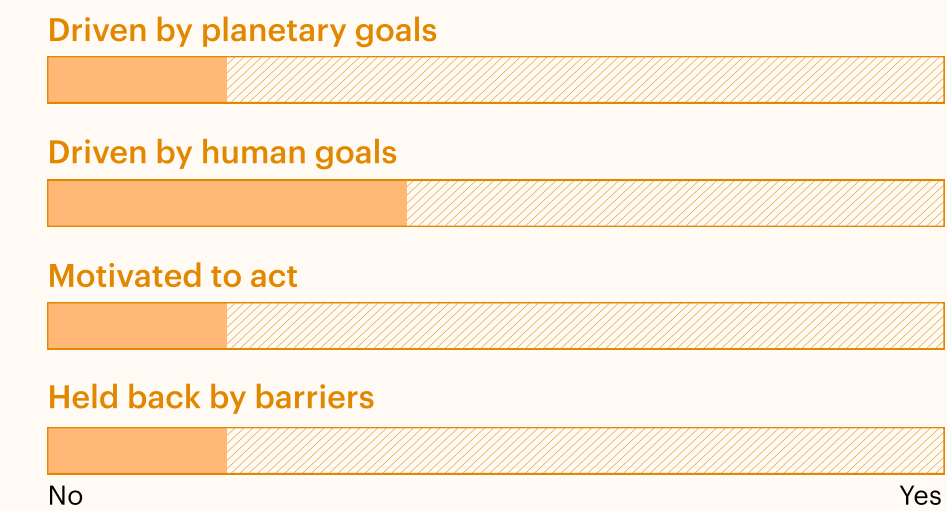
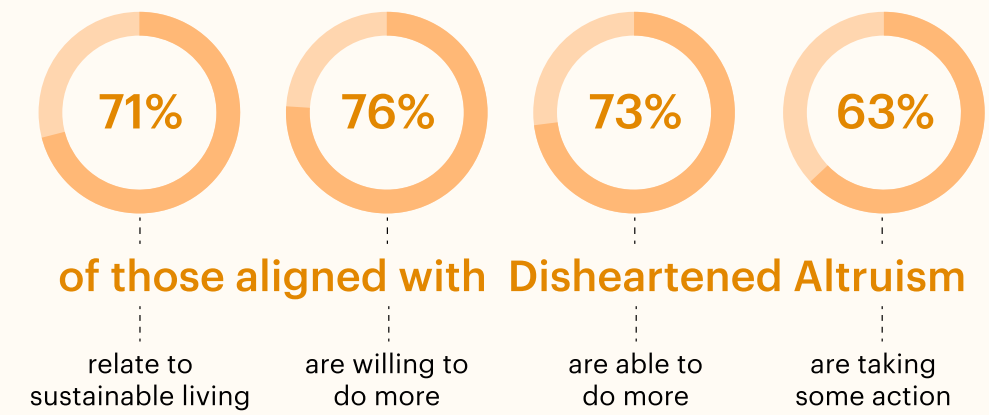
Lacking motivation, but open to engaging

Relationship to sustainable living

Disheartened Altruism doesn’t motivate people to fully engage with living sustainably, despite no significant barriers appearing to stand in the way. Taking care of others is the top priority – and there’s uncertainty with how well living sustainably fits with that calling.

Key characteristics

- ▷ On its own, the idea of living sustainably doesn’t motivate action
- ▷ Having to balance other priorities and decisions on who to trust don’t fully stand in the way of living sustainably
- ▷ Open to organizations’ help towards living sustainably



How to engage this archetype

- ▷ **Define** sustainability
Communicate honestly about the world and the future with a healthy dose of realism, recognizing worries while offering encouraging solutions
- ▷ **Connect** with people
Hero the societal and community benefits, demonstrating how sustainable living is aligned with caring and protecting those close to us
- ▷ **Stimulate** action
Celebrate generosity and reward decisions that deliver community benefits rather than personal ones



If you have nothing, you appreciate everything, including the health of your family and every single day you're able to spend with them. There's enough anxiety and uncertainty in the world, why look for more?

Rose, UK

Cracking the Code in action

Swedish furniture retailer IKEA's Buyback & Resell program⁸ offers an effective way to connect with people who align with Disheartened Altruism. The idea is to make it possible for IKEA customers to give back their used IKEA furniture for store credit — which they can keep or share — and to enable other customers to purchase used furniture instead of new. This arrangement offers individuals an opportunity to care for their community in an immediate and tangible way and can be celebrated as something that will help others, proving to this archetype that they can make a difference. By offering an additional way for customers to access and acquire IKEA products, this program also fights against this archetype's fear that scarcity will deny people the things that they need.

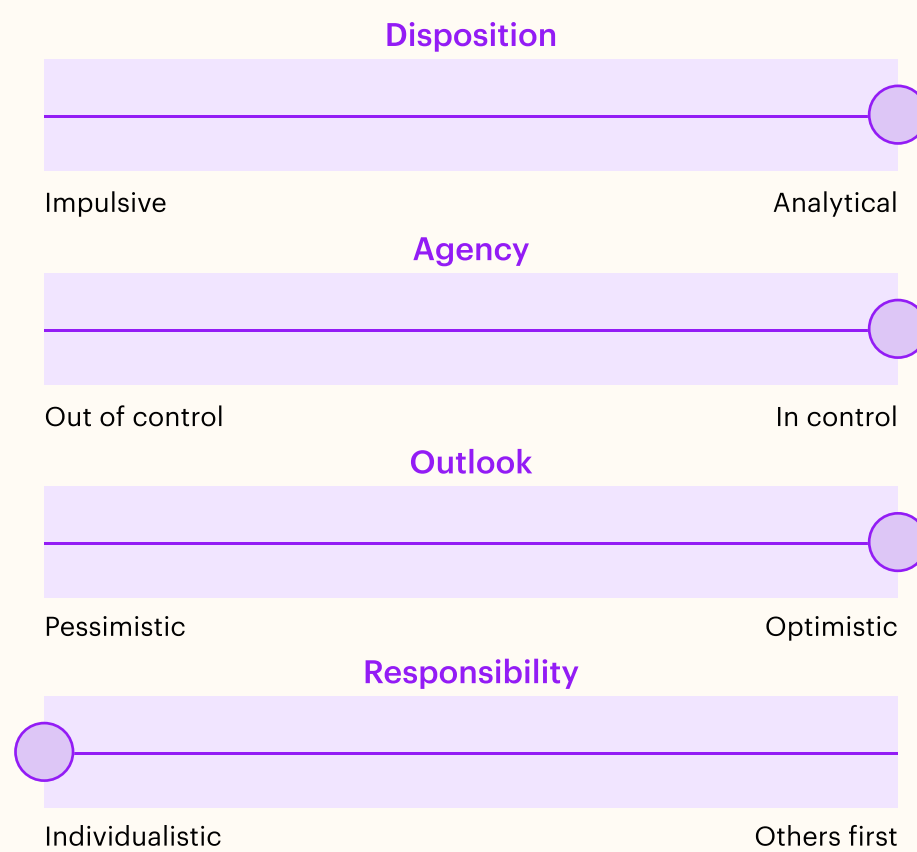


Worldview

Self-interested Idealism carries a conviction that actions lead to impact, instilling an unwavering sense of confidence. Combined with a highly optimistic view of the future, there's no difficulty in getting motivated.

Key characteristics

- ▷ People's decisions do create change and individual actions definitely matter
- ▷ Individuals will have access to what they need in the future, no question
- ▷ Unafraid to be self-centric and put themselves first, above all others



Worldview

Everything's going to be alright

Self-interested Idealism

Relationship to sustainable living

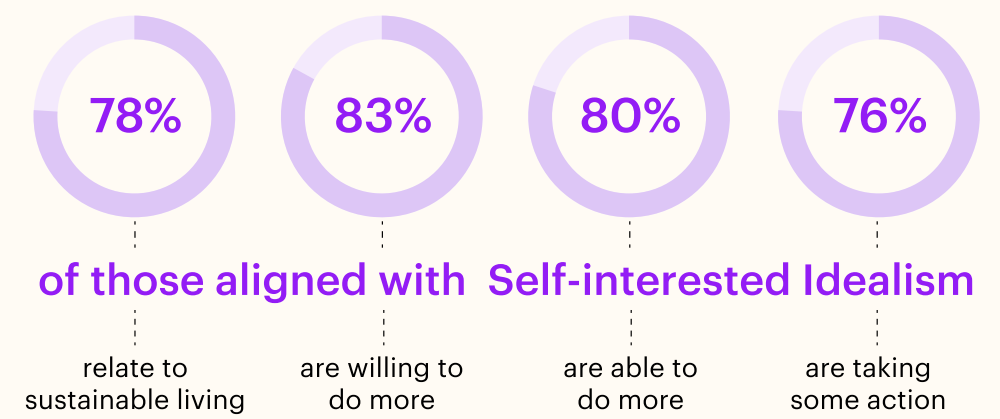
Focused on personal health and wellbeing

Relationship to sustainable living

Self-interested Idealism views living sustainably through a self-centric lens, but it is successful in resonating and compelling action. Motivation is provided by human goals, looking for ways that living sustainably can translate into health and wellbeing and amplify personal benefit.

Key characteristics

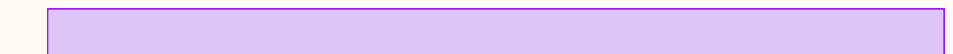
- ▷ Improving quality of life is the leading goal for living sustainably
- ▷ Unconvinced it makes people like them or helps save money
- ▷ Desire to protect people and things is important to them, as is creating a fairer world



Driven by planetary goals



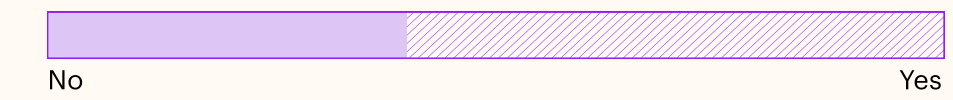
Driven by human goals



Motivated to act

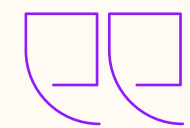


Held back by barriers



How to engage this archetype

- ▶ **Define** sustainability
Encourage action through vivid positivity and future-facing messages focused on how living sustainably improves quality of life and is something of which to be proud
- ▶ **Connect** with people
Reinforce the link between living sustainably and feeling good about it by celebrating how individual actions make a difference
- ▶ **Stimulate** action
Design mechanisms that focus on what can be accomplished at an individual level and reward personal achievement



The things that are important to me are physical and financial security, health, companionship and doing what I would like to do before I am too old. We live in a home with sufficient solar energy, have a borehole for fresh water, and our electric vehicle is being charged at the house and provides 'free mobility'.

Francois, South Africa

Cracking the Code in action

Japanese cosmetics brand SHISEIDO is committed to empowering people to be confident and authentic through the power of beauty. For people aligned with Self-interested Idealism who think deeply and feel highly in control of their lives, beauty — defined in diverse and inclusive terms — can resonate strongly as a way to build well-being and offer self-affirmation. Brand SHISEIDO's SEE, SAY, DO program⁹, which seeks to eliminate unconscious beauty biases, can tap into this archetype's desire to create equitable societies in which loved ones and others feel seen and heard. Further, brand SHISEIDO's refillable products give people who fit this archetype the satisfaction of contributing personally to a more sustainable world, confirming this archetype's belief that their decisions carry impact.

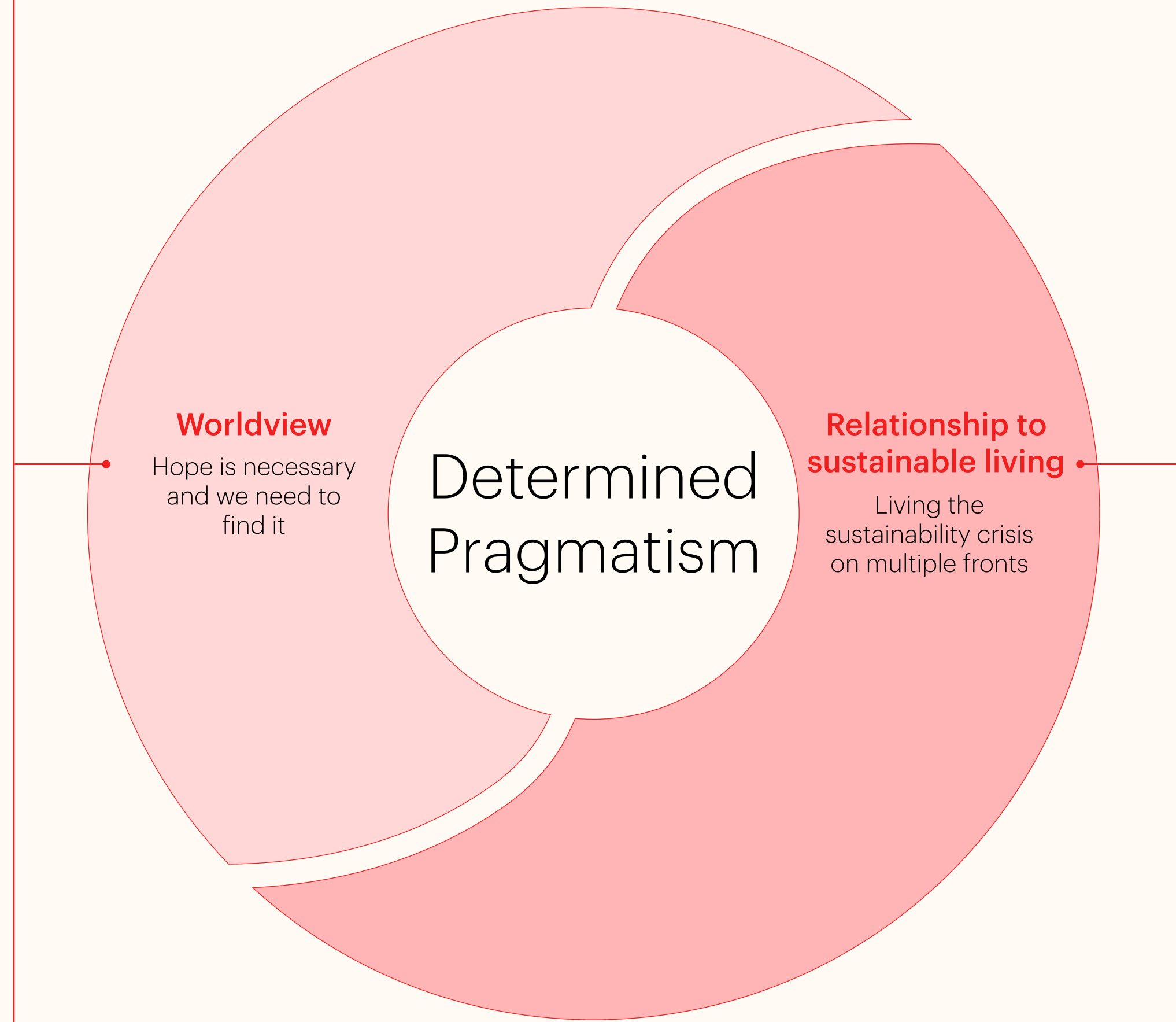
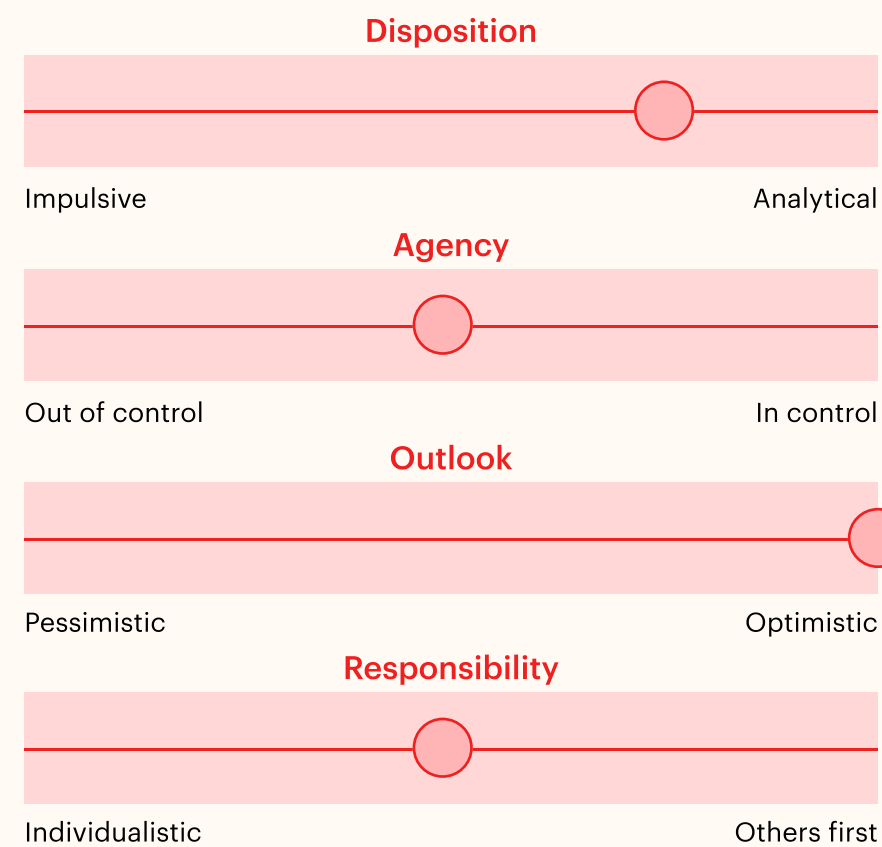


Worldview

Determined Pragmatism believes there is a rationality to the way events unfold, a predictability to life and a future where everyone's needs are met. This hope helps manifest a positive, yet sober, view of the world, rejecting despair but knowing that action is needed over idealism.

Key characteristics

- ▷ Life isn't only about today, but hard to prepare for the future fully
- ▷ Motivated to act, despite being unsure about personal agency and impact
- ▷ Balancing care for the self and others in a world where global is more important than local

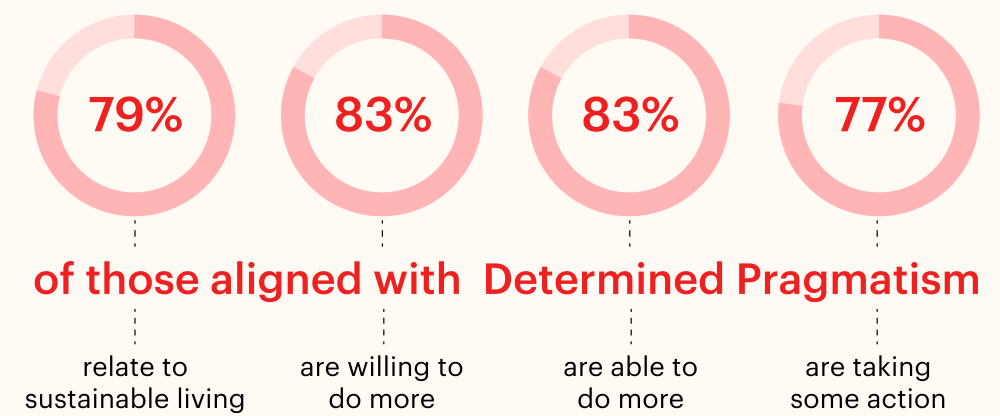


Relationship to sustainable living

Determined Pragmatism believes that there are real challenges in the world that can only be solved if everyone pitches in, and that includes organizations and businesses. Planetary goals motivate sustainable living – what's needed are tools and support to make it more possible.

Key Characteristics

- ▷ Brings about happiness as it's integral to identity and empowerment, and should be shared
- ▷ Personal experience with climate change compels action, particularly a desire to reduce the risk of natural disasters
- ▷ Could be easier and more accessible as it competes with other priorities and needs



Driven by planetary goals



Driven by human goals



Motivated to act



Held back by barriers



No Yes

How to engage this archetype

- ▷ **Define** sustainability
Speak to climate realities by engaging directly with how people are experiencing the impacts of climate change today
- ▷ **Connect** with people
Demonstrate how sustainable living helps people address personal and planetary challenges in their everyday lives, while caring for others and the global population at large
- ▷ **Stimulate** action
Innovate with them to co-create and collaborate on real, tangible solutions to climate mitigation and adaptation

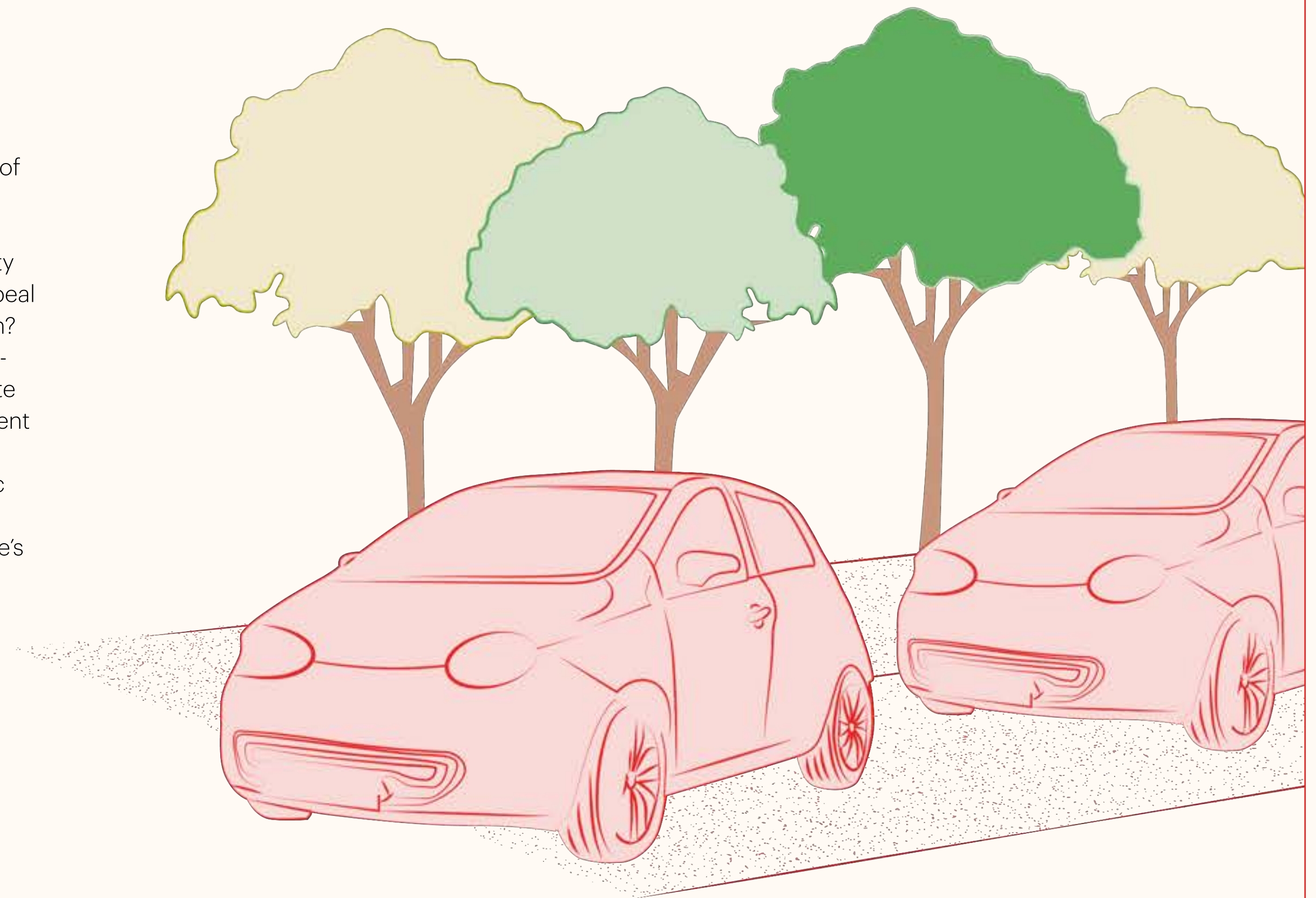


I experienced wildfires when living in Australia and these experiences have made me rethink my way of living. Now back in Germany, my house runs on solar power, I bake my own bread, and I grow my own vegetables.

Bettina, Germany

Cracking the Code in action

People who align with Determined Pragmatism reject business-as-usual. They demand innovation to confront climate change and the growing risk of natural disasters. Renault's efforts to reinvent itself from being a vehicle manufacturer to a sustainable mobility provider is well-placed to directly appeal to this archetype. One relevant action? The company has begun offering car-sharing solutions¹⁰ in a bid to eliminate the need for ownership. People can rent cars parked throughout various cities from Renault's fleet of 8,000+ electric vehicles. In doing so, Renault is demonstrating that meeting everyone's needs and taking action for a better tomorrow aren't at odds. It combines positive environmental impact with addressing the real mobility needs of everyday life, tapping into this archetype's appetite to take decisive action and share the experience of sustainable living with others.

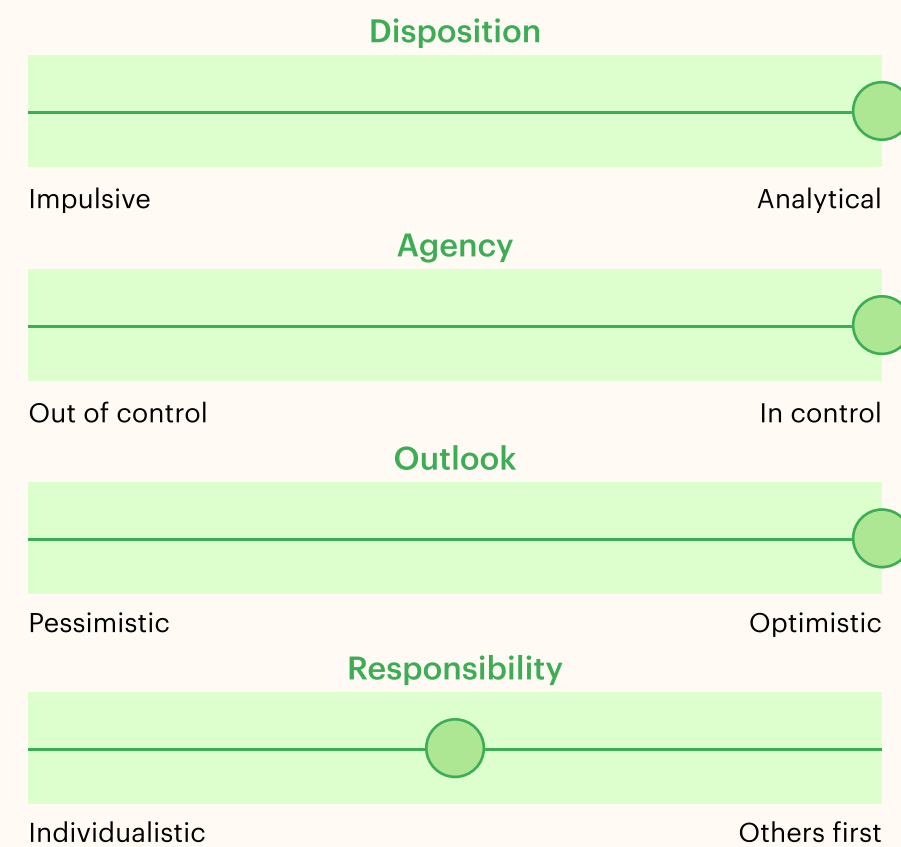


Worldview

Diligent Optimism is the belief that you can change the world for the better. This doesn't happen by chance though, it takes preparation and conscious effort to drive future impact.

Key characteristics

- ▷ Life's unpredictability is a certainty and requires preparation for the future
- ▷ Not afraid of change, rather a catalyst for it
- ▷ Easily motivated to follow through on intentions and well-positioned to do so



Worldview

With action the future will be better

Diligent Optimism

Relationship to sustainable living

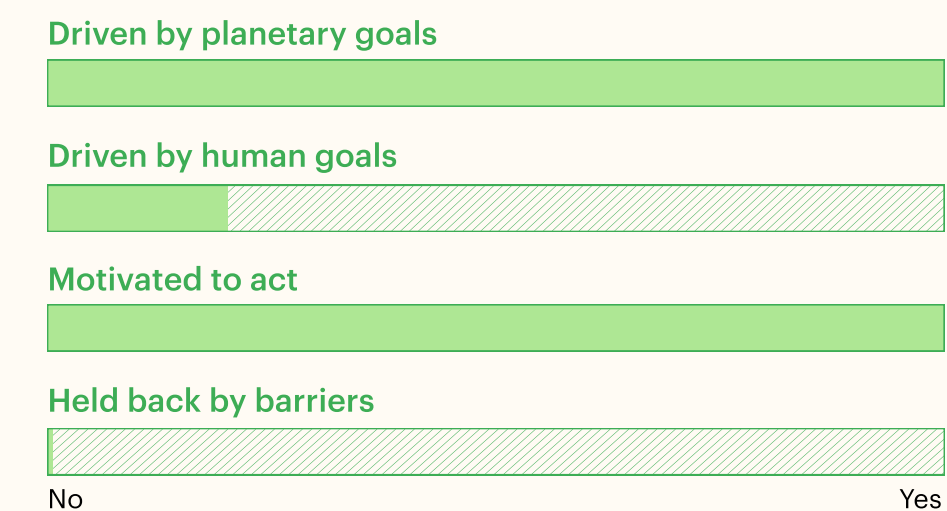
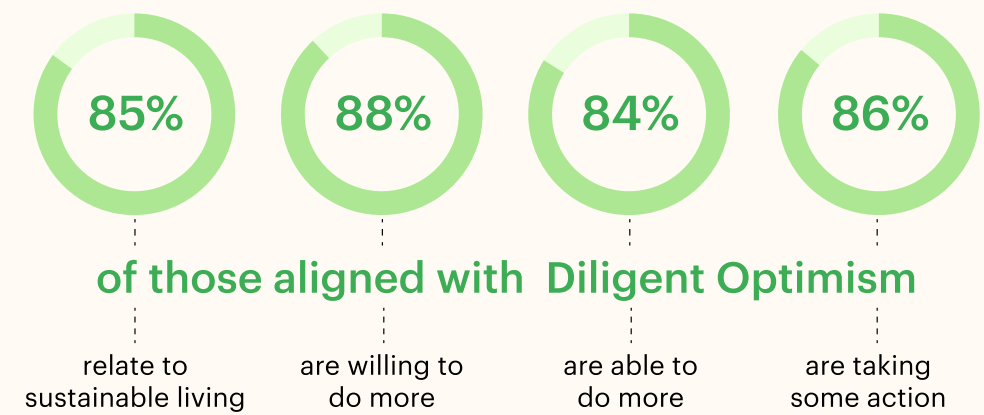
Deeply committed to living sustainably

Relationship to sustainable living

Diligent Optimism encourages action to live sustainably and provides certainty that doing so fits squarely into and enhances people's lives. It embodies the virtuous cycle between action and aspiring to do more, with a responsibility to build a more sustainable future.

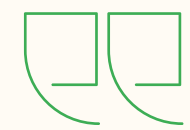
Key characteristics

- ▷ Sustainable living contributes directly to wellbeing
- ▷ Nothing stands in the way, including affordability and accessibility
- ▷ Demand direct engagement from business as they bear a responsibility to make the world more sustainable



How to engage this archetype

- ▷ **Define** sustainability
Make it an environmental crusade—lead with protecting the planet at the forefront with direct appeals and calls-to-action
- ▷ **Connect** with people
Place planetary goals at the center and be explicit about impacts on climate, pollution, biodiversity and resource use
- ▷ **Stimulate** action
Create cause-led, galvanizing campaigns for this archetype to rally around and share with their like-minded circles, snowballing action



I believe all humans are responsible for taking care of our planet and have a positive impact in their own households, communities and neighborhoods. Because if we don't, who will?"

Emily, US

Cracking the Code in action

Molson Coors' commitment to making beer more environmentally sustainable – with a focus on packaging, water, and climate – caters directly to people aligned with Diligent Optimism. For example, the company began replacing all plastic rings on Coors Light six-packs with a 100% recyclable six-pack in 2022¹¹. It also created a concept pop-up store in New York called the “Plastic-Free Future Mart.” Everything from the products to the walls, to even the ink used on the signage was made from 100% plastic-free sustainable materials, including biodegradable spent grain boards made from brewery waste. The store gave people the opportunity to engage directly with a crucial planetary cause and share their commitment on social media while showing how optimistic visions of the future can come to life.



These archetypes can help organizations engage with everyone.

A closer look at how our respondents reacted to motivators and barriers offers deeper insight into how companies can use the archetypes to engage people. Specifically, we saw distinct opportunities emerge when we sorted both the motivators and barriers we tested into two categories — actionability and relevancy — and then calculated how strongly people agreed or disagreed with the motivators and barriers against those categories. Note that actionability included affordability; it also included feasibility and the desire to act. Relevancy included identity and well-being, and covered people's connection with sustainable living and its strength of meaning for people more generally.

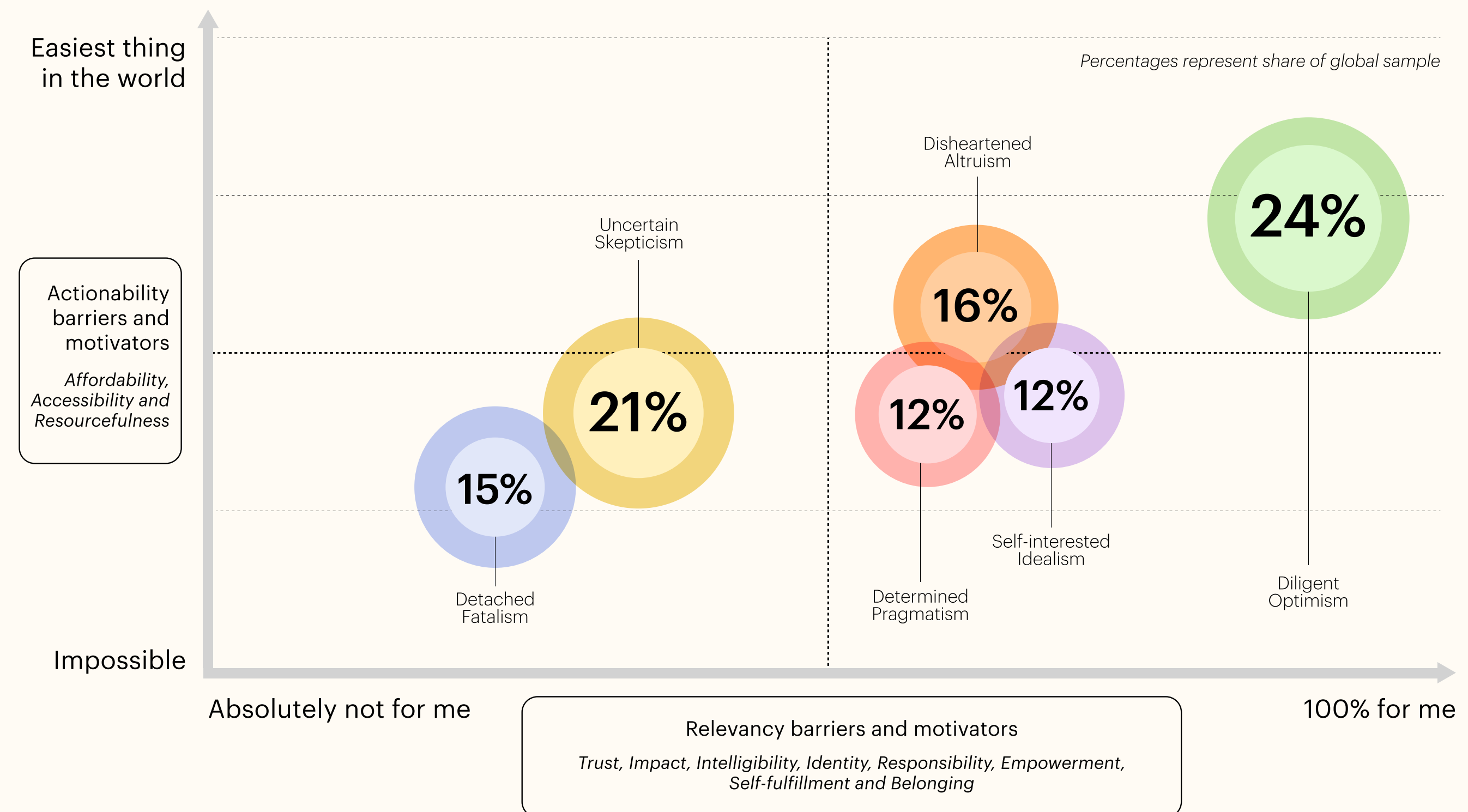
The chart reveals how each archetype maps against the difficulty or ease of taking sustainable action (actionability) and the level of connection and meaning sustainable living carries (relevancy).

It might be tempting to look at the archetypes in the “bottom left” (and maybe even those in the center) and write them off as unreachable. “Wouldn’t we be better off focusing our efforts with those who are already on board?”

But that approach won’t do what is necessary to engage the masses, potentially missing billions of people. Similarly, attempting to ‘move the masses’ into the top right quadrant isn’t likely to have the desired effect. As noted in the first Our Human Moment chapter, attempts to make people more sustainable by focusing on sustainability alone don’t tend to work too well.

Instead, we need to find a way to engage everyone, where they are today, no matter if they think sustainability is relevant or irrelevant, easy or difficult. And here, the worldviews come to the rescue — by providing unexpected, compelling ways of making sustainability relevant to people’s lives.

Level of agreement with relevancy and actionability barriers and motivators
Source: Accenture analysis (2023)



This approach is enabling organizations to move forward.

The Our Human Moment approach is designed to steer the necessary reinvention of consumption in new directions while helping organizations stay relevant and stay the course during these turbulent times. We believe organizations can bring everyone along on the journey as they adopt new business models and innovation practices — reinventing while remaining relevant¹².

The success of these efforts hinges on organizations building a strong digital core that allows them to develop and deploy new capabilities rapidly (see Accenture's Reinvention in the age of generative AI¹³ for a deeper dive on technology-enabled transformation). Such a foundation — one which fully incorporates emerging technologies — can amplify the impact of the Life-centric Archetype data and the Our Human Moment approach, ensuring organizations can respond to global disruption creatively and speedily.

We're already using Our Human Moment to create this momentum with our clients and partners. Each project isn't a paint by numbers affair — a simple case of matching propositions and messages to entryways or archetypes in the same way, every time, regardless of context. Instead, the creative and strategic process reigns supreme. And while much of the difficult job of reinventing remains ahead of us, we're already experimenting with more solid foundations.

This effort expands beyond sustainable products and services or revised communications. It's a two-way street where organizations and people begin to relate in new ways, including interactions between customers and organizations, employees and leaders, and cross-organizational relationships. The bedrocks of commerce and industry — ideas about growth, disruption, competition and resource extraction — are shifting. And organizations' business and revenue models, objectives and KPIs and reward and remuneration schemes are evolving too.

Amid the change, people have different ideas about what's needed and it's not easy to align everyone behind the effort. By making sustainability more human — more hospitable than political and more familiar than distant — we can respond to these differing perspectives. In doing so, we can dissolve the relevancy gap separating organizations from people.

Our Human Moment can propel sustainable transitions in the following ways:



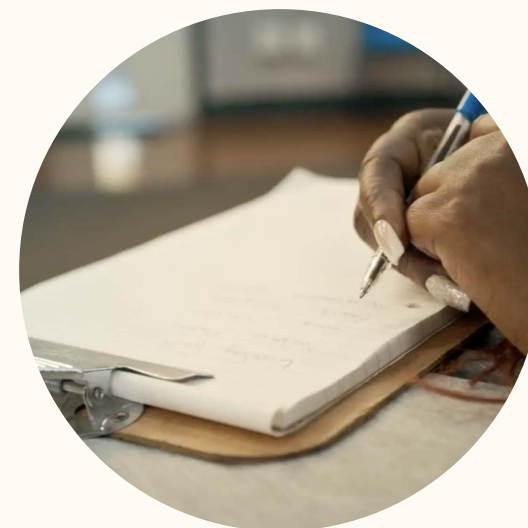
Modeling and targeting audiences



Communicating in more engaging ways



Unearthing new directions for innovation



Uniting colleagues as organizations evolve

Modeling and targeting audiences

Create more robust audience definitions for increased relevancy.

Companies need to engage people as strongly as possible with sustainable consumption, including people who show little to no interest in engaging. This inclusive target makes sense for organizations' (triple) bottom lines, commitments and obligations and our collective progress toward sustainability targets. The entryways from our previous work, together with the archetypes, provide ready-made starting points for engaging the masses.

To create even stronger audience definitions, companies can bring Life-centric Archetype data into dialogue with their existing demographic, sales or media engagement data. Doing so will help them adjust more nimbly to different industry contexts and the inevitable shifts of everyday life, helping them keep pace in a rapidly evolving world.

For example...

One company did just this when defining 'sustainability mindsets' to inform an innovation roadmap for engaging its consumers with new e-mobility propositions. The archetypes helped it avoid limiting assumptions about people's perspectives and behaviors, unlocking the discovery of new opportunities for offerings.



Communicating in more engaging ways

Deliver sustainability communications that connect with everyone.

Our Human Moment also enables us to talk to people about things they care about. Many organizations are already producing more sustainable products and services. But this traction hasn't yet resulted in sustainable consumption becoming the norm. There's an obvious challenge to address: how do we wrap these propositions up in more compelling ways? Using the Our Human Moment approach, companies can align stories, messages and imagery with people's hopes, fears and lives, reaching more people more powerfully.

Additionally, the entryways, coupled with the archetypes, combine to strengthen the relevance of sustainability communications. The entryways capture people's reasons for living sustainably and provide pathways to sustainable action, inspiring ideas about how we can talk about sustainable living in ways that resonate with people. Companies can apply the archetype data to further tailor communications to different audiences.

For example...

Take the case of a bank that offers its customers super-low interest rate loans for home improvements with clear sustainability benefits, such as solar panels or air source heat pumps. The firm could appeal to **Disheartened Altruism**, which believes in the importance of looking after others, by talking about how this product allows anyone to improve other people's health because solar panels improve air quality when compared to fossil fuel energy. Quite differently, it could appeal to **Self-interested Idealism** by illustrating the aesthetic improvement insulated external doors can make to a home (while ensuring replaced doors are recycled appropriately). Because **Detached Fatalism** is not remotely interested in the long-term, it could emphasize the fact that this product is a limited time offer. The bank might also emphasize the message that solar panels deliver energy security, given that this archetype tends to worry that there's never enough to go around.



Unearthing new directions for innovation

Moving sustainable innovation forward in ways that resonate with people strongly.

The entryways offered signposts to the diverse ways sustainability comes to life; the archetypes help us understand who we're engaging with and how to activate those entryways effectively. An Our Human Moment approach can also help companies take familiar steps with fresh eyes. For example, when designing recruitment criteria and discussion guides for research, it encourages us to leave the 'S word' at the door and focus instead on less divisive angles. When thinking about circular forms of product use (and reuse), it encourages us to see how different people might be compelled to behave in the same way for very different reasons, shaping product materials and delivery mechanics.

For example...

Consider a food manufacturer looking to widen its sustainable consumption activity. If **Determined Pragmatism** was the dominant archetype across the target audience, we'd know "the global is more important than the local" for most. So, combining this insight with the **Empowerment** entryway, we might create more equitable global supply chains before communicating this effort to our audience. Maybe we could create the world's first global alliance on combined nutrition and sustainability standards too.

If dealing with **Disheartened Altruism** as the dominant archetype, however, we'd focus on other aspects of **Empowerment**. Knowing this archetype believes there isn't enough to go around and prioritizes others, we could focus on more visible, localized initiatives. Perhaps we could empower disadvantaged school children to experiment with plant-rich diets at home or support food banks across the country — linking our audience's purchase decisions with the support we deliver to these initiatives. In doing so, we'd demonstrate that our choices can "change the world", countering this archetype's belief that they don't.



Uniting colleagues as organizations evolve

Shape transformational efforts around a shared understanding of what sustainability is.

As the entryways and archetypes help companies better understand sustainability, they also give people in the organization a common language for talking about it internally, while helping them better understand each other's perspectives. In this way, the archetypes support a more inclusive culture even as people grapple with new expectations and uncertain futures.

Additionally, the archetypes can help companies tailor interventions and modes of engagement, including training and multi-team workshops, so that organizations can make sustainability more relevant and actionable for internal colleagues and stakeholders as well as consumers.

For example...

With an enterprise technology company, we pursued this relevance and accessibility by framing their new sustainability strategy through the story of its founders, its original mission and the pure business objectives already incentivizing its workforce. For the C-suite, it created a sense of **Belonging** by celebrating legacy and business acumen — essential ingredients for engaging with the **Uncertain Skepticism** common in conservative executives. And to activate the **Detached Fatalism** and **Self-interested Idealism** evident within the company's sales teams, we designed straight-forward, personalized sales materials with everyday language, tangible short-term benefits and vivid positivity to build the sense of **Empowerment** and **Self-Fulfillment** necessary to inspire their support.





Let's crack the code.

Through intervention-oriented research in 'real world' scenarios across different industry and geographic contexts, we'll continue to test and refine this approach to driving more sustainable forms of consumption.

In the process, we aim to show how the high level of potential demand for sustainable consumption can translate into mass adoption, helping to prove the business case for more investment and commitment in this space, and increase the likelihood that new cultural norms and expectations will take hold.

This effort must be highly collaborative, and people must be the focal point of our efforts. Our sense of urgency surrounding the need to reinvent consumption increases each day. We're keen to question and unpack business-as-usual assumptions and actions by partnering with multiple stakeholders. We welcome your thoughts and engagement.

This is Our Human Moment.

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About the research

i. Survey design and data collection

We partnered with [CloudArmy](#), a neuroscience research provider, to conduct a 20-minute general population online survey among 8,000 people across 11 markets (Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Singapore, South Africa, UK and US). By combining traditional survey research with new methods rooted in cognitive psychology and behavioral science, we uncovered a holistic and less biased view of people's relationship, perceptions, attitudes and behaviors towards living sustainably. Additionally, through the design of the research instrument, we elicited responses to different words and phrases to gain an understanding of the impact of language on people's ability to relate to the topic of living sustainably. We experimented with two different constructs: one that made explicit reference to sustainability and one that avoided such a reference, but which nevertheless conveyed its component concepts.

Using CloudArmy's Fast Choice methodology, we incorporated a timed response for two questions (1. worldviews; 2. barriers and motivators), which helped us minimize the occurrence of socially desirable responses and allowed us to understand the strength of the conviction that the respondent had towards the selected response. The faster the reaction time, the more committed the respondent was to their response, increasing the likelihood that it is a strong, long-lasting and more reliably predictive indicator of behavior.

Descriptors of barriers and motivators related to sustainability relevancy and actionability for people are listed below:

- ▶ Relevancy: Trust, impact, intelligibility, identity, responsibility, empowerment, self-fulfillment and belonging.
- ▶ Actionability: Affordability, accessibility and resourcefulness.

ii. Fast Choice analysis

We used the two-dimensional (i.e., percent select and milliseconds) Fast Choice data, to perform a series of descriptive analysis exercises to contribute to the development and psychographic description of the six archetypes.

We took the reaction time and percent select for each response option and rolled them into a composite score: the Axis Weighted Score. This allowed us to rank the overall level of prominence of each characteristic (i.e., worldviews, barriers and motivators) for the total sample as well as for each of the six archetypes.

Additionally, our analysis also leveraged the Pole Weighted Scores, which are composite scores that combine reaction time along with the positive or negative pole response (i.e., Agree or Disagree). We analyzed the difference from average for each score to understand the net direction of the prominence of each characteristic, be it in the positive or negative direction. This was useful, for instance, in scenarios where we wanted to understand if a statement was mostly agreed or disagreed with, by how much, and as compared to other statements.

iii. Data modeling & driver analysis

In aiming to explain people's relatability, willingness, ability and action to live sustainably, we designed a modeling approach which analyzed the factors most responsible for driving or inhibiting these outcomes. The four output variables were reclassified into a binary output (relating/non-relating, willing/unwilling, able/unable, taking action/non-taking action).

Two subsets of the collected variables were included as inputs in our models:

- ▶ The first one contained people's worldviews, goals, motivators and barriers to living sustainably, as well as people's inspiration for doing so. The objective was to better understand what drove people to live sustainably.
- ▶ The second one contained life areas and contextual behaviors, people's inspiration for living sustainably, and what individuals expected of business. The objective was to better identify the opportunities for business intervention.

For each model type and each output variable we then ran binomial regressions. The objective was to measure the net effect of each variable on the output variable. It resulted in a list of significant variables and their respective coefficients, indicating the strength of their effect.

The outcome is a hierarchy of statistically relevant variables that are critical in driving or inhibiting relatability, willingness, ability and action to live sustainably, which contributed to shaping our differentiated archetypes.

iv. Cluster analysis

We used clustering to segment respondents into a set of meaningful groups that differ in the way they think, relate and engage with sustainable living. With this analysis we generated distinct groups (or clusters) wherein each respondent is both statistically similar to the others in the same group, while being measurably different from those in other groups. Relying on an algorithm to compute the best solution, the optimal number of clusters is reached when an incremental cluster provides only marginal additional differentiation among the existing groups.

In total we used 64 input variables, all collected through the survey. More specifically, the categories of variables included relatability, willingness, ability and action to live sustainably; people's worldviews; goals, motivators and barriers to living sustainably and people's inspiration for doing so. We did not rely on demographics for our clustering exercise, the reason being we aimed to create clusters based on non-traditional attributes.

We adopted a non-static and non-country-specific approach to clustering, looking to identify the different ways in which people think and engage with sustainable living. The resulting clusters — which we called 'archetypes' — do not represent fixed 'sustainability personas'. Rather, they have been built in a way that each individual a) primarily aligns with one cluster but can also align to other clusters for select aspects and b) can move among multiple clusters based on life progression and experiences. Zooming out from any one person, we can unite the archetypes with demographic data to see the distribution of the archetypes geographically and socioeconomically. This can help us better understand where and why certain archetypes dominate in different places and across generations, for example.

Based on the predominant variables and attributes in each cluster, we extensively described each archetype. We did this first by looking exclusively at 'worldviews', allowing us to graphically represent where each archetype fell in terms of disposition, agency, outlook and responsibility. Then, we layered in the other variables from the survey related to 'people's relationship to sustainable living'. This analysis covered the respondents' relatability with living sustainably and their willingness, ability and opinion on whether they were taking action and doing enough in this regard. Additionally, we graphically represented the extent to which a) planetary or human goals motivated sustainable action and b) motivators and barriers played a role in compelling or blocking sustainable living.

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- 1 All datapoints in this report – unless otherwise noted – are sourced from a global general population online survey among 8,000 people across 11 markets (Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Singapore, South Africa, UK and US) (Accenture analysis 2023)
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About

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