

GENETICS, ONE WORLD, PHILOSOPHY

CLIMATE CRISIS AND COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

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There is an interesting twitter thread by [@Psychologists4F](#) about news concerning the climate crisis and how we respond to the cognitive dissonance - the mental discomfort or psychological stress experienced by a person who holds contradictory beliefs or values. There are at least four possibilities how to respond to it

- Change the behavior (“reduce, refine, replace”)
- Changing the conflicting situation by just ignoring it
- Justify own behavior by pseudoexplanations, pointing to others
- Deny information by devalueing the source

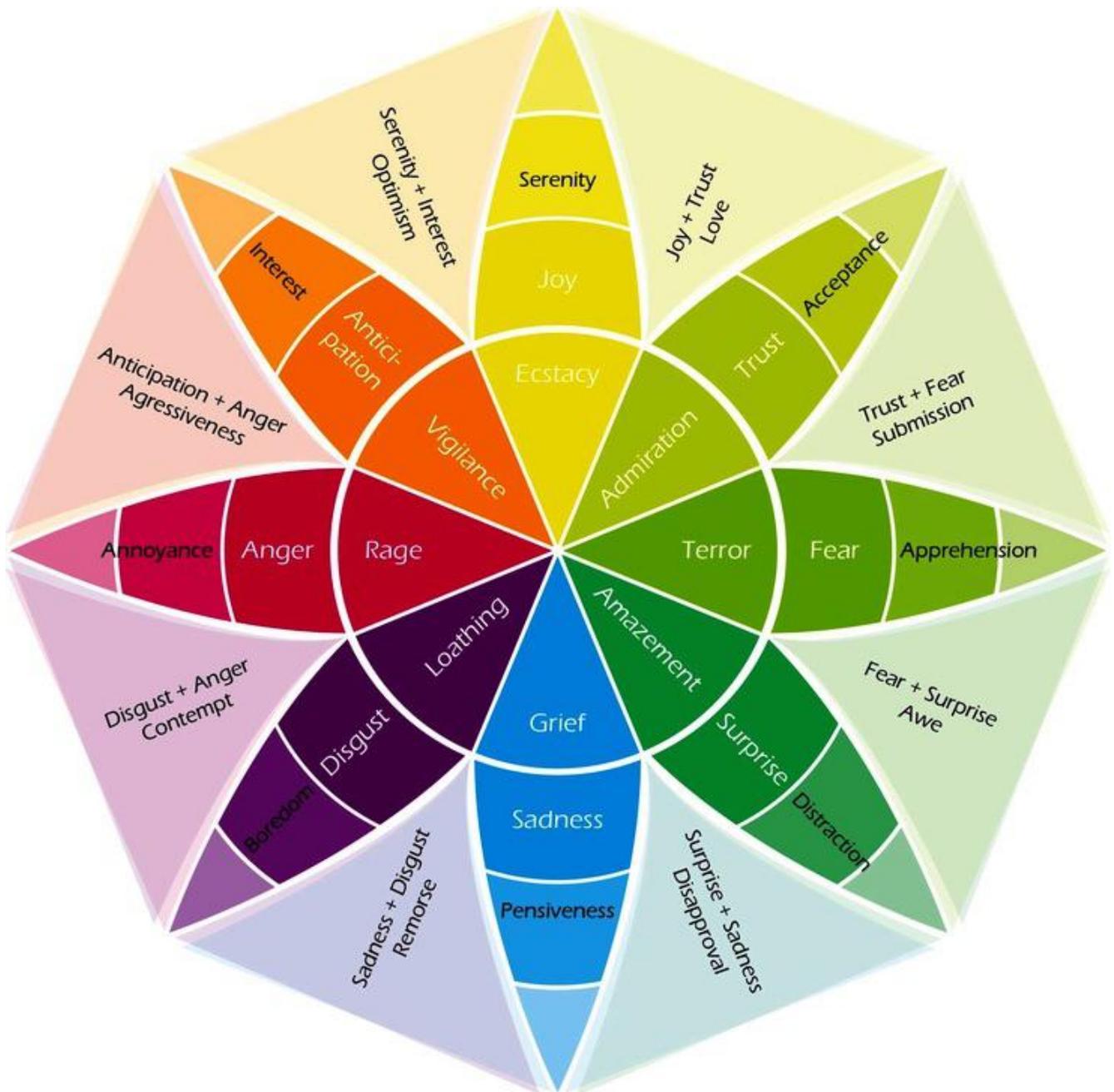
During the discussion the question was asked why the political right wing tends to ignore the dissonance. One commentator points towards a study in [Current Biology](#) that may have answer to that.

Substantial differences exist in the cognitive styles of liberals and conservatives on psychological measures ... Here we show that this functional correlate of political attitudes has a counterpart in brain structure. In a large sample of young adults, we related self-reported political attitudes to gray matter volume using structural MRI. We found that greater liberalism was associated with increased gray matter volume in the anterior cingulate cortex, whereas greater conservatism was associated with increased volume of the right amygdala.

The question now is: Are there regions involved in human behaviour? The authors believe so

The amygdala has many functions, including fear processing. Individuals with a large amygdala are more sensitive to fear ... On the other hand, our finding of an association between anterior cingulate cortex volume and political attitudes may be linked with tolerance to uncertainty.

There is indeed some evidence, that fear is the driving force here. Reminds me to 1980ies Robert Plutchik's Wheel of Emotion [while I believe more in an hierarchy](#).



[Wikipedia](#)

where strong fear/stress/panic reaction is blocking all other useful strategies.

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