

Coming Clean Book Club Discussion Questions

1. When it comes to climate change and transitioning to clean energy, what motivates you to take action? Is it to help bring justice to the Kichwa, communities near the Alberta tar sands, Maria Gunnoe and others? Or are you more motivated by the promise of what a clean energy society will bring in terms of clean air, clean water, green-collar jobs, and a rejuvenated economy? All of the above?
2. How do you think change happens? Does change come from a president, Congress, or corporate executive, or is a bottom-up, grassroots approach more effective? How can both work in tandem?
3. RAN has had great success coordinating thousands of people to focus collectively on a single target, such as Burger King, Home Depot, and Citi, to have a larger impact. How can similar strategic and collective efforts accelerate a clean energy transition?
4. There is not a single coal plant in the country that captures its emissions. Even utility executives say the technology is a decade away. And if the technology were somehow perfected, the effects of coal mining wouldn't disappear, and other forms of air and water contamination from coal plants would remain. Yet both political parties and many corporations continue to propagate the myth of "clean coal." Why?
5. How can we get government to end subsidies to the oil and coal industries – including some of the richest and most polluting companies in the world?
6. What did you learn in this book that you didn't know before? What encouraged you to think that we actually can break our addiction to oil and coal? What made you more pessimistic?
7. There is mounting evidence that biofuels actually increase greenhouse gas emissions, displace food crops, and destroy tropical rainforests and other endangered ecosystems. Yet some say that smart policies and/or a new generation of biofuels can avoid these pitfalls. Do you think biofuels can play any role in a sustainable transportation system?
8. The cost of oil and coal continues to rise, even as the price of clean energy steadily drops. In many areas of the country, we're approaching price parity. Do you think it's time for a complete moratorium on expanding the fossil fuel infrastructure, and go "all in" for clean energy?
9. *Coming Clean* lists dozens of ways in which people can act collectively to create a clean energy future. What can your group do have the biggest impact? What help or training do you need?
10. Based on the suggested actions to take at the end of each chapter, come up with an action plan for your group. What can you commit to individually and collectively to make a difference?