

Make Me Smart August 9, 2021 transcript

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Kimberly Adams: I think we're good to go. Hey, everybody. I'm Kimberly Adams, welcome back to Make Me Smart where we attempt to make today make sense.

Andy Uhler: And I'm Andy Uhler. Thank you so much for joining us. It's Monday. Around here, we call that "what did we miss? Monday."

Kimberly Adams: Yeah, and that's right. So we're gonna be doing the usual news fix. But also tell you about some stories you might have missed over the weekend or things that just like, we were thinking about over the weekend, and then we'll wrap up with a little make me smile. So Andy, since you are our wonderful person joining in to fill in while I am also filling in while Kai and Molly are taking some much needed R&R, why don't you go first?

Andy Uhler: You want me to start out with, with just absolute bumner news? I can go ahead and do that!

Kimberly Adams: Oh, you can't be worse than Meghan last week.

Andy Uhler: No, it's so, it's so funny, I was listening back to some shows and Meghan was talking about sort of the wildfires in the west and drought. And this is sort of speaking to exactly that. Right? We have this report from the United Nations from the, what's called the IPCC, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. It's a bunch of governments who come together and sort of try to talk about what we're experiencing. The news is not good, believe it or not. What struck me though, what I wanted to talk to you about a little bit is, it feels like a little bit of a shift. We, for the last couple of years, for at least the last two years, we've been talking about mitigation, that has been sort of the key word, right? We've been talking about different things that humans can do to make sure that we're not accelerating, or we're not sort of speeding up how much the planet is warming. It feels like right now the shift in even sort of the language is now adaptation. That word kept coming up in this huge report where it was like, look, this is already happening and we're too, we're almost too late to start mitigating or thinking about mitigation. Now we just have to think about adaptation. I'm curious. I mean, and that's the reality, right? Yeah.

Kimberly Adams: Yeah. I mean, I, if I recall correctly, from looking at it this morning, and as they said that we're, you know, we sped up global warming by about 10 years, or that some of the more severe consequences of climate change, global warming, are happening a decade earlier, are going to happen a decade earlier than expected. And even if we fix everything right

now and drastically reduce our emissions, we're still looking at rising sea levels for, for hundreds of years. So now it's about what do we do now? And I think it is, as you said, a shift in mindset. The other big thing about this was one of the sort of waffling points for people who don't necessarily want to view this as a climate crisis has been like, oh, well, the climate always changes and we don't know the role of humans and that's up in the air. And these scientists were saying, look, now we know for sure it's humans, no if ands butts about it, like it is us, we are doing this, and we are the only ones who can stop it. But of course, it all comes back to money and who is going to pay for it and how do you support the countries that are trying to develop in the way that the United States and other western industrialized nations did, which was by polluting a lot? And these other countries are saying, hey, you know, you got to have all of your economic growth at the expense of the planet and our relatively low lying countries, in many cases, that are going to bear the brunt of climate change. So it should now be on the wealthier nations to do something. It's a lot.

Andy Uhler: It's also one of those things, you're exactly right to talk about money, because the other thing that I keep sort of hearing about and I was looking up--I went to this week long fellowship, it was great, a whole bunch of experts sort of talking about the different technology, the different science. What I kept hearing was the technology and the science is there, we just have to have investment to make that science applicable, to sort of make sure that it happens. And we're just not funding it. And so it's, it's such an interesting, you know, carbon capture and storage is one of those things that they talk about on natural gas plants all the time, where you would actually sort of make sure that it's not leaking that methane, that everybody talks about. The flaring and things like that and everything that's sort of bad about natural gas. There's a way to make that not as bad. We just, as a country, certainly in the United States, but also as an industry, the industry doesn't want, it's super expensive to sort of make that fix. And until they absolutely have to, they're not gonna. And so that's sort of where we're at. It's like, we keep talking about how this is dire and how this is absolutely sort of no turning back. And then we just nod our heads and say oh, we shouldn't be doing it.

Kimberly Adams: It's not, it's not a universal we though, is it? Because if it were a universal we, it wouldn't be a debate. It's a segment of society that thinks it's a problem worth investing money to fix. There's a segment of society that thinks it's a problem, but not worth spending the money to fix. And then segments of society that don't think it's a problem, and a giant spectrum all along that route, and many other spaces in between. So I think it's important for us to just sort of think how then, if this is going to be a priority for the planet, who needs to be in the room to make sure that these decisions actually represent a broad swath of perspectives? Yeah, yeah.

Andy Uhler: I hope yours is a little more fun. A little more, come on.

Kimberly Adams: No, no, I think that the reason we have a make me smile is because the news fixes tend to be a little bit down, a little bit on the downer side. I have a bunch of things about COVID-19 and the Delta variant in particular. News out today that the Pentagon is planning to require the members of the US military to be vaccinated probably by around mid-September, potentially sooner if the FDA approval for these vaccines go through. I saw a

very interesting tweet from the CBS, I think, White House correspondent, who was quoting the leaders giving us press conference and saying, look, the military artery requires like 18 vaccinations, 17 vaccinations for service members. This is just another one on the list, par for the course, we do this all the time. Which reminds me of another tweet I saw earlier today about, you know, all the vaccinations that are required for schools that we don't really think about because we don't have those problems anymore. Like, you know, mumps, measles, mumps rubella. Well anyway, a lot--polio, thank you. You know, there's not a lot of people walking around with polio because we had enough vaccines to almost eradicate it. So that came out today. Rolling Stone has a story about all sorts of music shows and festivals shutting down because of the Delta variant. The New Orleans Jazz Festival was canceled for the second year in a row. Counting Crows canceled its performances. Limp Bizkit, Leonard Skinner, lots of groups are saying you know what? This is too much. We're not gonna do it. We're not gonna put our fans at risk. At the same time, the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally in South Dakota is the busiest it's been in years, according to Official, and about 700,000 people were expected to show up, according to an AP story in the Argus Leader. Last year, that was really bad.

Andy Uhler: No, I mean, I remember reporting, I did, I did a report on exactly--I talked to people, bar owners, up in Sturgis about exactly that. There was such an interesting sort of interesting bifurcation, right? Because--and it sort of speaks to exactly, I think, a lot of what all of us are sort of dealing with--it's these business owners need people to be there. And Sturgis is that motorcycle rally that supports them for something like a year and a half. It's really, really important. And so you sort of, you know, when I was doing the reporting, I was listening to people, you know, you're nodding your head. It's like, no, I get it. This is just not good for what's going on right now. And so I think right now, and there was a lot of people, a lot of the, the officials that I talked to also said they didn't cancel it last year because they knew people were going to show up anyway. That was the big sort of attitude. And I think there's a little bit of that reaction happening right now. Why you have such big crowds is that it's sort of like, well, I missed out last year, I was just gonna go anyway. I think there's a little bit of that happening.

Kimberly Adams: It was a super spreader event last year, though, and, you know, I follow a reporter and a friend of mine, Jeremy Fugleberg in South Dakota, who, you know, made it his business to start tracking all the different places that there were COVID cluster outbreaks that traced back to the Sturgis motorcycle rally. And that, that lasted, well, that, that had an impact well into the spike we saw in the winter. I hope that doesn't happen again, we have a lot of vaccinations, we have better information. But, you know, hospital ICUs are filling up in many places and it is cause for concern. But we are blowing through our time. Let's quickly hit the what did we miss, cause it is what do you miss Monday, I mean, all that kind of stuff that's been percolating. Mine is a story that I've been following. So there was this big recall of Philips CPAP machines. And there's a portion of the population that knows exactly what a CPAP machine is. And many of us, many people who do not. It's basically this machine where if you have certain respiratory illnesses, you put it on your face, and it helps you breathe at night. And basically, Philips had this recall that said there are some of these machines that might release fibers and things that can get into your lungs and cause a lot of problems. Big, big recall. But The Verge has this really detailed look at all the struggles people have had actually trying to get new

machines or to get theirs fixed because it's not like a TV that gets recalled, where you can just go without a TV, you have to be able to keep breathing at night. And so a lot of people have really struggled to get these machines fixed. And then it all factors into the supply chain shortages that we've been seeing as well. So I've been kind of watching that story. I know a lot of people who rely on these machines who've struggled as well.

Andy Uhler: No, I have a, I have a CPAP machine myself. My cousin has one.

Kimberly Adams: Oh, do you?

Andy Uhler: Oh, yeah.

Kimberly Adams: Is it a Philips one or no?

Andy Uhler: No, that's what I was going to say.

Kimberly Adams: How's your breathing doing at night?

Andy Uhler: I'm doing alright these days. Um, but it sort of gets you to think, you're right. I mean, what happens is people stopped breathing, you know, during, during the night. And so these machines are-- you're exactly right. It's not like, oh, I need to go to a Best Buy and pick up a CPAP machine that fits me because a lot of them are customized to you, the breather, because it's a medical device. And so now it's, it's, it's, it's a difficult thing when, when your machine, when they tell you that your machine might be, you know, sort of harming you. It's like, alright, well, I gotta, I gotta breathe tonight, so. Mine is, it came out last Tuesday and you and I were talking about this a little bit. I think you and I have talked about this before, but sort of the idea was the NCAA--so what happened was during the NCAA tournament last year, some athletes on the women's side of the tournament, that this sort of big Final Four tournament, released some videos about their facilities relative to what the men were, the men's facilities, like they, you know, the lunches, lunches that they were eating were such, you know, so subpar relative to what the men were afforded.

Kimberly Adams: Famous photos of the gym.

Andy Uhler: What happened was, yeah, exactly the weight room that wasn't a weight room. It was like, it was an old office or something like that. Yeah. And so what ended up happening was, to its credit, I will say to its credit, the NCAA commissioned a study. And so a law firm came out on Tuesday with an 118 page study about basically exactly how the women's tournament, this specifically the women's Final Four tournament, has been undervalued by millions while the NCAA has prioritized the men's tournament. And a lot of people say, well, you know, nobody watches the women's tournament, why, why does any, you know, anybody care? That's been sort of the argument for a long time about women's sports and funding and things like that. What I think this report reveals to us a little bit at least is there's no priority so there's no marketing to, to get people to watch the women's game. They sometimes don't even know when

the games are. My brother and I watch a lot of sports and we watched so much women's tournament last year because the games were so good. It's basketball. And I think a lot of, a lot of people, if you told them, if you marketed it right, if you told them, hey, these are when the games are and you should be watching because it's really good, I think a lot of people would. What this report sort of tells us is that they just haven't been investing in, in the women's side of basketball at the collegiate level, which is awful. It's, it's true and it's and, this report sort of reveals what some people have been telling me for years. But now we have the documentation. Now we need to take steps to make sure that we correct this, right?

Kimberly Adams: So what are they going to do about it?

Andy Uhler: I have no idea, Kimberly. There's, there's a question. Mark Emmert, the head of the NCAA said this is going to be a priority. This is one of those things that we're going to take a look at. It's sort of that line, right? When you have something like this come out, then your line has to be, oh my, oh, this is a priority, we are going to change things. And then in a couple of months when people forget about this report, and nobody, except for the folks in Marketplace, keep bringing it up, then, you know, then it goes away. But I hope we keep referring back to it.

Kimberly Adams: I'll look forward to your monthly stories on, status updates on this report. Okay, I'm ready to smile. How about you?

Andy Uhler: Sure.

Kimberly Adams: Okay, I'll go ahead and go first. I have a story about ink, particularly black ink. So you may have seen these stories over the years about all this research on like, the blackest black that you've ever seen, these colors, and you can like look at it, and it messes with your head and everything like that. So Fast Company has this piece on this ink that you can buy for your pen or for painting or for whatever you use, like, you know, bottled ink for, because that's what everybody does. I happen to have a few bottles of ink because I like to write with fountain pens every so often because I'm weird like that.

Andy Uhler: You're that person, sure.

Kimberly Adams: I'm absolutely that person. But the most interesting thing about this article is this epic battle that has been going on over who has rights to this particular shade of black ink and who is and isn't allowed to use it. So yes, you've got your like, Tiffany blue-green, and a couple of these other like--

Andy Uhler: You have your Pantone color wheel and all that stuff, right? Yeah.

Kimberly Adams: Yeah, sure. So somebody basically bought the rights to this particular shade of extra black, black, black, black, black, like, deep into the abyss black. And then another artist like, got mad and has been making fun of them. And they've been like this tit for tat. And it's like, drama, over who gets to own this particular color shade. And it was very fascinating to me. And

now I want to like, order some bottles of ink and test them out to see like, you know, what it's like to write with them and what, what it makes my letters look like.

Andy Uhler: So as you sort of wait for, for my reporting on the NCAA, I'm just gonna wait for your reporting on this awesome black ink story. There's gotta be something there.

Kimberly Adams: I'll mail you a letter once I get it.

Andy Uhler: There you go. So mine is gonna resonate, especially when you were talking about Counting Crows and Limp Bizkit. It will resonate with some of the folks who understand who we're talking about. So what happened was Nickelodeon is almost 30 years old. The Ringer decided to create, and this actually dovetails from my NCAA story too. I know that hurts, right?

Kimberly Adams: It really does cause I remember when it first came on.

Andy Uhler: I do too. So, what happened was The Ringer created a bracket, so exactly like the NCAA bracket that you would fill out for the tournament. They created a best Nickelodeon character bracket. And it's fantastic. You have SpongeBob as a one seed. What I think is really, really interesting and what brought this to me, somebody that a bunch of people were talking about it on Twitter today, there is Mark Summers versus Mike O'Malley in the--Mark Summers is the four seed, O'Malley it's a 13 seed. Mark Summers was the host of Double Dare, right? And he was sort of around Nickelodeon forever. And O'Malley was the host of Guts, The aggro crag. You remember that show Guts? Like I can hear that, I can hear the theme song in my head. And so what happened was everybody, I mean you had so many different people certainly from my generation weighing in on Twitter about exactly who should win and that's exactly sort of how they're gonna do it, they're gonna tally votes on Instagram and Twitter and through the websites about who should win, but you have, you know, Doug Funny is a one seed, Tommy Pickles, like it's, it's awesome for somebody like me who's like, I know all of those characters, right? And so you're rooting for them like a bracket like, like you would watch basketball games you're rooting.

Kimberly Adams: This is gonna give them so much information about our generation. Like, talk about the data harvesting opportunity there. Okay, I'm definitely—nevertheless, I will be filling out that bracket. Okay, we got to go. We went like overtime. Even though it's a podcast and we technically have unlimited time. That is it for today. Tomorrow we are going to take, as Andy mentioned, a deep dive on what the next chapter of the pandemic looks like for businesses, especially as a growing number of them start requiring vaccines for either their employees or for customers. So if you have questions on this topic, or any other topic like sports, because Andy knows all the sports things, send us an email or a voice memo or a voicemail, we are at makemesmart@marketplace.org and our phone number where you can send that voicemail is?

Andy Uhler: 508-827-6278 or 508-UB-SMART.

Kimberly Adams: That was a great announcer voice, Andy. Oh, it's almost like you're on the radio or something.

Andy Uhler: You set me up. Come on.

Kimberly Adams: Make Me Smart is produced and directed by Marissa Cabrera. Today's program was engineered by Drew Jostad.

Andy Uhler: Bridget Bodnar is the senior producer and our executive director of on demand is Sitara Nieves.

Kimberly Adams: And we did it. We got to figure out a way to like, not go deep into depression when we're talking about the pandemic tomorrow,

Andy Uhler: Especially at the top, yeah, it's like, well, you're talking about climate change and the pandemic, like jeez. That's okay.

Kimberly Adams: I'm glad you're hanging out, Andy. This is gonna be awesome.

Andy Uhler: This is super fun. Yeah. I am too. I think tomorrow is gonna be a lot of fun. Yeah. Cool.