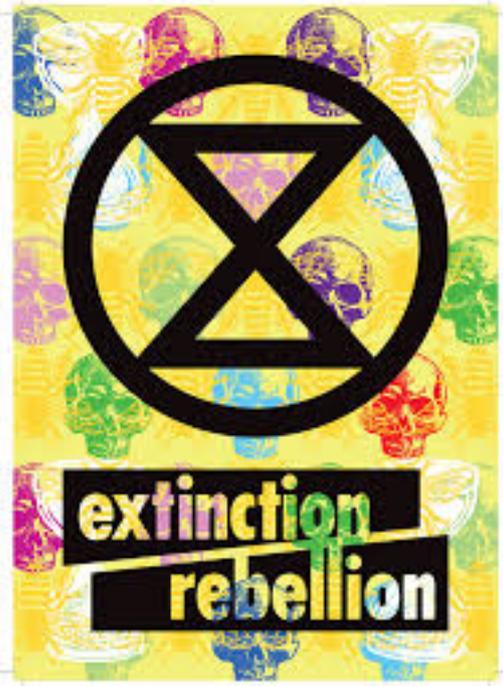


Why We Rebel

curated by Jay Griffiths with XR UK Vision team



Sometimes it falls upon a generation to be great, said Mandela. History is calling from the future, a hundred years from now. Half a hundred years. Ten. Today. Calling the conscience of humanity to act with the fierce urgency of now. This is the time. Wherever we are standing is the place. We have just this one flickering instant to hold the winds of worlds in our hands, to vouchsafe the future. This is what destiny feels like. We have to be greater than we have ever been, dedicated, selfless, self-sacrificial.

The third world war — of profit versus life — is already underway. Humanity itself is on the brink of the abyss: our potential extinction. We face a breakdown of all life, the tragedy of tragedies: the unhallowed horror.

Time is broken and buckled, and seasons are out of step so even the plants are confused. Ancient wisdoms are being betrayed: to every thing there was a season, a time to be born and a time to be a child, protected and cared for, but the young are facing a world of chaos and harrowing cruelty. In the delicate web of life, everything depends on everything else: we are nature and it is us, and the extinction of the living world is our suicide. Not one sparrow can now be beneath notice, not one bee.

Something in the human spirit, too, is threatened with extinction. Many feel exhausted, ignored, lonely and anxious. Humiliated by poverty and inequality, crushed by debt, powerless, controlled and trapped, many feel defrauded of what should rightly be theirs. Societies are polarised,

people estranged from each other and sundered from the living world. Only when it is dark enough can you see the stars, and they are lining up now to write rebellion across the skies. There is no choice.

This is a rebellion for the young people and for the ancestors.

This is for the turtle and the salamander, the dugong and the dove. It is for the finned, furry and feathered ones, the ones who scamper and swim, the chattering, chirping and hooting ones.

This is for the forests and the forest medicines, for the trees of wisdom, the trees of life and the living waters of the Nile and the Yangtze, the Tigris and the Ganges. This is for the seven seas, in seven directions, down to the seventh generation.

This is for the Great Song that runs underneath all the melodies, the rhythms of rain and sun, the rhymes of polar ice. We humans sang before we spoke, and we still know the song, though the harmonies are jangled and the melodies flung out of tune.

Each generation is given two things: one is the gift of the world, and the other is the duty of keeping it safe for those to come. The generations of yesterday trust those of today not to take more than their share, and those of tomorrow trust their elders to care for it.

The contract is broken, and it is happening on our watch. A pathological obsession with money and profit is engineering this breakdown. Warped and spiritually desolate, this system is contemptuous of humanity and the living world, and held in place by a toxic media (power without truth); by toxic finance (power without compassion); and toxic politics (power without principle).

The world's resources are being seized faster than the natural world can replenish them. Children can do the maths on this, and know they are being sent the bill. And the young are in rebellion now. This is their time, their fire. The flame is theirs and they are lighting the way. Why? Because they are the touchstone of nations, carrying the moral authority of innocence. Because they have not lived long enough to have their clear vision dimmed: this is not a game — it is about life and death and they know it. Because they are young enough to know cheating is wrong and old enough to see they have been cheated of their safety, their dreams and their future. Because they are young enough to be awed by the magic of living creatures and old enough to be heartbroken by their slaughter. Because they are young enough to know it is wrong to lie and old enough to use the right words: this is an emergency.

Worldwide, the heaviest emissions have been produced by the richest nations, while the heaviest consequences are being felt by the poorest. The few have sown the wind, and are forcing the many to reap the whirlwind. Reparation is needed. So is recognition: that Europe stole its wealth through its imperialism, colonialism and slavery. So is respect:

that the global South has resisted for hundreds of years, knowing that a shining kind of courage can end centuries of wrong.

Indigenous cultures have suffered the devastation of their lands, the extinction of their languages, knowledge and wisdom. And in their rebellions they have long evoked an Earth manifesto, saying we are the land: as earth-guardians, we are nature defending itself; land is alive, unfathomably deep, and there is intelligence within nature, thinking, spirited and alive.

Extinction Rebellion is young, old, black, white, indigenous, of all faiths and none, of all genders and sexualities and none: being alive on earth now is all the qualification required.

It is a rebellion against the heartless, loveless and lifeless delusion of seeing Earth as dead matter; against patriarchy's domination and control of women and the Earth, against heterosexism that condemns the beauty of diverse love, against the militarism that destroys living lands, wages war for oil and kills those who protect the green world.

This rebellion uses the finest weapons: peace, truth and love. It is strictly non-violent as an active stance — Ahimsa — preventing violence. For this, it is willing to take disruptive, loving and effective direct action, thinking big. Take the planet off the stock market. Make ecocide law. Rebel with cause. Rebel with creativity. Rebel with compassion. Rebel together because together we are irresistible.

Tell the Truth is the first demand of Extinction Rebellion, using fearless speech, Gandhi's 'truth-force' which creates a change of heart. People are not stupid: people feel a pervasive uneasiness at the extremes of weather, the floods, droughts and hurricanes, but they have the legal and moral right to be fully informed of the speed and scale of the crisis. Extinction Rebellion's vision is a politics of kindness rendered consistently and unapologetically. Its vision depends on values that are the most ordinary and therefore the most precious: human decency, dignity, responsibility, fairness, duty, honesty, morality and care. With Citizens' Assemblies, it believes that when people are given good information, they make good decisions.

This rebellion is regenerative, arriving with armfuls of cake and olives, bread and oranges. It reconfigures older and wiser ways of living while voicing the grief and fear of these times. It creates communities of belonging, with mentoring and eldership, where everyone's contribution is welcome. Rooted in radical compassion, trust, reverence and respect, the finest technology we have is love.

With serious, clear-eyed urgency, we have to mobilise now for deep adaptation for what is inevitable. Humans are by nature cooperative, and times of crisis can be times when life is lived transcendentally, for a purpose beyond the self. No individual alone is fully human, as the

African concept Ubuntu shows: our humanity results from being in connection with each other. Believing that there is no Them and Us, only all of us together, Extinction Rebellion seeks alliances wherever they can be found. We are fighting for our lives and if we do not link arms, we will fail because the forces we are up against are simply too powerful. We need you.

Extinction Rebellion seeks an economy that maximises happiness and minimises harm; that restores soil health and the honourable harvest, taking only what is freely given from the wind, sun and tides. In a decarbonised and relocalised system, it embraces frugality for the sake of fairness. It seeks to restore a sacred rightness to the world, to everything its season, the beauty of its steady balance. It restores the right to dream, relentlessly, gracefully, wildly. As trenchant as it is effervescent, this rebellion beckons the conscience, quickens the pulse and galvanizes the heart.

For our deepest longings are magnificent: to live a meaningful life, to be in unity with each other and with the life-source, call it the spirit, call it the divine, call it the still small voice, it doesn't matter what it is called or how it is spelled if it guides us in service to life.

This vision has a map. It is the map of the human heart. Believing in unflinching truth, reckless beauty and audacious love, knowing that life is worth more than money and that there is nothing greater, nothing more important, nothing more sacred than protecting the spirit deep within all life.

This is life in rebellion for life.

In solidarity, Paul & Roxanne