

# Healthy Teams

Resources for you and your team. From starting off, to resolving issues to the best practices we have for building and maintaining healthy teams.

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# What can help make a team healthy within XR?

## Introduction

It is often hard to put your finger on what exactly your team culture is or isn't. We say **we are transitioning to regenerative cultures, but what does that mean in practice?** Here we will outline some activities you could bring into your teams to help you develop sustainable and healthy cultures.

We would identify a healthy team as one where the following working conditions are prioritised:

- **High levels of trust**
- **Intentional choices** are made to work in regenerative ways
- Members of the team feel safe, valued and have a sense of belonging;
- There are clear roles and responsibilities
- Connections are strong with the parent circle and sub circles

By giving attention to the following aspects, these working conditions can be developed.

## Healthy Teams reviews

These can also be arranged for your team by the Healthy Teams circle (these are encouraged on a six-monthly basis within the constitution).

To request a review, contact the Healthy Teams our **Mattermost Reception channel** or by email at [HealthyTeams@proton.me](mailto:HealthyTeams@proton.me)

## 1. Connecting with each other

**Who is in the Room - Life Stories.** Every group and team within XR will have a slightly different culture even though we have all agreed to the P&Vs. Local Groups will vary across the country, Arts focussed groups will work in a different way to Data focussed groups. And a lot of the time the culture of the team comes down to the people in it.

**We have all come from different backgrounds and different experiences.** We have arrived here for a variety of reasons on a whole range of paths. There is no single route to becoming a rebel. So take some time to get to know each other and the paths we took to get here. And not just

to Extinction Rebellion but specifically to this team.

Think about the series of events that have taken place in your life, from your childhood all the way to the present day. How have your experiences shaped you and contributed to the decisions which have brought you here? You can go as deep or as broad as you feel comfortable doing in the moment.

**Give everyone space to talk.** This can be done all together as a group or in break out rooms of 2-4 people. It can take anything from 3-10 minutes, so decide on a length of time that fits the space you have. When setting up this activity give participants 2 mins to reflect and think before they start sharing. And set aside some time afterwards for folk to connect before moving to anything new.

The sharing of life experiences helps people come together, to see each other as full and complete individuals, as well as illuminating the reasons they may have for being here. Better understanding of each other as individuals can help a team pull together! As new members join it is a great opportunity to recap life stories too.

## 2. Celebrating success, gratitude and appreciation

It may be beneficial to your team to spend some time noticing the things you are doing well, which can include appreciating the work of individuals in your circle.

- Make a list of all of the things you and individuals in your team have done well in the last month.
- Give space for gratitude at the end of your agenda or as part of your check-outs.
- Appreciate those that leave the circle or step back from a role.
- Accept the possibility of feeling some discomfort as others appreciate you.

## 3. Aligning through the Principles and Values

Working in your circle will be a great opportunity to bring the P&Vs to life and as such it is worth spending time checking-in to to get a shared understanding of them and to ensure they underpin how you are working.

[Read the P&Vs in full here](#)

Some of the P&Vs underpin the general direction of the movement (eg 1, 2 and 4) and it might be difficult to see them specifically in action in your circle. But the others are all about how we work together, the processes and the spirit. One P&V that is highlighted in our everyday working is 10; the self organizing system (SOS) is XR's way of bringing this P&V to life and it influences all we do in XRUK. For more details go to [SOS - making it work for you](#).

Other aspects of the P&Vs can be explored further by following these links:

- [Our ways of working](#)
- [Our meetings](#)
- [Our cultures](#)
- [Accessibility](#)
- [Mental health and wellbeing](#)

## 4. Aligning with the circle mandate

The reason for doing the work you do is contained in the purpose of the circle, which is clearly described in the circle mandate and everyone's alignment with this is essential for the work you do to be meaningful. It is worth going back to the mandate to ensure you're not losing sight of what the purpose is.

More information about mandates and how they fit within the [SOS process can be found here](#)

## 5. Connecting across the movement

To work in a healthy way, circles need to have strong and effective connections with various other parts of the movement (some may not be relevant to your particular team)

- Your broader circle
- Any sub circles you may have
- The [XRUK Strategy](#)

## 6. Maintaining a balance between task and maintenance

Each team is made up of the individuals in it. Each person brings their own skills and experience and will naturally fall into different roles in the group dynamic. These roles usually aren't specifically mandated but functions in group dynamics, for example:

Task Focussed	Maintenance Focused
Bringing in new project ideas	Checking in with team members
Keeping track of progress on tasks	Setting group boundaries to preserve capacity
Consulting other teams for input	Unblocking tensions when they arise
Clarifying success criteria	Ensuring everyone's voice is heard in meetings

You can probably see from this that "Task" roles focus on the work of pushing projects forward and meeting goals, whereas "Maintenance" roles focus on the work of keeping the team together, preserving capacity and creating a team that can continue to function well together. This split can be likened to "long term vs short term" thinking and a healthy team needs a balance of these roles fulfilled at any one time.

Ask yourselves:

- Does your team as a whole feel like it is always pushing towards goals and never has time to breathe? Or...
- Does it feel like you have long meetings but never seem to get any concrete outcomes?

If either of these feel accurate then maybe you need to intentionally bring your team back into a balance of task and maintenance.

You might want to consider how your team is doing around these particular aspects of maintenance:

## 7. Welcoming new people

Here is a broad range of tools for [recruiting and onboarding](#) new members.

In the spirit of working in a healthy way, we encourage circles treat new members with high levels of respect by; Give space to hear their stories, explaining the terms and processes that are part of the team's work and giving them opportunities to ask questions and grow into the role. Using a buddy system might be a good way of doing this.

## 8. Dealing with personality clashes and group tensions

### Short Feedback Loops

Here is some comprehensive guidance around using short feedback loops to encourage prompt and direct conversations when tensions arise between individual members. [Short feedback loops guidance](#) In a nutshell, these conversations are best held using the model of nonviolent communication, focusing on observations, feelings, needs and requests.

### Embed a culture of airing and moving through difficulties in your team.

Here is some guidance for incorporating [tension shifting](#) as part of your circle's meeting schedule. It is recommended to hold these sessions on a regular basis to ensure the tension shifting 'muscle' is developed.

# Building Trust

The strengthening of relationships, key to healthy team working, requires moving towards greater degrees of trust.

**Trust allows us to commit more fully**, to invest more of ourselves in the projects we are working on and to develop those one to one friendships that can sustain us and support us through tricky times.

Our ability to trust will depend on all that is external to us; the attitudes and behaviours of those around us, the structures and working culture of the group, as well as our own internalised attitudes borne of our individual experiences.

In order to help **create the structures and culture** that will help build trust there are a number of things that it will be useful to have happen simultaneously;

- Clear mandates that are referred to on an ongoing basis.
- Ongoing reflection of P&V's to create a framework for working.
- Looking at individual capacity as well as each person's understanding of consent.
- Listening to life stories that can develop strength and confidence through shared vulnerability and depth of experiences; understanding where people are coming from.
- Modelling attitudes of kindness, compassion, patience, empathy and inclusivity where everyone is heard and welcomed.
- Encouraging the voicing of differences, disagreements and the resolution of these, accepting differences whilst building consensus; handling conflict well.
- Reviewing projects and development of the team; keeping what's working and identifying and letting go of what isn't.

Individually, it may be worth thinking about the times when we were let down and what impact that had on us and our ability to trust.

A decision to trust within a certain time frame can be a useful way forward, provided reviews are embedded in the structure of the team's operation; this is, agreeing to be led by other's ideas.

# Regenerative Culture Reminders - Intention Statements

## Regenerative Cultures Reminders

This collection of intention statements / regenerative reminders can be helpful for the start or end of sessions. If you have a contribution, please contact the Rebel Toolkit team via their [Mattermost Reception](#) or email [LGsupport@extinctionrebellion.uk](mailto:LGsupport@extinctionrebellion.uk)

Choose an invitation: pause, breathe, close eyes/lower gaze and share:

The Vision Reminder (also known as the Solemn Intention Statement), is often read out at the end of an XR meeting/event.

“Let us take a moment to consider why we are here. Let’s recall our love for the whole of humanity, in all corners of the world. Let’s remember our love for this beautiful planet that feeds, nourishes and sustains all life. Let’s recollect our sincere desire to protect all this, for now, and for generations to come. As we act today/this week, may we find the courage to bring this sense of peace and appreciation to every being we encounter, to every word we speak, and to every action we make. In this emergency. Together. Rooted in love. We are all we need.”

## 1) Transitioning towards regenerative cultures

We are transitioning towards regenerative cultures. These are cultures of respect and listening, in which people deal with conflicts when they arise, using short feedback loops to talk about disagreements and issues without blaming and shaming. They are cultures in which we cultivate healthy boundaries by slowing down our yes’ and returning tasks when we are unable to follow through. They are healthy resilient cultures built on care and support, where people arrive on time for commitments. We are all crew.

## 2) Online sessions

Let us take a moment to be present with each other, despite the physical distance we have to maintain. Let’s remember that we are transitioning to regenerative cultures. These are cultures of respect, understanding, inclusivity and listening where we arrive on time for commitments, slow

down our yes, return tasks we cannot complete, where we do not blame and shame. We deal with issues and conflicts as they arise, using short feedback loops to talk about disagreements and issues without blaming and shaming. These are also cultures where we understand and celebrate that we are all deeply connected to the natural systems that sustain us, and that what affects us in one time and place will come to affect all of us. We are a part of nature, a part of each other, never apart. Let us embrace this time of isolation and reflection as an opportunity to revisit our principles and values. Let's use the time and space as a cocoon in which we transform, ready to continue our rebellion in new beautiful and creative ways when we reemerge. We are all crew.

### **3) You can't be neutral on a moving train**

You can't be neutral on a moving train...

The world is already moving in certain directions – many of them are horrifying.

Children are going hungry, people are dying in wars.

To be neutral in such a situation is to collaborate with what is going on. We will not collaborate and choose instead to rebel.

Howard Zinn (1997)

### **4) Arundhati Roy**

“Our strategy should be not only to confront empire, but to lay siege to it. To deprive it of oxygen. To shame it. To mock it. With our art, our music, our literature, our stubbornness, our joy, our brilliance, our sheer relentlessness – and our ability to tell our own stories. Stories that are different from the ones we're being brainwashed to believe.

The corporate revolution will collapse if we refuse to buy what they are selling – their ideas, their version of history, their wars, their weapons, their notion of inevitability.

Remember this: We are many, and they are few. They need us more than we need them.

Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.” — Arundhati Roy

### **5) We come from a world which makes us weary**

If you would like to close your eyes or lower your gaze..... We come from a world which makes us weary. And we have volunteered to be wearier. We know that by fighting for this planet we will be poorer, more tired, and more stressed than the versions of ourselves who did not do this. Thank you all. We have put ourselves at risk for others. But whilst we fight for a different world, let us each take a moment now to decide a way that we will enjoy a glimpse of that world. Decide now how you might take a day, or an afternoon, or even an hour. To enjoy the qualitative over the quantitative, the odd over the one-size-fits-all, the joyful over the productive, the community over the individualist. In some small way which is meaningful to you, commit to it, to keep you going, through all the amazing work that you do.



## **6) XR Youth grounding**

We have the right to self sooth, To take care of ourselves throughout the day,

We have the right to self care, To make our lives ones in which we can find enjoyment,

We have the right to community care, To be a part of networks who look after one another,

We have the right to structural change, To live lives in which we are not exploited and are not required to exploit others

We have the right to a planet all life is able to thrive on

Let us make this meeting one which is understanding of the need for each of these things,

That they look different to each to us,

That we don't always get it right,

And that we need each other to make it happen.

## **7) Think from the gut**

Think from the gut

Follow from the heart

Act with the brain

Do what's right for the self

The planet will not thank you for worrying about it, unless the self is at peace.

XR is an intra capitalist organisation.

It needs warriors at peace within, not burnt out individuals. Nothing is worth that.

Especially not extinction.

It's not going away. Step back: take time to observe the self especially when quiet!

Now is all you have. Get peace now and the future will take care of itself.

And enjoy lots of clever, interesting books on how.

Liam Geary Baulch

## **8) A poem by Becky Hemsley**

"She sat at the back and they said she was shy.  
She led from the front and they hated her pride.  
They asked her advice and then questioned her guidance.  
They branded her loud, then were shocked by her silence.

When she shared no ambition they said it was sad.  
So she told them her dreams and they said she was mad.  
They told her they'd listen, then covered their ears,  
And gave her a hug while they laughed at her fears,

And she listened to all of it thinking she should,  
Be the girl they told her to be best as she could,  
But one day she asked what was best for herself,  
Instead of trying to please everyone else.

So she walked to the forest and stood with the trees,  
She heard the wind whisper and dance with the leaves.  
She spoke to the willow, the elm and the pine,  
And she told them what she'd been told time after time.

She told them she felt she was never enough,  
She was either too little or far far too much,  
Too loud or too quiet, too fierce or too weak,  
Too wise or too foolish, too bold or too meek,

Then she found a small clearing surrounded by firs,  
And she stopped...and she heard what the trees said to her.  
And she sat there for hours not wanting to leave. For the forest said nothing, it just let her breathe."

Becky Hemsley

## 9) Quick Quotes

"Go where the energy is." – Kate Rayworth

"Let this radicalise you, rather than lead you to despair" - Mariame Kaba

"In our struggle for freedom, truth is the only weapon we possess." – Dalai Lama

"Enthusiasm is common. Endurance is rare"- Angela Duckworth

"Turn your face to the sun and the shadows fall behind you". – Maori proverb

"Take into account that great love and great achievements involve great risk." — Dalai Lama

“Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying 'I will try again tomorrow.'” - Mary Anne Radmacher

‘We need, in every community, a group of angelic troublemakers’ – Bayard Rustin

“Compassion is the radicalism of our time.” — Dalai Lama

“What surprises me most is “Man”, because he sacrifices his health in order to make money. Then he sacrifices money to recuperate his health. And then he is so anxious about the future that he doesn't enjoy the present; The result being he doesn't live in the present or the future; He lives as if he's never going to die, and then he dies having never really lived.” – Dalai Lama

“Whether one is rich or poor, educated or illiterate, religious or non-believing, man or woman, black, white, or brown, we are all the same. Physically, emotionally, and mentally, we are all equal. We all share basic needs for food, shelter, safety, and love. We all aspire to happiness and we all shun suffering. Each of us has hopes, worries, fears, and dreams. Each of us wants the best for our family and loved ones. We all experience pain when we suffer loss and joy when we achieve what we seek. On this fundamental level, religion, ethnicity, culture, and language make no difference.”  
– Dalai Lama

## **10) Rediscovering Our Belonging (Joanna Macy).**

Being fully present to fear, to gratitude, to all that is, we rediscover that we belong. We can develop a practice of mutual belonging and find ways to remember, celebrate, and affirm this deep knowing of our inter-existence. We belong to each other.

We belong to the living body of Earth and nothing can ever separate us. We are already home. The practice of mutual belonging is the medicine for the sickness of the self-isolated ego and will accompany us through the hard times upon us.

The field of belonging is rooted in the living body of Earth, in the flows of time and relationship that form our bodies and communities, our land and climate.

## **11) We hear history calling**

“We hear history calling to us from the future. We catch glimpses of a new world of love, respect and regeneration, where we have restored the intricate web of all life.

It's a future that's inside us all – located in the fierce love we carry for our children, in our urge to help a stranger in distress, in our wish to forgive, even when that seems too much to ask. And so we rebel for this, calling in joy, creativity and beauty.

We rise in the name of truth and withdraw our consent for ecocide, oppression and patriarchy.

We rise up for a world where power is shared for regeneration, repair and reconciliation.

We rise for love in its ultimate wisdom.

Our vision stretches beyond our own lifespan, to a horizon dedicated to future generations and the restoration of our planet's integrity."

## **12) Anti-Regen Reminder?**

We refuse to wait any longer

We have been chosen by time

When we see injustice

We must speak out

There is no room for silence

When we feel defeated

We must stand tall

There is no time for despair

No place for self-pity

No time to grieve

No time to rest

When confronted

We must challenge

We must push as hard as they push

And then push harder

When we feel anger

ACT!

Act with audacity

Relentless audacity

We are a movement

An unstoppable movement

The need for protest will never end

Either we all live in a decent world or nobody does!

When the history of our time is written

We will be the heroes

### **13) From Joanna Macy**

Out of this darkness, a new world can arise, not to be constructed by our minds so much as to emerge from our dreams. Even though we cannot see clearly how it's going to turn out, we are still called to let the future into our imagination. We will never be able to build what we have not first cherished in our hearts."

"The biggest gift you can give is to be absolutely present, and when you're worrying about whether you're hopeful or hopeless or pessimistic or optimistic, who cares? The main thing is that you're showing up, that you're here and that you're finding ever more capacity to love this world because it will not be healed without that. That is what is going to unleash our intelligence and our ingenuity and our solidarity for the healing of our world."

### **14) Active Hope is not wishful thinking**

"Active Hope is not wishful thinking.

Active Hope is not waiting to be rescued . . . .by some saviour.

Active Hope is waking up to the beauty of life on whose behalf we can act.

We belong to this world.

The web of life is calling us forth at this time.

We've come a long way and are here to play our part.

With Active Hope we realise that there are adventures in store, strengths to discover, and comrades to link arms with.

Active Hope is a readiness to discover the strengths in ourselves and in others; a readiness to discover the reasons for hope and the occasions for love.

A readiness to discover the size and strength of our hearts, our quickness of mind, our steadiness of purpose, our own authority, our love for life, the liveliness of our curiosity, the unsuspected deep well of patience and diligence, the keenness of our senses, and our capacity to lead.

None of these can be discovered in an armchair or without risk."

### **15) The Three Beings**

## The Three Beings

"We call first on the beings of the past: Be with us now, all you who have gone before. You, our ancestors and teachers, who walked and loved and faithfully tended this Earth, be present to us now so that we may carry on the legacy you bequeathed us. Aloud and silently in our hearts, we say your names and see your faces...

"We call also on the beings of the present: All you with whom we live and work on this endangered planet, all you with whom we share this brink of time, be with us now. Fellow humans and brothers and sisters of other species, help us open to our collective will and wisdom. Aloud and silently we say your names and picture your faces...

"Lastly we call on the beings of the future: All you who will come after us on this Earth, be with us now. All you who are waiting to be born in the ages to come, it is for your sakes too that we work to heal our world. We cannot picture your faces or say your names — you have none yet — but we feel the reality of your claim on life. It helps us to be faithful in the task that must be done, so that there will be for you, as there was for our ancestors: blue sky, fruitful land, clear waters."

— World as Lover, World as Self

## 16) Roots by Steve Turner

It's a quiet job being a root. No one hugs you, climbs you or praises your intricate ways. Roots work in the dark. And it's hard work tunnelling, travelling, finding nutrition. But when the storms come it's our fingers which cling. When the drought comes it's our lips that drink. Without us, the ground would crumble. Without us life would fall. Everyone needs roots.

## 17) Standing on a precipice

Facing the reality that we're standing on a precipice right now, as a species and as a whole planet, is sobering, to say the least. But facing what is real opens the heart to grief, which somehow opens the heart to love even more deeply... When you reconnect with the alive world in a more compassionate way, and when you realise that the whole world is a living system that can only thrive when death makes room for new life, you may feel a calm settle inside you. You may find yourself with the energy that comes from love to embrace the whole story including the necessary emptiness and loss... When we look toward what has been lost with the climate crisis or other ecological damage that our species has inflicted, we do still need to strive toward repair, but the cure is in our own mentality. The mentality that love really is as strong as death compels us to regard those of us who remain - forests, polar bears, wilderness, people - with fierce love, looking toward how we can all live our highest quality of life together as a beloved community, no matter what. We don't need to minimise or overlook the pain and tragedy we encounter as we live in this time of interwoven crises. Eventually, when we recognise that the pain is directly connected with our love, we can embrace it. We can move into actions of restoration that are firmly planted in love. From "Church of the Wild: How Nature invites Us into the Sacred" Broadleaf Books 2021

## 18) The Peace of Wild Things

By Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me and I wake in the night at the least sound in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be, I go and lie down where the wood drake rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds. I come into the peace of wild things who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief. I come into the presence of still water. And I feel above me the day-blind stars waiting with their light. For a time I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

## **19) The emancipation of the proletariat**

"The emancipation of the proletariat is not a labour of small account and of little people; only they who can keep their heart strong and their will as sharp as a sword when the general disillusionment is at its worst can be regarded as fighters for the working class or called revolutionaries."

(Antonio Gramsci, Selections from Political Writings 1910-20, p.349)

## **20) Thankful to our Mother, the Earth**

"We are thankful to our Mother, the Earth, for she gives us everything that we need for life. She supports our feet as we walk upon her. It gives us joy that she still continues to care for us, just as she has from the beginning of time. To our Mother, we send thanksgiving, love and respect."

## **20a) Now our minds are one**

Intention Setting Statement.

At a foundational level, regeneration requires us to RESIST. We are in resistance.

We ARE the resistance.

Resistance against a failing government.

Resistance against corporate greed.

Resistance against a system that is killing us.

In resistance we need to reframe how to fully show up in our humanity, at this, the most critical point in human history.

We refuse to wait any longer.

We have been chosen by time.

And we must do what is necessary.

The task at hand, our great calling is to ACT.

When we feel anger,

ACT.

When we feel love,

ACT.

When we are alone,

ACT.

We cannot treat social injustices and ecological crises as separate. When we see injustice,  
We must speak out,  
There is no room for silence.

The need for protest will never end.  
Either we all live in a decent world or nobody does!

When we feel defeated We must stand tall When confronted We must challenge We must push as  
hard as they push And then push harder

There is no time to waste on projects that make us feel good but lack deeper impact.  
There is no time for despair or distraction.  
There is no time for infighting or division.  
There is no time for navel gazing, self pity and ego.

There is no time...  
There is. NO. TIME.  
All we have is now!

## **21) The Seasons**

May you all enjoy the beautiful colours of spring, the fragrant Summer breeze and glowing sun, the gold and crimson leaves of autumn, and the cool, beautiful light of winter. May you remember also that every being with whom we share this beautiful planet is also a precious gem. May you enjoy everyone around you and not wait until it is too late, until everything is nothing more than a dream. Sister Chân Không (Cao Ngọc Phượng)

## **22) XR Intention**

"If you would like to close your eyes or lower your gaze.  
Let us take a moment to consider why we are here. We are all here out of a sincere love for the Earth, who is still sustaining us and nourishing us after all the hurt that has been inflicted on her. Even as she burns, she is still feeding us. Sometimes this feels like too much to bear. We are all here because something deep inside each of us compels us to action. Call it conscience or courage, maybe even fear, or just love. We are all propelled by the same wish to protect our Mother and all our fellow beings who she gives life. Today, let's take a little extra time to show love and compassion to ourselves and to each other as we walk this difficult path together. Choose the generous word over the snarky one, choose the act of self care over the act of self criticism. Remember that, different as we all are, we are all joined in the most important work that has ever been. Let's take a moment to cherish each other. We are XR, and you are us."

## **23) Blaming Never Helps**

Blaming Never Helps (Thich Nhat Hanh) When you plant a lettuce, if it doesn't grow well, you don't blame the lettuce. You look into the reasons it is not doing well. It may need more nutrients, more water or less sun. You never blame the lettuce. Yet if we have problems with our friends or our



family, we blame the other person. But if we know how to take care of them, they will grow well, like the lettuce.

Blaming has no positive effect at all, nor does trying to persuade using reason and arguments. That is my experience. No blame, no reasoning, no arguments, just understanding. If you understand, and you show that you understand, you can love, and the situation will change.

One day in Paris, I had a lecture about not blaming the lettuce. After the talk, I was doing walking meditation by myself and when I turned the corner of the building, I overheard an eight year old girl telling her mother, "Mommy remember to water me. I am your lettuce." I was so pleased that she had understood my point completely. The I heard her mother reply, "Yes my daughter, and I am your lettuce also. So please don't forget to water me too." Mother and daughter practising together, it was very beautiful.

## **24) The Fragrance of the I am She**

The Fragrance of the I am She

When the Fragrance of the I am She is upon the Wind  
The Bee of the Heart Finds the Flower of it's  
choice And nestles there, caring for no other thing

Kabir - 17th Century Sufi

## **25) Starhawk from The Earth Path**

"We give thanks for all those who are moved, in their lives, to heal and protect the earth, in small ways and large. Blessings on the composters, the gardeners, the breeders of worms and mushrooms, the soil builders, those who cleanse the waters and purify the air, all those who clean up the messes others have made. "Blessings on those who defend trees and who plant trees, who guard the forests and who renew the forests. Blessings on those who heal the grasslands and renew the streams, on those who prevent erosion, who restore the salmon and the fisheries, who guard the healing herbs and who know the lore of the wild plants. "Blessings on those who heal the cities and bring them alive again with excitement and creativity and love. Gratitude and blessings to all who stand against greed, who risk themselves, to those who have bled and been wounded, and to those who have given their lives in service of the earth. "May all the healers of the earth find their own healing. May they be fueled by passionate love for the earth. May they know their fear but not be stopped by fear. May they feel their anger and yet not be ruled by rage. May they honor their grief but not be paralyzed by sorrow. May they transform fear, rage, and grief into compassion and the inspiration to act in service of what they love. "May they find the help, the resources, the courage, the luck, the strength, the love, the health, the joy that they need to do the work. May they all be on the right place, at the right time, in the right way. "May they bring alive a great awakening, open a listening ear to hear the earth's voice, transform imbalance to balance, hate and greed to love. Blessed be the healers of the earth."

~Starhawk from The Earth Path

## **26) Just show up, as you are**

"Just show up, as you are. You don't have to look or feel great. You don't have to be prepared for each challenge or know all the hows of every situation. You don't have to be fearless, or have all the answers, or be 100% ready. Nobody is any of those things. Nobody ever was. It's not about being perfect, at all. You just have to show up, as you are, despite all the objections and insecurities in your mind, despite each and every fear that threatens to hold you back, despite the limitations and criticisms others will place in you. To hell with it all. This is your life, your journey, your adventure, and all it's asking is to show up for it, as you are. That's enough, That's more than enough. That's everything."

Unknown of Facebook

## **27) All we can do in a crisis is try**

The human spirit is an unwavering force that shines brightest in the face of adversity.

When crisis strikes, it is our innate resilience that propels us forward.

Despite the overwhelming challenges that may surround us, we find the strength within ourselves to persevere and adapt.

It's in these moments that we discover the extent of our capabilities, fueled by an unyielding determination to overcome.

Though the road ahead may seem uncertain, the human spirit reminds us that all we can do is try. In the midst of chaos, we rise above, forging connections, offering support, and demonstrating the remarkable power of our collective will to endure and emerge stronger on the other side.

Ned Evans

## **28) Hold onto Hope**

Amidst the challenges of the climate and ecological crisis, let's hold onto hope. Humanity has a remarkable history of overcoming adversity and finding solutions. By working together, embracing innovation, and fostering a deep connection with nature, we can forge a path toward a more harmonious and sustainable world. Every step we take today, no matter how small, brings us closer to a future where nature thrives and generations to come will be grateful for our unwavering determination.

Ned Evans

## **29) Gratitude**

Looking into mental health and wellness this week, I found out more about Gratitude as a practice. I found out that by expressing Gratitude, it allows us to recognise something which we shouldn't take for granted. (It helps us build resilience and not feel bad when something is taken from us, as it wasn't ours by right.) I also found out that Gratitude is best done in detail, really saying what I'm grateful for, so not just "the flowers, my latest book, the sunset ...".

So here is what I'm grateful for today: I'm grateful for the space we make when we come together in XR communities. I'm grateful for the way we build and make bridges in our work, carrying out a

purpose, and strengthening our bonds. I'm grateful that working together helps me overcome "I might do this wrong, I'm afraid to start". I'm grateful for the love and respect I am encouraged to show, and that I receive.

Mariah Huff

### **30) Fear Nothing**

You're a ghost driving a meat-coated skeleton made from stardust, riding a rock, hurtling through space.

Fear Nothing

Boaty Jim

### **31) Pessimistic or Optimistic**

When asked if I am pessimistic or optimistic about the future, my answer is always the same: If you look at the science about what is happening on earth and aren't pessimistic, you don't understand data. But if you meet the people who are working to restore this earth and the lives of the poor, and you aren't optimistic, you haven't got a pulse. What I see everywhere in the world are ordinary people willing to confront despair, power, and incalculable odds in order to restore some semblance of grace, justice, and beauty to this world.

Paul Hawken

### **32) A love like that...lights the whole sky (poem by Hafiz)**

Even after all this time  
The sun never says to the earth,  
"You owe Me."  
Look what happens with  
A love like that,  
It lights the Whole Sky.

### **33) Why Rebel?**

The human conscience needs to be corroborate with the natural world and aligned to it's ethic, furthering a politics of kindness. But a political stance that is the opposite to kindness is on the rise: libertarian fascism with it's triumphal brutality; it's racism and misogyny; the politics that loathes the living world.

Here then, the causes for rebellion: survival and awe; beauty and necessity; grace and grief. There is an uprising of life in rebellion for life, those who are grief struck and furious for the tawny ones, the creatures of feather and fur, demanding that media and governments tell the truth about the emergency we are in, fighting for life in this shared wild home. Only when it is dark enough can you see the stars, and they are lining up now to write rebellion across the skies. Why rebel? Because nature is not a hobby, it is the life on which we depend.

From the book Why Rebel by Jay Griffiths (that got Pickle into XR)

### **34) "Hope" is the thing with feathers**

"Hope" is the thing with feathers -  
That perches in the soul -  
And sings the tune without the words -  
And never stops - at all -

And sweetest -  
in the Gale - is heard -  
And sore must be the storm -  
That could abash the little Bird  
That kept so many warm -

I've heard it in the chilliest land -  
And on the strangest Sea -  
Yet - never - in Extremity, It asked a crumb - of me.

By Emily Dickinson

### **35) Justice as a verb**

Justice is:

- . . . the actions we take
- . . . the choices we make
- . . . the standards we hold ourselves to
- . . . the way we treat people
- . . . the things we care about
- . . . the difference we make for people.
- . . . the opportunities we accept (and turn down)
- . . . doing the right thing, right now.

By reclaiming justice as something that we do, instead of something done to us, it becomes a stronghold in the storm, a guiding light out of the dark. By committing to doing the right thing, here and now, we create for ourselves an internal compass that guides and directs us home.

Ryan Holiday

### **36) Never doubt...**

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; it's the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Mead, anthropologist, 1901-78

### **37) Regroup**

You lend your strength to justice.  
You hold in tears.  
You carry anxiety like an ember on your palm.  
The hungry seas of human affairs churn beneath your boat.  
Come ashore for a day.  
Touch something green.  
Let the whispering life in you speak to nature and find its voice renewed.

a poem by Jarod K Anderson

## **38) Rebellion**

I incite this meeting to rebellion

Emmeline Pankhurst, 1912

## **39) BEANNACHT / BLESSING**

On the day when the weight deadens on your shoulders and you stumble, may the clay dance to balance you. And when your eyes freeze behind the grey window and the ghost of loss gets into you, may a flock of colours, indigo, red, green and azure blue, come to awaken in you a meadow of delight. When the canvas frays in the currach of thought and a stain of ocean blackens beneath you, may there come across the waters a path of yellow moonlight to bring you safely home. May the nourishment of the earth be yours, may the clarity of light be yours, may the fluency of the ocean be yours, may the protection of the ancestors be yours. And so may a slow wind work these words of love around you, an invisible cloak to mind your life

By John O'Donohue

## **40) Anger**

Keep my anger from becoming meanness.  
Keep my sorrow from collapsing into self-pity.  
Keep my heart soft enough to keep breaking.  
Keep my anger turned towards justice, not cruelty.  
Remind me that all of this, every bit of it, is for love.  
Keep me fiercely kind.

~Laura Jean Truman

## **41) Hopeful in bad times**

To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic.  
It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, and kindness.  
What we choose to emphasise in this complex history will determine our lives.

If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something.

If we remember those times and places – and there are so many – where people have behaved magnificently. This gives us the energy to act, and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction.

And if we do act, in however a small way, we don't have to wait for some grand utopian future. The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvellous victory.

Howard Zinn

## **42) It is an important and popular fact...**

"It is an important and popular fact that things are not always what they seem. For instance, on the planet Earth, man had always assumed that he was more intelligent than dolphins because he had achieved so much, the wheel, New York, wars and so on - whilst all the dolphins had ever done was muck about in the water having a good time. But conversely, the dolphins had always believed that they were far more intelligent than man for precisely the same reasons."

Douglas Adams

## **43) Tomorrow**

So, the bad news is, we have to keep going tomorrow. The good news is, we'll keep going with you.

Bored Panda

## **44) Sit for Climate**

We sit in gratitude

For sudden rain on slate grey roofs  
Beating a heavy refrain Clouds swollen like a purple bruise  
Probing fingers bringing life

For ice-sheets, and oceans Maritime winds that sweep across continents  
Bringing dew to the parched mountain  
For the cloud in my teacup

For vast coral reefs  
And swirling blooms of plankton Blue whales, barnacles And the ancient song of the orca

For rainforests and a million unnamed species  
For the soil on my boots teeming with unseen life We sit in gratitude. For the whole damn lot

We sit to say, no more

To endless extraction To Seared landscapes and foul run-off  
To the cost born by the young in far off places And at home

To the bloated consumption of the few That leaves a child too drawn and weak To flick away flies  
From crusted cheeks

To the solitary farmer  
Standing sentinel over threatened fields  
Playing Canute  
To the tendrils of an angry emboldened sea

To denial, delay and debate That challenges the inferno we all see  
And feel and know in our bones The gathering storm

To the coloniser Whose boots still leave prints and shape the world With debt and dollars and cash  
crops of coffee  
We say, No more

And we sit in hope

Hope that change is coming, that there is still time That compassion, connection and reason will  
prevail And humanity can grow and learn And maybe then nature can flower and with it her  
children.

Carl XR Newark

## **45) Not - by Erin Hanson**

You are not your age, nor the size of clothes you wear,  
You are not a weight, or the color of your hair.  
You are not your name, or the dimples in your cheeks.  
You are all the books you read, and all the words you speak.  
You are your croaky morning voice, and the smiles you try to hide.  
You're the sweetness in your laughter, and every tear you've cried.  
You're the songs you sing so loudly when you know you're all alone.  
You're the places that you've been to, and the one that you call home.  
You're the things that you believe in, and the people whom you love.  
You're the photos in your bedroom, and the future you dream of.  
You're made of so much beauty, but it seems that you forgot  
When you decided that you were defined by all the things you're not.

## **46) It's not that life is short - it's that we waste a lot of it.**

We watch our money.  
We protect our property.

Yet we fritter away the most valuable of our resources, the most finite of them—the one thing we can never get back, that they aren't making any more of.  
The time that passes, belongs to death.  
It is gone forever, never to return.  
Once a dawn happens, it is gone to you forever.  
Once a day ends, it's done for you for all time.

Act accordingly.  
Protect your calendar accordingly.  
Say "No" accordingly.  
Do it now...before it's too late.  
Memento Mori

Seneca

## **47) Patience visited me**

Patience visited me  
And it reminded me  
That good things take time to come to fruition  
And grow slowly with stability

Peace visited me  
And it reminded me  
That I may remain calm through the storms of life  
Regardless of the chaos surrounding me

Hope visited me  
And it reminded me  
That better times lay ahead  
And it would always be there to guide and uplift me

Humility visited me  
And it reminded me  
That I may achieve it  
Not by trying to shrink myself and make myself less  
But by focusing on serving the world and uplifting those around me

Kindness visited me  
And it reminded me  
To be more gentle, forgiving and compassionate toward myself  
And those surrounding me

Confidence visited me  
And it reminded me  
To not conceal or suppress my gifts and talents



In order to make others feel more comfortable  
But to embrace what makes me me

Focus visited me  
And it reminded me  
That other people's insecurities and judgements about me  
Are not my problem  
And I should redirect my attention  
From others back to me

Freedom visited me  
And it reminded me  
That no one has control over my mindset, thoughts and wellbeing  
But me

And love visited me  
And it reminded me  
That I need not search for it in others  
As it lies within me.

✍️ Tahlia Hunter

## 48) Girls

there is power in being a girl  
but there's also sadness  
struggle  
anger  
uncertainty  
and most of the time it's hard to find strength in being a girl  
except in knowing that the sisterhood is rising,  
we're coming,  
a force to be reckoned with  
and nothing to stop us

there is power in being a girl  
and there is also inevitability

✍️ Kimi Sanchez

## 49) Chris Packham on Trump's re-election



**Chris Packham** ✓  
@ChrisGPackham

**Follow**

Things have just got a lot more difficult . Here's what I think . I had no control over what just happened . None . But I do have control over how I will react to it . And I am not going to give up on the beautiful and the good , the grip on my dreams just got tighter .



## 50) A quote from Thomas Merton

1915-1968 (American Trappist monk, writer, theologian, mystic, poet, social activist and scholar of comparative religion)

"There is a pervasive form of contemporary violence to which the idealist most easily succumbs: activism and overwork. The rush and pressure of modern life are a form, perhaps the most

common form, of its innate violence.

To allow oneself to be carried away by a multitude of conflicting concerns, to surrender to too many demands, to commit oneself to too many projects, to want to help everyone in everything, is to succumb to violence.

The frenzy of our activism neutralizes our work for peace. It destroys our own inner capacity for peace. It destroys the fruitfulness of our own work, because it kills the root of inner wisdom which makes work fruitful."

## **51) Keep Telling of Gaza**

To love the land,  
Even when its burnt.  
To love freedom,  
Even when it looks impossible.  
To love justice,  
Even when its far away.  
To love the old house,  
Even when its just rubble....  
Such is to practice love.  
In a loveless world, ...Daily.

From Poet Khawla Badwan

<https://sidhe-press.eu/books/keep-telling-of-gaza/>

## **52) Pessimism is for Lightweights**

Think of those that marched this road before  
And those that will march here in years to come  
The road in shadow and the road in the sun  
The road before us and the road all done  
History is watching us and what will we become

This road is all flags and milestones  
Immigrant blood and sweat and tears  
Built this city, built this country  
Made this road last all these years

This road is made of protest  
And those not permitted to vote  
And those that are still fighting to speak  
With a boot stamping on their throat

There is power and strength in optimism  
To have faith and to stay true to you  
Because if you can look in the mirror

And have belief and promise you  
Will share wonder in living things  
Beauty, dreams, books and art  
Love your neighbour and be kind  
And have an open heart

Then you're already winning at living  
You speak up, you show up and stand tall  
It's silence that is complicit  
It's apathy that hurts us all

Pessimism is for lightweights  
There is no straight white line  
It's the bumps and curves and obstacles  
That make this road yours and mine

Pessimism is for lightweights  
This road was never easy and straight  
And living is all about living alive and lively  
And love will conquer hate.

Salena Godden

## **53) Do it. Do what you can**

It could fail. It could go badly. It could be harder than you expect. It could.

But how will you know? How will you know until you start?

That's the one thing all fools do, Seneca said. They delay to start. They put it off. They let their fear or their laziness win. This is where two essential Stoic virtues come in: Courage and Discipline. We have to be brave enough to push past our fears. We have to be strong enough to will ourselves to do what needs to be done.

And perhaps this is also where a third virtue comes in: Justice. What you're doing might be important. It could make a real difference. It could fail...but it could also help people. And here you are putting it off. Here you are taking counsel of your fears, letting the resistance win. This is not without cost...to yourself and to others.

Don't be afraid to start. Don't put it off any longer.

Do it. Do what you can. Do good.

## **54) Joy Chose You**

Joy does not arrive with a fanfare on a red carpet strewn with the flowers of a perfect life

joy sneaks in as you pour a cup of coffee watching the sun hit your favourite tree just right

and you usher joy away because you are not ready for her,

your house is not as it should be for such a distinguished guest

But joy, you see, cares nothing for your messy home or your bank balance or your waistline

joy is supposed to slither through the cracks of your imperfect life

that's how joy works  
you cannot truly invite her  
you can only be ready when she appears  
and hug her with meaning  
because in this very moment joy chose you.

## **55) Des's Citizens' Assembly Vision**

Let's take a moment to close our eyes and imagine something ... it's six months from now ... you're out and about ... but you're keen to get home to watch the news ... because today's the day that the recommendations of the UK-wide Citizens Assembly are being announced ... five hundred of your fellow citizens have taken part in the assembly which has run over the last eight weekends ... every TV station, every news channel, every media outlet is reporting on this ... the whole country ... indeed the entire world is watching ... because your fellow citizens are about to announce the most sweeping raft of changes to how we live our daily life in human history ... these social and environmental changes represent the profoundly powerful solutions that we need to overcome the ecological and climate emergency that we face ... they are fair, far reaching and embody justice, integrity and regeneration ... and there has been unanimous support for these changes amongst the participants in the assembly and the wider public ... the Government is now tasked with implementing these changes and they begin to do so with immediate effect ... that's one vision of how a Citizens Assembly might work ... help us make it happen.

## **56) Today is here**

It's not that we're never going to do it.  
It's not that we don't plan to do it.  
It's not that we don't understand that time is passing.  
It's that we say we're going to do it tomorrow.  
It's that we think we still have many more tomorrows.

And you know what? We might! Most of the time, we're right.

One thing we can say for certain is that eventually, inevitably, some day we will not.  
When will that be? We don't know.  
It could be right now though.

We must act and prioritize accordingly.  
We should not put important things off.  
We should not take things for granted.  
We should not presume a future, none of us are entitled to tomorrow.

Today though, is here. It is ours.  
Will we use it?

## **57) On forgetting**

I've learned that people will forget what you said,  
people will forget what you did,  
but people will never forget how you made them feel.

-Maya Angelou

## **58) On compassion**

Whenever someone has done wrong by you, immediately consider what notion of good or evil they had in doing it. For when you see that, you'll feel compassion, instead of astonishment or rage. For you may yourself have the same notions of good and evil, or similar ones, in which case you'll make an allowance for what they've done. But if you no longer hold the same notions, you'll be more readily gracious for their error. —MARCUS AURELIUS, MEDITATIONS, 7.26

## **59) Stand very still**

If you stand very still  
In the heart of the woods  
You will hear many  
Wonderful things  
The snap of a twig  
And the wind in the trees  
And the whir of invisible wings

If you stand very still  
In the turmoil of life  
And you wait for a voice from within  
You will be led to the path  
Of wisdom and peace  
In a world of chaos and din

If you stand very still  
And hold on to your faith  
You will get all the help that you ask  
And you will draw from the silence  
The things that you need  
Hope and Courage  
And strength for your task.

Poem by Patience Strong

## **60) The bird that sings**

The next time you refuse to sing because you'll never fill a stadium  
or decline the joy of dance for fear of looking ridiculous  
or you resist risking the new adventure because you're not entirely ready

or you dim your shine because you're not completely healed and whole  
the next time you hold yourself suspect because you're not entirely qualified

just remember

a bird doesn't sing because it's talented a bird sings because it has a song  
the moon doesn't only shine when it's whole  
it can show up with a single sliver of itself and still light an entire night sky

show up. sing. shine.

the world needs you as you are

Words by Angi Sullins

## **61) This body is a long-term rental**

This body is a long-term rental  
my skin is on a 70-year lease  
someday my bones will be a fossil ~ and my atoms will be a breeze  
My hair is here for a quick visit  
This brain won't linger too long  
My heartbeats are a thunderstorm ~ my breaths are a love song  
Our lives are a campfire spark as we blaze against the night  
Our existence is a quick "crack" ~ before we fall back into the light  
Since we are here for just a single blink we can't waste time fearing the grave

Embrace the moment, my sweet mayfly

'Cause life isn't the ocean - it's the wave.

~ John Roedel

## **62) The Road Not Taken**

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.  
< Robert Frost

## **63) Where Blackcap sings, Hope remains**

(Lakenheath Peace Camp 2025 poem)

Blackcap sings, beneath the roar of destruction.  
Shelduck nest under the rumble of obliteration.  
Hare in fear flees,  
Of courser and fox,  
Yet overhead potential armageddon flies.

Oh foolish men,  
For men it mainly is,  
Why amidst this greening and growing,  
Are thee planning all to dust return?  
Not the dust of life anew and star flung possibility.  
No, the dust of years of warp and life unweaving.

In the Spring promise,  
And the call to life.  
Evil intention and bow to power.  
Not the giving, the sharing, the humble serving,  
Wherein life is renewed and sustained.

We gather here in witness,  
And fellowship.  
Frail bodies and strong hearts,  
Trusting, though in a world of war,  
And rumour of war,  
That love may find a way through,  
And hope, though foolish,  
Is everlasting.

David Bagott (Christian Climate Action)



## 64 Attend to your corner

According to an old Native American legend, one day there was a big fire in the forest.

All the animals fled in terror in all directions, because it was a very violent fire.

Suddenly, the jaguar saw a hummingbird pass over his head, but in the opposite direction. The hummingbird flew towards the fire! Whatever happened, he wouldn't stop.

Moments later, the jaguar saw him pass again, this time in the same direction as the jaguar was walking. He could observe this coming and going, until he decided to ask the bird about it, because it seemed very bizarre behavior.

"What are you doing, hummingbird?" he asked.

"I am going to the lake," he answered, "I drink water with my beak and throw it on the fire to extinguish it."

The jaguar laughed. 'Are you crazy? Do you really think that you can put out that big fire on your own with your very small beak?'

'No,' said the hummingbird, 'I know I can't. But the forest is my home. It feeds me, it shelters me and my family. I am very grateful for that. And I help the forest grow by pollinating its flowers. I am part of her and the forest is part of me. I know I can't put out the fire, but I must do my part.'

At that moment, the forest spirits, who listened to the hummingbird, were moved by the bird and its devotion to the forest, miraculously they sent a torrential downpour, which put an end to the great fire.

The Native American grandmothers would occasionally tell this story to their grandchildren, then conclude with, "Do you want to attract miracles into your life? Do your part."

"You have no responsibility to save the world or find the solutions to all problems—but to attend to your particular personal corner of the universe. As each person does that, the world saves itself."

• author unknown

## 65) Slowing Down (By Leyla Aylin)

How brave you are for slowing down. For not finishing that to-do list.

How courageous you are for not crossing that finish line, because your body said "enough."

How fearless you are for choosing the quiet of your soul over those voices driving you always towards more.

It is truly an act of courage and rebellion to do any such thing, in a world demanding you resist your own self, your own rhythm, your own soul.

### full length version

How brave you are for slowing down. For not finishing that to-do list.

How courageous you are for not crossing that finish line, because your body said "enough."

How fearless you are for choosing the quiet of your soul over those voices driving you always towards more.

How bold, how rebellious -

You, out there,

honouring your own natural rhythm,

going against the culture's breakneck speed.

We tend to make heroes of those hungry with ambition,  
relentlessly doing, producing always more.

We applaud those who refuse to stop or rest. Who push themselves so hard in the name of  
achievement, that they sacrifice their body and soul and heart in the process.

We celebrate those who are ill or ageing but never show it, never slow down, never reveal a  
moment of vulnerability.

This drivenness can be heroic, at times. It can be necessary for our survival or the greater  
good.

But,

I want to make heroes of those who slow down.

I want to make heroes of those who listen to their bodies, who do not strive for more than what  
the soul truly needs.

I want to make heroes of those who do not force or push, but surrender to each moment as it  
opens.

I want to applaud those who may not be driven towards success as we know it, but instead are  
nurturing something deep and subtle and needed.

I want to celebrate those brave enough to cease all doing, even for a second, and sit with the  
ache in their hearts. A task many find harder than summiting the highest peak.

I want to make heroes of those who honour their limitations. Who are unable to keep up with  
the busy-ness of our times, yet show up to each profound, necessary moment.

It is truly an act of courage and rebellion to do any such thing, in a world demanding you resist  
your own self, your own rhythm, your own soul.

And the paradox is, that often when we cease our incessant doing, even for a minute, and listen  
to that quiet voice within, we discover what it is we absolutely must do, and what instead can  
fall away.

We finally hear the call towards what serves our soul, and what then will serve the world.

Nothing more, nothing less.

A hero is simply someone brave.

So come, be softly brave.

Be a new, quieter kind of hero.

Few may applaud, it's true, but your soul certainly will.

## **66) For when people ask (by Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer)**

I want a word that means  
okay and not okay,  
more than that: a word that means  
devastated and stunned with joy.

I want the word that says  
I feel it all, all at once.

The heart is not like a songbird  
singing only one note at a time,  
more like a Tuvan throat singer

able to sing both a drone  
and simultaneously  
two or three harmonics high above it—  
a sound, the Tuvans say,  
that gives the impression  
of the wind swirling among rocks.  
The heart understands swirl,  
how the churning of opposite feelings  
weaves through us like an insistent breeze  
leads us wordlessly deeper back into ourselves,  
and blesses us with paradox  
so that we might walk more openly  
into this world so rife with devastation,  
this world so ripe with joy.

Download page as a [Google doc](#) here.

# Creating Intentional Cultures

## Group agreements

These allow us to understand our shared values as a team and how we would like to work together. They set expectations for how we choose to interact and are key to building a healthy and resilient team culture.

By creating some group agreements we are explicitly saying “this is how we choose to work.” They can be around how meetings are held, how decisions are made, how we choose to interact etc.

Here are some example Group Agreements:

- This is a safe sober space
- We consider W.A.I.T – Why Am I Talking – before we speak
- We speak from our roles
- We use hand signals to help facilitate conversations

Having clear and explicit group agreements is a great tool for inclusivity. It allows anyone to look at those agreements and ask themselves “Is this a psychologically safe space for me to step into?”

The explicit nature of these agreements can help neurodivergent people better understand the social norms of the space. And often the group agreements we put into place are there so we can use them to better mitigate issues around power in groups.

## Creating a group agreement

Suggested steps to creating and getting consent for a group agreements:

- **Solo** - Ask everyone present to reflect for 3 mins on what would make the space safer and easier to engage with. Remember meetings should be fun and productive.
- **Pairs** - Ask participants to pair up and compare what they came up with, combining any similar suggestions.
- **Group** - Go around the group and ask people to read out one of their suggestions and why it is important to them. Continue around the group aiming to not repeat ones already stated until everyone has come to the bottom of their list. Note these somewhere everyone can see.
- **Clarify** - Give space for anyone to ask any questions so that everyone full understands the suggestions as written.
- **Reaction** - Create space for everyone to react to the suggestions. Take down any controversial ones to be reworded or reworked for next time. It's okay if some people have no reaction.
- **Consent** - For each suggestion hold it up to the group and ask if everyone consents to have this as a Group Agreement. If there are objections, based on a tangible issue it will

cause, either try to reword the suggestion or put it down for another time. The suggestions that get consent from everyone present become your group agreements.

# Tension Shifting Session

The facilitator needs to read the facilitation tips before the session.

**Pre meeting** - Agree the facilitator and notetaker.

## Check-ins (5 mins)

Could be one thing you're grateful for, how are you feeling, and what would make it easier for you to be present in this meeting today

## Regenerative cultures Reminder

Ask if someone wants to share something that has been moving them recently. If no one is moved to share something: go with a Regenerative Cultures reminder.

## Updates

Before diving into the tension shifting meeting, ask if there are mission critical updates for the group. Facilitation Tip: don't let it become a discussion about each project. This is just for essential updates only!

## Feedback & Tension Shifting

Facilitation Tip: explain the importance of feedback to learning how we can do our work better.

## Prepare for shifting

- **Check** openness for feedback (1 min)
  - Show of fingers 1-5, how available are you to receive feedback?
- **Journal** any tensions since the last tension shifting session individually (4 min)
  - **Identify** any that emerge as most significant.
  - People to put their 1 major tension on a shared google doc (as a record of tensions emerging)
- **Read** through each other's tensions (2min)
- **Internal mood checker** - supported by the facilitator (5 min)
- **Sort** the priorities (4 min) - The facilitator sorts tensions in order of significance (example of categories below):
  - Emergency / High Intensity
  - Regarding group functioning & relationship with whole group
  - Individualised & Interpersonal Tensions
  - -> **Check Consent** to agree on priorities

## Shift Tension

- **Understand** and hear the person's tension
  - Ask person to share more
  - Practice Active Listening (mirroring what has been heard)
  - Give space for clarifying questions
  - Try to hear the person
- **Explore** possibilities for shifting
  - Brainstorm: What ideas might meet the needs?
  - Variety of possibilities
- **Decide** next steps with your normal decision making process
- **Check** whether tension feels shifted

Facilitation Tip: Repeat if there is time for a second or third tension

## Recap conclusions & celebrate

- Review APs & Agreements
- Move any leftover tensions to the next Tension Shifting session (agree when this will be)
- Does anyone need any support?
- Celebrate

## Check Out (5 mins)

- Round of: How everyone is feeling at the end of the meeting?

# Healthy Teams Workshop

This workshop is designed to be used as a tool by any team that wants to run a health check on the way their team is functioning.

It focusses on both task and maintenance. Task means getting stuff done. Do you achieve your goals? Maintenance means how you get stuff done eg: looking after the team, the people in it and the systems and processes that keep the team alive and developing. Is everyone on board with the Principles and Values? Do they understand where the team fits in the whole movement and where they fit in the team? Are they comfortable enough and enabled to be brave and step out of their comfort zone? Are there any issues under the surface that need to be addressed?

The workshop is designed to be flexible. It can be done as a whole at one sitting or it can be broken up into several different activities which can stand alone. It can be done in a face-to-face setting or online. One or two team members can facilitate. Someone should take notes. A follow-up meeting may be needed to decide on actions arising from the workshop.

Facilitators may need to have available XR Principles and Values and relevant team documents such as mandate, agreed strategy, and designated roles.

## 1. Welcome to the Workshop

Regenerative Culture Reminder, Lighting the Children's Fire,

**Check-in go round:** (Names, pronouns, roles, a word or animal that conveys how each person is feeling)

Is there anything anyone needs to help them participate?

**Benefits:** gives everyone a chance to become present, remember what is important and ask for anything they need, establishes a brave space.

## 2. Purpose of the Workshop

A time to pause and reflect together, review how it is going, check if there is anything you need to change. It looks at group maintenance as well as task performance. It gives everyone an opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings about your team working, identify team strengths, weaknesses and blind spots, issues to be addressed in the future.

**Benefits:** clarifies that this workshop is for everyone to contribute to improving team working, identifying rather than solving any problems (this is done as a follow up).



### 3. Individual extended Check-In: Life-story in 3 minutes: “How I got to this point”

A facilitator demonstrates the process, picking out key factors that led to them being in this team at this time. Strictly timed.

**Breakout rooms.** Small groups so that everyone gets three minutes to tell their story.

**Feedback to full meeting:** respect confidentiality, feedback on how that exercise was for you, what did you learn about yourself, any insights or discomfort. No note-taking.

**Benefits:** everyone is valued equally, gives a chance to get to know others as people with lives and history outside XR, reminds individuals of their own motivation, what they believe is important, why they are in this team.

### 4. Principles and Values

Facilitator displays or shares copy of XR Principles and Values

- Which ones shine through in this team?
- Which ones get overlooked?

Responses are recorded eg in the meeting chat.

**Benefits:** reminder of XR Principles and Values and their relevance to healthy team working. In every team there will be differences of opinions, views, styles, personalities, energy etc. That is healthy. Principles and Values are different. Shared values play a major part in holding a team together.

### 5. Mandate and Strategy

Facilitator displays the team’s mandate or purpose, agreed strategy and the designated roles within the team.

**Discussion:** Have you looked at this recently? (*wavy hand responses*) How does this fit together? Are there gaps?

- Everyone considers what they bring to the team and how that contributes to the team’s performance of its task.
- What are the team’s current priorities?
- Does anything need updating?

Responses to these questions are recorded.

**Benefit:** reminder of team’s responsibilities in the Self Organising System, opportunity to review how well the written purpose fits with team members’ sense of direction and commitment.

## 6. Successes

Where has the team done well, either in tasks or in team maintenance?

Brainstorm all the successes, big and small.

Responses are recorded. We use a copy of this [Gathering Successes](#) Document.

**Benefits:** recalling occasions when the team did well brings gratitude, joy and hope and increases motivation to work together.

## 7. Issues

What has not gone so well? No team is perfect. It's normal to have some slips and failings. If they are noted everyone can learn from them.

Give everyone an opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings citing specific examples and using the framework:

- I observed or I noticed....
- I felt.....
- I needed.....

This is not a time (yet) for answering or problem solving.

Responses are noted

**Benefits:** everyone is listened to equally, gives an opportunity for any disappointment or dissatisfaction to be voiced in a non-violent way and acknowledged without blaming.

## 8. Identifying the roots of issues and next steps

**Discussion:** Think about what these issues mean about the way the team works. Are there themes or common threads?

Looking at the successes and issues, the Principles and Values and the documented purpose of the team, where are the strengths and where are the gaps, blind-spots or weaknesses?

- What does the team need to work on?
- Think about what you might do differently as a result of the learning from this workshop.
- How will you go about making this shift?
- What help and support do you need and where will you find it?

**Next steps:** who will take the lead in moving forward? When? How?

## 9. Closing

Check-out go round

- Say one thing you are taking away from this workshop.

Extinguish the Children's Fire.

# Exit Process

## Emergency Summary

Help I need to step back!

**Step 1** Tell your Coordinator.

**Step 2** Fill out [This Doc](#) to help your team pick up where you left off.

**Step 3** Breathe.

We are all volunteers in XR. This comes with some benefits and also some drawbacks. The benefits are clear and include the ability for us to step up when we have time and step back when our circumstances change. We can tailor the time we give to suit our lives, give the things we want to give, and hold back as much as we need for ourselves. There are a lot of aspects to our volunteer structure that are inherently regenerative in nature: after all, we are all crew, we are a family.

However, sometimes we will offer to do things that take much longer than we had expected, or our other responsibilities change after we step up to be a part of a project. There are often conflicting responsibilities for volunteer teams, and this can mean that the team membership changes a lot, or that there are some months where the team just doesn't have the capacity to meet its goals.

We never want to blame our individual volunteers for this. It is not our fault when our situations change. However, we want to make sure that we can change our commitment to XR with the least impact on our teams.

Below are two suggested processes to guide Rebels in stepping back smoothly.

## The Gradual Change of Focus

We often step into a team or role in XR to work on a specific project or for a fixed term. As the project or term ends, we may want to change what we are working on or move to another project. We don't want to leave the role suddenly but we do want to transition our attentions to elsewhere.

1. **Let your Coordinators know you plan to change focus.** It is useful to give as much warning as possible if you plan to move from your team, because they can then redistribute tasks in your absence. But also make a firm end date for yourself - it is all too common for there to be that one last thing to clear up and it could take months for a clean separation! Don't be afraid to leave some things unfinished.
2. **Find your new home.** If you don't already know what you want to dive into next then check out the Volunteer Website. You may have used this when you joined XR but it is also a great way to see where help is needed in different parts of the movement.

3. **Find your replacement if necessary.** If your team or project is continuing without you, it would really help if you can help to find someone to replace you. This may mean holding an election for your role or onboarding a new Rebel. Don't be daunted by finding someone new - we can help!

#### 5 Steps to finding a New Rebel:

1. Write up a short role/project description.
2. Ask your integrator or IC to post it on the Volunteer Website.
3. Once you get a response, reach out to them for a chat, send them the **Rebel Starter Pack** and give them a run down of the project.
4. Introduce the new Rebel to your team and let them shadow you for a week or two so then can slowly pick up the role.
5. Make sure you step back at the date you had planned. If possible, stay in contact with your replacement when they need help but make sure they know that the role is now theirs and they should fly.

4. **Wrap up your loose ends.** Take an hour or so to track down the loose ends that you will leave to your team (or teams). This will not only help your team in picking up where you left off but it will also give you a sense of rounding off so that you don't have to worry while your mind is needed elsewhere.

#### Consider:

- Making note of conversations you were having;
- Linking to any documents you were working on;
- Copying over your to do list and any unfinished action points or to-dos;
- Adding a couple of sentences on what your goal for the next few weeks was going to be.

This **template loose-ends document** may be useful.

5. **Say goodbye to your team.** Plan a small social or activity for your team to round off your time with them. We recommend Kumospace to bring larger teams together in a natural mingling way, or an intimate Zoom drinks party. Or you can host an activity, play a game or a gratitude sharing space.
6. **Stay in contact.** XR works due to our interconnectivity. In your new role you won't only bring yourself but you'll also bring your experience and knowledge of your previous teams. Use it. Make connections, start collaborations and most of all have fun!

## The Swift Retreat

Sometimes the need to step back comes quickly and unexpectedly due to family responsibilities, mental health, job applications or many other things. Here is a roadmap for a swift exit which doesn't leave your team in the lurch.

1. **Let your Coordinators know that you need to step back.** Ideally give them a date (end of the week, after the next meeting etc.) but, if you need to go instantly, that is also okay. The important thing is that your team knows to not expect you to continue doing the work you had been.
2. **Compile your loose ends.** Take an hour or so to track down the loose ends that you will leave to your team (or teams). This will not only help your team in picking up where you left off but it will also give you a sense of rounding off so that you don't have to worry while your mind is needed elsewhere.

#### Consider:

- Making note of conversations you were having;
- Linking to any documents you were working on;
- Copying over your to do list and any unfinished action points or to-dos;
- Adding a couple of sentences on what your goal for the next few weeks was going to be.

This [template loose-ends document](#) may be useful.

3. **Set up auto replies.** On your Mattermost or your XR email address set up an auto reply saying that you have stepped back and who to contact instead. This will allow any contacts to connect with your team once you've gone. Consider writing a short message in a document that you can copy into your texts or emails to use if someone contacts you from XR but you cannot set up a generic auto reply for that account. For example:

Hi Rebel,  
I'm sorry but I have had to step back from my XR work for the time being. If your question is about X please forward it to rebel1@example.com and if it is about Y then connect to rebel2@example.com.  
Love & Rage,  
Rebellina

4. **Take a breath.** You have now done everything to help your team continue the work without you. Thank you! Take a moment to yourself to reflect on the amazing things you have done with XR and don't be surprised if a few Rebels reach out in the coming days to say thank you. Come back when you are ready or good luck in the next adventure!