Self care - Introduction

> In many shamanic societies, if you came to a medicine person
> complaining of being disheartened, dispirited or depressed,
> They would ask four questions:
> When did you stop dancing?
> When did you stop singing?
> When did you stop being enchanted by stories?
> When did you stop being comforted by
> The sweet territory of silence?
>
> — Gabrielle Roth

As a vital part of the XR Movement ecosystem it is important that we look after ourselves and our needs. As part of a Non Violent Action movement we may choose to take certain risks and be prepared to endure discomfort sometimes, even imprisonment, but love and care rather than self-sacrifice is a wiser goal of our activism. If we do not hold a balance between the individual and the group in mind, we may end up exhausted, or burnt-out or resentful and no longer a fully functioning part of the network of relationships that make up the movement.

When we feel furious, fearful or heart broken about the damage being wreaked on our planet and about the harm and potential harm on loved ones human and non-human; our nervous systems' can drive us to a wish to take the most extreme action in response. This is part of the flight or fight response, it is a very natural reaction to our emotional state and to a sense of urgency. Of course urgency is part of the picture, but if we make a decision solely from this view point we narrow our perspective and will not have access to the full picture of our experience or the consequences of our actions.

It can be helpful to be aware of our motivations to take on roles or take actions. Often our histories can leave us with characteristic habits of pleasing or serving others, being the best, fitting in, rebelling against authority etc. These stories we hold about ourselves and our place in the world may have helped us thrive in challenging circumstances and can still be very motivating. However, they can lead us to behave in ways that fit an old story of our life rather than being the wisest approach to the present situation.

It is vital that we adopt practices and behaviours that support both our wellbeing and energetic engagement and our self-awareness.



> Peace-making doesn’t mean passivity. It is the activity of interrupting injustice without mirroring injustice, the art of disarming evil without destroying the evildoer, **the art of finding a third way which is neither fight nor flight** [...] It is about a revolution of love that is big enough to set both the oppressed and the oppressors free.
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> Shane Claiborne