

Introduction to Resilience

What is a Regenerative Culture?

Creating cultures which are healthy, resilient and adaptable.

Regenerative cultures are present in every bit of Extinction Rebellion and on every level. We have several strategies including encouraging the buddy system within affinity groups, check-ins, and certain meeting practices designed to allow meetings to go well and support our whole selves. We also encourage emotional debrief after actions, and it's the responsibility of affinity group/regenerative culture coordinators to organise this and ensure it happens!

Because we're experimenting, we also allow for imperfection and mistakes, giving space to unfamiliar ideas, even if we think they might fail. Failure indicates daring – trying to push beyond our limits into spaces that appear to be impossible. We all get stressed and are all volunteers with lives outside of our activist organisations. As such, it's important to practice empathy, think and feel into other people's shoes, recognise there are multiple competing pressures on all of us.

It's also important for the community to be seen as having a legitimate process to make decisions, and as with complex networks that have lots of interlocking/interconnected parts, it can take time to go through a process with legitimacy. Therefore, we encourage patience for other people and groups.

NVDA + Extinction Rebellion + the living support of our Regenerative Cultures = “The most fun and meaningful thing we could do with our lives. Changing ourselves and our togetherness, as we change the bigger picture. Join us as we figure this out – our great adventure”.

The rest of this document signposts some tools and practices for ways to look after yourself, each other, and to embody Regenerative Cultures, and we encourage you to read this in your own time. Extinction Rebellion also offers training and tutorials in these areas.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

We all have our own tools and resources to help support us in these different areas. Part of taking care of ourselves is reflecting on our capacity and pre-existing physical, emotional, mental, lifestyle situation as we enter into actions. To do this we need to take Personal Responsibility and continuously ‘track’ ourselves; being aware of our tendencies in regards to:

- How much do work we take on within our activist organisations? For example, Extinction Rebellion is built upon autonomy and holacracy (self organization and de-centralisation), so we get to choose our level of involvement.
- The feelings, judgements, desires, and expectations we bring with us. How do we project these onto our fellow activists.
- The effect of societal conditioning on us. For example, the school system can instil in us the idea that there is always someone else in charge of our autonomy (we may carry negative associations around people in “leadership” roles) - we need to own this, not be ashamed of it and not be dictated to by it.
- Our privilege. Getting to choose to engage in direct action/organising for system change is a privilege in itself. What other privileges do we have dependent upon our gender, where we come from, our class, the different colours and shades of our skin? As people who live in a nation that has accumulated wealth and resources through violence and oppression, how do we grieve this, sit with this and continue to bring awareness into our lives and actions.
- Get to know your ‘edges’. Where do you struggle? Where are you afraid? Then you can make an informed decision on how/when to challenge yourself.
- Get confident in your NO’s and slow down your YES’s. It can be easy to get swept up in the moment. Take your time, say you’ll think about it. No rush! You’ll be more sustainable if you are realistic about what you can take on.
- Don’t be ashamed if you do take on too much. Instead, let someone else know you anticipated being able to do more, and give the task back to the group or get someone else to do it.

We offer this document, as well as many others and various ‘signposts’ to other resources, in order to support its members in engaging sustainably and with awareness, however Extinction Rebellion has a culture of self-responsibility and ‘doing the inner-work’ and encourages constructive feedback across the board.

NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION

In order to feedback in the most worthwhile way some aspects of Non-Violent Communication (NVC) can be useful:

- Expressing how ‘I’ am without criticism or judgement.
- Receiving feedback empathically without jumping to the defence.
- Expressing observations instead of evaluations - what do you think you are hearing the other person say/do vs. what you think that person’s actions says about them.
- Owning how you feel in relation to your observations and the stories that are activated in your head when you experience them.
- Stating your own needs/values without asking something of others to make you feel better.
- Clearly requesting specific, concrete actions that would enrich your life, without demanding.

For example “When I hear ..., I feel ..., because I need/value ..., would you be willing to...?” And we can use these tools to mirror back to people in our network.
