

Personas

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People you may meet and people you may be

No two people are the same, but we can define broad groups of people who comment negatively about XR on social media, and look at their motivations and how to deal with each in a positive and productive way.

- **Edgelord.** Contrary people, troublemakers, winders uppers. Their ambition is to provoke reaction. This person uses both sides' talking points. Debating an Edgelord seems pointless BUT it's still worth keeping them busy. Time spent arguing means no harm elsewhere. Ideally via direct message to keep toxic discussion away from everyone else.
- **Tabloid Talking-Point Talker.** This person is absorbed in talking points against XR or climate change. It's easy to get sucked into an argument throwing cliches at each other. Surprise them: listen. Ask questions about why they feel the way they do instead of trying to win logically. Nobody (except maybe a well trained scientist) ever changed their mind because of a logical argument. Find common points and be sympathetic to their concerns. They may be a future ally.
- **Hypocrite Hunter.** This person will find a way in which the environmentalist is flawed and use that as an excuse to dismiss their message. This may well be a sign of an underlying sense of shame or guilt. They find flaws in the halos of people taking action to excuse themselves for doing nothing.
- **Nihilist / Climate black-pilled.** This person is dealing with the truth about the climate crisis with fatalism. They ask why bother, it's too late already what about CHINA? And is humanity dying out even such a bad thing?

[Click to read a rebel's comment...](#)

“ I felt like this until seeing XR actually start to shift public opinion. 100 years ago women couldn't vote and “right thinking” people thought that was a good thing. There's still a huge range of possible futures, and it's worth fighting now to avoid the worst case scenarios. We can slow the speed the ship sinks and buy future generations time to act. If you don't like what humans are doing, hopefully we can agree that it's still not good for billions to have their lives cut short by war or food or water shortages.

- **The Keyboard Warrior.** This person is on a mission to discredit XR or climate change science. They Cut-paste the same long statement again in many threads. They might even be, in rare cases, paid opposition. They are not worth engaging directly, but may give an opportunity for XR members to look good in responding. Remember that you are not just responding to the comment but for the benefit of other people reading the thread.
- **Single Issue Soldier.** This person only cares about one thread of the broad climate and environmental issues and want XR to focus on that over everything else. They are tricky as they are potential allies but need to respect XR's mission and principles. Eg. Chem Trails, 5G rollout, animal rights, over-population or conspiracy theories.
- **The Contrarian.** This person has a knee-jerk disbelief in climate science because it is becoming accepted by the mainstream. This person is similar to the talking point person, however they are unlikely to be convinced by quoting facts and figures. It may be useful to others watching to counter their misinformation, but resist getting sucked in.
- **Concerned Citizen.** This person has honest questions or concerns about how XR operates. Very much a possible future ally or even activist if handled well. XR is still a new movement and many people still haven't made up their minds what to make of it.

How people emotionally process the climate crisis

In many ways the way people react to the crisis are similar to how people cope with change or grief. Realising this can help you have empathy (understanding how they feel) and compassion (wanting to help them with their suffering) for some of the toxic ways people talk to and about us. These help explain some of the personas described above.

- **Denial** - it's comforting to decide it's not real and so no change is required.
- **Anger** - blame the messenger and other countries (what about CHIIINA?)
- **Bargaining** - technology will fix things, I don't need to change or worry
- **Despair** - it's already too late so there's no point caring about it or changing

When dealing with toxic people you can try to think more like a grief counsellor than a preacher. Nobody enjoys being told they are part of the problem and need to change.

There's lots of articles online about grief [[1](#), [2](#)] and dealing with change in business [[1](#), [2](#)], you may get inspiration from them.

General Criticisms of XR, and possible responses

Here's a bunch of the usual things people say and some ideas for coping with each. Please suggest more, and better ideas for how to respond. Responding with personal experience can be helpful too e.g. your own motivations for taking part in XR or your personal fears about the future that aren't listed here.

Please don't feel constrained by what's suggested below - they are just ideas and things that have worked for other rebels.

[bingo.png](#) Overall one of the most powerful responses to “I don't agree with your methods” or “you are all hypocrites” is to ask for advice. “What would you do differently” can seriously change a conversation thread for the better, and to see things from our perspective without feeling attacked. It can be a way to explain citizen's assemblies and sometimes we might even get new ideas!

Most importantly, please *don't* cut and paste the same response again and again into social media as it makes us look bad and makes you look like the troll.

Negative comments on XR / rebels / Greta

This section gathers together some ideas for responding to regular negative comments. As ever, never copy and paste.

Unwashed hippies...

Unwashed hippies

We're all sorts of people - including scruffy anarchists. but we're also:

XR Grandparents <https://www.facebook.com/XRGrandparents>

XR Youth <https://www.facebook.com/XRYouth/>

XR Doctors <https://www.doctorsforxr.com/>

XR Lawyers <https://www.lawyersforxr.com/>

XR Farmers <https://twitter.com/XRFarmers>

XR Jews <https://www.xrjews.org.uk/>

XR Buddhists <http://xrbuddhists.com/>

Some of us dress smart, some dress “scruffy”, some turn up in scrubs, some in costumes. Some work flexible hours, some are unemployed, some use their annual leave to be able to come.

We’re a real mixed bag!

We really do have plenty of alternative looking people which isn't always good optics, but they are the most visible and keen.

Don't judge a book by its cover

You want people to ignore the demand for a future in which people and other life on Earth can survive because you don't like the outfits of some of the people in a protest?

Sure, there's a few hippy types, but there's also a surprising number of scientists and doctors.

Can you tell which of those hippies is the surgeon, ex-policeman, head-teacher, re, psychologist, mother, designer, musician, nurse, engineer, lorry driver, scientist?

Jobless ...

I've been following up such comments to say my coworker used up much of his annual leave for the April protest.

I have a good job doing XYZ.

Many of the XR supporters work, either part-time or full-time, donating their spare time to help raise awareness and engage with people

Sure there are homeless and jobless people in XR, but there's also lawyers, doctors, plumbers and single mums. Most of the people at the protest are using up their leave instead of having a holiday.

Use this as an excuse to tell something about the humans of XR; That's what I thought initially, but it turns out lots of members are parents and Grandparents. I met one couple who'd just had their first baby and they told me that it was the moment that they realised they really wanted grandchildren that they felt they had to take things seriously and make sure those future grandchildren had a good world to be born into.

Many people in XR are employed full time, they're using their annual leave to fight for a cause they believe in. (Almost) everyone in the UK is entitled to paid time off, what we do with it is up to us.

XR is broadly a cross-section of pretty much any community; a mix of professions and trades, and of course some people may not currently be employed. Everyone volunteers their time to support XR, a cause that they believe in.
