

IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT

This is written by a prophet who is sixteen years old who is living with us through this heeish 2020. We better listen and do what she said before it is too late. Or is it late already?

#environmental_sustainability

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One simple truth, exacerbated by humanity's advancements and growth, has made itself indubitably and unmistakably clear through the exhaustive and extensive research of scientists across the globe. The truth is as simple as this:

The world is ending.

To phrase it a little less dramatically, we as a species have irrevocably damaged the earth through greenhouse gas emissions, and this will eventually lead to our downfall.

We, as the human species, however, aren't as united as we wish to believe. Many, in a show of unabashed selfishness, have denied the possibility of climate changes or brushed it aside in favor of things they deem more important. Humans, believe it or not, don't really seem to care all too much about the future of humanity, only themselves. Because, let's face the facts: the world is dying, yes, but it is dying slowly. And although we can see the effects of our carbon footprints now, they will only become apocalyptic in future generations. And some people just don't have the ability to look so far.

So let's turn our eyes to something a little closer. Remember the beginning of this calendar year? I know, it seems like it was decades ago, but if you have an acute enough memory you'd remember the Australian bushfires. The inferno was aggravated by a rare plethora of specific conditions, including strong winds, drought, and extreme heat waves. All of which, not surprisingly, are effects of climate change.

In fact, according to a study by the World Weather Attribution, global warming has increased the odds of such events occurring in southeastern Australia by at least 30 percent—likely even more.



Courtesy of: World Weather Attribution



Courtesy of: LA Times

You can also look to California, USA. So far in 2020 (what a hellish year!) a total of 8,500 wildfires have ravaged more than 4% of the state's land, making 2020 the largest wildfire season ever recorded in California's modern history, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. Why did this happen? With a superficial glance, poor camping etiquette, arson, lightning, and one disastrous gender reveal party can be attributed to causing these fires, but once one looks deeper, the same culprit linked to the bushfires across the world appears: the dreaded climate change. Guys, it looks like we have a serial arsonist on our hands.

As Robert Frost once mentioned: "Some say the world will end in fire, Some say in ice..." I suppose I am of the former, and I suppose the rising temperatures attest to that.

The world recently has seen a lot more of extreme weather conditions than simply fires, as well. In the United States and Caribbean, the 2020 calendar year has seen so many tropical storms and hurricanes that the Greek alphabet had to be utilized in order to name them all, and with these storms appear record-breaking flooding. Poor Louisiana.

I can go on and on with the effect of climate change. To be brief, here is a short list: Heat waves, drought, wildfires, storms, erosion, flooding, compromised infrastructure, habitat depletion, an increasingly acidic ocean, and agricultural complications.

I think everyone would prefer a world where these things wouldn't be nearly as common. So how does that world come to be? How can we make that world a reality? Well, I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but unless you are in charge of a mega-corporation, you can't really do much (But that's no excuse for inaction—we'll get to that later).



Courtesy of: The NY Times

Metal straws are nice and all, but to be honest, they're nothing near a viable solution to the climate crisis. Plastic straws just aren't that much of a problem. You, judging just by the fact that you're taking precious time out of your day to read this article, probably aren't much of a problem either. Yep, that's right. Spending an extra five minutes in the shower is basically inconsequential in the grand scheme of things, considering that based on a Carbon Majors Report, just one hundred companies are responsible for seventy-one percent of all global emissions since 1988.

Sounds crazy, right?



Courtesy of: Fortune.com

All these green grassroots movements across the world only really deflect our attention from the real perpetrators. Remember when I said that our culprit was a serial arsonist called climate change? Yeah, I lied. Climate change, the way we have come to define it, is not naturally occurring, so if you call it the culprit, you have to admit they were not working alone. Putting all the blame on just simply "climate change" makes it seem like those who cause it (and actually cause it, not including you with your gasoline car) are blamefree. It's like locking up the hitman, but not the person who ordered the hit.

This is why no real change in the right direction is occurring. Somehow, politicians and business magnates (who, let's face it, are one-in-the-same) have made it so climate change seems to be our problem, rather than their problem. And simultaneously, older generations have made it seem the climate change is a problem for the younger generations, rather than their own.

Listen, I respect Greta Thunberg with my entire being, but don't you find it just a tad pathetic that a seventeen year old is the face of the green movement? As stated just earlier, seventeen years old aren't the problem; giant corporations and governments are. Greta Thunberg shouldn't be the face of climate change, she shouldn't be the person who has done some of the most work in regards to the said crisis in the world right now. But she is. Can she single-handedly reduce carbon emissions on a large scale? Of course not. If other members of her generation join her, such as me, can we reduce carbon emissions on a large scale? Another no. By naming Greta Thunberg the face of the fight against climate change, people in power are further proving that they themselves refuse to take action.



Courtesy of: Time.com

The more I think about it, the more clearly this fact comes to light:

If things continue the way they are, positive change won't occur until individuals such as Thunberg are old enough to make world-altering decisions. By then, it will be too late.

In other words, it's another deflection and a textbook example of egoism. If it doesn't concern me, why be concerned with it? So let me just push it onto someone who cares, but someone who's not old enough to make a large difference herself and cause my already stuffed wallet to deflate a bit.

I am sixteen years old, and I am why you should be concerned. Not me specifically, maybe, but people like me. People who will inherit the broken earth and will be left to pick up the pieces. Except, the pieces will never be able to be put back together. Our planet will be irreparable.

Think of your (perhaps hypothetical) children, your grandchildren, your nieces and nephews. Think about how the fact that you are alive right now, in 2020, means that your lineage dates back to the first humans. Think about how the earth must've been back then: expansively, and wild, and beautiful. Think about the earth now: still expansively, wild, and beautiful, but a little more downtrodden, submissive, and gray. If your ancestors were to explicitly travel to present-day, they would be appalled. Where did all the trees go? Why is it so hard to breath? And to these prehistoric humans, however, the most appalling thing would be the apparent lack of survival instincts among the modern peoples. They just wouldn't be able to understand why you would jeopardize between five and seven million years-worth of a continuous familial lineage. Wouldn't it be a shame if your family died out because of the actions you turned a blind-eye to?



Courtesy of: NASA

It isn't hyperbolic when I say that the apocalypse is nigh. We are killing the earth with our own negligence. When the people of California and Australia looked up into the red smoky skies, I imagine it wasn't entirely difficult to envision Armageddon. Within a few generations, the world will reclaim itself with its wild acts of nature, and, sorry to break it to you, but we can't count on space colonization for survival. The world is ending.

Say it aloud:

THE WORLD IS ENDING

If you face that fact, if you recognize that fact, and if you truly truly believe in that fact, it is inexcusable to continue to idly sit by. If straws and showers and public transportation is all you can do, do it. If you can write, if you can type (and, of course, if you want to), pressure companies with high carbon emissions, pressure politicians who refuse to take action. If you have found yourself to be selfish, maybe it's about time to stop.

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I don't want to inherit a dying world. Neither do my friends, my cousins, my fellow teens and young adults across the globe. So if not for yourself, do it for the youth in your life. It won't be easy. Of course not. Centuries of pollution have led us to this point, and we don't have centuries to reverse it. But if you, if we don't try, then we should know that our descendent will be ashamed of us. That we caused a mass extinction. So please, at least try.

That is, unless you would prefer to die in a fire. In that case, you should be California dreamin'.