

“Avatime is weaving her new stories from and upon her old ones in the Wisdom of Mother Earth, passed on from our revered Ancestors throughout the ages, in continuing intergenerational Rebellion which, no doubt we shall win in defence of all Life!”

*Osie Adza Tekpor VII, Paramount Chief  
of Avatime, Volta Region, Ghana.*



“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 be many and they be 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, War Talk*



# CONTENTS

I	<b>THE OLD STORY</b>	5
II	<b>SO MANY NEW STORIES</b>	6
III	<b>HOW TO USE THIS BOOK</b>	10
IV	<b>THE UNTHINKABLE EVERYDAY</b>	12
V	<b>HOPE IS DEAD, LONG LIVE THE TRUTH</b>	15
VI	<b>LOCKDOWN LEVITATION!</b>	18
VII	<b>THE PRINCIPLES OF IMPOSSIBLE</b>	21
VIII	<b>ALCHEMY</b>	23
IX	<b>IMPOSSIBLE PROCESS</b>	28
X	<b>MORE EXAMPLES</b>	31
XI	<b>AMNESTY!</b>	38
XII	<b>BE VIGILANT</b>	39
XIII	<b>OUR SHARED IMPOSSIBLE</b>	41
	<b>IMPOSSIBLE REFERENCE</b>	42



# I

## THE OLD STORY

The old story was the world of possible.  
We lived there for hundreds of years.

The possible world was closed-minded,  
stale, unequal, dishonest, and obsessed with  
money. It exploited, enslaved and extracted.

It didn't want to change. Its motto was "this  
is just the way things are," it was fatalistic  
and the thing it called "magic" was really  
people doing tricks with numbers to get  
more money.



But it isn't the way things have to be, and  
there's nothing magic about money when  
compared to life itself.

## II

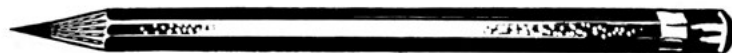
### **SO MANY NEW STORIES**

The old story is on its way out (whatever impression it likes to give to the contrary). In its place will be many new stories, told by many voices, including Extinction Rebellion.

← Some of these stories will emerge from the old story, freshly transformed for the times. →

But many will be new, or appear to be new, and be told by those that the old story wasn't interested in hearing.

These stories will be way better stories than that one old story. And if we listen properly, we'll find in them all we need to know about how to survive.



*It's late spring 2020.*

Take a moment to say the word 'January'  
and feel how far away that sounds.

January.

January.

January.

This is a really tough time.

But in the last few weeks, something  
unprecedented has happened.

The cracking of the old story.

The economy is fantasy. Planes are gone.

It's scary, and confusing.

←

→



*But also, shit!*

Could the moment of saying goodbye to an  
old story that wasn't a good story be closer  
than we hoped? And if that's true, what can  
we put in its place?

How about everything that we thought  
was impossible until now?

*What's happening that once seemed impossible?*

“Low-skilled workers” are recognised as “key workers”, fossil fuel execs the former.

Most daily interactions don't involve money.

You can't give oil away.

People realise that everything is connected.

We need brands less than they need us.

We need wildlife more than we realised.

Social cues are taken from the vulnerable.

The Himalayas can be seen from Indian cities again, and in all cities people breathe more easily.

The end of FOMO.

40% less nitrous oxide in the air.



*It's all possible.*

Now what *else* is?

This is an invitation to build that right now.

***Welcome to Impossible.***



“Do you really think people are gonna change, Russell?”

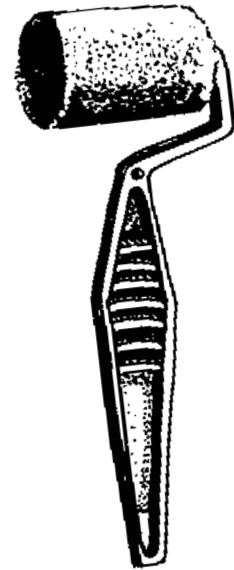
Is it going to be back to normal, suddenly we’re back in the shops, we’re buying everything we need, we’re overeating, overindulging?

People seem to think that there’s an endless supply of everything.

Now more than ever, I have this anxiety, and I will use this word because I do feel anxious about it.

I’ve got a baby right, I have Indie and Marley, and I didn’t used to think about where food came from, how bananas got to me, how berries were picked and strawberries ... but now I think about it, and I think about how will the world look, how will the oceans look in fifty years time? And Indie and Marley will be around then. They’re going to be alive ... I’m not scared of death, I’m scared about how the world will look when I’m gone ... Is that deep or have you ever thought about that?”

*Joe Wicks, aka The Body Coach, in conversation with Russell Brand — Under The Skin podcast, April 2020*

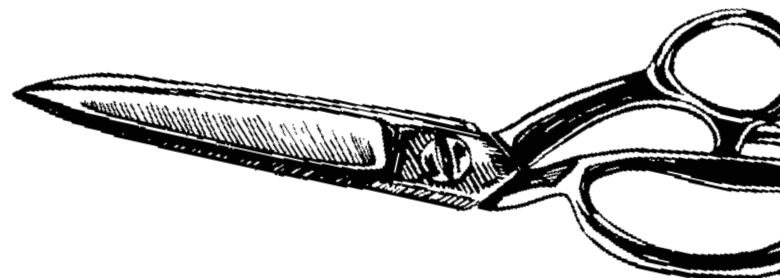


### III

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK



Everybody has their own Impossible.  
There are no limits to Impossible.  
It's a multidimensional work-in-progress.  
It's an invitation, not an instruction.  
Nothing in this book *means anything* until  
you *feel something* and then *make something*  
*happen.*





*Be realistic, demand the impossible*

## IV

### **THE UNTHINKABLE EVERYDAY**

Governments, corporations, ecosystems, industry, civil society, communities, families, friends and foe, competitors and adversaries, you, me — *all of us* — forming alliances with the aim of not killing our kids, and our kids' kids. Or the coral.

The greatest act of global collaboration ever known, shifting the focus of the world's wealth and power structures immediately away from profit, towards planet repairs.



*Also:*

Practical compassion, kindness, and empathy are celebrated as key survival skills.

Human progress is measured in units of Care not Gross Domestic Product.

We govern ourselves via local and national assemblies, every day waking to the knowledge that collectively we are able to create the world we want to live in.

*Everybody listens to the quieter voices ...*

We're vividly aware of our place in an interdependent ecosystem.

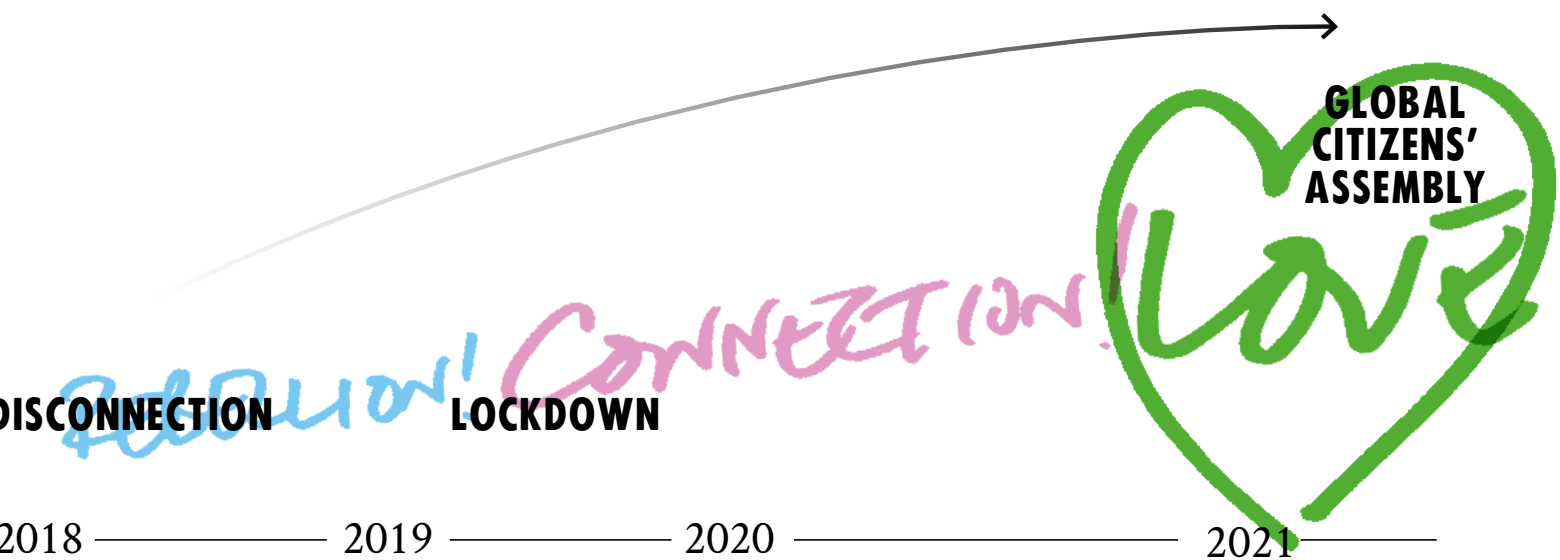
Power is redistributed so everyone wins. Global south, global north. Everyone.

*We listen to Mother Earth for updates on how the economy is doing, and the scale of the challenges ahead.*

Surveillance is redirected away from watching us, to watching where our food and energy comes from, and where our waste goes.

We practice radical connection and community building as the highest priority.

Everybody lives in a community as prepared as possible for the changes ahead.



### *The United Front*

Activists, and activism, are needed for a higher purpose in the 2020s than the pursuit of political revolution.

The universal task of activism in the 2020s is the formation of an alliance of opposites — a united front for climate mobilization.

In the culture of activism, a united front is the strategy of working with adversaries in order to achieve a greater goal.

The united front for climate mobilization is global, temporary and outcome-oriented.

The united front is fostered through the sacrifice of something vital to gain something essential.

*Micah White's Activist Manifesto 2020*



V

**HOPE IS DEAD,  
LONG LIVE THE TRUTH**



*It is Impossible that the world will end.  
It is Impossible that we can save ourselves.  
And that is precisely why we must act.*

***We are beyond caring. We are care.***



# WE ARE



**Matthew Pennycook** ✓ @mtpennycook · 17h

Sobering.

It has come at a huge cost and yet the resulting fall in global CO2 emissions is still only just over two thirds of what is necessary each and every year to limit warming to 1.5C.

We should be alarmed.

We cannot give in to hopelessness.

We must act.



**Simon Evans** @DrSimEvans · 21h

MAJOR UPDATE: My analysis showing #coronavirus could trigger the largest ever fall in global CO2 emissions just got even bigger

New estimated impact of -2,000MtCO2 or 5.5%...

(was -1,600MtCO2 / 4%)

...unfortunately, UNEP says -7.6% per yr needed for 1.5C

[carbonbrief.org/analysis-coron...](https://carbonbrief.org/analysis-coron...)

*Matthew Pennycook, Shadow Minister for  
Climate Change on Twitter, April 15, 2020*

# BEYOND FUUCKED



*This will not be easy.*

There are no sunny uplands.

There is only blood, sweat and tears.  
Because that is the way it is now.

Our salvation is not in false hope – good jobs and a quiet life – things have gone too far for that. No, our salvation is to pass to the other side. To pass through the rage and despair and emerge ready to do what we have to do. To resist is to renew and regenerate.

*And with that clarity we find our strength.*

We transform ourselves and this sorrowful life into something glorious and meaningful.

With peace, with love, with grief.

***We will see you on the streets.***

## VI

### **LOCKDOWN LEVITATION!**

*Take a piece of paper and a pen.*

Write down some Impossible things in the kitchen. An electric plug, a fridge magnet, a house plant, a child.

*The world is amazing.*

If you have access to a tree or some grass nearby, go there now. A window is great too.

Look out at the sky, the birds, the tops of the trees in leaf. Consider how life on earth is the ultimate Impossible, and that you are part of that.

Now think about all the things that you would like to see in the world that are Impossible. The ones you've never told anybody about because they would say, "you're right, that's totally Impossible."

Write these down. Don't worry if it comes out strange at first or doesn't come out at all.

Keep writing. Don't read anything back to yourself yet, or cross anything out.

Do this for ...



... seven minutes.

Has it been seven minutes? OK, stop.  
Look at your page. *Congratulations!* What  
you see there is the beginning of Impossible.



*How to know you've found an Impossible story.*  
It does strange things with time.  
It makes you feel younger and older all  
at once.  
You feel connected to something much  
bigger than you.



## VII

### **THE PRINCIPLES OF IMPOSSIBLE**

There are no rules\* or limits.

It's a journey.

Always look after yourself and others.

*We're creating this story as we go along.*



\*

THE FIRST  
RULE OF

**IMPOSSIBLE**

←

IS YOU

→

DO NOT TALK ABOUT

**IMPOSSIBLE**

Having a half-decent idea, and sticking  
“Impossible” in front of or all over it *is the  
opposite of Impossible.*

## VIII

# ALCHEMY

The old story wanted answers. The new stories require *alchemy*.

The combination of disparate elements in search of gold.

Of hopelessness and resolve; grief and joy.

Of unlikely partners holding hands and jumping into the unknown, free from the stifling restrictions of outcome.

Of values and valour.

Of Impossible and *magic*.



It goes like this: take your Impossible and add the magic ingredient — an abstract noun.

An abstract noun is a word like *freedom*, *beauty* or *love*. A word that describes a feeling more than it does a fact.

On its own, Impossible speaks to the scale of our ambition, but *combine it* with the right kind of abstract noun? That's where the alchemical magic happens:

Impossible *truth*.

Impossible *beauty*.

Impossible *virtue*.

Impossible *humanity*.

← There are many more Impossibly magical combinations, of course (*if you don't see yours, add yours*), but at its heart, the formula for a new XR story is deliberately simple. →







*This is*

**TRY**

*complex.*

**EVERYTHING**

← **And we've** →

**AT**

**run out**

**ONCE**

**of time.**



A microscopic image of biological tissue stained with a purple dye, showing various cellular structures and fibers. The text is overlaid on this image.

**EMBRACE**

**UNCERTAINTY.**



**RISK.**

**NOT REWARD.**

# IX

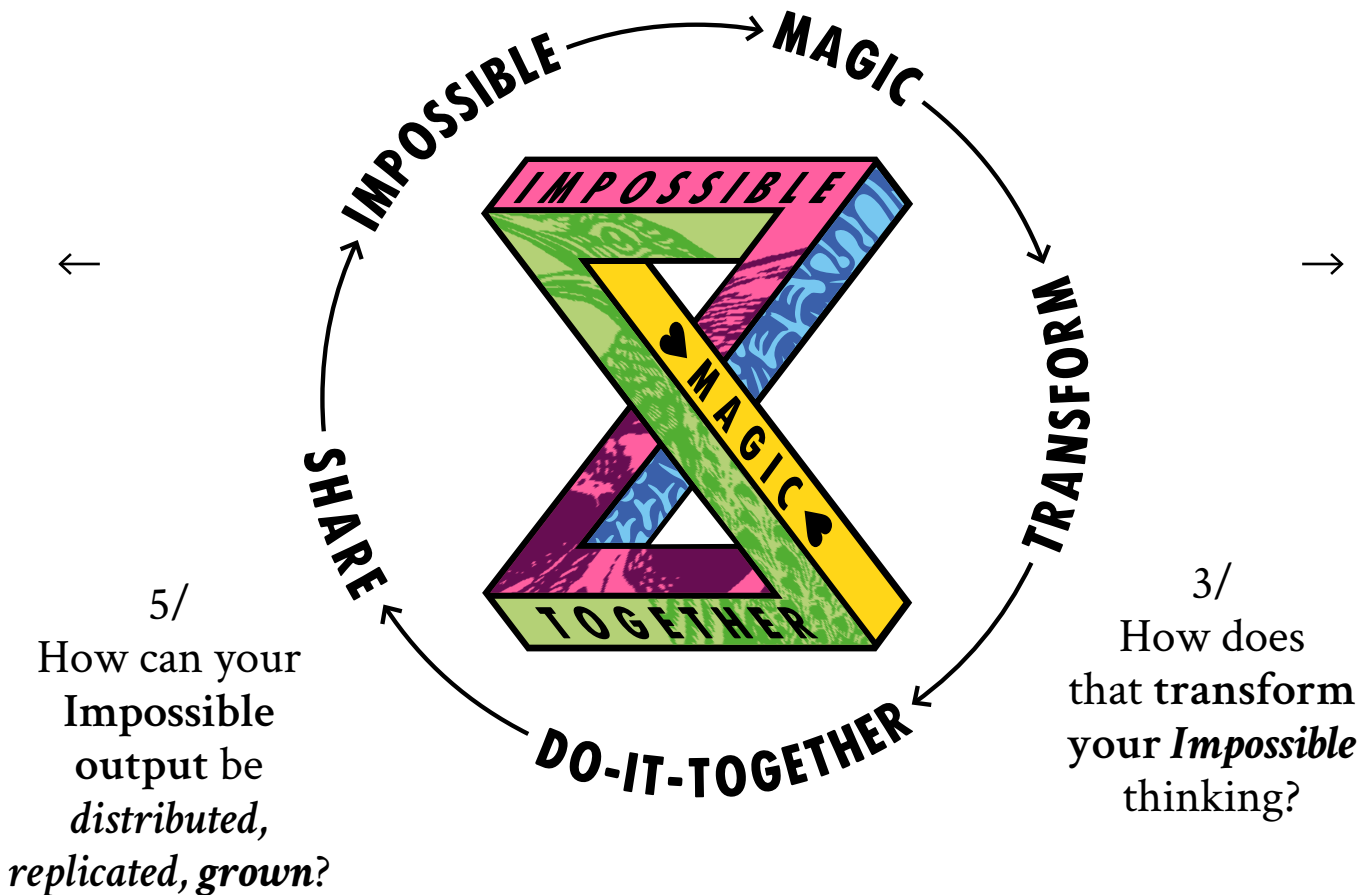
## IMPOSSIBLE PROCESS

1/

Where's your head at?  
Or more importantly,  
your audience's? *What's  
their Impossible?*

2/

Add the *magic ingredient*.  
Super-charge Impossible  
with a *radicalising  
abstract noun*, like LOVE.



4/

What does the output look like?  
A campaign, action, creative  
idea, slogan? *And how will you  
bring it to life?*

# IMPOSSIBLE ECONOMIC THEORY!

## IMPOSSIBLE

What do we do  
about the neoliberal  
addiction to growth?

## MAGIC

HUMANITY

## TRANSFORM

Stop talking about the economy  
+ start talking about the humanity

## DO-IT-TOGETHER

If we replace *production* and  
*consumption* with **care** and  
**freedom** then we  
can have *perpetual growth*.

[Thank you David Graeber x]

## SHARE

CARE

+

FREEDOM

used throughout  
XR comms. Banners,  
press, spokes, white  
papers etc etc



# X

## MORE EXAMPLES

The new XR story will be told in many ways. The new XR stories will be understood as one.

They will blow the mind, and state the obvious; they will be the missing piece, and the cherry on top.

When Impossible magic infuses *all we say and do*, we will move hearts, and mountains.

The next few pages illustrate how Impossible magic can be approached, and how it can inform activity of all kinds:



*campaigns*

*actions*

*thought-leadership*

*provocations*

*press*

*slogans*

you get the drift ...

# IMPOSSIBLE ART ON THE STREETS!

## IMPOSSIBLE

Report from the streets +  
reflect decentralised autonomy.

## MAGIC

*Creativity*



## TRANSFORM

Don't report *the news* make art.  
~~~~~> *Krusty's Kave* October Rebellion print factory.

## DO-IT-TOGETHER

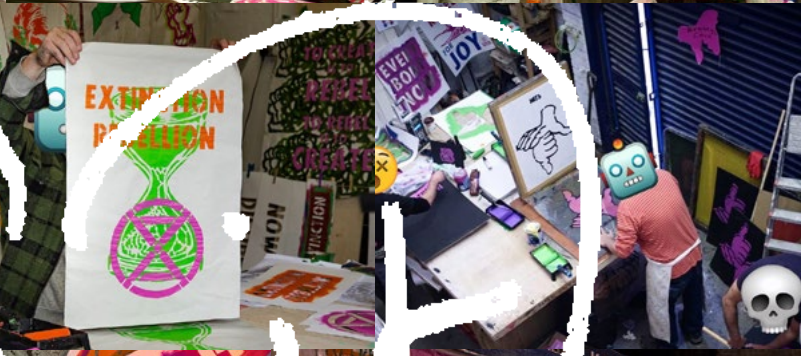
Borrow a secret  
railway arch.  
Set up screen print/  
stencil studio. Start  
shared workflow of  
writing, drawing,  
cutting stencils (using  
cartridge paper),  
and printing (using  
screens and stencil)  
onto newsprint.  
Make some placards  
and flypost  
remainder.  
*Repeat.*

## SHARE

Make video/zine  
covering all aspects of  
creative + distribution  
process, including  
paint/paper specs, kit,  
flyposting tips.  
Digitise the assets used  
to create stencils for  
distribution.  
Organise workshops  
and set up print studios  
in XR Art Factories.







PM's father tells climate crisis rally that he is proud to be a 'crusty'

Damen Gayle and Ben Quinn

The prime minister's father, Stanley Johnson, has told a crowd at Extinction



Do it to rebel



# AN IMPOSSIBLE ASK FOR BUSINESS!

IMPOSSIBLE

*alliances*

MAGIC

*forgiveness*

TRANSFORM

*its ok  
to change  
direction*

*Already*

DO-IT-TOGETHER

*Business  
leaders ask  
for legislation  
AGAINST their  
own industry.*

SHARE

*forgiveness  
you.*

*Who  
do  
you  
love?*

**IMPOSSIBLE SOLIDARITY #1!**

IMPOSSIBLE  
**WE ARE  
ALL FAMILY**

MAGIC  
**LOVE  
+  
TRUST**

TRANSFORM

←

**GLOBAL  
CITIZENS'  
ASSEMBLY**

DO-IT-TOGETHER

→

**TRUST  
THE  
PEOPLE.**

SHARE

# IMPOSSIBLE SOLIDARITY #2!

## IMPOSSIBLE



How to breathe in a traffic-choked city?

## MAGIC



Beauty

## TRANSFORM

Traffic = ugliness + death / XR = beauty + **celebration!**



## DO-IT-TOGETHER

We decide that OK, once a month we will pedestrianise the whole of our urban centre, make it a no go area for cars. And then we do it.

As simple as that!

On that day, the streets become a garden walkway. People are partying, sharing food, talking, there is music blaring. People turn it into a place to hang out.

We begin to dream spaces.

Next we plant fruit trees, veg in unused spaces. We can even do this in lockdown.

## SHARE

Then Kingston Jamaica, then Delhi does it, and it spreads around the planet.

We feel each other's power.

Nobody is waiting for governments to do it ... Jakarta, Lagos, São Paulo are doing it because we did it!!







XI



## **AMNESTY!**

It's OK to change your mind about what you believe in, play catch up or admit there are days when you don't believe in Impossible.

Herewith is an amnesty on everything each of us has ever done that was merely possible, unimaginative, or contributed to the impending catastrophe.

*Now we just need to forgive ourselves and get on with it.*

## XII

### **BE VIGILANT**

*The possible world is getting itself a rebrand.*

In the coming weeks, you might notice it describe itself by its new taglines, “back to normal” or “the new normal.”

As we begin to get back the things we’ve missed so much, like our families, pubs, and music, the possible world will also give us industry bailouts, new ad campaigns and fresh memes.

These are designed to give the impression that the possible world knows what it’s doing, and that we should forget Impossible exists.

*But Impossible doesn’t live in  
ad campaigns or newspapers, it lives  
in trees and hearts and we won’t forget.*



“I hope that this time of danger will free us from operating on automatic pilot, shake our sleepy consciences and allow a humanist and ecological conversion that puts an end to the idolatry of money and places human life and dignity at the centre.”

*Jorge Mario Bergoglio, aka Pope Francis*

← *“I’ve been made aware of how actually it’s acceptance that there’s going to be a change in our lifestyles, and we will have to compromise. We can’t rely on tech and someone else doing it for us. It has to be all of us working together.”* →

Ellie, member of the  
UK Climate Citizens’ Assembly





## XIII

### OUR SHARED IMPOSSIBLE

*The movement of movements, doing-it-together and learning as we go.*

*Cutting through the congested and distorting media landscape to keep Telling The Truth.*

*Zero carbon emissions in five years' time.*

*Establishing a Citizen's Assembly, the most immediate and radically inclusive way to do politics ever proposed in the UK. Trust the people!*

*International solidarity. We only survive if we all win.*

← *Galvanizing a million people to know intuitively the exact moment to be on the streets again to ensure that we never*

*ever,*

*ever,*

*ever,*

*ever,*

*ever,*

*ever,*

*ever,*

*ever,*

*ever,*

*ever,*

*ever,*

*ever,*

*ever*

*go back to the old story.*

→

*Your Silence Will Not Protect You* — Audre Lorde [[link](#)]

*We Are The Ones* — Sweet Honey in the Rock [[link](#)]

*Two Cheers for Anarchism: Six Easy Pieces on Autonomy,  
Dignity, and Meaningful Work and Play*  
— James C. Scott [[link](#)]

*Economics in an Age of Climate Breakdown*  
— Jason Hickel [[talk](#)]

*The Dispossessed* — Ursula K Le Guin [[story](#)]

*I Find It Hard To Say (Rebel)* — Lauryn Hill [[link](#)]

*A Month and a Day & Letters'* — Ken Saro-Wiwa [[link](#)]

←

*Down To Earth* — Bruno Latour [[link](#)]

→

*People Vultures* — King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard  
[[video](#)]

*Neither Lord Nor Subject* — Bao Jing Yan [[link](#)]

*A Rough Guide To Reality* — Anonymous

*I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel To Be Free*  
— Nina Simone [[video](#)]

*Tools for Conviviality* — Ivan Illich [[pdf](#)]

*Man On The Moon* [[film](#)]

*The Plague* — Albert Camus [[story](#)]

*Up High, Down Low* — José-Luis Orcozo [[soundcloud](#)]

*Indignez Vous! / Time For Outrage!*

— Stephane Hessel [[link](#)]

*Capitalist Realism* — Mark Fisher [[link](#)]

*Black Elk Speaks* — John G. Neihardt [[story](#)]

*Spell of the Sensuous* — David Abram [[story](#)]

*Braiding Sweetgrass* — Robin Wall Kimmerer [[link](#)]

*Attempts on her Life* — Martin Crimp [[link](#)]

*Dada and Cabaret Voltaire* [[video](#)]

*Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race*

— Renni Eddo-Lodge [[extract](#)]

←

→

*Deep Adaptation* — Jem Bendell [[downloads](#)]

*Triadisches Ballet* — Oskar Schlemmer [[video](#)]

*Big A Little A* — Crass [[video](#)]

*A User's Guide to Demanding the Impossible*

— John Jordan and Gavin Grindon [[download](#)]

*Homage to Catalonia* — George Orwell [[link](#)]

*Doughnut Economics* — Kate Raworth [[link](#)]

*Oh! The Places You'll Go* — Dr Seuss [[flipbook](#)]

Too [*insert criticism*]? [Add your own!](#)



*An important moment when Impossible prevailed.*

← That time, millions of years ago, when the first single-celled bacteria virtually wiped each other out due to hostile competition over limited resources — nearly destroying life on the planet when it had hardly begun. →

At the 11th hour, they learned to cooperate with each other, sharing resources and kick-starting multicellular life as we know it.





“I want you to do something beyond my wildest imagination.  
And I want you to do it tomorrow.”

*Miles Glyn, Art Group*



**IMPOSSIBLE**

**MAGIC**

**TRANSFORM**

**DO-IT-TOGETHER**

**SHARE**