

Peril and Possibility: Appendix of Quotes

“To see beyond what despair sees—to move from the feeling toward the possibility—calls for things we have in abundance: love, imagination, and a willingness to simply tend the world as best we can, without guarantee of success”

— Ayana Elizabeth Johnson, *All We Can Save*

“No one knows exactly how this crisis will end. No scientist, no activist, no novelist, no modeller or soothsayer knows it, because too many variables of human action determine the outcome.... success is neither certain nor probable, but possible.”

— Andreas Malm, *How to Blow Up a Pipeline*

“If we can recognize that we don’t know what will happen, that the future does not yet exist but is being made in the present, then we can be moved to participate in making that future. We can be skillful enough to make directed efforts, and sophisticated enough to know that results remain unpredictable. Many acts have had a huge positive impact but not immediately or directly, and so learning to value slow and indirect consequences is crucial to recognizing the nature of change.”

— Rebecca Solnit [1]

“It’s no good denying that there are problems. It is no shame if you think about the harm we’ve inflicted on the world. But if you concentrate on doing the things you *can* do, and doing them well, it will make all the difference.”

— Jane Goodall, *The Book of Hope*

“...we need a vision of a better future – a future with abundant energy, with a stable economy, with resources available to all, where our lives are not worse but better than they are today.”

— Katharine Hayhoe [2]

“Many of the precautionary actions that we need to take would be sensible in any event. It is sensible to improve energy efficiency and... to develop alternative and sustainable sources of supply; it's sensible to replant the forests which we consume; it's sensible to re-examine industrial processes; it's sensible to tackle the problem of waste. I understand that the latest vogue is to call them ‘no regrets’ policies. Certainly, we should have none in putting them into effect.

— Margaret Thatcher [3]

“Climate change is the one issue that could bring us together and enable us to overcome our historic divisions.”

— George Marshall, *Don’t Even Think About It*

“If I could change one thing today, I would love everyone to see the climate problem as an opportunity for making us healthier and allowing us to live longer lives. Every major climate solution has benefits for our health, for other species and habitats. Particulate pollution from cars and coal still kills 100,000 Americans a year through heart and lung disease in spite of the progress we’ve made in improving our air quality. Worldwide it’s 10 million people. That’s more people than are murdered, die in traffic accidents and drown, combined. Globally, one in five of all deaths is attributable to burning fossil fuels. that’s 10 million people dying senselessly every year when cleaner fuels are available. I would love to help people see the link between climate action today and longer, healthier lives.”

— Rob Jackson [4]

“[W]here do you find hope in these dark times? I’m not sure I really know what we mean by hope. A source of optimism? Wishful thinking? Evidence of a turning towards life and away from destruction? I don’t know about hope, but I do know about love. I think we are in this perilous moment because we have not loved the Earth enough, and it is love that will lead us to safety.

— Robin Wall Kimmerer [5]

“But the essential question, when talking of hope and despair, is: Hope or despair for what? Trees have survived cataclysmic changes in climate and several periods of mass extinction, and it’s a good bet that many will survive our current, man-made Holocene extinction. I’m very hopeful for trees.

— Richard Powers [6]

“Before I flew I was already aware how small and vulnerable our planet is; but only when I saw it from space, in all its ineffable beauty and fragility, did I realize that humankind’s most urgent task is to cherish and preserve it for future generations.”

— Sigmund Jähn, German Cosmonaut [7]

“...the question of how bad things will get is not actually a test of the science; it is a bet on human activity. How much will we do to stall disaster, and how quickly? Those are the only questions that matter.”

— David Wallace-Wells, *The Uninhabitable Earth*

“The fight to decarbonize and eventually go carbon negative will last beyond the lifetime of anyone reading this post. That is true no matter how high the temperature rises. The stakes will always be enormous; time will always be short; there will never be an excuse to stop fighting.”

“Yes, it’s going to get worse, but nobody gets to give up hope or stop fighting. Sorry.”

— David Roberts [8]

“It’s like we’ve turned Noah’s ark into a humans-only party yacht and sailed it to the edge of Niagara Falls. There are a million distractions aboard, but only three options as far as the waterfall goes. You can struggle against all odds to turn the ship around, stare numbly into the abyss or turn your back and dance. My personal adaptation is to ricochet erratically between all three. But on those days when I’m going with the first one, standing on the dance floor shouting, *Guys, guys*, I take a certain solace from the fact that, lately, more of us are waving our arms.”

— Arno Kopecky, *The Environmentalist’s Dilemma*

[1] Why climate despair is a luxury. R Solnit, Jul 2023, The New Statesman

(<https://www.newstatesman.com/environment/2023/07/rebecca-solnit-climate-despair-hope>)

[2] The most important thing you can do to fight climate change: talk about it. K Hayhoe, Nov 2018

(https://www.ted.com/talks/katharine_hayhoe_the_most_important_thing_you_can_do_to_fight_climate_change_talk_about_it/transcript?subtitle=en)

[3] Margaret Thatcher, 2nd World Climate Conference, Nov 1990 (<https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/108237>)

[4] A Repair Manual for the Planet, P McKenna, Jul 2024. Interview with Rob Jackson, author of *Into the Clear Blue Sky*.

“Optimism and hope are muscles we have to exercise. I try to exercise them myself.”

(<https://insideclimatenews.org/news/28072024/what-would-it-take-to-restore-our-atmosphere/>)

[5] Mending Our Relationship with the Earth, RW Kimmerer, *The Climate Book*, Greta Thunberg

[6] Richard Powers: writing ‘the Overstory’ quite literally changed my life. A Brady, Apr 2018, Chicago Review of Books

(<https://chireviewofbooks.com/2018/04/18/overstory-richard-powers-interview/>)

[7] The Overview Effect: Awe and Self-Transcendent Experience in Space Flight, DB Yaden et al, 2016

(https://www.researchgate.net/publication/298786174_The_Overview_Effect_Awe_and_Self-Transcendent_Experience_in_Space_Flight). Jähn flew aboard Soyuz 31 in 1978.

[8] The case for ‘conditional optimism’ on climate change. D Roberts, Jan 2019, Vox (<https://www.vox.com/energy-and-environment/2018/12/28/18156094/conditional-optimism-climate-change>) (under the heading “Opti-pessimistic hopeful realism, or something”)