



The
Work
WE
Need
to Do

A Manual for Our Time

First published 2023

This is the Work.

A manual isn't something you read.
It shows you how to do the work.

What work?

The work of creating a future worth our efforts.
Everything we need to do is right here.

We know what we need to do. We're ready to bring
people together. It won't be easy, but that's okay.
We know this.

You know what it feels like to commit to meaningful
hard work. How good it feels when it's work with
a purpose.

Work is rewarding. Work is tiring. It keeps a roof over
your head and the cold from the door. It's drudgery.
It's toil. It gives us meaning. It serves our communities,
puts food on the table. It shows you care (in both
senses). Work is listening to others – really listening –
and learning from them. Sometimes even breathing

can be work. But we keep breathing. Because we want
to see what we're made of. What we're part of. *Who*
we're part of. The circles around us and the bridges
between us, the arms over shoulders holding us up.
That's the work. Always has been.

The huge challenges we face mean it's time to get to
work for those we love. To create something better.
For sisters and brothers. Your children or your others.
For the sunsets and the artwork pinned on the fridge
door. For all crawling creatures and for the rivers and
streams we walk our dogs along. For those you don't
know but whose faces you recognise because you see
your worries in theirs, the people on the other side
of this bright blue planet whose struggles are our
struggles too.

The work is love. Caring gives it meaning. Because
it is what we're going to have to do every day from
now on just to maintain the right to exist. But that's
okay. We know *how* to care. We know *why*, what all
this work is for. To care for everything, for all we
love and want to protect.

A manual isn't something we read.
It shows us how to do the work.

Love is the work.
That's what this manual is for.

It's a single instruction, a life's vocation:
Love is the work.

Work is where we begin.
Got to begin somewhere.

It's Got to Start Somewhere



Where is this 'somewhere'? What does it look or *feel* like to start from such an elusive place?

Imagine that 'somewhere' isn't an 'X' on a map. It's not a faraway destination, impossible to find. We might not quite know 'somewhere', but it *is* familiar. And it's much closer than we think.


'Somewhere' is here: the climate and ecological emergency that is no longer a distant threat we can choose to deal with later. That thinking is how we got here. We might not understand exactly *how* we got here. But from here we can see the tragedy that's become of life on Earth, see that economic and political greed have brought us to a place we never wanted to reach, to a place where we know that we must *do* something. But what? How?


'*Somewhere*' is knowing that *something* is very wrong with our world. At the deep edge of confusion and sorrow we are able to *feel* how we ended up here.


Face to face with the loss and grief of a dying world, we can see all that we take for granted: family, friends, community, the changing of the seasons that come sooner each year, the birds disappearing, bees dying.


But this 'somewhere' isn't only a place we've come to see or know. It's a place we make, too. 'Somewhere' is where we *do*.

This doing starts with love. Our survival depends on us not burying our heads in the sand or giving in to fear. It depends on valuing love and care, not balance sheets or building walls. 'Somewhere' is in the roar of the young, refusing to be the last generation.

 'Somewhere' is that burst of courage it takes to sit down in a road and stay there, to link arms with a stranger and tell them you will stay if they will too.

 'Somewhere' is the wail of anger for how we violate animals and the natural world.

 'Somewhere' is the gasp when we learn our heritage and face the horrors of the past.

 'Somewhere' is committing to move forward into a better humanity, not backwards into more violence, exploitation and death.

To be human is to love. Serious love, playful love, love of your friends, love of good work. Love is a recognition that everything will change – and everything can change. The good work that our lives now depend on starts from this place.

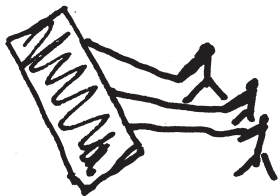
We start from 'somewhere' now.

The Work is Coming Together

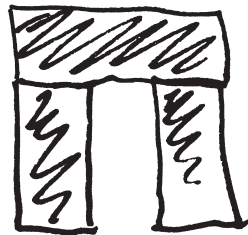
Do you remember when a thousand local networks emerged across the UK, almost overnight, to offer support to those at risk in the pandemic? It wasn't so long ago. These mutual aid groups involved tens of thousands of people; member-led, member-organised, open to all. While politicians dealt out dodgy contracts to cash in on the suffering, communities became care networks with, at their core, the aim of helping one another.

Communities supporting one another
and building resilience = The Work

Politicians profiting from crisis = NOT The Work



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No one waited to be asked. Everyone saw what needed to be done. So they did it, like this:

- ♣ A handful of friends in local neighbourhoods spoke to each other about those in need.
- ☞ They put out the word they were going to offer help, and called for volunteers.
- ⋮ They organised meetings to identify how to get things done, put processes in place.
- 📺 Told the existing services (councils etc) what they were doing and built bridges.
- 👤 Made lists of what needed doing, and allocated people to those tasks.

People brought their skills from a range of backgrounds: healthcare workers, mental health nurses, delivery drivers, stockroom managers, to design local-led solutions. They made themselves approachable (for low-level requests), flexible (to individual needs), accessible (not only on Twitter) and private (so people didn't feel ashamed to ask for help). Everyone was needed and everyone had a role.

Ask anyone in those mutual aid groups and they'll tell you the truth: coming together *is* work in itself. It's not easy. But it's easier when we remember we're on the same side, that together we're immensely powerful, because there's at least one thing we have in common: politics as we know it isn't working for any of us.

Come together.
Do the work.

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JOIN

THE

DOTS

Because we cannot afford to carry on like this.

It's time to join the dots.

The crisis is here, we are in it, and it's worse than we imagined. There is no 'somewhere' outside of this crisis now. It is in our politics and on our supermarket shelves, it's in the burning forests and our broken legal system, in our dwindling pay cheques and rising energy bills.

Politics as we know it is out of date and incapable of tackling the urgency of this moment.

It's time to join the dots.

From a financial system run for the benefit of profit over life to a media refusing to help society learn the truth. From a corrupt government in the pocket of lobbyists to the stripping of our right to protest against ongoing injustice.

It's time to join the dots.

Because the climate crisis and the crisis in our society are two chapters of the same story. It's an age-old story where the majority of us are forced to pay for crises not of our making, while a tiny minority profit from our struggle.

It's time to join the dots from the old stale story where there is no alternative, to a new idea of what's possible. From a closed-minded, unequal, dishonest story obsessed with money, to the better story of love, tolerance and care.

Our story does not belong to them, but to us, every single one of us.







We are the dots.

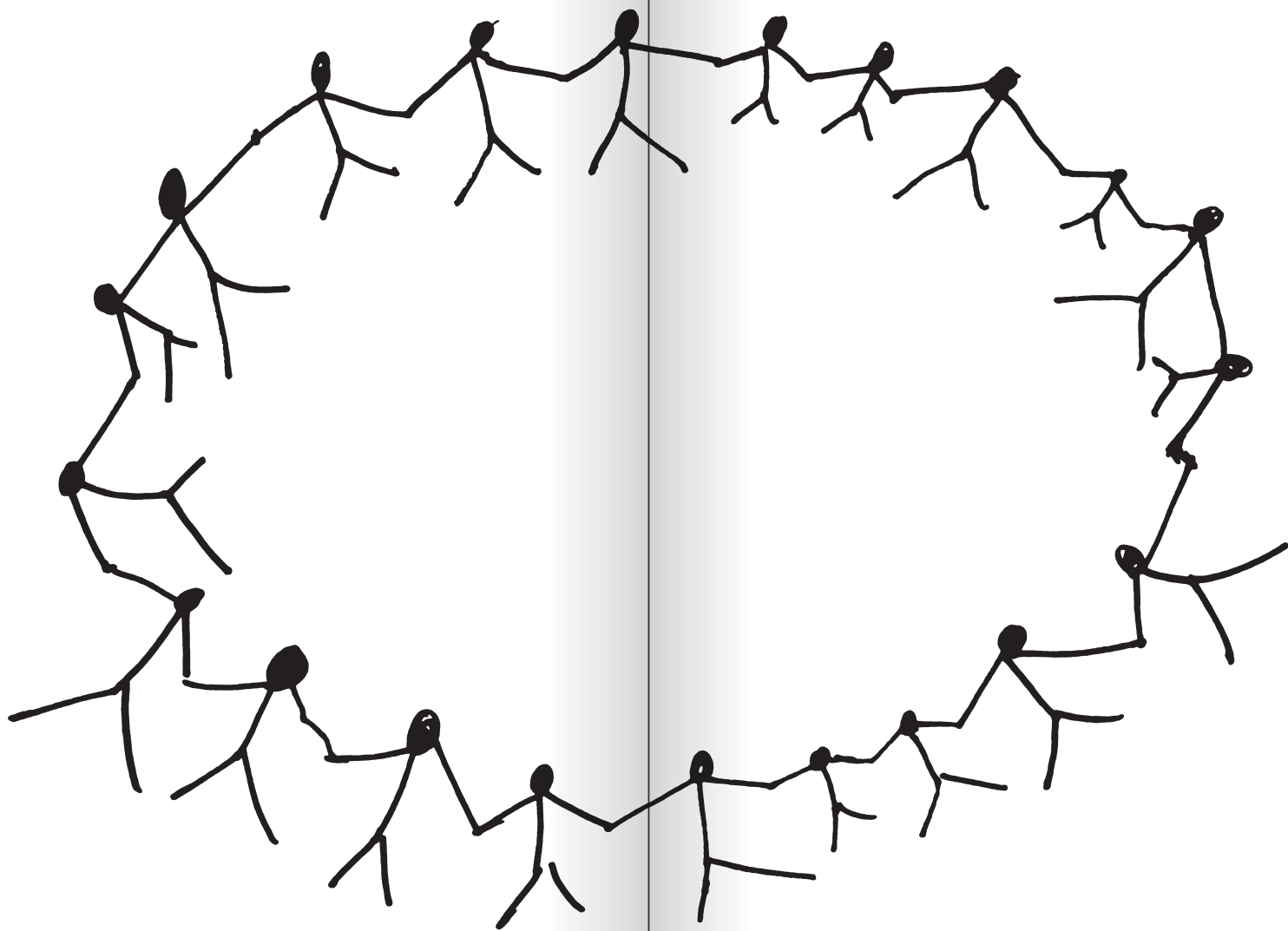
1. The
2. Work
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4. Getting
5. Organised

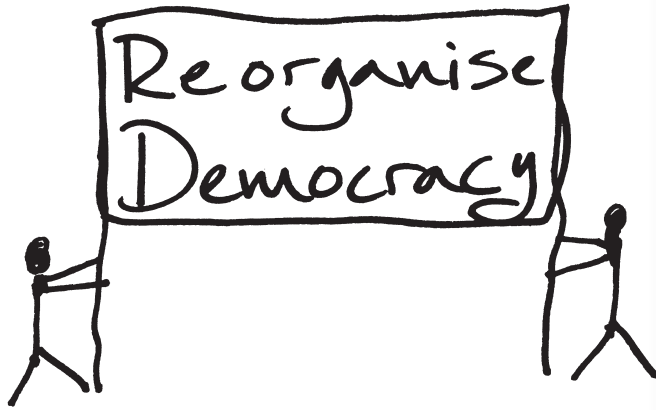
The cost-of-living crisis has shown us what happens when working people come together. Nurses, teachers, train drivers, lawyers, civil servants, cleaners have all stood up to the corporate and political powers who want us to think we can't afford to change.

The climate crisis is really a crisis of not knowing how to work together. The forces that have kept us struggling for so long are successful because they've managed to convince us we're atomised and alone, best looking out for ourselves, not each other. But, overnight, the mutual aid response to the pandemic showed us that's rubbish. The unions and alliances that have stood up to be counted have made it clearer than ever: we *know* how to look after each other. And we know why. In both senses of the phrase, *the work is getting organised*.

The most exciting part is that it's possible right now. So, let's do the work. It looks like this:

-  Join a collective of people in your industry who are challenging the system to change.
-  If there's no existing collective, organise people in your industry and build one!
-  Create art, write for the sake of it and to express the change you want to see.
-  Educate yourself and others on the history of working for others, from the Chartists in the 1800s to groups giving food to people in need through the 20th century.
-  Ask family, friends and colleagues about the climate and ecological emergency. What are their worries? What do they want to do about it?
-  Find the others: join a movement, or club, and organise for change.





If you knew you had the power to change things, what would you do differently?

You do have the power.

But we're told we don't. We're told that it's not possible to change things. That there is no alternative. But is that true? Is there no alternative to worsening social conditions, no alternative to the climate and ecological crises, no alternative to a small few getting rich?

There *is* no alternative if we're fixated by our social media feeds and paralysed by our disconnectedness. There's no alternative if we're waiting for someone else to get on with the job.

We're told that the UK is a democracy. If we are a democracy, isn't there *always* an alternative? Yes. But it requires being honest. Honest that politicians are not coming to save us. Those in

power have no intention of taking the necessary steps to protect us from what's coming. They're supposed to work on our behalf, but they're only serving themselves, not the country. If politicians aren't willing to put in the hard graft, then we will.

It is possible to upgrade politics so it represents everyone. *Independent Citizens' Assemblies* can bypass those blocking progress in Westminster and give power back to people. Selected like a jury and supported with independent, expert knowledge, this is a self-determined democracy that represents the diversity of the population.

The work is to create dialogue: listening to each other, and learning. This is what assemblies do. And we need many of them: conversations with family and friends, colleagues and our community; negotiating with organisations; shouting from the rooftops.

We have the power to do this. Let's do the hard work in the spirit that there is a Better Story to be told, that there is a place for everyone in the work that is required, that each and every one of us is making a difference.

The work is writing that Better Story as we go. Together.

The
Work
is
Rest
&
Play

Sometimes the work can *only* happen when we do it together. That's the best kind, when you know you are needed. Everyone wants to love and to be loved. Just like when we play, it doesn't have to be on our own. The forces against life want you to feel atomised and alone. What this 'somewhere' looks like (and how it can be a lot more fun) is this:

- ✿ Create a weekly ritual where your close neighbours meet in one of your houses to play cards and games, share food and stories.
- 🌿 Organise community-led planning groups for alternative travel and commuting such as new cycle routes, work hubs and pathway clear-up collectives.
- ✚ Volunteer as a family at a shelter to work with people in your community.
- 🍷 Gather a list of the skills and knowledge everyone in your family and friends have, and have them share those with others, whether it be how to cook pies, mediaeval history, fixing bikes, or growing herbs.

Everyone is needed and everyone has a role to play. The work we need to do isn't based so much on rights but on responsibilities. The work is in service to people, nature and community. Cleaning our rivers and oceans, rewilding green spaces, a mass roll-out of home insulation, new and renewable energy sources and free public transport, workers' cooperatives, and creating a new economy centred around caring for everyone. The list is endless – and the opportunities too.

To be

Human

is to

Resist.

We don't choose tasks like this because they're easy.
They choose us.

You've been chosen. What will you do?

Do not be a bystander to the ongoing injustice and harm. Choose to act in service to life and live in active nonviolent resistance to build a new humanity.

This moment calls on us to be great. Not as superheroes carrying the weight of the world on our shoulders alone, but as ordinary people who see ourselves in the faces of others. Because what power is most afraid of is people setting aside their differences to stand together.

To resist is to renew. To resist is to create. To resist is to step into our own power, together. We're mad as hell but we're led by our hearts. We choose nonviolence. We choose community. We choose to make a future of care and freedom.

We're made by this doing.

We resist in peace, love, and grief.

This is the work.

We
Will

to support each other.

to make our communities self-sustaining.

to reorganise our economy to benefit all of us,
not the greedy few.

to make our country a safe place for those in need
when millions inevitably flee from areas that are
becoming uninhabitable.

to see ourselves in the faces of others.

Work.

to create a self-determined politics.

to make our countries pay their international debts.

to maintain mutual aid initiatives.

to create new forms of education to counter
misinformation.

to forgive ourselves and each other as
we dedicate our lives to protecting life.

to dissolve the lies that separate race, class,
and generation, and refuse to remain divided.

for all our lives.

Our age has its own particular vocation:
the creation of a civilisation founded upon
the spiritual nature of work ... such a vocation
is the only thing great enough to put before
the peoples instead of the totalitarian idol.

Simone Weil, *The Need for Roots*

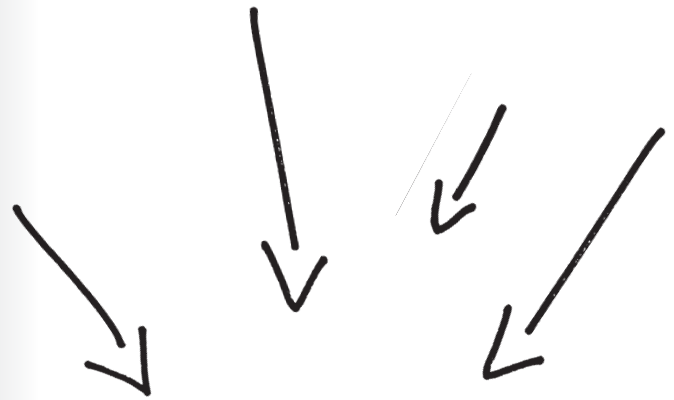


You have to act as if it were possible to
radically transform the world. And you have
to do it all the time.

Angela Davis



Living simply makes loving simple.
bell hooks



We know there is plenty of work to do. Are you
willing to work together? We humbly step into the
present and learn as we go, asking you to join us –
there are contributions everyone can make. It is
a labour of love for each other and our shared
lives together that reveals our true humanity as
interconnected people who recognise ourselves
in each others' faces. Please sign up and we
will contact you soon for what happens next.



For our ancestors and future generations

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extinction
rebellion

HUMANITY

Narrative
Shift

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