

Different perspectives on activism – find the place you fit in

Director Keith Badger shares advice and stories from four inspiring individuals. Each has a different approach and mindset to sustainability activism. To be an effective change-maker each person must first understand the type of activism that best suits their skill set and then bring that to the change they feel most passionately about.

Inspiring story One

Konda Mason: Oscar-nominated filmmaker and Grammy Award-winning music producer¹

In any movement for change there are these four quadrants. And people are typically drawn more to one than the other:

1. *Resisters - people who protest and resist the existing system.*
2. *Reformers - people on the inside of the system (e.g. business, government) bringing change.*
3. *Re-creators - people creating new methods outside the system (e.g. impact investors).*
4. *Re-imaginings - people (typically creatives) who point to a vision of how the world can be.*

When everybody's doing their part with all of it, change happens.

Inspiring story Two

Chris Rapley: Professor of Climate Science at University College London²

1. *Personal - do things to reduce your personal footprint. The world will hardly notice, but it's vital to maintain a sense of consciousness, create personal self-image, self-esteem and help engage others.*
2. *Professional - as **Mike Berners-Lee** (author of There is no planet B) says: Try to bring your whole self to work, including the bit of you that cares most for people and planet. Express yourself. Encourage others to do likewise. Anyone can open up the culture a crack.*
3. *Political - make your personal feelings known to politicians (speak and write to them) and vote consciously to prioritise sustainability concerns.*

Inspiring story Three

Retired GP Bob Rivett from Waterloo Bridge in London³

For many years I have been aware of the growing threat to life on Earth due to our overconsumption of the planet's finite resources, our pollution of land, air and sea, our disregard for other forms of life and, in particular, our reckless burning of fossil fuels. It's now clear that global heating and

¹ Konda Mason has love capital. Dumbo Feather online article published 7 June 2018.

² Note taking by Director Keith Badger when attending Professor Rapley's Meaningful Action Workshop.

³ Extinction Rebellion protesters aren't anarchists – we just want to save our world. The Guardian online article published on 19 July 2019.





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biodiversity loss are proceeding even faster than predicted just a few years ago and we are reaching a tipping point beyond which it will soon be too late to avoid the extinction of life as we know it. Like most of my generation living in the wealthy parts of the world, I must accept the guilt and responsibility of my own contribution to this situation.

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More and more people are waking up to the scale of the emergency: members of the public voice their concern, councils declare a climate emergency, and some politicians utter fine words. But we are yet to see this translated into effective action and there is no general acceptance or understanding of what that will entail. Because it will mean changing the way we live. The system that has brought us to this cliff edge is based on greed and inequality – we will only sustain life on this planet if we accept the need for less consumption and more social justice.

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Sitting on the bridge, waiting to be arrested, I was mainly thinking of my grandchildren. I was also thinking, desperately, that the world must change course before it is too late.

Inspiring story Four

Paul Polman: former CEO of Unilever⁴

The former boss of Unilever is seeking a team of “heroic chief executives” to drive a shift to a low-carbon, more inclusive way of doing business.

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Bosses, he insists, must commit to fighting inequality and tackling the climate emergency. “We are about to commit the biggest intergenerational crime in the history of mankind. We need to bring us together not drive us apart,” said the 63-year-old Dutchman...who has publicly backed the young people behind Extinction Rebellion and is a fan of the teenage activist Greta Thunberg.

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Polman said he is no longer ridiculed for suggesting that tackling climate change makes business sense and that companies are also beginning to see that addressing equal rights is just as important. “We are now at a point in society where the cost of not acting in these areas is higher than acting. It is becoming mainstream. It comes down to humans, that’s the missing element.”

⁴ Ex-Unilever boss seeks 'heroic CEOs' to tackle climate change and inequality. The Guardian online article published on 21 July 2019.

