

A Message to Greta Thunberg and the Youth Climate Strikers (2019)

Transcript of a talk by Charles Eisenstein

<https://charleseisenstein.org/video/a-message-to-greta-thunberg-and-the-youth-climate-strikers/>

What I love about the Youth Climate Strike is that people are taking a stand and saying, “I do not want to participate in a system that is destroying life on Earth. Why should I be schooled in participation in this system. It doesn’t make sense, so I’m not going to do it.”

That kind of refusal to comply; that kind of trust in values that embrace and serve life - that’s what we need on a mass level. And I’m really that happy young people are putting that ahead of the bribes and threats that keep them in the system, and that say that school is more important than taking a stand for Earth. So that energy is very...it’s like a fresh breeze for me and so many other people.

And I would caution that there are powerful forces that would like to co-opt that energy and divert it onto things that actually don’t disrupt the status quo too much. This is not just some technical matter of finding alternative energy sources to keep civilization-as-it-is running to maintain business as usual. We live on a planet that is alive.

We could cut emissions to zero and if we continue to degrade the organs of this living being - the forests, the wetlands, the whales, the elephants, the fish, all of the beings on Earth, all of the ecosystems - then the Earth will still die a death of a million cuts. Even if we cut emissions to zero.

So be careful about getting diverted onto these, and used, to promote these technical solutions such as geoengineering, such as bleaching the sky a paler shade of blue with sulphur aerosols that reflect sunlight. Problem solved! If you’re going to keep the issue to a narrow matter of global warming, problem solved. Business as usual can continue and we’ve saved the world.

Or carbon capture, giant machines in every city.

But what we want, and what is stirring us to this rebellion, is much bigger than ‘find some way to switch fuel sources.’ And I really want people to stay in touch with that and to go deeper and deeper. Where does the addiction of fossil fuels comes from? Can we just control that addiction? Like this civilizational addiction. Is it just something that we control? Or do we look at the source of it?

What is the crisis underneath the addiction to fossil fuels. Why are we, collectively we, pursuing a world of more and more and more that doesn’t even make us happier. Yeah, no wonder you don’t want to comply with that! And I would say, even if climate change weren’t a thing, still don’t comply with that! That’s not what you’re here for.

So hold that energy precious. Hold that impulse to serve life, to refuse the bribes and the threats; hold that precious. Don’t let it get co-opted towards something more superficial than where it really wants to go.

And thank you for being brave.