Regenerate yourself and those around you

Regenerative culture is about relationships. Our relationships with ourselves and personal histories, our relationships with what we struggle against, our relationships with other individuals day to day, and our relationships as a group – these are completely interdependent. Self care is also about taking care of the animal parts of the self that respond instinctively to stressful situations with fight or flight or faint.

A regenerative human culture is healthy, resilient and adaptable; it cares for the planet and it cares for life in the awareness that this is the most effective way to create a thriving future for all of humanity. Regenerative culture means improvements year on year, taking small steps to heal and improve, and on all levels, including individuals and communities. More than being a network of “activists”, we seek to find ways of being and doing that support positive change.

Whereas Regenerative culture is more than this, this document is about a healthy focus on mutually supporting categories of:

* self care – how we take care of our own needs and personal recovery from this toxic system
* interpersonal care – how we take care of the relationships we have, being mindful of how we affect each other, taking charge of our side of relationships
* community care – how we take care of our development as a network and community, strengthening our connections and adherence to these principles and values

We are not machines. We need to look after ourselves and each other in order to better look after each other and achieve what we want to achieve. Also, keeping the population subdued through stress, loneliness, sickness and anxiety is a feature of late-stage capitalism.

**How to achieve it?**

To foster self-care and intrapersonal care we need to take **Personal Responsibility** and continuously ‘track’ ourselves; being aware of our tendencies in regards to:

1. How much work we take on within XR. XR is based on autonomy, self organization and de-centralisation, so we get to choose our level of involvement.
2. The feelings, judgements, desires, expectations we bring with us into XR and how do we project these onto our comrades
3. The effect of societal conditioning on us, eg: the school system can instil in us the idea that there is always someone else in charge of our autonomy (we may carry negative associations around people in “leadership” roles) - we need to own this, not be ashamed of it and not be dictated to by it
4. Our privilege: getting to choose to engage in direct action/organising for system change is a privilege in itself. What other privileges do we have dependant on our gender, where we come from, our class, the different colours and shades of our skin. As people who live in a nation that has accumulated wealth and resources through violence and oppression, how do we grieve this, sit with this and continue to bring awareness into our lives and actions. We are all the product of our environment. We all internalise the violence inherent in our cultures. We have a duty to do the work that can undo those internalised prejudices and behaviours, so we can learn to interact in a healthier way.
5. Get to know your ‘edges’ - Where do you struggle? Where are you afraid? Then you can make an informed decision on how/when to challenge yourself
6. Get confident in your NOs and slow down your Yes. It can be easy to get swept up in the moment. Take your time, say you’ll think about it. No rush! You’ll be more sustainable if you are realistic about what you can take on.
7. Don’t be ashamed if you do take on too much; instead, let someone else know you anticipated being able to do more, and give the task back to the group or get someone else to do it.

**Burn outs**

The last two points are really important to prevent burn out. Burn-out is your body telling you you need to support yourself, get help where needed or take a break. Burn-out doesn’t always occur straight after an incident or period of high-stress, sometimes it is a delayed response and will only be felt months later. This is why it is so important to have a sustainable, reliable, supportive culture in place.

Burn-out can occur for people who take on or support direct action, including **both** organising **and** engaging directly, because we often take on a lot or find ourselves in high energy or anxiety situations, and of course we take this stuff on because we really care.

If you are experiencing it, or you see others around you going in that direction talk to them. It can be caused by taking on a lot of projects at one time, by being in a constant state of high-anxiety/stress, loss of external control and experiencing/witnessing traumatic events. After a prolonged period of a heightened state of stress, the body literally starts to work differently, changing your body’s hormone systems.

It can result in a range of symptoms such as exhaustion/fatigue, depression, insomnia, headaches, gastrointestinal problems (especially ulcers), frequent colds/flu, weight loss or gain, shortness of breath, hypertension, high cholesterol, coronary disease, impaired speech. More info at [www.emptycagesdesign.org/overcoming-burnout-part-5-the-biology-of-burnout](http://www.emptycagesdesign.org/overcoming-burnout-part-5-the-biology-of-burnout/)