



INVITATION!

Conception to COP Four Trimesters project: Please help us by sharing your story?

'The decisions at this COP will decide the quality of life for every living thing on this planet for the next century' (and beyond...?)

Christiana Figueres

What if, in the months leading up to COP26, we could conceive of and 'gestate' ideas of a *new era* in which the collective values of our societies were to drive sustainable habitation and co-existence on the earth?

Background

We are a group of psychologists, inspired by the creative and courageous leadership of individual women and women's groups involved in frontline environmental activism, to dream about the sort of world that will be born if global leaders take the right actions to protect our climate, repair our environment and nurture wellbeing.

We had an idea that the nine month period leading up to the momentous event that is COP26, in November 2021, has parallels with a human pregnancy. We are exploring and designing a series of events and actions, one for each 'trimester' leading up to and after COP26, to be supportive of the challenges that this gathering of world leaders faces in bringing to birth something new, shared and transformative.

Twitter: @xrpsychologists

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/XRPsychologists>

Email: projects@xrpsychologists.co.uk



2021: GRAVITY AND GRACE: CARE AND CHALLENGE FOR COP 26 AND BEYOND

Delegates from all the nations who signed the UN Paris Agreement in 2015 will come to Glasgow to discuss solutions to the global climate crisis.

Detailed plans are in place, pressure is building, signs of new possibilities are becoming both more apparent and more numerous. Collaboration is at its heart. There's a lot to do. Many want it to go as well as possible, ready to help so it has every chance of succeeding.

John Paul Lederach describes the change we need as springing from our *moral imagination*, which he defines as:

'the capacity to imagine something rooted in the challenges of the real world yet capable of giving birth to that which does not yet exist.'

John Paul Lederach in Barry Knight's

FACING THE SHADOW WITHIN OURSELVES TO #BUILDBACKBETTER

In February 2021, we held a successful '**conception**' event in collaboration with other individuals and groups, exploring shared inspiration from some of XR's core principles and strategy, connections with ten actions from *The Future we Choose* by Christiana Figueres and Tom Rivett-Carnac, and inspiration from Wangari Maathie, Mary Robinson, Sharon Blackie, Greta Thunberg, Joanna Macy and others. We acknowledged a desire for a shift towards leadership with more feminine energy. From this event the idea emerged of building our next activity around listening and sharing stories.

In this project we hope to build on this idea of pregnancy and gestation as a metaphor, using stories to connect with the experience of potentially gestating something new. We would like to transform personal stories, or extracts from stories, relating to experiences of any stage of a human pregnancy.

1. The first stage is to invite men and women, young and old, with a wide variety of experiences to share their stories (hence this invitation).
2. In the second stage we will transform these stories so that they read as if it is a new era being conceived and born, rather than a real baby. We see this as 'putting our weight behind the future we want to see' (Joanna Macy & Chris Johnstone, *Active Hope*). We have piloted the process of transposing stories and we feel it has lots of potential.
3. Finally the transformed extracts will be displayed publically in an invitation to everyone, whether or not they have experienced an actual birth, to add their energy and 'weight' to the idea of the birth of a new era, which it is hoped will pivot around fairer and more sustainable societal values.

XR aims is to be disruptive but there are many ways to do this. We hope that the transformation and sharing of personal stories linking two potentially powerful topics will engage at an emotional level, and that this will *disrupt* our natural tendency to intellectualise the challenge that is the Climate & Ecological crisis. We have piloted the process of contributing and transforming stories and we believe this project could be as powerful as dramatic, disruptive actions on the streets. We acknowledge that we are deliberately choosing to take a risk that we may provoke difficult feelings in both our contributors and readers of the end stories.*

Twitter: @xrpsychologists

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/XRPsychologists>

Email: projects@xrpsychologists.co.uk

2021: GRAVITY AND GRACE: CARE AND CHALLENGE FOR COP 26 AND BEYOND

You are warmly invited to engage with this metaphorical journey by contributing a story and/or sharing this invitation with others.

How can I help?

We are inviting women and men to create a piece of prose or poetry or image reflecting on their own experiences, or those of someone close to them, of: wondering about whether to have a child; the decision to try or not to try; the process of trying to conceive; finding out about a confirmed pregnancy; finding out that conception has *not* taken place; loss and divergence from a hoped for path; changing emotions during pregnancy; birth and the early weeks of meeting the baby (if this was part of the experience). It doesn't matter how recent or ancient your story, or if you are a mum, dad, relative or friend, or had a positive or negative or mixed experience. We would love to hear from you!

I want to help but I don't feel able to contribute a story?

If for any reason you don't wish to, or feel able to share a story, your support is still enormously valuable. Please follow us on social media and look out for the next stage: output about a shift towards a new era, with all our hopes and expectations of fair and sustainable values. Whatever your relationship to parenthood this is something we strongly suspect will resonate with you. If you feel able to like and share our posts then you will have amplified and nurtured this shift!

What will happen to my story?

XR Psychologists would like to transpose an extract from your story, paragraph or piece so that it retains the essence of the original but reads as though it is a new era with new or recovered values that is being gestated and eventually born. Whole stories, extracts, woven stories, quotations, poems, will then be presented back to the world throughout the series of social media posts (video, text, images). It may be that you would wish to reclaim the story and read it to camera or even at an event! It could be that a theatre company enacts some of the stories. Our plan is for the four trimester stories to be shared predominantly throughout 2021. We may continue to share stories where relevant beyond COP26 in November.

Whilst the exact use of the stories will emerge, we are fully committed to honouring the ownership of the original and will seek your permission for the finished version and the proposal for each piece of work. If you are not comfortable, you can withdraw your permission at any point.

Can I be anonymous/acknowledged?

Our intention is to acknowledge every contributor. However, we are more than happy to anonymise the contributions. We will ask you to state your preferred option at every stage and you can also change your mind at any point.

When do I need to submit it by?

We will welcome contributions at any time.

I would like to contribute but I don't have time /confidence to write.

We can phone you and you can tell us and we will write it down and show it back to you?

Twitter: @xrpsychologists

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/XRPsychologists>

Email: projects@xrpsychologists.co.uk

2021: GRAVITY AND GRACE: CARE AND CHALLENGE FOR COP 26 AND BEYOND

How do I submit my story?

Please send it to xrpsychologists@gmail.com along with some contact details. Then we will be in touch. You can email us if you wish to request the prompt questions below in an email, with no obligation!

Can you offer any prompts to help me get started?

Think of a time when someone close to you or perhaps you yourself were going through the experience of wondering about whether to try to conceive or having a pregnancy initially confirmed.

It may help to bring to mind an object, photograph or place that you associate with this time, or with a particular moment.

Let yourself reflect on how you felt in that moment. How you felt as the situation progressed and your experiences over the months that followed, as you took in and adapted to the news. Perhaps the pregnancy continued to full term and you recall the impact on yourself of the baby's birth. Perhaps there was loss. Think about how this impacted on you, sharing as much as you feel comfortable to do so: and whether you feel your story links at all to your hopes and fears for the future we face together now.

Prompt questions to use if helpful:

- How did you feel and how did this change over time?
- What challenges did you face?
- What helped you through difficult times?
- What was it like being with others going through similar experiences?
- What was the impact on you of other people's reactions?
- How does your story connect with your hopes and fears about the future we face now?

How long does it need to be?

As long as you like! Even a single sentence or paragraph will be welcomed.

Thank-you so much!

*A final note.

If reading this invitation has evoked strong, powerful emotions for you, and you feel you need it, we trust that you will seek out someone to support you, such as a trusted friend or confidante. We acknowledge that the topics of the Climate & Ecological Emergency and Pregnancy & Childbirth are both emotionally powerful and potentially enormously challenging, as well as full of potential, hope, and joy.

