

Dealing with change

Navigating the transition into adult dominated spaces as a young person involves managing change, building confidence and effectively communicating your ideas. By developing key skills, setting realistic goals and utilising support networks, you can handle the challenges and continue making a positive impact on environmental and conservation issues. However, moving into environments dominated by adults can be daunting. It's important to acknowledge these feelings and understand that they are a common part of transitioning into new roles and spaces.

Dealing with change is a big part of being a changemaker that a lot of people struggle with, so if you're experiencing this, the first thing to know is that you're not alone in it. Experiencing change can lead to feelings of anxiety, uncertainty or overwhelm. Understanding these impacts helps in managing them effectively and there are lots of things you can do to make dealing with change easier, as well as lots of things you can do to support others.

Below are three sections written by **Young Changemaker, Emma Greenwood**, who has had a lot of experience with advocating for environmental changes in adult dominated spaces.



- 🌿 **Dealing with change yourself**
- 🌿 **Supporting others with change**
- 🌿 **Additional resources**

Feel free to read them all or skip to the section that you need at this moment.

Dealing with change yourself

Written by **Emma Greenwood, Young Changemaker**

Find a community

Don't be afraid to lean into your community. When it comes to pushing for change our power comes from the fact that we're not in it alone. Don't be afraid to find a collective, whether it's online or in person, who believe in similar things to you and you feel safe within. Having people to share experiences and struggles with will be a MASSIVE help when things get hard.

If you don't know of any groups near you, make sure to give it a Google or check on various social media channels by searching things like: 'Local Conservation Groups' or 'UK Conservation Campaign groups near me'. When looking for a group, it can be a matter of trying them out to find the one that feels safe and accessible for you. Don't feel like you need to commit straight away and remember that the groups you're involved in can also grow and change with you.

Take action

Whilst it is important to sit with your feelings, sometimes taking action can be a great way to channel any fear, anxiety or anger you have into something proactive and beneficial to your mental health. Seeing the real impact you can have in the world and **focusing on the things you can control/change** is a great way to realise that things are rarely as bad as they may seem at first.

Taking action could look like joining a local rewilding or community gardening project, going to a protest, writing to your MP or even simply doing something at home like upcycling a water bottle into a bird feeder. Taking action looks different for everyone and there isn't really a 'right way' to do it, so let your imagination go wild and see where it takes you.

Get out in nature

Considering many of us are fighting to protect it, it's all too easy to forget to slow down and spend time in nature. If you're feeling overwhelmed or disempowered, making time to go outside, sit with no distractions (I know the music can be tempting) and simply taking in nature can be incredibly grounding.

A good exercise to ground yourself in nature is to go to a local green space, crouch down and find a small square of earth in front of you that looks interesting. For anything from 2 to 20 minutes, explore the small square in front of you, taking in all the plants, insects and fungus that may be there, just making note of it. Reading this, it may seem like that would take you 20 seconds but you'd be surprised how much of nature there is to see when you stop and really look. You'll be even more surprised about how much more nature you may notice after doing this!

Know when to say 'No'

For Changemakers, this is a big one, because when it feels like everything needs to change it can be easy to feel like you need to do EVERYTHING to change it. However, you're only one person and you don't need to do it all. Being aware of how your body's feeling, how much capacity you've got and when you've reached your limit is possibly one of the biggest strengths you can have in dealing with change.

Don't be afraid to say 'NO' because there is a world of people out there pushing for change alongside you and someone else will be able to pick it up. Rest is as much a part of pushing for change as the protests and meetings are.

Know when to get help

Sometimes we can't deal with change alone and things can become too much. If this is the case, discussing how you're feeling with a trusted adult can be a good way of identifying how you can get additional support. You can find more information on this in the 'external resources' below.

Supporting others with change

There may also be instances where those around you are struggling to deal with change and drawing on your experience can be a great way to support them. If you're stuck on how to help them though, here are some good things to do:

- 🌱 **Be there to listen** - Sometimes people just need someone to rant to, simply being there to listen and validate how they feel can be a massive help.
- 🌱 **Share how you feel** - Helping someone see that they're not alone in feeling how they feel can make it feel like a much less isolating experience. If you can have open and honest conversations it can help make things feel a little less overwhelming; as they say, a problem shared is a problem halved.
- 🌱 **Don't try to fix it** - It can be tempting to try and offer 'solutions' or stop the feelings but sitting with the emotions and feeling them can be a very important part of dealing with change.
- 🌱 **Redirect them if needed** - Sometimes our friends need more support than we can offer and that's okay to note and point out. Telling your friend to talk to a trusted adult or directing them to online mental health resources like those in the 'external resources' below can be one of the best ways to support them.

External Resources

- 🌱 **#HoldThisSpace** - A digital tool that takes you on an interactive journey, helping you to explore your emotions around climate change.
- 🌱 **The Resilience Project** - An open-source library of assets to help everyone including young people, parents, educators and mental health professionals.
- 🌱 **Young Minds** - Tips for coping with anxiety about change.
- 🌱 **Mind** - Useful contacts for 11-18-year-olds who need support with mental health.

Stay resilient, stay informed and continue to drive meaningful change.