

The Big DIY Assemblies

Instructions 1/3

Set up and intros (5 mins)

- Form a group of 6 people (no more) ideally with people you don't know
- Appoint a facilitator (takes people through these instructions), note taker (give them the Notes and Answers card) and timekeeper
- Facilitator: Welcome everyone and read out today's question: **How might we act together to elevate the rights of nature in everything we do?**
- "The conversation you are about to have is a unique opportunity to connect with others on an important topic, to exchange ideas and support and consider a pathway forward."
- "We are using a format developed by Talk Shop (talkshopuk.org): our thanks to them"
- "Let's have a simple introductions round: Name, town and perhaps group"

The Big DIY Assemblies

Instructions 2/3

Deep listening (10 mins)

- Facilitator: “Great discussions are helped when you actively listen. We’ll begin with an active listening exercise.” See back of Instructions 3 card for this (ask if any questions)

Topic input (15 mins)

- Facilitator: Read out today’s question again. Our task is to decide together our best three ideas.
- Facilitator - Input to stimulate the discussion: Give the other 5 members an information card each
- Allow 2 mins for everyone to read their card in silence
- After reading, each person in turn reads out their card to the whole group (no discussion)

The Big DIY Assemblies

Instructions 3/3

Discussion (30 mins)

- Facilitator: “Please raise a finger if you want to speak. Wave your hands or put your thumbs up if you agree with a point.”
- “If you were here yesterday, do bring in any relevant points from the discussion”
- Towards the end, decide your **top three ideas**, together, for the note taker to write on the answer card

Integration (5 mins)

- Ask one person to submit the ideas to Polis
- Everyone: Visit Polis to view and rate ideas from other groups (open until Tuesday)
- Facilitator: “This concludes our assembly. Exchange contacts and any follow up steps if you want to.”

The Big DIY Assemblies

Deep Listening

In a People's Assembly all voices are heard and valued equally. No one person or group dominates - we are not trying to win an argument here, but instead uncover a group wisdom. To do this we must listen carefully and respectfully to everyone. Let's practice this active listening:

Split into pairs and take a few minutes each to share some of the meaningful experiences you have had in nature.

Share as openly as you can. Remember to listen carefully, with your full attention - don't think about what you're going to say or interrupt - silences are OK!

After 3 minutes (timekeeper) swap round and the other person shares their experiences.

The Big DIY Assemblies

1. Our current relationship to the natural world

Humans were originally much closer to the natural world.

Vandana Shiva, an Indian scholar and environmental activist, explains how this changed:

“Separation is the characteristic of the convergence of patriarchy and capitalism. First nature is separated from humans, then humans are separated on the basis of gender, religion, caste, class. This separation is at the root of violence – first in the mind, then in our lives.” PTO

The Big DIY Assemblies

Capitalist patriarchy denies the creativity of nature, and hence the Rights of Mother Earth. This results in the mismanagement of the earth, our home. Without nature and her ecological processes to sustain life on earth, the grandest economies collapse, and biggest civilisations disappear.”

Another factor is our language. Other languages make no distinction between humans and nature; colonisation changed this. Also, some Western philosophers popularised the idea that humans and non-humans are distinct.



bit.ly/tbodyiy

The Big DIY Assemblies

2. What is happening to biodiversity?

Up to one million animal and plant species are now threatened with extinction. Recent rates of extinction of plants and animals are running hundreds of times faster than in pre-human times.

The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world, ranking 228th out of the 240 countries in the Biodiversity Intactness Index. 1 in 4 of British mammals are now threatened with extinction in the UK. These include water voles, hedgehogs, the hazel dormouse, and wildcats. PTO

The Big DIY Assemblies

The Government has only protected 5% of England, against its own target of 30% by 2030. The UK has failed to reach 17 out of 20 UN biodiversity targets agreed on 10 years ago and in six areas has gone backwards.

Yet, around the world, almost 50 species have been saved from extinction. These include the California Condor, the Iberian Lynx and Przewalski's Horse.

Info from *Scientists for XR*



bit.ly/tbodyiy

The Big DIY Assemblies

3. The rights of nature

There are two examples below. When reading them, remember that ‘giving rights to nature’ makes humans, the givers, sound superior. It’s not like that - nature has its own worth and its own rights. Also, laws are just one way to think about the rights of nature.

Two countries that have given legal rights to rivers are Australia and New Zealand, for the Yarra and Whanganui rivers. Because rivers are “voiceless” their rights are implemented by a custodian. Indigenous peoples play a central role in giving these rivers a voice.

PTO

The Big DIY Assemblies

Ecocide is the destruction of the natural environment by deliberate or negligent human action. The UK's leading campaigners have been Polly Higgins and Jojo Mehta.

Ecocide is starting to find its way into law. In March 2023, the European Parliament called on member states to recognize ecocide in their criminal law.



bit.ly/tbodyiy

The Big DIY Assemblies

4. Changing our relationship to the natural world

Thoughts to prompt the discussion:

- Seek out indigenous understandings of nature. Indigenous Peoples place Mother Earth at the centre of cultural, judicial, and social systems.
- Access to nature is a fundamental - not just a nice to have. Like a baby being separated from its mother - it's vital.
- Tipping bleach in the loo is poisoning ourselves
- We should stop viewing the natural world as resources PTO

The Big DIY Assemblies

- Trust and love are important - trust that we don't need to hoard nature as resources and love that connects us to nature of which we are a part.
- Joanna Macy, an American environmental activist, says "Of all the dangers we face, from climate chaos to nuclear war, none is so great as the deadening of our response." Also, "Active Hope is waking up to the beauty of life on whose behalf we can act. We belong to this world."



bit.ly/tbodyi

The Big DIY Assemblies

5. Acting together

To summarise yesterday's theme:
Create relationships then do something with them. That could be climate emergency centres or create just a place to talk.

In terms of today's theme, reconnect with nature and move from separation to oneness.

It can be as simple as pulling weeds together, growing veg, or walking in nature. Put your hands in the ground, marvel at the animals and insects. Do this together! PTO

The Big DIY Assemblies

More broadly, think about the coalition that brought us here today. What connects us? What are the issues that we all care about most, such as the state of our rivers?

Some more questions to think about: How can we act so that everyone in our neighbourhood has access to basic needs? How can we change our systems and our cultures? How we can interact in less unequal, extractive, exploitative ways?



bit.ly/tbodyi

The Big DIY Assemblies

Notes and Answers 1

1.

2.

3.

The Big DIY Assemblies

Notes and Answers 2



bit.ly/tbodyi