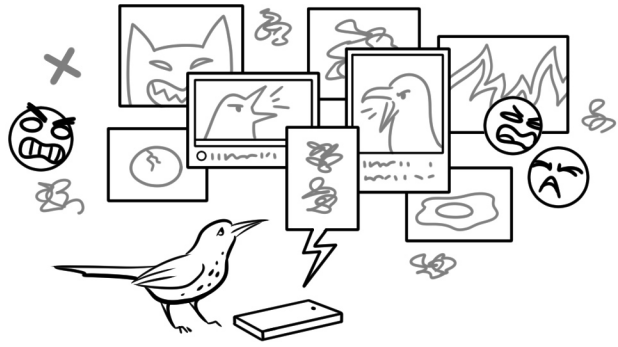
FOR WHOM WE DOOM SCROLL

DESPITE THE DOOM WE DARE TO BLOOM

A MINI-GUIDE SERIES ON HOPE AND POWER



Have you been trapped in existential dread?

Reading world-ending headline after headline, feeling powerless to bring the powerful to justice, hearing the masses regurgitate propaganda.

Well, the good news is you're **not** alone.

You're feeling the same doom as many Americans tuned into our modern social media landscape. While the Internet has been a boon to humanity, connecting us globally, and spreading knowledge in ways never before possible; current platforms are designed to optimize engagement for profits, which includes indulging our fear and anger.

As individuals it's all too easy to get caught up in the information flood.

Analysis paralysis from the catastrophe avalanche is because of real psychology. The way we naturally process info served us well for centuries, but our brains haven't caught up with the jump technology has made in recent decades.

The recency illusion:
a bias that evolved from our ancestors' need to prioritize new info as threatening.

Useful when they needed to make split-second decisions if a rustle in the bush was prey or predator. However, in our modern age, our instincts treat the honks of incoming traffic the same as the headlines of global disaster. And overexposure exhausts our brain's ability to discern which information is dangerous, ultimately leading to fatigue.

It's no wonder we feel powerless with the world's injustices on loop. But remember, learning about tragedy somewhere else doesn't change how you can help your own community, right now.

Give yourself grace for the things you can't change, and focus on **what you can do.**

The illusory truth effect:
a bias where we're predisposed to believe information that's been repeated to us, regardless of whether it's true or false.

Before the invention of writing, our ancestors relied on oral repetition to retain information. It worked well when our social groups were small and it's sensible that more corroboration of a truth makes it more likely to be true.

But our modern world is complicated, with thousands of narratives and powers who'd want to influence our choices. We **must not** underestimate how misinformation can affect our psyches. Exposing ourselves to misinfo repeatedly, even when we know it's false, can make us more inclined to believe it. This is why it's important to get your news from trusted sources, and not just from "Trending Now" algorithms.

Social media favors engagement over truth, a simple narrative over nuance. When you see a story that shocks you, follow up, read beyond the headline onto the full article. **Slow down**, resist reacting in the moment, and find the context.

It's especially important to resist dunking on bad takes over social media. Repeating the opposition's talking points just exposes yourself and your followers to their rhetoric. You're doing the job of spreading and legitimizing their words for them.

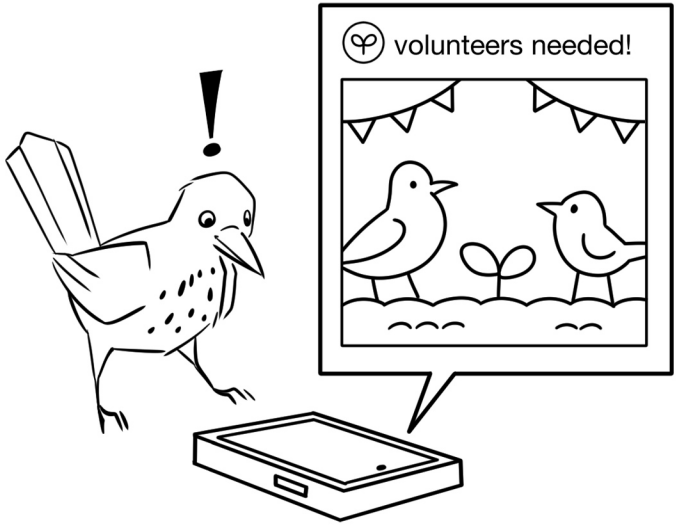
Remember to have **patience** for yourself.

These platforms have been engineered to monopolize our attention. Encouraging us to stay trapped in a loop of slop, not only serves to provide profit through ads, but keeps us distracted in hopelessness. We are effectively denied the power of our own collective activism.

- Pay attention to your **emotions** as you scroll. Do you feel fear, anger, doom? It could be a sign to take a break.

- Resist the temptation to dunk on bad takes, giving air to your opponents spreads their words further. Feel empowered to **block** and move on.

- **Slow down** and reduce reliance on social media feeds to educate yourself on current events. Find newsletters, follow local news sources, read the full articles. Take time to absorb the information thoroughly.



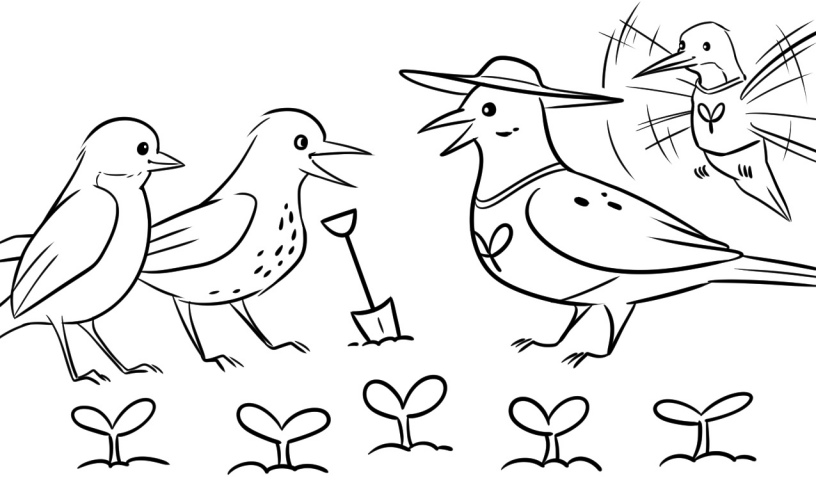
Social media is a powerful tool, but consumption is **not** a substitute for praxis.

We can use it with **intention** to educate ourselves and find connections with others who wish to better the world. There's no getting around the hard work of organizing your community. It requires speaking to neighbors, breaking silence with strangers, learning from our differences, and finding common ground.

It won't be easy or always comfortable, but the **growth** will be worthwhile.

Start with 1-3 topics you'd like to improve in our world. Look out for local groups or activists who share your goals and are already doing the work. The Internet can be a great tool to find these organizers in your local area, and once you do: follow their newsletters, go to in-person or virtual meetups. Invite your loved ones and introduce yourselves. Make connections and listen for calls-to-action.

No single person can stop the world from burning, but if you start with your own neighborhood you may be surprised with how much you can help.



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