

My Letter To Greta: Some Questions and a Piece of Advice

Dear Greta Thunberg,

Congratulations on making the cover of Time and being named “Person of the Year.” That’s quite an achievement for a person your age. Though I had followed you online by reading a few articles, the Time honor led me to look more deeply into your background. That investigation left me with some questions.

First, I wondered who is providing the money for you to travel so extensively. In the last year, you’ve made appearances before the United Nations, and you’ve spoken throughout Europe, Canada, and the United States. How do you afford such expeditions? I’m an old guy, still working, and I count my blessings when I can rent a house at the beach for a week. I looked online for some information on your financial backers, but other than one bogus magazine cover, not a word.

Recently, you traveled across the Atlantic on a sailboat. You did so to avoid leaving a “carbon footprint” through air travel. That’s a noble gesture, but I’m curious as to what you might say to a man flying from New York to Stockholm to visit his dying mother, or to a woman flying from Los Angeles to Tokyo to seal a business deal. Should they go by sailboat? What about people like me? Put me on the ocean, and in half an hour I am sick as a dog.

In September 2019, you and fifteen other young people sued five countries – Argentina, Brazil, Germany, France, and Turkey – for failing to abide by the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement. You frequently criticize European nations and the U.S. for pollution, yet you avoid criticizing two of the world’s largest polluters, China and India. Why?

You have encouraged other young people to follow your example by cutting school on Fridays to protest climate change. Given the deplorable state of education in some countries, is that wise? Would it not be better to encourage teenagers to stay in school and learn as much as they can about the world they live in? Why not engage in afterschool protests or Saturday vigils? Do you ever lie awake at night wondering whether you might be harming the education of others?

I'm also curious about your credentials. How deeply have you researched climate change? Have you spoken to many scientists, both those who believe we are in a catastrophic situation and those who take the opposite point of view? Though I believe climate change is wrapped up in politics, I also know I am too ignorant of the science to argue for or against its reality. Please share the scientific data that has convinced you the world will soon end.

Your biography at Wikipedia says you suffered from depression around age 11. Are you still suffering from depression? Do you think we should be throwing the world's problems on kids who are still learning multiplication tables and enjoying "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory?" If you do believe that, please explain why. It doesn't seem to have worked out too well for you.

Some commentators have said that because of your tender age and your Asperger's syndrome and obsessive-compulsive disorder, you should be immune from criticism. If they mean ad hominem attacks, I agree completely. But your views on climate change are a different thing altogether. Greta, if you step into the public arena and demand changes that may possibly wreck the economy, and if others disagree with your analysis of climate change, why should you not face criticism from those who disagree with you?

Finally, some advice from an old guy: Please stop looking to governments for solutions. Governments generally create as

many problems as they promise to solve. Here in America, for example, government keeps promising to fix everything from health care to education – but it's not working. Meanwhile, our country is \$23 trillion in debt and counting. The socialism you seem to embrace has even more dire consequences, both in terms of personal freedom and societal welfare. As for climate change, countries like China, Cuba, and Venezuela hardly seem on the cutting edge of environmental protections.

All my best to you as we enter the New Year,

[Jeff Minick](#)

—

[Image Credit: Flickr-ulricaloeb, [CC BY 2.0](#)]