

# #YOLO

“You only live once”, “I don’t care” and “F--- it all”. When grown-ups hear us talk like this, they feel reassured that we are nothing more than a generation of lazy, careless, dismissive teenagers, brainsick due to smartphone overuse. Therefore, we won’t make it far regarding climate change, they say. But it’s not like they’ve managed to solve the problem of climate change themselves, is it?

So can anyone have faith in us anymore? Well, I still believe in our generation’s ability to take the long overdue action to fight climate change, all while #yolo is trending.

However, one may claim that if we live by and act on the #yolo mentality, nothing really matters to us and we will keep depleting and damaging ecosystems and destroying our planet. On the other hand, when living like “we only live once”, we may want the time that is never coming back to be as great as possible. We are very much aware that we only have this one life and that it should not be characterised by air pollution, animal extinction, raging wildfires, disastrous hurricanes or whatever environmental disaster you can think of. That means we care for our environment BECAUSE of #yolo.

Now that we have figured out why there is still hope for our generation, what good can we do? From time to time, we all think that our actions are nothing more than a drop in the ocean – futile and irrelevant. The ten largest companies are responsible for more than half the world’s pollution. Well, if we all stopped endorsing them by buying their products, they would have to rethink their strategies. But let’s be real: the moment our parents offer us a new phone or money for new clothing items, who of us seriously starts thinking about the environment and turns down the offer in its favour?

I could go on telling you what we’ve already heard a thousand times before; it’s not like it’s a bad thing to get informed about the actions we can take to save the environment, which basically means saving ourselves. But I am not some sort of environmental goddess, so telling you to change your behaviour doesn’t feel right. I would be a massive hypocrite if I did, keeping on acting as I do. Instead, I should start with myself, like Michael Jackson sings in “Man in the Mirror”: “If you want to make the world a better place, take a look at yourself and then make a change.”

We all need to change our own behaviour, but in order to succeed we need to have the internalised will to do so, and not some people constantly telling us to. I can only recommend you take a moment and evaluate if your choices are morally and ethically acceptable. I know that mine are not. Yet.