

Debate Ammunition: You are not powerless

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THE RICHARD J MURPHY YOUTUBE CHANNEL

DEBATE AMMUNITION

You Are Not Powerless

Funding the Future | July 2026

Topic

Individuals who feel angry and overwhelmed by a mad world are neither crazy nor helpless: with a credible plan, a small community of support, and the courage to persist, they can make real change, from the local to the international.

The video that this Debate Ammunition supports [is available here.](#)

The Core Argument

Recognising that the world is mad and feeling angry about it is not a personal failing. It is a sane and appropriate response, and it is the indispensable first step toward doing something about it.

The instruction to suppress anger is not neutral advice. It is a neoliberal trope designed to keep people in their place and prevent them from challenging a status quo that benefits those at the top. Reclaiming that anger as a motivating force is itself a political act.

Change is possible, and individuals and small groups with learned expertise, credible plans, and persistence can reshape policy at scale. That the Tax Justice Network's 2015 achievement in getting country-by-country reporting adopted as law in 80 countries, started from one person's idea proves it.

The Argument Structure

Step 1 — Recognise the world is mad, not you:

The starting point is understanding that anger and confusion at the state of the world are rational responses, not symptoms of personal failing. The person who wrote to Richard Murphy after watching the Funding the Future video [You Are Not Crazy](#) had reached that point: once he understood he was the sane one, he was freed to act. Without that clarity, nothing follows.

Step 2 — Reclaim anger as a tool:

We are repeatedly told to manage and suppress our anger. That instruction serves those who benefit from the status quo. Anger is the recognition that something is wrong; it is the source of motivation to look for solutions. The goal is not to be consumed by it but to use it as fuel for action.

Step 3 — Identify your issue and build a credible plan:

Choose the area where you can develop genuine expertise, then write a plan that works within what is actually possible: real possibilities, real funding routes, and real cooperation from real people. Incredible demands undermine campaigns. Credible ones persuade people they are deliverable and worth supporting. The Tax Justice Network wrote down its goals at its outset in 2003; twelve years later most of those goals had become OECD policy.

Step 4 — Act, communicate, and persist:

Use every available channel: a blog, letters to local newspapers, local radio phone-ins, emails to MPs.

Find two or three people who share your concerns and meet regularly for mutual support. Expect the timescale to be measured in years or decades, not weeks. Persistence, not genius, not fame, and not money, is the defining trait of everyone who has ever changed anything.

Their Argument → Your Rebuttal

They Say

Your Response

One individual can't change anything against the weight of wealth and power.

Country-by-country reporting, which is now law in 80 countries was thought up by me and took 12 years to deliver.

The OECD, one of the world's most powerful economic institutions, adopted the goals that two people wrote down when they founded the Tax Justice Network.

Ask: if not individuals, then who exactly is supposed to change the world?, internationally, nationally or locally?

Anger just makes people irrational. Stay calm and persuade people rationally.

The instruction to suppress anger is not a neutral piece of advice. It is a neoliberal mechanism for keeping people in their place and preventing challenges to the status quo.

Anger is the recognition that something is wrong. Without it there is no motivation to seek solutions.

The goal is not to be consumed by it; it is to use it.

Plans have to be big and ambitious to make a real difference.

Plans that ask for things that cannot be delivered, cooperation that will not be given, or funding on an unimaginable scale achieve nothing except demoralisation.

A credible plan for an allotment can change real lives. And it demonstrates the method that scales: identify a real resource, a real site, a real committee, a real funding path.

Local is not less significant than national. It is just as important, and often faster.

Most people don't have the platform or expertise to influence anything.

Local newspapers, radio phone-ins, parish magazines, emails to MPs; all these channels exist and they are hungry for contributions.

Expertise is built, not innate. Richard Murphy and John Christensen were not well known when they started the Tax Justice Network. They had knowledge and they used it.

The question is not whether you have a platform. It is whether you are willing to try to build one.

The One-Liners

“You are not powerless, but you are the only one who can decide to act.”

“The instruction to suppress your anger is itself a political act, by people who benefit from your silence.”

“Every large change in the world started as one person's credible plan.”

“Local is not smaller than national; it is just as important, and often faster.”

“Persistence is the defining characteristic of everyone who has ever changed anything.”

Questions to Ask

If individuals cannot change things, how did country-by-country reporting end up as law in 80 countries, starting from one person's idea?

Who benefits when people believe their anger is irrational and their action pointless?

What is the specific, real-world obstacle to your plan, and is it genuinely insurmountable, or does it just need a credible solution you haven't yet worked out?

If not you, then who? And if not now, then when?

Further Reading

Post

Date

What it covers

[You are not crazy](#)

7 Jun 2026

The directly referenced predecessor to this video: establishes that feeling the world is mad is a sane and rational response, not a personal failing.

[Rejecting neoliberalism](#)

19 Jul 2026

Directly relevant to the argument that neoliberalism suppresses anger and discourages the community action needed to challenge it.

[We need a Courageous State to fight neoliberalism](#)

15 Jun 2026

Sets the political context in which individual and collective action becomes not just possible but necessary.

[Where's the plan?](#)

9 Dec 2025

On the critical importance of credible, detailed planning as the precondition for achieving change, the core argument of step three.

[The Tax Justice Network achieved a lot in twenty years, but right now it is going nowhere](#)

25 Oct 2023

Honest assessment of what the TJN achieved and the challenges of sustaining momentum; illustrates the persistence argument directly.

[Unreasonable people change the world](#)

17 Dec 2012

The case for challenging the status quo: argues that it is unreasonable people and not those who adapt to the world as it is are the people who change it.