

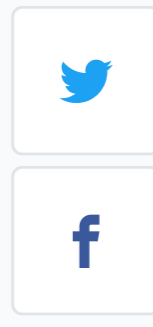
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Sep 15, 2021 **Why are we having kids if the world is burning?**

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## Why are we having kids if the world is burning?

By [twenty-something.](#) • Issue #16 • [View online](#)

by *Natalie Zisa*

### Just one more thing to consider before you procreate.

My roommate and I talk about our futures all the time: where we're going to live, who we want to be, what vacations we're going to take. We talk about our hopes and dreams and our fears—God knows we have a lot of them. So, it's really no surprise that one morning while sitting at the kitchen table, she blurted out, "why have kids if the world is burning?" (I told you we get deep.)

This question was based on the recent report released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, or IPCC. In simple terms, the world is burning. But more factually, the Earth's temperature will surpass [1.5 Celsius degrees](#) within the next 20 years. And in 30 years, Arctic seas will become ice-free. As a twenty-something, this could very well happen in our lifetime. If the recent weather patterns are any indication of what we can expect, we're doomed. And the worst part is, as humans, we've created this problem.

So, I initially didn't have any idea how to respond to my roommate. I had always known I wanted kids, despite all of the anxiety that comes with it. I'm worried about the day my kid will get bullied on the playground. Or the day I have to explain to them what a hate crime is. Essentially, anything that reminds me I can't keep them safe forever. But I never considered that climate change would have to factor into my decision too. On the other hand, my roommate has always been skeptical of having kids, and this only justified it.

In 2018, Katie O'Reilly wrote, *[To Have or Not to Have Kids in the Age of Climate Change](#)*, based on the previous IPCC report. "...I'm worried that if I procreate, I will contribute to melting ice caps, rising seas, and extreme weather. Worse, I might create brand-new victims of climate change—people who never asked to be part of this human-made mess," she writes.

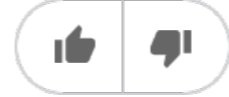
This discussion with my roommate and that article I read reminded me of an episode of *Sweet Magnolias* when a couple broke up over their desire to have kids. One of the characters considered it unethical to have your own kids when we can't support those already existing. Again, it was something I had never given any thought to.

Personally, I want to experience summer in the summer and winter in the winter. In fact, I want all four seasons (here on the East Coast, that is). Because that's how it's supposed to be. But I don't know that I have to give up having kids to experience that. Because I still imagine my future family and I would spend those summers together.

In the words of my roommate, having kids is like the highest form of optimism. That we're capable of improving our situation and making this world a better place.. So, I guess, for now, I choose optimism, but I wouldn't blame you if you didn't.

*Natalie is a freelance writer based in New York City. She loves SoulCycle, croissants with her coffee, and taking too many pictures of sunsets in Central Park. You can find more of her writing at [www.natalie-zisa.com](#) and you can find her on Instagram and Twitter @natalie\_zisa*

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### By twenty-something.

Twenty-something is a newsletter about being twenty-something. Or thirty-something. Or forty-something (you get the idea). Every week, we pose a question about the most important things impacting young adults today or the questions we can't stop thinking about while we mindlessly scrolling on our phones, taking our Screen Time to new limits.

We have a lot of questions. We will rarely answer them in their entirety. We will have fun trying.



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