

Our Greatest Need

MARIA RESSA ■ OSLO, NORWAY ■ DEC. 21, 2021

Veteran journalist Maria Ressa is a Filipino-American journalist and author who was the recipient of the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize for her work in safeguarding freedom of expression. In 2019, Ressa was arrested in the Philippines on trumped-up allegations that her media outlet published a libelous story about a powerful ally to President Rodrigo Duterte. Ressa, who has become an international icon for press freedom and democracy, is the first Filipino to win the Nobel Peace Prize. Here is an excerpt from her acceptance speech.

Our greatest need today is to transform that hate and violence, the toxic sludge that's coursing through our information ecosystem, prioritized by internet companies that make more money by spreading that hate and triggering the worst in us.

Well, that just means we have to work harder. In order to be the good, we have to believe there is good in the world.

I have been a journalist for more than 35 years. I've worked in conflict zones and war zones in Asia, reported on hundreds of disasters, and while I have seen so much bad, I have also documented so much good, when people who have nothing offer you what they have. Part of how we have survived the last five years of government attacks is because of the kindness of strangers, and the reason they help – despite the danger – is because they want to, with little expectation of anything in return. This is the best of who we are, the part of our humanity that makes miracles happen. This is what we lose in a world of fear and violence.

We are standing on the rubble of the world that was, and we must have the foresight and courage to imagine what might happen if we don't act now, and instead, please, create the world as it should be – more compassionate, more equal, more sustainable.

The destruction has happened. Now it's time to build – to create the world we want.

So please, with me, just close your eyes for just a moment, and imagine the world as it should be.

A world of peace, trust, and empathy, bringing out the best that we can be.

Open your eyes. Now go, we have to make it happen. Please, let's hold the line together.

Thank you.