

YEAR OF WEALTH ~ GOING GREEN: MARCH 2020

Building human, social, and environmental capital for ourselves and our communities

Hello! This month as we prepare for Spring and all its new opportunities, we turn our thoughts toward understanding the differences we make – large and small, alone and with others.

March Practice: Understanding Individual Impact

We all matter, and so do our choices. Some choices have greater impacts – positive and negative – than others, so it is important to understand them as much as you are able. This month, your practice is to consider the impact of a single choice: a product, a habit, a bus ride, a clothing provider, some new carpet, or maybe a stop at Goodwill; then determine if you wish to pursue that choice, change it, or end it – or that you need more information to decide.

Tips and Tricks:

Action: Consider a ‘budget,’ for purchases or use, to practice becoming more intentional about choices and honest about needs. I’m trying a clothing budget for this year: only 20 new unclean (high environmental impact) clothing purchases – shoes, jackets, tops, accessories, etc. There is no “budget” for clean items from Patagonia, Prana, Everlane, or second-hand shops 😊!

Notice that you have power (and how you use it) – as a model and a buyer. Merchants are listening for cues on what to offer, so tell them what you value. Your peers are noticing what you do, so let them see your values.

Review your choices. Increasingly, producers offer impact information on their products. You can find it on the packaging and online. The clues are recycling or source symbols, mention of energy use or materials content, or notice of any sustainability certifications.

Resources

Something I really enjoyed reading: [The Conscious Closet](#). by Elizabeth Cline.

An interesting article on [consumer as activist](#).

Does One Person Really Make a Difference? Much commentary on this takes an extreme view: either Yes or No. I find that extremes are unhelpful. To work well, a system needs balance, but extremes drive systems out of balance. I prefer to find the *Yes, And* approach. It literally and metaphorically reduces friction and tension within a discussion or a system.

Yes, individual changes are important because of the direct impacts, and for their indirect ones: they usually build awareness, understanding and skills that are valuable for creating more change; and the example is often the nudge another uses to create change. *Someone* chose to build this nest box for pollinators. *And* now I want to.



And, if we believe such changes benefit others, then we make a bigger difference through spreading that change by example. So, start that tool-lending program, or join the solid waste committee, or offer to promote your local farm market – do what matters to you, and others who care will join you. ~ Sarah