

YEAR OF WEALTH ~ GOING GREEN: AUGUST 2020

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

Hello! This month we are focusing on transportation: personal use, public options, and policies. Whatever your ultimate decisions about transportation and shipping (the stuff we order or send), knowing the options and impacts makes the choice-making easier and more thoughtful. The big issue is that fossil fuel-fed transportation – for people and goods – [makes up the largest part of carbon contributions to the atmosphere in the United States, 28%](#)

Besides adding heat-trapping gasses to our atmosphere, there are particle pollutants from the fuel production and use that make our air less healthy for us all, especially those with asthma and other respiratory conditions that put them at risk. Reducing these impacts means phasing-in some approaches and phasing-out others, and rethinking where transportation infrastructure does and doesn't reach.

August Practice: Re-examining Choices

You might be surprised at how many kinds of transportation you use: family car, shared-rides, a bicycle, a bus, a train or the underground? Do you walk or use a scooter or even a skateboard? What about planes and ferries? We each choose modes of transport based on available options and appropriateness to our needs. We also choose them by habit, and convenience. Our practice this month is noticing how we (and stuff) get about!

Tips and Tricks: The biggest barrier to choice-making here is usually information. That's why awareness is our task this month.

Action: Be on the lookout for information on the news, in the media, in the mail and the newspaper about [people and things](#) getting from one place to another.

Notice: Which ones are a part of your weekly or monthly experience? How might using each makes sense for your daily life? What presents a real barrier to you to make a lower-impact choice for the environment? What might be the benefits and do they make the barrier easier to overcome? Or, is this just not something available to you now?

Review: Try to test your assumptions twice this month. Since we're moving about less, feel free to think about how things are getting to you during this time of COVID. Which shipping method are you choosing, or are you cutting back on purchases because they have to be shipped? Are you saving up orders to cut postage costs and/or shipping impacts? Do you know what makes emissions higher or lower for shipped items? (we'll explore that this month.)

Of course, our intentions and the shipper's logistics may not align, but being intentional remains important.

A Story

When we lived in Hawaii, one of us needed a new car. My son was interested in an alternative fuel vehicle and he ended up buying the all-electric Nissan Leaf. I grilled the salesman and felt we'd made a good choice. I was wrong. The car was fine, but the location for it was terrible.



We lived on one side of the ancient volcano and used up all the power in the charge driving up and then down between home and the next charging station. We couldn't make a round trip on this hilly island without stopping for a three-hour charge at one of the limited locations. Turns out an urban setting is the one for the Nissan Leaf. Back it went: good idea, not ready for prime time on Oahu. Now my son owns a hybrid and "range anxiety" is no longer a part of our lives. As the systems improve, so do the choices.

~ Sarah