

36 IDEAS, BIG AND SMALL, FOR AN ECO-FRIENDLY HOME.

Celebrate the 50th Earth Day with sustainability tips and stories from people across North America



Compiled and produced by



Wish-cycling

Sounds like it might be a good thing, right? It's not. It refers to the practice of putting things in your recycling bin because you think maybe they'll be accepted. It comes from the belief that it's better to recycle than send items to landfill. After all, the thinking goes, if it doesn't belong, then your municipality will just send it off to landfill – no big deal.

The problem is that wish-cycling has made recycling uneconomical. The cost of sending items to landfill, sorting them out, loading them on a truck to the landfill is adding hundreds of millions of dollars to municipal recycling costs. Many have reduced their recycling program to cope with these higher costs and some have cancelled their recycling programs altogether.

At Recycle Coach, we're working with local governments to fix this.

From our popular "What Goes Where" search tool, blog posts jam-packed with information on how to recycle and live more sustainably, to monthly interactive lessons on proper recycling, we equip users with knowledge on how to contribute to a healthier future.

Have fun, save the world, or recycle trying!



Download our smartphone app today.

Or, visit us online to [Find Your Municipality](#) and check what services we have for your community.



36 Ideas, Big and Small, for an Eco-Friendly Home

Celebrate the 50th Earth Day with personal stories of lifestyle changes and essential tips from people across North America!

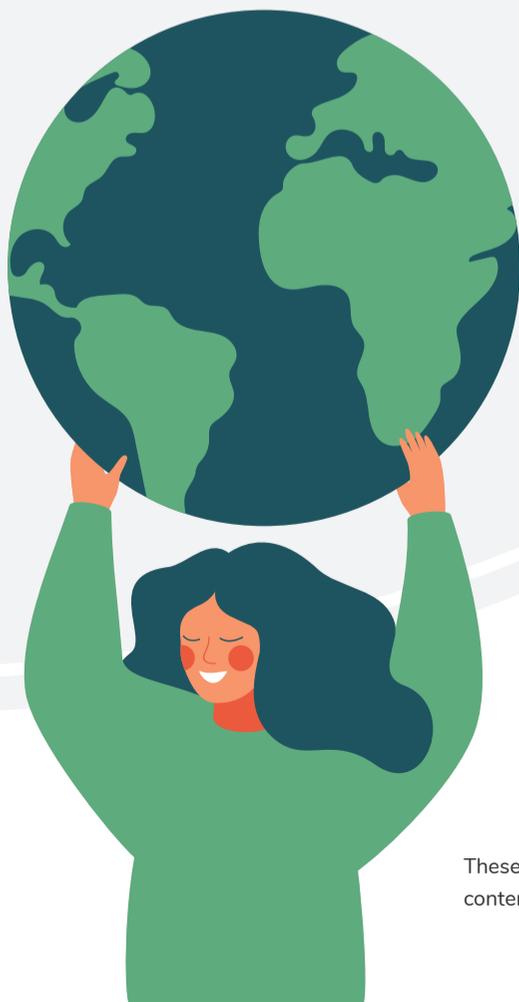
In February 2020, Recycle Coach asked our users
and community members:

“What are your tips, tricks, and lifestyle changes showing your love for
the environment?”

Our community answered.

Here are select stories from 36 individuals across North America.

We hope they make you smile,
spark curiosity about your own habits,
reinvigorate your love for the environment,
and inspire you to make similar changes in your life.



These stories have been edited for clarity and style, but the contents and sentiment shared remain true to the submissions.

Read about

Recycle right	5
Living low to zero waste	8
All about composting	13
Lifestyle and diet change	15
More than beauty and fashion, naturally	16
Materials, repurposed	20
Conserving resources	22





Recycle right

COLLECTING RECYCLABLES, MADE EVEN EASIER

I discovered a neat trick 10 years ago. I get paper sacks at the grocery store, and I use these paper sacks to collect my daily recyclables. I first place the sack inside a tote bag. I keep this in the corner of my kitchen and toss in junk mail, newspapers, rinsed cans, and aluminum foil. When the sack is full, all I have to do is throw the entire sack into my recycling container. Easy peasy.

Hope this can help you collect your daily recyclables!

Diane Rork

CAPITALIZE ON WHAT YOU ENJOY

We only purchase soft drinks in cans. Our son enjoys crushing the cans once we have finished them. Each holiday, we take him to the scrap metal yard, and he cashes the cans in for pocket money.

Jaki Atkins, Launceston

IT'S A TRAP! HOW TO RECYCLE SMALL ITEMS

Metal bottle caps and the lids of tin cans are recyclable, but small items are often forwarded on to landfill because they are too tiny to be recovered at the sorting facility. So, when I open a tin can, I never open it all the way around. I leave a bit of metal attached so that after I rinse the can I push the attached lid inside the can. That way it always gets recycled. For bottle caps, I put these inside a tin can and pinch the lid closed so that the caps are trapped inside. Voila! They now get to be recycled.

Creighton Hooper, Toronto
Recycle Coach, Founder & President

START WITH THE BASICS

My change is to keep up with my waste and correctly separate each other in different containers.

Jose Pena, Clifton



A SMALL EFFORT GOES A LONG WAY AWAY FROM THE LANDFILL

I used to toss cans, jars, and bottles in the recycling bin even if they were full of contents. Bottle filled to the brim with water? Chucked it. Aluminum can with tomato paste clinging to its wall? The important thing is I'm tossing it into recycling.

I had toured the recycling plant of the Region of Peel in Ontario for work twice. It was massive and intricate, with many conveyor belts leading to various machineries and manual workers that sorted materials. The facility had rules and guidelines on how to sort items correctly, which dictated the Region of Peel's collection requirements.

I was too busy feeling impressed with the facility that I downplayed why it was important to follow the Region's rules on how to recycle.

With such a massive and advanced recycling facility, I assumed they could figure out how to sort my waste properly. Right? Wrong. That's how contamination happens. Now imagine a whole city thinking this way.

Contamination means that materials – like ketchup, tomato paste, and water – that cannot be recycled get on items that can be recycled and render them unfit for recycling. It means my tomato paste could get on papers that would have been sent to

a paper mill for recycling, and instead send those papers to a landfill. It means all my good intentions would send recyclables to the landfill.

I had considered myself to be environmentally friendly. I grew an organic garden. I sought out local farms that produced meats and produce in more sustainable and humane ways. I sell or donate housewares and furniture instead of disposing of them in the garbage. I even try to source second-hand clothes and furniture when I can.

And yet, I was too lazy to empty containers, rinse them, and let them dry a little before I threw them out.

Now I let cans, bottles, and jars stand upside down on my kitchen sink after a quick rinse before tossing them in recycling the next day. That's how easy it is.

Recycling incorrectly has massive consequences that can undo all my recycling efforts. All it takes is a small effort to make sure my recyclables are actually recycled.

Jodelle F.S. De Jesus, Mississauga
Recycle Coach, Marketing Manager



To recycle right means to recycle according to your municipality's collection requirements. Be sure to check your municipal website or the Recycle Coach app for instructions specific to your community.

PLASTIC WATER BOTTLES CAN TAKE A HIKE

I personally use a water filtration product, but tap water is the source of choice always and I use a steel and/or aluminium water bottle.

On my hikes throughout the countryside and forests of Ontario, I see innumerable empty plastic bottles strewn casually to the side of trails or in roadside ditches, fields and forests from one end to the other - often by folks who supposedly have a great love of nature, healthy living and the beautiful wide outdoors.

If I can change a few minds on the subject of buying plastic water bottles and recognizing that free clean water is as much a human right as is free clean air then I suppose that these few words are worth the time and thoughts put into them. I come from an age when milk, pop, juices came in TRULY RECYCLABLE containers.

Michael M.



Living low to zero waste

COMMUNITY GIFTING OVER IMPULSE BUYING

I am doing a personal “buy nothing challenge” where I buy no clothes or non-essential items (like food, soap, repair items). The exceptions for myself are art supplies. I have **joined a gifting community** called Buy Nothing and have gifted things I can no longer use and received a few items as well. It’s been a few months now and it’s been great to notice where I have an impulse to buy things that I don’t need and then not act on the impulse.

Brenda Waters, London

DITCH THE PLASTICS

We visit Palm Desert Tennis Club every year but are from Piers Island, BC Canada. This year I began to ditch the plastic. We all feel we are doing a wonderful job by recycling, but as we buy everything encased in plastic, we are increasing the need for production.

Shop Nude is my favourite term. If we simply buy our veggies, breads, cheeses without a plastic case or bag, the reduction in recycling waste is incredible. Shampoos and conditioners can be bought in bar form and there are many more ways I am finding each day. It is a journey, and it’s difficult at times, but our garbage and recycling volume has reduced incredibly. Well worth it. I am sharing my journey through my website, ditchtheplastic.ca.

Pauline Olesen, Palm Desert

A BUBBLY CHANGE

We have bought a *SodaStream* machine to make carbonated drinks. We used to buy drinks in plastic bottles, but no more. We use the same bottles over and over, so they do not go to the landfill. We also have refillable water bottles so that we do not buy those cases of bottled water that end up in the landfill and the environment. It helps us and our planet, the animals, water life, birds. Please help save our earth – it's what our children will inherit someday!

Diane DeRochie, Cornwall

BLOWING LEAF

When collecting leaves in the fall, I mulch them with the leaf blower vacuum. This fits more leaves into fewer bags. I hope the use of the electric blower is offset by the cost of the bags saved.

Mike Eikermann, York

SEW PRACTICAL

I recently **took up sewing** and I am making all of my own produce bags. I feel there should not be plastic bags of any kind.

Janine Hoffart, West Kelowna



A FAMILY THAT LIVE SUSTAINABLY TOGETHER, CONTRIBUTES TO ZERO WASTE TOGETHER

Our family began living a low waste lifestyle in earnest about 3 years ago. We had always been eco-conscious, but learning about the sheer volume of ocean plastic deepened our commitment. It was overwhelming at first, feeling like everything needed to change all at once. After many discussions we found what was sustainable for us as a family, working to change one habit at a time until it became our new normal.

Lowering your waste as a family is an exercise in working together. In the beginning, living more sustainably might feel more difficult with children, but it is possible. If you are looking to implement low waste changes in your home, here are some suggestions!

Do A Waste Audit

Have a family meeting and discuss your goals. Draw up a plan to track your waste for one week, keeping a tally of what goes into the compost, the recycling bin, and the trash. Have the kids sort

items into recycling or put food scraps in the compost bin, explaining why they go into these bins as opposed to the trash. This is a hands-on way to teach your kids that there is no “away” - our waste must go somewhere. Double check your municipality’s rules on the Recycle Coach app as you go to make sure you are putting items in the right place. At the end of the week, discuss your high frequency trash items and brainstorm what changes you could start making to reduce them.

Involve the Kids

Children learn by doing, so now is the perfect time to instill sustainable living habits they can take with them as they grow up. Depending on the age of your kids, there are so many ways to empower them to make eco-friendly choices.

Food items make up a huge chunk of household waste, so start there. Brainstorm package-free snacks (such as muffins or protein balls) and batch cook them with your kids once a month. Store them in the freezer and pull them out as needed. Bring your children with you to the bulk store or bakery, letting them choose items and put them in reusable bags themselves. If package-free items are not accessible, purchase the larger container you can (eg. yogurt) and send it to school in smaller containers to reduce overall packaging. Pack school lunches in reusable containers and have kids wash them each night.

Kids grow quickly and items need replacing more often. Look for clothing, toys, and sporting equipment second-hand wherever possible. From thrift stores to online selling forums, nearly everything you could need is out there waiting for a new home! This is also a great time to reinforce caring for what they already have to make it last as long as possible. Have your kids help you hang laundry to dry and teach them basic repair skills such as how to sew on a button.

There are so many more ways to do eco-friendly things as a family! Go for a hike or a bike ride together, plan and tend a small veggie garden, or spend an afternoon at the public library. The best part of sustainable living is spending more time together!

Talk to Your Community

Once you are comfortable with changes in your own home, begin to broaden your scope. Talk with family and friends about what you are doing and why. Lead by example, showing off your swaps and discussing how they have shifted your mindset. Talk to your child’s class about how to properly divert the waste from their lunch boxes to teach them local rules. Join your school’s parent council to make a greater impact on your school community. Search out local eco-conscious groups either online or in person and get involved with local sustainability initiatives. Look for local volunteering efforts you can do as a family (such as litter pickups) or arrange to attend a climate strike with other families. Make your signs from items in your recycling bin, like pizza boxes!

Children are naturally curious about nature and want to protect it. By following their lead, we can learn about actions we can take together to lower our environmental footprint and ensure a greener future for them.

Sarah Robertson-Barnes, Aurora



[@sustainable.suburbs](https://www.instagram.com/sustainable.suburbs)



sustainableinthesuburbs.com

REUSE, REPURPOSE, REFUSE

I have always been conscientious of what I purchase and how it will be used or disposed of. When I was young, we recycled and reused everything - not because of the environment so much as because that is just what you did. If you could find another purpose for a jar or can, you put it to that use. Very little was thrown away.

When I was raising my family and working a full-time job, it was easier to purchase throw away goods - paper towels, single use items, etc. Now that I am not working any longer and am retired, I have the time to really deal with reusing/repurposing things the way I was raised.

I found several t-shirts that were worn or stained and somehow missed being put to good use! I **cut them up, hemmed them on my machine and now use those in place of paper towels.** I had some cotton flannel fabric that I cut and hemmed to replace facial tissues.

I now consciously refuse, whenever possible, to purchase things in plastic. I no longer use take out boxes from restaurants and instead bring my own so that I don't contribute to styrofoam or non-recyclable packaging when possible (not all restaurants allow this).

One of the things that recently annoyed me was that our recycling system no longer takes glass of any sort. Apparently, the machines are too old, and it is too costly to replace them. We do have a glass recycler but they only take larger quantities. I live in an apartment and don't have space to save glass to the quantities they require. **Several of my neighbors and I are going together to save what we have** and make a monthly trip to the recycler.

I will always do what I can to use eco-friendly ways to reduce my impact on the environment but there are things in place that make it difficult sometimes.

Leanne Long, Olympia

IT DOESN'T TAKE A VILLAGE TO PRACTICE ZERO-WASTE

I am a Sri Lankan veterinary surgeon. I have been very concerned about the environment since my childhood. That habit came to me from my father. He was a merchant. That was 35 years ago. He was very concerned about polythene bags, which are a deadly disaster now. He always encouraged customers to bring their own bag to collect the goods from his store. I was a seven-year-old girl. Now I am 44 years old. My father passed away in 2006. I still feel that my father has his eyes upon me.

I believe if we start practicing the zero-waste concept in our home, it may cause a very strong turn in conserving our environment. We all need to change our attitude. We should get rid of a consumable mentality. If we do the correct activities which are environmentally friendly, do not shy or hesitate to continue it. ... I have a thirteen-year-old daughter and I have been training her from the very early stage to live in an environment friendly manner. I used diapers on her very rarely. I never used disposable baby towels; didn't buy unnecessary toys; and used every single cloth until it's torn off.

I share my opinions with my family, especially with my loving husband, to practice zero waste habits in my house. It was very difficult at first. But now my husband goes beyond me about zero waste. Now he buys glass bottles instead of plastic bottles. He stopped using paper serviettes in his get-togethers with his friends. He asks me to prepare cloth towels or serviettes that are reusable. My husband goes shopping with his reusable bags. He uses every single paper's both sides to write.

In my kitchen, no lunch sheets, cleaning scrubs, sponges or wiping papers. I use coconut husk to

clean the utensils. Every single bag (milk powder, noodles packets) are used to grow chili plants or any other herbs (spinach, ginger, or mint). We go to retail stores instead of supermarkets. We buy in bulk instead of packed items. I don't buy bottled coconut oil; I buy coconut oil that I then transfer to glass bottles. I used to collect all kitchen waste in compost bins and used them to make soil.

I never buy unnecessary stuff like hair clips, handbags, plastic containers, plastic bins. I use boxes as bins and storage. I never buy extra cloths. Starting on my 44th birthday on the 23rd January 2020, I stopped buying nylon cloths.

I organized a program to **educate my village**, talking about the misuse of polythene. It was very helpful to raise awareness among people. If I get a chance, anytime, anyplace, I do not hesitate to share my opinion and activities on a zero-waste household, and the consequences of misuse and burning of plastics. My husband and I installed a solar [panel] system. We are very satisfied about it. I have a small garden to get green leaves for my family and potted vegetables. In the disposable containers we used to grow plant like vegetables and flowers. Those are the few things I practice to have a zero-waste home.

Dr. Surangika Hapuarchchi, Colombo

TRADE IN SINGLE USE FOR LONG TERM USE

I wanted to make a change to reduce single use plastics and virgin tree pulp products. Last year I switched to hankies instead of facial tissue, beeswax wraps instead of plastic wrap, silicone resealable baggies instead of ziplocks, cloth menstrual pads instead of disposable tampons/pads, natural bar soap/shampoo bars without packaging, using biodegradable and natural based cleaning supplies or vinegar, bringing my own containers to bulk stores, packing reusable grocery bags, using mesh produce bags instead of the flimsy plastic ones in the stores, and I try to purchase bamboo based toilet paper and paper towels when I am able. I dry laundry outside during the summer months and I prefer to thrift shop for many things and donate back when I'm done with something. I know there's a lot more I can still do, but I feel positive about what I've done so far. It **seems like a big investment at first** because things like silicone bags and cloth menstrual pads cost more than disposables up front, but you do not have to replace them for a very long time which means they end up being **more cost effective in the long run**. Not to mention there are many Canadian small businesses that make their own products, so I feel good about supporting small business and buying Canadian.

Erin Rupert, Kitchener



For all things that you can't substitute with low/zero-waste solutions, make sure you dispose of them correctly. [Download](#) the Recycle Coach app today or [Find Your Municipality](#) to check first what services we have to offer in your area.



All about composting

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Pauline Olesen, Palm Desert

VERMICOMPOSTING = BEST COMPOSTING

We started to compost many years ago in order to reduce and reuse our food waste and to produce something that was beneficial. We started with the most basic composting in the corner of the yard and bought a Tumbler type composter. We even had an electric under-the-counter composter, and most recently were introduced to and started worm composting. We were given just a few worms to try it out by some kind Master Gardeners.

The **worm composting has turned out to be the most fascinating and has yielded the best results** out of all of them! We started with just a few red wigglers in a 5-gallon bucket. Now, just a couple of years later, we have graduated to a set up called The Urban Worm Composter, which is working really well. The compost we get is super rich, and the vegetables and plants thrive in it. Happy to help someone get started - even give them a few worms - and hope to pay it forward.

Virginia Linnell, Middletown

TAKE COMPOST IN YOUR OWN HANDS

My family is from the Greater Toronto Area and we are used to placing organics in a green bin for composting. Since Kawartha Lakes does not compost organics, we decided to compost them ourselves in a composting bin. After recycling and composting, the amount of garbage we produce is negligible.

Vaughan Spence, Fenelon Falls

A TEA-RIFFIC USE OF BAGS

I drink a lot of tea. Instead of throwing out the tea bags, I **used them in the garden** as compost.

John Scipio, Plainfield

ROLE MODEL OF CURBING FOOD WASTE

I had a child back in November 2018. Growing up, we didn't recycle or compost. It just wasn't a real thing at the time. As soon as I had my daughter, I wanted to become a role model in helping her understand a greener alternative and by protecting this beautiful earth. One way we do this is by using every part of our food. We reuse scraps for oil, broth, or growing new plants. We do not waste food. We buy only what is needed for the week and limit our processed, packaged items.

Samantha Syrenne, Mission

A VERMI BUSINESS IDEA

I've been doing vermicomposting for 5 years. I work at Cache Creek transfer station and notice we have large amounts of grass clippings and leaves. I'm interested in starting a vermicompost operation onsite and then could sell bags of worm castings for soil enrichment.

James Cox



Lifestyle and diet change

A LITTLE BETTER EVERYDAY

I made the change from a traditional western diet to a more plant-based diet over two years ago. I started off as a vegetarian, meaning I still ate dairy products, eggs, and occasionally fish. In January 2020 I made the decision to go full plant-based and cut out all animal products.

Initially I made the decision to cut out meat from my diet because I had so much love and compassion for animals. Later in my journey I learnt more about the negative effects the meat industry has on our planet. I learnt that the meat industry contributes a large portion of greenhouse gases into our environment. This led me to do more research and educate myself more. Which led me to completely cutting ties with the animal agricultural industry altogether. I feel great with my decision to change my diet to a plant-based one. Since this change, I have noticed what you could call a “rippling effect” on my life. With **becoming more educated on what harms our planet, it’s guided me to change parts of my life.**

I am in no way perfect, but everyday I try a little harder. You don’t have to completely change everything in your life overnight to a zero waste, environmentally friendly lifestyle, and run off to go live in a DIY tree fort in the wilderness to help our planet. **It starts with the small things. Make small changes and continue to try to do better everyday**

Erica Kirby, Kelowna

A BIG APPETITE FOR THE SMALLEST CARBON FOOTPRINT

I believe the **biggest and most impactful choices we make every day are what we put on our plates.** This is why I live a vegan lifestyle. The vegan diet has the smallest carbon footprint per individual, and with just a few minor switches from my previous omnivore diet, I drastically reduced my own negative impact on the planet. It’s no secret that animal agriculture is one of the biggest factors contributing to climate change, and thanks to a more sustainable diet, I ensure that with each purchase at the grocery store I do the least amount of damage to the Earth.

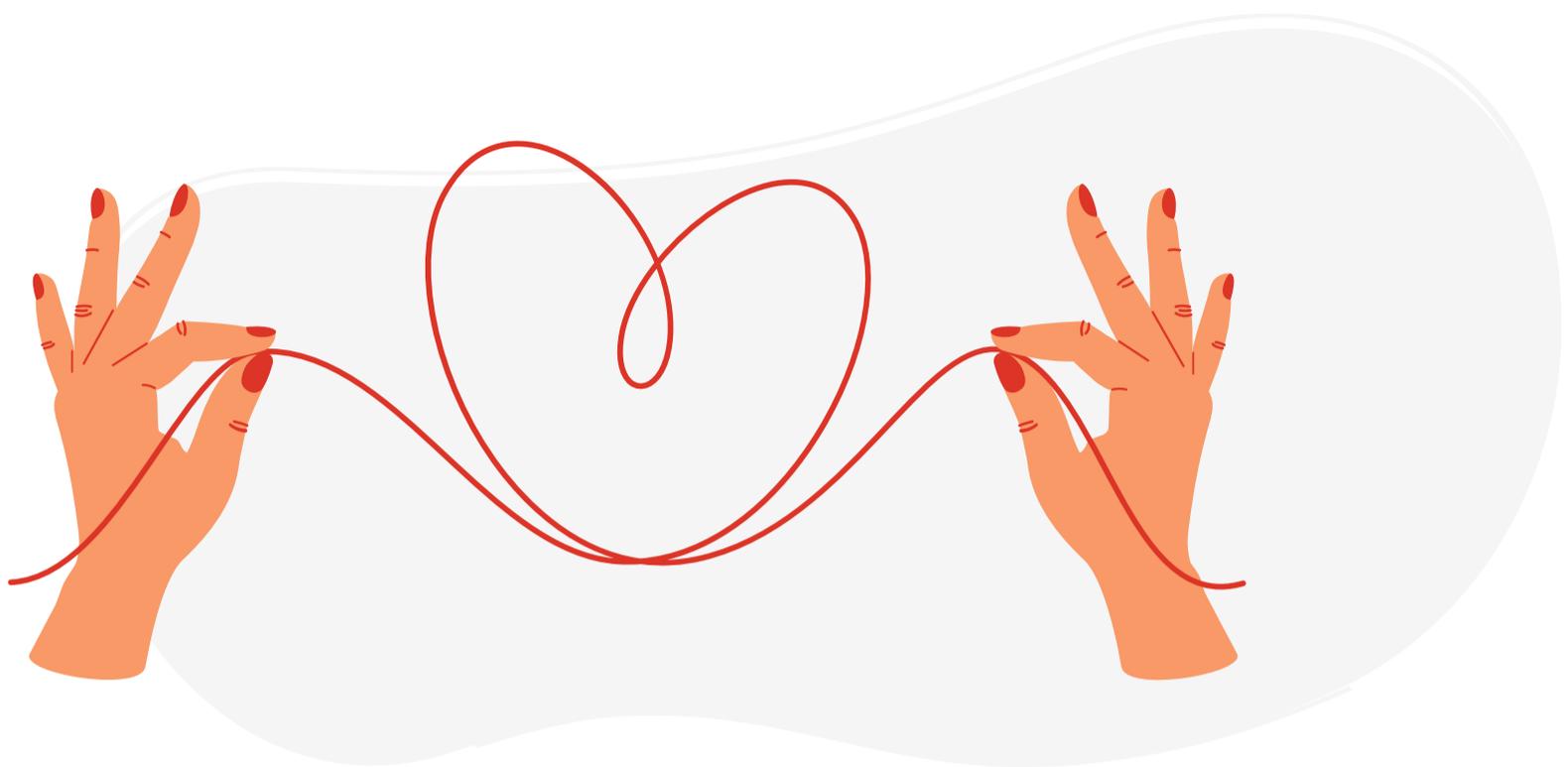
Joshua Alzona, Toronto
Recycle Coach, Customer Success Manager

DOCUMENTARIES AND CHILL

A little over a year ago I went through a documentary binge that lasted about a month. As I was going through documentaries about sustainability, I came across a video explaining why you can't say you are sustainable as you think you are if you still eat animal products. It opened my eyes to the concept of veganism, and I just watched video after video of how these animals are treated and the medical benefits of veganism. After watching all these videos and documentaries, I thought that the way these animals are treated was just not right. Against many peoples' advice, I went vegan overnight on the 19th of December in 2018. Since then I have felt less bloated, less tired, and most importantly I know that my diet and food choices don't hurt other living beings.

Carlie Ingram, Big Sandy





More than beauty and fashion, naturally

FROM FASHION TO INFOGRAPHICS

A couple of years ago, I set a personal goal to shy away from “fast fashion” and to, instead, reinvent the pieces of clothing I already own. Last year, I launched a website with the mission of helping others decrease their clothing waste. The service provides clients with an alternative to buying new garments, offering custom **re-design and tailoring of the items they already own.**

I began my role as Product Owner at Recycle Coach a few months ago. Finding a company whose mission is so perfectly aligned with my passion-project felt like serendipity. I feel lucky to go to work every morning, knowing I am part of company with a purpose that is so aligned with my values for sustainability practices.

Since I have started working at the company, I have been taking extra measures to ensure I am as environmentally conscious as possible.

I introduced more sustainable changes into my life: composting my food scraps, purchasing reusable dryer balls for my laundry, and taking more care to ensure that my recyclables are empty and clean. These changes are minor compared to the mindset shift I have had with my perceptions of sustainability issues.

Since educating myself and understanding both the problem and the solutions to recycling and waste issues, I am hopeful other people are just minutes away from being inspired to make better choices. One informative article, video or infographic,

could be enough for an individual to change their habits!

If every individual was properly armed with the knowledge to recycle properly, I think their habits would change for the better. Recycle Coach makes it possible. This gives me hope for a greener world, and a better future.

Whitney Hanmer, Toronto
Recycle Coach, Product Owner

VINEGAR: A SWEET ALTERNATIVE TO SOFTENERS

One of the many things I do for the love of my Earth (and for the love of my skin) is to use white vinegar instead of commercial “softeners” in the rinse cycle of my laundry. **Vinegar rinses away the detergent, acts as a softener, and eliminates static cling.**

The cost is only a fraction of the cost of commercial “softeners.” White vinegar does not have a long list of chemicals and artificial fragrances.

Rosalie McKinney

BYE BYE, DYE

Since early 1970s, I have been using white paper towels to keep dyes out of water. As well, I collect the empty roll and place it with cardboard recycling.

Jeffrey Altschul, Parsippany



A LIFESTYLE MAKEOVER

I started my blog, Greenify-Me, in 2015 as a green beauty blog. Every week I'd be reviewing new products – all of which I had to purchase myself. After a while, this got very taxing and the products were piling up. I was paying attention to the ingredients in the products, but not the packaging itself. Sure, the ingredients were sustainable, but the excessive, hard to recycle packaging counteracted it.

That's when I stumbled across the zero-waste movement – it was like a light bulb went off in my head. I finally understood why all that packaging was bothering me so much. It was wasteful! Just because something is “green” doesn't mean it's actually good for the environment. There's a lot of greenwashing out there. Plus, purchasing anything in excess – green or not – isn't good for the planet. I found out the average **American produces approximately 4.4 pounds of trash per day**, and I did not want to be part of that. Sadly, it felt like I already was.

The zero-waste movement consists of people who aim to reduce their trash, using more reusable and sustainable products to reduce their carbon footprint. I wanted to be one of those people, so

in 2017 I took the leap and became zero waste. I cancelled my skincare and makeup subscriptions. I gave away beauty products otherwise gathering dust on my shelves.

But I didn't stop at green beauty – I **started analyzing waste in every facet of my life**. The areas I found myself producing the most waste were certainly in the kitchen and bathroom – specifically food waste, food packaging, single use takeaway containers, liquid body soap in plastic bottles, shampoo and conditioner in plastic bottles. I started researching more ways to make bigger changes and I've been zero waste ever since.

Now, my blog is dedicated to zero waste and sustainable living. I share helpful tips and tricks for going zero waste with people who are looking to change their own habits. I feel like my blog really helps change lives for the better. It's a place for positivity and growth. I've made so many amazing friends and met so many inspiring people on this journey. A lot of people are intimidated by the zero-waste lifestyle, but they don't have to be. It becomes second nature at a certain point.

I recommend starting off with doing a trash audit: understanding where most of your trash is coming from will help you eliminate it. Next, start to slowly phase wasteful products out and replace them with reusable or sustainable alternatives.

One of the biggest changes I've made to cut back on waste was composting. I save all my food scraps throughout the course of the week in a compost pail, then dump it out to be composted at my local farmers market. Most farmers markets have food scrap collection sites, which I love because it's all very hands off.

I also love shopping at the farmers market in general for fresh produce. It's so easy to get everything there package free. Every Saturday, I head over to my local farmers market with reusable tote bags, cloth produce bags, and my compost pail. I get to bond with the farmers and ask them about their practices face to face. There are no annoying plastic stickers on the produce, and I'm able to return any egg or fruit cartons I get every week. This keeps everything closed-loop and waste free.

For other goods, I hit up my local health food store that has a bulk bin section. They allow me to take my own glass jars in and fill them up with food, package free. I love getting grains, beans, oats and other dry goods from there. To reduce waste further, I also DIY a lot of my toiletries like deodorant, toothpaste, mouthwash and more. I also create my own cleaning products which cuts down on waste and saves me a ton of money. Win-win!

These simple changes have been game changers when it comes to living a zero waste life. The best part? **They're great for you, the planet, and your wallet**. I've saved so much money going zero waste! That's because I'm not overconsuming items anymore but making much smarter spending choices.

I've also written two ebooks – 10 Ways to Reduce Trash (free) and How to Reduce Food Waste. My other ebook, How to Reduce Food Waste, is designed to help eradicate food waste once and for all – another topic I'm passionate about. I think that there are **so many facets to zero waste living** – not just reducing single use items from your life. There's water waste, food waste, e-waste, and so many other areas to analyze. Limiting it to just single use item waste is not productive, so I try to keep my blog open to these other facets as well.

I'm truly excited to see how my blog will continue to evolve as time goes on. Greenify-Me will be 5 years old this year and I'm amazed at how much it's grown. I cannot wait to continue educating people and continue making an impact.

Ariana Palemieri, New York



[greenifyme](#)



greenify-me.com

Materials, repurposed

REUSE EVERYTHING FROM 'A' TO 'V'

To cut down on waste, we try to have **two uses for everything**. Before we put our veggie scraps into the green bin, we make veggie broth. Before I put my coffee grounds in the green bin, I make face wash. I dehydrate fruits to make fresh bath bombs.

Along with those, we make sure we always bring our own bags to stores. We shop at stores that allow us to bring our own containers. And the best - when we run out of something, we then buy the reusable version, like reusable paper towels.

Laurie Nimela, Waterloo

PLASTIC CONTAINERS TO GREASE

My family reuses all and any plastic container. Example: Lunch meats that come in plastic containers - instead of purchasing actual *Tupperware* we re-use these.

Glass jars - we re-use these to pour cooking grease into. We will also reuse the grease until it is no longer useable.

Gayle Schneider, Tucson



A BOUNTIFUL OF USAGE

After we wash our hands and use *Bounty* to dry our hands, I keep the used *Bounty* sheets under the sink so that I can use it to clean spills on the floor or elsewhere, instead of ripping a fresh strip of bounty.

Helen Boateng, Frederick

MINIONS, CRAYONS, AND OLD CLOTHES

I'd like to share some nice recycling ideas that are not innovative but very helpful to educate kids about the environment-friendly behavior as well as **reusing through play and craft**:

- 01.** Number one in my son's list is a turning Kinder Surprise eggs into... Minions! We all know that kids love this 2-in-1 treat which contains not only chocolate and a toy but also a plastic egg that often goes to the garbage bin... Instead of throwing out we started using them as a base for the cartoon characters. Adding a black stripe, googly eyes, some more details and... a new toy or tiny storage is ready to go!
- 02.** Reusing pieces of crayons. It's a really simple yet powerful way to reuse old Crayola pencils by mixing and melting small pieces in a new shape. It's also great as a little gift for the party's loot bags.
- 03.** Upcycling old clothes. What a fun and creative activity! Damaged jeans were turned into a stylish notebook, a bag, and a pens holder, an old but loved sweater has found a new life as a pillow cover. Once we've made stuffed monster toys (honestly, it was the best toy ever!) using.. single knitted gloves survived after the winter season!

The most valuable result after a number of named playing activities, that I've noticed in my kid, is developing creative thinking on how to reduce the negative impact on the environment by reusing items instead of throwing them out!

Happy recycling!

Kateryna Bogun, Whitby



For things that you can't reuse, dispose of them correctly. [Download the Recycle Coach app today](#) or [Find Your Municipality](#) to check first what services we have to offer in your area.

Conserving resources



A RETROFIT STORY

We moved from Vancouver to Burnaby just over a year ago. We doubled the square footage of our old house, which we thought was extravagant but still much less of an environmental footprint than living in separate houses. When we moved into our 1990 house we found 88 pot lights (all incandescent) and a chandelier and sconce setup in the entrance/stairwell that had 68 x 75watt chandelier bulbs! What a huge electrical output! We considered using that as our primary heat source (kidding) briefly, but then got serious. We had all of the pot lights replaced with retrofit LED inserts that fit into the existing pot fixtures - a huge decrease in wattage as well as a very good aesthetic upgrade. And then we recently took out the sconces and chandelier (68 x 75w) and replaced it with a far better lighting in 10 new LED pot lights (10 x 6W).

The aesthetics and lighting are far superior - and the **decrease in consumption speaks for itself.**

Tim De Souza Jensen, Burnaby

DISH OUT THE COLD WATER

If you're handwashing dishes, use cold water for all steps. You really don't need hot water to clean the vast majority of dishes; you just need a little bit of soap. If your water is heated by natural gas, you're using a lot of energy and creating a lot of greenhouse gases for no reason.

Mike Apostol, London

A BUCKET OF CONSERVATION

While waiting for the shower to warm up, **save water by putting a bucket in the shower** to collect for the garden.

Colleen Margot, Canada Bay

SOAPY, EFFICIENT CAR WASH

This is about saving other earth resources as well... Our water restrictions take place in May through to October. Even so, people still use up gallons of water washing their cars. If you don't like driving around in a dirty car when water restrictions take effect, fill a bucket with hot soapy water (not too soapy) and wash it one section at a time, drying it with an old towel as you go. You'll not only conserve water, you'll be amazed at how **quick and efficient** it is. You can also "dust" your car off a bit before starting, to lessen the amount of dirt going into the water.

Debra De Silva, Mission

Feeling inspired by the stories you've just read?

Here are a few things you can do to start your own 50th Earth Day Celebrations.

Download the Recycle Coach app.

Start with relearning how to recycle and recycle right.

Download the app from the [Apple iTunes Store](#) and [Google Play Store](#). Set your home address to receive waste collection dates, drop-off locations, and requirements specific to your neighborhood.

Be the 37th storyteller.

Tell us your story of change or sustainability tips that contribute to your eco-friendly lifestyle. Share it on your public Twitter and Instagram profiles using **#IAmThe37th** and tag **@RecycleCoachApp**. On Facebook, find our page **@RecycleCoachApp** and post your story to our wall with **#IAmThe37th**.

We'll share select stories on our feeds, so be sure to follow us!

Take our pizza box challenge.

Got a greasy pizza box lying around? Share a video online of you ripping the greasy part out and use **#GreaselsGross** on social media, tagging **@RecycleCoachApp**. Grease on paper can render paper and cardboard recyclables unfit for recycling, so it's best to leave it out.

Take our "Empty & Clean" challenge.

Show how quick and easy it is to rinse your bottles and containers before tossing them in recycling. Share a video on social media and use **#Empty&Clean**, tagging **@RecycleCoachApp**. Food and liquid particles in containers can contaminate your recyclables, sending them to the landfill instead.

Take our "Tangle Will Mangle" challenge.

In a video format, show yourself tearing or cutting out the handles out of paper bags. Share it online with **#TangleWillMangle** and remember to tag **@RecycleCoachApp**. Bag handles, belts, hangers can get stuck in recycling equipment and cause harm to the facility and its workers.

