OneUpAction International
Healing the Earth one action at a time.

ZERO WASTE GUIDE & DIRECT ACTIONS INFORMATION // A GUIDEBOOK

ZERO WASTE GUIDE FOR YOUTH

History, tips, and living sustainably!
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Increasing population, booming economy, rapid urbanization and the rise in community living standards have significantly accelerated the solid waste generation around the world. Solid waste is now a global environmental issue. Continuous depletion of natural finite resources creates an unpredictable and dangerous future.

To prevent further depletion of global resources, sustainable consumption and a strategic waste management system is essential. One approach that has been suggested as a means of addressing these concerns is that of the concepts of “Zero Waste.”

However, transforming currently over-consuming activities into zero waste is still challenging. In this study, the challenges of solid waste (focusing on industrial waste e-waste, food waste and packaging waste), zero waste practices, and zero waste strategy, were discussed to analyze the challenges and opportunities to transform traditional waste management toward a zero waste vision.
an individual consciously removes all single-use items from their lifestyle and finds reusable alternatives to decrease their carbon and wasteful footprint.

This means no plastic, no wrappers, no garbage. While this may seem like an unrealistic task in today’s very disposable society, everyday people all over the world demonstrate its capabilities. By reevaluating the way they approach the concept of trash, the leaders of the zero-waste movement are teaching the world that we all have the ability to make a difference in protecting our environment.
In 2002, Richard Anthony found himself on the scientific committee for a series of Resource conferences (called the R-series) organized by EMPA. When reviewing papers submitted for an upcoming conference to be held in Geneva (R-02), he found far too many papers devoted to incineration and not enough tackling the issue at the front end. The director asked Richard what he would like to see instead and he said a workshop devoted to Zero Waste. Richard proposed that if EMPA could sponsor accommodation and waived registration fees, he would put a team of experts together and get them to Geneva.

With this agreement, Richard then had to find the funds to get them all to Switzerland. When he approached Dr. Bill Sheehan, Director of the Grassroots Recycling Network (GRRN), Bill said that he would help under the condition that this action was going to be more than an academic exercise, insisting that they found a way to help community groups working on waste at the grass roots level. With the help of some activist groups in the UK (Greenpeace, Communities Against Toxics) they managed to set up a forum at Sussex University, in Brighton, Sussex to take place two days after the R-02 meeting in Geneva.

After the Geneva conference, most of the Zero Waste team traveled to the UK for the Brighton conference. This meeting attracted many grass roots activists fighting incinerators and landfills and others promoting recycling. Moreover, once the news got around, it attracted many decision makers from towns and counties from across the UK struggling with the waste issue. Over 100 people attended a very successful conference. ZIWA sets guidelines and standards to help the development of zero waste in the world of governments, waste management teams, and businesses. The rest is history!
Tips for productive discussions with family + friends about zero waste

1. Lead with compassion.
Shaming the people you are talking to into leading a more sustainable life is not going to be an effective strategy to foster productive communication or action. Try not to place guilt on somebody for the choices they make before you learn about their motivation for those choices. It’s possible that the person you are talking to is aware that their choices are not the most sustainable. However, sustainable products or options could not be accessible to them, or perhaps they are just ignorant of the importance of sustainability, in which case you have an opportunity to educate them. You don’t need to tone down your feelings or values, but you have to meet them where they are at, without expecting your family or friends to have the same outlook you have.

2. Remember there is always more for you to learn.
As you educate the people around you about zero waste initiatives and sustainable practices, remember that you can always continue to educate yourself as well. Showing the people around you that you are also still learning is one way to connect and help each other grow and gain more knowledge.

3. Expand your definition of sustainability.
Often we conceptualize living sustainably as an all-or-nothing practice, and broadening your understanding of sustainability can make it less intimidating to talk or hear about as a family member. Discuss the many different ways that sustainability can be manifested in one’s life and help them explore those areas that they are interested in. Celebrate little achievements like using reusable bags or buying from a greener brand, encourage them in their journey, even if their victories seem small.
4. Talk about sustainability casually and often.

This will signal to the people that you are talking to that the topic is something you are passionate about. Your friends and family will not be surprised should you bring it up in a conversation, and are less likely to feel defensive or feel like you are being preachy. This might also incline them to learn more about the subject themselves.

5. Acknowledge inaccessibility.

More often than not, sustainable alternatives to commonplace items are going to be more expensive or exclusive than the original item. In order for climate activism to be effective, it must be intersectional, because the climb inherently intersects with social, political, and scientific issues. For example, alternatives to fast fashion are often more expensive and less size-inclusive, while some neighborhoods are food deserts, meaning they have very limited or no access to fresh produce.

When educating yourself and others about sustainability and the climate crisis, it is important to recognize your privilege and realize that the people you are talking to may not share it, and so sustainability will mean something different for them than it does for you. However, despite certain economic challenges, there is merit in research. Spending a couple of minutes with friends and family finding economical alternatives can generate great alternatives. Also, educating people about the long term effects of both owning well made products and reducing overconsumption are key steps in acknowledging the price gap.
Tips for Educating Family and Friends

1. Focus on what's already happening.

When or if people talk about the climate crisis, it is often framed as a distant threat, one that will irreparably damage our world and society in the semi-far future. To highlight the urgency of the subject to someone that may be ignorant of it, it is important to focus on how the climate crisis is already impacting our world and our society. Tangible effects include extreme weather such as intense heatwaves, heavy rainfall, fires, and hurricanes.

It is easier for people to see the crisis when it is in measurements they are familiar with, rather than a global temperature increase of 1.5-2 °C. Recognizing the urgency surrounding the climate crisis might help your family or friends feel like they have more incentive to adopt more sustainable or zero waste practices where they are able to in their life.

2. Expand upon existing passions.

Trying to get educated or become more sustainable can be intimidating, as there is so much information, research, and opinion that it can feel overwhelming, or a struggle to find where to start. If you, your friends, or your family are feeling this way, it can be helpful to think about what subjects or fields you are passionate about, and go from there. For example, if you like beauty or skincare, explore more sustainable, cruelty-free, or vegan brands; try to use reusable cotton pads; or learn how to recycle your products when you are done with them instead of throwing them away.

3. Act.

If you work to the best of your ability to make your actions sustainable ones, it allows you to lead by example. Having discussions with family and friends about the ways in which they can be more sustainable is helpful, but it may be easier for the people around you to initiate their own sustainability journey if you are there as an example. The alternative choices that you make might demonstrate that even simple actions have an impact, and inspire those around you to also take those actions, even if they felt previously intimidating.
Going zero waste does not mean that you will fit all of your trash into a mason jar at the end of the year, that narrative is harmful and unrealistic. Zero waste just implies that you are more mindful about what you consume and the impacts of becoming zero waste. Nevertheless, not everyone has access to the privilege of leading a life with little waste, and that is the fault of a society wrought with systemic oppression. Until we prioritize the needs of the marginalized as a society, there is no way we can work toward a sustainable future. Despite the internalized societal oppression, there are benefits to adjusting your lifestyle to one sustainable alternative. Never diminish achievements, whether big or small.
Tips for Achieving a Sustainable Lifestyle

1. Start with single-use items

As you go about your day, try to be conscious of each single-use item that you use. Ask yourself first: Is it necessary for me to use at all? If yes, then: Is there a way that could replace this item with a more sustainable alternative? If not, don’t shame yourself for not being good enough, it is not your fault. Unfortunately, society is not designed to be sustainable by default. By taking inventory of the single-use items that you use throughout a day or a week, you can more easily identify where exactly your waste is coming from, and what you can eliminate.

2. Compost.

If you have space in your backyard, you can set up your own worm farm for little to no cost. You can also find your city or county’s local food scrap drop off location. Depending on the city, some neighborhoods allow you to toss food scraps into your green bin. In a search engine look up at-home composting and your regulations should appear. Composting dramatically reduces the amount of waste you produce that makes its way into landfills, where it is eventually incinerated, burning and releasing massive amounts of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. By emitting CH4 (methane, which is 4x more potent than carbon dioxide), our ozone layer is weakened and our lives are threatened by damaging sun rays.
3. Use what you have.

There are plenty of articles or guides to going zero waste that will provide you with a comprehensive list of sustainable products you can purchase to replace your existing possessions. However, you can often simply re-utilize the items that you already own. Use old fabric like t-shirts, bedding, or towels that you no longer use as cleaning cloths, rags, or as a replacement for paper towels. Old glass jars can be used as storage containers for leftovers or even a water bottle. Experiment and find zero waste practices that work best for you and your life, everyone’s zero waste journey will be different.

4. Borrow or buy second-hand first.

If there is an item that you need to use only temporarily or on rare occasions, ask if you can borrow from a neighbor, a friend, or a family member. If there is something you need to buy, see if you can find it at thrift stores, or buy it used online. Creating less waste is about utilizing the resources that you already have around you, rather than buying something new because it may be advertised as convenient.

5. Set an achievable goal.

Setting goals will keep you mindful of what it is you want to achieve, while also keeping you motivated and excited to do more. For example, if your large goal is to go as zero waste as is plausible for your individual lifestyle, start by cutting out something small, don’t go all in right away. Bring a reusable fabric bag when you go grocery shopping, cook yourself a meal instead of getting takeout or pack your own lunch to bring to work or school, take public transport or ride your bike instead of driving. Set a new goal for yourself once you feel that you have accomplished your previous one, and keep going.
Influencers to Follow

**BLOGS:**
- Going Zero Waste (https://goingzerowaste.com)
- Trash is for Tossers (https://trashisfortossers.com)
- Zero Waste Home (https://zerowastehome.com)
- Wasteland Rebel (https://wastelandrebel.com)
- Zero Waste Chef (https://zerowastechef.com)

**INSTAGRAM:**
- @zerowastehabesha
- @marielle.elizabeth
- @dominiquedrakeford
- @greengirlleah
- @conciousnchic
- @rocket_science

**YOUTUBE:**
- The Girl Gone Green
- ECO BOOST
- Gittemary
- Shelbizlee
IMPORTANCE OF ZERO WASTE (Daria Shevtsova, 2018)
When we keep tapping into natural resources (as if they’ll be there forever) and continuing along this broken, linear cycle, we’re not changing our systems to accommodate for our planet’s massive population growth. Our world now contains over 7 billion people, with the population doubling in just the last 40 years. That’s an incredible strain on the Earth’s natural, limited resources. We’re creating far too much waste, and an explosion of greenhouse gas emissions along with it. This in turn will impact future generations. This impacts each and every one of us, regardless of where you live or what your socioeconomic status is. You can’t hide from it.

Reducing, reusing and recycling can be a key part of a climate change strategy to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. The U.S. EPA has estimated roughly 42% of all greenhouse gas emissions are caused by the production and use of goods, including food, products and packaging. Refusing, reusing, reducing, and recycling will conserve that energy and dramatically reduce our carbon emissions. Our current culture of consumption is unsustainable. Extracting raw materials from natural spaces requires large amounts of energy and causes pollution, whether it is logging a forest, mining for minerals or drilling for oil. Processing these materials requires more energy and causes more pollution. Once they’re used, the goods are simply dumped in a landfill or destroyed in an incinerator.

In contrast, a zero waste approach conserves natural resources and reduces pollution from extraction, manufacturing and disposal. Reducing and reusing means fewer products are made, as people buy less and as products are made to last. Recycling keeps waste out of landfills and incinerators and provides manufacturers with recycled instead of raw materials to make new goods.
EXTRA RESOURCES

Places to find affordable sustainable products:

Your local thrift store. Thrift stores are excellent places to find things like fabric, glass jars, reusable bags, water bottles, and more for lower prices than if the products were new.

Clothes:
- Pact (wearpact.com)
- Everlane (everlane.com)
- Rent the Runway (renttherunway.com)

Home cleaning products:
- Earth Hero (earthhero.com)
- Method Home (methodhome.com)
- Seventh Generation (seventhgeneration.com)
- Common Good (commongoodandco.com)

Beauty and skincare:
- Love Beauty and Planet (lovebeautyandplanet.com)
- Pacifica Beauty (pacificabeauty.com)
- W3ll People (w3llpeople.com)
- Meow Meow Tweet (meowmeowtweet.com)
CONTRIBUTORS

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For about one and a half years, Sayan has been passionate about solving the climate crisis through environmental justice by joining various environmental groups in LA, California such as Fridays For Future, etc.

LODEN CROLL, 16
Loden has been passionate about environmental justice and the climate crisis for most of their life and has been a part of various Minnesota-based, national, and international climate organizations for around a year and a half.

DELANEY MICHAELSON, 18
Delaney began her activism efforts while she lived abroad in London, England in 2012 when she realized the intersectionality of the climate crisis.