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## FROM EMPATHY TO ACTION

### How your daily life shapes the world

*“Success is the sum of small efforts,  
repeated day in and day out.”*

*Robert Collier*

The choices you make every day can have important and lasting consequences for the planet. Your power is in your decisions, which means you can contribute to transforming the global economy. The food you eat, the clothes you wear, the places you go – all of those activities carry costs and opportunities. How you can balance those costs, both for your wallet and for the environment, shows how important your choices can be. Businesses respond to what consumers want, and more and more consumers are demanding sustainability from their favorite brands. And they're being listened to!

You can also take this power as your voice to be heard by government, to urge more sustainable policies – like smarter transportation options. If you can live a conscious life, and explore the choices you make every day, you can transform every action into a sustainable action for a sustainable future. We have an opportunity, together, to build back better as the world recovers from COVID-19. What choices are YOU going to make to contribute?

### What does a sustainable day look like?

Starting the day, the sustainable way!

From the minute you stretch your arms over your head to get out of bed until the moment you go to sleep, your day consists of a series of decisions. Committing to making those decisions sustainable can take practice, but it is worth it in the end; you'll be living a healthier life and contributing to a healthier planet.

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#### Good morning!

- Turn off the tap while you brush your teeth or wash your face
- Can you take a shorter, colder shower or bath? Try it! What about installing a more efficient shower-head?
- Unless you're boiling a kettle for the whole household, try to heat only as much as you need for your morning drink. See if your local shop offers fair trade or organic products; not only are they good for the planet but they also support communities in growing regions.
- Better yet, make two cups and take one with you out the door in a reusable mug; you'll save money and the environment. Don't forget to pack your lunch and a water bottle.
- Check the weather before you go; a scarf or sweater is better than heaters in the winter, and light layers make summer heat bearable instead of the A/C.
- Some of us can walk, cycle or use public transport to get where we are going. If you're one of those lucky people, good for you! Keep it up. If you must drive, can you ride share or carpool? When in a car, four passengers are better than one.
- On your way out, make sure you've turned off all the lights. And no matter how much your dog or cat asks, don't leave the TV on all day!

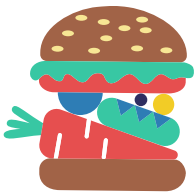


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### Time to eat

Sustainability sometimes requires balancing your budget against your commitment to the environment, and making trade offs. In that way, we are faced with some of our biggest choices when we go food shopping. Fresh or frozen? Imported or local? Vegetables or candy bars? We are in control of the things we put in our bodies, and we can use those food choices to shape the global economy. Don't forget your reusable bags!

- It's helpful to make a list before you go to the store, so that you're not tempted by things you may not need
- Shop in season and try to buy local.
- Read the label – are you able to choose organic options? Or less highly processed options? A short and understandable list of ingredients is usually a good sign!
- Do you live near a fresh fruit and vegetable market? Consider buying fruits and vegetables direct from the farmers who grow them. They may not be as perfect-looking as the things in the supermarket, but they probably taste even better. Plus, less packaging! Some places have food cooperatives, where you can buy your staples like rice, flour, sugar and oats in bulk. You can bring your own containers and buy only as much as you need. They also encourage volunteering so that you can get to know your local food community.
- Do you live in a place that allows composting? All you need is a bin with a lid and a place to dump it in the garden. The rich soil that emerges from the compost can be used to nourish your own vegetable or herb garden.
- Takeout food can be super tasty but also super waste-y. If you can, ask the delivery folks NOT to give you plastic utensils, and rinse your containers so they can be reused, or recycled.
- And don't forget – leftovers make great lunches. Whether you cook, order in or go out, there's nothing better than getting to savour that meal the next day.

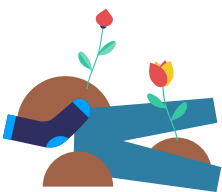


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### Shopping

There is a reason that they call it retail therapy – buying things can make you feel good. But buying too many things leads to too much unnecessary consumption, which means a lot of stuff ends up getting dumped. So when you're feeling blue and only a new shoe will do, how about going for a walk instead?

- Fast fashion is called fast fashion for a reason; it moves in and out of style quickly AND it wears out quickly, too. It's best to try and purchase the best-quality clothes and shoes that you can.
- Have you ever been thrifting? There are so many treasures to be discovered at second-hand clothing stores and markets. You can have a whole new look for less.
- Support local craftsmanship! Every country has a distinctive style of national dress, and a host of talented designers at home making beautiful, wearable clothes. Shop local and support local talent – you'll look good and feel good.



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### Leisure time

We are all rushing around busy, all the time. So in our down time we want to do things that make us feel good, rested, and able to be around our friends and family. That's the perfect time for sustainability oriented activities – making the fun things we choose to do with our time Earth friendly.

- Remember that compost you were making? How about planting a garden – no matter how big or small your space, you can add a bit of greenery. Whether it's in pots on a window ledge or balcony, or covering a large space in a bigger yard, try your hand at a green thumb. Some places have community gardens; see if you can get signed up to pick up a shovel.
- Volunteering for a cause you believe in, whether it is social justice, animal rights, or climate change or anything else, is a powerful way to use your voice for sustainability. Whether it is at the local level or at the national level, in person or online, get involved and support the things you care about. Nothing feels better than being part of a movement.
- Feed your brain and raise your voice! At a time where information is so easy to access through books or e-books and online science-based sources, take time and learn more about environmental issues. Being conscious about the environmental challenges we are facing and its solutions, make us more comfortable when talking about a sustainable lifestyle with friends and family.
- Everyone loves a holiday. But if you can stay closer to home and get there on public transport, give it a try. Air travel is the least sustainable method of getting from one place to another. So if you can, limit your time in the sky. You can also offset your emissions by contributing to airline carrier offset funds.



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### And to all, a good night

- That turned off tap from the morning? Same ritual for toothbrushing and face washing before bed.
- Is your bed weather-friendly? If you can keep your windows open to let a breeze in, it's a lot more comfortable than the hum of an air-conditioner. If you can put a heavier cover on your bed in winter, instead of using piped heat, that's a great way to be cozy with the planet.



### The bigger picture

So your daily routine of sustainable action is sorted. Good for you! But what about the bigger decisions you have to make in your life, especially as you get older? Whether it's buying a car or a home or moving between cities, the choices you make have a cumulative impact that contributes to the future of the planet. Check out the GEO-6 for Youth report for more details about the type of questions you should be asking yourself as you make your big decisions. You've got the power to make all the right ones, if you stick to the 5Rs: Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose and Recycle.