

## SENIOR COLLEGE CLASS 1 FALL 2010: LIVING GREEN

### What is Living Green?

- I. Definition of “green living”
  - A. Any action or activity that results in a positive impact on the environment so that the planet can continue to support future generations
  - B. Conversely, minimizing or eliminating toxins (poisons) from our environment as well as reducing and eliminating destructive habits
  - C. Green is something that has a positive, not a negative, effect on our world and us
  
- II. Goal of “green living”
  - A. Preserving and improving the health of the planet for all who live here
  - B. This includes both external, and internal, environment
    1. Our body
    2. Our home
    3. Our work environment
    4. Our social/leisure environment
    5. Our planet’s environment
  - C. Adopting a philosophy by making choices and decisions that have the most positive effect possible for all of the environments above
  
- III. The ‘Great Divide’
  - A. Eco-minded (intention) versus eco-active (action)
    1. Busy lifestyles
    2. ‘Bad’ habits
    3. Lack of knowledge of role in problems AND solutions
    4. Lack of guidance
      - a. What to do
      - b. How to do it
    5. Adjusting expectations
    6. Using learning as a motivator and enabler
    7. Providing practical solutions and tips
  
- IV. Debunking myths
  - A. Living green is a virtue, not an obligation
    1. Human activities cause the most harm to our environment
      - a. ***Please take a moment to stop right now and discuss amongst yourselves for a few minutes TEN current problems that we’re facing due to what humans have done to the environment***
    2. We are obligated to take care of what we value both personally and globally
    3. It’s EVERYONE’S responsibility

- B. Change is just too difficult and disruptive
    - 1. 21 days (times) to form a new habit
    - 2. Accept period of adjustment
    - 3. Keep it simple and manageable
    - 4. Build on the small (crawl, walk, THEN run)
    - 5. Replace old habits with new better habit
  - C. Environmentally-friendly products are hard to find and expensive
    - 1. Green products are now integrated
    - 2. Some products can be expensive but save money over long run (example: light bulbs, solar panels)
    - 3. Other products are less expensive (example: consigned items, local eggs)
    - 4. Some may cost more FOR NOW (the more we buy them, the lower the cost)
  - D. Conventional businesses will suffer if I live green
    - 1. "Conventional" means using out-dated practices and materials
    - 2. Change is what businesses do to grow
    - 3. Strong businesses will change and grow with the times
    - 4. Consumer choices should support earth-friendly businesses
  - E. "Greenies" are weird people and look strange
    - 1. Enlightenment is not eccentricity
  - F. Frugality requirements of living green mean deprivation
    - 1. Expectations need to be readjusted
    - 2. Earth-friendly forms can be found for any income
    - 3. Green doesn't mean less modern, less convenient
  - G. Green causes take too much time to support
    - 1. Getting involved is on every level
  - H. If I'm not 100% green I can't be green at all
    - 1. There will always be more to do but we all start somewhere
    - 2. Remember, keep it manageable
    - 3. Don't preach what you won't practice
  - I. I can't make a difference anyway
    - 1. You are not alone
    - 2. Every act multiplied produces positive effects
    - 3. Look at how far the living green philosophy has come today....we're having this class!!!
    - 4. ***"You must be the change you wish to see in the world."*** Mahatma Ghandi
- V. Questions to ask to determine the "greenness" of an item
- A. Is the product produced locally to minimize energy used in transport?
  - B. Is the product in season?
  - C. Was the product produced using organic growing methods?
  - D. Was it raised humanely without drugs and additives?
  - E. Does it come from readily renewable sources?
  - F. Was wildlife habitat, water quality, or natural resources impaired during production?

- G. Does it use reclaimed or recycled product?
- H. Is it made without toxic ingredients?
- I. Did the manufacturer reuse and recycle during production?
- J. Does the manufacturer use energy-efficient production?
- K. Are pollution-controlled devices used to reduce poison and toxins in manufacturing?
- L. Is the item packaged minimally?
- M. Is it a quality design made to last a long time?
- N. Is it the highest energy-efficient product of its kind?
- O. Can it be recycled?
- P. Will the manufacturer take it back, when its use is finished, for recycling?

***Please take about a 15-minute break to use the facilities, grab something to drink, and to think about the information you've been provided thus far. Be thinking about how you can get the answers to the questions I've just asked, and then we'll come back together to discuss that.***

VI. I asked the right questions, now how do I get the answers?

A. Eco-labeling

1. Read the label!
2. Know common terms
  - a. Biodegradable: degrades or decomposes in sunlight, air, and water (remember, our landfills don't allow for all of these, so even organic matter can take decades to decompose)
  - b. Biodiesel: alternative fuel made from vegetable oil
  - c. Cage free: not kept in cages, but not necessarily let outdoors
  - d. Chemical free: anything with a toxic chemical will read "danger," "poison," "warning," etc, so this is arbitrary
  - e. Clean energy: energy-generating technologies that release little or no air emissions (example: sun, hydrogen, water)...doesn't speak to other environmental impact (example: damming, mining)
  - f. Energy efficient: product uses reduced amount of energy compared to conventional products (reduce resource depletion and negative environmental impact)
  - g. Energy star: product that meets minimum energy-efficiency standards (EPA: if every consumer, business, organization used these \$200 billion be saved in next decade...[www.ecorebates.com](http://www.ecorebates.com))
  - h. Fuel efficient: vehicles of this sort reduce CO2 emissions, decrease air pollution, and decrease global climate changes
  - i. Greenhouse gases: gases that help trap heat in the earth's atmosphere...sunlight hits the earth, bounces back into atmosphere, and certain gases (carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide) absorb it into atmosphere
  - j. Hybrid: vehicle that has an electric motor with a gas engine (90% less smog pollution, 50% fewer greenhouse gases, better gas mileage)

- k. Natural: meaningless term, except in meat and poultry (no artificial products)
  - l. Nontoxic: non-poisonous, PBT- (Persistent, Bioaccumulative, and Toxic) free
  - m. Organic: USDA accredited, look for USDA label, "100% Organic" is 100%, 95% of product is organic if it says "Organic"  
([ams.usda.gov/nop](http://ams.usda.gov/nop))
  - n. Reclaimed, recovered: items used from already existing products (examples: flooring, doors, machine parts)
  - o. Recyclable: item that can be collected, separated, and otherwise recovered from solid waste stream for use in manufacture or assembly of another product
  - p. Renewable: resource that can be created again (examples: trees can be cut down but can be planted again, sun and wind energy)
  - q. Sustainable: using resources in a way that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their needs (forestry and fishery)
3. Research the manufacturer
  4. Join environmental groups with established reputations  
([worldwildlife.org](http://worldwildlife.org), [greenpeace.org](http://greenpeace.org), [nationalgeographic.com](http://nationalgeographic.com), [foei.org](http://foei.org), [nwf.org](http://nwf.org), [ecologyfund.com](http://ecologyfund.com), [newdream.org](http://newdream.org))
  5. Read, read, read!
  6. Ask, ask, ask!

***We're going to break for a few minutes for a discussion about how you've been green in your life thus far.***

- 1. Think of one to three examples of this.***
- 2. Consider how you started this practice and why.***
- 3. Share and discuss with members of your group.***

#### VII. How you may have been green all along

- A. Reducing, reusing, recycling (a waste-not-want-not world)
  1. Water
    - a. Collecting rainwater
    - b. Collecting bathwater
    - c. Bathing once weekly
    - d. Pumps versus faucets
  2. Food
    - a. No such thing as throw-away food
    - b. Scraps for cats, chickens or hogs
    - c. Not taking more than you could eat (or else you'd have to eat it anyway)
    - d. No such thing as a 'fussy' eater
    - e. Growing or raising what you ate

- f. Canning
- g. Using every part of every animal and plant (chicken feet and dandelion greens)
- h. Homemade NOT packaged
- i. Knowing what was in what you ate
- 3. Clothing
  - a. Feedsack uses
  - b. Quilting
  - c. Patching
  - d. Hand-me-downs
  - e. Darning
- 4. Transportation
  - a. Animals
  - b. One vehicle
  - c. Legs
  - d. Carpooling before it had a name
  - e. Travel meant to the next town
- 5. Composting
- 6. Saving
  - a. Tinfoil
  - b. Bags
  - c. String/yarn
  - d. Newspaper
  - e. Buttons
- 7. Christmas
  - a. One “fun” gift (candy), one “practical” gift (pants)...if you were lucky
  - b. Save the ribbons and wrapping paper!
  - c. A tree from the yard
  - d. Handmade gifts

VIII. After the ‘what’ now ‘why’

- A. For our next class, prepare a list of three ways that you’ve always been green.
- B. Next, name three ways that you now want to be green.
- C. Bring your lists to class to share and discuss them with your group.
- D. The next class will be about why we should all desire to be green and how it can impact our world.