

GOING GREEN BASICS



THE BASICS ON HELPING
YOURSELF AND MOTHER EARTH

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Wrapping Up

Foreword

How vast is your knowledge in the subject of global warming? Reports on global warming and climate change seem to be everywhere and people are starting to get alarmed. However, the publication of these reports may be a good thing since it presents that there is awareness of this particular problem. As a response, people want to find ways on how to go about it. Get all the info you need here.

Going Green Basics

The Basics On Helping Yourself And Mother Earth

Chapter 1:

Introduction

Synopsis

The term “going green” has become widely known, you would hear about it everywhere. Ad campaigns on this subject are widespread that it is hard to miss. You can hear advertisements on radios, watch them on TV and even read about it in blogs.

People start questioning themselves on how to go about this going green lifestyle. What type of changes could take place if you were to go green and how will it affect your life?

What does going green even mean and how should you do it? Is it all about the color green and how it should be part of daily living? Does it mean that you should also patronize green food items such as leafy vegetables?

While eating vegetables is healthy, it is, however, not what going green is all about. Going green is a lifestyle that focuses on conserving the energy and resources our planet Earth has provided us. All of this is for the sole purpose of saving the planet.

What Role Do You Play in Saving the Planet?

Recycling is not a new thing and you have probably done it many times in your home. You also observe energy conservation by turning off the lights and other home appliances when you leave the room. But the question is, is that enough? Most people think that the main solution is to give attention to the practices of big corporations.

After all, they are usually the ones to consume great amounts of energy and also contribute to large amounts of pollutants and garbage. That may be true; however, some big corporations these days are stepping up to be part of the Going Green campaign by improving their manufacturing processes to cut pollution.

Why Should You Care About Going Green?

Our planet is facing different environmental issues and these have a significant impact in our daily lives. Resources in this planet come in limited amounts and there are increasingly more people using them. If we want the future generations to have the privilege of enjoying a comfortable living experience, we need to do something.

Everything we do – big or little, good or bad – every day can somehow have an impact on our environment. As an inhabitant of this planet, you have the freewill to take over your life and make choices and the impact it has on the environment follows. What you eat, how you use electricity and water at home, where you go to take a vacation, how you get from one place to another – all of these can have an impact on the global scale.

Every living thing on this planet will always depend on the environmental resources for survival and it is crucial for everyone to take even baby steps to help minimize the negative impact their actions have on the environment. Supporting a greener lifestyle is not just doing little things you can to save the rainforests, but it is also about doing something to improve your health, saving money while saving the environment, and overall improving quality of life for every living thing on Earth.

Chapter 2:

What Does It Mean to Go Green?

Synopsis

The term “Going Green” is popularly used today and you may have heard it quite a few times. Going green involves baby steps to doing things that does not involve over-exploiting the environment.

Basically going green means living life individually or as a community in an environmental-friendly way. It involves contributing to the balance of the ecosystem and preservation of the planet.

Think About What You Do

Things you use every day, the activities that you engage in and the food you eat can have an effect on the environment. For instance, think about the soap, shampoo, and detergents that you are using. Most of them contain chemicals that are washed down the drain and eventually find their way to rivers, reservoirs and sea. Imagine having billions of people do that.

Consider the car you are driving to work, or riding a cab or bus just to get to your office on time. They emit greenhouse gases that significantly contribute to global warming, as well as lead, which can be harmful to living things. Consider thousands of vehicles doing that. Think about the chemicals, waste products, and noxious gases produced by industries and manufacturing companies as they produce items for human consumption in the form of clothing, paper, furniture, electronic gadgets, and the like.

It is hard to go about our daily lives without having to leave a trace of harmful substances and it is even difficult not to produce even the littlest amount of pollution as we carry out our daily activities. Despite the pollution that we bring to the environment, we still need to do something about it the least possible way and that is what Going Green is about. There are many things that you can do to minimize the impact of daily activities to the environment.

Going Green Starts at Home

It is easy to go green and it usually starts at home in a small scale. To start off, you can use incandescent light bulbs and do away with fluorescent ones since the former saves energy. It is easy to recycle bottles, paper, and cans

as well; in fact, you can find several how-to projects online. Using your air conditioning units less can also make a difference.

Other people are so committed to the green lifestyle that they would go as far as reconstructing their homes and make them very eco-friendly through installation of machines that harness natural sources of energy like sun and wind. While not all people can invest on remodeling their homes into an eco-friendly haven, the other option is go for small green choices.

Turning off power equipment when no one is home is a great start. Turning the faucet off when you brush your teeth or even using biodegradable cleaning products can also help. You can also uphold a green lifestyle by patronizing local market products, especially organic ones.

All in all, there are many simple choices that one can take to promote a healthier world to live in. Imagine millions of people worldwide making those simple yet green choices – it can definitely have a significantly affect the planet in a positive way.

Chapter 3:

The Issues We Face With Global Warming

Synopsis

The climate is changing; in fact, it has been changing over the last few decades. The earth is getting warmer and several scientific reports can prove this. What is sad about it is that the problem is mostly caused by humans. Global warming is a lingering problem and different animal and plant species and habitats tend to suffer more from this phenomenon. The result could be devastating – the balance in the ecosystem can be disrupted.

Global warming is a hot topic of the current environmental issues we face today. Its effects on agriculture, animals are already frightening enough. How much more when it comes to the human population? As most of the causes come from us, it is unfortunate to say that the effects it will have on us will be severe.

Causes of Global Warming

Global warming is caused by different factors but is mostly human-induced. In a small scale, we contribute harm to the environment through our actions, but when put together the millions of people in this planet, the impact can reach a global scale.

Carbon Dioxide Emissions

We depend on electricity so much that what we do not often realize is that this electricity comes from power plants that burn coals. As this process takes place, carbon dioxide –in great amounts – is released into the atmosphere. You can just see how trendy electronic gadgets are today, which only means that there will be an increase demand for electrical supply.

The demand for cars is also increasing due to the alarming growth of population. More and more people need cars for transportation and as a result, there is an increased use of fossil fuels. It goes back to carbon dioxide emission as we burn gasoline for transportation.

Deforestation

Our forests are rich in resources and wood is one essential resource greatly needed in any part of the world. We need wood for different purposes – paper products, furniture, construction, and the like – and as the demand increases due to population growth, deforestation results. Forests are there to help remove and store excess carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. But increasing deforestation only contributes to the accumulation of carbon dioxide, further harming the atmosphere.

Carbon dioxide emissions and deforestation are not only the causes of global warming. There are plenty more and if we do not do anything about it, pretty soon the Earth will be a difficult place to live in.

The Devastating Effects of Global Warming

Climate change is the most obvious effect of global warming and has been around for the past decade. Frequent storms, irregularities in weather, rising sea levels, and melting glaciers are just some of the obvious signs of climate change.

Our natural resources will soon deplete due to our greed. Human activities such as agriculture, fishing and mining can result to the degradation of these resources. If this trend does not stop, it is only a matter of time that we will exhaust our natural resources.

The List Does Not Stop

The environmental issues brought about by global warming are not just limited to what has been mentioned above. There are more issues that surface each day making the list of problems longer as time passes. If we do not take action, even the simplest ones, we may not have any other option but to suffer the consequences.

Chapter 4:

The Issues We Face With Natural Resources Today

Synopsis

Life on Earth depends on the availability of the world's natural resources, which includes water, energy, materials, and fertile land. However, the human population is growing at an overwhelmingly rapid rate, also increasing the rate at which these resources are consumed.

The climate is changing; freshwater reserves and our forests are diminishing; there are only a few land areas that remain fertile and different animal and plant species are threatened to extinction. If we want life to continue on this planet, we need to change our lifestyles and do what we can to preserve our natural resources.

The Issues with Natural Resources Depletion

Everything found in nature that can be turned into a product for consumption is a natural resource. The modern technology can do so much in the name of convenience but it is incapable of making trees. However, technology can modify these resources and as it is trying to take over the world, the rate at which these resources are depleted has increased dramatically.

It is important to understand that not all the resources found in nature are unlimited. But somehow, its depletion is inevitable due to the lifestyle we lead. Increasing demands due to population explosion, human greed, and neglect all lead to the loss of these precious gifts of nature.

Below are some of the common problems concerning our natural resources:

- The quality of land worldwide is not as pure as it was a hundred years ago. Forests have been cleared out and have been replaced with agricultural lands and residential lots. Vast agricultural lands deplete more nutrients in soil much faster than the rate at which they are replaced. Fertile lands are decreasing, while consumption and demand continue to rise.
- Our waters today are polluted as a result of waste products coming from industrial sites. Water pollution brings on several negative consequences. One is forcing the closure of beaches due to poor quality of water. Another is that fish may become unsafe for consumption. The potable water in your area could be contaminated with harmful microorganisms that can cause serious health problems.

- The ocean is also at stake especially with the growing problems of global warming. The ability of the ocean to replenish fish population cannot keep up with the rate of consumption. On top of that, the climate change has also affected productivity of marine life.
- The lush forests are threatened with continued deforestation to satisfy the economic needs of many nations. Biodiversity is greatly affected as the consequences are suffered by species that thrive in the forest, which could eventually lead to their extinction.

One Planet to Save

The human population takes up 30% of the Earth's resources and our planet may not seem to keep up with the high demand. This leads to deforestation, polluted air and water, degraded soils, and the dramatic decrease of different plant and animal species. The problem intensifies as the human population and rate of consumption continue to increase and. If nothing changes, it is likely that this only one planet we have may not be able to sustain life.

Chapter 5:

The Issues We Face on Waste/Trash Today

Synopsis

Solid waste is considered garbage produced in our homes, offices, and industrial companies. The production of solid waste and its toxicity is increasing. Most of the products we buy from the market contain harmful chemicals, and when these products are combined with other chemical products, your health and our environment are at risk. There are different waste facilities for every nation including incinerators and landfills.

Humans Contribute Too Much Waste

The human race is responsible for more than 30% of the world's generated waste. Just imagine how much household garbage you throw out every day. You tend to throw out trash of different kinds each day. It is in the form of paper (white paper, magazines, tissues), plastic (food container, bag of chips, medicine bottles), glass (food jars, beer bottles), food (vegetable peels, leftovers), and so much more - it is for certain that you can still think of a lot more examples.

In addition to the solid waste coming from your home, there are also pieces of trash lying out on the streets; those that come from the commercial sector such as restaurants, hospitals, and shops; the industrial companies, manufacturers, and the agricultural sector.

In the United States, about 220 billion tons of garbage per year is being produced as reported by the Environmental Protection Agency. While statistics for the entire planet are not readily available, just consider that the U.S. comprises 4% of the world population – that will simply tell you that it is a LOT.

The Toxic Nature of Waste

Government regulations on the chemical industry are not that stringent, which results to the manufacture of products that may contain harmful, untested chemicals. These products are consumed and eventually thrown away. There are still chemicals known to be harmful (such as BPA in plastic toys) that are still used due to poor regulation. The toxic nature of waste

intensifies the problem and people do not really have a clear solution for the problem.

Packaging is definitely a serious contributor of solid waste and that a huge percentage of waste products come from packaging, which is made of plastic. Plastic does not biodegrade and it does not disappear even for centuries – and that will seriously wreak havoc in our environment. Imagine the lifespan of a plastic material and the fact that a lot of trashes thrown away are made of plastic – it is definitely concerning.

How Garbage Pollution Affects the Environment

Garbage pollution affects the environment in many ways. For one, the chemicals that are present in the waste are harmful to the environment and all living species. Garbage pollution is also a source of bacterial diseases. Uncontrolled trash problem can also radiate into something more serious like having the garbage find their way into rivers and streams, polluting the waterways and harming aquatic life.

The long-term effects brought about by trash problem are not easily reversible especially when chemicals are involved. While there are several campaigns and projects that aim to solve trash problems, it still helps if you make small contributions to prevent the problem from becoming worse.

Chapter 6:

The Issues We Face on Our Food Today

Synopsis

Global warming has been believed to be beneficial for the food and agricultural industry for quite some time. This is due to the high levels of carbon dioxide from global warming which were once thought to help with photosynthesis for the greenhouses, thus, the belief that there will be a boom on the agricultural sector and food supply.

The theory was backed by the fact that there has been a great improvement in barley production in Iceland amidst global warming. But as more research experiments have been conducted, it was revealed that global warming effects on food supply and agriculture are not good at all.

Photosynthesis is necessary for plants to grow and manufacture their own food, but with the drastic increase in temperatures brought about by global warming, these plants will find it hard to survive. In addition, the climate change has brought about weather irregularities, bringing in floods and hurricane – surely, the survival of it will be a total struggle. Furthermore, these plants are primarily used for human consumption and when they are affected by the prevailing high temperatures, food shortage will occur.

How Global Warming Affects Food Supply

It has now been established that global warming can have negative effects on agriculture and ultimately food production. These effects are:

- Reduced yield - With global warming, expect that there will be reduced yields of food. High temperatures and drought can bring

stress to crops and livestock, making them vulnerable to diseases and affecting their productivity.

- Decreased soil arability – with the climate change, higher latitudes will receive the right temperature suitable for growing, only that the soil and nutrients found in these areas are not suitable for growing produce. Alternatively, lower latitude areas are suitable for farming but with the climate change, it becomes a less productive ground.
- Need for Irrigation – In some parts of the world, crop production will depend on rain. However, since the rise in temperature makes rain absent most of the time; the need for irrigation becomes the next option. As a result, there will be more expenses to take care of and water access will also become a problem.
- More Pests – Pests, fungi, and weeds tend to thrive better in warmer temperatures and under high levels of CO₂. New pests may be introduced in different regions as environmental temperature and humidity changes. For instance, pests thriving in low-latitude areas may migrate to higher latitudes.
- Effects on Fisheries – fisheries are already affected by pollution, global warming, and overexploitation. The changes in water temperatures in oceans, lakes, and rivers, coupled with rise of sea level and melting ice can have a great impact on different species of fish. For instance, they become more vulnerable to diseases in warmer waters. For some species of fish, they are fortunate enough to have adapted to the change by migrating to high latitude, but for others, like freshwater species, there is no other option.

Food shortage is a serious threat to society since man relies mainly on food for survival. The future of the global food supply will depend on how different societies can handle to the changes brought about by global warming.

Chapter 7:

The Issues We Face With Air and Water Quality

Synopsis

It would truly be disappointing to need your inhaler even if you are just doing a 4-mile run. Study shows that the increase in CO₂ levels brought by global warming increased the amount of pollen present in the air, which only means that people allergic to pollen are at great risk. In addition, the air has become dustier since global warming equates to drought, which consequently produces wildfires, and in turn brings in more dust in the air.

The temperatures of the ocean have also risen and will continue to rise if global warming is not put to stop. This would result to a threatened marine life.

These are just some of the effects that global warming can have on water and air, which will be briefly discussed in this chapter.

How Does Global Warming Affect the Air You Breathe?

Climate changes from global warming can have a substantial impact on the health of people worldwide. Global warming is responsible for the spread of diseases and reduced quality of air. Carbon dioxide is the main pollutant that contributes to global warming and is emitted from cars, power plants, and airplanes. Other human activities may also be held accountable for its emissions.

As climate changes, seasonal months are expected to fall out of sync. Spring would come early, fall ends late, and there will be heavier rain and snow. Rising levels of carbon dioxide and seasonal changes make a great recipe for pollen to be released into the air. In short, asthmatics will become sicker in the coming years.

The air has been polluted and its quality has been reduced as combination of noxious gases circulates in the atmosphere. On top of that, it becomes easier for diseases and illnesses to be spread, making people more vulnerable to health problems.

How Global Warming Affects Quality of Water

The quality of water is also significantly affected by global warming. If temperatures continue to rise as part of the global warming process, the flow of water, in rivers for instance, decreases. As a result, pollution will be condensed in the river because there will not be enough water to dilute the pollutants. Ultimately, sewage treatment facilities are required to control these pollutants and setting them up can be expensive.

Reduced water quality for the lower species can mean a threat to their survival. When water temperatures rise, it leads to the decrease in the

levels of dissolved oxygen – an element needed by aquatic animals. Hence, these animals will be under stress and may fight for survival – that is, if all of them would really survive.

Air and water are both essential for the survival of living things. While different species can adapt to changing environmental conditions, the absence of air and water cannot sustain life and having poor quality of those elements are just as bad. The issues we face with water and air quality today are not restricted to what was pointed out in the aforementioned, but is all the more a reason for people to do their part to make that change.

Chapter 8:

The Legacy We are Leaving for Future Generations

Synopsis

Global warming is a hot and controversial topic since it brings serious consequences in the economic, political, and social sector which can greatly affect the future generations. Some people tend to deny that this global phenomenon does exist.

This denial comes from people who wish to escape having to deal with what global warming brings. But no matter how much you want to deny its existence, global warming is a reality – and it is happening now.

It is therefore important that we face the issues brought by this phenomenon with determination for our own sake and the sake of the coming generations. In order to achieve this, we need to understand the beginning of all this and know what to do to solve the problem.

What We Can Contribute to Stop Global Warming

The global phenomenon can be frightening, considering its dire consequences but there are ways to stop it. The main point is to conserve our natural resources so we don't have to demand for more to the point of resource depletion. The following are just helpful tips that can take a step to having a better environment to live in:

- Recycling plastic materials instead of buying new ones
- Using eco-friendly bulbs instead of conventional light bulbs
- Support tree-planting campaigns to compensate for the loss of trees in deforestation
- When appliances are not in use, turn them off
- Advocating the fight against global warming through education
- Support the use of renewable sources of energy

Get the Kids Involved

The younger generations deserve to enjoy a healthy Earth; they should have the privilege of enjoying what the planet has to offer. However, with the threat of global warming, this privilege has been threatened and it is up to the adults to help make the world a better place for them to live in. There is no better way to leave this legacy to future generations than to have them involved in the advocacy.

Educating children and getting them involved is a great idea to help fight this global phenomenon. Kids should be educated about the basic facts of global warming through fun-filled activities and conversations. You can show them what to do to support the cause. Creativity is key to keep their attention and if you wish to explain global warming, it should be done in a

way that will not lose their interest. Science experiments can be a very smart idea in order to get the kids involved and understand the problem.

No Work Is Too Little When It's All About Saving the Planet

Not all people will appreciate the green lifestyle and the idea of conserving the natural resources but all of this is for the betterment of future generations. The attempt to save the planet will definitely take a lot of work and not all people may be committed to go through that. But every little thing you do to contribute would work when it is all for the benefit of the planet. Changing one's lifestyle is not easy to do and some would not find it a very enjoyable thing to do. But in the end, all the efforts to save the planet will pay off and the younger generations will be the ones to enjoy the benefits. The simplest green choice can make a big difference in defending the only planet that is home to the human race – and that is the legacy we are leaving for the future generations.

Chapter 9:

Developing a New Relationship with Mother Earth

Synopsis

In order for a relationship to work, it should be a matter of give and take. The relationship humans used to have with Mother Earth is all about taking advantage. Since Mother Earth has provided us with just about everything we need, we tend to just take it willingly to the point of abusing the privilege, without realizing the possible negative consequences. For many years, our planet has not ceased to provide us with rich natural resources, but today, the story has come to a twist. There is always an end to everything and it won't be long before Mother Earth stops giving.

What humans took from the planet, they never gave back, for if they did, things like global warming and climate change would not have happened. However, it is not too late to develop a new relationship with our dear planet. Nothing is ever too late if it is simply for the benefit of the planet we call home. Do what you have to today and reap the benefits later on.

Saving Mother Earth

When our relationship with Mother Earth was once just taking advantage of what we are provided for, the new relationship should now be about giving back to her by saving her. Since people are now aware of the consequences of abusing the natural resources, others have put in their efforts to do something about it.

Fortunately, people have awoken and are starting to take those steps. Since the advent of global warming, different campaigns have been launched to protect the Earth all the more. In addition, the major corporations that were once a major source of pollution are also doing their part to help save our home planet.

Even amidst the raging modern technology, efforts to save the planet have not diminished. In the modern world, people are fond of using electronic gadgets, one after the other, supporting the fad.

While at this point the demand for such goods cannot be controlled, the big corporations are stepping up to at least make up for the energy they consumed to make those products, as well as the electricity required for the product to work. In a more specific sense, take the web hosting industry as an example – it is much needed for businesses and they, too, have decided to go green with their services.

Going Green Choices

Going green does not have to be lavish as installing expensive solar panels or wind turbines to be able to harness renewable energy sources. Although it may involve a change in lifestyle, it does not require you to be someone that you are not. If you cannot afford solar panels, do not push it - you can still do so many things to contribute to the protection of the planet, even in your own little way.

Going green is a choice to make, and a simple one for that matter. Every little thing you contribute to save the planet makes a very big difference. Start small and it can go a long way in developing that new positive relationship with Mother Earth.

Chapter 10:

The Benefits of Going Green for the Earth and Our Wallets

Synopsis

It is quite obvious that there are plenty of benefits to reap from going green. The first and most important benefits go to the environment. The Earth is the only planet that we live in and it has everything necessary for our survival. Of course, we want to do everything in our power just so we can continue living in this planet. There may be no further explanation needed why going green can benefit the Earth, but what people do not realize is the extent of this positive impact.

Advantages

Reduced Pollution

Choosing to uphold a green lifestyle helps reduce the amount of pollution distributed to the soil, air and water. By limiting your dependence on fossil fuels and more on alternative energy resources; recycling materials; and reducing waste, there will be fewer pollutants for the environment to take in.

Conservation of Natural Resources

Majority of the world's source of electricity comes from burning fossil fuels, such as natural gas, coal, and oil. Burning these fuels only emits greenhouse gases, which can have a detrimental effect to the environment. You can cut down emissions by choosing to use alternative energy sources and reducing energy consumption.

Preservation of Different Species

Going green is going pro-life as this lifestyle helps preserve natural habitats of different species of plants and animals. Various plant and animal species are threatened to extinction due to deforestation. If you reduce too much consumption on paper products or support recycling, you can decrease the rate at which these species extinct. In addition, pollution also finds its way to the waters and for that, going green also helps in the preservation of marine life.

Less Waste Production

A green lifestyle encourages people to minimize their consumption and recycle items to help reduce waste production. If you reduce, reuse, and recycle, you are doing something to decrease the amount of waste that ends up in landfills. These waste materials biodegrade, they release carbon dioxide in the process which can harm the environment.

Going Green Also Benefits Your Wallet

Apart from the environmental benefits, going green can also help you save money without you realizing it. Prices of gas could go on a hike but you have the option to take your bike to work or even walk to get to your destination. This not only helps reduce carbon dioxide emissions from cars, but also saves you money on transportation, and at the same time get some exercise.

It has been mentioned in the previous chapter how climate change and global warming can have a detrimental effect on your health. If you put an effort to saving the planet by going green, you are also doing something to minimize the risk of developing health problems brought about by climate change. In turn, this could save you a lot of money from medical expenses.

Wrapping Up

Going Green is Beneficial in Every Aspect

Observing eco-friendly discipline can be very beneficial in just about any aspect, whether it is about health, money, and environment. We may not realize it every day but as we do something for the planet, we are also doing greater things for our own benefit.

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