

Lauren Singer's interview: Trash is for tossers

Magazine: Il Cambiamento - Dal virtuale al Reale

Journalist: Massimo Nardi

Site: www.ilcambiamento.it

Date: 01/2015

When did you do this choice? And why?

I started living this way a little over two years ago when I was a student at NYU. I have always been passionate about the environment and sustainability and so I decided to pursue Environmental Studies as my major. In one of my environmental classes there was a girl who would use a lot of plastic everyday to eat her dinner and afterwards she would just throw it all in the trash. I would watch her night after night and become very frustrated.

One day I came home after class after feeling upset about watching her produce so much plastic trash and I went to make dinner. When I opened my refrigerator I saw that everything that I had was packaged in plastic and I couldn't believe it! I was just as bad as the girl that was using a ton of plastic. I decided in that moment to stop using plastic since it made me so upset to see other people using it.

Not using plastic meant learning how to make all of the my everyday products myself. It also meant a ton of research. I had to learn how to make everything that I would otherwise purchase in plastic such as toothpaste, beauty products, and cleaning products.

While researching recipes I came across a blog called the Zero Waste Home started by a mother of two children in California. She was living a Zero Waste life with a family of four! I was so impressed and inspired and thought that if a family of four didn't have to produce trash, I didn't have to either.

The journey was incredible and the lifestyle makes perfect sense for me. I love the environment, studied environmental science, but wasn't necessarily living that way in my day to day life. Now, living a Zero Waste lifestyle, I live in a way that aligns with my worldview which makes me so incredibly happy.

Why "Trash is for tossers"?

I had so many potential names for my blog and none felt right. One day I was watching TV and heard a British girl say the word tosser and I LOVED it. At first the name was going to be Waste is for Tossers, but I love puns and alliterations and so it became Trash is for Tossers.

Which difficulties did you find at the beginning? And which ones do you still find?

In the beginning it was hard to figure out how to make all of my products. There was no one resource to find awesome recipes that worked well for me. It took a lot of research and trial and error to find products that I loved, but once I tinkered with some recipes and made products that I liked, it has been really easy.

On your blog you have posted a picture of four months of trash. How did you achieve this goal? How do you make it possible? For instance, food and clothings are necessary for individuals...

I achieved my Zero Waste lifestyle by identifying what my trash was and then figuring out the ways to reduce it. For me, buying food unpackaged and in bulk helped me to reduce a lot of my waste as did composting my food scraps as opposed to throwing them away. I also do not buy any new clothing and only shop secondhand if I absolutely need anything. I stick to a very minimalist wardrobe.

What do your family and your friends think about your lifestyle?

My family and friends are very supportive of my lifestyle. They like that I am so passionate. I have even seen them adopting little things that I do into their everyday lives. For instance, my friends use reusable bags to shop in bulk or bring mason jars around. My father also recently told me he reduced the amount of trash he was producing. This makes me so happy because I have never told anyone to live the way that I am living, I just live my lifestyle and if people have questions about it, I answer them. So they have decided to lessen their impact on their own and that is very powerful.

On your blog is available a zero waste alternatives list online, in which there are your most successful inventions. So, what about the company you're launching?

I have been making my own products for years now. There were a lot of people who were asking me where they could buy products like the ones I make myself since they didn't have time to make them. I never felt right recommending anything as far as cleaning products that were available in stores because I felt that even the "eco" companies had ingredients that I was uncomfortable with. This was a big motivator for me to start my own company called The Simply Co. to produce the sustainable, organic, cleaning products that are incredibly simple, effective, and that I have made for years. They are vegan and only contain the highest quality ingredients available. Our first product is a 3-ingredient laundry detergent that is safe for your body, your home, and the environment and we cannot wait to expand our product line.