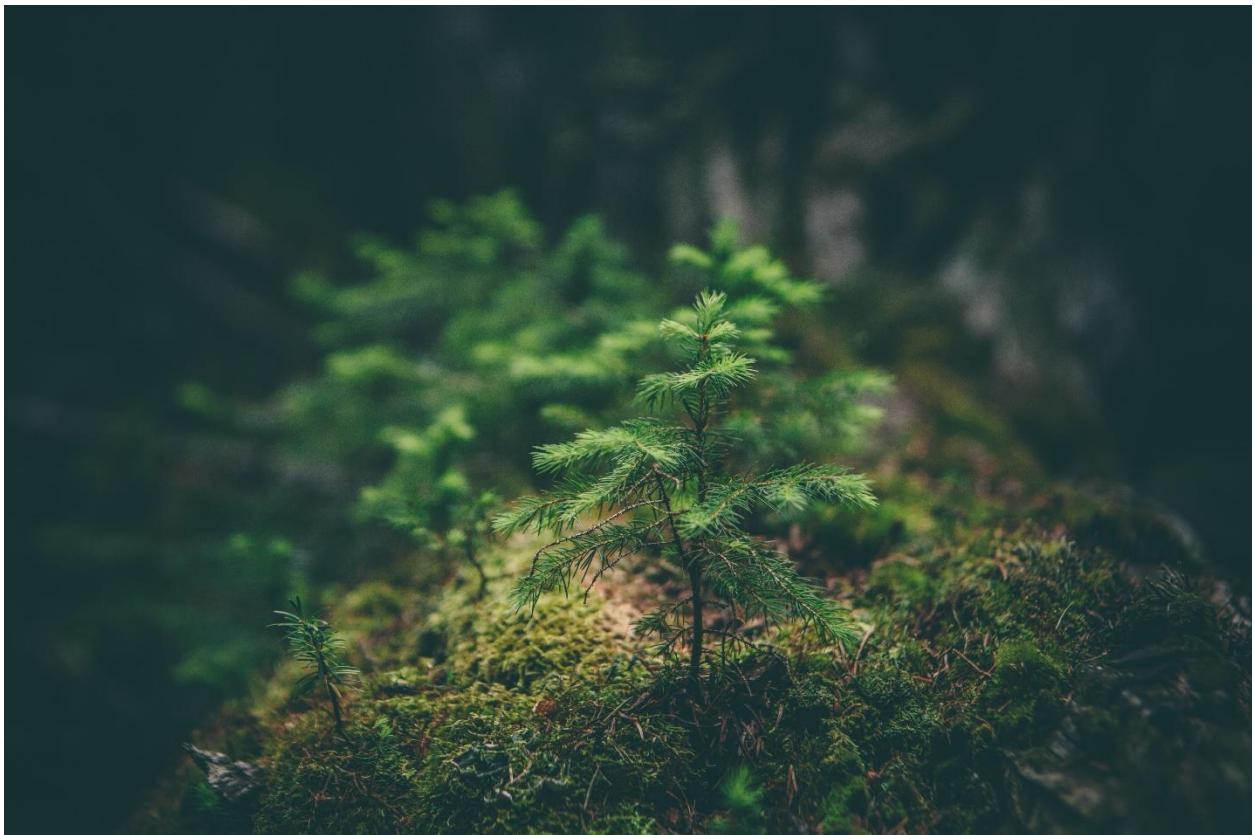


10 pint-sized (and perhaps unpopular) actions you can take to help aid the fight on Climate Change

Easy, empowering and often overlooked actions you can take individually and collectively to combat the effects of Climate Change and increase environmental awareness and empathy.



Sometimes small actions have huge outcomes, especially when they are taken into consideration collectively. While not always easy or trendy, there are tiny changes and daily decisions you can make right now to empower yourself in the midst of tragic events and a changing world.

Many of us have been waking up to heart-breaking natural disasters on the news or out our back door, along with weather patterns that are dangerously different than what is deemed normal and

healthy for our planet's human and animal populations. In the face of these events, many of us are left with a sense of helplessness or ambiguity around the steps that can be taken to support the balance and protection of the environment. However, just behind the veil of these troubling sentiments is a wellspring of ideas and actions we can take to counter both climate change and the bleak outlook that can otherwise take hold.

10.) Water works

While the plastic industry has boomed over the decades and made life remarkably convenient for many of us, the national recycling efforts have hit a tipping point in which plastics are used faster than they can be recycled and recreated into new products. While recycling plastic is a noble and worthy effort, an even better action you can take is to purchase a high-quality water filter for your tap at home (and dig out those old reusable water bottles). Many of these go for between \$15-30 at local department stores or online marketplaces, and by taking the step to filter water at home, one single household can save thousands of plastic bottles from being bought, and virtually thousands of dollars that would have otherwise been spent on weekly purchases of plastic single-use water bottles.

Additionally, not many people think about how water plays into electricity production. Many electric facilities are fueled by water (in thermoelectric power plants, hydropower, and in the process of drilling for fuel sources), and in many areas of this country and around the world, water is a cherished commodity not to be taken lightly. The less electricity that is used by each household, the less the demand for the production; whereby easing the extravagance of water use and encouraging alternative clean energy solutions. Electrically speaking, if we turn off the TV instead of allowing it to run all night (and unplug similar high-useage appliances), we indirectly save electricity *and* any water to power it.



So, if you want to really get wet and wild and make a splash for water preservation, schedule a few evenings a month to have a "pretend" power outage (novelty and relaxation can be found in an evening by candlelight without the use of electronics), and put a cap on your plastic water bottle consumption by using a filter and reusable containers.

9.) Near or Far

It is common knowledge that personal vehicles are a major contributor to the pollution that deteriorates our ozone layer. So, as audacious as it may sound, we can aim to consolidate our consumption of gasoline by planning errands and outings for the same afternoon once a week, or by making the bold decision to stay in or stay local for weekends and vacations rather than traveling on highways for hours if it really is unnecessary. We all love to get out and enjoy places, and traveling is integral to enjoying and experiencing life. But there is also something to be said for the massive reduction in pollution that the Earth witnessed a few years ago when citizens were encouraged to stay home except for emergencies and necessities.

When planning a trip or considering our weekly travels, the goal is not elimination of vehicles or eradicating fun trips to far-off places, but rather seeking a bit more balance and conscientiousness in how we utilize our vehicles and how much gas and fuel we are consuming. Consider compassionately whether the best or only choice is to drive for hours for recreation, or whether you could replace a few of your outings here and there for a destination you could reach on foot, or a shorter distance driving.

8.) Don't Be a Meat-Head

Meat of various kinds is a dietary staple for millions of people and various cultures around the globe. When this is practiced with complete abandon, however, we see the toll that it takes on human health, animal lives, the economy, and the environment.

In several very telling studies of the last few years, methane gas from livestock and the deforestation for farms and grazing land combine to create a significant proportion of the pollution leading to climate change. Methane alone is a major contributor to greenhouse gases, and articles of recent years have cautioned that it would be wise, and virtually imperative, that we work to decrease our consumption and demand for meat. The production of meat products (not to mention the horrors of factory farming for the animals), plays largely into the destruction of forested areas critical to absorbing carbon dioxide, and the factories themselves spew untold amounts of pollution into the air that gets locked in our atmosphere. Additionally, the over breeding of cows for meat and dairy products is a massive contributor to the concentration of methane introduced into our atmosphere. While in one context, we can all enjoy a good fart, those gaseous emissions as a widespread result of over-breeding farm animals for human consumption becomes a seriously threatening phenomenon.

Decreasing our weekly reliance on meat for daily meals would have a far-reaching positive effect on lowering the demand and popularity of meat farms, whereby reducing both pollution and ozone-depleting methane. This doesn't mean that every individual must eliminate every ounce of meat in their diet. But what it does mean is that replacing red meat when possible for soy or other alternatives, and reducing our reliance on meat for every meal will help our health, will support the wellbeing of animals, and will help to heal the environment in numerous dramatic ways.

7.) Trees: Even Cooler Than We Thought

We all know that trees have the amazing ability to filter the atmosphere and make it possible for other living species to breathe. But (as if that wasn't incredible enough), what fewer people realize is that trees also decrease the temperature around and beneath them significantly, and play a major role in keeping the overall outdoor temperature in check, in cities, parks and forested rural areas where people live and require cooling. Therefore, protecting trees and producing more of them is a really solid move in terms of combatting climate change.

It is clear that without trees, life as we know it would not exist, and that trees can make environments more comfortable, cool, and beautiful. What steps can you take to act on this knowledge? There are actually a number of ways you can be a tree patron. You can of course plant some seeds or saplings to grow your own trees, even turning it into an annual tradition, a family ritual, or a fun activity to do with kids at school. Additionally, you can make sure that you buy paper products that were sourced responsibly (no clear-cutting involved), or replanted after the trees and wood were harvested.

Even toilet paper, paper plates and paper towels are now often made from recycled materials, or from bamboo. While many of us consider bamboo a type of tree, it is a wildly unique and resilient type of grass that appears and functions very similarly to trees, but grows up to three times faster, produces up to 35% more oxygen, and absorbs more than twice as much carbon dioxide as its deciduous and coniferous counterparts. And while bamboo is a vital resource to animal species such as the Panda, when sourced responsibly after it begins growing, bamboo regrows rapidly and can be regrown from roots as well. Many bamboo companies also confirm on their packaging that the bamboo sourced for production is specifically grown and harvested for resources and does not interfere with or deplete the bamboo forests used by panda populations.



Lastly, we can help preserve the trees directly that already exist. Donating our time, money or efforts to organizations that protect the treasured rainforests or combat deforestation is a simple and manageable measure we can take. Also, adopting forested acreage, buying from small local farms, and supporting your local parks and conservation land are yet other helpful ways to cultivate a cooler climate and give trees the attention and credit that they deserve.

6.) Bring-Your-Passions-to-Work Day

We've heard of bring-your-child-to-work days, and while this is a nice tradition, the new challenge could be to bring-your-passions-to-work day. Many of us are at work around colleagues for a significant portion of the day, often upwards of eight or nine hours, which is a ripe opportunity to spread news and raise awareness.

Bring in fliers to post up on a work bulletin board in the employee break-room, staff bathroom, teacher's lounge, or above the office copier machine. Be bold enough to mention something to co-workers about the environment, or climate awareness, or a personal tree-free challenge that

you're initiating. If stated in a positive light, this could spark not only great conversations, but could lead to unseen domino effects of inquisitiveness, awareness, and perhaps even change.

So many of us are at our place of employment almost more than we're at home, around people with whom we might not normally socialize or speak with. Why not use this opportunity to share the planet love in your own unique way?

5.) Be the Change You Wish to See in the World

While perhaps a bit of a stretch if you are already settled into a career, but not at all out of actual reach, is to become a professional whose job it is to protect and preserve the environment. Sure, this is far more in-depth than sponsoring an acre of forest or installing a water filter on your kitchen sink, but it's worth mentioning to dream big.

Many of us have these kinds of dreams and visions for the future of our planet and for our own lives, but not all of us end up walking the paths that we envision as children for a number of different reasons. However, if the call of Nature is in your heart, and you are seeking to make a difference in terms of vocation or volunteering, professional work and service provision within the Sciences, Natural Resources management, Litigation, Politics, or Environmental Education could be the call you were waiting for.

There are multiple avenues of employment or unpaid community service that can support the environment, and numerous ways we can help to educate and uplift humanity toward brighter outlooks and healthier futures. Even roles at local petting farms or outdoor tree-care center are valuable means of donating your time, love and efforts toward environmental stewardship and a sense of awareness for our fellow creatures who depend upon it.

To spread love for Nature through a service you provide, whether paid or volunteer, temporary or as a long-term career, it is never wasted energy. People who serve others and the planet can create a far-reaching support network of jobs, careers, volunteer positions and grassroots organizations that distribute active care and compassion for our planet.

4.) Mindset

While the news may make it seem otherwise, it is imperative to remember the truth that we are not impotent; we CAN indeed make a difference. What may seem like tiny actions or trivial choices have greater effects collectively than we may imagine. Just as each seemingly insignificant drop of water eventually fill up an entire bucket (and massive bodies of water like lakes and oceans), our actions work in much the same way.

We know that our thoughts lead to our feelings, moods and behaviors, and therefore thoughts, concepts and ideas can function similarly; tiny droplets of inspiration and repeated waves of thought and emotion can fill us up with motivation, hope and energy, or conversely, they can deplete our cognitive water supply until it's a dry and bitter desert of despondency, or worse.

At a glance, there may not appear to be much connection between mindset, mental health, and the environmental havoc we see around us. But if we look deeper; dive down into the origins of our thinking patterns and attitudes toward others, it becomes clearer how mindset and our collective attitude play a pivotal role in how we maintain our surroundings; the natural environment included.

As master adaptors in a modernizing world and expansive universe, it becomes incumbent upon us and the future of all life on this planet, to use our innovations, extend our understanding, and grow our capacity for creative solution finding. Each and every day, we are faced with either staying fixed on what is, and allowing concerns and derogatory thoughts to ferment, or we choose to unfold the capacities of our mind and engage a Growth Mindset.

Attitudes are contagious; which is why it is vitally important to shift our own mindset from one of fear or hopelessness to one that is solution-focused and oriented toward change rather than challenge. Misery loves company, but so does light-heartedness, joy and determination. It'll stick, if we're willing to put in the effort to really monitor our mindset and reexamine how we portray our approach to climate change to other people. It may seem trivial, but our mindsets and heartsets can make a world -- or a planet -- full of difference.



3.) Laugh Out Loud

Despite the shade and shadows, looking at the bright side becomes more than just a trope when we look at its benefits and practicality. Optimism breeds powerful innovation, and by keeping your heart light, you shield and fortify yourself to take on challenging tasks and difficult demands; which is more important now than ever. Humor is known to be an amazing vehicle by which to share and process challenging truths.

Comedians are known to operate this way -- they present challenging, sensitive topics with humor to make insightful commentary and clever points about circumstances and events, which has a disarming effect rather than placing people on the defensive. Laughter and light-heartedness help keep us sane, grounded, and focused on possibilities. Who could deny that comedy is a fun and invaluable way to process difficult information, as well as a means for opening up to connection, collaboration and creativity.

Comic skits, the "funnies" in newspapers, comedic documentaries and fun animated films have helped capture the hearts and minds of the youngest and oldest to heighten our collective awareness and understanding to new levels. Through artistry, humor, puns, jokes and simply

sharing laughs together, very poignant points can find a home, and we can embrace the levity that allows us to take them to heart.

2.) Take a Hike

Exposure to plants and wildlife, especially when introduced at a young age, not only increases our sense of empathy for the natural world and the state of our planet and the climate effects, but it also demonstrates that preservation and enjoyment of the environment is important to us as a culture and species.

Hiking of course is one well-known activity of choice, but getting outside and partaking in shared natural spaces also can include time out in forests or public gardens, parks, nature preserves, natural science museums, or visiting natural wonders, outdoor attractions, wildlife sanctuaries and animal rehabilitation centers. All of these experiences increase our exposure to natural landscapes and other forms of life, and contribute to the funding and public awareness of the celebration of nature.

People tend to pay closer attention to what they understand and care about, and politicians tend to allocate more attention and resources toward what their constituents want and value. Visiting these wild locales and nationally recognized parks and preserves can therefore yield multiple angles of positive results; it can foster a sense of connection, compassion and even reverence for the environment while telling our leaders and legal system that we as a people feel that it's a passion worth fighting for.

1.) Simply put – and to Sum it Up – Just Give a D@mn

For all of us, there are innumerable tasks and immediate day-to-day situations that demand our energy and attention. This is true no matter what age or stage of life we find ourselves in. But while our time may be finite, the heart itself is infinite and our capacity for love and compassion knows no boundaries or limits. By consciously choosing to open up the mind and the heart to the ails of the world while emphasizing positive thinking and solution-oriented action, we tilt the balance toward a bolder human race and a healthier habitat for all the Earth's species.

Caring does not need to break the bank or sanction untold amounts of time or resources. Actions can be done in small but consistent ways to create a cumulative effect. Decisions themselves can seem minute while amounting to tremendous social statements when examined collectively. And efforts can be minimal, while multiplying exponentially with the more people who join the fight. Lastly, this "battle" need not be vicious; it can be fiercely loving and victorious through simplicity.



Remember that actions, habits, decisions, and words matter. We all have a voice and a choice in any given moment. Add articles to your work bulletin board. Post on social media or place quotes in your place of work to raise awareness. Bring up the topic in conversations with friends and family. Visit public parks and submit photos of your enjoyment. Sponsor an acre of land, donate to a preservation sanctuary, or volunteer at a nearby environmental education center.

Increasing awareness moves topics from the back burner of peoples' minds to the forefront of conscious focus. It doesn't need to be pushed down anyone's throats or brought up in a

threatening or desperate way, but when something is on your mind (and heart), you are more likely to take simple actions on it.

When people open their eyes to what's going on around them, it's not as easy to turn away or put our focus on something else. Sometimes it can be a protective mechanism to do so, and even healthy, when we are inundated by events that we feel powerless to do anything about. However, the climate crisis is different. We are each responsible (and can be responsive) in our own ways. As inconsequential as our contribution may feel, it's the collective impact that counts. Like water drops that fill a bucket, one drop does little, and zero droplets equates to zero change, while consistent drops added to a bucket results in a fountain overflowing.

It can be easy to feel disempowered, but just as the truth firmly and lovingly woke me up, I offer the same reminder to you; that "**you are not impotent**". There are handfuls of actions that you can take right now, to add your voice and efforts to the movement of protecting and preserving our planet. Let's be courageous enough to begin.



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