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What It Means to Be "Green"  
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Can I tell you a secret? I have recently come to hate the term "going green."

Faithful readers, assuming there are any, may note that I have used this phrase on many occasions. I am, in fact, a flagrant participant in the "green" lexicon but I do so with a certain amount of reluctance. That's because "going green," seems to mean an idea that is trendy or a hobby or a part-time interest. I'm sure that I don't have to tell you that for me "being green" is a full-time gig, and not just because it's my job to spread the word about the state of the earth.

This is where I tend to lose the interest of my marginally-ecological audience. I know it sounds like I am going to commence with the obligatory global warming guilt trip and the subsequent recycling diatribe. I won't. Let me make my case and then maybe ask you to do me one favor.

Environmentalism isn't something you do or something you buy or a group you join on Facebook. It's a way of thinking and a way of living. It means considering the structure of our lives and tweaking it to create real change. We all live within systems - the way we get our food, how we procure our clothes, the means by which we get around - and these systems affect our fancy planet up and down the line. They say that the devil is in the details but when it comes to the creating ecological change, the demons of destruction dwell in the broader picture.

So, here is my one request: Think about what is really important to you. Imagine what matters most to you in the whole world. Go ahead, take a minute. I'll wait.

For me, my family, my health, and my independence top the list of concerns. Miraculously, each of those items depends on a healthy planet and an improving environment. My health is reliant on air quality, water quality, food contamination, hazardous waste management, sanitary sewers, noise pollution and a million other environmental aspects of my existence. My family can only thrive if they have healthy lives. My independence is tied to a lifestyle reliant on safety and growth. Everything I need to be happy depends on a happy planet. And everything I do has an impact on the earth. Therefore, every chance I get, I'm considering the bigger picture of living in the systems we call home.

And that is the big secret: Environmentalism isn't about making you feel crappy because you drive a big truck. Environmentalism is about making your life better, all the way around. I keep preaching ecology because really, I want you to be happy.

That's my confession. Call me and we'll talk about what you can do to increase your contentedness.

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