

I WENT TRASH FREE FOR A DAY



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Recently, while going down a YouTube rabbit hole, I came across this video where this woman tries to live "trash free" for a whole month. The title of the video instantly caught my attention and I started watching it. This video then led me to a whole bunch of other videos and eventually I found a whole community of people who try to live sustainably by reducing their individual wastage.

The idea behind going trash free is to make a person realise how much unnecessary waste is produced by each of us on a daily basis. A lot of us don't think twice before throwing something into the trash and we almost never think about where our trash ends up. Most of the discarded materials end up in landfills where they degrade and produce gases that harm our environment. In the videos that I watched, everyone started by trying to cut down their trash for a week or for a month and then slowly integrating that habit into their lifestyle. Cutting down on trash also meant not using products containing synthetic polymers that don't degrade. I was quite intrigued by this and decided to try it out myself.

MORNING

My morning started with the bitter realisation that even the toothpaste used to brush my teeth comes in plastic tubes which are highly harmful for our environment. I also noticed that I owned plastic containers to keep my toothbrushes. As for the plastic toothpaste tubes, there are lots of alternatives where people actually use homemade toothpastes which don't lead to plastic waste.

Having breakfast without producing waste was challenging since most foods we consume come in some sort of packaging. So, I decided to go grocery shopping and get some fruits instead. At the counter, I decided to carry the produce by hand instead of using a bag.

AFTERNOON

Lunch was even more difficult since I had to prepare a whole meal without producing any waste. This meant I had to go grocery shopping again. Since I knew I would have to buy quite a few things and I probably I would not be able to carry them in my hands, I decided to take a bag from home. Now, every house has this one drawer full of just plastic and paper bags. If my parents have ever taught me anything, it's how to hoard unnecessary bags. This made me realise how we waste bags during grocery shopping by taking a bag even if we are buying just one item.

For lunch, I was forced to buy mainly vegetables since everything else came in containers. I carried all the items in the bag that I brought from home instead of taking home another bag which will never be used again. For grocery shopping, it's actually best to keep a reusable bag at home. For the cooking part, I had to watch a few YouTube videos to make something edible. Sustainable cooking involves cooking the entire portion and not throwing away anything. So, that's another thing that has to be kept in mind while shopping for produce. For most foods, we always end up throwing a few parts away but I had to ensure I used up the entire vegetable. The idea is, even if you don't use the whole food for eating, instead of throwing parts away they can be used for something else. A lot of people, who are completely committed to trash free living, even go as far as building their own home compost system.

NIGHT

By night time, I was properly exhausted since I didn't get to have a full meal the whole day. Obviously, if I was more prepared and had done more research I wouldn't be so tired since it's possible to have healthy meals that don't produce any trash. But, since I'm lazy I just heated up some of the leftover lunch for dinner.

There are a lot of things to consider before you embark on your journey to a trash free tomorrow. Even though I know I wasn't able to go completely trash free the whole day, I realised how literally everything we do produces some kind of waste – from our foods, cosmetics, to our hygiene products. Also, trying to live trash free actually leads to eating more healthy foods since it's mostly the natural produce that come without the unnecessary plastic packaging.

Since the use of these products is so ingrained it's very difficult to completely get rid of them from our lives. In many countries, a lot of everyday products come in sustainable options nowadays. In Bangladesh, it's a bit more difficult to come across these sustainable alternatives but we can at least try changing the small things that we can and move forward from that.

Tasnim Odrika is having an existential crisis at the moment and doesn't really know who she is anymore. Send her compliments at odrika_02@yahoo.com