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Book Review

**Introduction**

The book *Save the World; There is no Planet B* written by the author Louise Bradford is an environmental guidebook targeted towards the general population. The sub header of the book says, “Things You Can Do Right Now to Save Our Planet”, which is the first give away that the book is appropriate for anyone to read and does not really have a specific audience. The author breaks the book down into eleven different categories of major locations that pollution exists in everyday life. Some of these include the home, transportation, food and water consumption, and shopping habits. Every day, individuals across the world generate pollution in many different ways, and Bradford has listed simple changes individuals can make to their routines that may help save the planet. She also addresses how many people assume that, as individuals, we cannot make changes large enough to make a difference on the environment. In doing so, she points out that this is false, considering we—as consumers—control the entire market with our purchasing habits. This book was written in 2019, so is it a very current book that discusses current climate issues and solutions. She points out various actions that can be taken by individuals in order to reduce their carbon footprint and unnecessary waste. Unfortunately, since this is still a current problem, there is not “end” or “resolve” given. The author provides a call to action, but this problem has not yet been solved. I chose this to read because of a couple reasons. Throughout the quarter, we have learned about many ways humans have and still are polluting the environment. I felt a desire to discover ways that I could make a difference for our future, and so I looked for a guidebook that could walk me through steps I could take in my everyday life.

**Body**

One thing the author talked about that I liked was shopping habits. I go shopping very frequently and have a pretty vast wardrobe. I know it is bad for both my wallet and the environment, but I really enjoy doing so. I frequent the dollar store and websites like Shein, where I can fuel my desire without breaking the bank. Unfortunately, like Bradford discusses, this is the only positive that comes from a choice like this. The author talks about a few different paths an individual can take to decrease their impact on the environment when it comes to shopping. Obviously the most desirable choice would be to shop less and only ever purchase items you need. She mentions a few strategies to help in doing so as well, such as waiting at least a week before making a purchase to cut down on impulse buys or looking for alternative solutions to buying something new if the item is a necessity. The author uses the example, “Does your pet need a new, custom-made dog bed or can you just add a blanket to its old one to make it more comfortable” (Bradford, 126). By using this mentality, individuals may realize that there are many solutions to problems that do not involve purchasing a new item. This can also look like sewing buttons back onto shirts, cutting up old fabric to use as dish rags, or using old cups and water bottles as planters. While this is the best option for the environment, sometimes it is not always feasible. Bradford states that, if upcycling or recycling is not possible, then using smart shopping choices is the second-best choice. This can look like shopping at second-hand stores, purchasing high-quality items, or doing research to find the company that uses the best practices and materials. This is a very important step when shopping for clothes, as the textile industry is not kind to the environment. Bradford does a good job talking about the difference in textiles and finding ethical companies. The author also talks about how a vast wardrobe is not necessary, and it is important to avoid fast-fashion trends that will not be popular in a few years. Overall, the section Bradford wrote on shopping was one of the most impactful to me, as I discovered ways I could reduce my impact as well as learned about negative habits I have and their consequences.

Another thing Bradford does really well is providing solutions to a wide variety of problems. She discusses ways we impact the environment from daily activities to travel and vacations, that way, the book can be applied to almost anyone. One topic she covers that is applicable to everyone is food. Bradford goes over how large of a negative impact meat has on the environment, saying, “Meat production is one of the least efficient forms of farming, taking up 83 percent of global farmland to produce just 18 percent of the calories consumed” (Bradford, 45). The author also discusses each individual type of meat and lists how they impact the environment. This helps the reader pick the least impactful protein source if they are unable to cut meat completely out of their diet but still wish to make an impact. One thing that she brings up that I found interesting was the various impacts fish and fishing can have. Most of the time, environmentalists recommend consuming more fish, as they do not produce greenhouse gasses the same way cows do, but Bradford explains ways they negatively impact the environment as well. The book says, “Fishing nets are made of strong plastic that does not break down over time and the nets also create a lethal tangle of plastic in which marine life gets trapped” (Bradford, 52). Many people may overlook this impact, so the author recommends eating locally sourced fish—this is a good thing to do when buying any meat—in order to avoid some of those consequences. Bradford also brings up coffee pod and tea bag pollution, which is another daily pollutant that is often overlooked. She also provides a variety of solutions to the issues Bradford brings up, as she recognizes that not everyone has the financial ability to make some of the changes she suggests.

The last point Bradford discusses that I enjoyed was how paper causes pollution. While many people turn to paper products over plastics—paper straws and plates are the most common examples—this is not really the most efficient alternative. The author does discuss that many of the paper mills have switched to renewable energy sources and practice recycling, but this only helps one of the issues with paper consumption. One of the largest issues is the amount of water necessary to produce paper. The book says, “…in fact, it uses more water to manufacture one ton of paper than for the same weight of any other product” (Bradford, 114). Bradford explained the amount of water used for agricultural purposes and how it is already contributing to a shortage, but many people may be surprised to learn that the paper industry affects it as well. She also discusses the issue of water pollution, both from pulp and the chemicals used to treat the paper. Obviously, one of the major consequences of the paper industry is deforestation. While many companies take the time, effort, and expense of replanting trees when they cut them down; but even those companies are not planting enough to keep up with the demand. Trees have hundreds of positive impacts on the environment—not to mention people—so it is crucial that we find a solution to deforestation. I think that Bradford did a good job of coming up with ideas on ways individuals can reduce their paper consumption. Some of the ideas she listed include unsubscribing from junk mail, switching to ebooks, only printing things when necessary, and practice recycling (Bradford, 115). There will be times when you need to print an essay or get a copy of your receipt, but out of the list she provides, I am positive there is at least one thing everyone can do to cut down on their paper use.

**Conclusion**

Overall, I really enjoyed reading this book. It was very easy to understand, not overly complicated, and provided many helpful tips that I will be employing into my daily life. Unfortunately, I was unable to find a scholarly journal review of this book, but after reading through many reviews online, it is clear that the general population agrees with my conclusion. Some of the words used to describe the book from Amazon and Good Reads reviews are, “Brilliant, Essential, Interesting, Fun, and Resourceful” (Amazon & Good Reads). It is a very well-organized book packed full of facts, information, and solutions. I feel as though everyone should read this book; it is not a hard read and it can be applied to every individual’s life. Specifically, I would recommend it to families and schools. Because families are typically larger than a normal household, they will accumulate more pollution. Because of this, it would be beneficial to them to identify easy switches they can make to help cut down on their environmental impact. I believe that schools—specifically high schools—should require their students to read this book before they graduate. Once they move out, they will be forced to make decisions on their own. If they are taught smart practices early in life, hopefully they will make decisions that benefit the environment in the future. Though these two groups of people will benefit the most from this book, I do believe that everyone should read it.

**References**

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