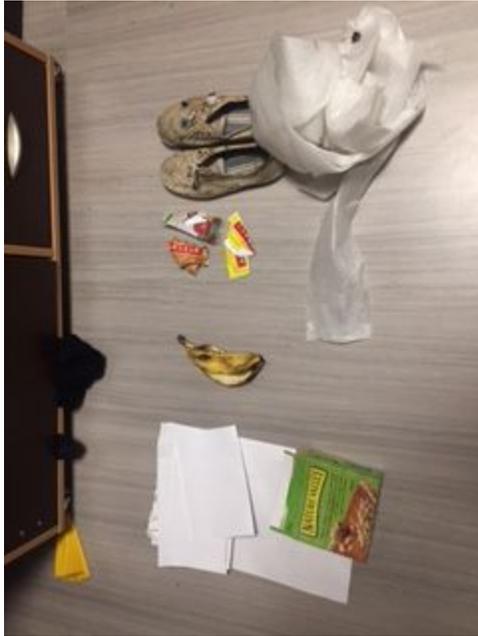


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CONVERSATION:

I HAD A CONVERSATION ABOUT THE TRASH I WAS CARRYING AROUND WITH MY ROOMMATE WHEN I RETURNED HOME AT NIGHT. SHE WAS CONFUSED AS TO WHY I WAS BRINGING MY TRASH AROUND WITH ME AS OPPOSED TO THROWING IT ALL AWAY, SO I EXPLAINED THE CHALLENGE AND THE IDEA BEHIND IT TO HER. WHEN I BROUGHT UP HOW MUCH WASTE AN AVERAGE PERSON PRODUCES, SHE GOT A LITTLE DEFENSIVE. SHE DIDN'T BELIEVE THAT SHE ACTUALLY PRODUCED THAT MUCH WASTE, AND HOW MUCH OF A NEGATIVE IMPACT SHE HAD ON THE ENVIRONMENT WITH HER CHOICES. SHE BROUGHT UP RECYCLING AS A DEFENSE TO HER USE OF OCCASIONAL PLASTIC WATER BOTTLES AND PLASTIC BAGS, TO WHICH I EXPLAINED TO HER THAT RECYCLING IS NOT A SOLUTION TO OUR WASTE PROBLEM. THE ONLY TRULY VIABLE SOLUTION IS TO DRASTICALLY REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF SINGLE USE ITEMS WE USE, AND RELY ON REUSABLE ITEMS SUCH AS WATER BOTTLES AND UTENSILS. EVENTUALLY, WE AGREED THAT SHE WOULD BE BETTER ABOUT BRINGING HER WATER BOTTLE WITH HER TO PLACES, AND I LENT HER ONE OF MY REUSABLE GROCERY BAGS. ALL IN ALL, IT WAS A VERY PRODUCTIVE CONVERSATION THAT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN STARTED WITHOUT THE HELP OF THIS CHALLENGE.

SHOES:

YES, SADLY MY SHOES FINALLY BROKE AND I HAD TO THROW THEM AWAY. WHILE THEY TRULY WERE DISGUSTING AND I COULD NOT HAVE KEPT THEM, THEY WERE RELATIVELY CHEAP AND CHEAPLY MADE. THEY ONLY LASTED FOR ABOUT SIX MONTHS BEFORE FALLING APART.

NEXT TIME, I WILL BUY MORE EXPENSIVE, HIGHER QUALITY SHOES THAT LAST FOR SEVERAL YEARS, NOT JUST SEVERAL MONTHS. I WILL ALSO LIMIT THE AMOUNT OF SHOES AND CLOTHING I BUY IN ORDER TO REDUCE WASTE.

STYROFOAM WRAP:

I RECENTLY ORDERED A SHIPMENT FROM AMAZON, AND IT WAS DELIVERED WRAPPED IN STYROFOAM WRAP. THIS MADE ME SO SAD, BUT I HAD ALWAYS KNOWN THAT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN WHEN I ORDERED SOMETHING ONLINE. EVEN THOUGH IT CAN BE VERY CONVENIENT, IT PRODUCES SO MUCH WASTE TO ORDER THINGS ONLINE! FROM NOW ON, I AM GOING TO GO DIRECTLY TO STORES AND BUY THINGS THERE, THEREBY REDUCING THE PACKAGING AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL COST OF THE SHIPPING.

RANDOM PAPERS:

IN COLLEGE, IT IS A FACT OF LIFE THAT YOU ARE GIVEN A LOT OF PAPERS THAT YOU SUBSEQUENTLY RECYCLE WITHOUT EVEN LOOKING AT THEM. I AM GIVEN AT LEAST 5 FLYERS ABOUT EVENTS THAT I AM NOT EVEN INTERESTED IN EVERY DAY! I USUALLY TAKE THEM, BECAUSE I HATE SAYING NO TO PEOPLE, BUT I AM GOING TO START REFUSING THEM. IF I AM NOT INTERESTED IN WHATEVER EVENT IS GOING ON, I DO NOT NEED THAT EXTRA PAPER BECAUSE IT IS JUST GOING IN THE RECYCLING BIN.

FOOD WRAPPERS/CONTAINERS:

I AM VERY GOOD ABOUT BRINGING MY OWN WATER BOTTLE AND REUSABLE UTENSILS WITH ME ALMOST EVERYWHERE I GO, BUT ONE THING THAT I STRUGGLE WITH IS FOOD WRAPPERS. AS A COLLEGE STUDENT WITH A TINY KITCHEN SHARED WITH 100 OTHER STUDENTS IN MY BUILDING, IT IS VERY HARD FOR ME TO MAKE MY OWN HOMEMADE SNACKS. AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THIS, I HAVE BEEN BUYING PRE PACKAGED SNACKS SUCH AS GRANOLA BARS AND FRUIT CHEWS. UNFORTUNATELY, THIS IS NOT A SUSTAINABLE HABIT BECAUSE THEY ARE INDIVIDUALLY WRAPPED IN PLASTIC AND ALUMINUM! AFTER RECOGNIZING THE PREVALENCE OF THIS HABIT, I HAVE RESOLVED TO BECOME MORE RESOURCEFUL IN MY UNIVERSITY DINING HALLS. I WILL STOCK UP ON THEIR FRUIT, SUCH AS APPLES AND ORANGES. THEY ALSO HAVE HUMMUS AND VEGETABLES, WHICH I CAN PACK IN A TUPPERWARE AND BRING WITH ME WHENEVER I NEED A SNACK. THIS WAY, I WILL BE AVOIDING PRODUCING THAT WASTE.

COMPOSTABLE CUP:

THIS IS NOT IN MY PHOTOGRAPH(SORRY), BECAUSE MY BUILDING TAKES OUT THE COMPOST ON WEDNESDAYS, AND I PUT MY COMPOSTABLE CUP IN IT! I WANTED TO PUT IT IN THE PICTURE, BUT THE COMPOST HAD TO BE TAKEN OUT BY 6 PM, AND I WASN'T DONE WITH MY TRASH BAG BY THEN. BUT EARLIER TODAY, I GOT A SMOOTHIE IN A COMPOSTABLE PLASTIC CUP. I FELT TERRIBLE ABOUT THE PLASTIC, BUT I HADN'T THOUGHT TO ASK IF I COULD GET IT IN MY OWN CUP. THE NEXT TIME, I WILL MAKE A SMOOTHIE IN MY OWN KITCHEN, SO I DO NOT HAVE TO BUY ONE. IF I RETURN TO THAT STORE, I WILL ALSO ASK IF I CAN USE MY OWN CUP TO PUT THE SMOOTHIE IN.

BANANA PEEL:

TO BE HONEST, I THINK I'M DOING PRETTY GOOD ON THIS ONE! IT IS COMPOSTABLE AND WILL EASILY BREAK DOWN. PERHAPS I CAN EAT FRUIT THAT HAS LESS OF A SKIN, SO I CAN REDUCE MY FOOD WASTE. JUST IN GENERAL, WHEN I COOK, I WILL DO BETTER AT USING THE WHOLE FRUIT/VEGETABLE INSTEAD OF ONLY USING PART OF IT TO REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF USABLE FOOD I AM WASTING.

MY CHANGE:

IF I IMPLEMENT THE CHANGES MENTIONED IN THE PREVIOUS SECTION, I WILL BE WELL ON MY WAY TO A ZERO WASTE LIFESTYLE. I ALREADY USE MY REUSABLE WATER BOTTLE, UTENSILS, PLATE, AND CUP WHEREVER I GO, AND THESE STEPS WILL HELP ME REDUCE MY IMPACT EVEN MORE. I AM SO GRATEFUL FOR THIS CHALLENGE BECAUSE EVEN THOUGH I HAD BEEN DOING A LOT TO REDUCE MY IMPACT PRIOR TO TODAY, THIS HAS REALLY HELPED ME TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT HOW FAR I STILL HAVE TO GO. I AM FULL OF HOPE AND OPTIMISM ABOUT CARRYING OUT THESE CHANGES!