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Conversations with Two People

Today I talked to one of my classmates about the bag of trash I was carrying around. The first was one of my friends from my residential college. At the time I talked to him, I had two single serve milk cartons and a paper towel from drying my hands in the bathroom. I pointed out how I was trying to use less trash than usual because I didn't want to have to carry it around all day, and I asked him if he would reduce the amount of disposables he used if he had to carry around a bag. He said "I would just know I'd need a really big bag," but then followed up that he might reduce trash a little just for the day.

I also talked to one of my professors about the trash, and we had a discussion about how food waste is one of the biggest problems relating to sustainability that people don't think about often. Usually, I generate a lot of food waste because I fill my plate in the dining hall and get full before finishing, but today I did not generate any food waste because I did not want to have food scraps in my bag of trash starting to smell the whole day.

Two Items to Avoid

In the future, I will use the hand dryers in the bathroom instead of grabbing paper towels because they are quicker. This is a very easy switch that will reduce the number of disposables I use. I only used paper towels once today, because after having to put the used paper towels in my bag I realized how easily I could avoid creating that waste.

I will also try not to throw away to-go plates from the dining hall anymore. Instead, even if I choose to eat in my room after getting food I can get a real plate and bring it back to the dishwashing room after eating my food. Even though today I did not use any disposable plates (because I knew I would have to carry them around), disposable plates and the food waste I leave on the plates are definitely my biggest source of waste generation so I want to focus on removing that waste.

Today, a lot of my trash was from baked potatoes that I had at dinner. Since I eat at a dining hall I do not have the option to choose larger packages of butter and sour cream, or the option to bake my potatoes without foil. Overall, I definitely created less than the 4.5 lbs of trash the average person creates, and was much more conscious of if I would have to throw things away after using them.

