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Project Green Challenge Day 6: Team Green Bears



This is what I carried around with me all day, sorted into paper recycling, cans and bottles recycling, and landfill waste! I ate all of my meals using reusable plates and utensils. :)



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Reusable Alternatives:

Paper bags	Reusable cotton or mesh bags (this is hard during covid, but bring your reusable bag everywhere in case and ask if it's okay with store policy that you use it)
Teavana tea bottle	Water Bottle + compostable tea bag (less waste than glass bottle, also takes less fossil fuels to produce)
Plastic strawberry container	paper-based berry container OR BYO-tupperware (this one's a toughie because berry packaging is supply-based and not always up to the consumer, but if you have the option of non-plastic packaging, choose it!)
Sanitizing wipe	Sanitizing spray + reusable hand towel (or any other non single-use alternative!)

My interactions today:

*I want to preface this by saying that **sadly, my interactions for today weren't too different than any other day**, despite me carrying around two bags of trash throughout the entire day. If anything, this speaks to the invisibilization of the waste industry, since in general, people don't even know where their waste goes. If you are interested in learning more about where our waste goes and who manages it, I HIGHLY recommend reading Picking Up by Robin Nagle.*

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I live in a communal living space. In the early evening, when I had generated two bags worth of trash, and carried them downstairs with me to fill up my water bottle, three of my friends sitting at a nearby table asked me what was in the bags. I told them that I was doing a challenge to carry around all the waste I generate in a day, and that it is usually more but I was challenging myself to generate as little waste as possible so that I wouldn't have a heavy load to carry. They thought it was a really cool experiment, and one of them said **"If that were me, I wouldn't be able to carry it. My bag would be too heavy."** Another one of them mentioned, **"Yeah I don't even think about the waste I generate in a day, it's virtually impossible to not generate waste."** These interactions got me thinking about how we are not set up for success in terms of achieving zero waste.

My friend was right — it is virtually impossible to go zero waste in a world where plastic packaging and single-use materials are used for everyday items, and the industry has so much money behind it. It got me thinking about a movie I recently watched called "The Story of Plastic," which tracks the cycle of plastic manufacturing, packaging, and (single) use in the United States, and then where it goes after (the majority of our plastic waste is shipped to developing countries to be informally recycled, which in and of itself is a dangerous industry). We must put pressure on the plastic industry and demand change!

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Instagram post:



The image shows an Instagram post from the account 'green.bearz'. The main photo features a woman with long brown hair and glasses, wearing a white top, holding two brown paper bags. She is standing in front of a wall that is densely covered with numerous small photographs. A dark grey speech bubble with the text 'turninggreenorg' is overlaid on the right side of the photo. Below the photo is the standard Instagram interface, including icons for likes, comments, shares, and a bookmark. The caption text is as follows:

green.bearz Today I took the challenge to carry around all my waste for the day. 🗑️ At the end, I sorted it all into paper recycling, cans and bottles recycling, and landfill waste. This was a great challenge for raising awareness about the invisibilization of waste —it is such an inconvenience for us to reuse something, but it's also inconvenient for us to have to carry around our single-use trash. We must not only try to be more responsible consumers, but also put pressure on corporations to offer sustainable packaging so that zero waste is truly achievable. #PGC2020 @turninggreenorg #greener