

Sustainability Returns

Sam: Good morning, welcome to *Sunday Snacks with Sam and Ellie*. Today we are going to be talking to you about the fact that sustainability is not a new concept. Amen. It has been around for a very long time. Ellie has been schooling me regularly on this.

I mean, I did know it was around for quite a while. My grandmother always talked to me about, but she never called it "sustainability." Let's just be real. That maybe the term sustainability is a new catch phrase. Yeah. But the concept has, is as old as time.

Ellie: Yeah, right. To many of our elders, it was just common sense.

Sam: And living with like, hello, like why are you not doing exactly, exactly. Because I think the reason that I got into this conversation with you originally was is that like we were talking about recycling.

In our town, a friend of mine is running the recycling program and she's really advocating for that and a compost program.

Well, my grandparents have been composting. I don't even know how long they composted because I was born in the eighties and they were composting in the eighties. And evidently, I know that they learned that from their parents because they both grew up on farms right outside of Philadelphia proper.

So, for me, I think of it as all the ads and the marketing that came out in the nineties of "recycle, recycle, recycle." And then my friend who is helping with the local Green Team, who's promoting this. It just kind of really struck a chord with me of like, huh, this really isn't a new thing, but yet we're making it, with the marketing, look new.

Ellie: Right. Well, and, and the marketing originally was to help people, to convince people, to recycle when we weren't, and everything was ending up in landfills. I mean, that's where the marketing came from. There was a need to educate people.

Sam: Yeah. I guess just for me, again, growing up in the city with grandparents who had lived through the great depression, my grandmother was always having me collect cans. We were crushing them, and we were getting money for them. You know, I guess that wasn't the norm.

Ellie: Yeah. The 5 cents a bottle. Yeah. You could earn your allowance that way.

Sam: Yeah. But I guess that wasn't the norm for a lot of people at that time and which is why in the nineties, it became such a prevalent concept and it's still now a prevalent concept. You know, we see all the ads to stop using plastic or single use plastic bags or single use straws and get rid of those kinds of things in our population. Since we live near the bay, the Chesapeake Bay, the straw thing's huge. It's been for the last couple of years, even before COVID.

But one of the things that you talked to me about, which I thought was really neat and, mind you, I've been having a problem with my pants lately, I keep having to patch my pants because the denim that I get, and I'm being honest from my Old Navy pants, because it's the only place I can find that has petite enough jeans for me, because I'm only five foot tall. So even their petite's run long and I drag them on the ground, but they're ripping.

And I'm not used to denim ripping. Yeah. Well it's yeah, it's a thinner material. So, I'm constantly having to patch my pants which sounds ridiculous. But you know, you were telling me about some fabric and cloth recycling.

Ellie: Yeah. I'll find the link and put it in our blog posts, but there's a company and I'm pretty sure it's an American company that you can send in like a bag of clothes and you get a \$20 credit. It costs like \$20 to send it or for the bag, not sure exactly how that works. Then you get a \$20 credit if you buy anything from their recycled store. Cool. They also they use all of it.

So, they'll take those old t-shirts that aren't good enough to really re resell or give it to Goodwill or something. They'll they have companies they work with that recycle that into either other products or into yarns and threads that they can make other products. Again, I don't know if all of those are American, but, but it's very much a full circle, Closed cycle. I think the more we use places like that, the better. I'll make sure I put that link in the post.

And one of the things that I thought was interesting, that we kind of got onto that topic with, was the fact that, you know, in my house, growing up with my grandparents, my grandmother would always have a basket of old t-shirts that she would then cut. She would Serge the edges and make them into a tea towel. She never made these rugs, but one of the ladies that she knew did. So, she would save rags and she would give them to the lady who would then make her rag rugs. They were always neat. I think I still have like three in my house when my grandmother did those saving the fabric and for the other lady who made them.

One of the interesting aspects along that whole concept of recycling fabric for different reasons and how you do it is that, you know, I'm not very fashionable. I mean, I am not a fashionista. Let's put it that way.

But I do like clothes that are comfortable. One of the things that you and I both were talking about is what we've recognized is that our convenience culture and our variety culture has led to more of the problems and the mess that we're facing.

Ellie: It's not necessarily that we shouldn't be wearing clothes.

Sam: We should **definitely** wear clothes, especially if you live in a cold climate, don't be cold. I hate being cold.

Ellie: But we don't have to change our outfits three times a day. With so many things that just because the variety is there and the marketing is there and we're losing, you know we grew up with families that you had your five days of school outfits and you had your play clothes. Then you had your jammies and your play clothes often were also any kind of work clothes.

But your mom, didn't wash three sets of clothes for you in a day. Oh no. In fact, got in trouble for that. Where today, nobody - kids or adults - thinks twice about it because we have supposedly the convenience of our washers and dryers, but in essence, all of that can be made more sustainable by using them all more frugally.

Sam: Yeah. And one of the things that you taught me a long time ago, and this is really an interesting concept is that I wear jeans all the time and I'm in the garden all spring. Now if I get my clothes muddy, I will not re-wear my pants. End of story. I will wash them because they're usually so coated at that point, I can't bend in them. But like if I'm just wearing jeans, I can put them in the freezer and it literally kills the smells of any sweat you would have or anything like that.

Another thing that I learned also was that you leave them air out. I mean, in the summertime and spring, you know, when it's not rainy at all, through the fall, My husband and I, we hang our laundry outside and we have racks in our basement to use in the winter because obviously our heats on. So we can air dry our clothes in the house and outside, and we end up not needing to have six, seven different types of jeans.

Like I can have like four or five pair of jeans that can last me two weeks versus changing my jeans every day when they're not really dirty. I remember growing up, my grandmother bought me a uniform, mind you, I went to Catholic school as a kid because my grandmother was adamant. I had to have a good Catholic education. Okay, fine grandma.

But she would buy me a uniform that was bigger than I was. She was a seamstress. So, she would sew in the sides and hem up the bottom. But that fabric was so sturdy. I would wear my jumper over top of my shirt and my shorts all week. Yeah. I'd wear one jumper. I would change my socks and underwear and my shirts and stuff, but like my outerwear, the jumper, which was a thing that got, technically, it would have been the dirtiest, I wore all week. And it wasn't a problem. I didn't smell. I wasn't that kid in school. I literally didn't have to because this fabric was so sturdy, and that cloth lasted me multiple years.

Absolutely. One of the other things, when we're talking about all these concepts, that you brought up was the people that you heard about in the seventies and you baffled me because you pulled out the books, do you still have them nearby? So you pulled out like the **Whole Earth Catalog**. I had never even heard of this thing. Okay. Well, everybody, except for me, I live under a rock.

Okay. But she's got some of the original **Whole Earth Catalogs** by Stewart Brand. And in there was the one from the seventies. It was talking about permaculture. Permaculture is a big thing right now in trying to create sustainability and safety and a safety net in areas where there are arid climates. I didn't even know that that was a thing. I thought it was a relatively *new* concept. And then she did that. (Showed me a 1970s **Whole Earth Catalog**)

No, it's okay. It's great. It's great that we're coming full circle. Yeah. Well, we do that like about every 50 years, if you've noticed our local Joseph's Department store, their latest clothes are things I wore in the seventies, No, God, Not that I would wear them now because somebody in their seventies wearing clothes from the seventies is not the same fashion statement as somebody 20 wearing the

latest fashion trend that I was familiar with from the seventies. I think that makes sense. Yeah. Bell bottoms. I miss them but my body does not look the same as they might've looked when I was 20,

Sam: But the fashion, even though not (relating to) sustainable, that fashion came back.

The other thing that you just taught me this morning was about Helen and Scott Nearing. And I need to go get this book now. You were telling me it's called ***Living the Good Life***.

They were some of the predominant homesteaders

Ellie: That was in the seventies. If you were kind of in the hippie movement and wanting to live off the land, the first book you bought was ***Living the Good Life*** with Helen and Scott Nearing. At that time they were probably 40 or 50 years old and they were building their own walls, like in Vermont - they don't do fence. Their fences were stone walls and stone for foundations for buildings. You could go and stay with them. They had little camps, you could go stay with them and learn these different practices (skills). Even if you weren't into it (homesteading), everyone then knew who they were.

Sam: Well, evidently, I didn't know who they were, and I needed to get my head out from under my rock. These are the cool things for why we created ***Beyond TP and Milk***, that sustainability isn't new. And the idea of being prepared isn't new. It's just how we're approaching it is different and how you approached it and continue to approach it at 70+ years and how I'm approaching it at 40, are very different as a single family, a family with land, or an apartment, or small house, they're very different, but yet these aren't new concepts,

Ellie: The basics are the same. Then you tweak them for your lifestyle. Exactly. Some will go all in like a thousand percent and others will just kind of tiptoe around for a while. And all of those are valuable. Well, I don't think you tiptoe anymore. But yeah, it's, it does come around.

I think the difference today is, just by virtue of the population of Planet Earth resources are becoming slim or oftentimes less available, you know, along with storms and droughts and fires and all those kinds of things. So that whatever small things that we do, we may not think they're important, but in virtue of thousands and millions of people taking those small steps does have an impact. And it's important today.

Sam: It is important. So what we would love to know from you is what is **one** thing that you've learned either from somebody else, or **one** thing that you do that you know is sustainable that maybe has come full circle and come back around and somebody else can learn from, let us know.

Yeah. Because we're learning from you as much as you're learning from us, we love to have you, and we're thankful for you following us.

So absolutely - have a good one. See you later.