

The Change I Seek in the Way We Eat
-eliminating food waste to save our planet
(Original)

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By 2030, if there is no change to the way we consume food, we will need two Earths to support our daily lives. Yet we are living on the one and only earth. Something has to happen and fast. I think changes should start from our own dinner tables to reduce food waste.

My family and I try our best not to waste food, because we know that there is so much effort and hard-work involved in bringing it to our plates. At the same time, wasting food causes a huge environmental burden.

Reducing food waste is an everyday goal for my family, because we are aware that it is a major cause for landfill. More than 361 billion kilograms of food-waste is collected each year in Australia alone. Extreme weather conditions caused by climate change will result in challenging farming conditions, so food shortage would increase. I worry the inequity of food supply around the world will get worse, and we will alienate ourselves from nature and each other. Decreasing food-waste is the change I'd like to make, while we still have time to take helpful steps.

In my family, we try to make the most use of our left- over food. My grandmother likes to make pureed tomato sauce in summertime when they are plentiful. My grandfather collects egg shells and puts them in a soft cloth bag to make a great scrub. My brother and I help our parents to gather seeds from fruits and vegetables we eat, such as apple, pear, orange, capsicum, and pumpkin. We plant the seeds in our back garden to try to grow them. Watching the seedlings grow is one of my sweetest joys.

My mother usually keeps mandarin and orange peels and soaks them in white vinegar to create a new natural disinfectant which cleans almost everything in our house. My brother and I always help mum to shop for fruit with no additional plastic packaging, we call them "Nude Fruits", then there will be no waste ending up in landfill.

These family daily practices with food are like giving food a second chance to shine, by

doing that, I feel I am giving Mother Earth a chance to recover and reboot.

There are also actions towards food waste reduction that we all can take. First, it is essential to appreciate where food is from and reconnect with nature. For example, we should shop more at local farmers markets. Talking to the growers while doing our grocery shopping helps to gain lots of knowledge and acknowledge the efforts and hard work that have been put into the produce.

Secondly, becoming a "conscious consumer". Make a meal plan with all the family and then buy only what is needed for the meals, and don't be too picky. This will help because everyone wants perfectly shaped fruit and vegetables, while the edible, but weirdly shaped varieties often remain unsold and are wasted. My local supermarket is taking action by creating a special area for strange shaped fruit and veggies, labelled 'The Odd Bunch' which is often sold more cheaply. This gives them more attention, and encourages people to buy food that would otherwise be wasted. Instead of throwing food waste into the "Landfill" bin, you can also put them in the "Organic Waste" bin, to make compost.

My mother taught me an ancient Chinese poem called Sympathy for the peasants when I was only 4 years old, which says:

Hoing millet in mid-day heat,
Sweat dripping to the earth beneath:
The food on your plate is your concern,
Since each grain is hard-earned"

If we all remember this simple wisdom of where our food comes from, we will remain connected with nature and each other. With simple solutions and awareness, we can begin to eliminate food waste from our next meal. Will you join me in making this change that will help the world?