



The Green Book: The Everyday Guide to Saving the Planet One Simple Step at a Time

Elizabeth Rogers , Thomas M. Kostigen

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Ellen DeGeneres, Robert Redford, Will Ferrell, Jennifer Aniston, Faith Hill, Tim McGraw, Martha Stewart, Tyra Banks, Dale Earnhardt, Jr., Tiki Barber, Owen Wilson, and Justin Timberlake tell you how they make a difference to the environment.

Inside *The Green Book*, find out how you can too:

- Don't ask for ATM receipts. If everyone in the United States refused their receipts, it would save a roll of paper more than two billion feet long, or enough to circle the equator fifteen times!

- Turn off the tap while you brush your teeth. You'll conserve up to five gallons of water per day. Throughout the entire United States, the daily savings could add up to more water than is consumed every day in all of New York City.

- Get a voice-mail service for your home phone. If all answering machines in U.S. homes were replaced by voice-mail services, the annual energy savings would total nearly two billion kilowatt hours. The resulting reduction in air pollution would be equivalent to removing 250,000 cars from the road for a year!

With wit and authority, authors Elizabeth Rogers and Thomas Kostigen provide hundreds of solutions for all areas of your life, pinpointing the smallest changes that have the biggest impact on the health of our precious planet.

The Green Book: The Everyday Guide to Saving the Planet One Simple Step at a Time Details

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Fred says

Before I get too far into this review I should make clear that I'm a huge fan of sustainability and conservation. I'm even pursuing a graduate certificate in Environmental Sustainability right now. This is a good book and I definitely learned some things but I think this is another of those science books that needs to be dusted off every ten years in order to remain relevant with the stats. The book was honestly good enough that I would have given it a four star rating had they stuck to science and science based research, but they let a reference to homeopathic medicine (i.e. snake oil, voodoo, magic) slip into the book and that's an automatic negative one star. It also makes the other more seemingly science fact things that they talk about seem more and more like some crappy Facebook post from a pseudoscience website as a result. So, there is a lot of good stuff here, but I'm forced to say that you should validate what you take away from the book and make sure that it's accurate before you implement any significant changes to your lifestyle based on all of that.

It's a short read though and you should be able to get through it in a couple days at the most. I'll admit, I skipped the chapter on make up and cosmetics . . . you know, since I'm a dude and all.

Anna Engel says

This book does so little and wastes too much paper (recycled or not). It's so disappointing. Its "Simple Steps" are silly and don't offer much useful information. Likewise, the suggestions made in each chapter are almost goofy. For instance, there was a whole paragraph about which type of inflammatory device was best for the environment (plastic lighters vs. wood matches vs. paper matches). Also, every single suggestion was concluded with an outlandish if-we-all-pitched-in statement like (I'm making this up), "If we all saved the clippings from our pets' fur, rather than throwing it out, we could use it to make clothes for all the children in Africa." It's ridiculous.

At a minimum, what this book needs is:

- * a major reorganization;
- * actual steps that can help readers green their lives;
- * real-life examples of how greening can save the reader time and/or money; and
- * real-life examples of how other people have greened their lives.

And, for goodness' sake, lose the celebrity endorsements about going green. They're lame and absurd.

I wouldn't recommend this book to anyone.

Jeff Corrigan says

This is not a book you should read if you are hoping to learn about a lot of different ways that you can live a

greener life. It's basically a bunch of celebrities sharing a thing or two about what they do to be "green." I'm not sure that I really need to hear that Jennifer Aniston takes three minute showers to conserve water. That's great, but I'm not sure that it would move a reader to do the same or really teach someone how to live a greener life. I'm not sure that the average person who is interested in living a greener life needs to hear the call to action from a celebrity to change their ways. There are many other books out there that can teach you how to actually live a greener life than this one, so please look elsewhere.

SooYoung says

Kind of a waste of space of a book. I would think even in 2007 people would have known to turn off the tap while brushing their teeth, do some of their grocery shopping at local farmers markets, and to not have hotels wash their linens everyday. On top of the pretty lame tips, there are these 1-page wisdoms from celebrities on how they got in touch with the eco-friendly world: during their trip to Africa, when they bought a Prius (2x), or how they recycle at home.

"You don't have to change the way you live to recycle. It really isn't that big of a commitment." This is a good summary of how the "green" movement took a turn for the worse. Improving the health of the earth - the quality of the air, soil and water for generations should come, so that all living beings all over the world can enjoy it, is probably something worth committing too.

This book is trite.

Lain says

When confronting issues of ecology and conservation, I can often feel hopeless -- that no matter what I do, it's not enough. Or my efforts make little effect at all. This book made me feel that one person can -- and should -- do what she can to help save the planet. Not only were there hundreds of ideas on how to make small changes, the impact of those changes was clearly spelled out. Now I know that by skipping the beef in one meal, I save 2500 gallons of water. The same kinds of comparisons are made in each and every section of this fabulous book. I have already recommended it to a dozen people!

Dave says

(transcribed from a 2009 blog entry)

This holiday season, I received two books detailing how we can help the environment.

The first one, the New York Times' green book, was a disappointment. The celebrity vignettes are well-intentioned, if at times bizarre (William McDonough and Cameron Diaz?)

Some of the advice in this book isn't very good. Take the following Travel tip:

Seek out locations that aren't overexposed, overcrowded, or in environmentally sensitive areas. Overcrowding in already densely populated areas can lead to increased pollution by wastewater, garbage,

heating, noise, and traffic emissions.

Unfortunately, the impact of tourism on the environment is more complicated.

As any trail designer will tell you, concentrating visitors in certain areas can actually be good for the environment, because it limits overall damage. Similarly, it hurts the environment less to ride the teacups at "overexposed, overcrowded" Disney World than it does to ride an airboat through the environmentally sensitive Everglades.

But you can also visit the Everglades without particularly hurting the environment, provided you stay on the boardwalks and paved paths. In fact, you might become so enchanted with the amazing bird, alligator, and otter populations that you are moved to reduce your environmental impact upon returning home.

In fact, income from legitimate eco-tourism empowers some communities to avoid unsustainably harvesting their natural resources!

We generate pollution everywhere. In a densely-populated city, the larger shared buildings waste less heat. Destinations are closer together, so we don't have to drive as far. That means less pollution, not more.

The chapter on school advises:

Try using a digital library or the World Wide Web instead of traveling to your local branch to do research. You'll save time and money. The circulation of books from public libraries is 1.9 billion a year, or about 7 items checked out per person. If every American checked out and researched online a single book a year, we would save three hundred million trips to the bookshelves.

These numbers sound fishy to me, but let's assume they're right. Let's further assume that no one ever walks or bikes to the library, which has minimal environmental impact.

I'm all for the Internet, but do we really want to discourage kids from using the library? The Internet is a gigantic but profoundly non-authoritative source of information. Information published in books has to pass a higher threshold of quality and suitability.

Electronic books are great, but the availability of titles remains limited. And e-book delivery platforms are still pretty expensive.

In order to function as citizens of a participatory democracy, it is imperative that we remain well-informed. Without resources like libraries we wouldn't be able to cope effectively with the challenges that affect our environment.

Then the chapter on work goes on to give this contradictory advice:

More than two hours of the average office worker's time is used per day sending e-mails and surfing the Internet. Internet data servers use as much energy in the United States as is used by all U.S. TVs combined.

And the final fifty-one pages of the book are, you guessed it, references to Internet data servers! Why pulp trees to print web addresses that will already be out of date when the book is published? Why not set up a single web site, include the URL at the end of the book, and maintain links to everything from there?

Clearly, there is work to be done improving the energy efficiency of Internet server farms. Instead, the authors of the green book would have us to communicate and read less! Unless we're using the Internet to avoid a trip to the library.

It is unreasonable to expect that we should stop living our lives to help the environment. Ultimately, the whole point of environmentalism is to enrich our lives by securing the wonder of nature for ourselves and our descendants.

The book's saving grace is a page on which Will Ferrell recounts the "limitless joy" that driving his electric car to the hazardous waste facility affords him. For my money, they should have let Ferrell write the whole book.

I'm glad to say that I really did enjoy *Living Like Ed, A Guide to the Eco-Friendly Life*, by Ed Begley Jr., late of *Real Genius* fame. Ed is the real deal. His book is full of great information, much of which I had never read anywhere else.

Kate says

The Green Book is pale green at best. I was drawn to the book because William McDonough, co-author of *Cradle to Cradle*, contributed to the foreword (along with Cameron Diaz). However, this book is not for the already environmentally-savvy reader. This book might serve as a really good entry-level approach to environmentalism for economically privileged folks who have little to no background understanding of the environmental crises of climate change and pollution. The emphasis of the book is on 'environmental consumerism'. The last paragraph of the preface says it all, "This book is derived from our desire to be environmentally friendly while remaining selfish consumers."

The book gently suggests accessible behavioural changes to lessen individuals' ecological footprints, and is helpfully divided into areas of day-to-day life where change might be made: in the kitchen, at school, at the office, etc. It caters to a subset of folks with monetary means as it details how to make better decisions about diamond, china, crystal, flat screen television, and patio furniture purchases. (I resented the line, "If you must handwash [dishes], turn off the tap while you scrub." – Yes, those of us without a dishwasher *must* handwash, unfortunately.)

Each suggested change item is backed up by facts about what could be saved if we all did our part. In theory, this is great for building context around how our personal choices can have an impact on a larger scale. In practice, in this book, it is sometimes interesting and mostly absurd. For example, "If every U.S. household served fresh-baked bread instead of packaged rolls for Thanksgiving dinner, the energy conserved could fly more than twenty-three thousand early colonists from England to Plymouth Rock." – what?! There is also something about the potential white-out correction fluid savings being enough to paint the White House. Absurd.

There was also this irksome statement to illustrate that technology now permeates everything: "You can get a cell phone signal in the middle of Africa or email your friends on your laptop computer while flying over the Atlantic Ocean." As if the two are equally wild to contemplate. Why is it so bizarre that people in Africa should want and have cell phone signals??

On the one hand, anything that inspires positive environmental action is to be applauded. Hope is crucial

given the complex global problems that we face, and it is important to show that individual actions are important for the big picture, that there is something that each of us can do. On the other hand, the book skirts the complex global problems without hinting at the (radical) action required to right injustices. It doesn't once suggest that 'environmental consumerism' sends a message to corporations, or remind readers that as citizens of a democratic nation, they can impact local and national politics by letter-writing, demonstrating, and voting. Instead, it tells us that if every household in the U.S. reduced their food waste by just 25 grams per day (the weight of a slice of bread), "the savings would be enough to provide three meals per day for a whole year to each of the 1.35 million children in the U.S. who are homeless." Full stop. I'm not sure what the point of this fact is... to show how much food we waste? To casually highlight a huge systemic problem in the U.S. of child and youth homelessness? Anyway, the book moves on immediately to the next item: Garbage Disposal.

I have nothing productive to say about the celebrity advice interludes.

I did take away a couple things from my quick read-through: I never before considered my purchase of wooden matches and will definitely be making the switch to recycled cardboard matchbooks. The book also reminded me to arrange to turn down the hot water heater for my apartment. Great! In general, though, if you have any background in environmental justice and climate change, I doubt you'll find this book to be very helpful.

Rebekah Byson says

Found this book stuffed in the forgotten corners of my shelves, and decided to give it a quick read. Pretty disappointing waste of (recycled) paper. The information is already out-dated, and the endless statistics and comparisons questionable. Full of tips that hopefully have become basic common sense- such as changing the light bulbs!

Danielle Wells says

I learned quite a lot of information about being environmentally conservative in this book. It's all about taking care of our planet and being responsible for our actions (waste created and how it's dealt with). I breezed through this book in a hour because it's laid out so simply!

There are 12 chapters and each one focuses on an aspect of our every day life in which we could take better care of our planet: home, entertainment, travel, communication & technology, school, work, shopping, health and beauty, sports, money & finance, building and going carbon neutral.

Because of this book I'm considering: 1) buying an electric car (Tesla model s is really cool!). 2)utilizing a hazardous waste disposal. 3) finding a disposal site for our glass recycling (our county's recycling collection no longer accepts glass).

I think every one should read this! We are all human. We all contribute to our earth's "health" whether negative or positive. We all should be environmentally conscious. A quote from the book:
"It doesn't matter whether your Democrat, Republican or Independent, as the environment and things like global warming know no political affiliation, but ti's true that they often become the political football and are

treated as political sport. Politics will always be a part of the equation. Whom we elect to office on every level will always play into it all. The whole political system can be irritating sluggish, stalemated and the barriers and seem insurmountable. But then little pockets of inspiration slowly begin opening up, joining together and building a collective force that can suddenly give way to tremendous change." ~Robert Redford

Auroradaybreak says

This is a great book for any environmentalist or anyone who just wants to keep our planet beautiful. Our planet needs help and this is how you can keep her alive, and how to not be wasteful.

Crystal says

Lovely cover design and interior format., but the book was disappointing. It'd serve as a nice introduction for those who haven't a clue how to recycle--and by that I mean those entirely void of clue.

First two chapters were okay, but then it became very repetitive, in ideas and advice, and annoying, in analogies and attempts at communicating just what vast changes can come about by being environment-friendly.

For example, it was tolerable the first twenty times they used such equivalents as doing this or that would save a space "the size of Texas" or "could wrap around the Earth _____ times".

But it escalated into a sort of desperate scribbling that translates to the reader as "*ohgod ohgod I hope the readers find this entertaining and informative. Are they laughing? I hope they are. Please please, be laughing... *nervous chuckle**" An example of this would be on page 97:

If for the next year you replaced your purchases of disposable razors with refill cartridges, the amount of energy saved by not manufacturing the extra plastic could brew you five pots of coffee. If half of the disposable razors sold per year were replaced with refills, the energy saved could fly twenty-six thousand San Diego java lovers to pick their own Kona coffee on the Big Island of Hawaii.

I groaned hardcore at that point and felt a little sick.

Given the mediocre content and the overhyping via lame analogy, the celebrity quotes were a gross addition.

But, I have to say, any mainstream attention to the increasingly dire need for recycling and resource management is welcome.

Kristy says

The information was basic and repetitive.

Amy says

I really liked how this book gave a lot of statistics. If you cut your shower by 2 minutes, you'll save 10 gallons of water. It really brings things to light, and I wrote down a lot of tips on what I can do to cut down on waste and conserve natural resources.

Mir says

The writing formula was really tiresome... After the 2nd chapter I was like, "OK OK OKOKOKOKOK. I GET IT." They spent more time making huge analogies and "what-ifs" than they did actually giving helpful advice. A little more in the "how" department would have been helpful. Examples would have also been helpful. Faith Hill telling me her daughter likes to sort the recycling wasn't really all that helpful.

My biggest pet peeve with this book was the recommendation to stop going to the library and look at e-books instead.

That is wrong. E-books are limited, the internet is way too full of distraction for kids, and I believe that every person should go to the library more. Libraries are good. Books from the thrift store are great. Books from used book stores are great. Tangible books make a huge difference to me. Perhaps, if the option is available to you, walk or bike to the library- or carpool- but don't write it off, stay at home and stare at your computer screen instead. That is not good advice.

*Donated

Lkowalczyk says

This was published in 2007, so some of it is a no-brainer. I was like, duh, this is old news. But for some, it's not. It really is a primer for those who haven't figured out their actions are effecting the planet. Recycle, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose. There are some hidden gems. And like a good recycler, I'm now going to donate this book to our Friends of the Library!
