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About Us
 Events
 Classifieds
 Healthy Maui Directory
 Advertising Rates
 Advertising Tips
 Sponsored Events
 Writer's Guidelines
 Subscriptions
 Community Links
 Join Our E-Network
 Featured Article
 Contact Us



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Featured Article

Going Green Takes A Lot Of Discipline!

By Andrea Dean

Most people start New Year's resolutions on January 1st, but this year I started on June 1st. This just happened to be the day that I decided I didn't want to be a total hypocrite any more. I want to align my life with my inner eco-values. Is that so hard? Actually, it turns out that it is.

That day I started a personal project called *The Sustainability Chronicles*, in which I adopt a new "eco-action" each week and blog about it. In my *Sustainability Chronicles* journey, I have chosen to pick the low-hanging fruit first.



After forgetting my canvas shopping bags in the car more times than I care to remember, I finally bought these great nylon reusable bags that fold up into little pouches and fit right in my purse (Acme Bags from reusablebags.com). I can fit four of them in my purse and they carry a lot of groceries. Since I cannot afford an alternative energy system right now, I have reduced my electrical usage as much as possible (hanging laundry, compact fluorescents) and I Carbon Offset the rest. I also offset all of my CO2 from transportation (driving and flying).

I have chosen to offset with Evolution Sage (evolutionsage.com), the only carbon offset company in Hawaii; the money I contribute goes into renewable energy projects in Hawaii. I don't use disposable to-go containers. I keep glass containers in my car and bring them with me or take a little walk to get them when I am done eating. The glass containers I purchased at Wal-Mart were made in the USA and have plastic lids, which are BPA free (look that one up!).

It has been relatively easy to make changes like bringing my own reusable grocery bags to the store and not using to-go containers, but I am finding other changes to be a downright spiritual struggle.

The clothes that I wear are woven with the misery of others and dyed with their blood and sweat. The occasional organic cotton clothing purchase from Patagonia just does not wipe me clean. In a moment of inspiration, I

was exploring the possibility of giving up all of my clothes for one simple outfit. Ghandi's simple dhoti said so much. It spoke of his commitment to local economy, to simple living, to his unconcern with how others perceived him. I thought that perhaps a modern modification could be made - I could choose three outfits and limit myself to those for a time.

Last night before I went out to a party, I tried on and discarded at least three outfits. I looked too fat, not cute enough. How about the lace-trimmed undies? Higher shoes? My concern with appearance far outweighed my supposed need for simplicity and concern for humanity. Later on at the party, I was concerned about how I looked to other people watching me dance. Can't I dance my own sweet, authentic and simple dance and dance through life in my dhoti? Isn't the only relationship that matters the one between my creator and me?

When I started *Sustainability Chronicles* , I thought it was going to be easy to do something green every week. Some changes are easy, but the real battleground is in our own heads. It turns out that being green is a spiritual discipline. My home and office are the ashrams and I am a disciple on the path of spirituality and sustainability.

Andrea Dean, MBA is a life and business coach, and green business coach and consultant. She works with highly motivated individuals and teams who are interested in aligning actions with values and achieving their goals. A longtime Maui resident, Andrea now makes her home in Hawi on the Big Island. She be reached at 808.889.5806 or andrea@andreadean.com Learn more about Andrea and her work at andreadean.com.

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[back to top](#)