

Alison Major Essay

Climate change is something that we should all be concerned about. We all have a role to play and we can all do our own little bit to make a difference. I have to admit, until I had my daughter 5 years ago, I didn't pay much attention to news stories about climate change. It was of course, extremely sad to see footage of starving polar bears on shrinking ice caps and turtles perishing because of plastic in our oceans, but it all seemed so far removed. I didn't see a connection between these awful pictures and my life. It is so easy to live within your own little bubble and keep oneself removed from global issues, when life's every day issues are enough to keep us busy. Then I had a child and everything changed. For the first time, I was envisioning the world she would grow up in and what I saw horrified me. Suddenly, the images of the world's beaches being clogged with plastic and the catastrophic weather events going on around the world seemed so much more important and relevant to me. It sounds so selfish, but it really was only when I had a personal and vested interest that I fully appreciated the scale of the problem. The problem was, I had no idea what could be done on an individual level and struggled to see what difference my small contributions could make. So I decided to educate myself. I had come to college when my daughter was 18 months old to finally obtain my National 5's, with the intention of going on to do Highers (which I did), then progress to HNC (which I am currently doing). The plan is to obtain enough qualifications so I can support my daughter and ensure she has all the opportunities I was denied as a child. As part of the National 5 course, we had to choose a local company to do a presentation on. Preferably something with personal meaning to you. I chose Greener Kirkcaldy. They are a fantastic charity who do as much as they can to promote greener living in the area and help families to be more eco friendly. From energy advice, to growing your own food advice, to holding seminars to help educate locals about climate change and what we can all do to combat it, they are so informative and not at all evangelical. They were my first step into a greener lifestyle and a greater awareness of my individual role. From then on, small changes have continued to be made. It began with ensuring that I recycle as much as is possible and avoiding single use plastic. Then I began composting. There is nothing more satisfying than seeing your used tea bags and vegetable peelings turn into something useful! Then I cut meat from my diet, aware of not only the implications for the environment but also the animal welfare issues. I intend to be fully vegan within the next few years, but I feel that young children need dairy in their diet and should make their own (informed) decisions, so this can wait until Isabella is older. Something she can get involved with though is litter picking. It is amazing how exciting it is for a group of children to spend a morning collecting plastic from the local beach! It is also very sad to witness just how much rubbish is left along our beautiful coastline. These small things are no effort at all and can actually be fun. The added bonus is every little helps when looking after our planet. There are so many things we can do as individuals and it doesn't have to be a chore. Some of the energy saving measures actually save you money, so everybody wins. I completely understand the "What good does my tiny contribution do and what's the point?" attitude. I was guilty of it myself for a long time. But every small step DOES make a difference. Every switch from a disposable cup from Costa every day to a re-useable travel mug DOES help the planet. (And saves you 10p!) And every conversation with friends about small changes and their impact DOES help to get everyone informed. I don't want my child to grow up in a world where polar bears are some long extinct creature only seen in books.