

Roth: Resolutions for an Eco-Friendly Life

Happy New Year to all and may 2014 reveal all the promise for you that feels possible.

The age-old practice of adopting resolutions at the start of the year has no doubt led to significant improvements in peoples' lives. Improving your health by quitting cigarettes or altering your schedule to guarantee more quality time with your children can directly and indirectly improve and extend your life and the quality of the lives of those around you.

But there's an approach to life that is, at our core, an effort worth making every single day of the year. Call it the golden rule, or a life of purpose, but the mere intention, commitment and repeated actions to live more friendly is perhaps the greatest resolve to have. Actions, or often inactions, affect each other. With a few purposeful thoughts, we can make a huge difference for ourselves, our families and in the end for the broader family of all the earth.

Here are a few ideas to consider for an eco-friendly life.

Haste makes waste: Americans can do a lot to benefit our wallets and our environment by simply slowing down some. Almost a third of all U.S. carbon dioxide emissions come from driving. The American Public Transportation Association suggests that using public transportation saves as much as 1.4 billion gallons of gas and 1.5 million tons of carbon dioxide each year. As you know, public transportation isn't readily available to much of Oklahoma and likewise 88 percent of all trips in America are by car, so here's what we can resolve to do: If you drive slower, even a few miles per hour, your car uses less gas, burns less pollutants and causes less damage. We are still better off walking, riding a bike, or taking

public transportation whenever possible, but even a subtle decrease in our pace can make a big difference.

Grow your own: About 35 percent of our landfills are comprised of food waste, food scraps and food-soiled packaging and containers. Americans waste about 25 percent of our food purchases, either in food that spoils or over-preparing quantities that are never consumed.

Growing your own food – or at least a portion of it – enables you to eat healthier, teach your family valuable lessons about life and appreciating its bounty, and helps you reduce your expenses and food waste. Also, please remember to bring your own grocery bags when you can, choose recycled paper over plastic and reuse your food scraps, such as meat bones in soup, veggie trimmings in broth and stock, and build an easy-to-use compost pile for the rest.

Drips matter: Every drop of water is valuable, whether we are in one of our recent droughts or not. Fixing leaky faucets and not letting the water run while brushing your teeth are obvious simple things we should all be doing. But we can also repurpose that cold water in our tubs or showers while we are waiting for the hot water to arrive. Instead of letting that water run down the drain, capture it in a pitcher to reuse for indoor and outdoor plants or even for cleaning your household floors. There are many ways to reuse water if we just resolve to recognize that every drop has a purpose.