

My Life Style Analysis

Dave Draper

This Lifestyle Analysis was geared toward collecting data and reflecting on some of the ways in which I personally have a direct impact on the environment. Throughout this analysis, I focused on the individual lifestyle choices available to me that can make a difference in my ecological footprint. With that being said, I looked at multiple aspects of my daily life based on the principle that I could collect data and show change accurately. While I did my best to collect data on as many topics as I could to get an accurate analysis of my lifestyle, I was unable to collect accurate data for some areas, and so chose to put enfaces on the fallowing categories pertaining to my impact on my environment: Locality of food, and Dependence on fossil fuels. Along with these two categories, I thought it would be interesting to keep track of how I interacted with the economy in regards to my participation in a goods and services system. This was brought on by the fact that our excessive capitalist consumption is draining our planet of recourses, so much so that there has been a shift in the perception of what the “common good” should evolve into.

The methods of data collection vary for the different categories I monitored, but all work around the concept of collecting data for an average week with no deliberate changes. The following week I intentionally changed in an attempt to bring my totals as close to zero as I could (I allotted myself a 10% window of tolerance unless otherwise stated), without harming my personal well-being. More than anything, throughout this second week I did my best to not only fit within the confines of my ecosystem/habitat, but also reject the common belief that the individual is an imprisoned cog in the system of a disposable society with no escape.

Seeing the results from this analysis has pushed me to dedicate more time and effort to being sustainable. By the beginning of week two I was thrilled to have moved into the Eco-yurt which has no electricity, running water, or heating/cooling system. Instead I built it in a way to utilize as much passive solar energy as possible for heat. I still go into the main house for water usage/consumption and to occasionally cook. I have become even more dedicated to riding my bike as well as incorporating more foraged foods into my diet. This is indeed an extreme lifestyle and is not for everyone. The challenges I face moving forward with these changes while still going to school and work are time and resource management. Riding my bike is not convenient as it takes 2.5 to 3.5 hours out of my day for travel. Foraging for my food also takes time out of my day to collect and process (only about 1 hour out of the day). The main resources I need to consider and manage are heat for the Eco-yurt and availability of forageable food. As winter approaches I plan on getting straw bales to insulate the Eco-yurt and trap as much heat in as possible. Also, I am working on a passive solar heat to use during sunny winter days. Along with the approach of winter comes a scarcity of edible plants. My solution to this is to collect and store as much wild/local food as I can as well as making a conscious effort to buy local food when shopping at a store.

Though some may see my resulting choices as considerably lowering my standard of living in a negative way, I would disagree. Knowing that I can lower my personal impacts so drastically has improved my health both mentally and physically. I believe this is the true measure of a positive standard of living.