

Could you buy nothing new for the whole of Lent?

Imagine buying nothing new. Excluding food, medicines and basic toiletries, could you spend Lent mending, borrowing, buying second-hand, or going without?

We live in a throwaway society. Fast fashion means that clothes are often cheap and cheerful, thrown away when they grow holes or fall out of fashion. Household items are replaced when they fail.

Yet this stuff we consume in our households is responsible for up to 60% of global carbon emission. Buying one new t-shirt can be the equivalent of 2- or 3-days energy.

People who have moved towards buying no new stuff say that they have saved money, reduced their dependence on a consumerist culture, have learnt new skills, and have made closer connections with their community through swapping and buying second-hand

So, what can you do?

Mending

The carbon cost of the production of a pair of jeans is estimated to be (excluding use costs and disposal) is approximately 1.2 kg of carbon dioxide. Instead of disposing of them, why not brush up on your sewing skills and perhaps explore the new trend of “visible mending”? (I’m wondering if any of this is discussed in the schools?)

Many electrical goods have built in obsolescence and manufacturers can be obstructive in helping people when their machines break down. In the meantime, local groups have started training sessions to give people the skills to do simple repairs. (Yukonstruct??)

Swapping or borrowing

There’s no point in buying a snow blower if the person in the next road owns one. We have a local community group in Takhini North where residents post items to give away or share. Many communities have set up Facebook “Sell or Swap” groups.

Buying second-hand

In the past few years there has been increasing trend towards buying second-hand. In a recent poll of 1500 respondents 45% said they would buy pre-owned clothes, and 20% said they currently buy second-hand clothes on a regular basis. Or you can also buy second-hand without leaving the comfort of your own home by shopping on secondhand websites or sites such as eBay, etc. Whitehorse has several Thrift and Free stores which are well used.

Going without

This is perhaps the biggest challenge: sometimes we may be called to refuse to get on the consumerist roundabout. Might there be times this Lent when we can decide to go without something new?

What difference will it make?

Consuming more than we need is creating a demand for 'stuff' that the planet simply cannot cope with. To make a dent in our environmental footprints we need to buy less, seek second-hand alternatives, mend and borrow more.

Taking on this challenge for lent is not about saying that we will never purchase anything new ever again, but it's about encouraging us to shift our mind set about consumption. Our hope is that after 40 days of not buying anything new, we will now consider more carefully than before our consumption habits, seeking to look for alternative and more sustainable options before purchasing anything new.

Want to find out more? Explore these articles and websites for more information:

Remember, make do and mend is nothing new!

I went [200 days buying nothing](#) new...

What is the [Carbon Footprint of my outfit?](#)

[Ten top tips](#) for buying nothing new

Could you commit to buying nothing new this lent? Sign up and become part of the Living Lent community.

(As a fairly frugal person, by necessity as well as by choice I'm often amazed by the spending habits of others-especially the travel consumerism that happens in the Yukon.

I would hope that purchases not bought during Lent aren't just deferred for 6 weeks which would defeat the purpose.

And I do advocate the use of washing strips for laundry which greatly reduce the use of plastic packaging.)

Adapted by Jan Burks from Living Lent – creating a climate of change

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