

Melissa's Environmental, Social & Economic Life/work Actions
(aka "living acoustically," permaculture inside-out, etc)

General goal

Shrink negative environmental, social and economic impact as much as possible AND grow positive impact

- Engage in actions that build global equity, wellbeing and peace, protect cultural diversity and support environmental sustainability
- Reduce resource use associated with life & work—across product/service lifecycle, not just my direct impact—and create cradle to cradle system with zero waste & pollution
- Use renewable resources over non-renewables for necessary resource use
- Purchase only ethically produced and traded goods, locally direct from producer
- Keep dollars in local economies
- Educate others to share simple tips (and benefits: cost, time, health, etc)
- Never stop learning and improving
- Engage to change systems to make it easier for people to make less harmful/more positive choices AND harder for negative-impact choices to exist in the marketplace

Food/Agriculture (emissions, resource use, waste)

- Cook from scratch, buy very little processed food
- Buy only organic food
- Buy very little food grown outside USA/North America (ex: spices, chocolate)
- Preferentially buy local food. Member of local organic CSA farm and shop @ Farmer's Market April-Oct
- Buy food from small, organic farms (or co-ops of small farms) with documented sustainable practices
- Shop preferentially @ co-op/locally-owned stores
- Forage/glean fruit, some nuts (May – Nov, can store till Dec/Jan)
- Grow food from own saved seed, local seed, starts from friends/local growers.
- Buy almost exclusively bulk/non-packaged food, put in reused bags/containers
 - If packaged, 100% recyclable or reusable packaging in bulk/larger size.
- Don't buy/drink bottled water (or other bottled beverages). Drink tap water. Use a reusable stainless-steel metal bottle
- Avoid purchase, consumption and use of GMO foods and materials such as bio-plastic
- 99% vegan since 2001 (adopted vegetarian diet in 1990) (VERY rarely have dairy/eggs, and only specific organic/local brands w/ documented humane & sustainable practices)
- Look into labor/wage practices on farms to ensure equitable practices are used

Paper (resource use, waste)

- Take own bag and containers to store (shopping bags and produce/bulk bags)
- Don't buy new paper ex. toilet paper (100% recycled).
- Use cloth towels, handkerchief, napkins, etc.
- Reuse any "return" envelopes received.
- Use email versus postal mail, scan vs fax, etc
- Print/write on back of 1-side printed paper then recycle
- Print double sided if new paper needed
- Do not receive any junk mail – on DMA "do not mail" list, ask co's/others not to share info/mail

- All financial/other statements by e-mail, pay bills electronically/paperless
- Opt for e-newsletter vs hardcopy for memberships, request removal from junk/mail lists
- Scan/email docs versus faxing/mailing.
- Sign docs/contracts w/ scanned signature electronically versus printing then scanning/mailing

Household/personal, other goods (resource use, waste)

- Buy used household goods/clothing except sneakers, personal wear
- Any new items that are necessary
 - Buy from local business, if available
 - Buy locally-made if available, then regional/USA made if not. If outside USA, find closest option and look into eco/social practices.
 - Buy maximum recycled/organic/renewable content
- If mail ordered, ask for 100% recyclable packaging and ground shipment (no plane)
- Use reusable shopping bags, reuse plastic bags
- Buy only biodegradable soaps and cleaners, in bulk w/ own containers
- Clean with baking soda, vinegar, etc
- Use the library and internet vs buying books, magazines, paper
- Use own mug vs disposable
- Travel w/mug/water bottle, cloth napkin and utensils
- Repurpose “waste” for home/stuff
 - Use paper, cards, photos, product packaging/labels, etc to make cards, decorate reused canisters, photo frames, etc
 - Reuse fruit stickers instead of buying tape
 - Make old t shirts into bags, rags
- Repurpose/ruse “waste” for home/garden –
 - Use twisties to stake plants, connect several vs using string
 - Built raised beds w/ scrap wood & nails from crate, lined w/ old compost bags
 - Start plants in paper cups, yogurt containers, reused plant pots
- Compost food scraps, yard stuff, foil-lined and waxed paper, cartons, floss, TP, etc
- Prune trees and use branches for plant stakes, raised planting area borders, etc
- Use rechargeable batteries
- Use digital camera vs film
- Donate clothes, shoes and unneeded goods
- No TV since 1997, just not into it
- Save things recyclable non-locally and recycle when traveling, etc

Transportation/Fuel (nonrenewable resource reduction, renewable resource use, emissions)

- Bike/walk is primary transit, gave up car in 11/06 (due to ties between oil /Iraq war)
- Offset any necessary flights
- Shop locally – reduce shipping use
- Online bill pay versus mailing if offered
- Avoid purchase and use of petroleum-based plastic as much as possible

Energy (nonrenewable resource reduction, renewable resource use, emissions)

- Use natural light
- Use only CFL bulbs

- Use broom and carpet sweeper vs vacuum
- Air dry clothes on line or inside
- Water heater on 30 min before shower, off after shower
- Wear sweaters and use blankets when cold
- Downsides to mini-fridge vs full size. When weather is cold enough, food in box outside.
- Electronics unplugged if not in use, incl modem, laptop, etc.
- Turn off oven/burner 5-10 min before done cooking – remaining heat finishes it off.
- Cook in batches (e.g, pot of legumes or rice lasting several days).
- When using oven, cook at same time on burner above oven heat vent
- Chop, mix, grate, knead, etc foods by with non-electric kitchen tools (by hand)
- No A/C. Close windows/shades on hot days, open @ night to let in cool air.
- Buy renewable energy credit for 100% of energy use
- Work @ home, use skype for phone, eliminating need to power phone (laptop already on)
- Play my acoustic piano unless I'm at a gig or sequencing?
- Usage:
 - All-electric rental: 1200 kWh/2007, 1500kWh/2006, 2100 kWh/2005 (previous tenants 700+kWh/yr)
 - Elec/fuel (water heater/radiator) 1 kWh/day 1/08-8/09

Water

- Catch/use water from heating shower water for plants and toilet tank
- Turn on shower to get wet, turn off to soap up, turn on to rinse off
- Wash clothes in bathtub with shower water, catch and reuse water on non-food plants
- Hand wash dishes with biocompatible soap in dishpan, use water on non-food plants
- Dishpans in other sinks, catch & reuse water on non-food plants
- Use pots, utensils, plates, etc through the day then wash
- Mulch to reduce water needs, plant drought tolerant perennials, water in early AM
- Don't flush toilet every time (1-2x daily). Put jug in tank to reduce water per flush.

Learning & Sharing

- Freelance writing for industry site/blog and local paper
- Created consumer newsletter w/ sustainability tips at previous company
- Created/launched employee environmental education campaign at workplaces
- In local sustainability groups and Daily Acts
- Volunteer on local CSA...invaluable learning
- Took permaculture class, earned Permaculture Designer certificate
- Continuous reading, etc
- Have blog, website, twitter. Made this list per repeated q's in 2006 & update periodically
- Info: dailyacts.org, newdream.org, greenamericatoday.org, grenbiz.com, justmeans.com

Advocacy for Systems Change & Giving back

- Lobby for legislation (climate change, extended producer responsibility, organic funding, cut subsidies for non-organic/factory farms, non GMO, etc)
- Established, implemented company-wide sustainability program at DAGOBA Organic chocolate; recycling programs @ prior jobs, grad school, high school
- Transitioned to work focused on corporate social responsibility after DAGOBA
- Engage local gov't and service providers in expanding conservation programs
- Ask retailers and companies to improve specific practices
- Contribute time and dollars to numerous causes