

It's Not Easy Being Green

Life is full of ethical dilemmas, and many of the decisions we make in life contradict themselves. I've realised as I've got older, not to be worried about these contradictions. It would be lovely to live a totally consistent life, but I've met very few people who manage to attain these dizzy heights. One of the major ethical dilemmas I face is over how green I am. I try to be green. I believe it's important to be green. However, I have also realised a lot of the more environmentally friendly options are far more expensive, and I simply don't have much money. Obviously, there are things that don't cost money, and are things everyone should be doing - for example, recycling, turning off lights, not leaving electrical equipment on standby, and using the car minimally. Unfortunately, a lot of the other options are expensive. Some of the greenest people I've met are people with money; people who can afford to build their own eco-homes, install solar paneling, and source their own water. These are also the people who can afford to shop locally at Farmers Markets, buy ecological products, and buy expensive recycled products. I buy such items when I have the money. However, the reality is by the end of the month, I don't have any option other than to buy value items from major supermarkets. Necessity makes for one of life's biggest contradictions. It forces difficult decisions and moral uncertainty. Necessity also forces compromise and making the best out of the circumstances offered. I don't want to make a decision which harms the planet, but I also have to live my life. Renewing my car insurance last week gave me exactly this dilemma. I spent many hours at the computer looking at different companies, trying to work out which was the cheapest and greenest. I knew I needed to pay by direct debit as I didn't have enough money in my account for the full lump sum, so this again, through necessity, narrowed down my options. Finally, I opted for the package that was the greenest for what I could afford. From my research, I knew this wasn't the best environmentally friendly option, but it was better than some of the others. Compromise eventually gave me the best option. I find the same is true with electricity suppliers. I was forced to swap from a company who solely ran green power because I couldn't afford the bills. Again, I compromised by using a green policy from one of the major suppliers. However, having said this, energy saving light bulbs have now decreased in cost enough to be affordable to all. Things are improving. Green options are coming down in price, and this is fantastic. I'm luckier than most. I can just about afford the lower end of these services. However, until we get to the point where environmentally friendly products are the cheapest on offer, we will not be able to move to a greener society.

About the Author

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