



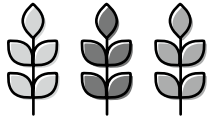
# PLANTING A SEED

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**3 simple steps to  
sustainable living**

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**KATE GAERTNER**



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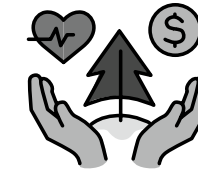
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# **Know What You Value**

Three weeks of information I never had before have changed forty years of ingrained driving habits... I didn't have to change my values. I just had to see how my action did and did not conform to my values.

**DONELLA H. MEADOWS**, *The Global Citizen*



**DON'T WANT** you to just read about sustainability; I want you to enact it. One of the best ways I know to do that is to link sustainable actions to what you already value. If sustainability measures reinforce what you value today, then pursuing them is like an amuse-bouche served at a fine dining restaurant: a delightful, satisfying morsel that adds to your dinner experience.

We all organize our lives around the internal values we have, whether stated or not. These are ideas, things, people, and even practices we hold dear. Below are some examples:

- I prize sleeping eight hours a night because good sleep keeps me happy and healthy.
- I read to my kids every night before bed because it instills a love of reading.
- I call my mom daily because I want her to know that I love her.
- We eat as a family nightly because it builds a strong family unit.

Of course, our value system extends beyond ourselves and our immediate family.

- I shop at farmers markets because I want to support local businesses in my community.
- I plant native trees and flowering plants on my property to support my state's local pollinators.
- I don't water my lawn in the hot summer months because it's important to conserve freshwater resources.

And like life itself, our value systems can shift and change. What we held as important in our teenage years may be different in our mid-thirties. Our values will continue to expand and refine as we move through marriage, parenting, and our advancing career. Some of our values will remain fixed throughout our life; others will be newly acquired. As we grow and learn, we take on new mantles and let others fall away.

I'd argue that sustainability is much like learning a new subject matter, whether in a formal academic setting or as a new hobby, like playing the piano or crocheting. We learn and practice but keep it simple at first. We build up our finger muscles and memorize the feeling of the hook in our hands and the knots that form a weave. We master basic ditties on the ivory keys with one hand before we add the other to support a richer melody. As we gain comfort in our crocheting ability, we progress our knowledge and challenge ourselves to move from crafting a straight scarf to a rounded hat. The progression of our learning and understanding is validated by our growing confidence and the sophistication of our capabilities.

We know more. We try more. We gain confidence. We progress our knowledge. We apply our learning in deeper, more meaningful ways.

The "test" for us is seeing the results of our efforts.

## Your Sustainability Lens

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If you were a photographer hired to take photos of a special occasion, how would you best capture the moment? Would you shoot in color or black and white? Would you take still shots or video? Would you capture scenes as a photojournalist would—fluid and unexpected—or more as a portraitist, formally choreographing images? Would you use a digital camera or go old-school and use an analog Nikon?

You have a gut feeling about your aesthetic preferences. You may consider a couple different approaches, but you generally know what you like and what you would prioritize.

The same goes for picking our value-driving preferences. Can you articulate which of the following drivers ring true for you? (There can be multiple that resonate.) Which one would you consider a motivating factor for taking sustainability action in your life and with your family? I have identified four value drivers:

- 1 Saving money
- 2 Living a healthy life
- 3 Building community
- 4 Supporting the biodiversity of the planet

For each, an avatar based on a real person is presented to give you a sense of how your personal values align with sustainability measures you could take.

### Cost Savings

Are you driven by saving money? Perhaps a lens of frugality drives your sustainability decisions, as it does for Robin Haight.

**Money matters.** We can get so caught up in what are the right things to do and what needs to be done to be sustainable. We can lose ourselves in whether we "believe" in climate change and what may be causing it. And we can fight about the political stances that Republicans and Democrats have on global warming. But, when all is said and done, sustainability comes down to what is important to us: Does sustainability align with our values? Robin Haight taught me that.

Robin is a fifty-year-old middle school teacher. She's an eastern Oregonian through and through, having been born and raised in the state and, now married with three girls, living in eastern Oregon for the last quarter of a century.

People are important to her. It flows from her work with the church. Robin is both deeply religious—she was raised Christian and has a strong belief in God—and a science teacher, educating students about "little bits" of all sciences, including physical, earth, and life.



"Packed with practical tips to help lighten your family's impact on the planet. Kate Gaertner will help you create a customized sustainability action plan that is sure to inspire you to become a personal change-maker."

**ADRIA VASIL**, bestselling author of the *Ecoholic* book series



# Create a personal action plan for more sustainable living

**I**N THE FACE of climate change, it's time for every one of us to take steps toward a new way of living, working, and moving around our planet. Sound daunting? It doesn't have to be.

In *Planting a Seed*, corporate sustainability expert Kate Gaertner offers a three-step framework for building sustainable measures into your life that feel good and work for you—and the planet. By understanding how you fit into the global picture, and investigating what changes suit your lifestyle, you'll see how you can soften your footprint and scale up your actions over time. You'll learn about the seven impact categories where your actions can make a difference, and customize a plan that builds from where you are. With ideas for sustainability at small, medium, and large levels, you'll discover how living lightly can also mean living well.

"Now it's personal. In her uplifting book, Kate Gaertner provides the knowledge, tools, and easy-to-adopt frameworks for lowering environmental impact in all parts of your life."

**DAN KALAFATAS**, co-founder and chairman of 3Degrees

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**PAGE TWO**

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