

5 lifestyle choices to help save the planet

By GUY LAWRENCE
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Seattle Times business columnist Jon Talton's recent piece ["After the events of 2018, climate change should be our biggest priority, Jan. 1, Business"] is perfect in everything it touches on. Read it! Climate change will affect every person on the planet. Some will feel the effects in more severe ways. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change tells us we have 12 years to act or feedback loops will kick in, and Earth will take over and changes will accelerate.

Clearly, there is a lack of political will in Washington, D.C., and right here in our own state. The carbon-tax proposal that was defeated in November was not nearly high enough to really address the problem, but it would have been symbolic, a starting point for a new way of thinking about our future. Human behavior has brought us to this point and human behavior will change. We will either change it intentionally and move humanity away from the precipice of uncontrolled climate change, or Earth will change it for us. Because you simply cannot negotiate with the laws of biology, chemistry and physics. The changes we will make will have to be a complete paradigm shift in the way we live. And yes, there will be some economic pain associated. The good news is, economies are human constructs. They can be redesigned.

Here are the top five choices each of us can make that would have the greatest impact on minimizing climate change and that don't require any government action. There are degrees of choosing, of course, and it depends on what stage of life you are in for each choice.

Have one less child

In the U.S., this will have an emission savings of 119 tons of carbon

dioxide per year. Even with 1 billion people starving every day, global "overshoot" day was Aug. 1 last year. This means that by Aug. 1, humans had used all of the biological resources that the planet can produce in one year, and produced all the waste that the planet can absorb in one year. So, for the last five months of 2018, humans were degrading Earth's ability to support life.

Live car-free

This will have an emission savings of 3.1 tons of carbon dioxide per year. Living car free is very difficult for most people. Getting a more efficient car helps, and using the car less helps. Biking, transit and walking are low-emission options.

Avoid one trans-Atlantic flight

This will have an emission savings of 1.6 tons of carbon dioxide per year. This is pretty straightforward — fly less.

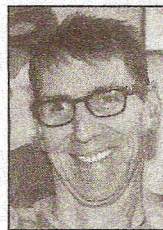
Buy green energy

This will have an emission savings of 1.4 tons of carbon dioxide per year. Find out where your electricity comes from. What are your options?

Eat a plants-based diet

This will have an emission savings of .9 tons of carbon dioxide per year. Going all vegan can take a while. Maybe start with eating only poultry.

The numbers are clear. There is some room between the lines, but in the end, choices will be made — by us or by Earth.



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