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Zoo to You: Going Green for 2018

The new year is well underway, and many of us made New Year's resolutions for 2018. For many, that resolution might focus on eating healthy and exercising, but why not consider including eco-friendly goals in your New Year's resolution?

Our planet is impacted every day, in both positive and negative ways, by humans. Why not make it your goal to increase the number of "green" activities you do to raise the positive impact you have on the Earth. Being eco-friendly doesn't have to be an all or nothing change; by adding one or two small "green" steps to your daily activities, you'll be creating positive change for our planet.

One of my green resolutions centers around the herbal tea I enjoy before bedtime in winter. At first glance, my cup of tea might not seem like a significant impact on the Earth, but tea bags can produce a lot of waste. Most people, including myself, purchase tea that is individually packaged. Items that are packaged individually require more resources to produce and in turn create more waste. Have you ever thought about all the parts that are needed to package tea into a convenient individual serving? When you buy individual tea bags, they are typically sold in a paper box with a plastic film wrapped around the box. The tea is contained inside a bag, attached to a piece of string and paper by staples so that you can conveniently maneuver the bag in and out of your cup. Plus, there is the paper envelope which wraps around your tea satchel to keep it from getting tangled with the rest of the tea pouches. That's a lot of pieces for one cup of tea! Plus, all of those items will eventually end up in a landfill after you finish your tea.

This year, my goal is to switch to eco-friendly tea options. At Christmas, I received a metal tea ball that will allow me to enjoy my tea without having individual packages. Switching to a reusable tea ball requires me to purchase loose leaf tea, but this is an easy option in our town. There are a variety of local specialty shops which offer a wide variety of loose leaf tea, and even grocery stores carry loose leaf tea if you take a moment to look for it. It might not be

a huge change to my daily routine, but it is a simple way to reduce the amount of trash I make each day.

You don't need to become an ecowarrior overnight, but we all have a responsibility to protect our planet and try to keep it healthy. If you are interested in adding green resolutions to your goals for this year, remember it is often easier to start off small. Choose an option that will create a positive impact on our planet, but isn't a huge stretch to your daily routine. By starting small, you will have a better chance of making it a long-term change rather than a short-term one.

Switching to a reusable tea ball is only one small way to start a green resolution for 2018. Follow the zoo on Pinterest and explore our "Green Resolutions" board to discover small changes that will create a positive impact on our planet. Once you see success with your first eco-friendly step, you might even become inspired to add other green activities and do more good for our planet. Don't forget to get the kids involved too!

Whether it's with your kids at home, in a classroom, or with an after-school group, you can find simple "green" options for kids to participate in as well. The Lee Richardson Zoo Pinterest boards have plenty of eco-friendly activities for kids. By creating green resolutions with the children in your life, you are setting them up for a lifetime of making smart choices to keep Earth healthy.