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481 Words

A Need For Change

We buy our plastic groceries then get into our plastic cars to come home to our plastic houses where we enjoy our plastic lives. It's the American Dream- convenience, ease, and all at a price easily afforded by everyone. Ever since the invention of plastic in the early twentieth century, our world has slowly been coated in plastic, along with nearly every item we purchase.

When I pick up a plastic fork, I am not thinking of the landfill that it will go into or the process required for this fork to reach my mouth that has birthed so many toxic chemicals and greenhouse gases. No, I am thinking only of myself in that moment and of my hatred of doing dishes. When a child sees a plastic toy in Walmart, she considers not the toys she already has awaiting her at home. What that child sees is a bright, flashy package featuring her favorite cartoon character which she of course then must have.

When we fail to consider the environment, we are failing the environment. One of the major appeals of plastic is that it makes tasks effortless. Users have to give no thought to a styrofoam plate or a disposable shopping bag. The lack of consideration when using single-use plastics is what has created the Great Pacific Garbage Patch and filled so many landfills. To make a change, we have to first change the casual and expected nature of plastic.

It is this mindset that we must have the best, the newest, the easiest- the concept of consumerism- that has led us to the state we find our planet in now. After being granted these conveniences for so many years, the world simultaneously recoils at the idea of anything less. Even the thought of being denied a straw triggers outrage from all corners of the nation. But changing our habits is so much easier said than done. Instituting recycling programs and encouraging the use of reusable shopping bags appears as though it would be a simple feat, but changing mentality and routine can be close to impossible. Why would anyone want to put in extra time and effort to combat a problem seen as not affecting them for years to come?

Yet we must change. We must change because 12.7 million tonnes of plastic enter our oceans every year. We must change because global warming is real and it is unforgiving of our laziness and ignorance. Earth, the only home we have ever known, is crying out for help and we are doing nothing to save it. To salvage our planet we have to do more than ask for our Starbucks with no straw and buy bracelets that promise 1% for the planet. No matter how much effort is required, without a full change of lifestyle, we will be unable to preserve our beautiful home for future generations.

Bibliography-

Key Facts About Plastic Pollution. (2018, June 08). Retrieved from <https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/key-facts-about-plastic-pollution/>