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Kicking bottled water is one step for green living

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A longtime environmentalist and friend of mine, Caroline Budney, told me she knew Green Revolution really hit Mainstream America when she saw it take hold here in New England.

"Yankees are all about common sense. But it's got to also save cents, if you know what I mean," she laughed. "That's how I knew the Green thing was really happening here" when it made financial sense as well as common sense."

Caroline worked on one of the country's most successful consumer marketing programs launched this year called "Refill Not Landfill" to get Americans to stop using bottled water and refill their own bottles with drinking water. Kicking the water bottle habit isn't just a "feel good" public service campaign. The average American household consumes 3,000 16-ounce bottles of water per year. That translates to approximately \$600-\$1,000 per year.

Water is one of the things at the heart of the green movement. After all, clean healthy drinking water is something everyone wants for their bodies and their families. Today nearly every American has purchased bottled drinking water at some point or other. And it's not just about wellness. Oscar winning movies and best selling books dramatize tainted drinking water and paved the way, for sure, for nearly 20 years of American life with bottled water.

One of the biggest areas of change is in homes, where families are changing traditional water bubbler systems because they're recognizing it's not very environmental. Consumers are just becoming aware that nearly 70% of plastic bottles that are dutifully recycled by Americans get shipped overseas where they are probably incinerated. They're also realizing it just doesn't make sense to people who live healthy, active lives that their drinking water is trucked thousands of miles around the country on 18-wheel diesel trucks in order to deliver a "spring water" taste experience. And most consumers simply aren't aware that their home and office bubblers are supposed to be sanitized for bacteria every three months (nearly all are not).

Despite news that seems otherwise, the truth is Americans have become more health conscious, more environmentally conscientious, more innovative as they've been given correct information and facts. It seems to be working: just try to find someone you know who isn't doing something - even the smallest little thing - to "help the planet". And as Martha Stewart would say, that's a good thing.

Tim Brown is founder and president of Stonybrook Water, a Boston-based home and office drinking water company that replaces bottled water bubbler systems with an environmentally sensitive, filtered clean water dispenser.

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