

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE IN WHICH TO LIVE

It is easy to complain; in fact, we all tend to do so almost on a daily basis. Complaining, however, never corrects a problem or helps to resolve a dispute. There are actions you can take that *will* help improve the environment. The following list offers a few suggestions, and others will probably come to mind once you have thought about it. Try to expand the list with others in your class, and give your suggestions to your instructor.

1. **Continue your education.** Learning should not stop when you leave school. Become informed about issues; then you can begin to bring about change.
2. **Do not feel responsible for every problem in the world.** You cannot do everything. Concentrate on issues that you feel strongly about and that you can do something about. Focus your energy.
3. **Think about the consequences of your profession and your lifestyle.** If they are damaging to other people or to the environment, adjust your behavior accordingly. Try to persuade friends, family, and coworkers to do the same. Make environmental awareness a family affair.
4. **Work with others.** Attend meetings of your local government and ask officials about their plans to prevent pollution. Often, officials are very responsive to visits of this kind. Being part of a group of people with similar interests gives you support and increases your effectiveness. If you cannot find an appropriate group, start one of your own.
5. **Become active in your community.** Organize a community conference to discuss positive approaches to pollution prevention. Invite public officials, industry and labor representatives, other interested groups, and individual citizens. Get all the facts, and then try to get the appropriate action programs initiated.
6. **Learn about the ecology of your bioregion.** Develop a sense of place that puts you in contact with your local physical environment. Learn about the unique environmental features of your area. What are the most urgent environmental problems?
7. **Vote.** You cannot improve your world by not voting. If you do not like the choices available, work to get individuals on the ballot who represent your interests.
8. **Think globally and act locally.** You need to be aware of global conditions, but you should also work to improve your own particular place.
9. **Do not be discouraged.** It is important to face facts honestly and to be realistic about the state of the world, but it does not help to wallow in despair. Do not dwell on negatives. Do what you can to improve the world, and take pleasure and pride in the small victories and elements of success.
10. **Try to leave things better than you found them.** Pick up a piece of litter on a beach or on your street, plant a tree, recycle your papers . . . the list goes on. Don't wait for the next person to begin—you can make a difference!