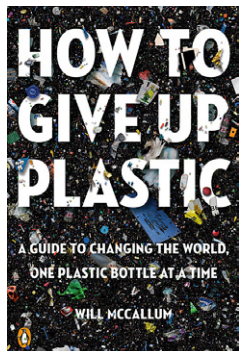


OTHER

How to Give Up Plastic: A Guide to Changing the World, One Plastic Bottle at a Time

By Will McCallum. 2018. Penguin Random House. 224 pages, 15.00 USD, Paper.

Plastic. No matter where we look, it is everywhere, whether we see it or not. The impact that plastic has been having on wildlife and ecosystems has extended past the environmental field and has exploded into mainstream media. It can almost feel like we are bombarded by the various ways to become more eco-friendly and adopt a zero-waste lifestyle, leaving many people feeling like their contributions will be minimal at best. As someone who is always trying to reduce their footprint and encouraging others to do the same, this book was one I was particularly excited to check out.



How to Give Up Plastic begins with a wake-up call. The first two chapters focus entirely on the plastic problem and include many astonishing statistics and research that I was unfamiliar with. It was very interesting to learn the history of how plastics became so prevalent in our lives, how they have evolved, and how our recycling systems are not what we, as regular consumers, believe them to be. These chapters paint a somewhat glum picture of where our reliance on plastic has brought us, countered in the next chapter, “Stories of Hope and Success”, showing how one person or one group created a huge difference in their community and beyond. Throughout the book you can find mini interviews relating the experiences of people leading the charge in the fight against plastics. I thoroughly enjoyed reading their views, tips, and reasons for doing the work that they do.

The next five chapters take us through different areas in our homes and lives. Each chapter breaks its area down into the most common items one might use (for example, the bathroom chapter includes sections on lip balm, shampoo, make-up, and hair removal). Some of the categories mention businesses that are targeting certain waste forms by creating alternatives. This information is very helpful in giving you a place to begin searching for items that suit your lifestyle; however, it could go quickly out of date as

businesses come and go. While most of this advice is available through internet searches, having it all in one location to read through puts the bigger picture together and allows you to see where you want your plastic-free life to begin. As someone who has begun changing my lifestyle to lessen my waste and use of single-use plastics, I was happy to find many items that weren't on my radar and a few new blog suggestions! Many of the chapters end with a work page where you can list your plastic-free plan based on the topics covered.

Chapters 10 and 11 take you from targeting your individual plastic use to your workplace and community. They are full of ideas, from getting people motivated to using your vocabulary to engage others to join the cause. The chapter on community gives a step-by-step guide to running your own clean-up, writing an effective letter to your members of government, and hosting a protest. These are activities that I think many people would like to be involved in and this allows them to take the next step in the actual planning process.

This is a great book for those who are relatively new to being plastic-free. It has tips and tricks for your everyday life and acts as an easy access, easy-to-read guide to start making your plastic-free plan. What felt like almost a blog-type format kept the content engaging and easy to read. I appreciated that the author consistently highlighted the need for systemic change, beginning with the industry, and an understanding that different realities exist for different people and can inhibit their ability to fully give up plastics. I typically expect books like this to be relatively preachy, but I also appreciated the fact that the author did a good job of being non-judgemental while still giving solid advice and statistics on the repercussions of plastic use. I would recommend this book to anyone interesting in beginning to reduce the amount of plastic in their life or anyone currently on the plastic-free journey as it may provide some topics they haven't thought of yet.

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