

Prompt: Think of a personal or public action, behavior, or activity that you engage in on a daily to weekly basis that has a local and perhaps regional or even global impact. Explain the reasons for your actions, the local or global consequences, and the challenges you encounter as you sustain or attempt to change what you do.

About a year ago some friends and I were discussing waste while in the break room at work. We were all disturbed by the amount of recyclable items that were put into our dumpsters every day. The items we were concerned about included copper, Aluminum, paper, and many other items that get put in the trash and not recycled.

There were also complaints about the amount of money that was given to our former CEO when he stepped down. When this complaint came up I suggested that we could get all of our money back if we just recycled one pound of copper a day at each of our two thousand stores. This brought laughter from the rest of the group, but I decided to do the math anyway.

If we recycled only one pound of copper and received \$3.60 per pound for 365 days in the year we would in fact bring \$2,628,000 back into the company each year.

When I saw the amount of money involved I did the math for aluminum, brass, and steel. I was amazed at the amount of money we were throwing into our dumpsters. I made a list of items we could recycle and considered my next move.

I went to our managers and district manager and they all said we could not recycle because it would violate our policies. I asked if they would help me change the policies and they said it was not worth their time. I became frustrated and didn't know where to go next.

I realized the impact this could make on the company so I contacted our new CEO and made the suggestion that we begin a recycling program. After I presented my numbers he asked that I write it all down and e-mail it to him. I did as he asked.

Within days I received numerous E-mails from many people from our corporate offices thanking me for my input and informing me that they would do everything they could to make it happen.

Less than six months later a company wide memo came out announcing a recycling program that we would be implementing within the next few months. I was excited to see that I had made a difference.

This has made me realize that one person can make a difference if they just take the time to talk to the right person. If we all start recycling we might not see the same monetary gains as a large corporation, but we would all be helping to reserve our natural resources and keep our world a beautiful place to live.

Every day I attempt to find something else to recycle or another way to get someone else to recycle. The difficulty in this is convincing people to recycle their items. A lot of people do not realize that they can make a difference. I overcome this by sharing my experiences with them and letting them know how good it feels to know that I have made a difference as an individual.