

Going Green ~ Sometimes Kicking and Screaming



In my fantasy world I have a big solar panel on my roof, and a windmill out back. (I live in Kansas after all; it's our state bird ~ the wind) We'd take no electricity from the co-op, in fact they pay us to buy our extra energy. Our carbon footprint would be zero. Ahhh, in my fantasy world.

Here I am living in rural Kansas, with a conservative husband who still thinks Global Warming is something the democrats made up.

Even though my fantasy world may not be a current reality I have managed to sneak some green ideas and more ecologically friendly things into our house. Here are the top 5 things:

Switch the Lightbulbs

I swapped out all our old lightbulbs for the new Compact Fluorescent Lightbulbs. We were able to get a pack of 5 or 6 at Home Depot for under 10 dollars. We frequently fried the old bulbs, so each time one went out I just replaced it with the new kind. I was also concerned about that weird "fluorescent" color, like at the grocery store, which gives me a headache, it's no problem though. I can't tell the difference between these and the old bulbs.

Wear a sweater

We've always used a controllable thermostat and kept our heat/AC lower/higher during the day while we are gone. However, this last year I have been able to stay home to work and take care of the baby. I noticed that if I wear a sweater I don't really notice the few degrees I would have turned it up. So now we keep the thermostat lower/higher depending on the season, all the time instead of just while we are gone. Pay attention to

where you usually have your thermostat set. Then turn it down two degrees and see if you really notice any difference. Keep doing that until you do notice; now you know where to set your thermostat. Believe me you'll notice a difference on your first electric/gas bill.

Cover the Windows

We have been remodeling and have finished the upstairs. We decided to put in good energy efficient windows, and we can really tell the difference. However, downstairs we still have our old windows. They are really old, they have the weight and pulley in them~ this is an old farmhouse. Since you can actually see and feel the draft coming through these windows we decided to cover them with plastic in the winter. The first year we used regular drop cloth plastic and attached it from the outside. It worked great, but was awful for me because I couldn't see out any of the windows and didn't get enough sunshine. Last year we got on the ball before it got too cold and got the kit to cover your windows from the inside. That worked great as well, and this plastic is clear so you can see out and still get the sunshine. (It won't stick to the windows below a certain temperature, so be proactive on this one)

Save Water

This year I planted a lovely little raised bed vegetable garden. I put out 55 gallon drums and caught the rain water both from the roof and just from the rain. It allowed me to water my plants and not use any of our well water. The plants loved it!!

New Toilets

When we were remodeling we chose new toilets. They use less water, and they claim they can flush a dozen golf balls in one flush. We haven't tried the golf ball thing; we're taking their word for it. If you aren't in a position to get new toilets you can also put a brick or another large item in the tank of your toilet to offset the amount of water used in each flush.

There you have it, five ways to go green in spite of living with a non believer!

These are pretty basic ideas, and you can choose to live green along a long continuum that goes from barely green to complete sustainability. *If you'd like to know more about sustainable living take a [listen to this conversation](#) I had with my friend Debbie.*

[Jackie Lee](#)

Jackie Lee is a gifted wife, mother, photographer, writer and online marketer using a unique marketing philosophy called vibrational marketing of her own design. She has been using the Law of Attraction to attract "perfect" clients and drive

traffic to multiple projects for the last 5 years which allows her to be a stay at home Mom to her spirited daughter. Jackie is thrilled to share what she knows and help others who want to experience the same kind of freedom and success that she enjoys. If you'd like to get to know Jackie and say hello, stop by her homepage: www.FeelGoodNOMatterWhat.com

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620-863-2485

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