

Q&A with David Bach
Author of
Go Green, Live Rich, 50 Simple Ways To Save The Earth
(And Get Rich Trying)

Have you always been concerned with the environment, or did that interest develop as the environment became more entwined with the economy?

My personal transformation to becoming more environmentally conscious happened suddenly and, I must admit, by accident, when I moved into one of the country's leading green apartment buildings. It started by doing that one "green thing," and quickly snowballed when I began to see the benefits to not only the environment but to my own life and my family.

What was your "Ah Ha" moment?

My health, and the health of my son, improved within weeks of moving into a green home. I stopped needing the three prescription drugs I had been taking daily and my son Jack's mild asthma disappeared completely. We also started sleeping better and having more energy.

How did you go from doing "one green thing" to writing a book about being green?

I switched to using a "green" drycleaner, embraced green household cleaning supplies and started reading green magazines and websites. The more I learned about becoming an environmentally conscious person, the more I realized that what is good for the environment and our health is also GREAT for our wallets.

When I gave up my gas guzzling SUV, I noticed that not only was not spending more money to make these life changes. In fact, I was SAVING money!

I also came to understand that there was a HUGE disconnect in the environmental conversation taking place in America. The conversation about the environment focused too much on the challenges of being environmentally aware—and not enough about the benefits to us as individuals as well as the planet. Most importantly, no one was sharing the idea that YOU CAN SAVE MONEY by caring about the environment and YOU CAN MAKE MONEY by investing in this huge environmental transformation that is starting to shake the global economy. I became so excited about the benefits of undergoing a green transformation that I simply had to talk about it. And then I begged my publisher to postpone my next planned book so I could write this one.

Besides living in a green apartment building, what changes have you made to green your lifestyle?

I changed all of my cleaning supplies to non-toxic products. As a family, we began using non-toxic detergent, toilet paper and cleaning towels that are eco-minded products and even a green drycleaner (greenapplecleaners.com). One of the biggest changes to my daily life was giving up

my SUV—and not keeping a car at all. I now use a Zip Car (www.zipcar.com) a few times a month max—and I walk to work.

How has this lifestyle change affected your work?

Go Green, Live Rich is my ninth book in the FinishRich Series but it's the FIRST book to be printed on environmentally friendly paper (it contains 30 percent post-consumer waste fiber and 50 percent totally recycled fiber, it is acid free and chlorine free).

One main argument of business against going green has always been the expense, the damage to the economy. Is that a valid argument, in your opinion? Why or why not?

Ten years ago, if you suggested to a company that it go “green” and spend more money and care on the environment, you would have been pushed right out of the office. Today, virtually every major company in America and around the world is putting together teams of people and/or consultants to figure out how to “be green.” Companies are waking up to two fundamental realities of the business world: First, you have to be “green” and care about the environment to prosper in the 21st century; and, second, if you don't start caring about the environmental impact your business and products and services have, you are going to go out of business.

Businesses are acknowledging that success today means being responsible to more than just shareholders; They are adopting the principles of the Triple Bottom Line Theory (People, Planet, Profit) and realizing that they have social and environmental responsibilities that must be factored in to determine and improve upon their profitability. At the end of the day, business operations of any scale have to meet consumer demands, so as consumers increasingly make choices based on what they believe is the “right thing to do,” businesses will have to pay attention to maintain profitability. Making a profit and doing the right thing don't need to be separated!

Do you feel that making environmental changes (on either a small or larger scale) hinges on whether it can be seen as profitable, as well as (or as opposed to) "the right thing to do"?

It would be an overstatement to say that environmental change *hinges* on being profitable, but what most people don't realize is that green, as a broad category, is already profitable- and will become even more profitable as demand for greener and more sustainable products and services increases, driving innovation.

It is in the best interest of businesses, entrepreneurs, and the general public to try to exist and interact in a more sustainable manner, and ultimately the adoption of greener practices can both *save* and *make* money. Efficiency + waste reduction equals more money in the bank -- and that is what sustainability is all about.