

FOR YOUR Body, Mind, AND Spirit

Green is the New Red, White and Blue!

Last weekend I attended the Go Green Expo in Manhattan and got an inspired look into the future. People congregated on three floors of The Hilton Hotel to hear speakers and panels of experts, see movies, and visit booths with everything from a hemp version of lip balm to biodegradable garbage bags! What was of most notice was that the information presented was often contradictory to what we hear in the media and in typical conversations.

For example, did you know that biodiesel fuel, which is made from vegetable oil, can be used in any current automobile with a diesel engine? Diesels aren't like they used to be--noisy and highly pollutant--they run very smoothly and are cost effective, yet a very small percentage of cars are offered with that option, especially in the United States. One of the advantages of using biodiesel fuel in a diesel engine is that the infrastructure is already in place; it's a highly cost effective option if you're in an area where it's available at the pump.

Another thing that struck me was that although the speakers recognized the dire situation we've put ourselves in—you know, that thing called global warming—they're working on cost-effective alternatives. There's a 'green' alternative to just about everything I learned.

Clothing and bags can be made from hemp, it lasts forever and doesn't fade, and I wondered why the few shirts I bought at The Gap couldn't be made with such care. Food, that which sustains us (but only as long as we let the Earth sustain us), tastes so much better when it's organic that I can't imagine ever going back to my collegiate diet of fast food and ice cream. In fact, after the initial and surprisingly short break-in period, I no longer crave sweets. You can feel the difference as you eat it and have energy all day long! It's easy to say that it costs more, but as someone in the health field, I can assure you that you will pay one way or the other--with your wallet or your health. The funny thing is that as we buy more organic foods, food growers will have to notice and supply more of it. At some point, the basic law of economics dictates, this will make the prices lower. We have the power to change things by merely choosing the healthier, smarter option!

Big business, at least the ones run by intelligent people, recognize that things often change and will. They listen to the demands of the consumer. I've heard of places in the states where the hybrid 45-mile to the gallon Toyota Prius has a waiting list, and Toyota has expanded that technology into its Camry and their upscale division, Lexus. Yet the American car companies are slowly dragging behind. With gas prices at \$4 a gallon and tax incentives to buy a hybrid in many states that more than make up the difference for the hybrid option, why would anyone choose otherwise?

When I mention that certain ways of being or doing things are conducive to optimal health people generally get excited about it. Yet often, within a few weeks they're right back where they started. Making changes is difficult and without support from friends and family members, it's nearly impossible, but we can't give up. There is just too much at risk. Both our own health and that of the planet are at a crossroads. If over half the population of the USA is overweight leading to illness and premature death, it's got to tip you toward believing something could be better. But we have to commit to making it happen. Buy organic and exercise more than walking to and from your cars. Likewise, if Saudi Arabia is the leading researcher into alternative fuels, it's got to tell you something, too: oil is running out. Drilling for more at the expense of destroying the remaining environment isn't the answer, dictating change with our buying decisions is. Likewise, complaining about things get nothing changed, being proactive to the situation does. Now before you go to your save the whales meeting in your 12 mpg SUV with a leather interior (5 cows died to make that) and wood dashboard (unless you've discovered new things to breathe,

