

## My Life, My Love, My Planet

Fortunately for me, I was born and raised in Northern California. I got to enjoy access to the mountains, the ocean, lakes, rivers, and forests, a virtual cornucopia of environmental beauty. I can't remember a time in my life that wasn't frequently punctuated by camping trips, days at the lake or in the mountains, time spent at ocean-side cabins, hikes, picnics, and all kinds of outdoor excursions. I learned to appreciate nature by being immersed in it, and am more than grateful to my parents for showing me the beauty of nature, and teaching me to respect it.

This love of mine has carried over into my adult life, and I now find myself blowing off stress by getting away into the great outdoors. I love to sit and just look; to enjoy the simple and imperfect beauty that is nature. Lately, however, I've been faced with a problem: that which makes me so happy is being destroyed, and may not be there in the future. How much longer will the sky be so blue and the air be safe to breathe? Now when I sit marveling at the landscape in front of me, I think about how that beauty may be denied to future generations. I think about the emissions spewing from my car; I think about the trash on the side of the road; I think about all the resources we have misused and wasted.

I love Earth, and I want it to be around for a good long time. But not just for me and for my lifetime, I want future generations to be able to see snow covered mountains, deep blue oceans, wild animals, wild flowers, and all of nature's wonders. So after I sit and despair about the threats our world is facing, I think about all the things I can do, and recommit myself to doing my part. In times like these, just a little can count for a lot, like turning off the light when you leave the room, walking instead of driving those few blocks to school or to the store, reusing or recycling instead of throwing everything out, and being a smart consumer by bringing your own bags shopping. There are so many easy ways to help prolong Mother Nature's existence, there's no excuse not to! It's time for all of us to do our part and ensure that there will be something left for those who will come after us.