

I believe in sustainability. I grew up around construction. My father drove a concrete mixer, and always took me to the jobs that he was working on. I lived in a house that was over 100 years old and I was always helping him to tear something out or down. As I got older I began to paint, but all of my painting were of some type of home design. My first instinct was that I wanted to be an interior designer when I grew up, but I realized how much I loved science and how good I was at math, so civil engineering just seemed like the most logical path. I was going to be a structural engineer when I grew up.

I did an internship my sophomore year in college at an environmental firm, that cleaned up old toxic dump sites and performed environmental audits on some large U.S. companies. The environmental side of civil engineering was not for me. After that year I joined the military where I was a carpenter and a mason. All the designs that we received never called for "green" building, and when you are working with or for the government you give them the cheapest price, which meant leaving out materials that may have been better for the environment.

Once out of the military I went back to per sure my degree. In my junior year, I took introduction to environmental engineering, where my attitude was I will try my best but this is not what I want to do. I left that class and changed my concentration from structural to environmental. During that class we watched Al Gore's *Inconvenient Truth*. My reaction to the movie was not positive I thought that he was a little over the top. I have always believed that global warming existed, but not because of humans, but because the Sun is a star, and stars go through a life span in which they get bigger and hotter. I thought all these environmentalists were making a big deal over something that was just going to happen no matter what. Yes, maybe we put a few more gasses into the atmosphere than we should have, but regardless of what we do this was going to happen.

Now in my senior year I am taking a class where I read excerpts from books about sustainability, where again the claims were that we are at fault for the diminishing condition of our planet. While these reading were on the extreme side, things started to make sense. I have not given up on my theory of the sun's fault, but I blame it less and us more that I did. I was not ignorant to the facts presented in the readings before but I looked at them in a different way. The one thought that changed my mind is that we as a race do not look at the impacts that our designs have on the distant future, rather we look at how it will affect us 10 years down the road. Once a design has run its course how will it be disposed of? It will most likely be placed in a landfill. Instead we need to looking further ahead and asking questions like how can I design something that when it has run its course the materials can be reused? Because, although we have plenty of recourses to last us and the next three generations, what about those who will come after that? This is what I believe will help to continue the sustenance of life on Earth.