

"why bother" by michael pollan essay sample

[Environment](#), [Climate](#)



“ Why Bother” by Michael Pollan Essay Sample

In the article “ Why Bother” by Michael Pollan, the author states that despite the fact our planet is at great risk due to continuous carbon emissions, “ we”(the people) have done nothing to stop it. It is this passive attitude, Pollan argues, that inhibits us from helping our planet. Michael Pollen quotes Wendell Berry in his essay saying that “ the deep standing problem behind all the other problems of industrial civilization is specialization” (Pollan, 91). Indeed, it is this “ specialization” that causes humans to believe that we only have one role in society, and that we cannot expand outside this world to which we are familiar. In other words, most people do not want the article “ Why Bother” by Michael Pollan, the author states that despite the fact our planet is at great risk due to continuous carbon emissions, “ we”(the people) have done nothing to stop it.

It is this passive attitude, Pollan argues, that inhibits us from helping our planet. Michael Pollen quotes Wendell Berry in his essay saying that “ the deep standing problem behind all the other problems of industrial civilization is specialization” (Pollan, 91). Indeed, it is this “ specialization” that causes humans to believe that we only have one role in society, and that we cannot expand outside this world to which we are familiar. In other words, most people do not waste their time with environmental issues such as the one Pollan is discussing because they believe it is not their job to do so. The author urges readers to throw away this “ cheap-energy mindset” (Pollan, 92) and for once try to make a difference by working independently. Pollan

suggests the best way of doing this is by personally going green and planting a garden.

Though Pollen suggests many other ways of going green in his article like purchasing a hybrid, walking to work, eating local meat, or even changing your light bulbs like Al Gore suggested in *An Inconvenient Truth*, none of those ideas will "reduce your sense of dependence" (Pollan, 93) and carbon footprint as much as a garden would! The author hopes that one person's choice to go green will in turn cause another person to go green, which in the end would create one giant chain event. In essence, Michael Pollen's article "Why Bother" was written to enlighten the public about our looming environmental issues and encourage people to do start bothering about the planet they live by reducing carbon emissions. ste their time with environmental issues such as the one Pollan is discussing because they believe it is not their job to do so.

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event. In essence, Michael Pollen's article " Why Bother" was written to enlighten the public about our looming environmental issues and encourage people to do start bothering about the planet they live by reducing carbon emissions.

Michael Pollan's article Why Bother, has risen the awareness of the controversial issues of Global Warming. He starts his article off by bringing in the shocking feeling he got after watching Al Gores, " An Inconvenient Truth" His biggest issue with the document was when Gore asks the viewers to change their lightbulbs during the closing credits. After watching how threatening Global Warming is to the earth, he was expecting a bigger request from Gore considering how important the issue is. Knowing that it would be such a struggle for people to change their lives to go green, he asks himself " why bother", meaning why change his life to a extreme extent to go green when the majority of people aren't going to.

Would his decision going green even have an effect on the world? He decides to take the challenge of leaving a carbon footprint, but questions himself in situations that he doesn't know what will be the better choice. An example of this is when he says, " According to one analysis, if walking to work increases your appetite and you consume more meat or milk as a result, walking might actually emit more carbon than driving". Pollan also brings up the issue that argues no matter what people do, no individual personal choices can not do enough to make an impact. What is also needed is laws and money, along with countless of little everyday choices people can make to save the planet.

The problem with society is the Cheap energy, that is keeping people from going green.

So the question is Why Bother, if all these other factoring issues are in the way of a person trying to make a difference? Well Pollan says, " If you do bother, you will set an example for other people. If enough other people bother, each one influencing yet another in a change reaction of behavioral change, markets for all manner of green products and alternative technologies will prosper and expand." Another way a person can make a difference according to Pollan, is to plant a garden which he claims is one of the most powerful thing an individual can do. Pollan's whole point of bothering to make a change is because he can and also because he has the ability to spread an effect on other people.

I think that this article is really good, because it really arises the issue of Global Warming and targets an audience that involves the world. He uses great rhetoric writing throughout it by using statistics, emotion, and credibility. The tone of the article was negative towards the beginning, but then quickly shifts to a more positive one when he expresses that there is a reason to " bother". I think that he gives great reasons and statistics to give the audience an understanding of why we should bother and change our lives to a green one for the sake of our planet.

Helping preserve our earth is something every individual should be taking a part of because our planet is on the fast track to no longer existing. Michael Pollan's article " Why Bother?" opens reader's eyes in a good effective manor, using rhetorical strategies to help them see the good that comes out

of going green. He captivates his audience questioning what are they doing to help our climate change for the better without hurting the planet even more and he believes that it is not too little too late to make a difference.

Pollan's article is well composed, he uses examples of current/past events and also practical examples of everyday tasks to show then cons and pros of going green and does not show where he stands until the end. In the beginning he leads on readers to think why even bother it is too late for whatever we may try to do. He suggest that people are just plain lazy and don't want to change their lifestyles so makes it seem impossible to make a change, " Al Gore asks us to change the light bulbs because he probably can't imagine us doing anything much more challenging" (97). There are too many skeptics with their own theories, whether or not going green is good or bad we really don't know where we actually stand in this fight.

He then tells us that waiting around for our government to take action or waiting on technology to get developed and make something happen is not going to get anything done any faster so individuals should start taking action. After explaining and going back and forth giving the good, bad, and setbacks we face to better our climate, Pollan reveals where he stands which is not too late to change and help preserve our earth's climate.

When you have so many people who can't even change a light bulb in order to make a small difference, where do we really stand in this fight?

Government does not act until people make it a concern. Pollan says that waiting for our government and technology to help our issue...

zWhy Bother?" is the question that many people ask when confronted with ideas of making small living choices to reduce their carbon footprint. In the world today, too many people believe that their individual impact on the national carbon footprint is too minute that nothing they can do or change in their daily lives will have any effect whatsoever on climate change. However, according to Pollan, this perspective is what is making us so dependent and causing time to pass without any real changes being made.

Wendell Berry was a farmer and writer from Kentucky, who, thirty years ago, diagnosed the problems of industrial civilization as being too much "specialization." We are far too dependent on companies and other individuals to sustain us. While specialization is a positive concept, in many ways, in the case of climate change, it is a major problem. Climate change is the result of cheap energy, which makes it seemingly impossible to conquer climate change in our own individual lives.

The reality is, we have to bother in order to make progress in our communities and, eventually, in our nation. By "bothering," you are setting an example for others, which can start a chain reaction that will lead to the majority of the community suddenly "bothering." This sort of chain reaction requires viral social change, which is uncontrollable once an individual sets an example and starts a pattern. The key is to start small: give up meat, observe the Sabbath, or, best of all, plant a garden. Pollan believes that growing some of your own food is the single most powerful thing that each individual can do.

By planting a garden and producing some of our own food, we are changing our ways from being dependent and divided to being independent and self-sustainable. There is an abundance of benefits of planting a garden, including food that is local, very fresh, very tasty, and very nutritious. When you are working in the garden, you are burning calories without even knowing it, which is an added bonus of being your own producer. " During World War II, victory gardens supplied as much as 40 percent of the produce that Americans ate."(p. 94) If we are entering a time when, as predicted, we need to learn how to provide for ourselves, what better way to start than by simply planting a garden.

The fact is, planting a garden is the first step to real climate change. It will cause us to reestablish ourselves as not only consumers, but also producers and citizens. We will get to know our neighbors better and lose the sense of helplessness that so many people have acquired by depending so much on others to provide for their needs. " As long as the sun still shines and people can still plan and plant, think and do, we can, if we bother to try, find ways to provide for ourselves without diminishing the world."(p. 94)