

**Rethinking Consumption with Outdoor Minimalism**  
**with Meg Carney**

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## Rethinking Consumption with Outdoor Minimalism with Meg Carney

It takes a brave and independent mindset to go tiny. If you are trying to figure out your tiny pivot, this podcast is here to inspire and connect you with the other unconventional, gritty, inspirational people within this community.

I'm Laura Lynch, your tiny house friend and host. On this show, we are always going to come back to money because, as a financial planner, this is the question I hear the most: How do I make this work for me financially?

Well, that's my jam. So jump in, let's go. New episodes drop every Thursday.

**Laura Lynch:** Well, Meg Carney, welcome to Less House More Moola podcast. I'm super excited to have you here. When I came across your podcast, the Outdoor Minimalist, I was like, "Wow, this is a whole 'nother angle of the minimalism that I think we're going to need to explore." I'm going to be talking a little bit about how you can explore, so please introduce yourself and share a little bit. I know you had some time as a digital nomad and kind of moving around. So share a little bit about that too, and how it's been for you to put down roots.

**Meg Carney:** Awesome. Well, thank you so much for having me. I'm excited to be here and talk all things outdoor minimalist, I guess. So my work history and like living history is pretty sporadic and staggered, which is what really inspired me to go freelance writing full-time, which led to Outdoor Minimalist.

So it was kind of like an organic journey, if you will. But for pretty much all of my 20s, I moved around like every year and a half, two years, to a new place, or I lived in a vehicle full-time in between living in different areas. And so, as a digital nomad, it's was hard to find jobs and things like that.

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So I supplemented my income with freelance writing. And then, if I was able to find a job in an area that I wanted to live, it was usually in the outdoor industry. So, if you look up any of my writing or podcast content, you'll notice that it is heavily focused in the outdoor industry because it's one that I have been a part of for over a decade.

And now I live in Wenatchee, Washington, which is the central part of the state, and it's a beautiful place. It's a high desert environment, so nothing like Seattle. It's very sunny here and very dry, but I really enjoyed it. I live with my partner and we both are pretty nomadic in our lives before now.

And so, we still travel a lot and I still take several month trips away from the house because, I don't know, it's just something that sometimes people are meant to wander. And I feel I am one of those people.

**Laura Lynch:** Yes. I wandered a lot in my years ago, more out of, I guess, necessity, though I always had a lot of wandering sort of urges as a kid. And now I'm coming to that point where I really want to become part of a community and maybe establish sort of my sense of place. So, super excited to get started. We're on our journey, as listeners know, out to New Mexico, full-time, which is another desert environment. So I'm glad we shared that connection.

So your book "Outdoor Minimalist" and podcast, can you define what outdoor minimalist is for us? Because I take it you mean more than just not having a bunch of stuff.

**Meg Carney:** Yeah, absolutely. So in the book, there is a definition that we wrote because we use it as a noun and it has two parts. So, the first one is an individual striving to minimize their impact in their relationship with nature.

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And then the second one is one who consumes thoughtfully and leaves the wilderness better than you found it. So, a lot of those definition aspects will probably sound familiar because they're kind of taking from like different areas of 'leave no trace', general minimalism, essentialism, those concepts, I guess.

And yeah, it's definitely more than just having less stuff. That's definitely a piece of it, but in general, I would say the biggest point of Outdoor Minimalist is to analyze your mindset around consumption, how that impacts your daily life, but also how you recreate outdoors. So, I guess we like to say that your impact starts long before you hit the trail.

And so, Outdoor Minimalist is how to analyze those contributing factors to environmental impact as well as like the impact you have in your community.

**Laura Lynch:** Yeah, it seems like that anytime we get into a niche sport or what have you, there's like a lot of gear that is being sold to us, right? Our hobbies come with a lot of spending opportunities. So how do you sort of think about that in terms of that minimalist piece?

**Meg Carney:** In terms of the minimalist piece, in terms of like, if I'm starting a new activity, then I would use the seven R's that I outlined in my book. And I don't think I have an episode on every single one on my podcast, but I do talk about them pretty frequently.

And that framework is really important because questions like yours, they all can kind of fall back to that framework. And then, you can kind of pick and choose pieces that would be most relevant to your life. And so, when I was writing the book, that was the first thing that I decided on was like, "Okay, what is the foundation of outdoor minimalism?"

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And it is the seven R's. Yeah. Do you want me to overview like what each one is? Okay.

**Laura Lynch:** A hundred percent.

**Meg Carney:** Yeah. Okay. So, they're not necessarily in a specific order except for the first one. The first one I put there because I figured, if someone is reading this book and they only remember one of the R's, needs to be this one. And so the first one is Reduce, which you will probably recognize from the normal three R's, 'reduce, reuse, recycle', and in that initial campaign for those three, they were put in order of importance. So, you're meant to reduce your consumption first. If you can't reduce, then you're meant to reuse. And if you can't reuse, then you're meant to recycle. So, that's kind of why I put that one first again.

And I can go into detail of what each one means, but I'll tell you what all of them are first. So, it's Reduce first. Refuse. Rethink. Repair. Rehome and Repurpose are grouped together, and then Remove, and Restore.

So, reduce is kind of self-explanatory. You want to reduce your consumption, but also reduce your impact. And that can happen in a lot of different ways. But the number one way is to simply not buy as many things. And then, refuse is kind of building off of reduce. And I was initially kind of concerned that people would think these were too similar, but the intent behind refuse is kind of like a boycott.

So for me, personally, an example for this would be: I'm vegan. So, I don't buy any animal-related products, food, clothing, anything that could cause harm to animals. So that's me refusing to, I guess, contribute to that industry. Another common one would be like zero-waste. You're refusing to produce waste.

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Plastics is another good example. There's a lot of people who refuse to buy plastics. And this is especially important because as individual consumers, we often don't feel like we have much power, I guess, in terms of environmental impact or environmental degradation. But by refusing to buy something, like currently right now, the Kellogg's boycott is a really good example of this because it is impacting their bottom line.

Granted, if you only do it for like a week or two, it's not going to do anything. But on a mass scale, if we're voting with our dollar, especially if it's a protest or boycott that lasts three months or more, that's when the company or corporation will need to reevaluate and be like, "Okay, we're losing a lot of money. We need to figure out how to appease our consumers so we can continue to make a profit." But then, more often than not, they're doing it to improve the environment inadvertently. Like, they obviously could have done that in the first place, but it's like a way to push and tip the scales. Okay, that's kind of long, ranty bit on refuse, but that one is really important to me.

And then, rethink. This one was probably the most impactful for my personal minimalist journey, and this was kind of rethinking my daily habits, my spending habits, my consumption habits. And I guess one example of rethinking would be; I use this one a lot because I spend a lot of time on social media, which I don't like to admit, but it's true.

So, like when you're scrolling or on TikTok, Instagram, whatever, you'll see a lot of ads, either from influencers or just sponsored ads. And, I mean, those are in the algorithm. They're calculated to target you specifically as the audience, and they're going to pique your interest. And so, what I like to do with the rethink category in terms of social media is like, "Oh, that's a product that I would probably use. Do I need it? I don't know. Is it necessary? I don't know." And if you can't definitively say yes to those questions, then I generally don't buy it.

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If it's a product that I've been thinking about for six months or more, and I don't need it immediately.., So, an example would be like a spin bike. I bought one of those several years ago, but I thought about it for about six months, and I was like, "Okay, I'm actually going to use this." And so, I did purchase it, and I use it quite frequently. And so, that's kind of, like, one way to rethink purchasing habits.

Trying to think if there's anything else about that one. That's kind of like the gist. Okay, and then repair. So the first three R's are kind of more conceptual. So they're more about your mindset. And then the following R's are more like action items.

So, like repair. This is really relevant for outdoor gear and equipment. One, because it's expensive. And two, because we don't want it to go to the landfill. And if we are reducing our consumption, refusing to buy certain items, and rethinking our purchasing habits, then repairing items to extend their life with us is really important. And you can do that yourself, or you could do it under product warranties, send it back to the manufacturer, they'll repair it for you.

Or another example that I personally have done is like bring it to a local shop that does repairs. This could be a tailor if it is clothing item. I've even brought jackets or tents that need zippers replaced to like shoe repairmen or cobblers, because they often have the tools to repair zippers as well. And another one that is pretty easy is like, if you have a bike or something, there's usually bike shops that will repair those types of things for you.

The next ones, rehome and repurpose. Those ones I grouped together because usually when you get to this point in the life of gear, at least for your personal use, it's like the same time. You're either going to rehome it or repurpose it, like you're just kind of done using it in your specific journey. So that's why they're together. So you kind of decide, is this worth rehoming? Is it something that is in good enough condition for me to give it

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a new home with someone else? Or if it's not in good enough condition, how can I repurpose it?

So, some examples of, I'll start with repurposing, I guess, is--I'm trying to think of ones that I personally have done. So, like a tent. Sometimes, if a tent is not repairable at all, I'll replace it with a tent of a similar size. Oftentimes, tents don't come with a footprint, so I'll cut the bottom off of my old tent, and I have a footprint for my new tent. You can also use old tent parts to repair new tents. And, as well as backpacks. Like, you can take old backpacking backpacks and use components to repair new ones, or even make smaller backpacks from those things.

I will note that, yes, this takes like a certain level of skill to be able to repurpose something, but it's also kind of fun if you're into arts and crafts, if you like sewing. I like sewing. So, it's kind of fun to see what you can come up with

For rehoming, I think we're going to talk about that in a little bit more detail later. So, that one is kind of self-explanatory and I can give some examples of that in a little bit.

So, moving to remove. Remove is kind of two different ones. It can be seen differently. So, the first one would be to remove trash from the environment. So, like participating in cleanups, when I walk my dogs or go on hikes, if I see trash or dog poop on the trail, I will try to pick up at least some of it. I can't always carry all of it, but that's something that I've just kind of like built into my life because I hike almost daily. And so if I see trash in the trail, then I'm going to pick it up. But it can be like less frequent as well.

So National Cleanup Day is a good resource if you want to participate in cleanups in your area. They have a map of cleanups. I think they are in conjunction with Clean Trails. So, that helps you kind of like find local

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cleanups in your area. And if you can't find a local cleanup, you could always start one.

**Laura Lynch:** Have we covered all seven?

**Meg Carney:** No, the last one is Restore. So, restore is like restoring the environment because there is a lot of environmental degradation that has already occurred. So, restoration efforts are often falling to like local programs. This could be land trusts, it could be the National Forests Foundation, any of those like conservation organizations will often restore things on their own, but you can also participate in restoration if you have a yard or you want to get involved in restoring the trail.

So where I live in Wenatchee, the land trust puts on several different programs throughout the year, specifically in the summer during the main hiking season, where you can go out with ecologists and conservationists and basically help with these projects.

But another restoration option for people is like plant native wildflowers, or plant native plants in their yard. So instead of planting like an annual, you would plant like a perennial that is native to that specific place that you live, because then that contributes to the native insect population, which then can contribute to the native birds. And it just kind of like, snowballs from there. So you can do little things like that. It doesn't even have to be like a huge project. Little things, if everyone in the community starts to do those, they definitely compound to have a more positive impact

**Laura Lynch:** Yeah, it seems like restore is very much in alignment with a lot of the regeneration work focused on soil health and native habitats. And all of that focus around the holistic system of the earth in a place.

So, that sounds very much tied in with that, which is work that I'm super passionate about being that we have, what, 50 harvests left in this country

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if we continue on the path that we're on. So, definitely need more people focused in that work.

So, I want to drill into two specifics that are really tiny living-specific. And the one is going to be on living in small space and then the other on downsizing. So, for folks that are living in small space-- which, you know, you did for a time for sure, and for everybody out there in van life for schoolies, or what have you, it's really hard to kind of.. You can't buy in bulk so much.

And people have become very used to single-use packaging, which of course is a lot of plastics. So what are your tips there?

**Meg Carney:** Yeah. So this is definitely something I struggled with when I lived in a vehicle, specifically because of what you're saying, like it's easier to buy the single use items or things wrapped in plastic because they'll last longer. They're not perishable, et cetera.

When I was able, I would buy from bulk bins and just have containers in my vehicle and I found that to be almost more effective because I could control the portion sizes. So instead of buying like a big canister of oatmeal, I could just end up getting a little jar that I will use for that week.

And I found that this takes a lot more planning and intentionality to be able to find places that have those options. But in the long run, it helps reduce the amount of trash that you have to deal with. And then also that is going to the landfill. And it will probably save some money because the more intentional, like you're shopping, at least for groceries, I find that I save quite a bit of money if I'm being like very specific about the things that I'm actually eating and the things that I'm going to use that week.

And I will say that it's likely not possible, especially when you're living on the road, to completely cut out all of your waste because sometimes you do

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have to kind of buy off of convenience. And I think that's just something that you kind of have to accept.

But you can end up buying from better brands. And I think that's like kind of the direction that I would often go. If I knew that I was going to have to buy something that was creating waste or packaging waste, then I would make sure I'm buying something that's organic. I'm buying something that is rainforest-certified. It's from a small family-owned business, if possible. So, like going to local farmers markets and getting kind of like products from those people, going to local bakeries. Oftentimes, they have things like breads, granola bars, those types of things that you would usually buy packaged.

And I get that this takes more intentionality, but when I was on the road, oftentimes you're missing a sense of community. And places like markets are a great way to meet people that oftentimes have like similar values to you. And I've met a lot of really cool people and discovered places that I probably wouldn't have before simply by going out of my way to find a local spot versus stopping at the Walmart because it's most convenient. So I think it's a better way, one, to travel and then to also kind of contribute to the local economy.

Trying to think if there's other things. I would say one area that I still struggle with is my dogs. So, I often travel with my dogs, and it's really hard to find things that are not packaged for dogs, especially when you're traveling. Like, when I'm at home, I can make their dog treats, I can make their dog food, whatever, but when I'm on the road, that's not really possible. So I would say that's like one really big waste area that I'm still kind of learning about and trying to figure out how to minimize with.

But I also think when you're trying to reduce waste or achieve zero-waste of any kind, even minimalism, that there needs to be a point where you're like, "Okay, I'm gonna do what I can with the information I have, and not get

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too overwhelmed," because I feel like if you try to change everything at one time, it's not going to be sustainable.

So, finding certain target areas that you're like, "Okay, this is something I can do for this month. I can dedicate time to finding local businesses and markets to try and get most of my food from there." And then, if that's going really well for this area, maybe I'll try in the next area as well. And then you can add something on top of that.

So, just kind of like building those better habits and not having a lot of like shame or guilt because you're contributing waste is I think really important, because in the grand scheme of things, companies and corporations are the ones that are responsible for a lot of the pollution, climate change, and everything. Like, we definitely play a role, but we should not have to accept the responsibility fully on ourselves.

**Laura Lynch:** Yeah, I think it's good to have a little dose of moderation in there. We can all get very perfectionistic or hard on ourselves. And, you know, there's lots of ways that we can have beneficial impacts through all of those other R's too of, you know, regenerating, educating others. You know, kind of doing good work that can help contribute in a positive way without trying to figure out exactly how you're going to transport your morning granola oats without using any plastic at all. I mean, it's very difficult to avoid plastics.

I just finished my permaculture class and we talked a lot about this, and it's just very difficult to get away from plastic. When you—and this isn't on the list of questions so I'm going to hit you from the left side a little bit—when you go to a bulk store, do you take like jars and fill them up directly rather than filling up the bag that's provided and then transporting it?

**Meg Carney:** If it's allowed, then yes, I will, but there are some stores that don't allow you to bring in your own containers. But for the most part, when

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I was living in my van, the most recent time, I would just save my old pasta jars or pickle jars, probably pickle jars, because I eat an obscene amount of pickles, and then I would bring those.

And I prefer to store food in glass whenever possible because there's always a chance of leaching chemicals into your food. But if I have to use the bags that they provide, then I will usually repurpose it for something. So I'll put produce in it that I get from the market to help it stay longer. Or, at the very end of life, I'll use it as a dog poop pickup bag.

**Laura Lynch:** Yeah, I recently switched from everything is now bars in my house instead of liquid stuff. You know, all the soap bars all throughout the house, right? And it was such a simple paradigm shift. And yet you walk up to your kitchen sink and you see a bar soap there instead of liquid dish detergent. And it takes a minute for people to kind of figure out, "Oh, this works just as well, right?"

But my gosh, that's the way it was for so long. And we have forgotten that we can wash dishes with a bar or, you know, whatever was the original soap without having a big blue bottle of Dawn. When one very simple thing that kind of took a minute to kind of figure that out.

So on the downsizing, so I'm in the kind of last legs of my downsizing. And I have to admit, there's a lot of guilt associated with downsizing. And I've written about this some and continue to like mull this over around this, holding on to the generations of things that have been passed down to me. And the things that, you know, don't make sense, maybe moving forward, figuring out the best way to part with them, especially when I wasn't even the one to buy them originally.

And so, it's really tough on the downsizing piece because you don't want to put stuff in the trash can and send it off to the landfill. You don't necessarily want to drop it off of at Goodwill 'cause you know that a lot of that stuff

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ends up in the landfill too. And when it's a large volume of stuff going from a full house, you know, down into a small space, a van or what have you, it's just really hard to individually find the right person for all of those things. So what are your tips and suggestions there?

**Meg Carney:** Yeah, I'm going to say on your.. I'm going to kind of go back a little bit to the bar soap thing, 'cause I was thinking like the time that I spent on the road, when I switched to using like bar shampoo and whatever dish soap, et cetera, I found it was just way easier to use. Like it's easier to transport. You can bring it pretty much anywhere. You're not going to spill it. And it generally lasts longer. So that's just a note on that. But I love bar soaps for a multitude of capacities. And I've even found bar soaps for dog washing as well. So they're really, you can find them for a lot of things and they're extremely effective for small spaces and traveling.

Okay, so for rehoming items, I will say that, because right out of university, I basically started living in a vehicle, I didn't have to downsize that much. So I had a little bit of an advantage because I didn't have furniture. I didn't have a lot of kitchen appliances. Like a lot of that stuff was like old things that my parents let me borrow while I was at university. And so, I didn't have to get rid of that much stuff.

So I think, you know, that when I have downsized in certain times in my life, the most effective thing, obviously, is to give things to people that you know personally, but like you said, it can be hard to be like, "I don't know who needs this," you know?

So, I revert to using things like a Buy Nothing group. And a buy nothing group, usually these are on Facebook, but you can find them on other platforms as well. They're usually like, local community groups where you post something that you want to get rid of and someone in your community that needs it will take it.

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And so, there's no exchange, it's not a bartering system, they're not going to pay for it, it's just a place to post and be like "I don't want this anymore," "I'm moving," etc. And I found those to be pretty effective, depending on the community you live in. I will say certain areas probably aren't as active as others, and so if you're in an area that doesn't really have an active buy nothing group, then you obviously can resell some of your larger items, but that's very labor-intensive.

You can find consignment stores to drop things off at, and they'll kind of organize things for you, and then you get like a small bounce back of money. Usually it's not much, but in terms of like outdoor equipment specifically, and this could go for other items as well depending on what they are, but I'll start with outdoor gear. I've found it to be like, pretty effective to reach out to local scout troops to see if there's any participants that they might need something like a backpack or hiking shoes, et cetera, especially for girls groups.

Oftentimes, they don't have a lot of donations for girls adventure programs, and those products are expensive. So if someone's on scholarship to something like that, they might not have access to it. And another option is nonprofits. There are several nonprofits that do take and distribute outdoor equipment, usually in one specific municipality or area, and they're usually larger cities. So like Seattle, Los Angeles, New York City, places like that. They do allow you to mail them, so if you don't live there, you can always mail it to that nonprofit, and they'll find.. It's usually for adolescents that need some equipment.

But then, in terms of general household items, I think that it can be a little bit harder because a lot of times, people will already have those things. But for me, when I have maybe done like a spring cleaning, or one of my friends who recently moved, she ended up leaving a bunch of stuff with me, and I was like, "Well, now I have duplicates of everything, and I don't know what to do with them." Then I try and find a nonprofit, or where I live,

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there's a women's shelter, and so a lot of my women's clothing, I'll donate to them because I know it's going back to people in the community that need it.

And the women's shelter donates beyond people that live or need the use of the shelter. It's for single moms that maybe they left a bad situation and they need some extra furniture. So I think trying to find those resources in your area can be really beneficial and rewarding because you're giving back to the community and it's not just going to some billionaire that owns Goodwill.

**Laura Lynch:** Yeah. Thanks for that. It takes a little bit more time to sort of figure out where in your community that need might be, but definitely more worthwhile to be helping folks that intentionally need that stuff. So that's a really good idea.

It's been a struggle for me to kind of figure out because I've been very minimalistic my entire life. And I spent a lot of time in the military moving around. And so, you get used to not keeping and having a lot of stuff. And then when you reach a certain age, you start inheriting a lot of things. And so then you're like, "Oh, I've got six sets of China now. So what do I do with this? What do I do with this?"

**Meg Carney:** Sometimes for like, trinkets like that, I've found that artists, they'll take those as donations as well, and they'll repurpose it. Where it's like, "I don't know what to do with this," but they'll like create a sculpture out of it or something like that, and it ends up being really cool. They can resell it then for a profit, which I think is really great.

**Laura Lynch:** Yeah, that's a good idea. Artists. So, you know, a lot of this, as you pointed out, the first three Rs are about mindset, right? And I think mindset is probably where everyone has to start in this work. And as you pointed out, right from the minute that you pick up the screen, you're being

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very specifically and carefully marketed to. It is in the economy's view, our job to be consumers, and so disengaging from that expectation of being consumers can be really hard and probably painful for some people.

There is a little bit of a hormone squirt or dopamine or whatever that we get when we do a little bit of shopping. So how do you help people kind of rethink about taking care of the earth being an important concept in addition to taking care of yourself?

Say for example, you know, you feel like you need a new pair of boots, right? And so, you're wanting to take care of your own self for a hiking trip or what have you. How do you kind of help people think about taking care of the earth as well as themselves in those situations?

**Meg Carney:** Yeah, I mean, I think it's important to acknowledge that because we live in a consumer culture, we are going to buy things. We need things to live life, daily life, and also do the things that we enjoy in a safe manner.

And so, a big focus of the book and the podcast is identifying brands, materials, and like supply chains that are more sustainable and transparent. So, transparency is a big issue. What, in any industry, really, but it's also an issue in the outdoor industry in terms of how a brand is communicating their actual impact on the environment throughout the entire life cycle of a product. So, that's from the extraction of the materials to the end of life when that product is finally disposed of.

And we are seeing a big shift in the industry to move towards more of a circular economy, which is really good, but it'll take a long time to achieve that. And so, as an individual consumer, what I have found most effective in my life, and it seems and a lot of listeners have communicated that this is helpful when they listen to my podcast as well, is being able to identify and read through greenwashing.

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So, greenwashing is essentially just a marketing tactic to claim that something is more sustainable than it actually is. And this will happen in a variety of ways. A lot of times they'll just use kind of like target language like 'eco-friendly' or 'eco-conscious' or even just the phrase 'eco'. The more a company uses the word sustainable, the more red flags go off for me because I'm like, "I need details here, people. I need to know exactly what you mean when you say that."

So I'll use your boot example. So, if I'm shopping for a new pair of boots, footwear in particular is very difficult to find a sustainable brand because a lot of sustainable materials don't work well for that specific product. And so what I look for is like complete transparency.

Do they have a sustainability report that they put out every year, every couple of years that overviews where they get every aspect of that product? You don't have to read the full report, but if they put it out, that's a good sign. Are they using products that are more sustainable and putting that in quotes? Because they're probably going to be synthetic if they're coming from shoes. Are they using products like Gore Tex or other PFOS, which is a large class of chemicals that is dangerous to human and environmental health?

So, kind of asking questions like that can kind of help narrow down your buying options. And this can be pretty labor intensive, I will say, which is why I wanted to create the podcast and the book kind of like as a way to fast track that information for people to be like, "Okay, here are the warning signs. And these are the things I should avoid." So, you can kind of filter through that information a little bit faster. I'm trying to think how to elaborate that more. Does that answer your question?

**Laura Lynch:** Yeah, that's great. And I think that takes, you know, exactly to my next question being, what resources do you recommend for folks that

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are trying to be intentional in this way? You know, obviously, your book and your podcast are two that you want to highlight.

**Meg Carney:** Yeah, I would say my book and podcast for outdoor recreation folks is probably most applicable. I definitely have topics that would apply to the general consumer population as well, so you might just need to look through and see what those are. But there are other people that I follow that have a lot of good resources in terms of like making more intentional buying decisions.

One that comes to mind, they're based out of Australia, it's called Sustainable Jungle. They have a podcast and they're also pretty active on social media. So social media, I feel like it can be good and bad. So, I kind of like to take a minimalist mindset on social media as well, where I really only want to see things on my feed that kind of improve my life. And so, following creators like Sustainable Jungle is a good way to do that because they're giving me ways, actionable ways, that I can implement in my daily life.

A blog, if you like longer form content, the OG zero waste is Zero Waste Home. And so, that would be really applicable for people that kind of want to live a more non-toxic, less plastic lifestyle, and they're not sure where to start. She has a lot of really great resources on there and she has existed for a very long time, so there's a big backlog of information you can search through.

And another one for my outdoor recreation folks is actually coming from Outside Magazine, Kristen Hostetter. She's a journalist that works for them and she runs a column that is published every two weeks, I think. But she overviews like a specific topic. I think this most recent one she had on plastic toothbrushes. She's done ones on PFAS. She's done like an audit of her life in terms of like, 'in the last year, I saved this much money by making these lifestyle changes'. So I think she has a lot of really good content that

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is relatable to the average consumer and are things that we can think about changing like a little bit at a time.

**Laura Lynch:** Yeah, it's good, you know, like we talked about earlier with the soap thing, you can come up with one idea and you can implement that. And then, you know, you come up with another idea and kind of move through and make small shifts and improvements and new ideas come in and it could be just a progressive transformation over time.

So let's go back to PFAS. I know you've just launched a whole entire series around forever chemicals, so it sounds like that, from the energy that I've been seeing on social media with you releasing this, that there's a lot of attention being paid. Does this give you hope that we're gonna, I don't know, recover the environment from the damage that's been made? What inspires you to have a conversation about something that is kind of grave?

**Meg Carney:** Yeah. PFAS is a topic that is very important to me, I would say. And it's something that impacts every single person on earth. And it's also something that not very many people know about or know what it is or know the health implications. And so I felt like it was really, really important to at least present that information in an easily digestible way. Because there's not a lot out there about it. There is some, but there's not, like, a ton.

And in the outdoor industry specifically, like with Outdoor Minimalist and Forever Chemicals, I have continually felt like, as an industry, we could do better. Because as a front, the outdoor industry is so great, we care about the environment, yay. But on the back end, they're making all of this equipment that has very serious consequences for the people that work in those facilities, the people who live around those facilities, and then end users as well.

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And so, Forever Chemicals, I don't know if it gave me hope is the honest answer. In some ways, it made me more, I guess, passionate, or filled with rage to some capacity, that I was like, "Wow, this has gotten really out of hand, and it's not our fault as a consumer." We're just kind of left to clean up this mess that was created and it can be hard to kind of like stomach that information.

But also, I talked to a lot of brands who have made positive changes. So one in particular that I'll highlight right now is Houdini Sportswear. I believe they're a Swedish company, but they're based in Europe. And honestly, they were one of the first brands to recognize and acknowledge, "Hey, PFAS is bad. We also recognize that a linear production model is bad." And so, several years, I would say like 2009 to 2012, somewhere in that range, they started to phase those things out and change the production model. Whereas in the United States, we didn't really see a lot of those big changes happening until, really, right now. So they were like a decade or more ahead of that like production curve.

And so, I think that if you're looking for glimmers of hope, companies like that, where they truly are in alignment with things like the planetary guidelines—which is like a framework based in the European Union that helps France not ruin the Earth, basically, they're really producing things with that in mind and they are willing to admit that, "Yeah, our gear might not have the same level as performance as, say, a Gore-Tex jacket. However, we're willing to accept that and tell our consumers that," because of all of the impacts that the other products would have if they were creating them. So I think that's positive. That is definitely positive.

**Laura Lynch:** Yeah. Just a little bit of glimmer. Certainly, none of us are going to have the influence to change what is essentially a money-driven system, right? It's about where the dollar is and where the cheapest production is and the greatest profit margin.

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And so, just the fact that there are companies out there saying, "Hey, there's something more important to us than perhaps the bottom line," or "there's something equally as important as the bottom line.." Yeah. But I guess that's, you know, the progress.

**Meg Carney:** Yeah. And I think companies like Houdini and the other ones that were early adopters of changes like eliminating PFAS from their products, they recognize that we like to play outside and we like to live on a planet that's like enjoyable and hospitable to human life. And if we continue to produce in the way that we are right now, then it doesn't matter if we're making money because we won't have an outside to go and use if we continue in this same exact way.

And I think, like another trend that was really, really interesting in making the Forever Chemicals podcast is I noticed a lot of the early adopters, the companies were either owned by, or the sustainability program was run by a woman. And so, I think that listening to women, it can be a really important step in the right direction in terms of innovations and production and science, because a lot of times I think we're not always afforded that level of, I guess, power or authority in a system. But, this was a proof, essentially, that you can have a successful business while having people and planet in front of profit.

**Laura Lynch:** Yeah, that's so good. And you and I, when we get together next time, we'll be talking about impact investing a little bit, and this is the same story there. You will find that a lot of women have higher positions of decision making in impact investments, whereas the overall industry at large from an investment perspective only has 2% women or minority. So, another place where women can bring their complimentary voice that allows us to turn the ship a little bit.

**Meg Carney:** Yes, absolutely.

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**Laura Lynch:** Awesome. Well, Meg, before we go, please share where listeners can find and follow your work.

**Meg Carney:** Yeah. So, the Outdoor Minimalist podcast and the Forever Chemicals podcast are both available on all major podcast platforms, including YouTube. You can get more information on both of those on our website, which is [theoutdoorminimalist.com](http://theoutdoorminimalist.com). And you can also follow us on Instagram @outdoor.minimalist.book or YouTube, which is @theoutdoorminimalist.

**Laura Lynch:** Perfect. And I've got all of your links, I'll put them in the show notes. Thank you so much for having this in-depth conversation about outdoor minimalism and how we can all get a little bit better by making little progressive choices that are somewhat more thoughtful about our impact.

**Meg Carney:** Awesome. Thank you so much for having me.

Hey, I'm honored that you listened to this episode of *Less House More Moolah*. I hope something in it will help you continue to move toward a life aligned with your values.

Every algorithm out there is trying to tell us what to prioritize, but we get to choose. If you haven't ever identified your key values, I have a free resource on my website to help you.

You just have to go to [thetinyhouseadviser.com](http://thetinyhouseadviser.com). It's the tiny house A-D-V-I-S-E-R dot com.

At the bottom of the page, you can grab the tiny life values worksheet. When we design a life around "what is our core truth?", we shortcut to deep fulfillment.

See you next Thursday.

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