

Transcript for **Meet Lauren Singer – zero waste girl**

Presenter: The average American produces 4.3lbs (four point three pounds) of trash a day. That's almost sixteen hundred pounds a year but if we took some simple steps we could go off the trash grid and minimise thousands of pounds of waste into just a single jar!

Going off Grid

Lauren Singer: So, this is my trash jar.

Presenter: Two years of trash in this tiny little jar.

Lauren: Yep!

Presenter: That's crazy. I mean I probably produce twenty times this much in a day.

Lauren: Yep. This is everything basically that I couldn't compost or couldn't recycle or couldn't figure out what to do with.

Presenter: Where did you get this idea to become zero waste?

Lauren: Erm, it kind of all started when I was a senior and in NYU and I was starting environmental studies. And one day after class I went home to make dinner and I opened my fridge and I saw that everything in there was packaged in plastic and I felt such a hypocrite. We're supposed to be saving the planet and here you are making all of this trash. I feel like it's really important to live your values and my values are having a really low environmental impact. I have to live like I want that. And so that's why I've decided to change my lifestyle.

Presenter: What was the easiest part about reducing your waste?

Lauren: I think it was just like seeing that I didn't have to do that much to produce very little waste and by composting and buying in bulk I essentially eliminated eighty per cent of my waste. Buying package-free means needing to have containers to buy things that you can't hold with your hands. For instance, I buy bulk olive oil, I bring a mason jar to fill it up. I'll pick up some beer from a local shop that sells it in growlers that are actually reusable so that's like a totally waste-free way to drink.

Presenter: I imagine you get asked a lot of questions about 'how do you do this?' I'm curious about a few things ...

Lauren: OK.

Presenter: I'm going to throw out a few things too.

Lauren: Sure!

Presenter: Plastic toothbrushes?

Lauren: I use a compostable bamboo toothbrush.

Presenter: Sponges?

Lauren: I use a compostable dish brush.

- Presenter:** Paper towels?
- Lauren:** Cotton napkins.
- Presenter:** Plastic cookware?
- Lauren:** Wooden or stainless steel utensils.
- Presenter:** Cotton balls?
- Lauren:** Reusable cotton rounds.
- Presenter:** Drier sheets?
- Lauren:** Drier balls that I make myself.
- Presenter:** What about shampoo?
- Lauren:** Bulk castrol soap.
- Presenter:** Make-up?
- Lauren:** Organic vegan make-up in recyclable packaging.
- Presenter:** Feminine products?
- Lauren:** Menstrual cup.
- Presenter:** Gift wrap?
- Lauren:** Why?
- Presenter:** OK, so you are going to teach me how to make toothpaste.
- Lauren:** Yes!
- Presenter:** What do I do?
- Lauren:** So we are going to mix two tablespoons of organic coconut oil and then a tablespoon of baking soda and then about twenty drops of the organic peppermint oil.
- Presenter:** So this is how you make your toothpaste?
- Lauren:** Ah hem!
- Presenter:** Let me see your teeth! They look very nice!
- Lauren:** Eh yeah!
- Presenter:** What does your dentist think about this?
- Lauren:** They haven't gotten mad at me yet so ...!
- Presenter:** Ha ha!
- Lauren:** So, I'll just take this spoon and scoop it onto my toothbrush.
- Presenter:** Hee hee. It's not bad, actually it's kinda salty!
- Lauren:** Yeah! That's the baking soda.
- Presenter:** Yeah, my teeth really do feel cleaner ... so ...
- Lauren:** Yeah ...

- Presenter:** ... thank you. So do you have any garbage cans in your home here?
- Lauren:** No, I don't have any garbage cans in my home.
- Presenter:** Because you don't have any garbage?
- Lauren:** Exactly!
- Presenter:** It really does compel me to want to try to reduce my waste so what tips would you give me or somebody else that wants to do that as well?
- Lauren:** Yeah, I would suggest, you know, look in your garbage can and see what your garbage is and until you do that you don't really know what you're reducing, right? Step 2. Using a reusable bag instead of plastic or paper bag. Just like, easy one-time changes and then the last one would be to actually make your products yourself. So learn how to make toothpaste, learn how to make deodorant. It's a really fun thing to do.
- Presenter:** What is your ultimate goal?
- Lauren:** Before I lived my lifestyle I wonder why is there all this trash, and why is that OK and we have to find the solutions before it gets out of control. I've never told anyone, 'Oh, you should live this lifestyle' or 'You have to live this way'. Erm, I kind of live my lifestyle and put it out there and see what happens.