

SEPTEMBER 2019

Avoiding Consumerism and Marketing.

One of the most popular leisure activities in the UK is shopping. Most of us have enjoyed a day out with friends or family wandering round the shops and having lunch together. But excess shopping is putting a serious strain on our environment, because of the resources it uses in making new “stuff”, the CO2 emissions in getting both us and the products to the shops, and the disposal of these items at the end of their life.

Think how much time and money shopping takes up. Not just the buying, but also the sorting, reorganising, “having a clear out” that excess stuff in our homes creates.

All big marketing companies, from those that sell a new sofa, to designer labels, fast fashion and convenience items, all play on the same basic message; your life will be better and you will be happier if you buy this item. It might be because they want you to think you will look better, or your home will be more welcoming, or you will appear cooler to your friends. This is all so they can make more money from us. We have to ask, is this true? Will my friends really like me more if I had this item?

So, what is it that we actually enjoy from a shopping trip? Is it the time spent socialising? Therefore, are there other activities that would be more fun: we could have a meal together anywhere, maybe after a walk in the countryside, after sport, crafting or another social activity. Do we get a thrill from finding something unique? Well why not shop for secondhand items; you really will be getting something unusual then, a real find, rather than something mass produced last week! Simply by going less often and making it a real treat, only getting “stuff” when we really need it, would give us the chance to afford items of better quality, ethically sourced and crafted in Britain, that

would last longer, support our local suppliers and not end up in landfill as quick.

written by Helen Gillingham