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5 Habits of Conscious Consumers and How You Can Shop Thoughtfully by Kasey Lum Condra

Conscious shopping may be a strange concept for many, but at its core remains a simple approach when using your purchasing power: having a more active shopping experience, through more informed and mindful decisions. Conscious consumers are actively aware of their purchases, consider the transparency and social impact of companies, and focus on the long-term or “big picture” effects of purchases.

Are you curious about how to shop consciously? Here are five basic habits of conscious consumers that you can apply to your own shopping:

1. Set your intentions. This may sound like a step from yoga class, yet it applies here too: conscious consumers always have a goal in place. What are the intentions of your shopping trip? Are you looking for vegan shoes that make less of an impact on the environment, or because you prefer products made from cruelty-free materials? Or do you simply agree with the brand mission of “Made in the USA” products? Having a clear understanding and thought-process behind your purchases not only makes shopping more meaningful, it allows for more self-examination as to where (and to what) you are supporting with you dollars. Having your own, certain shopping

intentions can also be helpful if you are new to the world of ethical or sustainable fashion and looking to adjust purchasing behaviors.

2. Do your research. Not as intense as a college thesis or research project, but just as meaningful: what sets a conscious consumer apart from the average joe is that they don't buy into glossy marketing schemes, popular trends, or viral hype. They actively and wholeheartedly like to get dirty with the backstories—a brand's mission, a founder's story, sourcing choices, or ingredient lists. Any evidence or information available is helpful and welcome to conscious consumers because they take the initiative to familiarize themselves with the ins and outs of products and brands to not only better inform purchasing decisions, but to understand the full picture.

3. Take your time. Conscious consumers take necessary time to consider their purchases. In our fast-paced society, we are encouraged to think fast, decide quickly, and shop impulsively, often consuming without rhyme or reason. Conscious consumers take time to think about the impact of their purchases, and how a product or brand might add or take away from their daily lives and perhaps the world around them. This is not to say you should ponder long enough to be indecisive about purchases, but factor in time, money, and personal goals or values. Unlike the trends of fast fashion, conscious consumers buy what they need, when they need it thinking less about an immediate want or momentary purchase.

4. Consider the big picture. While there are various factors to think about when making a purchase, conscious consumers always have the big picture in mind. This means considering the long-term effects of your purchase, rather than just the momentary product in front of you. Considering what is currently in your closet, how your purchase affects the environment, or who benefits from your purchase, are all ways to keep the big picture issues in mind. Not only does thinking long-term cause more sustainable planning, it can result in larger impacts (like improving factor workers' lives or maintaining ecosystems) that might not normally be considered.

5. Embrace new or bold concepts. Many consumers follow trends and suggestions of others when it comes to shopping. Conscious consumers aren't afraid to embrace products with new or bold concepts, with reasoning grounded in their intentions and interests. Shoes handmade from ethical, cruelty-free materials? Low-impact manufacturing processes? A shirt that can be worn 10 different ways? Conscious consumers make courageous shopping decisions with the confidence in brands, founders, and the stories that stand out from the crowd.

About the Author: *Kasey Lum Condra is an ethical fashion enthusiast, green beauty blogger, and communications professional. When she's not furiously typing away on her laptop, Kasey enjoys traveling the world, spending time outdoors, and cozying up with a good book. She lives in Virginia with her husband and golden retriever pup. You can read her blog, [Plein Vanity](#) or follow her on [Instagram](#) or [Twitter](#).*

