

A Cooler Planet—Heidi Bailey and Krista White

It's not easy to live green, as many of us can surely attest. It takes a lot of research and a great deal of determination to reduce one person's global impact, and often the information you're seeking just isn't available. In trying to change their lifestyles, sisters Heidi Bailey and Krista White have been through the motions—and succeeded. They have opened their store, A Cooler Planet, in Chicago's own Roscoe Village, the city's first eco-lifestyle store, in order to make the transition into an organic lifestyle more accessible and enjoyable for as many people as possible.

Heidi told us recently that she had begun her own attempt at green living by purchasing products for her home from online vendors, but hit a wall when she realized she was missing the usual, tactile experience of getting to know and question an item: “I thought—*there ought to be a place where I can touch and feel and learn about these products*. Through conversations, we found that many of our friends wanted to do the same but were overwhelmed by the process and information out there. That is how our store was born.”

And so she and Krista have spent serious time and effort in recent years researching products that are not only animal- and eco-friendly, but also conscious of the global economy and fair trade. “We have educated ourselves on products and ways in which our own families could have less of an impact on the earth,” Heidi says. “Our mission is to bring education, products, and people together. We hope to support people in making those small changes in their lives which will make a big impact collectively.”

To that end, Krista and Heidi have sought out earth-conscious manufacturers and vendors—businesses which share the sisters' desire for a cleaner, healthier earth. “We are finding these people to be a wealth of knowledge and advocates for sustainability, fair labor practices, and organic practices. Their enthusiasm and commitment is contagious.”

So, too, is the enthusiasm of Krista and Heidi. Committed to a fully organic life, A Cooler Planet carries everything from cosmetics to beds, from clothing to baby toys, even an indoor composter. Better yet, a portion of the profits of all of their vendors are donated to non-profit organizations, and A Cooler Planet itself donates to organizations like EcoMom Alliance, uniting and educating mothers about green living, and First Slice, which prepares substantial and often organic meals for the needy.

Of course we did not forget to ask Heidi and Krista about their **Alpha Five**:

1. Name one piece of work—novel, painting, movie, etc.—that really influenced/motivated you. Explain how/why.

Krista White: *The Power of One* by Bryce Courtenay is my favorite novel. I love the message that if you keep your inner spirit alive, nothing else can stop you from truly living your life. I do try to remember that power within myself when I am feeling overwhelmed. Heidi and I have drawn on our individual inner strengths throughout this process. I am motivated by the young

boy who never gave into the negativity that surrounded him. It helps me to remind myself that we truly do have a Power of One that can help us realize anything we want to do. We just have to remember to draw on that Power.

Heidi Bailey: A quote that made me stop in my tracks: “Treat the Earth well. You do not inherit it from your parents, you borrow it from your children. We do not inherit it from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.” An Indian Proverb...as parents we think of our children in the future based on happiness, successes, accomplishments, milestones...this quote jolted me into another reality: it is up to us to make sure there is a planet worth living on. It has made me look at how we have become so consumed with having it all for our children, we have lost sight of what it will cost them in the end.

2. What is the biggest challenge/obstacle you have encountered thus far?

Krista: My biggest challenge in this adventure has been learning to balance being a wife and mom, with starting up a new business. My son is five and I have been a stay-at-home mom since he was born. I truly believe in what my sister and I are trying to create. I believe that we will be able to help influence our children to make choices in their lives that will help them have healthy and productive futures. It is our children’s generation that will be able to really change the way people live on this planet and learn to respect it again.

Heidi: My biggest challenge and obstacle has been myself. I have always found it a challenge to be fair and just to myself.

3. What is your biggest regret?

Krista: I do not believe in regrets. Sure, there are things that I would have done differently, but I believe that we learn from our mistakes. Our failures, as well as our successes, make us who we are. Sometimes regret can paralyze us from moving forward. We need to focus on the changes we can make so that we can have a positive impact on our lives as well as the lives of those around us.

Heidi: My biggest Regret...one of the motivating factors in creating A Cooler Planet was not to have an answer to this question!

4. Describe what you envision your life to be like in 10 years—what has changed, what has stayed the same?

Krista: In 10 years I see my family actively helping bring about change in our environment and the way we all treat it. I hope that my son and nieces are inspired by their mothers and are positive influences in their own ways. I see my sister and me still learning ways to inspire ourselves and others to make changes that positively impact our planet. I hope that through our

store or stores, we will have provided people with a conscious way to shop. I see my husband, son and myself leading a less hectic life than we are right now. I see us visiting other cultures, learning from them and bringing back wisdoms which we can all use in our daily lives. I see my sister and me active in our community, helping promote practices that ensure a healthy future for our children and our planet.

Heidi: In 10 Years... I envision myself with my two daughters (who will then be teenagers) and my husband, truly enjoying one another's company. I envision that we have created a life which reaches well beyond just our family...a life which positively impacts the lives of others. What has changed is the speed of life...it has slowed down...what has stayed the same...the love of my husband and children.

5. What is the one piece of advice that you feel has been the most valuable to you and which you would like to pass on to others?

Krista: When I was in college a teacher once told me, "The older I get, the more I don't know." When we are young, we think we know it all. It is so important for us never to forget that we are always learning. We should never feel satisfied that we know everything. There is always something to learn from someone.

Heidi: Breathe...a bit simple, but for me this can do wonders. Sometimes it is just in the action of stopping and taking a deliberate breath that everything else melts away and just that breath in and out matters...a most simple and necessary part of living.

Get more information about A Cooler Planet at www.itsacoolerplanet.com/ or stop by the store at 2211 West Roscoe St. (Tel. 773.248.1110). You can also check out the recipients of their donations:

www.firstslice.org

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