

Season 1 Episode 3 – Guilty Greenie

The Naked Truth

Cait Bagby: [00:00:00] Hello, and welcome to Guilty Greenie. Live on Fireside from the Climate Collab Auditorium. We are your imperfect hosts: I'm Cait Bagby,

Sarah Ferris: and I'm Sarah Ferris. And I don't know about you, but we're tired of perfectionism in trying to live more sustainably. Personally, I feel that if I'm not living in a cave, hand spinning the wool from my hand reared yet free ranging llamas I'm pooping all over this glorious planet. So no matter which way I turn, I feel like I'm getting it wrong. We want to get real for a minute and focus on what we can achieve because I've got no intention of moving into a cave, sure as hell can't spin any wool but I probably wouldn't say no to a few llamas. So join us as we bare all. We'll share our own guilt, share our own journeys, and just add some levity in our attempts and fails to be more eco-friendly, but in the real world.

Cait Bagby: And I agree. I have no plans on moving to a cave anytime soon, but the llama part sounds... it doesn't sound too bad. I have to [00:01:00] be honest. We are going to be sharing our own journeys; the good, the bad, and the laughable. And today we are sharing our naked truth. Sarah, please explain what that means, because I feel like that could be taken so many wrong directions.

Sarah Ferris: It so could. Last week we looked at the laundry and got a bit dirty in there, but now we're going to look at just specifically the shower because the bathroom is a big eco issue. Personally, it's one of the first places I started when I thought, right, I need to be a bit more sustainable. This looks like a place that needs some work. Cait's going to educate me on what actually that looks like. I'm really looking forward to knowing what I've been doing right and probably what I'm doing wrong. Right, Cait?

Cait Bagby: I think surprisingly more people do stuff right than they think they do. And you raised a really good point when people are thinking about being a bit more conscious or sustainable in their life, they tend to either start with the kitchen, the bathroom, or their wardrobe. Those tend to be the three places where people feel like they have the most control. I'm going to kick things off. We're going to get personal right up front. How [00:02:00] often do you take a shower?

Sarah Ferris: Ooh, you're diving right in.

Cait Bagby: We're just right in. No barriers at this point.

Sarah Ferris: I'm scared to answer this cause either I'm going to look like I over shower or under shower, and I don't know which one's worse. But I shower every day, once a day in the morning, I have to have a shower to wake up. The exception to that rule is if I'm exercising straightaway so I will save my shower til after I've had my run or bike or whatever. I feel like you're going to tell me that that's bad.

Cait Bagby: No, it's normal. Listen, we're not here to cast judgment on anybody. We're just here to help shed some light on maybe some better habits.

Sarah Ferris: Hold on. Tell me about you. When do you shower? How Often?

Cait Bagby: So about every two to three days.

Sarah Ferris: I can smell you from here.

Cait Bagby: I just can't be bothered. I'll wash up at the sink in the evenings and if I've been outside working on the farm or if I've been working out or something, yes, absolutely, I'll take a shower. But if I'm sitting in the office for a couple of days working, then naw. Honestly, I can't be bothered [00:03:00] to, and I don't smell or no one's complained yet. I guess maybe that's...

Sarah Ferris: Nobodies complained.

Cait Bagby: For a second when you were saying, oh, I'm not sure I want to tell you, I was having flashbacks to last week show where we talked about how often Brits wash their bedding.

Sarah Ferris: Yes.

Cait Bagby: Do you remember that?

Sarah Ferris: Yes.

Cait Bagby: Once a year.

Sarah Ferris: That is disgusting. When I changed my sheets this week, all I could think of was that stat: that we only changed them supposedly once a year and I was just imagining that cracking of the sheets coming off, it's disgusting.

Cait Bagby: Maybe we looked at the wrong way. Maybe they changed them they just don't wash them all. They're just changing out the bedding, but then they're saving it for one large wash at the end of the year. I'm going to go with that. That's more pleasant, still not great.

Sarah Ferris: Don't think that's any good either. There still bad. I think the stats speak for themselves.

Cait Bagby: All right. Here's how often people generally shower and by the way, Sarah, also side note, I did all my calculations ahead of time for this week's show so I have gallons and liters prepped and ready to go for you.

Sarah Ferris: Because you know I hate a math [00:04:00] show. I hate a math show.

Cait Bagby: Oh, me too. All right.

Sarah Ferris: Fire away

Cait Bagby: Two- thirds of Americans shower daily? It is often in the morning for the same reason you had mentioned, which is to feel that kind of wake up. However, that is also divided depending on your job. If you're a blue collar worker, you tend to shower in the evenings because you maybe getting physically dirty. Where as if you're an office worker, you tend to shower in the mornings.

That number goes to 80% of Australians shower daily, 62% of Brits shower daily, and in China it's about 50%, twice a week.

Sarah Ferris: That's quite big differences isn't there between even Australians, 80% down to 50%. Interesting.

Cait Bagby: There's also like cultural norms there too. Americans became obsessed with cleanliness. Part of that went to consumerism because you could put a shower in your home and we saw this in particular after World War Two. When I was doing some reading on the history of the shower I couldn't find any exact information on this, but it looks like the shower in our home that we know today, the [00:05:00] electric shower, really didn't come into popularity until the Sixties in the United States and the Eighties in the UK.

Sarah Ferris: The Eighties in the UK!

Cait Bagby: Yeah. That's what one of the papers was talking about.

Sarah Ferris: No. It's funny that you say that because my day job is I've got a property business and I'll often go looking at older homes that you can do up and flip. A lot of times those bathrooms, one they're in the oddest positions because they've been kind of shoe horned into the last sort of space because normally they'd be an outhouse, but yeah, there's not often a shower. There's still some places that you'd go into there'd be a bath and I'd be like, "that's odd." You could tell that it was maybe a late Seventies bathroom. No shower at all. So there you go.

Cait Bagby: The old clawfoot tub they'll retrofit them now too so it has the shower head coming up so you can stand in the tub to take a shower. That's really popular to see as well in older homes. Yeah but it looks like between sixties and eighties in the United States and the UK, that's when they became really popular.

Sarah Ferris: Interesting

Cait Bagby: Before that people were taking a bath.

Sarah Ferris: Which is time-consuming and also, well, I don't know if [00:06:00] I'm jumping ahead here, but which one's worse for water consumption?

Cait Bagby: It all depends. It all depends. If you're showering every single day. This is I promise the only math portion of our show. The average shower is about eight minutes. A lot of people say they only take a five minute shower. Data shows us they actually take an eight minute shower; the average shower uses 17.5 gallons of water, or for you Sarah 65 liters.

So in the UK, that's 4.2 million liters of hot water per day across the UK.

Sarah Ferris: That sounds like a lot.

Cait Bagby: It is. A 20 minute shower uses 50 gallons or around 100 89.6 liters of water, but this is where it gets a bit tricky. These are just averages, different tubs different sizes. A bathtub uses 80 gallons of water. So going back to our eight minute shower, it's 17.5 gallons for a shower versus a bath, which is 8, 8 88 [00:07:00] 0. Wow. Can't say that number to save my life today.

Sarah Ferris: That's interesting.

Cait Bagby: Well, so here's the nuance. That's taking into account you have a shower head that's not necessarily a low flow, but is not either a fast flowing or a power shower. A fast flowing shower head uses 80 liters in just four minutes. 160 liters for an eight minute shower. Or power shower can use 136 liters in four minutes.

Sarah Ferris: So actually you were saying that the bath could be a better option because you get to enjoy it longer than four minutes for a start, because you're only going to get four minutes in the shower. I always felt guilty taking a bath, but I'll tell you what I might not now.

I'll tell you who should feel guilty is my daughter. She said, she'd been in the shower and this is horrifying. You're going to drop off. 45 minutes, 45 minutes in the shower!

Cait Bagby: How did she not prune up? Didn't she like shrivel up, no?

Sarah Ferris: I don't know. God knows what she was doing, but [00:08:00] yeah, all water gone. So I'll be giving her these stats when she comes home later. Sending her the bill.

Cait Bagby: Great segue because we know from last week show that most electric use for laundry comes from the heating of the water and the same is for the shower as well. The most CO2 emissions and electric usage comes from the actual heating of the water. So it's better to have, if you can, low flow shower heads or, flow aerators or, cut down on the temperature of your shower.

You had mentioned, you want to have a refreshing shower? It helps wake you up in the morning.

Sarah Ferris: Yes. Yeah, absolutely.

Cait Bagby: Colder is better.

Sarah Ferris: The colder shower. My son's been doing that a lot lately. I think it's something to do with waking him up as well. You also lose a lot of time when you go to the shower, you turn it on and let it run a little bit before you get in and then you end up faffing around and you're just letting all that water go down the drain. So I think that's something to be conscious of as well, isn't it?

Cait Bagby: Yeah. There's been a huge push one not to do that. But two, have you ever heard of gray water usage?

Sarah Ferris: Yeah, I have, but I couldn't tell you the meaning of it. Is it when [00:09:00] it's been recycled or something?

Cait Bagby: Yeah, essentially it's recycled water. One of the things some people are doing is when they were first turning on their water they would put buckets in and then using it to either water their lawns or cleaning around the house, things like that. So it was just a way to capture that water that wasn't being used. And I get that's not for everyone, but it's just a thought for anybody who's hoping to capture some of that water and reuse it.

Sarah Ferris: Very clever.

Cait Bagby: So showers are the third largest water use after toilets and washing machines and it accounts for 1.2 trillion gallons of water annually.

Sarah Ferris: That's in the home. That's the most just in the home? Not like anywhere else. Okay.

Cait Bagby: Yeah. On that front, if you're going to shower every day cut down the temperature because that's going to help with saving money and helps you save on electricity, helps cut down CO2 emissions and then shorter showers better, obviously for water savings.

Sarah Ferris: Okay. Here's a question for you. The towels in my bathroom... I swear to God, people use them like they're disposable in my house and [00:10:00] everywhere I go in the morning, I will pick up a towel. This is what my husband does. He has every intention to reuse that towel so what he does is he brings it into the bedroom and then hangs it on the radiator. But what we end up with by the end of the week is five freaking towels on the radiator.

Cait Bagby: He forgets to bring it in?

Sarah Ferris: A hundred percent. So we've got that situation and then we've got the kids just eating them, snacking on a wet towel, throw it on the floor. That's what it feels like.

Cait Bagby: Do they leave their wet towels on the floor?

Sarah Ferris: Of course they do. And sometimes on their beds. I mean, they're just little monsters. But tell me... What's the best practice? You see it often, if you go to a hotel. Leave it on the floor if you want to change the towel, or if you're trying to save the planet, hang it up and reuse it. So how often should we be washing our towels?

Cait Bagby: The information points to washing your towel about every two to three uses. Personally, I really disagree with that and I want to do more digging into that because I think if you're balling up a wet towel and leaving it in a corner somewhere to potentially mold, then yeah, I get [00:11:00] it. Wash it more often. But if you're hanging it up to dry, presumably you have just cleaned yourself in the shower. So yes, you might get some sloughing off of skin cells onto your towel and whatnot. But I think to me, two to three washes seems actually too soon.

Sarah Ferris: Okay. So I'm going to ask you a personal question. How often do you wash your towel?

Cait Bagby: Once a week, but again, I don't shower every day so technically for me, it probably would be about every three to four uses.

Sarah Ferris: True. Okay.

Cait Bagby: I feel like people are going to think you are the cleanest person in the world and I may be the dirtiest person.

Sarah Ferris: Yeah but, the thing is what we're going to discover later after my challenge from this week, which I don't want to go into too much is actually the towels came into play and I have changed my habits because of your challenge. Put a pin in that one and we're going to keep going, diving into the shower. Let's talk about the endless products that end up in my shower. I've gone through so many iterations of trying to be sustainable that I can't even tell you. I've gone through shall I tell you?

Cait Bagby: Yeah, let's hear it.

Sarah Ferris: When I first [00:12:00] started on the sustainable kind of journey of my own, I looked in the shower and went, this is ridiculous. We're throwing out, you know, little 750 mil bottles of conditioner every couple of days. Sure, we're recycling them, but there doesn't seem like the right way to be doing it. I went down the hole of the shampoo bar and the conditioner bar and I went through quite a few different types of them and then I found this beautiful brand. It was a New Zealand brand and it was gorgeous. So I bought all the special little containers and I put them in the shower and the next couple of months, you just saw pieces of shampoo bars all over the floor and the moldy container that nobody could be bothered to ever rinse out.

So, that kind of went to the wayside. It didn't really work out. There was no buy-up from the rest of the house, I guess was the issue. What I've gone to is buying the large five liter tubs with their own sort of pump on them. And then I decant them into my little mini pump

bottles, and sometimes they're recycled bottles that I've had [00:13:00] lying around for ages. That's what I've got as my solution at the moment. It's my journey. Tell me right or wrong?

Cait Bagby: There's no right or wrong. You're never going to hear me say that. Okay, there are a couple like big wrongs, but if we ever get there, I will put a big warning sign up. I will let you know.

Sarah Ferris: I should say, should I be guilty or not guilty?

Cait Bagby: This is not a courtroom. I really appreciate that aired those frustrations because these are the things that are not talked about. These are the things that people get really dissuaded. They start on their sustainability journey and they're seeing all these pretty images and they're hearing people talk about how easy it is and they're running into similar problems that you have, and they get really frustrated. And a lot of times that frustration can turn into personal guilt, which we don't want because personal guilt prevents you from acting.

Sarah Ferris: It's so true, and I also forgot to mention that when I started on my journey to try and find the soap bar and the conditioner bar, I went down the adventure track after a lovely summer holiday. I'd been in France and there was lovely little markets that had the shampoo bars, I'm going to make some [00:14:00] of those when I get home. So I did.

Cait Bagby: You made your own shampoo bars.

Sarah Ferris: I made my own shampoo bars and they can only be classed as paint stripper. They stunk like just, there was no scent that I could get into them at all that would carry into it. And then your hair would come out like straw. But yeah, so that was my journey with the soap. I stuck at it because I knew that there was a better solution, but I had to go through all those iterations to get to one that I was happy with.

Cait Bagby: You didn't end up finding one that you were happy with, right? You switched over to the larger bottles.

Sarah Ferris: If it was just me, I would have been happy with the soap bars and the conditioner bars but obviously the buy up in the house was low.

Cait Bagby: That's one of the challenges too, being in a home with multiple people. You don't want to be buying 500 different products. You want to find something that suits everyone. I have very similar frustrations. I had tried to switch over to shampoo bars and for me, they would work for about a month or so and then I didn't like what it was doing to my hair. I was [00:15:00] just not a big fan. I did the same thing. I went through a couple different brands and eventually switched back to buying enormous bottles of shampoo.

Sarah Ferris: How big? Come on.

Cait Bagby: We're not doing the maths in this show. But they are massive bottles and I do the same thing. I put them into smaller bottles. And they'll last for about five to six months.

Sarah Ferris: Yeah, that's impressive.

Cait Bagby: And I washed my hair about three times a week. When I was traveling like pre COVID, I loved the shampoo bars because I did not have to worry about what was going in my carry on. They were incredible. I could just pop it in a tin and off we went.

Sarah Ferris: On that point, great on the way over, but then on the way back, sometimes I'm like, I'm not taking that slimy bar back with me and then I'd be like feeling wasteful cause I'd be like, oh, it's not worth taking that tiny bit home or what have you.

Cait Bagby: A lot of hotels are cutting down on their small plastic bottles, the toiletry bottles, which is great. And then a lot of them are opting into recycling programs. So they'll take the soaps use them [00:16:00] for other products. Shampoo bars, conditioner bars, and soap bars they're a great option. Some people absolutely love them. Like you said, it takes finding the product that's right for you.

I would suggest not popping it into a tin and closing it after you're using it. Especially if you're in your own home. Just pop it on a tin or it's placed in the shower and leave it to air out. When you're traveling pat it down with a cloth or something before putting it back in its tin.

Side note, every time I traveled to Europe I forget to bring a face cloth. And I don't know why it annoys me that there are no face clothes in most hotels or places you stay at.

Sarah Ferris: That's true. I haven't seen a face cloth in years in a hotel. I've seen one this morning.

Cait Bagby: Some people just don't use it. To me it's a personal preference. But, bars are great and then second refill stations if you can find them. They are becoming more and more popular. Third best option there's make your own, which you've tried and it's not my thing. Then fourth option cut down on your plastic. The bigger the bottle, the [00:17:00] better.

Only 9% of all plastic waste that's ever been produced has been recycled. 12% has been incinerated and 79% of plastic ends up in landfills, dumps, or the natural world.

Sarah Ferris: 79% of plastic. Doesn't get recycled?

Cait Bagby: Or burned. Yeah, it ends up in landfills or waterways, dumped on the side of the road.

Sarah Ferris: Wow. Back that up. When I'm recycling in my bin you're saying that doesn't go to be recycled.

Cait Bagby: I'm not saying that.

Sarah Ferris: I think you are.

Cait Bagby: No. Can I give a shameless little plug? Brian and I did a Climate Collab show called The Rising Tide of Ocean Plastic and we talked a lot about this, about how plastic gets sorted. The key takeaways from that one is that a lot of plastics are blends. The technology doesn't necessarily exist to separate those plastics from one another and then reuse it. The second thing is there are not a lot of recycling centers specifically in the United States so we ship a lot of our plastic overseas. China actually closed their [00:18:00] borders to that in 2018, I think, and said, no, we're not taking your trash anymore. So we send it all over. And a lot of times those countries that we're shipping our plastic off to, in order to be recycled, they don't have the systems in place either to really deal with it.

Sarah Ferris: That's scary, isn't it. It's really sad. Well, let's talk about what's actually inside those plastic containers that aren't being recycled properly. What's good? What's bad? Is there some things that I shouldn't be using?

Cait Bagby: Definitely. But before we go there. Very quick on this point because I think it's really important to know is that 95% of plastic thrown away is single use plastic. Think a straw, cutlery, plastic bag, cosmetics, things like that. But also if you're buying bar soap and it comes in a plastic wrap on the outside that's considered single use. Within cosmetics, that has to do with soaps and shampoos, all of it, it's 120 billion units of packaging produced every year for the cosmetic [00:19:00] industry. And it's thought to account to the loss of 18 million acres of forest annually. So first and foremost, when it comes to any kind of packaging try to the best of your ability not to use A) single use plastic, anything that's wrapped or just going to be thrown away immediately. And then B) as you and I were talking about, the bigger the container, if you are going to use plastic, the better because you don't want to be buying it more frequently than you absolutely have to.

Sarah Ferris: Wow. That's really quite frightening. And, cosmetics, I haven't even started looking at that. We're going to have to do a whole episode on cosmetics, I think.

Cait Bagby: There's a big debate on that too. That'll be interesting.

Sarah Ferris: But even just like that simple thing of I had to buy something the other day and I thought, oh, I need that, but I didn't even think to think, okay, what's in that packaging. And because I'm wedded to that brand or wedded to that item that I need, I don't see an eco alternative on the shelves that I would go, that brand is eco. I think [00:20:00] it's definitely one to put a pin in and we'll come back to that one as well in a different episode.

Cait Bagby: Even the labels too. Being able to read a label not just read a label, but trust a label. There's so much greenwashing happening. It's incredibly difficult. We should do labels too. Okay. So what's in it? Last week we had talked about in the United States and laundry detergent, you don't necessarily have to list every single ingredient?

Sarah Ferris: Yup.

Cait Bagby: Shampoos and conditioners you absolutely have to and they have to be in descending order from highest concentration to lowest. Lower than 1%, you can list them however you want, but everything does need to be listed. Soap however is different. Soap does not necessarily need to be completely labeled.

Sarah Ferris: Right. Okay.

Cait Bagby: Your question though, is what's in it?

Sarah Ferris: What should we be looking at and going, oh, steer clear of that one, but go towards that one.

Cait Bagby: Maybe not known to people, is that in a lot of cosmetics, including shampoos and conditioners, there are microplastics. This is actually well known within the industry, but a lot of people [00:21:00] may not know this. And a micro plastic is a particulate of plastic that is 5 millimeters or smaller. The reason for this, specifically acrylic polymers, they are used to, you ever see like the shampoos or conditioners that are like seal in moisture, make your hair healthier? That's what acrylic polymers do: they coat your hair so you're literally coating your hair in plastic.

Sarah Ferris: Okay. My mind is blown. Okay. So when you said microplastics in there, I had this vision of it just being, you know, those face scrubs, you used to get? Exactly the microbeads, but you're telling me that it's just actually built into the, like, if I was to tip that up, I would not see that that's got plastic beads in it cause they're so small, but that's exactly what it is in the shampoo?

Cait Bagby: Yeah. Well, there's different formulations of a plastic and I am not a compound chemist of any kind so I'm not even going to try to delve into the nuances of those.

Sarah Ferris: Not a chemistry show either, is it?

Cait Bagby: Were just staying out of the math and [00:22:00] sciences.... Some products actually do have microbeads in them but then other products like shampoos will have acrylic polymers and different things to help create lather, to help coat the hair, to quote unquote seal in moisture. Essentially. It's a really cheap way because you're using fossil fuels. Yeah, it's icky and I'm not going to go too far into it because I don't know enough about all of those names and how plastics are formulated in that in depth. But yep. It's there.

Sarah Ferris: If somebody wanted to find out more is there somewhere that you could point them to, to go, right, "I don't know the answers to this, but this is where I would look to find the list of things that are full of plastics."

Cait Bagby: Let me think about that and what I'll do is I'll put it up on our Instagram stories, cause I know they're out there, but it will vary from country to country. So in Europe, the European cosmetic industry voluntarily decided to remove microbeads. Not necessarily microplastics, but one particular type. I believe in 2020, they're fully gone from cosmetics, but it was voluntary. This is not legislated. So yeah, let me do a little bit more [00:23:00] digging. In the United States, the EPA Environmental Protection Agency, and also the CDC has a lot to say about this as well, will give an overview of carcinogens, um, things you should look out for. As for a comprehensive one, let me dig a little bit and find a source that I would really trust that we can share out.

Sarah Ferris: Sounds good. What's the CDC, by the way?

Cait Bagby: Uh, oh my gosh, my brain.

Sarah Ferris: Sorry. I thought it was going to be one of those like American things I just should know.

Cait Bagby: It's the Center for Disease Control and Prevention because of COVID we just keep hearing CDC, CDC, and after hearing the acronym for so long, my brain is kind of like, oh, that's an actual, that's an acronym. You need to know what the rest of that is.

Sarah Ferris: It's like WWF, isn't it. Worldwide fund for nature or world wrestling Federation. I always get those two mixed up.

Cait Bagby: I think I did that last week. All right so no english, no science, no maths.

Sarah Ferris: We're narrowing our target area right down. Laser-focused. Okay, what's the next thing that we need to look at?

Cait Bagby: Let's talk about ingredients.[00:24:00] Some of the bigger ones to stay away from we'll go through those. Artificial fragrances, number one, if you see anything that's an artificial fragrance, just stay away from it. One, because you don't necessarily know what an artificial fragrance is. It can be a whole cocktail of different things, but it will generally contain phthalates. And again, I'll create an Instagram post for this.

Sarah Ferris: I think you're going to need to.

Cait Bagby: You can find Sarah and myself on Instagram @guiltygreenie. We'll make sure to get those up there for you all. Phthalates are known to cause reproductive and thyroid harm. They're derived from petroleum, right? So we want to cut down on fossil fuels, not great, not good for your health.

Sarah Ferris: Can you give me an example of what might be an artificial fragrance that you'd go, oh, "that's clearly artificial" with your trained eye.

Cait Bagby: It will literally say on the bottle artificial fragrance.

Sarah Ferris: Oh, okay. So that easy then. I need to read the label?

Cait Bagby: You don't have to dig too deep on that one. Same as it might say, artificial color. It can say artificial fragrance as well. If it's not telling [00:25:00] you natural fragrance derived from blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. If it's not spelling it out, question it a bit. The other one, the acronym is DEA. If I can pronounce this, I'm just going to retire right now. I've made it in life.

Sarah Ferris: I'm waiting for it. I feel like you need a drum roll for it.

Cait Bagby: This is going to be really bad- Diethanolamine.

Sarah Ferris: You can retire. You nailed it.

Cait Bagby: So DEA is, you know, when you wash your hair, most shampoos with lather, like you'll get a really thick kind of sudsy. That's what DEA is or that's what it's used for. It's also known for kidney and liver problems and considered a carcinogen.

Sarah Ferris: Wow.

Cait Bagby: Contrary to popular belief, your shampoo and soaps do not need to lather to be clean. We've just come to think that if it lathers it's working, but that's not true whatsoever.

Sarah Ferris: That was one of the things with the shampoo bars that was hard to get used to, not lathering. Some of them didn't lather, some did.

Cait Bagby: There are natural lathering agents out [00:26:00] there. I would not be able to tell you what they are right off the top of my head, but they do exist. And if that's something that's really important then... I use plain castile soap in the shower and that lathers fantastically. And it's one of the better soaps you can use.

Sarah Ferris: Great. Good to know. So can I just pull you up on one thing there? When you say DEA, it's considered a carcinogen, is it considered a carcinogen when used lathering or ingested? I mean, you're not going to eat your soap, but you know what I'm saying? Is just putting it on your hair, is that going to create a reaction in your body?

Cait Bagby: I think this is more of the bigger problem is there's a lot of debate in terms of the concentrations and in what methods it's safe to use. Because to be fair, there are some things you can use that are safe to use in one way, but not safe to use in another way. In terms of DEA. I can't answer that question. But think about it this way, if it is classified as a carcinogen, if you're in a shower and it's steamy, you are A) automatically breathing it in. And B) if it's absorbed through your skin, you're putting it on your scalp and [00:27:00] really digging in with your hands. So either way...

Sarah Ferris: Stay away.

Cait Bagby: It's being absorbed one way or the other, the question is in what concentration. raise a really good point though: these are different compounds to be aware of. These are different compounds that the Food and Drug Administration, the Center for Disease Control, or the EPA, have all kind of said, "Hey, there may be, if not are, issues with some of these compounds so if given the choice, choose something different.

Sarah Ferris: I like that. Choose something different. You've all got choices. It's just being aware of what they are. All right. So carry on. What else have we got in that little bottle of hell that you're talking about?

Cait Bagby: Triclosan, which was actually banned by the Food and Drug Administration in the United States, in hand sanitizer because it's linked to organ damage but it's still found in cleaning products and hair products. And then propylene glycol. A lot of people have heard about propylene glycol because, well, where I've heard it used most actually is people who vape. Propylene glycol is one of the bases for vaping. [00:28:00] It can in very small quantities cause skin irritation.

Sarah Ferris: Right. Okay. Well, I'm going to task you with this Cait is put that list up for us Guilty Greenie cause there's a lot of information there and it's not something that I'm going to go to the supermarket and remember, I'll be like, right "I need to see what was on the list." So it's great information.

Cait Bagby: It can get a bit confusing when you're looking at labels, because I really don't like when people are like, chemicals are bad. Everything is a chemical. The question is how we're using it, what chemical we're using, what concentration, so on and so forth. In the United States, one of the best practices is look for. Hmm. I feel like I'm going to regret saying this in a later episode, but I'm just going to put it out there. In order to be considered USDA certified organic 95% of the ingredients have to be certified organic in order to put the USDA organic label on a product. So I would start there first and foremost.

Sarah Ferris: Okay. Organic.

Cait Bagby: In the United States: USDA organic.

Sarah Ferris: Okay. So we don't know if there's something similar over here.

Cait Bagby: The EU and the UK are actually much stricter on what can and [00:29:00] cannot be included in products.

Sarah Ferris: Oh, that's good to know. I didn't know that. I feel safer. Is there anything else that we need to know about the ingredients of shampoos, conditioners, and what about body washes and things like that?

Cait Bagby: This is where I'm always like shop small, smaller tends to be better. Because if you're buying goat milk soap from your local farmer, I guarantee you there's about three things in there, maybe four ingredients, and they will probably show you their entire process. If that's an option, I would say go that route. If not, I would say, then go to refill stores. They tend to do all that kind of background checking for you. The third option is, and this is where Sarah, you and I will put up a list of resources of really trusted places you can go to rest assured that the product you're getting has been vetted by someone who knows what's going into it.

Sarah Ferris: Great, awesome information. Well, I feel like that is quite a wad of stuff for us to take away today.

Cait Bagby: Can I give one quick note and then I want to jump into knowing how your challenge was.

Sarah Ferris: Okay. Yeah. I'm ready.

Cait Bagby: To go back to [00:30:00] why you shouldn't shower every day. Dermatologists and doctors have actually found that by taking either too hot of a shower, too frequent of a shower or using too much soap, you're actually stripping your skin of all of its natural oils. You're preventing it from actually healing itself. Imagine how much work it has to do to replenish all those oils all the time. Sometimes just don't mess with it, you know?

Sarah Ferris: Just do a Cait. Have a shower every couple of weeks.

Cait Bagby: Wow. That's going to be the sound bite. Isn't it?

Sarah Ferris: Meanwhile, clean Sarah over here is smelling like daisies.

Cait Bagby: I went to a waxing salon when I lived in London and the woman who was doing my waxing, I believe she was from Poland and she goes, "oh, you're American". I said, "yeah, how'd you know?" And she goes, "you smell like washing powder." She goes, "Americans always smell like washing powder."

Sarah Ferris: That's so weird! Well, maybe it's the whole not cleaning our sheets over here. Maybe she was just excited to know that somebody washed their sheets and maybe their clothes. Who knows.

Cait Bagby: [00:31:00] Oh. Without further adieu your challenge last week was to go the entire week without using the dryer. How did this go?

Sarah Ferris: It was an interesting one. When you gave me that challenge that day, I went around the house and took a little audio so you could see the initial reaction and what I was setting myself up for for the rest of the week. I'm just going to play you a little audio clip to give you the inside scoop.

This is my husband's reaction. "So my challenge this week for the Guilty Greenie is that I've got to not use the dryer at all."

Sarah's Family: "Good. My socks will stay the same size as when they go in."

Sarah Ferris: My 16 year old son. He was pretty keen to beat the system and find a work around. "What was the best thing about this challenge?"

Sarah's Family: "This challenge is that I'm not involved."

Sarah Ferris: "How often do you do your own washing?"

Sarah's Family: "Every day."

Sarah Ferris: "I don't know if that's going to count for me cheating or not."

Sarah's Family: "No, because I'm not you."

Sarah Ferris: "What if I get you to do some of my loads of wash?"

Sarah's Family: "No. That's cheating."

Sarah Ferris: "What is I [00:32:00] sneak in like some of my stuff into your washing?"

Sarah's Family: "You fail the challenge."

Sarah Ferris: "You're not going to tell on me?"

Sarah's Family: "To Whom?"

Sarah Ferris: " Yeah, exactly. Exactly."

And Aviana my 13 year old who, if you recall, had been so onboard with the first challenge of zero waste birthday, present wrapping, but was not quite so enthused about this one. "So this week's Guilty Greenie challenge is I'm not allowed to use the dryer all week."

Sarah's Family: "Are you having a laugh?"

Sarah Ferris: "No."

Sarah's Family: "What if I need to go somewhere on my clothes aren't dry?"

Sarah Ferris: "Well you'll just have to prepare and get them out there."

Sarah's Family: "You decide to do that that week I go back to school?"

Sarah Ferris: "It wasn't me. You can blame Cait."

Sarah's Family: "Fine. I do blame Cait."

Sarah Ferris: "All right. Well it's day one. Let's start."

Cait Bagby: What a note to land on Sarah. You're just throwing me under the bus to your children. Unbelievable.

Sarah Ferris: I know they weren't that pleased. Everyone except Gareth who was like, this is great. I'm all up for that challenge. He's also trained the kids really [00:33:00] well to do their own laundry, which is amazing. Of those three who do you think broke the rules?

Cait Bagby: I think it was your husband.

Sarah Ferris: You're bloody, right? You're so right.

Cait Bagby: The other two were just like, "nah, nah, no, we're just not doing it."

Sarah Ferris: Josh actually did. He hung up all of his washing this week and did it, and I think Aviana's technique is that today when she knows the challenge is finished, I'm going to end up with pretty much a house load full of washing coming down.

Cait Bagby: She's just been squirreling it away in her room.

Sarah Ferris: Exactly. Everything's under the bed. But yeah, it was quite interesting. We only used the dryer once and that was Gareth who broke the rules and he was just like, "I can't be dealing with this" and through the sheets in the dryer and then everybody came and told on him. Everybody in the house. It was so funny. I was like, oh my God, I can't believe that. But by the time I found it, it was too late.

Cait Bagby: I like that Josh was holding you responsible right from the start. Whether or not he was going to do it. He was like, "no, you got to stick to this challenge"

Sarah Ferris: He loves a rule. Especially if it's going to throw me under the bus.

Cait Bagby: So how did you [00:34:00] find it?

Sarah Ferris: I don't know. It's two things: this week I've been super busy, so I've actually not been doing loads of washing. And because the challenge was in the back of my head, I've actively not been creating washing so much. I've definitely made it that I've been using the towels more often. I was really conscious about it. Oh, can I use that sweater again? Can I use that again? Those jeans don't need to go through, so yeah, it definitely made me think about it because I don't want to be creating work for myself. And then there's only so much drying time in the UK and so much space in the backyard.

There you go. It was a good challenge. And I think, we've definitely cut down on our electricity, use this week and we're consciously thinking about using the dryer so that's a good result.

Cait Bagby: Do you think that it will make you reconsider how often things need to be washed or the more efficient ways to dry?

Sarah Ferris: Definitely. Definitely. I think it's just that, like I say, switching your brain. That's something that I can consciously think about consciously change day to day so I won't be so [00:35:00] thoughtless in pushing the button.

Cait Bagby: I feel like we should do an end of year show with your entire family, like a proper sit down, you know, like after the show, the cast meets and we got to hear about everything.

Sarah Ferris: The real Housewives: the after show. I love it.

Cait Bagby: Alright, well let's stick on clothing then for your challenge for this week.

Sarah Ferris: Okay.

Cait Bagby: I'm torn if I want to do this as a weekly challenge or if this is going to be the challenge for the rest of the month, because so the reason being is September is known as secondhand September.

Sarah Ferris: Okay.

Cait Bagby: This was actually started by Oxfam, a few years ago and the idea was to encourage people to take the month of September and not buy any new clothing, really not to buy any clothing, but it was, only buy secondhand if you have to buy something. The reason for that is because one, we have a horrible fast fashion habit. And then two; in the United States alone in 2018, 17 million tons of textile waste ended up in landfills. In the UK that was around [00:36:00] 11 million items.

Sarah Ferris: Wow. Okay. That's a lot.

Cait Bagby: The main source is clothing. When I say textiles, it's not just clothing, but it's mainly clothing. So, your challenge I'll ask you, how often do you buy clothing? Let's start there.

Sarah Ferris: Not very often. I'm going to be honest. This challenge would be quite easy for me, I think. The only thing that I've had to buy recently, and I'm really glad that you're doing this challenge today, is I've got an event coming up at the end of the month and so I needed an actual proper gowny dress, and I needed to buy that and shoes, but I've done that now so I'm clear for the month. I can easily do this one.

Cait Bagby: See, I would have challenged you to buy it second hand, but I get it.

Sarah Ferris: I know! Thank God I didn't have this challenge before hand. That would have stressed me out so much. I could never do that. Maybe, you should give me a small challenge for this week as well. I'm going to be traveling. Is there a traveling challenge you could give me?

Cait Bagby: Only bring a carry on.

Sarah Ferris: Are you serious? You're evil.

Cait Bagby: That's the first thing that comes to mind because luggage adds a lot to the CO2 emissions of a plane because the fuel is calculated on the weight. The more [00:37:00] weight the more fuel.

Sarah Ferris: I'm so up for that challenge. I can do that. I dunno if I can but I'll try.

Cait Bagby: To be fair I don't know where you're traveling so I don't know if this is long haul short haul and if it requires a packed bag but this is what happens when you ask for a second challenge.

Sarah Ferris: No, I'm up for it. That's a good challenge. I went on holiday in the summer and I took a big bag and I literally counted how many things I'd worn out of that bag and it was three three items I'd worn on loop for that holiday. So I was like, next time I'm going to definitely make it better packing wise.

Cait Bagby: There's something about holiday where you start packing and you're like "oh, I'm going to need seven shirts and six dresses." Meanwhile, you're sitting at home in your sweat pants, the same sweat pants, every single day. But, there's something about holiday where you're were just like no I will wear my entire wardrobe- I just know it.

Sarah Ferris: And like clothes you've never worn but like in the last like five years come and get in that suitcase and they're like "you've got no business being in there at all" And come to the end of the holiday, they had no business being in there.

Cait Bagby: For me it's shoes I always pack the wrong shoes. [00:38:00] Every single time. Before before we wrap things up, I know we covered so much today, what are your key takeaways from the Naked Truth?

Sarah Ferris: Oh I've got lots today. I'm going to be looking at labels in shampoos and all of my bathroom products. And I'm going to be really conscious about the length of my shower tomorrow and see if I can get it down to four minutes. And I will be having a conversation with my children about bath versus shower because I think that's actually quite interesting. Those are some of my key takeaways. There's a lot in there today. Probably when I go back and listen I'll be like oh I forgot to mention that.

Cait Bagby: I think the only thing I would add to that list is cut down plastic: try to eliminate that as much as possible. That's just a general rule of thumb no matter what you're doing whether it's the grocery store, your laundry room, the bathroom, your closet - just try to cut down as much plastic as possible.

Sarah Ferris: Oh, one other thing that's my takeaway I'm going to be looking at cosmetics a little bit more consciously this week.

Cait Bagby: Now I'm thinking of a future challenge. Maybe I'll have you make your own lipstick with that...

Join us [00:39:00] next week to see if Sarah accomplished her challenge for more, the good, the bad, and the laughable.

As we tackle our own sustainability journeys, exclusively on Fireside in the Climate Collab Auditorium. Thank you for joining us on this week's episode of Guilty Greenie.

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Sarah Ferris: Bye-bye