

Professor Richard Townsend
DEP 2000 – Human Growth and Development
Life Span Psychology

“Mommy, where do plastic water bottles come from, and where do they go when they are empty?”

We have been studying the human life span from the decisions made prior to conception to the grief following the death of a loved one. Health issues are central to each stage of human development, but it is difficult if not impossible to sustain human health on an unhealthy planet. Restoring balance to Earth seems like a daunting problem, but we need to be ever-mindful that even the longest, most tortuous journey begins with a single step. Plastic water and beverage bottles are a significant environmental problem. What can we do about it?

Use online data bases for your research, and then in small groups discuss the following questions. Each group will be assigned one of the six questions with the ultimate goal of doing a class presentation. You are encouraged to bring in copies of print ads and television commercials which promote various brands of bottled water. We will analyze these promotions from a psychological perspective.

1. What raw materials go into the production of a plastic water bottle, and where and how are these raw materials obtained?
2. Teratogens can be harmful or lethal to the developing fetus. What substances associated with the production and use of plastic bottles could be considered teratogens?
3. What are the stages in the life of a plastic bottle from the extraction of raw materials to the ultimate end of the bottle? Describe the transportation required for each step.
4. It would be an unfulfilled dream for millions of people worldwide to be able to turn a tap and receive clean water in their homes. Why are people in the U.S. convinced that bottled water is better? What can be done to change that perception>?
5. Why is recycling not the ultimate solution to the problems associated with plastic water/beverage bottles?
6. Several states require deposits on reusable glass bottles. After years of trying, why hasn't the Florida legislature been able to pass such a bottle bill?