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*Dear Reader,*

The Monsoons are here and the rank and file of Pakistan's citizenry has moved from action stations to battle stations, one hopes. The PDMA is severely under-resourced and under-equipped to tackle the scale of the anticipated crisis, may Allah preserve us, and for the most part it's going to be everyone for himself and herself, like always.

In our lead story **Eddy Quan** is all about advocating being your authentic and vulnerable self when building your brand, and not seeking to cast an impression that is patently false. He terms "fake it till you make it" as garbage advice, and to make his point he leans heavily on the documentary Hearts of Darkness that gets behind the scenes of Francis Ford Coppola's movie Apocalypse Now with Martin Sheen and Marlon Brando. Read the piece, and go figure.

Next up is **Christine Alemany** with 3 Ways Marketers Can Earn and Keep Customer Trust. As consumers wake up to the indignities and absurdities of unfettered capitalism, she writes, trust is in short supply, and yet it remains a vital currency in sustainable customer relationships. The fight for consumer trust is ongoing, says Christine, and it will not be going away anytime soon. "But savvy marketers can use authentic brand messaging to engender stronger customer relationships that stand the test of time."

**Robert Roy Britt** has penned a piece that says Doing Nothing Can Be Really Something, and he certainly strikes a chord with his lament that we have become so focused on being productive that we have lost the ability to sit and think. Or just sit. Which brings to mind William Henry Davies' poem Leisure – "What is this life, if full of care, we have no time to stand and stare, no time to stand beneath the boughs, and stare as long as sheep or cows....". Modern life has villainized the act of doing nothing, says Britt. "We think less of ourselves if we're not productive. We learn to despise boredom. And in this modern world of 24/7 everything, there's no shortage of stimuli to prevent us from doing nothing." Hence plunging levels of mental health.

Meanwhile, **Melissa Penfold** elaborates on 20 Ways To Be Fabulous, saying that sometimes it's more sophisticated to serve takeaway pizza than a five-course meal. Yeah, right.

Finally, in our tailpiece we wrap up with alarming statistics on food waste, amongst other things like the plague of plastic and bane of dirty fuels, as also the hard-riding Calamity Jane, in Nature Calling for Action Stations. Stay well and stay strong 😊

Explore JJ's curated articles for expert insights on managing people, business, and personal growth. Gain valuable knowledge and prepare for future challenges with confidence.

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# why “fake it ‘til you make it” is garbage advice

By Eddy Quan | 8 min read

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One of the biggest mindset traps you can fall into when you’re starting out in any new endeavour is to believe the “fake it ‘til you make it” meme.

If you’ve never heard of it, the idea is that since you’re not successful YET.... You should act as if you are already successful then at some point in the unforeseen future, you can drop the “fake it” part and simply make it.

Makes sense right?

Yep. For years, it also made perfect sense to yours truly.

I kept faking it and faking it and faking it for what seemed like forever.

And at no point did I feel like I had made it.

It wasn’t until I watched a documentary last night about the making of *Apocalypse Now* (which in my correct opinion is the greatest movie of all time) did I realise that fake it ‘til you make it is subpar advice that you should ignore completely.

(Sidenote: the documentary is called *Hearts of Darkness* and you can watch it for free on YouTube. Look it up if you’re a fan of the movie).

If you haven’t seen the film, it’s about a commando named captain Willard (played by Martin Sheen) who is sent into the jungles of Vietnam in the midst of the war to assassinate a green beret named Kurtz (played by Marlon Brando)

But it’s the beginning of the film I want to talk about.

The movie starts with Willard trapped in a sweaty hotel room. He’s going crazy as he’s reflecting on all the horrors he’s seen and experienced in the war and he’s losing his mind eagerly waiting for another big mission.

I won’t go into too much detail here (watch the film if you haven’t already) but Sheen does a phenomenal job in portraying a man going crazy you’d think he’s actually going crazy himself.

He's jumping around in his underwear, shadowboxing, screaming, talking to himself, crying and at one point he punches the mirror, breaks it and cuts his hand and starts bleeding all over the bed sheets.

The acting is so powerful you forget it's Martin Sheen as you're pulled into the mind and world of captain Willard.

For years, I thought it was just another example of good acting (and it was).

But I didn't realise how real it was until I watched that documentary last night. Turns out, that scene was shot on Martin Sheen's 36th birthday. He was completely drunk and at one point during the shooting of the movie, he considered committing suicide and also had a heart attack.

The part where he breaks the mirror? That was improvised. Sheen actually broke the mirror and cut himself while he was drunkenly dancing around that hotel room with Francis Ford Coppola (the director) talking to him and hyping him up behind the camera.

And that's just ONE scene.

Everything about Apocalypse Now is about as authentic as it can be for a fictional movie.

Which is why it's one of the most memorable movies of all time.

So how does this apply to you?

Well, it just goes to show that when you're building a brand online and growing an audience....**faking it til you make it isn't enough.**

Because building a brand and growing an audience isn't about faking it 'til you make it.

Like Sheen did with Willard, you have to BECOME the brand.

This is why I stopped recommending people copy, remix or otherwise rehash viral content.

Yes, you might make a little bit of money and go viral a few times....

But all you're doing is destroying the one thing that makes you memorable....

And that's your authentic self.

Now I'm not saying you need to get drunk, do drugs and go breaking mirrors and doing other silly things in order to gain attention.

But whatever character it is you're portraying through your personal brand needs to be real.

And being real sometimes means being strong but sometimes it also means being vulnerable.

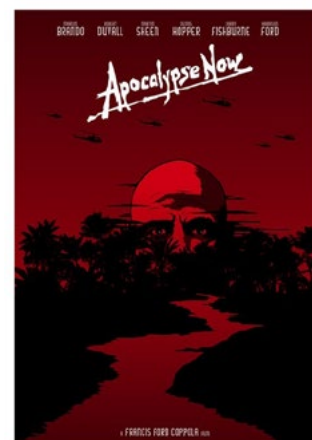
Anyway.....

That's all I have for you today.

I hope you take this insight seriously because it's a big one and will do tremendous things for your brand.

Your man

Eddy "stop faking it and just become it"  
Quan ■



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# 3 Ways Marketers Can Earn — and Keep — Customer Trust

By **Christine Alemany** | 8 min read

It is no big secret that our world has a trust problem. Amid a global pandemic, economic crisis, and political instability set against a backdrop of deep cultural malaise, people no longer know where (or whom) to turn to for dependable information amid widespread disinformation and propaganda.

Similarly, government leaders, briefly seen as the most trusted institutions at the beginning of the pandemic per the 2021 Edelman Trust Barometer, squandered that goodwill when they could not halt the virus or restore economic stability. And per the 2021 Edelman Trust Barometer, trust in U.S. CEOs is at 47%, and credibility has basically hit rock bottom in Japan (18%) and France (22%) as consumers wake up to the indignities and absurdities of unfettered capitalism.

Yes, trust is in short supply, yet it remains a vital currency in sustainable customer relationships. A 2021 survey of 1,000 consumers concluded that more than 80% consider trust a deciding factor in their buying decisions, despite the fact that only 34% trust the brands they use. Consumers, of course, are not a monolith. And as it so happens, age is a key differentiator in understanding the intricacies of the public's confidence in and perception of the news media, in particular.

Per a Gallup/Knight Foundation survey, older Americans tend to rely on maybe one or two sources for all their information, and they prioritize brand reputation and political slant when evaluating an outlet's credibility. Conversely, younger adults (18- to 34-year-olds) are more likely to gather information from numerous sources and place more of a premium on how open that outlet is with its facts, research, and processes.



Illustration: Nata Schepy

Younger consumers also view national news outlets with more skepticism, with just 29% saying they trust them compared to 41% of adults over 55. A credible media landscape is always critical, but with the line between marketing and media blurring each day, news organizations' morale fiber can sometimes be linked to that of a brand.

To summarize, older adults are more brand-conscious, while younger adults are more process-conscious. As marketing experts, we can apply these findings to our brand messaging to develop credibility with our intended audiences as they age and evolve. Here is how.

## 1. Do not overspin.

Though Edelman found that trust in CEOs hit an all-time low in 2021, the same study revealed that businesses are still considered more trustworthy than governments, NGOs, and the news media. With such power comes great responsibility. CEOs and other business leaders must address today's most pressing challenges and focus on societal engagement with great fervor. According to the 2021 Edelman Trust Barometer, 53% of respondents believe that business leaders have a duty to fill the information void left by the news media.

This is not the time for corporate platitudes. People are smarter than you think. If you

attempt to fool them, they will find out — and the hit to your credibility will outweigh any short-term gains that you made.

Think back to summer 2020, when PR teams across industries jumped to distribute public denouncements of systemic racism. People were quick to call out the performative allyship of companies such as Glossier, whose public anti-racism pledge was at odds with former employees' recounts of on-the-job discrimination and toxicity. So make sure you back up any announcements with actual steps. For example, Ben & Jerry's is not one for empty promises, and its statement on racial injustice held a lot more weight because company leaders have a track record of on-the-ground activism.

Keeping your message free of excessive spin goes a long way with the public and protects you from potential PR gaffes down the line.

## 2. Avoid half-truths.

Pfizer has been in the news a lot this past year — mostly for good reasons. CEO Albert Bourla and his team cleared myriad hurdles to develop an innovative, effective Covid-19 vaccine in record time. But back in 2006, Pfizer was in the news for less-than-glowing reasons after launching a \$258 million ad campaign for a cholesterol drug with Robert Jarvik, inventor of the first permanent artificial heart, as the face of it.

The tagline — “Just because I’m a doctor doesn’t mean I don’t worry about my cholesterol” — was catchy, but there was one problem: Jarvik was not licensed to practice medicine and, in fact, had never practiced medicine. The ads drew swift criticism that resulted in a congressional investigation and millions in monetary losses for Pfizer.

In the court of public opinion, omission is akin to lying. If a claim requires omission, then do not use it; and if you do make a mistake, own up to it. In fact, you may find consumers more forgiving if you show any semblance of

contrition. Being vulnerable about where you have fallen short in the past suggests honesty, which sits at the foundation of consumer trust, brand affinity, and long-term engagement.

## 3. Read the room and adjust.

When was the last time you checked the pulse of your customer base? You should be continually evaluating the effectiveness of your marketing efforts by asking yourself these key questions:

What is our customer sentiment? Negative? Positive?

What are our favorability ratings? Are they rising? Dropping?

Is our audience engaging with our content?

And did we follow through on our promises?

By regularly checking whether consumers are picking up what you are putting down, you will find that you can more easily meet and even exceed their ever-evolving preferences. For example, Bryanna Evans, the social media manager at home fragrance brand SECC, told Buffer that her team's social media-powered strategy focuses on in-feed customer engagement. Not only does the social team respond whenever someone leaves a comment, but it also nurtures consumer interest by regularly posting quizzes, contests, and giveaways. As a result, SECC has built an army of loyalists and grown its monthly revenue from \$20,000-\$30,000 to more than \$100,000.

The fight for consumer trust is ongoing — and it will not be going away anytime soon. But savvy marketers can use authentic brand messaging to engender stronger customer relationships that stand the test of time. Implement these three steps to begin building a reputation as a reliable information source that people depend on.

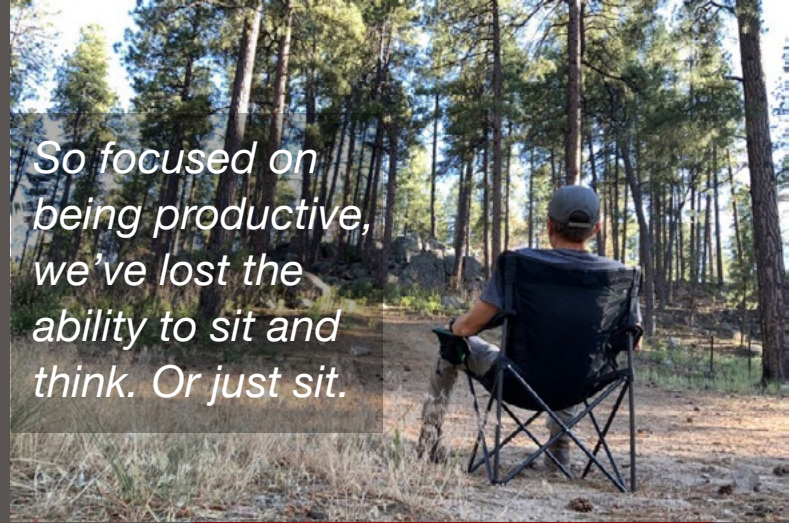
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### Source:

<file:///Volumes/Data%20HD/OCTARA.COM/60%20Octara.com%20Jul%202022/THREE%20WAYS%20MARKETERS/3%20Ways%20Marketers%20Can%20Earn%20%E2%80%94%20and%20Keep%20%E2%80%94%20Customer%20Trust.html>

# Doing Nothing Can Be Really Something

Robert Roy Britt | 8 min read



*So focused on being productive, we've lost the ability to sit and think. Or just sit.*

Sitting and thinking. But mostly sitting. Photos by the author

My brain was going 90 mph the other day, ruminating on a long to-do list alongside things I wanted to do, all with zero motivation to think about any of it, let alone ambition to actually do anything. I wandered around the house, listless, distracted, inconsolable.

My wife, perhaps out of irritation as much as loving consideration, suggested I head to the mountains. She knows I love the mountains. Almost as much as I love a partner who knows what I need.

I hit the road, no specific destination in mind, other than cooler temps and some trees, an escape from the 100-degree heat of the Arizona desert, from people, from suburbs, from comfort, from everything usual. Two hours later I was on a Forest Service road a few miles outside Prescott at 6,500 feet amid towering ponderosa pines. It was a weekday, so I had the area to myself. The only sounds were buzzing insects, chirping birds, and the pines whispering in the wind.

And there I sat and thunk. And sometimes I just sat. I felt better instantly.

This quote is attributed variously to Satchel Paige or Winnie-the-Pooh, but [apparently](#) it was first uttered by some anonymous fisherman around 1905:

Sometimes I sits and thinks, and sometimes I

just sits.

I first ran across it three decades ago, on a wise and humorous older man's office wall. It struck me as funny at first — I was too young to appreciate its simple wisdom. Over the years, as life got more and more complicated — kids, career, bills to pay, you know — the quote kept coming to mind, speaking to me more and more as I got busier and busier.

Modern life has villainized the act of doing nothing. We think less of ourselves if we're not productive. We learn to despise boredom. And in this modern world of 24/7 everything, there's no shortage of stimuli to prevent us from doing nothing.

"Many of us have created a 'busy habit,'" writes Susan Weinschenk, PhD, a behavioral psychologist, author, coach, and consultant in neuropsychology. "We're addicted to doing stuff. We have to prove something to ourselves and the world. I'm not sure what that something is, but it involves striving, being productive, being busy, working hard, playing hard. Everything has to have a purpose and be connected with a goal. Even our leisure time has to be busy, busy, busy."

Yet there's ample evidence that doing nothing can be really something. For starters, plenty of research (by very busy scientists) shows that working too much is bad for health

and [shortens lives](#). Other studies find overall well-being improves when we [stop trying to be so damn productive](#). And boredom, as boring as it may seem, can lead to [greater creativity](#).

There are helpful strategies for disengaging.

The practice of mindfulness, for example, teaches how to sit for a few minutes and not do anything, to let thoughts come and go as they will. You don't ignore thoughts; you acknowledge them without trying to think about them. Thoughts come. Thoughts go.

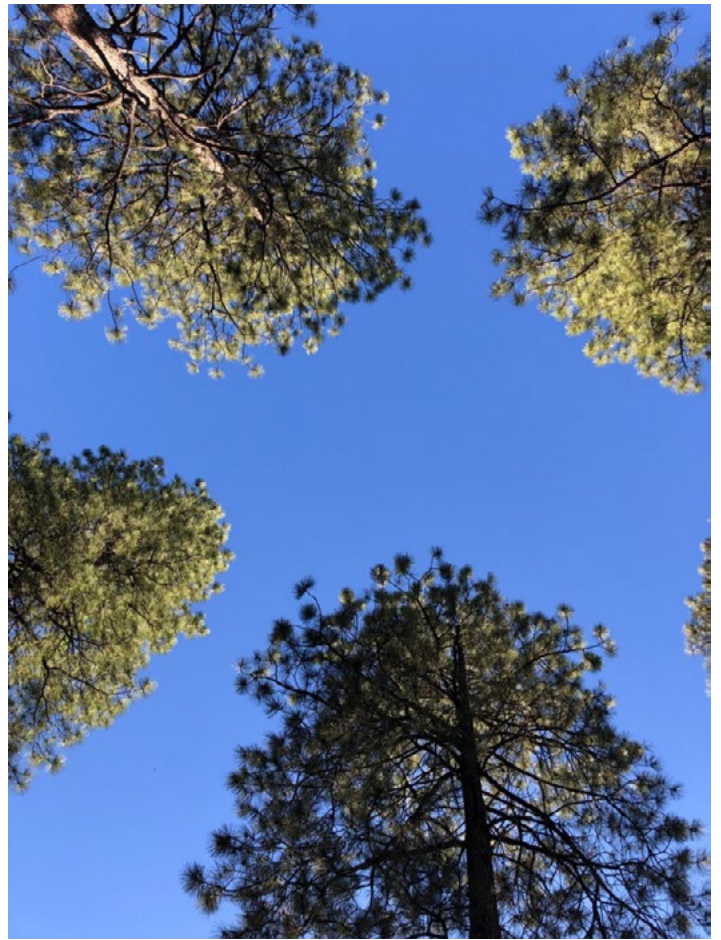
While [I find mindfulness extremely beneficial](#), it's not always enough. Sometimes we need to more fully disengage, take an afternoon off or a day or two — if we're lucky enough to be able — and really get away from it all and just sit and think. Or, better, just sit.

A nearby park will do. A backyard with trees. Something more remote, if you can. Nature offers [an amazing mental escape](#), science shows, boosting overall well-being, even physical health. All one has to do is turn off the phone, tune out, and let nothing happen.

After setting up camp, I spent much time sitting and thinking and sometimes just sitting. I pondered a nearby hill, wondering if I was seeing its top. Without much intentional thought, I decided to go find out. No backpack, no tracking apps to count my distance, no plan. I just put my boots on and headed up.

Each time I crested a rise, another top loomed. So I hiked on. Up and over and up, through stands of oaks, small meadows, and back into the pines.

The forest soil was soft, almost sandy. Boulders perched precariously atop other boulders. A wildfire had torched all the



underbrush and some of the trees, but new growth was emerging. These were the things I noticed. Simple things that drew my attention and curiosity. I thought of little else. I was hiking and thinking, but mostly I was just hiking.

I turned around at no particular point, for no particular reason, and headed back down. A squirrel found me amid the boulders. He sat and stared, maybe he thought. Or perhaps he just sat. I wondered.

Back at camp the sun was sinking below the treetops, the air a few degrees cooler. I sat down and took my boots off. I thought about writing this article, pondered how it might be a helpful exercise for me — something to do — and useful to you. And then I just sat ■

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**Source:**

<https://robertroybritt.medium.com/doing-nothing-can-be-really-something-938cf6d6b659>

# TWENTY WAYS TO BE FABULOUS

Why it's sometimes more sophisticated to serve takeaway pizza than a five-course meal.

By **Melissa Penfold** | 8 min read

Life is a confidence trick, so be confident. Lose your fear of being an individual. Think yourself up, not down. Convince yourself that you are unique, then go out and convince the rest of the world. If you have the confidence to get the look, the clothes, the manners, then the man the job and the money will follow. Even if they don't, you'll still feel better. Here are the basics:

## **1: USE IMAGINATION IN EVERYTHING YOU DO**

Creativity is the magic that will transform the way you live – how you present yourself, decorate your house, wrap presents, arrange flowers, set a table, and how you see things. Money can never do what imagination on a shoestring can achieve.

## **2: PUT YOURSELF FIRST – FABULOUS PEOPLE DO**

Most women put their children, their husbands, their job and their friends first, and themselves last. If you don't take care of yourself, no-one else will. If you put yourself last, the train soon comes off the track and everyone suffers.

## **3: FALL IN LOVE WITH YOURSELF**

Enjoy your own company, build yourself up. Focus on your assets: what keeps your closet pals coming back for more? Embrace your life story, and be proud of the things you have overcome and achieved, however small. Don't cast yourself as a victim and never act like a doormat- it's the sure-fire way to guarantee you're treated like one.

## **4: DRESS TO FEEL GOOD**

If you like what you see in the mirror and the way your clothes make you feel, it will weave

the same magic over everyone who sees you. Identify your best feature, then flaunt it shamelessly. If all you've got are great elbows and ears, then cut holes in your sleeves and wear chandelier earrings everywhere you go.

## **5: NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF A GREAT PAIR OF SHOES**

Bosoms sag, bottoms droop, hair thins, but feet and calves stand up well to the passage of time. Fabulous shoes drive men (and other women) crazy- and will flatter your ankles and calves until your hundredth birthday party. Never buy shoes that don't flatter your pins. Experiment until you find the pair that slims your calves and minimises your ankles.

## **6: PUT YOUR FAITH IN THE CLASSICS**

That goes for everything, from frocks to flooring. As a general rule, choose matte over shiny, tailored over unstructured, fitted over loose, natural over synthetic, plain over patterned, quiet over noisy, soft over hard, and understated over overstated. Avoid fashion, especially fads. There is a huge difference between style and fashion. Some dress rules are for life: never wear clothes with words on them, polar fleece, cheesecloth, plaits, ankle boots or Jesus sandals.

## **7: BE ORGANISED**

Have a diary, iCalendar, any method that works for you – to make sure you're on time, on top of things and never flustered. Organisation will make you a better person – but for goodness sake, don't flaunt your method and risk becoming a techno tosspot.



## **8: AIM FOR A COMPLIMENT A DAY**

Even if it's just flirting with the butcher. Compliments give you confidence. Make a noise: voice your opinion in a group and make conversation with people, even strangers.

## **9: MAINTAIN YOUR STANDARDS**

Prune your wardrobe seasonally, bin chipped china and glassware, toss stained linen, hang those pictures, file and frame photos, reupholster that tattered sofa. Throw out everything that's broken – relationships included. You will feel free to get on with the rest of your life.

## **10: DON'T TRY TOO HARD**

Ostentatious things – gold-plated taps, unnecessarily enormous houses and clothes with designer labels on the outside – scream, 'I've arrived!' You will be judged and treated accordingly. Simplicity and informality is much more stylish. Sometimes it's more sophisticated to serve a takeaway pizza or smoked salmon on toast than a five-course meal.

## **11: KINDNESS, ENTHUSIASM AND A SENSE OF HUMOUR WILL GET YOU EVERYWHERE**

They're the lubricants of life.

## **12: USE YOUR HANDS WHEN YOU SPEAK**

It makes you look animated, expansive and relaxed.

## **13: BE DIFFERENT**

When everyone else is talking, be silent. When everyone else is silent, talk. When everyone is wearing black, wear white or red. If everyone is clamoring for Bermudas, wear hotpants with the confidence of someone who knows they are wearing next season's stuff.

## **14: RISE ABOVE THINGS**

When people are gossip about or blame you, shut up. Never complain, never explain, and never put out a statement.

## **15: IF YOU CAN'T EMBRACE THINGS THAT HAVE TO BE DONE, OUTSOURCE THEM**

If you don't want to do something- make curtains, iron, mow lawns, raise children- then charm, barter or pay someone else. Don't feel guilty, don't do it badly, just pay someone to ensure it gets done.

## **16: IN CONVERSATION, GIVE YOURSELF TIME TO RESPOND**

Fools gabble. Pause before you say anything- your words will carry more weight if they sound as though they are the result of intelligent thought. Don't talk too fast- give your audience time to absorb what you are saying.

## **17: TO BE A SUCCESS, YOU MUST ACT LIKE A SUCCESS**

Walk and talk the part.

## **18: ACCEPT CHALLENGES THAT BOOST YOUR PROFILE**

But avoid impositions that make you a drudge or a doormat. If there's no glory, duck, and dodge.

## **19: IN MEETINGS OR AT PARTIES, GET INTO THE MIX**

Don't be afraid to place yourself next to the power players, or sit at the head of the table. It's the position that conveys power and commands attention.

## **20: ALWAYS MAKE A GREAT IMPRESSION**

You'll never reclaim the lost ground if you don't. Develop a firm handshake, a warm smile, a certain way of saying hello. It's free, and it's the most effective thing you'll ever do. Onwards! ■

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### **Source:**

<https://melissapenfold.com/interiors/twenty-ways-fabulous/>

## Nature Calling for Action Stations (NCfAS#30)

# HALVING FOOD WASTE CAN REDUCE HUNGER FOR 153M PEOPLE

Around a third of food produced for human consumption gets lost or wasted globally, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, resulting in useless emissions and less available food for those who need it (TNI/AFP July 03, 2024).

### Colossal supply-chain inefficiencies

By 2033, the number of calories lost and wasted between produce leaving farms and reaching shops and households could be more than twice the number of calories currently consumed in low-income countries in a year, the report warned. Cutting in two the amount of food lost and wasted along the journey from farm to fork “has the potential to reduce global agricultural greenhouse gas emissions by four percent and the number of undernourished people by 153 million by the year 2030,” according to the report. Agriculture, forestry and other land use account for around one-fifth of global human-induced greenhouse gas emissions.

UN nations have committed to cutting per capita food waste by 50 percent by 2030 as part of sustainable development goals but there is no global target for reducing food loss along the production supply chain. Between 2021 and 2023, fruit and vegetables accounted for more than half of the lost and wasted food given their extremely perishable nature and relatively short shelf life.

Unfortunately, no attention has been paid to cutting down food losses along the supply chain by addressing structural issues like poor planning, lack of proper equipment to transport food in temperature-controlled containers, and lack of food-handling skills, amongst others. Since this issue

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**“Approximately 600 million people will be facing hunger in 2030”**

– UN FAO

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is universal, it is important for all countries to come together and devise a plan to minimize food waste.



### Ensuring greater access to food

The FAO estimates that approximately 600 million people will be facing hunger in 2030. “Measures to reduce food loss and waste could significantly increase food intake worldwide as more food becomes available and prices fall, ensuring greater access to food for low-income populations. Halving food loss and waste by 2030 could result in increased food intake by 10 percent for low-income countries.

According to research published last year, around one billion tons of food gets wasted, which means 24 per cent of the world’s food supply goes uneaten (Dawn Editorial July 06, 2024). This is happening in a world where one in 10 people remains malnourished. Not only does food waste lead to malnourishment among people, but it also leads to climate change, resulting in 8-10 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions.

### Worth pondering

On a thought-provoking note, nomads are using ancient techniques to preserve meat. In the absence of electricity and refrigeration, they thinly slice the meat, season it with salt and chilli powder, and then dry it in the sun to drain the water from the meat and ensure it remains edible for many months.

### Debt servicing and food security

Meanwhile, in Pakistan where food security is a clear and present danger and malnutrition rules the roost for a big chunk of the population, [unbridled food exports have forced domestic consumers to pay record prices for essential items \(Dawn July 03, 2024\)](#). [In our mad dash for dollars to meet our debt](#)

[servicing commitments](#), the value of raw food exports reached \$8 billion in 2023-24, up from \$5.8bn over the corresponding period last year, according to the data compiled by the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP).

India's decision to ban rice exports to protect the interests of domestic consumers has emerged as a key driver behind the surge in basmati rice exports from Pakistan. Due to a sustained rise in export figures over the past two years, the average price of basmati rice has skyrocketed to Rs400 per kg from Rs150, restricting buying from domestic consumers.

## Plague of Plastic

“Every minute an entire garbage truck worth of plastic enters our oceans” – Samantha Power, USAID Administrator (Express Tribune June 28, 2024)

The WWF-Pakistan says the country consumes 55 billion plastic bags annually, with an expected annual increase of 15% and a per capita consumption of 6.5 kilograms (Dawn June 8, 2024). In 2022 Pakistan imported virgin resin, raw material to make plastic products, worth US\$ 3 Billion. Tea, whose import has gained an unfair notoriety, stood at US\$ 707 Million, less than a quarter of our total plastic imports.

Punjab, as the most populous province, is presently responsible for more than half of the total plastic consumption in the country. There is no data, however, on the scale of plastic bags production. This is a critical omission because one cannot manage that which one cannot measure. Belatedly, a digital registry is being prepared to map and gauge plastic bag production and register all its producers, distributors, collectors, and recycling units to enable the making of informed decisions in furtherance of the Punjab government's “No to Plastic” initiative.

## Dirty fuels playing havoc with health

“Nearly 2000 children under 5 die every day due to the effects of air pollution” – Kitty Van Der Heijden, Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF (Express Tribune June 20, 2024).

According to Palavi Pant, head of Global Health at the US based Health Effects Institute (HEI), air pollution

## “Around one billion tons of food gets wasted, which means 24 per cent of the world's food supply goes uneaten”

– UN FAO

accounted for 8.1 million deaths in 2021, or 12% of all fatalities. Its overtaken tobacco and poor diet to become the second leading risk factor, behind high blood pressure.

Over 500,000 deaths were attributed to cooking indoors using dirty fuels like coal, wood or dung, mostly in Asia and Africa. Over 90% of the deaths are linked to inhaling tiny airborne pollutants called PM2.5 which measure 2.5 micrometers or less, and increase the risk of lung cancer, heart disease, stroke and diabetes along with neurodegenerative disease (Express Tribune June 20, 2024).

## Coal rules in India

Meanwhile India still generates three-quarters of its electricity using coal, and this is predicted to remain the mainstay fuel for another decade (TNI June 20, 2024). While it may be pursuing ambitious clean power targets, but rapid economic growth has prolonged reliance on the dirtiest fossil fuel. Alongside, severe heat waves are making matters worse, pushing electricity consumption to fresh records every year. India plans to add 90 gigawatts of coal-fired capacity by 2032.

To its credit, India has managed to add more than 100 gigawatts of renewables capacity over the past decade, outpacing growth in thermal power generation. However, insufficient energy storage is holding back expansion of environmentally friendly electricity.

‘Calamity Jane’ rides again! Stronger than ever

Changing horses midstream (read raging torrent) is never a good idea, putting it mildly, but the lady has done it effortlessly. From the Federal Minister for Climate Change & Environmental Coordination to the Chairperson of the Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change & Environmental Coordination, Senator Sherry Rehman has made the switch without missing a beat.

This seamless transition should come as no surprise since it's the same raging torrent whose fury she is no stranger to,



much like an intrepid rafter negotiating the super wild and very white waters of our Northern reaches.

## Working in silos not an option

The Senator has emphasized the importance of collective action in addressing climate change and made the admission that the government alone cannot tackle this massive disruption without the citizens playing their part in saving the environment (TNI July 03, 2024).

“Pakistan’s climate challenges are multifaceted, and all relevant environmental institutions must not work in silos. There should be a coordinated and shared strategy to tackle these challenges,” she said (TNI July 10, 2024). “It can’t just be about infrastructure; it has to be local and people-centric.” Clearly the Chairperson of the Senate

**“Between 2021 and 2023, fruit and vegetables accounted for more than half of the lost and wasted food given their extremely perishable nature and relatively short shelf life”**

– UN FAO

Standing Committee on Climate Change & Environmental Coordination has her work cut out for her given the hostile and adversarial relationship between the state and its people that operate in a negative trust culture.

## Empowering the grassroots

What struck me was the Senator’s emphasis on the importance of a resilient approach to counter the adverse impacts of climate change in Pakistan. The keyword here is resilience, and when combined with her emphasis on local and people-centric we arrive at an inescapable need for energizing grassroots resilience.

Grassroots is where climate change disruption strikes and where the ability to pivot with agility has to be fostered so grassroots communities can reinvent with speed and counter the disruption, and not be waiting endlessly in vain for the messiah to arrive and save them.

At the formal level the sincere implementation of the Local Government System is what the doctor has been ordering for a long time now, but the doc’s prescriptions have fallen on deaf ears for years, made deaf by an outright denial to devolve and delegate resources and the authority over their deployment. This must change ■

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