

## Say No To Shaming



PHOTO BY GERDA KRUTAJA FOR KEISEI MAGAZINE

By Claudia Cole

The sustainability movement is growing, inspiring a generation of change as people make an effort to live a low impact lifestyle. With the existence of Instagramable perfection, inspiration can come with a hefty dose of pressure. Just know you're not alone. As a person who also feels eco-guilt, I understand how hard it is to navigate sustainable living in a society that has yet to adapt. This is why we should all say no to sustainability shaming.

In the modern age of [Instagram envy](#), it's easy to become consumed by the idea of perfectionism. This even applies to many sustainable brands and eco-influencers across social media. Every explore page is flooded with insanely perfect zero-waste aesthetics under the [#sustainableliving](#). There's nothing but neat, tidy cupboards filled with new bulky glass jars of dry foods.

This is where the thin line between inspiration and perfection begins to blur. Comparing ourselves and our journey to others can often lead to added pressure. I've even felt the brunt of this, regularly questioning whether my low-waste efforts are enough.

It only worsens my eco-guilt, a feeling you get when you could have done something for the environment.

According to research, 89% of people experience green guilt. This includes 64% who describe themselves as active or very active in reducing their environmental impact.

Although it's argued that eco-guilt somewhat motivates eco-friendly behaviour, does that make it acceptable to shame others? The answer is no.

### The Problem With Sustainability Shaming



PHOTO BY SARA KURFESS

Social media has amplified the way we criticize others. With the world watching us and our lifestyle choices through every phone screen, it's easy to be ridiculed at any given moment.

A clear example is when high-street shoppers are often heavily criticized. While most high street brands are fast-fashion retailers, it still appears that the anger is misdirected. The bashful comments reeked of classism but also demonstrated something important.

*The act of shaming not only divides us, but it also weakens our ability to create an inclusive community. We cannot demand change alone.*

In an ideal world, we would all lead a sustainable lifestyle, and everything would be carbon neutral. However, we have to be practical about our current society. We live in a world full of fast fashion, plastic packaging and carbon emission airplanes. Not everyone has the luxury to choose a better alternative.

For all we know, some high-street brands might be all that some can afford. UK inflation plays a massive part in that.

According to [Trust For London](#), 4 in 10 Londoners can't afford a decent standard of living. While there are some affordable, [sustainable fashion brands](#), many are a lot more expensive. We don't know everyone's income and circumstances to determine what is actually affordable.

*No one is perfect, and we can't expect everyone to be in a world that's so far from it.*

The other day, I forgot my water bottle and purchased a plastic water bottle at the train station. I had no choice and was thirsty. It just goes to show that it's not easy.

No one should be shamed. Not you, not me, not anyone.

**How Can We End Sustainability Shaming?**



PHOTO BY IAN SCHNEIDER

### Show Some Compassion

Compassion is a powerful inner resource to combat shame. We must take the time to reclaim our true worth and give ourselves a break. Recognize that we, as individuals, can only do our best, and that's enough. In the face of guilt, show yourself as well as others a little compassion.

### Share and Educate

Rather than shaming others, we can take a more practical approach by educating them. Got any sustainable tips? Any simple ways you've managed to navigate a zero-waste lifestyle? Share it. Inspire others with your authentic journeys. Help and uplift your community by giving them a helping hand. That's what we at KeiSei are all about, and you can do that too.

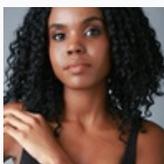
### Continue To Take Action

The most important thing to remember is that your efforts matter and to continue to live mindfully. It's still within our power to make a change but ease up on the pressure. You're doing your part, and that's enough.



Sustainable living is not a competition, nor is there one way of doing it. Small actions lead to significant change. Therefore, our conscious efforts should always be valued and appreciated.

Let's leave sustainability shaming behind and keep inspiring others to lead a mindful lifestyle.



### Claudia Cole

Claudia is a lifestyle writer from London. While she's an enthusiast for books and all things screen related, she is passionate about sustainable living and mental health & wellbeing