

By using an appropriate model of reflection identify one aspect of your own practice or behaviour that you may choose to modify and how this would contribute to a more sustainable society. Your proposed change should be supported by reference to theories of sustainability.

I shall be using Gibb's (1988) Reflective Cycle as the appropriate model for my chosen practice of coastal litter picking. I chose this cycle as it presents a clear easy to follow framework to aid me in reflecting upon the experience as a whole from every reflective angle.

Description

I walked through the coastal path to Marros only to realise there were steep hills and a far walk before we got to the designated area to litter pick. It took a good 45 minutes before we even arrived at the beach. We spent around 3 hours clearing up and sorting the rubbish into the recycling and binbags to clear the area of litter and made the beach clean and beautiful again. Some of the items could be cleaned up and upcycled into something new following Stahel's (1981) circular economy framework. A large percentage of the litter could be recycled it seemed. I realised that the only way to remove all the bags we filled from the area was to carry them by hand back up all the hills and coastal path. We all attempted it and had at least three full bags each to carry which proved to be a massive challenge.

Feelings and Thoughts

I felt so disheartened and angry by all the litter I found that area is so rural and hard to get to that nothing should be there apart from nature. I do not understand how people feel they have the right to drop rubbish everywhere, including dangerous items for wildlife to find and consume. Its diabolical, wildlife die because of these inconsiderate individuals making our beaches anthropogenic (Nelms et al., 2017; Finkl & Williams, 2013). The area becomes less visited as nobody wants to sit amongst rubbish and dog poo (which was picked up but left on the floor in bags?!) it is stupidity and so inconsiderate. It would have been better to leave the dog poo to decompose somewhere if they were going to be so silly as to not take it away with them and leave it to rot in a plastic bag. It seemed to be all age groups that contribute to the littering of the beach, many beer cans were found.

Evaluation

The experience as a whole was positive with a bitter undertone. I gained instant gratification as I cleared all that litter into bags and felt my time I volunteered was well spent (Carpenter & Myers, 2020; Dagmang, 1999). However, it is not my job to be clearing up after others, they must take ownership of the environment and what they do with their rubbish. I would have to spend a lot more of my time clearing up others mess to try and keep up with the litter I found. Some of the rubbish was so sun faded and old fashion labelled that it must have been sitting there for around a decade. This showed that people are not learning, and they have been dropping rubbish in this area for many years, and nothing has changed. It is disgusting, such disrespect as it is so simple to take rubbish home. If there was space to carry the item all the way to the beach, there is space to take away the empty packet.

Analysis

I do not understand why this keeps happening and never will. There is plenty of awareness on how landfill and litter harm the environment and its inhibitors. It seems that herd mentality is afoot here, as among piles of old sun faded rubbish was fresh new items (Al-mosa et al., 2017; Schultz et al., 2013). It shows that if one person drops something, others feel its ok to do the same. It is appalling, the lack of responsibility for how a simple task of not littering is shocking. Humanity is built upon rules, this is a trivial objective so there is no excuse to ignore it. However, it has been happening for many years and still continues. This will have a massive impact on our future generations if something is not changed now. It feels that the battle to protect and respect the environment is never ending.

Conclusion

I love the green environment and sustainability and I want to be proactive in maintaining equilibrium in the world. If I can follow Elkington's (1997) framework of People Profit and Planet, so can others. Prevention is better than cure in this circumstance, if people stop dropping litter, there will be less environmental and wildlife harm and therefore will be less to pick for volunteers like myself. Humanity needs to find its respect for the planet again, as we only have the one and it is already

becoming far too consumed by landfill and litter. When this planet is full and too toxic to live on, there is nowhere for humanity to go, we have to stay here and more importantly our future generations will pay the price. If there were no volunteers like myself, the litter would just stay there and possibly more will be added to it.

Action Plan

I can do my bit by attending more litter picks to clear different areas. However, I feel the areas we do clear need to have signs put in place threatening the public to be fined for littering (Gneezy&Rustichinni, 2000). As I feel that if a person thinks that there will be an implication from them littering to financially affect them personally, they may take more responsibility. It is a shame they could not feel this way for the planet. I can take pictures each time of before and afters to post on social media to raise awareness. I could approach the council about every area I clear and discuss about the signs being placed and bins being installed nearby for regular collection. I could also get in touch with other like-minded people like the Pembrokeshire Eco Champions (PEC)(2020) for more assistance. PEC can arrange for binbags to be collected from volunteer litter picks, and even provide all the necessary equipment to do the picks with.

References

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