

The Great Dehydration

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Some cultures celebrate it and its creators, others use it in their rituals. Too much of it, and it causes death, yet not enough causes death. Necessary for the survival of billions of organisms, yet taken for granted and frequently wasted. It is in scarce supply, yet little action exists to replenish it. This deadly, but essential, substance: water. Water has been valued for centuries, but the world may be running out of purified drinking water. Climate change causes frequent droughts globally, including in Santa Clarita, California. Individuals and companies in drought locations have begun advocating for better water conservation practices to the masses, like in schools, which is one step in the positive direction. However, water sustainability practices in the United States are ironically unsustainable because water is not replenished fast enough, but action by individuals and the government ensures there will be water for future generations.

Unfortunately, water is no exception to Americans' greedy and wasteful culture. The Environmental Protection Agency's data shows: "The average American family uses more than 300 gallons of water per day at home" (*How We Use Water*). To decrease this statistic, large-scale change is not necessary, smaller-scale action can be taken immediately. Small practices of lessening one's water footprint include switching to water-efficient showerheads and faucets, taking shorter showers, using a dishwasher, and treating pipe leaks immediately. Outside, residents should water lawns every other day, save rain in barrels, and replace landscaping with native, drought-tolerant plants. Also, implementing household recycling systems that recycle gallons of excess water to be cleaned for reuse. Household water conservation and recycling make a tremendous difference in water sustainability.

The variety of large-scale changes includes implementing desalination plants to utilize oceans. Oceans account for more than 95% of the earth's water, and if utilized for drinking water, it solves the decreasing purified water problem. This solution faces opposition because of the high expense and environmental damage, but ultimately humans need water to survive. Desalination plants remove particles and salt from the seawater and add minerals to meet water quality standards. Hopefully, with the abundance of ocean water, desalination plants will not only replenish the current supply but provide additional water for countries with no access to clean water. Governments can mandate this on coastlines so water will become a sustainable resource again.

With further action by individuals and the government, the problem of water disruption will be solved. Ancient civilizations valued water so much, they honored gods of water, current society does not necessarily need to worship water, but they still need to learn to appreciate it. Respect for water and resourcefulness is crucial, otherwise, future generations may not access the resources they require. Americans must not solely prioritize water for themselves, but for nations that are unable to provide purified water for themselves and their future generations. The Great Depression was an economic shortage, The Great Resignation was an employee shortage, the world must do better to prevent The Great Dehydration: a water shortage.