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5 Signs You Are an Aspirational Recycler

Should I? Shouldn't I? If you're asking yourself these questions as you toss something in your recycling bin, you might be an aspirational recycler. This happens when you aren't quite sure if something is recyclable or not, yet you still place that item in your recycling container, hoping that somewhere down the line it will be recycled or reused.

Common items that wrongfully end up in recycling centers include food, yard waste, plastic bags, clothing and hoses.

Unfortunately "wish-cycling" is detrimental because it puts a lot of items in the recycling stream that don't belong there, can contaminate perfectly good recyclables, and can damage the equipment in recycling facilities. Aspirational recyclers generally have good intentions. Knowing the basic rules of recycling is vital so that those good intentions don't go to waste (pun intended).

Think you're an aspirational recycler? See if you're doing any of these things:

1. **You don't know whether something is recyclable, but you hope it is.** When in doubt, you should throw it out. Stick with the basics...
2. **You recycle more than cardboard, paper, metal cans , plastic and glass .** Keep it simple and focus on items like water bottles, milk jugs, aluminum cans, and clean and dry paper and cardboard.
3. **You confuse "recycle" with "reuse."** Your old clothing, tools and appliances can have new life, but not if you put them in your recycling container. Donate items for reuse to a local charity.
4. **You toss items in the recycle bin with liquid and food still in them.** Items must be empty, clean and dry to be recycled. When they're not, they contaminate the perfectly good recyclables around them, sending some to the landfill.
5. **You bag your recyclables.** It sounds like a nice, neat way to keep your bin clean and collect recyclables. But the truth is that bagged recyclables can't be unbundled and sorted at the recycling facility. They'll go to the landfill - nullifying your recycling efforts.

We know people want to recycle and have the best intentions; so, if any of this sounds familiar, don't despair. There are plenty of resources to help you know what and how to recycle at RecyclingSimplified.com . Once you've upped your recycling knowledge, don't forget to pass on the good recycling word! Make aspirational recycling a thing of the past.