

Earth . Food . Love



THE ZERO WASTE SHOP

SETTING UP A ZERO WASTE SHOP

BY NICOLA & RICHARD ECKERSLEY

Hi!

It is with great joy that we bring this document to you. It is our hope that zero waste shopping becomes accessible for people all around the globe and we can finally say goodbye to disposable, single-use plastics. In setting up a zero waste shop, you are creating such a huge shift in the way people shop that you are directly influencing positive change and for that you should be proud. Remember that it only takes one person, to make one change and the ripple will be felt through the entire ocean.

Nicola and Richard Eckersley



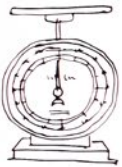
DISCLAIMER: We are not business advisors and we do not take responsibility for any actions taken as a result of reading this document. We are two individuals that created the shop they wished existed. This document is simply a sharing of the knowledge gained from our experience of setting up a zero waste shop.



WEIGH



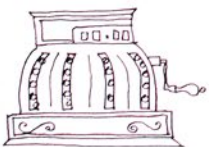
FILL



WEIGH



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PAY



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Top Tips

To Conclude

1 LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION



Rightly so, this point is first on the list. It is vital that you thoroughly research the area in which to open your shop. There are five main points to take into consideration when choosing location;

THE DEMOGRAPHIC OF THE AREA

What are the people like in your chosen area? What is their age? What's their social class? What are their interests? There is no better way to do this than go out there yourself and do some direct market research; speak to the other shop vendors in the area, speak to people at the local café/market/hairdressers. Tell people your idea and register their response. Are they intrigued? Excited? Curious? Or in some cases, just not interested. This will give you an immediate gut feeling as to whether the area contains the right people to become zero waste shoppers. This is what we did, and thankfully we were overwhelmed by the enthusiasm we received. The people of Totnes were more than ready for a zero waste shop - they wanted it!

COMPETITION

Once you have chosen your location, you need to become familiar with the other local businesses. Do any other shops offer fill-your-own? What can/can't you get in that local area? We saw immediately that there were ample choice when it came to unpackaged fruit and vegetables; there were farmers shops and market days and it was easy enough to get fresh produce without the plastic, so it didn't make sense for us to stock fresh food too. Shopping becomes habitual and people take comfort in their regular routine, so stay focused on only offering what isn't already available. Another example of this is that there were several places that sold fill-your-own olives and again, we choose to leave olives out of our store for that reason.

1 LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION



ACCESS

Ideally the shop will have good public transport links near by, provide car parking within walking distance (filled glass jars can be very heavy) and also have the visibility to catch footfall (people who haven't planned to come to your shop but they end up coming in as they pass).

OPENING DAYS/TIMES

This is easily changeable but to begin with its good to conduct further research with other local shops. Major cities are often not only open on Sundays, but also very busy. This wasn't the case for Totnes, it's a sleepy town on a Sunday and many places are closed on Mondays too. We also noticed the majority of places didn't open until 10am and that the busiest day in Totnes is Friday as the market is on which draws people from afar, we reflect this in our opening times and open an hour earlier on Fridays and close on Sundays/Mondays.

RENT PRICES

It is worth comparing the rent prices between shops in different locations, it can have a big impact on your monthly outgoings. But bare in mind, the best 'located' shops will have a higher rate and this might be reflected in how busy your shop gets, so it's a calculated risk to take into consideration.

COUNCIL REGISTRATION

Once you've chosen your area and found a shop premises, you need to notify/register with your local council.

2 BUDGET

Regardless of your budget, the same checklist still applies. As with all projects there are ways to save money if you are willing to put in the extra work. Taking on some of the tasks yourself (such as marketing, branding and shop labour) would keep costs down but unless you're extremely confident it's probably best you invest your money to ensure complete professionalism in the end product. Being creative with upcycled materials will also help keep your budget on track, and it will keep used items out of landfill, winner all round! Below we have listed categories that you need to set money aside for (in rough order from most to least expensive). We haven't provided any figures as this is all relative; the size of the shop, the location you live, the design company you choose, etc. can all vary quite considerably and it's up to you to allocate your money accordingly.

SCALE SYSTEMS

- Self serve scales
- POS systems
- Laptop that's compatible with scale software
- Scanner/cash draw/ till roll/ sticker roll

FOOD DISPENSERS

- Gravity containers
- Ski-boot scoops
- Glass jars
- Stainless steel funnels
- Nut butter machines
- Spoons/scoops/funnels etc.

SHOP FITTING

- Shelving units (bespoke or pre-made)
- Catch trays (essential for cleanliness!)
- Carpenter
- Hardware
- Painter/artist
- Electrician

BRANDING & WEBSITE DESIGN

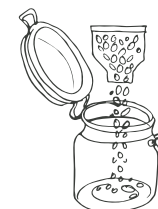
- Graphic design
- Website design
- Domain name and website hosting
- Photographer

MARKETING/ADVERTISING

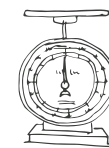
- Shop front posters
- Advertisements in local papers/magazines
- Canvas bag design and production



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2 BUDGET

STOCK

- Your first initial order of stock will be a huge financial commitment, probably the only time you will buy everything you sell at once. Make sure you budget correctly for this by working out stock in advance.

RENT

- If you are leasing your shop premises, its advisable to have the first 6-12 months rent budgeted for in advance.

LEGAL FEES

- Solicitor fees for authorizing your lease agreement can vary, so ask around between different firms and choose the option that best suits you.

BUSINESS CONSULTANCY/ADVICE

- Some people work with a business advisor for their whole process (in which case it would need to be much higher up the budget list). We however just used a consultant at the very beginning to ensure all the legalities were correctly in place and to speak us through the rules and regulations of opening a business because it was all so new to us.

REGISTERING THE BUSINESS

- A small payment, but essential non the less.

WAGES

- Decide if/how you're going to receive a wage. Speak to an accountant about how is best to go about this for your financial situation.
- Are you employing other people? Take their wages into consideration too.

INSURANCE

- Business, building and contents insurance. Speak to a local insurance broker to make sure you are legally covered in all areas.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Stationary; note pads, pens etc.
- Cleaning; brush, shovel, mop, etc.
- Accessories; funnels, scoops, paper bags etc.
- Aesthetics; lights, plant pots, storage crates etc.

PLEASE NOTE

If applying for a loan, you have the advantage to use our shop as a working model, to show investors and banks the vision and that it does work!

Suppliers of mentioned equipment are covered in chapter 5!

3 BRANDING



To save time and money, have a very clear idea of what you want your brand to look like before you meet with your branding designer. It is difficult for them to get started if they don't have an idea of your vision, plus you want it to reflect you so the idea needs to come from you! It is best to write down what it is you like and brain storm from there. Below is the brief we gave to our designer;

- Minimalist
- Colour pallet to be charcoal grey, white and forest green
- A triangle to be incorporated into the logo. It carries a lot of symbolism for us personally and was an essential part of our look
- Illustrations used throughout (inspired from Quentin Blake, making the brand family friendly and approachable)
- To fit alongside the illustrations we wanted a font that looked like handwriting, this also complemented the use of charcoal grey!

As you can see it doesn't need to be long. The more concentrated it is, the stronger your brand will be. Your brand represents you and what you are doing, it will be used throughout your business, website, shop, labels, advertising, social media, fliers et. So make sure you like it!

Earth . Food . Love



THE ZERO WASTE SHOP

4 MARKETING, ADVERTISING AND SOCIAL MEDIA



The best thing we ever did regards advertising the opening of our shop was to have a custom made full-window poster printed - on recyclable paper using plant-based inks, featured above.

This provided us with the privacy we needed to renovate the shop and it literally got the whole town talking! Having the links to our social media accounts on the posters also got us a strong following before we had even opened, allowing people to follow our journey up until the opening day. It was a cheap but very effective way of advertising the shop and gave us a platform of communication with our customers before we even opened. We also got an advert created by our branding designer to place in the local health and wellness magazine. This didn't reveal too much, but our brand came across strong and it said 'opening soon'. Other than that we relied heavily on social media. We live in an 'online world' where people are never far from their smart phones, so Instagram, Facebook and Twitter are an essential (and free!) tool.

BASIC SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS:

- Keep it very visual, regular pictures catch peoples attention and doesn't take up too much of their time.
- Keep it relevant; share zero waste news/articles, share eco products, share progress of the shop etc.
- Connect with other local businesses/similar businesses to you/local residents.
- Interact; always have a quick response rate to your comments and emails, it shows people you are listening and it keeps things personal.

5 EQUIPMENT

The two vital pieces of equipment to make the shop run smoothly are the food dispensers and the electronic scale system.

We used Martek Food Systems to supply our food dispensers. They offer a variety of different models and sizes and provide assistance in what dispensers will work best in your space. They are extremely efficient and offer top class customer service.

For the electronic scales and POS system we used a company called, Bizerba. The technology and software they've created allow any container to be weighed first, making shopping zero waste effortless for the customer. Full technical training is provided and the scale system can be easily edited throughout the day from the back end.

PLEASE NOTE: We have an affiliation with the above companies, if you reference 'Earth.Food.Love' when purchasing from them you will receive your equipment at a discounted price.

6 SUPPLIERS

As we are only a small shop and we wanted the best possible prices for our customers, we have used several different suppliers to find the best prices. We get the food from 3 main companies;

Essential Trading, Infinity Foods and Super Nutrients.

All our other products in non-food, including the cleaning products we get direct from each company. Ordering from several different suppliers is manageable as long as you are organized and keep track of your stock and orders (more info on stock management in the 'Tips' section).



7 TARGETED CUSTOMER



All zero waste shops cater to people who want to eliminate plastic packaging from their lives, but not all have to cater to the same crowd. We chose to create a 100% organic, plant-based, wholefoods shop; it fits perfectly with our own morals and local area, Totnes has a high demand for organic food and a high concentration of vegetarians.

STOCK RELEVANCE

Having this target audience helps to keep your stock relevant and manageable. This can be adapted in many ways; if you're in an area with a high population of Italians for example you might want to specialize in a wide range of infused olive oils/pastas/cheeses etc. Being a specialized store will give you more of an identity. You may not even be interested in wholefoods as such and want to sell sweets and candy without the packaging (similar to Bulk Barn in Canada), which would totally work as long as it's in keeping with your brand, your message and your ethos.

Another area to explore is providing meats/cheeses without packaging, in the style of a deli. We can't advise on the logistics of this as we have no experience but it is definitely an area of people's diets that comes with a lot of plastic packaging! Serving meat and cheese might require a license/hygiene certificate in your area, so please check with your local council.

We also feel it is worth mentioning that the range of foods you stock is important. Having as much variety as possible will make the trip to your shop worthwhile for the customer. What you don't want to create is a shop that can only cater to half of their shopping list, resulting in them going to major supermarket for the rest. We hope that we supply enough products so that customers can stock up their pantry in our shop, and then head to the green grocer and/or butcher for the rest of their shop - keeping packaging off their food and keeping business on the high street!

AGE AND INCOME

When deciding on your target customer, take into consideration the average age and income of the area. Whilst professional millennials are likely to request organic, fair trade superfoods for their morning smoothie, families with only one income are more likely to want reasonably priced daily staples such as oats, rice and beans. Of course, many people can use your shop, but catering to the majority will keep your stock moving faster and therefore fresher and provide you with a higher turnover. Once you've opened you may find you eliminate some products that aren't proving popular and add others upon customers request, flexibility is key!

8 WHAT TO STOCK



Once you've chosen what kind of food you will be selling, you can work out how much space you have to stock some non-food products too. This is a great way to introduce your customers to products that will help them live a little closer to zero waste, so keep them relevant! Here is the list of what we sell in our non-food section;

- Glass jars
- Onya Bags
- Canvas Bags. Each time someone buys a bag they become a walking advert for your shop. So work closely with your designer to create a clear, attractive image that represents your shop well.
- Books; Bea Johnson 'Zero Waste Home' and Rob Greenfields 'Dude Making a Difference'
- Bamboo Tooth Brushes
- Hand Soap
- Cloth Sanitary Pads & Mooncups

- Bamboo Cutlery
- Stainless Steel Lunch Box Tiffin & Leak-proof Tiffin
- Stainless Steel Drinking Cups & Straws
- Cloth Sandwich Wraps

We have a variety of liquid cleaning products that are available as a fill-your-own, just like the food. We decided to sell all liquids on weight, not on volume. This gives more flexibility to the customer, as they aren't forced to fill a 500ml or 1L bottle each time; they can take as little as they need. It's slightly more work as each liquid weighs differently, but once you've weighed it once, it can be put in the system and saved. We chose to display the price for the volume, as that's what most people would relate to, but we also provided the weight of said volume as an example.

Once you've ordered all your stock (food, non-food and liquids), you can make a plan for the shop layout. As with any food store it is advisable to keep product groups together (beans, grains, flours etc.). Although glass jars and Onya Bags work really well dotted around the shop!



OLD IDEA - FRESH APPROACH

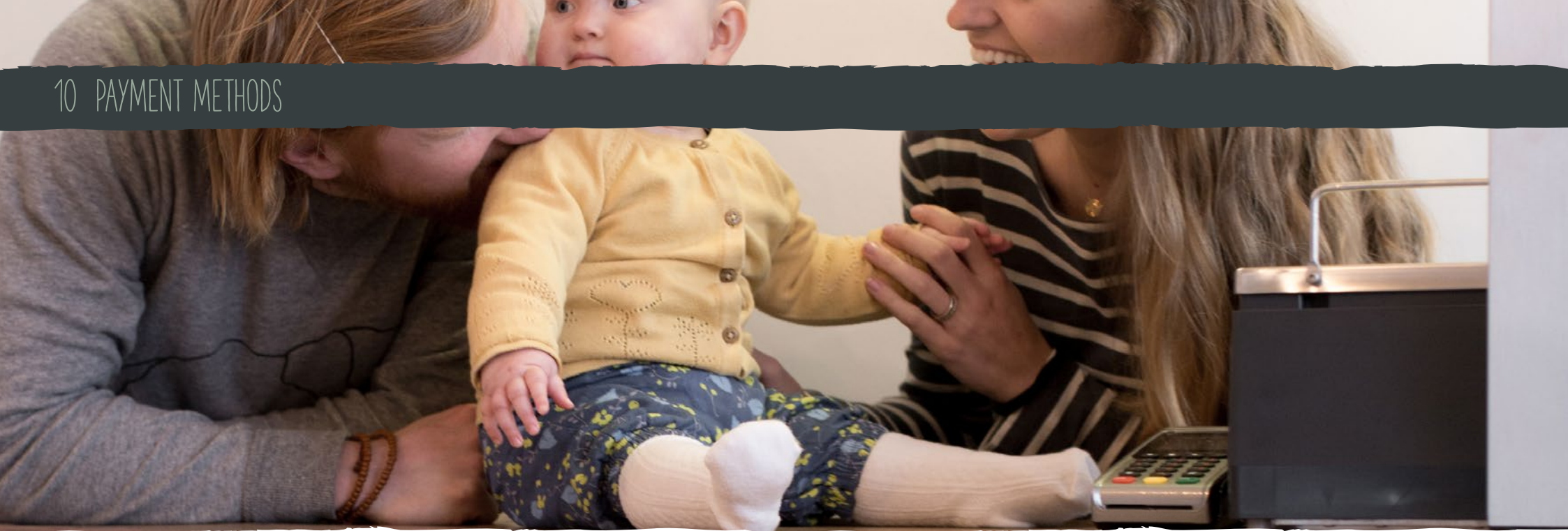
As much as this might affect some egos, shopping this way is not a new idea. It's an old concept that's come back to life, only much more hygienically! The only criticism we have heard about 'fill-you-own' shops is how people have memories of them being grubby shops with large open sacks; this meant the food wasn't air tight, wasn't fresh as new stock went on top of old stock and the food was exposed to the elements (think flies, grubby hands and dust-ew!)

Using the containers listed in section 5 eliminates this problem but there is no escaping the fact that this way of shopping will get messy. You don't want your customers feeling nervous and scared of spillages, so reassure them that spillages are normal and that's why you're there to clean up after them. If you follow these steps you'll be able to keep your shop clean, attractive and welcoming.

TIPS FOR KEEPING THE SHOP CLEAN, ATTRACTIVE & WELCOMING

- Have hand brushes, ours are wooden with coconut fibre bristles, that are specifically for brushing down food surfaces, have these clearly marked as 'food surfaces only' so that they never get used on the floor. We also have a much smaller one (unused make-up style brush) that we use for regularly dusting out the spoons for the herbs and spices.
- Have an abundance of clean towels and cloths to use. We have white organic bamboo fibre cloths that we use on the containers and on the funnels. Having white ensures you never use a dirty cloth as it shows up any dirt very obviously so you can replace it immediately. We have thicker towels to wipe up liquid spills.
- Sweeping and dusting throughout the day comes as standard, but it's worth taking into consideration that each evening as you close it takes at least an hour to clean the shop. Each scoop and spoon needs sterilizing, the floors need brushing and mopping and catch trays and buckets need to be cleared and cleaned. Take this extra time into consideration if employing staff, as it's more employment hours.

10 PAYMENT METHODS

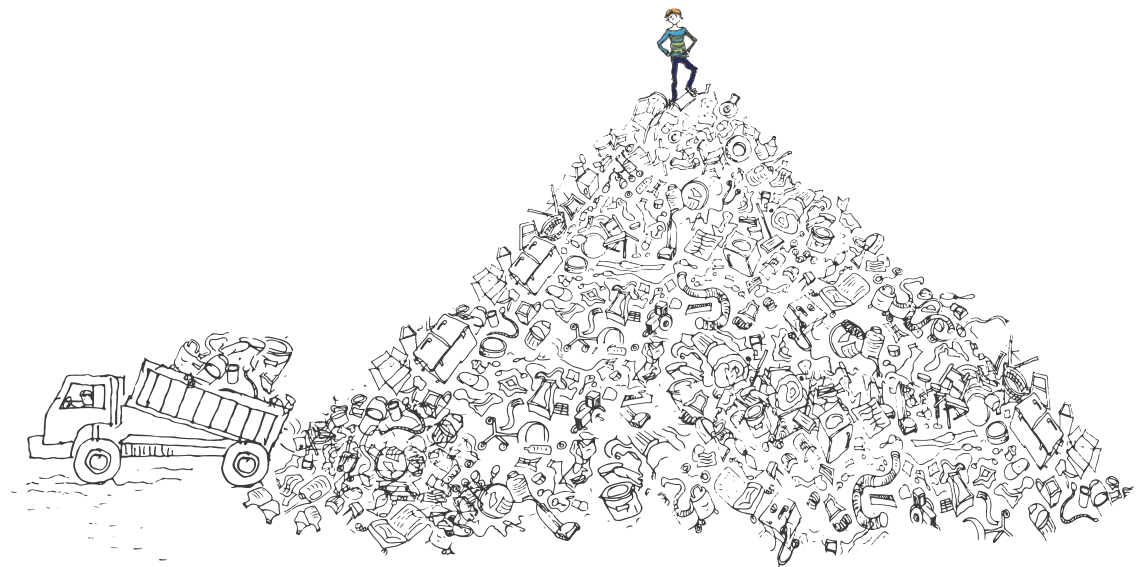


CARD PAYMENTS

It would be extremely limiting to only accept cash but when choosing your card payment system remember to take into consideration the following;

- The cost of the hand terminal
- The monthly fee
- The percentage charge per transaction

We choose to have no minimum spend on card payments but some businesses choose to have a £5 or £10 minimum spend. Also note that most banks charge you for depositing cash!



TOP TIPS



BECOME SPREADSHEET SAVVY

Organisation is key. We have the following spreadsheets to keep everything in order;

- Expenses
- End of day reports
- Stock with suppliers, prices and origins (See our example stock spreadsheet found on our website).

BE NIFTY WITH STORAGE

Keeping your food airtight is essential; use storage boxes, food bag clips or custom made draws/shelves. Storing in categories will also make re-stocking a much quicker process.

DON'T FORGET THE EXTRAS

Small but essential items that make the whole process run much smoother:

- Buckets to catch drops from the fustis
- Funnels for customers to use with food
- Food surface only brushes for spillages
- Separate spoons and scoops for every single food item
- Loose leaf tea cannot be stored in glass or plastic, it loses its potency and aroma quicker. Use tea caddies for optimal freshness

TO CONCLUDE



TWO PEOPLE, ONE PASSION - A LOT OF DEDICATION AND LOVE

We got the keys to the shop on Nov 26th and we opened the doors on March 11th. This time frame could have been much shorter but we only had one tradesman creating the shelving units, the work was being carried out over the holidays and we were also raising a 6-month-old baby without any help. All our research and work got done late into the evenings as she slept.

We want to stress that neither of us have a background in business or in retail. What we have created has come direct from our hearts; we have followed our passion and made it into a reality. We are still learning new things every day but we feel it is important to highlight that if we, two regular people can pull this off, then so can you! Don't be intimidated by the numbers, the legalities or the journey, if you have passion, dedication and love for what you do, you'll make a success of it.

AND FINALLY!

Plastic pollution is an epidemic. Our planet is suffocating in our packaging. Opening up a zero waste shop will influence hundreds, if not thousands of people in your area. Don't leave it to somebody else or until its too late...

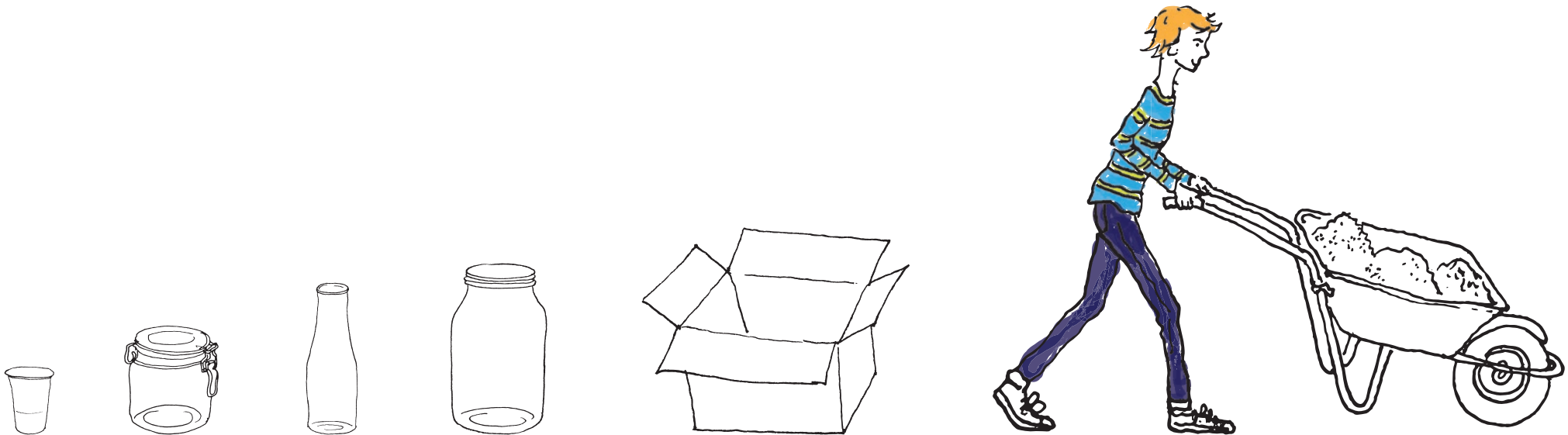
If not me, who?

If not now, when?



Earth . Food . Love
THE ZERO WASTE SHOP

ANY CONTAINER CAN BE WEIGHED - ANY CONTAINER CAN BE USED



well almost!

NO MORE LANDFILL . NO MORE RECYCLING . NO MORE PACKAGING

THEZEROWASTESHOP.CO.UK   EARTH . FOOD . LOVE, 101 HIGH STREET, TOTNES, DEVON

This document has been produced in pdf format to reduce use of resources - please print consciously!