



Sparta featured on 680 Weekend Business Report & Ants! Something to Ponder about Upcycling...

Sparta was recently featured on the 680 Weekend Business Report (a Toronto all-news radio station) as a part of their ongoing discussion about *"Finding ways to Solve the Plastic Problem"*. Check out the link below if you didn't catch it live.



[Press here to listen](#)

Upcycling; Something to ponder...Recycling became mainstream in the 1970's but Sparta has been focused on Upcycling and people are starting to listen.

So, consider this: all the ants on the planet, if taken together, have a biomass greater than that of humans. Ants have been incredibly industrious for millions of years. Yet their productiveness nourishes plants, animals and soil. However human industry has been in full swing for a little over a century, yet it has brought about decline in almost every ecosystem on the planet.

According to the entomologist E.O. Wilson, the earth is home to between one quadrillion and ten quadrillion ants, across more than 12,000 different species – 4,500 alone in the rain forest. If one then considers the biomass of six billion-plus humans to the biomass of at least a quadrillion ants, the ants' biomass is greater than ours. In fact, when humans are compared to ants in this fashion, they don't even

come close. At any given moment the biomass, or stored energy of the world's ant population is five times the biomass of our current human population, or roughly the equivalent of 34 billion people.

Ants safely handle their own wastes as nutrients in the system to assist their own and other species. They build homes out of recycled material. They have full employment as they all have jobs. They grow and harvest their own food. They even create their own medicines and disinfectants that are healthy, safe and biodegradable. Meanwhile most humans continue to throw away material and deplete resources. Should we not learn from the example of ants?

But no one is suggesting that humans live like ants. That doesn't sound fun or inspiring and considering their practices of slave capture and child labour, it seems unethical and regressive. However, if people modeled systems and communities on those ants, they would not deplete resources and they could flourish at a population level which is much higher than we do now, as we would be far less concerned about depleting resources.

At Sparta we recognize that nature doesn't have a design problem, people do. Over the last few hundred years, we have used our incredible intelligence to design materials and reshape our world to make it a better place. While we have been incredibly inventive, we now need to do everything we can to assist nature to close the loops, which will in turn help put our planet back in balance. Upcycling is an important next step for all of us to embrace and best of all, it not only provides value to our planet and future, there is real economic value in the processes. If designed properly from the beginning, what once may have been viewed as simple waste will one day be viewed as valuable natural resources and thus helping mother nature keep our world in check.

Files from The Upcycle; beyond sustainability – designing for the abundance, by William McDonough and Michael Braungart