



# SAVE THE EARTH WITH YOUR CHOICE OF CLOTHING

**Everything we do impacts ourselves, others and the environment. Hence, making the right choices is critically important - especially now, when the environment is in a precarious state. You can start with your choice of clothing**

C W Tan

No man is an island. We're all connected.

Our connections transcend space and time.

We're connected with our family and friends. But we're also connected with people in faraway lands.

We're connected with the past. We're connected with the future. We're certainly connected with the present.

Last but not least, we're connected with the environment.

Am I exaggerating? Let us look at some facts to uncover the said connections. Since I am in the clothing business, allow me to share some facts connected to clothing. Specifically, let us consider cotton, one of the world's best-loved materials.

There are basically two types of cotton: Conventionally grown cotton and organic cotton.



Here are two statistics about the former:

- **Conventionally grown cotton consumes approximately 25% of the insecticides and more than 10% of the pesticides used in the world.**
- **Conventional farming requires approximately 150 grams of pesticides and fertilisers to produce enough cotton for a single T-shirt.**

These are disturbing numbers. But that's not all. There are a few more things you should know about these man-made agrichemicals. I call them the 3 P's.

Firstly, the agrichemicals are mostly made from petroleum. Petroleum is a non-renewable resource. It gets depleted when used. Which means we will one day run out of petroleum. At the same time, petroleum



extraction can be environmentally damaging. Remember the massive Gulf of Mexico oil spill in 2010? According to several reliable sources, it is "the biggest unintentional offshore oil spill in the history of the petroleum industry" and "the worst environmental disaster the US has faced".

# ORGANIC & Wholesome

100% COTTON

Secondly, many of them are poisonous. This is a significant problem and it affects the health of many. According to a report prepared for the WHO (World Health Organization) and other international organizations, between 1 and 3% of agricultural workers suffer from acute pesticide poisoning. These percentages translate into between 25 million and 77 million workers worldwide.

Thirdly, some of these agrichemicals are persistent. It means they don't go away immediately; and their adverse effects can hit us somewhere down the road. For example, some will end up in the yet-to-be-made clothing and can cause skin- and health-related problems for the wearer. Some will enter our food chain (a part of our environment), posing a serious and insidious threat to our well-being.

Let's now see how the agrichemicals are connected to us.



We are consumers. We consume to live and function in society. One of the major things we consume (or use) is clothing. And we consume lots of cotton clothing. But which type? Based on the most recent figures, conventional cotton makes up 99% of the global cotton production. This means an overwhelmingly vast majority of consumers still prefer to buy clothing (and other products) made from conventional cotton. Because of this overwhelming preference, factories will continue to produce those petroleum-based agrichemicals - where there's demand, there's supply. This means the health of the environment will continue to be under constant threat. Also, because those agrichemicals are poisonous and persistent, we and the cotton workers in faraway lands will continue to be exposed to health risks from toxicity. And if we buy conventional cotton clothes for our family and friends, they will be vulnerable to the same risks as well. In other words, we are in this predicament because of the consumption choices we make now and in the past. That's how we and other people and the environment are connected.

The good news is, we can change all that. Mahatma Gandhi has given us wise counsel: We must be the change we wish to see in the world. If we make sustainable choices, we can get out of our

unpleasant situation. Furthermore, what we do in the here and now will help our children and our children's children. For that is what sustainability is about: the satisfying of our present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy theirs. That is how we should connect with and contribute to the future.



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How can we change? There are many things we can do. One of them is to buy and wear sustainable clothing. For example, organic cotton clothing is sustainable. That's because organic cotton is cultivated without the 3 P's agrichemicals. On top of that, organic cotton clothing is healthful. No poisonous and persistent chemicals, no skin and health problems.

In the final analysis, everything we do impacts ourselves, others and the environment. Hence, making the right choices is critically important - especially now, when the environment is in a precarious state.

*"When the Earth is sick and polluted,  
human health is impossible..."*

*"To heal ourselves we must heal our  
planet, and to heal our planet we must  
heal ourselves"*

*Bobby McLeod  
Activist*

Let us heal ourselves by becoming responsible consumers and consume only what is essential and sustainable. When we do that, we will enter into a mutually restorative relationship with the world around us. Then we and our environment will become a picture of health.



**CW Tan is the CEO and Director of Nukleusshop - a revolutionary brand for fashionable sustainable and affordable men's and women's underwear and basics.**

For more information on Nukleus innerwear, visit [www.nukleusshop.com](http://www.nukleusshop.com). You can also follow the conversation on sustainable clothing and living at [www.facebook.com/Nukleuswear](https://www.facebook.com/Nukleuswear)