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INTERVIEW SERIES

**Easy Concrete Steps For Going
Green On A Budget**



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HardToFind Seminars.com

Expert Interviews On Mind Body & Spirit

Dear Student,

I'm Michael Senoff, founder and CEO of HardToFindSeminars.com.

For the last five years, I've interviewed the world's best business and marketing minds.

And along the way, I've created a successful home-based publishing business all from my two-car garage.

When my first child was born, he was very sick, and it was then that I knew I had to have a business that I could operate from home.

Now, my challenge is to build the world's largest free resource for online, downloadable audio business and health related interviews.

I knew that I needed a site that contained strategies, solutions, and inside information to help you operate more efficiently.

I've learned a lot in the last five years, and today I'm going to show you the skills that you need to survive.

It is my mission, to assist those that are very busy with their careers.

And to really make my site different from every other audio content site on the web, I have decided to give you access to this information in a downloadable format.

Now, let's get going.

Michael Senoff

Michael Senoff

Founder & CEO: www.hardtofindseminars.com

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Easy Concrete Steps For Going Green On A Budget

Although you may think your house is clean and safe, according to Diane MacEachern, author of *The Big Green Purse*, toxins are everywhere. From the plastic we store our food in to the very products we use to make things cleaner, the chemicals in everyday household items may be making us sick.

So, Diane says we have a responsibility to our family, our budget, and to the environment to be choosy when it comes to our spending power. If we can shift \$1,000 of our family's yearly household budget to greener products, it will send a strong message to manufacturers that consumers care about their health, safety... and planet.

And in this audio, you'll hear what you need to know to make every purchase count.

You'll Also Hear...

- The 2 dangerous chemicals that could be in your household plastic – and how to make sure your plastic is safe
- The simple little trick parents can do to help their kids be more relaxed, energetic and healthy
- The fastest known way to let manufacturers know you demand more responsible behavior from them
- A very easy tactic that will help you combat the commercialization your children are bombarded with that makes them think they need every new toy at the store
- 2 ways to ensure your children's clothes are the safest they can be
- Key strategies that will help parents control the overall consumption of their households

As we go about our everyday lives, Diane says, it's vital to remember that you can't really "throw away" anything. Garbage goes somewhere, and is never really destroyed. So it's important that we make deliberate, conscious decisions when it comes to our spending -- and make everything we own as valuable as possible.

Hi, I'm Michael Senoff, founder and CEO of [HardToFindSeminars.com](http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com). For the last five years, I've interviewed the world's best business and marketing minds. Along the way, I've created a successful publishing business all from home, from my two car garage. When my first child was born, he was very sick, and it was then that I knew I had to have a business that I could operate from home. Now, my challenge is to build the world's largest free resource for online downloadable mp3 audio business interviews. I knew I needed a site that contains strategies, solutions and inside angles to help you live better, to save and make more money, to stay healthier and to get more out of life. I've learned a lot in the last five years, and today I'm going to show you the skills you need to survive.

Hi, this is Chris Costello, and I've teamed up with Michael Senoff to bring you the world's best wellness related interviews. So, if you know anyone struggling with their weight, with cancer, diabetes, ADHD, autism, heart disease or other health challenges, please send them to Michael Senoff's [HardToFindSeminars.com](http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com).

Chris: I'm Chris Costello, and our guest today is author of *Big Green Purse, Using Your Spending Power to Create a Cleaner, Greener World*, and we're talking today with Diane MacEachern. Diane, thanks so much for joining us today.

Diane: It's my pleasure, thanks for having me.

Chris: So, this is just a fantastic book. It has so many different ideas for people, and inspiring ways that they can participate and work towards making a greener community. You seem to also be a pioneer in the field of environmental writing. Can you tell our listeners a little bit about how you got into this, and how you got inspired?

Diane: It probably goes all the way back to my childhood. I grew up in the state of Michigan, which if you've ever been there, you know it's a very beautiful place to be.

So, when I was a kid, various things happened that left a big impression on me. I remember one hot summer day, all the kids pile in the car with Mom and Dad to go to the lake. When we got there, we couldn't go swimming because the water had been so polluted. The beach was just littered with dead fish.

I'll never forget that sense of disappointment and concern and worry that in fact we really worry a threat because of what people were doing to that lake.

So, you know, over time, various other issues arose and one thing led to another. I got a Master's Degree in Natural Resources Management and the Environment from the University of Michigan, and as they say, the rest is history.

Chris: That's an amazing story. You were just a little kid, and you went to this lake and saw this destruction. How old were you?

Diane: I'm sure I was old enough to remember, but still young enough to want to go places with my parents.

Chris: You have gone on to advise the Environmental Protection Agency, the World Bank, the World Wildlife Fund and many other agencies and non-profit organizations that focus on protecting the planet. Now, you've also had one of the first energy efficient homes.

Diane: Well, again, I'm doing these things because it always seemed like it made sense to me, and maybe it's because I grew up in a household with parents who lived through the depression. They were very frugal, and we were turning off lights and things long before people were doing it to save energy because my parents just wanted to save the money.

So, being conservative on the environmental front, being a conservationist is something that has always been important to me, and when I wanted to live in my home, I was lucky enough to be able to find some property that was going to be very near the subway. I wanted to live near a metro station so that I would not have to drive to work.

So, my husband and I were able to work with an architect who specialized in passive solar energy and energy conservation and so on. We built our house in a very interesting way. In each corner of the lot, there happened to be a big oak tree, and rather than cut down the trees, we built a platform, and we put the house on the platform. So, it's sort of like a great big tree house.

It's on a platform, that we could keep the trees on the property and not take them down, and that actually did the size of the house. The house actually doesn't have a very big footprint because we decided we would rather save the trees. We're actually very glad we did because they're mostly deciduous trees.

So, in the summer, we've got all the cooling benefit that we get from having this incredible leaving canopy, and then in the winter, we benefit from direct solar day because the leaves have fallen is far facing, and so the sunlight streams into the house and warms it during the day, which is really wonderful.

It seems now like it was ahead of the time, but for me, it was just the time that I was living. I feel now like people have caught up to some degree, but it always seemed like it made sense to me.

Chris: One of the things you talk a lot about in Big Green Purse is kids, and how important nature is for kids. I would love to hear you talk a little bit about that, and how we can get our kids connected back with nature because I think it is such an important thing.

Diane: The most important thing is to make sure that kids spend some time everyday outside. You might think that this is a no-brainer, and that of course, they're going to be outside. They go back and forth to school, but there are a lot of schools that don't even have kids doing an outdoor recess anymore. It takes them fifteen minutes to get to school and fifteen minutes home, and they're in school all day, and then they're home and on the computer or watching TV all day.

They might be outside maybe a half hour, and again, I look to my own youth, and I was outside all the time. There wasn't as much television to watch when I was growing up, and of course, there were no computer games. We had small houses, and we had big groups of friends and we had to be outside because the outdoors was the place that could sustain energy.

If all of us were inside, it would be very challenging, and I've certainly seen this with my own children. I've raised two children. They were always more relaxed. They had more energy. They slept better. They were healthier if they were outside.

I think that's really true. They weren't overweight. They were getting a lot of exercise. They were also very observant, and this was particularly true of my son. He's a very observant person, and I think it was because he would be outside. He really had to pay attention to his surroundings – where he was, what he was doing, where he was going. It has helped him become a much more engaged human being, I think.

Today, kids are just spending way too much time living artificial experiences through television or computer games, and the planet really needs us. It needs as many people as possible to be tuned into the planet, into the environment of the world that they live in, to nature, and so on.

So, if you don't have a park you can take your kids to, put them on the porch, at least get them outside an hour a day enjoying nature. Now that the weather is getting nice again, the beautiful spring arriving, there's just no excuse for staying inside so much.

Chris: There's a great list in Big Green Purse of fun things to do with kids. Can we go over that for our listeners?

Diane: Well, sure. I mean, I don't know what you're favorite on the list is. We started when our children were very little. We had backpacks for them of course, and we always packed the backpacks and go hiking. As they got older, we went biking, and now they're 18 and 21 actually and we can do things that are ambitious.

We can go white-water rafting, and rock climbing and repelling and horseback riding and all those kinds of things, but you don't have to be that ambitious.

A picnic in the park is wonderful. Have kids make snow angels in the snow in the winter and have them go out and draw the butterflies they see in the yard in the summer.

We used to find it great fun to go looking in our own back yard for things the animals left behind. Wherever there is wildlife, there is some kind of interesting artifact whether it's the skull from the decayed raccoon, which actually is a pretty interesting thing for a little kid to look at, or you find turtles. You can look at interesting birds that are in the backyard. You can count how many different kinds grow in your yard, which are really interesting.

You can collect those beautiful leaves in the fall and press in between wax paper, and you've got beautiful designs to put up windows. There's all kinds of wonderful things.

I wish we could have outdoor classrooms. I think kids would be so much better off if they were spending more time outside. In a way, I

think our system is reversed. They're in a classroom for nine to nine and a half months of the year, and only outside for two to two and a half months. It seems to me that that proportion is all wrong. That they should really be outside a lot more and have their classrooms.

When they're studying science, so much of the science curriculum that kids study is nature based. It is based in the elements and in observing what's going on in nature, and they should be doing that outside.

Part of the problem, I think is that kids are now still prescribed. You've got these achievement tests that they constantly have to pass, and there are too many kids in a classroom anyway. Figuring out how to manage them becomes a challenge, and the indoor environment, interestingly, and I talk about this quite a bit in the Green Purse – the indoor environment is not necessarily the healthiest place to be.

I think a lot of people think it is because we control it and we clean it and so on, but in fact, we use a lot of cleaning chemicals in the indoor environment, and those have a tendency to build up, and what we have seen not just an increase in ADD, but we've seen an increase in respiratory illness for example.

To some degree, it's being blamed on the fact that there are just so many chemicals circulating in the indoor environment, and how are they getting into our bodies? We're inhaling a lot of these things. So, I think people would be just a lot healthier, too, if they were outdoors more.

Chris: Another thing you talk about is with kids on controlling consumption. I think that was a really important part of the book.

Diane: Parents have so much control over this issue, and it just always amazes me that parents allow kids to consume as much as they do. I think it's really important to teach kids right from the beginning the value of the items that they're getting, and the importance of keeping products in the system, if you will.

In other words, teach kids that there is no way that you can't really throw something away. It doesn't go away. You can't destroy matter. It's one of the laws of physics. It goes somewhere, and the more that we throw away, the worse it is for the planets.

So, again I will use my own family as an example. We made a habit of buying toys for our kids gently used. They were always perfectly adequate for their need at the time, but we would go to yard sales and second hand shops and thrift stores, where the kids could easily get something that was age appropriate, but then we weren't buying it brand new. We weren't racking up all the environment class of manufacturing that goes into something when you manufacturer it new.

Then, we were giving it back. We would get it gently used, and then we would pass it on. So, you keep that cycle going, and that's a very productive way to think about products.

I feel like kids are such a target for commercialization and for commercialism. I understand that manufacturers need to keep making money, but I think there's something wrong with the system the way we set it up. We constantly have to create new things because kids see all the stuff on TV, and they want it. I think it's really important for parents to put a hold on that.

One of the easiest ways we found was to control the desire for all this stuff which was to eliminate the amount of television the kids watch. If they didn't see all those ads for all that stuff from September – well, actually it probably starts around August and September, all the back to school frenzy. Even though you have a perfectly good backpack, you need to get a new one according to the advertisers, and you need a new pencil case. You need all those new clothes, and you need new this and new that.

Again, just stop and take a breath. As parents, you don't want to keep up with frenzy. You want to do what makes sense for your budget, and your family and the planet, and that usually means buying a lot less.

From September until December then, it's the frenzy to buy stuff for Christmas. If you start early with a policy that you're going to limit what you buy or you're going to make sure that the gifts that you give are meaningful. I have a friend who only gives one gift to each child, and the parents give one gift to each other. The kids still get presents from their friends and aunts and uncles and stuff, but they really focus on giving each other one meaningful gift.

Sometimes, it's not something they buy. It's a gift of time. It's the gift of an experience. It's those things that are meaningful. Then, I look at my own children. They really can not even remember what they got for

Christmas last year. They just don't remember what they go, but they remember we took a nice Christmas Holiday. For Thanksgiving, we had a lovely dinner. Those things are valuable to them.

We just celebrated Easter. There were no gifts involved. Our kids are beyond the age of Easter baskets now, but they love the holiday. It was a wonderful dinner with friends and family, delicious food with lots of great conversation. Those are the things that they remember over time.

I don't know about you, but I find it so stressful to have to do all that holiday shopping. I'd much rather bake cookies.

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Chris: Another interesting thing, too when you talked about the consumption aspect for children, a lot of these things especially for babies and young children are made out of plastics and things. Can you tell our listeners a little bit about what are the problems and dangers with buying that kind of merchandise?

Diane: Well, a lot of plastic that is used to make kids' toys or baby bottles or rubber duckies or so on, contains an ingredient called phthalates, and I'll spell it because if people want to look for it, it's counterintuitive. It's p-h-t-h-a-l-a-t-e-s. Again, this is in Big Green Purse if you can't remember it.

The reason why phthalates are in something like plastic is because it makes them soft. You can really think of one of those yellow rubber duckies, and how you can squeeze it, or think how soft the nipple on a baby bottle is.

It's soft because it contains phthalates, but it turns out that phthalates are considered a reproductive toxin in the state of California. That means that if you are pregnant, if you use a product containing phthalates, it could be difficult for you to become pregnant. You could have an abnormal pregnancy when you grow older. You could have a child that has consequences because you had phthalates in your body and so on.

So, the phthalates are considered a reproductive toxin, and there's a big effort under foot to outlaw putting phthalates in products. In the

mean time, consumer demand has been so great for an alternative, that manufacturers are starting to create baby bottles that are not made from plastic containing phthalates, or people are returning to glass baby bottles with safer nipples.

They're finding toys that don't have phthalates in them. So phthalates are one problem. There's another product call BPA, Biphenyl A. It's another toxin that's found in a lot of plastic. Again, in a lot of water bottles and baby bottles and so on, it's just another chemical that has consequences for the human body.

In that case, it's considered to be an endocrine disrupter. In other words, it mimics the hormones that our endocrine glands produce in a negative way.

So, the choice that you have really is to buy the safer alternative, and this is really what the message of Big Green Purse is. Big Green Purse says use your purse to choose products that offer the safest alternative, and that's the strongest incentive you can give manufacturers to clean up their act. That's really what the message of Big Green Purse is.

Chris: That can be such a powerful message, and I know you also have a challenge for people. Can you tell them a little bit about that?

Diane: The One in a Million Challenge – the idea is really to encourage a million people to shift a thousand dollars of your existing household budget to products and services that offer the greatest environmental benefit.

I'm not talking about spending an additional thousand dollars. This is not what that's about. Everybody – think about what your annual household budget is. It might be twenty thousand or thirty thousand dollars. I'm talking about the money you spend on food and clothing and personal care products, maintaining your car, lawn and garden products, all of those things.

You'd be surprised how much waste there is in that budget, and what I'm suggesting is that you look for ways to shift just a thousand dollars in that budget to greener products and services as a way to saying to manufacturers, you just have to take a look at what's happening in the marketplace and reduce the pollution, reduce the amount of materials you use because we're creating a market for you.

Chris: That sounds like a great challenge, Diane, and we hope our listeners will go to BigGreenPurse.com, and take on that challenge. Now, back to the plastics for kids and babies, how do people know if these chemicals are in them? Do they just have to assume that they are? Is there going to be a sticker that says, "Free of phthalates?"

Diane: Increasingly, there will be some kind of mention on the label that the product is phthalate free or does not contain BPA, the Biphenyl A. Otherwise, the companies are not required to list those ingredients. So, it's really tough for consumers who want to buy the safest possible product because the company does not need to say that – if you buy a baby bottle, the baby bottle doesn't say what the ingredients are that it was manufactured from. You have to really focus in list ingredients if it's a cleaning product or a personal care product.

So, what you do is you look for the disclaimer on the label that says it's BPA free or phthalate free, and if it doesn't say it, then you have to assume that it does contain those products.

At BigGreenPurse.com, there are lists of toys that you can get. There are companies that are really trying to do their best to manufacturer safe products, and in my book, I list a lot of companies that have safe products for kids – toys and baby products and all kinds of things. So, it's growing, but the major manufacturers Johnson & Johnson and Gerber and all of these people, they need to constantly hear from consumers that they want cleaner, safer products.

Don't hesitate to send these companies an email and to let them know that you demand more responsible behavior from them.

Chris: I love that you have some great websites for safe toys for kids. You mention buying wooden toys, switching to bees wax instead of the color doughs.

Diane: Yes, and you can also make your own play-dough, and I used to do this with my kids with flour, water and oil, and then if you want to add a few drops of food coloring, you can do that, but kids just want to have their fingers in gooey stuff.

In the spring, send them out and let them make little mud pies. Don't be afraid to let them get dirty. That's part of being a kid. I remember with my own children, we'd have birthday parties for them, and people

would bring all these elaborate toys. Then, I would find the kids playing with the boxers that the toys came in because they could do something themselves to them.

My kids favorite toys were wooden blocks – unpainted wooden blocks in various shapes and sizes that they could fashion into a castle one day, a boat the next, build their own house with it. They spent hours with those wonderful toys.

I think getting back to simplicity, simple materials, wonderful way for children to grow up.

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Chris: Another thing in Big Green Purse, you talked about organic cotton clothing, and that's a very interesting complicated issue, and we're hoping that you can touch on that a little bit here for people that are looking to outfit their kids in healthy clothes or healthy bedding.

Diane: It's funny. People are constantly saying, "Oh, I love cotton. It's a hundred percent natural, and it feels so good on my skin." All of those things are true. It also true that twenty-five percent of the world's agricultural pesticides are used to grow cotton. People don't realize that cotton is an extremely pesticide intensive crop.

The consequences are there. It's not that there are pesticides on the clothing. That's not really the issue. The issue is that cotton leaves behind pesticide residue in the ground which then contaminates ground water.

When the spraying of pesticides contaminates air, contributes to air pollutions, working who are around these pesticides are exposed to dangerous chemicals, and wild life that are in the surrounding environment of these cotton fields are exposed to these dangerous chemicals – birds and aquatic life and so on.

So, what is the option? Well, the option is to number one for kids buy them used clothes. When you think about how quickly kids grow, they can't wear much from one year to the next. They can't wear much from one year to the next until they're in their late teens. Kids are just growing all the time.

So, the longer clothes are worn, essentially the less impact that article of clothing has because you're getting so many lifetimes out of that one article of clothing. So, one is to especially for kids' play clothes, get them used. Again, turn your neighbors, yard sales, thrift shops, second hand shops, the Salvation Army, those kinds of places.

Number two, do look for clothing that's made from organic cotton, and for kids there are lots of soft organic cotton t-shirts, play pants, pajamas, all kinds of things they get, and they're actually pretty comparably priced to convention clothes.

Also, you can increasingly buy clothes made from recycled fibers. That's a third option that I think is pretty appealing.

Chris: How about the bedding? I know a lot of our babies sleep in cribs, on mattresses. What should people be doing there?

Diane: One of the issues with bedding is that it's coated in flame retardant chemicals. I think there's a federal standard that mattresses and mattress pads and crib pads really need to be flame retardant.

So, manufacturers have responded to this by gassing them in flame retardant chemicals, but a consequence of this is we all have this stuff in blood. Mothers have it in their breast milk and so on. There are increasingly manufacturers that are using materials that are more flame retardant.

For example, wool, wool is far less likely to go up in smoke than thin cotton or a lot of the synthetics are because synthetics are basically a petroleum product.

So, what can you do? You can increasingly go online and find alternatives to convention mattress pads and so on that do come coated with fire retardant. I always say make your house fire proof. Do what you can. Make sure you've got smoke detectors. Make sure there are not live flames. Don't be leaving candles burning or anything like that.

Make sure that appliances are in good working order If you've got baby monitors or radios or things that have lights, things that have plugs in the room that your children are sleeping in, make sure that they're not frayed so they're not going to short out.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure as the saying goes, and this is one of those things where be cautious sort of when you're outfitting the room, and when you're thinking about what's going into that space so that you're not in a situation where you're fighting a fire at some other point.

Chris: What are the problems with flame retardant you mentioned that's used in children's clothing and bedding?

Diane: Well, most of these chemicals are carcinogens or they interfere with your hormone system or they interfere with your ability to reproduce, or they can lead to respiratory problems. They all have some kind of a health impact.

So, it depends on the level of exposure and the age of which you are exposed to these things, and the frequency, the length of time that you're exposed to them, all of these issues. If it's potent enough to subdue a flame, then it's got to be a pretty strong chemical.

So, my inclination, my intuition is to stay away from as many of these chemicals as possible, and to find a safer/healthier alternative.

Chris: As our listeners probably have figured out by now, Big Green Purse is just full of different ideas as to how to make your life for your kids and yourself healthier. One thing we love about the book, Diane is that you really give people easy concrete steps that kind of tell you what you can do because individually each of these things can become overwhelming for people I think.

Diane: Well, I'm glad you found it that way. The book looks a little daunting, I think for some people when they see it. Some people have called it the Big Green Bible because it's a big book, and it contains a lot of information. However, it's not designed to be read from beginning to end.

It's got these twelve easy to read chapters so that when you're looking for clothing, you can go to the clothing chapter. If you're interested in chocolate, you can go to the chapter on chocolate. If you want to know about organic food, it's a separate chapter. I think that's what makes the book so easy and accessible that each one of these chapters really stands alone. As you say, they're all broken down into a format that's very easy to follow.

So, there's a little bit of background information at the beginning, and then lots of lists and checkpoints and subtitles and bullet point idea so that you can really read it pretty quickly, I think.

Chris: And, lots of resources too. We found a lot of great websites that I know people will enjoy checking out and kind of changing their lifestyles with in an easy kind of way.

Well, Diane we want to thank you so much for spending the afternoon with us, and we look forward to talking with you again in the near future.

Diane: Thank you so much. I really appreciate it.

Chris: That's the end of our interview, and I hope you've enjoyed it. For more great health related interviews, go to Michael Senoff's [HardToFindSeminars.com](http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com).