The Story of Stuff

1. What are the steps involved in getting “stuff” in the flow chart?

2. Why is this said to be a “linear model”?

3. What is the significance of developed countries (North America, or U.S and Canada) using 3rd world countries resources? Why do we do this? What will this cause?

4. What happens at production?

5. What groups are at the biggest risk for accumulating toxins in their system?

6. What happens to the people who move out of the areas we have stripped for resources?

7. What does “distribution” mean?

8. How are prices kept down?

9. If the price of stuff does not reflect the true costs of its extraction and production, who pays for it?

10. What does “externalization of costs” of production mean?

11. Why does consumption “drive” the system?

12. What percentage of materials in North America are still in use six months after their date of sale?

13. How can we run a planet on this level of materials?

14. Who “designed” our consumer oriented society?

15. What seems to be the ultimate purpose of the American economy?
16. What is "planned obsolescence"? Give some examples.

17. What is “perceived obsolescence”? Give some examples.

18. What seems to be happening to “happiness” in North America? Why?

19. What are the two main leisure time activities?

20. Why do we seem to be on a treadmill of work → watch → spend?

21. Why is incineration bad?

22. Which two places in the linear model does recycling help to reduce?

23. What can you do?

24. Over the course of this week, have you thought twice about “buying” some “stuff”? Will you give more thought to your purchases in the future?