

PURCHASE POWER



POINTS
OF LIGHT

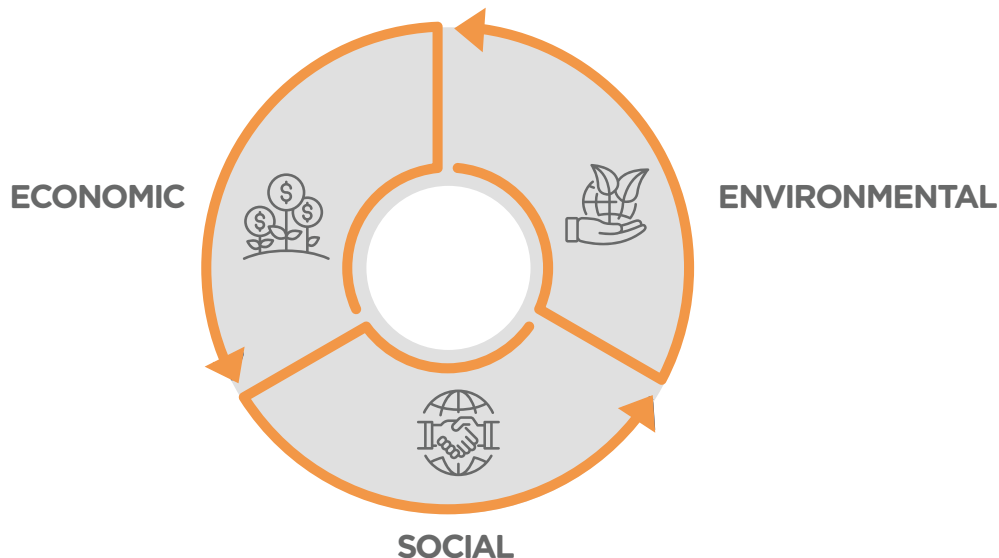
WHAT IS IT AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

From the clothes we wear to the food we eat, our buying decisions touch nearly every aspect of our lives. But before clicking “check out” on your online shopping cart, have you ever thought about the impact your purchases make?

Purchase power is an individual’s ability to make decisions around spending or consumption of goods or services. These decisions often reflect our values and can advance a social issue or cause we care about. Examples of aligning our values with our purchases include buying eggs from humanely raised chickens, purchasing jewelry from a company that provides job skills training to survivors of human trafficking or shopping at local businesses.

Being a conscious consumer means you are considering the entire lifecycle of a product – from its raw materials to how that product is disposed of when it reaches the end of its usefulness. When we take a step back to consider how a product has reached us and adjust our spending habits based on this information, it is one way that we use our wallets to reflect our values.

What we buy impacts our world economically, environmentally and socially. And these things are all interconnected – the environmental factors influence the economic factors; the social factors influence the environmental factors. And through the collective impact of each individual’s purchase power, the results can be transformative.



FIVE THINGS TO CONSIDER ABOUT PURCHASE POWER



1. Small changes matter. Leveraging your purchase power to support the greater good is not about changing all of your spending habits. It’s about being a more aware consumer and making small, incremental changes where possible.



2. A global issue. The rising global focus on sustainable consumption and production is so important, it’s even an [U.N. Sustainable Development Goal!](#)



3. Do I really need this? Before buying something new, ask yourself “can I borrow this? Can I repair something I already own? Can I buy this second-hand?” Sometimes using your

purchase power to support what you care about is making the decision to not make that purchase at all.



4. Knowledge is powerful. Even when there are limited choices in where to shop or what to buy – factors influenced by things like timing, budget and where you live – there’s still power in being more informed and encouraging those around you to be more mindful.



5. Together we make an impact. When we shop, we vote with our wallets. And when choices around purchase power are collective and sustained, they can create movements.



TAKE A DEEPER DIVE AND LEARN MORE



An individual's carbon footprint is the amount of greenhouse gases that are generated by our actions. Use the [Carbon Footprint Calculator](#) to determine your carbon footprint



[DoneGood](#) curates and sells products from companies with a social mission



Visit [Fair Trade Certified](#) to find curated fair trade products and shopping guides



WATCH: [Conscious Consumerism: Time to Shop and Live Our Values](#) (TED Talk)



BOOK: [Buy the Change You Want to See: Using Your Purchase Power to Make the World a Better Place](#) by Jane Mosbacher Morris

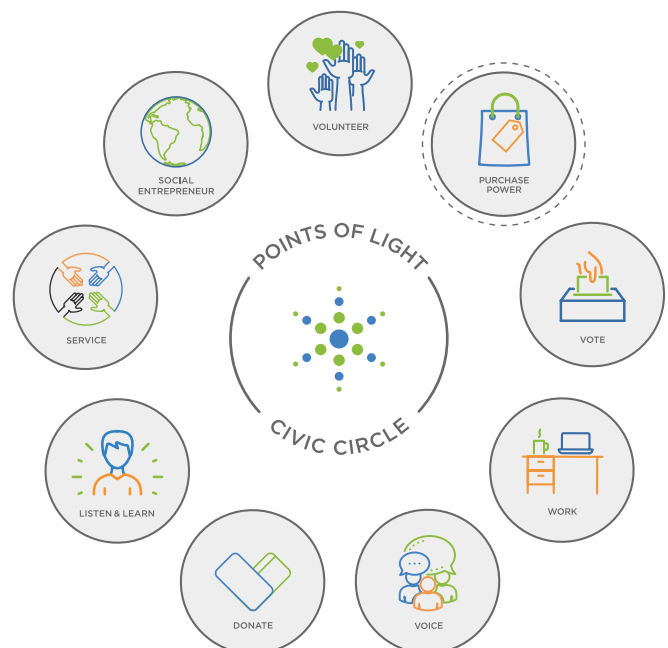
THINK ABOUT IT...



- Before reading this guide, had you ever considered how a product is made or a company's social responsibility when deciding where to shop? Why or why not?
- Have you learned anything new about the impact of purchase power?
- Are there any changes to your buying decisions that you're now going to consider?
- How would you encourage others to use their purchase power?

WHAT NOW? WHAT NEXT?

- Do your homework and look for brands whose business practices align with your values.
- Keep what you've learned in mind before making your next purchases.
- Continue the conversation and share what you've learned with others.
- Purchase Power is just one activity in the Points of Light Civic Circle that you can use to lead and lend support to causes you care about. To learn more, visit <https://pointsoflight.org/civicle/>.



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The **Civic Circle** represents your power to lead, lend support and take action for causes you care about and to lead a civic life.