

## Recycling Is Broken. Should I Even Bother?

With the summer heat coming in full force, staying hydrated throughout the day is a challenge. This often involves using plastic bottles, which I've noticed an influx of in our recycling bin. This has got me wondering how recycling worked and if it truly was helping the environment like I've been taught my whole life. My original thought process was that the entire "idea" of recycling seemed great! However, I still wondered if sorting through all the random junk that most of us carelessly throw into our blue bins was cost-efficient. Thus, when I saw the first half of the headline, "Recycling is Broken," I knew something was up.

Well, I guess I was "partially correct." It turns out that reincarnation is a more complicated process than I thought. My plastic water bottle must prove itself and face many harrowing challenges. It would be sent away, sorted, sold, sent away again, and processed. Throughout all of this, the poor bottle is only one wrong step away from being sent to the landfill, where it'll experience fiery destruction. As a responsible plastic bottle owner, you can help prepare your bottle for its trek.

Firstly, make sure your bottle has the appropriate gear. Depending on the location of your blue bin, you will need to make some changes to your bottle. For example, removing a wrapper or drying the inside. Next, you will need to make sure your bottle's teammates are also prepared. Your bin contains too much trash that doesn't meet the guidelines of your local recycling service, so the whole batch of trash will likely be incinerated.

However, even after my bottle makes it past sorting, there's a chance no processing company will want to buy it, and it'll be incinerated. The system has evident problems, but if you do everything right, recycling will still help the environment. Maybe someday, with fancy tech like AI, we could make recycling more straightforward and efficient.