



The Overloaded Liberal: Shopping, Investing, Parenting, and Other Daily Dilemmas in an Age of Political Activism

Fran Hawthorne

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A veteran journalist and levelheaded mom tackles the ethics of everyday life

Today's shoppers don't just consume; we investigate and categorize the impact of our decisions on climate change, animals, our health, our political views, geopolitical relationships, working conditions, and more. Yet when we actually try to live according to our principles, it can be so overwhelming, contradictory, and demanding that we want to scream. Do I buy imported organic or local nonorganic? Is it terrible if my child wants watermelon out of season? Veteran journalist and levelheaded mom Fran Hawthorne sets out to answer these questions—and spark more. En route, she interviews activists and ordinary consumers alike, including officials from PETA, the AFL-CIO, the Sierra Club, an organization of “EcoMoms,” and the rabbinical group that has redefined kosher. She learns from ethicists, psychologists, Wall Street analysts, child-rearing experts, and policy wonks, while examining everything from Barack Obama's union-made inaugural ball tuxedo to the conundrum of how electric cars might obtain their electricity. And she delves into socially responsible investing at a moment when the wheels have come off the economy. Her odyssey will be all too familiar and often funny for consumers who have thrown up their hands and wondered, “What's a good liberal to do?”

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