29) Compostable Clothing, Natural Dyes, and Localized Supply Chains with Lydia Wendt [TRANSCRIPT]

ELIZABETH
You're listening to the Conscious Style Podcast, where we explore what it will take to build a better, more sustainable and equitable future for fashion. I'm your host, Elizabeth Joy. Now let's dive into today's episode

When we think about the best end of life option for clothes, once we've loved them and worn them well and we've extended their life as long as possible, we may think about recycling or upcycling those clothes.

And those are solutions that we've talked about in detail throughout this season of the podcast, which was all about circular fashion. And if you caught a few of those episodes, you likely heard about some of the nuances and limitations or barriers to those solutions.

So today, we'll be looking at a different approach to circularity. What if our clothes could return to the soil from where the fibers to make that clothing were grown? Now, this might sound like a far off dream, especially when we consider that most clothing today is made from synthetic fabrics i.e. plastic fibers like polyester.

But there are actually a few brands working to make fully compostable clothing a reality. One of the brands making significant headway in this realm is California Cloth Foundry. This small slow fashion brand believes in creating a healthy wardrobe the natural way using botanical ingredients that we could consume and avoiding all petroleum based fibers, treatments and dyes.

Now, this is not an easy feat in today's fossil fuel addicted fashion industry. So to dive into how California Cloth Foundry is doing all of this, I sat down with founder and designer Lydia Wendt.

In this conversation, Lydia is sharing what fully compostable clothing is and what elements might make even natural fiber clothing no longer safely compostable. What the challenges are as a brand to create compostable clothing. And what natural dyes are, and how those are different from low impact dyes.

Lydia is also going to talk about how California Cloth Foundry is going beyond doing less bad and investing in creating a positive beneficial fashion system. And Lydia is going to share some interesting reflections on her previous experiences working in big fashion and why she decided to create a local and traceable supply chain for her label. And also how sourcing locally and producing slowly allows California Cloth Foundry to produce in a more sustainable way.

As always, the transcript as well as all of the relevant links will be in the show notes hosted on consciouslifeandstyle.com. And in next week's episode, we'll also be talking about soil to soil

circularity, so make sure to hit subscribe so you do not miss that interview or any future conversations about circular and conscious fashion.

If you have enjoyed this podcast so far, a rating on Apple Podcasts can go a long way in helping this content reach new audiences and also help me get more amazing guests on this show. So thank you in advance for taking a moment to do that in your Apple Podcasts app if you have it!

Okay, now on to the show. Lydia is going to start us off here with a bit of an introduction of herself and some background on what led her to creating California Cloth Foundry.

LYDIA
So the short answer to why I created or how I created California Cloth Foundary is that I founded and incorporated California Cloth Foundry in California as the commercial vehicle to manage the supply chain for the North Face Fibershed Backyard Project that I was invited on to manage.

And The North Face is obviously one of the largest brands in the world and Fibershed was invited to create this backyard project. And Fibershed is a nonprofit. So they brought me in as kind of the supply chain commercial expert and there was really no vehicle to be able to manage all of that supply chain before it went back to The North Face. And so that's kind of like the most recent answer.

Then to go back in time, I'm a 30 year veteran of the fashion industry. And I started in New York City in the 90s. When it was just a, it was a crazy, wonderful time. And during that time, I went to the Fashion Institute of Technology. And I put myself through school by modeling for global icons like Giorgio Armani. I was walking down the runways before I even completed my school, my fashion design certificate at FIT.

And then when I did begin designing in New York City, I started working for amazing fashion icons like Calvin Klein, and Tom Ford, and Jones New York and Bloomingdale's and slowly moved into fast fashion.

And, you know, creating a company like CCF was always a goal of mine. And so when in 2013, Fibershed invited me to manage that supply chain, it was the perfect platform to start my company. And because, you know, our mission and values Fibershed and California Cloth Foundry are so aligned, it was really easy to establish my company through the pilot project and grow my vision for the future of fashion through this company.

So, I'll just say one more thing about my vision or the vision of this company, and that is to make a healthy wardrobe in collaboration with nature. I think that's just a very clear line of where we're going and why and how we're doing that. So it has to be healthy. No fossil fuels. No toxins. All natural.

And as will go, you know, further into it, why in collaboration with nature? Why would we do anything that wasn't in collaboration with nature? So that's, that's kind of the foundation of our company.

ELIZABETH
Yeah. And I love that mission. Something that you mentioned in your background that I would love to explore deeper is that you used to work in the fast fashion industry. So could you share a bit about how that experience influenced your perspectives? And where you are today with CCF?

LYDIA
Yes, so fast fashion, I actually believe well, of course, I came to, you know, my career in the 90s, when fast fashion I think was actually forming its name and its system. And, you know, I think the phrase, fast fashion, can be related to fast food as well.

And when I was working with all of these design houses, and mills, and I was working for huge corporate clients like Bloomingdale's and the Limited Brands, I was working very hard to create large margins by negotiating pennies out of the product development, out of the design, out of the mills.

You know, can you cut corners and, and make this cloth a little bit less expensive per yard? And what I didn't realize when I was negotiating pennies for these large clients, out of the pockets of the supply chain and the mills and the designers, I was actually negotiating pennies out of the farmers pockets. Because every time you ask on one end of the supply chain to cut us a break and give us a discount that goes all the way down the supply chain.

And it became apparent through the end of the 90s and the beginning of this century that it was an unsustainable system. All of the products were becoming cheaper, and in the process of becoming cheaper, all of the the mills and the farmers would swap out the more sustainable cleaner and greener options for toxic ones, only because it created a very quick, high yield as cheaply as possible so that they could make a profit.

And so that I think, I believe is the origin of the toxicity of fast fashion. Does that answer your question?

ELIZABETH
Yeah absolutely. Yeah, I really appreciated that sort of insider perspective you gave us there. This is stuff we talk about in this space that the race to the bottom is going to have an impact on everybody down the supply chain: the garment workers, the farmers, and what you said sort of validated that.

And also a really interesting perspective on how this race to the bottom has made the industry really reliant on toxic ingredients and fabrics. So that was really informative I think for all of us.

So, this season of the podcast, the focus is all on circularity in fashion and getting it all of the various aspects and approaches towards circularity. And while there is a lot of talk about creating more technology for things like textile recycling, especially from those fast brands who have long overproduced and continue to overproduce. But we don't hear a lot about the land-based approach to circularity that is already available to us, or soil to soil circularity. Could you tell us about your approach to circular fashion at California Cloth Foundry and how that differs from the you know mainstream approach to circular fashion?

LYDIA
Yeah, thank you. Yes, the soil to soil circularity is, that's our goal. That is our vision. And that's what we're practicing. And we call it you know, I think that was the Fibershed that actually said soil to skin to soil. I think I added the soil but you know, that's kind of a given.

But that whatever you produce, whatever materials you cultivate, obviously they're coming from the soil. That is my philosophy and stake in the ground that nothing comes from under the ground. Nothing comes from fossil fuel. Unfortunately, our energy from the mills and transportation, we can't manage that yet, because we're so small. Larger brands might be able to and that's where they're offsetting their carbon emissions.

But we'll go back to the circularity again. Nothing comes from fossil fuels from us. If we're recycling fibers and fashion like large brands, it's all from natural ingredients. And my other stake in — well that's not a stake in the ground… My other understanding of circularity, or even the environment is that nothing actually can live in a bubble.

Like if you're talking about recycling plastic bottles into polyester thread into garments. And that system takes toxic ingredients and solvents to actually… and you know what a solvent is: it melts the plastic into a fiber, or it melts the plastic dye into a liquid dye that can then color our clothing. Both of those solvents are in a bubble of a supply chain or within the bubble of a mill, and those hazardous materials are supposed to be kept separate from our environment.

In my world, nothing can actually be kept separate from our environment. There's always leaks. And where's that hazardous material going afterwards? So that's why we don't even consider recycled plastic bottles into polyester or even recycled polyester into clothing. Because we know it's all going to end up in our environment, in our natural environment.

So our circular practice is from soil, whether it's cotton, linen, flax, or food waste, or my Mycelium leather, or it's proteins, it's wool, or it's alpaca or it's silk. That's actually you know, from the soil. It's agriculture, and it should be regeneratively produced naturally, because when it's regeneratively grown or cultivated — like the Climate Beneficial wool that we're going to be using next season — that natural ingredient can easily be assimilated back into the soil in a circular model that regenerates itself and will help to clean up our environment.

If you add toxins and solvents, and it goes into our soil, well then you're degrading our environment again. And so that's our natural innovation. You know, you can go into technology

in different ways. We're focusing on technology that utilizes only natural ingredients so that if there's a leak, it'll go right back into our environment with no problem.

Second part of that, which is soil to skin to soil: it's about your skin and your health. Humans health. If you're putting something that was grown regeneratively and environmentally clean and beneficial on your body, including the dyes and the fixatives like the mortants, the colored fibers.

Some mordants are made from crystals, just think that you're putting natural indigo or you're putting chestnuts and crystals on your body and cotton and wool that have been grown with no toxins. That's beneficial to your skin.

And then you can just throw it in your garden. You should probably shred it. If you're going to be wearing the hoodie until it almost falls apart. You can throw it into your garden and it becomes compost easily. So that's the soil to skin to soil. It's beneficial for all involved.

ELIZABETH
Yeah, That's beautiful.

LYDIA
Thank you.

ELIZABETH
So when we think about natural fabrics, many people assume — I used to assume — that those are all compostable since they're natural.

However, it's not so simple. So could you tell us what 100% compostable clothing is? And maybe what elements might make natural clothing no longer compostable?

LYDIA
Yes. And that's also very near and dear to me. I want to add a comment about certifications, because that's the only way that consumers know whether something is certified, let's say compostable. And I'm not sure if there's a certification for compostable yet, but USDA certified organic, or USDA certified sustainable, or GOTS certified organic. These are certifications that we use and all other brands use. But there's a little hiccup in the system.

Because USDA certified organic cotton is 100% United States Department of Agriculture certified meaning there's a whole system that ensures that that is organic. Ours comes from Texas and Arizona, New Mexico, California, but not for a while.

But anyway, that USDA certification of that agricultural product is 100% that cotton, and GOTS certified organic cotton is actually a minimum of 70%. So you could have 30% toxic cotton from slave labor and laden with really dangerous pesticides and fertilizers. And it won't be labeled as such. So that 30% of your T shirt, your organic-labeled GOTS certified organic t-shirt could be

quite toxic for the soil. Now, I would still compost it, but it's laden with potentially a lot of toxins and a lot of unethical labor force. So that's one thing to consider.

Now GOTS is Global Organic Textile Standard. And they're amazing. I mean that we use them all the time. We use a lot of materials from them. It's just that people do not understand that there could be 30% of that cotton. There's allowed, there's a margin of 30% that is other cotton.

And then if you have a 100% USDA certified organic or sustainable Cleaner Cotton like the cotton that we've used from California here that is in its raw state, that is beautifully compostable. I mean, it's a carbohydrate. And the plant matter and the seeds are all really good for the environment. In fact, cotton seeds are filled with nutrients and protein that are sold to the dairy farming industry of America, from the cotton gins all over America. And that's how the cotton gins make their money is they sell cotton seed to the dairy industry or the food industry.

And if that cotton seed is grown unsustainably or not organically, there's a lot of toxins in there. So if you buy a T-shirt that is USDA certified organic cotton, but then it goes through the milling system, which is all mechanical, that's fine. There's no toxins added. But then it goes into the dyeing system and the finishing. And in dyeing and finishing, all conventional dyes are petroleum-based, that's from crude oil, that's fossil fuel.

And the only way that you can get that dye onto that organic cotton t-shirt or organic cotton yarn to make the t-shirt is with solvents. And I told you before I mentioned before that solvents to dissolve the petroleum to make it work as a dye or a print pigment or a finishing surface treatment, you need toxic ingredients, which should then not be composted back into your soil. So where do you put it? That's the question.

ELIZABETH
Mhm, yeah so many considerations with what makes clothing compostable. So you touched on dyes, and this is something that I think isn't talked about as much especially compared to fabrics. So could you walk us through what natural dyes are and how that differs from low impact dyes? Because I think that's quite confusing terminology, and then maybe talk about why you've chosen to use natural dyes for CCF.

LYDIA
Yeah, thank you. That's kind of what we're known for. And also that is another, as I said, the stake in the ground. Really, you know, what it boils down to is that a low toxin dye, even dyes that are certified by GOTS and Bluesign, and other certification standards.

All of these low toxins are used on organic textiles, but they're all from petroleum. They're all from fossil fuels. And the petroleum industry, the extraction, we all know this, fossil fuel extraction and use is going to kill our Earth.

And so the quickest way to avoid any participation in that system, the toxicity and the atrocities in all of the other social issues around oil, the oil industry, is to only use natural dyes, natural mordants, only natural ingredients that you would mostly find in your kitchen.

And we know this because it was practiced thousands of years ago. So it's a science that just needs to be, you know, dusted off and refined into natural innovation that's going to be as beautiful and more beautiful than the toxic petroleum based one. And so that's why we only use natural dyes and natural mordants.

Going a little bit into what a natural dye is. It is either from a plant, mineral or protein. And the plant dyes that we use are chestnuts and matter root and indigo, and weld. And you can look at our website and our Instagram and if you see a color, we usually list what plant that color comes from. On our regenerative page, you can look at all the ingredients and you can find out whether it's a plant, which most of the dyes or botanical plants.

Some of the dyes are from proteins like cochineal, which is the tiny little parasite that grows naturally on cactus all over the world. And I go hiking in California and I'll grab a little bit off of a cactus and rub it on my hand and scare people because they'll think it was blood, but makes a really bright, beautiful red color. So that's a protein for a dye and then the minerals. Oh, well, the other plant; the major plant is Indigo, which you know, comes with such history.

I do want ot say one more thing about the botanical, the plant based dyes that we use, for the most part, they come from the medicinal side from hundreds and hundreds of years ago. So for the most part, the plant dyes that we're using, have a medicinal herbal health and healing type of an aspect to them as characteristic to them.

And then the minerals are mostly in the mordants. And those minerals are mostly from calcium and stone and, and metal, like iron. So, all of these come from, as I said, either plant protein or minerals. All of the mordants that we use — we choose to use — in our dyeing process are from the food industry.

So they actually come with certifications that say that this is all completely FDA and USDA certified and they come with a rating system of you know, the most pure. We use ferrous lactate in our charcoal color, and that ferrous lactate we bought from a food processor that is actually using it for baby food formula.

So it's for the most part, I would say at lesat 95% of all natural dye mordants you could find in your kitchen. That's actually made for pickling food, making beer cheese, you know, as I said, baby formula. So that's why we use them.

ELIZABETH
Yeah, absolutely. And what are conventional — I mean, I hate using that word because it's totally not normal or conventional — But what are the typical mordants used in the fashion industry?

LYDIA
There's a lot of heavy metals that are used in abundance, there's heavy salts and metals that are used that just completely go into our waterways and strip our soil and disrupt our waterways. Gosh, I don't have a list in front of me right now.

But a lot of the petroleum based ones like the fixatives, there are fixatives that are quite toxic. And when they're used to fix the petroleum based dyes so that they won't fade, those fixatives do not exhaust into the fabric, they're actually left in the water. And in that water, it goes out into the water treatment plant.

And I interviewed a water treatment plant executive in Los Angeles, where there's an industrial area where all the dye houses are and all the food processing as well. And they said that most of these... the contaminated water from the dye houses has such a low oxygen count in there, and the carbon is so high, but it's the negative kind of toxic carbon from the petroleum based solvents and mordants. And what they do is they introduce biological organisms that actually eat these toxic carbons, molecules from the solvents and from the mordants.

And then once the oxygen demand goes up in the water — meaning that the oxygen that the water seems clean, it's because these biological organisms have digested the toxins, and then they send the water out into the ocean. And these biological organisms that have eaten these toxins now are part of our food chain.

ELIZABETH
Crazy.

LYDIA
Yeah. So the biggest offenders would be the solvents, obviously, the petroleum-based ingredients. And you know, formaldehyde is used in abundance in very large quantities overseas, because then it preserves the fabric and the fashion as it comes across on ships, or however it's being transported. So it says a preservative formaldehyde, which is quite toxic.

ELIZABETH
Wow. So California Cloth Foundry takes a lot of effort to not put in these toxic chemicals into your clothing, and making it safe and healthy for us as well as our environments. But beyond doing no harm, you are also focused on building a more regenerative and climate beneficial fashion system. You mentioned, you are going to use Climate Beneficial wool in the near future. So could you tell us more about your efforts towards building a positive fashion system and your partnership with the nonprofit Fibershed?

LYDIA
So yes, our goal is 100% regenerative and regenerative means creating a system that improves upon itself, creating agricultural byproducts that actually enriches the soil every season, rather than just staying the same or sustaining itself.

And the Fibershed, we began with the Backyard Hoodie Project in 2013. And we've done a number of small projects, and a lot of their members have utilized our fabrics for their natural dyeing projects and for their collections. And their goal, as well is to create a regenerative fashion and at least fiber and dye system that scales and that's my goal. And so whatever we can do together, we're constantly reaching out to each other and seeing how we can grow this system faster.

Our efforts with this Climate Beneficial Wool, they've been working on Climate Beneficial fibers and dyes for a number of years. And that has to do with regenerative cultivation systems, whether it is the way that you raise and manage your sheep, and obviously share the wool and process the wool, which we get directly from their Climate Beneficial wool producers.

And in Climate Beneficial wool, as well as eventually the regenerative and Climate Beneficial cotton, linen, flax, any fiber this actually grown, whether it's on an animal or from the soil, that is actually sequestering more carbon than it is using carbon in the production process and actually the cultivation process.

So once I get that wool from Lonnie — who is Lonnie is Launa, who is one of our suppliers — that will actually sequester more carbon out of the atmosphere in the way that it was produced by Lonnie and her farm and her team, then the carbon that they used to produce it. And so that's our goal with everything we do in fashion.

You know, as I said, we cannot offset the energy yet. We would like to be able to through the materials we source, whether it's Indigo, chestnuts, matter root, cotton, all of these plants, we would like to be able to source materials that sequester more carbon out of the atmosphere, in the production of it, then the actual production so that when we receive the materials, they already are carbon negative, and we've done something good by bringing those products through our supply chain. Committing to these farmers saying that, if you grow it, we will build it, you know, or turn it into fashion.

And then once you get it through the supply chain — so it's only the materials right now — once you get it through the supply chain, it our goal is to maybe work with Los Angeles. We're playing around with the idea of work with Los Angeles, and converting Los Angeles into a regenerative fashion hub. You know, slowly: 1% to 5% to 20% of the materials that come through Los Angeles are actually carbon negative and Climate Beneficial.

And the process of producing the fashion might make it carbon neutral. But our goal is to do even more than that. So I know that that's kind of a lofty goal, but Fibershed's working on it, we are working on it, many of the partners of Fibershed, other brands, are working on it.

So I think we're you know, we're on our way. It's easy to talk about it. And really, I could dive even deeper and geek out on it. But if we don't do this, now, we're not really going to have a climate to live in.

ELIZABETH
Yeah. Right. And that's incredible that you're going beyond your brand and working with Fibershed and other makers and maybe organizations to create this entire textile system in Los Angeles, in California, and creating an entirely different textile economy there. And that's really inspiring.

And something really unique about California Cloth Foundry that I love about your brand is that you're involved with each stage of the process, and it's all localized.

So could you tell us why you decided to build a localized and traceable supply chain and what that process has been like, like maybe the challenges and the surprises, benefits, anything like that?

LYDIA
Well, thank you for the compliment. And it feels good to hear it repeated in your words, because it has taken a long time to do this. And as I said, I'm a 30 year veteran of the industry and the industry that I began in showed me where the mistakes and the toxicity and the labor, unethical practices could be, you know.

So choosing to be local, it was two different decisions at the same time. The first kind of landed in my lap, as I said before, because it was for the Fibershed x North Face Backyard Hoodie Project. So I was fortunate enough to be able to create the American supply chain that would work the best for them, and then take that into my company and grow it.

Their goal was, obviously the Fibershed goal is growing within your watershed or your fibershed growing your own fibers in a regenerative way, where that concept of local was already ingrained in the project. So I took that local project, created that American supply chain and I already had a lot of relationships from my history back east in New York City with the fashion industry and then consulting in San Francisco. And to be able to, to have the luxury of going to the farms, and then to the mills and then to the dye houses and the cut and sew facilities helped to work out a few of the kinks.

And I want to quickly talk about the kinks that can happen when you're working overseas. There's agents that represent you and they find you the least expensive vendor to either sell you the fiber or create the yarn or create the fabric or dye. So all of the steps of the supply chain usually entail these agents that work for you. So they're the middle people, middlemen.

And there's a huge opportunity for error, and unethical or toxic ingredients to slip their way in there with these agents, or maybe our company project is passed off to a second agent, to a third, you know, so you're never quite sure of the authenticity, and the materials that are coming through your supply chain overseas, unless you do the due diligence of going there, and making sure that what they're claiming is actually true.

So we decided to do that and really embed that into our company after the Fibershed North Face Backyard Hoodie, and only integrate an American supply chain where we actually do go and work with the fiber producers.

I mean, we'll go and speak with Lonnie, it's not like we suggest how to produce her wool. And we don't tell the Cleaner Cotton farmers in the Central Valley of California how to grow their cotton, but we learn from them what they're doing. And that helps us to understand where we source all of our fibers and what to look for and what certifications to collect. So that we know that what we're putting into our fashion and fabrics is actually as we claim, as clean as possible.

Then when you go into the mills, and you're designing a yarn, it's so much more beneficial to collaborate with the mill owners and with the technicians, right there with their deep history in what they do with those machines. You're always going to have a better product, if you collaborate with them. You're going to have a much more efficient, less wasteful product and supply chain.

And you're going to come up with something that you never ever envisioned because you're not telling them what to do sending instructions overseas with, you know, just a call out sheet, you're actually going in and asking them what they would do to achieve this end result.

So I as a designer will go in there and say, this is what I'm looking for. How would you reverse engineer it to create it for us and with us? And it saves on so much waste — and also it educates us and them, our vendors throughout our supply chain, on how to utilize the materials. Maybe recycle it back in or through another waste channel that then becomes another product. And I don't believe that if you're working overseas, that you can really do that as clearly and efficiently.

I think that's it. I mean, the mistakes, there are huge mistakes that you can make by not being there. And there are smaller mistakes that are made by being there, at the mill working with the people that are actually touching your product every day.

ELIZABETH
Right. Yeah, and a lot of what you talked about there pointed to slow fashion as well, which I believe is so integral to sustainable fashion. I talk a lot about slowing down and reducing production. I don't think that we can reach a sustainable, let alone circular or regenerative, fashion system without slowing down.

So as a slow fashion brand, also committed to sustainability. How do you see those connections? Like how does having a slower production process allow you to be more sustainable?

LYDIA

You know, we have this comparison. I like that you really talk about slowing down fashion. It is a contrast. I mean, it has been labeled fast fashion and slow fashion. To me, slow fashion is actually what I just described I think, which is as you just said, slowing down the fashion.

If you slow it down enough to be able to see what you're doing throughout the supply chain, rather than say, okay, I've got this great idea. I'm going to send it out overseas and it's going to come back to me within two weeks. Because everybody's going to hustle to create it as fast as possible and the waste in the process just gets disregarded and piled into our landfills.

So I think that the most important part of slow fashion is, well, I think they're all important. One, you reduce waste. Two, you understand the toxicity and have the time to try to either mitigate it or remove it from your supply chain because you learn about the whole process of the fashion cycle and the whole process of the fashion supply chain. Once you're thoughtful about that, that means you had to be slower to be able to participate in it.

And then the third part of that, or fourth part of that is the style, and the quality of the product is much higher. Now the price is higher, because it took more time to do it, it takes more manpower. And if you're going to invest in more manpower, to create a more thoughtful, sustainable clean product, you're going to be investing in higher quality ingredients, so that people will like it because the quality is high. You're going to utilize more design manpower so the style and the fit is going to be much more spot on. People are going to want to keep it in their closets.

And they will invest in a healthy wardrobe. Here we go with my as my tagline is a healthy, healthy wardrobe! But it truly is. I think it makes people happy when they can invest in something that constantly feels good once they bring it, once they wear it, launder it, wash it however they care for it.

The more they wear it, the more they become attached to it, the happier they are. And well heck if it's healthy? Well, that just rounds out their day, because they feel like they actually have done something good and invested. They've save their money to be able to invest in something that they believe in. And it actually feels good and looks good on.

So I think that's what slow slowing down fashion achieves, is the beauty, the quality, the thoughtfulness, the waste reduction big time and the choice of materials.

ELIZABETH
Right. Yeah. So this whole interview has been very inspiring thinking about what fashion can look like. But I have one question for you specifically on this. And that is: what does a better future for fashion look like to you?

LYDIA

Well, I actually think it's what we're doing. A better future for fashion is fashion that can be grown or produced right next to food. So the connection is for me, intimate. So it means that what you're putting on your body is just as good as what you're putting in your body.

And both of those means regenerative agriculture in food and regenerative agriculture and fashion. Regenerative agriculture is number one about the soil. And number two about the water.

And fashion should just die as it is today and become regenerative and natural. It should be a given that it creates clean, healthy clothing for clean water, healthy soil and clean air. And I think that if all the brands work towards what we're already doing…

Now, we're in our beta stage, I mean we have products and they're beautiful. And if we begin here with all of the thoughtfulness and creativity in this industry, if everybody went natural and regenerative soil to skin to soil tomorrow, there would be the most beautiful fashion industry in the next five years because ideas move so fast, and the infrastructure is already there.

ELIZABETH
So I hope that you all enjoyed that conversation with Lydia — I definitely learned a lot and felt really inspired about what fashion could really look like, after that conversation.

And if you also felt inspired by it, it would mean so much if you shared this episode with a friend or shared it on Instagram tagging @consciousstyle in your story. And if you want to connect with Lydia and CCF, all of the links will be in the episode description and in the show notes on consciouslifeandstyle.com.

Before I let you go, there were a few points that Lydia sent me after our interview that I wanted to make sure to add in to this episode, As we talked about, CCFy really believes in using natural dyes and non-toxic clean fibers, and Lydia discussed some of the reasons why CCF believes so strongly in this. But here are a few more reasons why Lydia and CCF believes so strongly in this:

So first, our skin is our largest organ and can absorb what we put on it. So we often hear about this in the context of beauty products, but it can also include the chemicals that are in our clothes: like dyes, finishes and treatments, surface design inks and washes.

We also know that the global textile industry has been contaminating our waterways, which impacts the life that relies on that water: plants, sealife, other animals, and us: humans. This is something that impacts all of us.

And of course plastic microfibers are contaminating the planet's oceans and ecosystems as well. Microplastics have been found in various types of food, in drinking water, in fish, and the list goes on and on.

Plus as we've talked about on this show, in episode 2: What is Sustainable Fashion? Plastic fibers like polyester and nylon are made from fossil fuels; they're made from crude oil most of the time.

CCF on the other hand uses all natural fibers. Elastane currently accounts for 2% of their collection but this will soon be bio-based or plant-derived as well.

Another theme from this conversation was the importance of localized supply chains. So California Cloth Foundry produces within the US and uses majority USDA certified fibers, and Lydia discussed the importance of local supply chains from a lens of transparency and collaboration, which are huge reasons to have a local and traceable supply chain but there's also an ecological benefit when it comes to the carbon emissions if you are producing locally.

Also as talked about in episode 2 What is Sustainable Fashion? The fashion industry is responsible for up to 10% of global carbon emissions. And with more complex, global supply chains, fashion getting faster, and plastic fibers becoming more prominent in the industry, the fashion industry's carbon footprint will only continue to grow if we keep up this current pace.

So local supply chains, natural fibers, natural dyes, free from petroleum and fossil fuels.. That is the sustainable fashion future that I want to see.

So thank you for listening to this entire episode and sticking with me until the end of the episode. Really appreciate your listenership and support.

As mentioned before, a rating and review on Apple Podcasts really goes a long way in helping out the show. And if you have anything in mind that you want to see for season 3 which will launch in January of 2022, don't be afraid to hit me up on Instagram, you can send me a DM at the account @consciousstyle. I'd love to hear about what you want to learn in season 3 of the podcast. I'm currently in the process of planning it so your feedback is super important to me. I want to create what you want to listen to, so do not hesitate to let me know what you want to hear, if you have a question. All that good stuff.

Alright, that's all from me for now. I will see you again same time same place next week for the second season finale.