

## Crafting Classes with Cookie Washington



Hi! I'm Cookie Washington and I'd like to teach you sustainable creativity. You will be helping to reduce environmental waste and you'll be drawing inspiration from the rich textile crafting cultures from around the globe. Students will experience the regenerative process of breathing new life into discarded textiles while reducing our environmental impact. I'm actually teaching something our Grandma's did instinctively, we've just added a fancy name to get folks to pay attention. "Upcycling" also known as creative re-use; it's just giving old textiles a second life.

Did you know that it takes approximately 713 gallons of water to produce one single t-shirt? Fact: every American contributes 112 pounds of textile waste into landfills each year, and the fashion industry accounts for something like 70% of chemicals dumped into the water. Decomposing clothing releases methane, a harmful greenhouse gas and a significant contributor to global warming." You, yes YOU can help stop it, just by learning a new skill.

The US generates just over 17 million tons of textile MSW (Municipal Solid Waste) per year, according to the most recent EPA data. That is around **112 pounds** per person, according to the latest census statistics. In the US, 66% of all unwanted clothes and textiles are landfilled.

During the decomposition process, textiles generate greenhouse methane gas and leach toxic chemicals and dyes into the groundwater and our soil. What percentage of textile waste can be recycled? Although around 95% of the clothes sent to landfills could have been reused or recycled, only 7% of textile waste is recycled.

Is textile recycling good for the environment? YES!

The fashion industry, especially "fast fashion," is a notable contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Contributing to the circular economy through recycled items helps to cut down on these emissions by extending the life of your garments and reducing the need for new production.

I'll guide you through the regenerative process of breathing new life into discarded textiles while reducing our environmental impact.

What if I told you that I can help you to refocus your mind away from harmful, negative distractions, opening you up to a more positive relaxed attitude as you let go of anxiousness of the day...and help you create an heirloom quality upcycled quilt, rug or basket?

And by learning to upcycle cast off dry goods, you will be learning a skill that will feed your soul?

There are over 100 studies that found benefits ranging from increased brain productivity, enhanced self-esteem, and lessening the effects of serious health conditions. Now more than ever makers are using their art to not only heal themselves but also to express their views on social and environmental injustice in its many forms.

Creating useful, beautiful items that will give textiles an even longer more useful 2nd life is a win-win. You'll be crafting by hand, without the use of a sewing machine using the one or more of the following techniques, Gullah Rag Quilting, Boucherouite, a Moroccan rug making tradition, braiding, flat weave, crochet with a few macramé knots thrown in.

These handcrafts can help you craft an heirloom that you can share with the next generation. Creating just 3 rag rugs 45 inches square can use up 112 pounds of recycled textiles or more depending on the technique used.

I'm leading 1 day to five-day workshops on upcycled needlework traditions. In these workshops, you'll create a small-size (12" x 18") rag rug, quilt and/or basket in one of the ancient textile traditions using old clothing, fabric scraps, and forgotten linens. Learn how to prep scrap cloth; explore strategies for designing your rug and basket; experiment with combining different fabrics, textures, patterns, and colors; embrace the imperfections and charm of old cloth; and work in community with others to create objects that tell unique stories, interweaving memories embedded in discarded personal and household fabrics. Come energize your creative practice and create a new family heirloom that is beautiful, meaningful, and sustainable. All levels welcome!

The act of crafting becomes a meditation in itself. In the gentle act of hand-work, there's rhythm there that lulls and soothes. Hand crafting reduces tension and stress, and can promote a calming meditative state, as well provide a sense of accomplishment and creative fulfillment, promote a sense of well-being and relaxation and has been known to lower blood pressures when we feel calm and more content.

Crafting increases brain activity and cognition promoting a calmer state of mind when engaged. That stimulation also allows our brain to fire new neurons associated with focus, concentration and learning.

Cognition and recognition are an important part of our psychological health that crafting helps improve. Our brains require concentration in learning new skills, so tackling new projects and remembering pattern repeats can help us battle the deterioration of an aging brain. This is why things like fiber arts are *actually recommended* for people suffering with dementia.

As we get older and our body ages, taking up a craft, can help keep your fingers trained to be more nimble as you age. And even small exercises can help dexterity. Also engaging with other crafters enhances your ability to improve your critical thinking and empathy.

You'll learn to craft items that are multifunctional, and environmentally friendly. And by Contributing to the circular economy by making recycled items, it will help to cut down on emissions by extending the life of your textiles and reducing the need for new production.

As a bonus, nothing beats that warm feeling you get all over when you've done something great for mother earth. By taking my classes you'll be doing your bit to create a more sustainable planet, create lasting memories and you'll have a great deal of fun, which is pretty awesome.

These are great crafts to incorporate into a zero-waste lifestyle, and if you sew or make quilts, you can use left over fabric from your stash to make rugs, blankets, baskets and tote bags.



Toothbrush Rag Mat 24" X 18"



Gullah Rag Quilt technique 6 in rose in shadow box



Toothbrush weave basket w/ cording



Gullah Rag Quilt 27" x 32  
This small piece took 9 yards of fabric to create

You can start creating with an old bed sheet, a safety pin, a crochet hook or one of the special tools available..

*To sign up for classes, a list of supplies and kits, visit my website*

**[www.cookiequilt.com](http://www.cookiequilt.com)**

