

Why people go vegan

Compassion is one of the main reasons why people decide to become vegan. Because they want to reduce suffering in the world rather than creating it. People become vegan for a variety of reasons. My understanding is that the three main reasons are because they care about animals and want to eliminate their suffering, because they care about their health and want to improve it, and because they care about the environment and want conditions on Earth to be hospitable to humans for a bit longer.

Less common reasons are because they care about other people who are abused by the animal agriculture industries, those who work in the industries and those who don't have enough food or are starving because 80-90% of the soy and corn that are grown are fed to animals instead of people.

Different reasons appeal to different people, and although some people may initially go vegan for one main reason, sometimes overnight, for example, after watching the movies "Earthlings," "Cowspiracy," "Forks Over Knives," etc., others do it for multiple reasons, or start for one reason and continue for more and more reasons.

Carnists

Carnists (people who choose to go against the physiology of humans being herbivores and eat animals and their secretions--eggs and dairy) value the taste of the food they eat above all else: above their own ethics and beliefs, above their compassion, above the fact that humans are physiologically herbivores, above the facts that support veganism as the rational choice to reduce or eliminate cruelty to humans, other species, and desecration of the environment.

A few weeks ago I heard from Beth Preiss a wonderfully succinct way of differentiating between carnists and vegans. She said:

A carnist is someone who sees a pig and thinks "bacon." A vegan is someone who sees bacon and thinks "pig."

Vegans no longer live in denial

Vegans choose to no longer live in denial of the effects of our choices of food, clothing and other products, and entertainment choices.

We face the consequences of our actions, whereas carnists turn away and choose to live in denial, dissociation, and indifference to their own ethics and effects of their actions.

Vegan Ethics
by David Savage
david@savageheart.com

Most people care about animals, and will say they care about animals, yet their actions contradict that assertion, and they are content to live with cognitive and ethical dissonance.

Vegans attempt to live in accordance with our ethics. Vegans care about other beings regardless of species, and their choices and actions reflect and support that in their choices of what food they eat, what clothing they wear, what other products they use, and what types of entertainment they participate in.

Veganism is a social justice movement

Veganism is absolutely a social justice movement, and it is the awareness of the commonalities between veganism and other social justice movements against oppression and cruelty that make it even more powerful.

Speciesism as a justification for cruel and irrational behavior towards other beings is just another rationalization for the separation of beings into "us" and "them," and the view that because "they" are different from "us," we are better than them and they do not deserve our moral concern, compassion, or just treatment because they are of a different race, skin color, facial features, religion, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, ability, or species.

Before the American Civil War, the general consensus was that slavery is "normal, natural, and necessary." The same consensus view formerly applied to the treatment of women, homosexuals, and disabled people. Melanie Joy's brilliant and original analysis of food choices uncovers the consensus view that eating other beings is also "normal, natural, and necessary," when in fact, none of those are true.

Veganism is about ending violence and oppression, just as were (and are) the anti-slavery, anti-racist, anti-sexist, and feminist movements.

Veganism originated as a position of conscience, not about food. Carnism is largely about the oppression of and cruelty to the females of other species (dairy and eggs).

The intersectionalities between veganism and other social justice movements are described on such websites as:

<https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=veganism+social+justice>

<https://vegansocialjustice.wordpress.com/>

Vegan Ethics
by David Savage
david@savageheart.com

<http://veganfeministnetwork.com/veganism-is-not-food-ethics-veganism-is-about-social-justice/>

<http://www.vegansocietynsw.com/vs/html/socialjustice.html>

<http://www.onegreenplanet.org/lifestyle/carnism-why-eating-animals-is-a-social-justice-issue/>

<http://www.animalliberationfront.com/Philosophy/Morality/VeganSocialJusticeIssue.htm>

<http://www.abolitionistapproach.com/social-justice-human-rights-and-being-vegan/>

<http://thethinkingvegan.com/articles/veganism-is-a-social-justice-movement/>

<http://www.care2.com/causes/veganism-as-social-justice-excellent-video.html> (scroll down to click on the video)

<http://www.tribeofheart.org/peaceablejourney/mediabase/1456.htm>

<http://www.thescavenger.net/social-justice-sp-24912/animals/280-veganism-connection-to-antiracist-social-justice-work-48676.html>

and books such as

Sistah Vegan: Black Female Vegans Speak on Food, Identity, Health, and Society, by A. Breeze Harper

The World Peace Diet, by Will Tuttle

Animal Oppression and Human Violence: Domesecration, Capitalism, and Global Conflict, by David A. Nibert

Circles of Compassion: Essays Connecting Issues of Justice, edited by Will Tuttle

The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory, by Carol J. Adams

The Pornography of Meat, by Carol J. Adams

Neither Man Nor Beast: Feminism and the Defense of Animals, edited by Carol J. Adams

Vegan Ethics
by David Savage
david@savageheart.com

Animals And Women: Feminist Theoretical Exploration, edited by Carol J. Adams and Josephine Donovan

Ecofeminism: Feminist Intersections with Other Animals and the Earth, edited by Carol J. Adams and Lori Gruen

Animals, Men and Morals, edited by Stanley and Roslind Godlovitch and John Harris

Defiant Daughters: 21 Women on Art, Activism, Animals, and [the book] The Sexual Politics of Meat, edited by Kara Davis and Wendy Lee