

BARFEE & THE VEGAN

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Jan/Feb 2016

Animals &
Elders
Together forever

Full
Flavor
Vegan
Milan Ross

Holistic
Cancer
Treatment
With Dr. Ruby Lathon

Cattle Ranch
to Veganic
Farm
Rowdy Girl

Shaun Monson

The Writer & Director of *Earthlings* & *Unity* talks
Inspiration, Consciousness & Effective Outreach...

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FROM THE EDITOR...

Hello beautiful people!



IN TAROT THERE'S A MAJOR ARCANA CARD THAT DEPICTS A TALL TOWER SET ATOP A CRAGGY MOUNTAIN. It's dark, lightning strikes and flames burst out as a man and a woman leap from the windows. On face value this card may look like it foretells disaster, but if you look at it from a different perspective, it actually represents change and revelation on a life-changing scale. The tower represents ambitions that have been built on false principles and the lightning bolt demonstrates a sudden glimpse of truth, a flash of inspiration

that breaks down ignorance and false reasoning. The theme for this issue is '*New Beginnings*'. As the level of consciousness rises on Earth, more and more of us will begin to experience 'Tower' moments, where the very bedrock of our beliefs is shaken. At first this may be difficult to accept, but if we embrace this awakening we have the opportunity to rebuild our world based on the principles of love, compassion and peace instead of the shaky ground our current systems are precariously perched upon. I'm honoured to feature Shaun Monson as this issue's cover story. As Shaun rightly points out in our interview, everything in this physical form is temporary. Nothing remains steadfast except for love. So as we welcome in this New Year, let's also meditate upon the enormous opportunity we have before us. What kind of world do we want to create? Is it a world where we embrace holistic healing practices to heal our mind, body and soul like Dr. Ruby Lathon? Do we look for ways to peacefully co-exist with our animal friends in a mutually beneficial way like the folks at Rowdy Girl Veganic Farm? We can totally rebuild, unite and empower our ourselves and our communities if we have the desire to do so. I hope within the pages of this issue you'll find the inspiration and determination to get building. Wishing you all a revolutionary 2016!

With love,

Emma Letessier





Vegan Publishers™

In Pursuit of Great Food A Plant-Based Shopping Guide By Stewart Rose and Amanda Strombom

Shopping is a vital link in the chain for those who follow a plant-based diet, or for those who are curious and want to give it a try. The grocery store is where you will find alternative products and new ingredients to purchase and enjoy. This full-color practical guide will help you learn about the many different plant-based choices to buy, and how to get the best value from your food budget. This guide includes information on the foods you need for a healthy, plant-based diet; what foods to stock in your kitchen; how to plan your grocery shopping and save money; what to look for on food labels, what the certification labels mean; special ingredients to look for, or to avoid; how to select fresh fruits and vegetables; and meat, dairy and egg substitution products.

IN PURSUIT OF GREAT FOOD *A Plant-Based Shopping Guide*



*Stewart Rose &
Amanda Strombom*

Regular Contributors...



Laura Koniver

Laura Koniver, MD is the *Intuition Physician*. She infuses modern medicine with intuition for a deeper understanding of health & healing. You can connect with her via www.intuition-physician.com and [Facebook](#).



Lee Watson

Lee is the author of the vegan cookbook 'Peace and Parsnips' & is a food adventurer who travels the world veganizing local dishes, combining two of his main passions; travel & cooking. Lee lives with his partner Jane in the Beach House, from where he writes the blog '[The Beach House Kitchen](#)'. Connect with Lee via [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

[Click here](#) to find out about writing for Barefoot Vegan...



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JACOB'S
RIDGE 80

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WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...

Thank you so much for taking the time to get in touch. It really brightens my day to hear from readers. Got something to say? Get in touch! I'd love to hear from you! The 'Editor's Pick' for this issue goes to Suzy. Enjoy your goodies from [Living Naturally](#), Suzy!



Editor's Pick



I just wanted to say thank you for the new issue! Can you believe I have read it already!? I felt I had to thank you straight away. I have been vegan four years and this issue has come around at just the right time as I have been starting my journey towards a minimalist way of living this October. The interview with Masha and Michael has been so inspiring. So many beautiful articles in this issue have really helped me work out how I can take the next steps to a more conscious way of life and reject this culture of consumerism. I'm so excited to try out the chocolate coconut fudge too. Can't wait for the next issue!

Suzy, Bournemouth UK xxxxx



Dear Emma, I made the choice to become a vegan around one year ago. It has been an amazing journey of discovery and has opened my eyes to issues I never knew existed (or perhaps previously wanted to). With Barefoot Vegan magazine launching around the same time that I made the change, I feel somewhat connected to it and want to deeply thank you for the love you put into it every issue. It has been instrumental in my growth as a vegan, and as a person. From delicious recipe ideas to covering all manner of spiritual thinking, it has taught me so much and I know it will continue to do so. Thank you! **Adam Wakeling**



Love this magazine! So inspirational, so thought-provoking. It lights the day! Bright blessings to you and your husband for enabling it to be free to all. **Tina Yule**



Is there a better way 2 prep 4 #WorldVeganDay than downloading the new issue of Barefoot_Vegan??? I-Don't-Think-So. **A Spoon Full of Vegan**



It's brilliant, can't believe it's free! I downloaded it today and all back copies! Loved it :-) thank you x **veganomically**



Thank you so much for creating such a great magazine; each issue nourishes my heart and my soul and I look forward to reading many more positive and vibrant articles. Lots of love, xxx **Melanie Crepin**



Just want to say I LOVE your magazine, blog and links - they have changed my life! Thank you x **Dominika Izabela**

Get in touch to win!

The 'Editor's Pick' for the next issue will win a skin care Flower Peel from [SPA Technologies](#), valued at £25.00.



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In Case
You Missed
It...

My Goodness: Guinness Goes Vegan

Guinness has announced that from 2016 the famous Irish stout will be suitable for vegans since they will no longer use fish bladders in their brewing filters. Over the course of the company's 256-year history they have used isinglass, which is a by-product of the fishing industry and is used to help yeast settle faster.

The news comes after several campaigns and online petitions from vegans have highlighted that brewers are not required to state the use of isinglass on the list of beer ingredients.



UK's Forest Green Rovers becomes first football team in the world to go vegan



The Forest Green Rovers, a non-league football team in the UK, has become the world's first team to offer a completely vegan match-day menu to its supporters. The team stopped selling meat burgers in 2011 and earlier this year they also removed fish from their menu. The club now also offers soya or oat milk in hot drinks in place of cow's milk. The decision was influenced by the club's chairman, Dale Vince, who is vegan and founded Britain's largest green power company, Ecotricity. In addition to making the Forest Green Rovers a vegan club, he's also been responsible for laying a new organic pitch at the club's ground and buying a solar-powered robot to mow it.

18 Michelin-Starred French chef, Alain Ducasse removes meat from his menu



Influential and globally-renowned French chef, Alain Ducasse has removed all meat from the menu at his eponymous restaurant in the Parisian Plaza Athénée hotel.

Commenting on the reason for his decision, Ducasse says, "There is an absolute necessity to go towards a better way of eating, in harmony with nature; healthier and more environmentally friendly." He has also limited the use of dairy products. Although unfortunately seafood is still on the menu, it is definitely a step in the right direction and further indication that more and more people are starting to adopt a more considered approach to food.

Former McDonald's CEO joins the board of vegan start-up

Former CEO of McDonald's, Don Thompson, has recently joined the board of vegan company Beyond Meat. Beyond Meat creates plant-based, protein-rich products designed to be just as good in taste as real meat products, and are marketed as eco-friendly,

healthy and good news for animals. Thompson has worked for McDonald's for nearly 25 years, serving two and half years as CEO and is still working as a consultant for the company. Beyond Meat products are currently sold in 7,500 stores across the US and the move to get Thompson on board could help the company to gain access to fast-food stores as well.



Pets no longer fly as cargo on Delta Airlines

Due to the deaths and disappearances of over 80 pets over the past decade, Delta Airlines has announced that from March this year, they will no longer require pets to fly in the cargo hold of their passenger planes. Large dogs will not be allowed in the cabin due to size restrictions but pet owners are able to transport pets within the US as freight through the Delta Cargo service, which the company describes as a safer alternative to plane travel for animals. Delta's track record of pet deaths accounts for around 25 percent of all airline pet deaths in the US.



Netherlands upholds ban on fur farms

A ban on fur farming that came into effect on 15 January 2013 in the Netherlands has been upheld at the court of appeals in The Hague. The appeal came after a lower court found in favour of fur farmers in 2014, who were furious that their operations would be closed down without compensation. The appeals court said it based its decision on the fact that the new legislation allows for an 11-year transition period for existing companies. Sadly, this is not instantaneous good news for the five million poor animals involved in this industry across 160 fur farms in the Netherlands; however, it will eventually mean that the country will bow out of its third place as the largest fur-farming nation behind Denmark and China.

Hawaii first US state to ban use of animals for entertainment

In November 2015, the Hawaii Department of Agriculture board approved a set of rules that prohibits the import of exotic wild animals for exhibition or entertainment purposes. This decision makes Hawaii the first US state to do so. Exceptions to the rule are available to commercial filming for television and movies and for governmental zoos, with the legislation expected to come into force early this year.

Zimbabwe bans trophy hunting after 1 million sign petition



Following the death of Cecil the Lion, who was brutally murdered by American dentist Walter Palmer, a petition signed by over 1 million people has led wildlife authorities in Zimbabwe to announce that hunting of big cats and elephants around Hwange National Park is banned immediately. However, it's not completely safe for the country's endangered wildlife just yet as the head of Zimbabwe's parks and wildlife authority has stated that big game hunters would only be allowed if authorised in writing by the Director-General of the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority, still leaving room for legal hunting.

World Trade Organization rules against India on Solar Energy Programme

The World Trade Organization (WTO) has ruled that India has discriminated against American manufacturers when putting forth its plans for a solar energy programme. The Indian government's plans would see the creation of 100,000 megawatts of energy from solar cells and modules, and include incentives for Indian manufacturers to use locally-developed equipment. The incentives for local manufacturers violate global trade rules but labour and environmental groups have expressed outrage at the ruling, saying that it demonstrates the environmentally destructive power of 'pro-corporate' deals such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

Morrisons supermarkets in the UK to donate unsold food to community groups

Each year, an estimated 15 million tonnes of food is thrown out in the UK by supermarkets and households. To help combat this problem, Morrisons has announced it will be the first supermarket in the UK to donate all its unsold and unspoilt food to community programmes that can distribute it to those in need. A trial in Morrisons stores in Yorkshire and the northeast discovered that each supermarket could donate around four trolley loads of food per week. The initiative will soon be rolled out across all 500 Morrisons stores.

Keystone XL tar sands pipeline cancelled

US President Barrack Obama has announced that he has rejected a request from a Canadian company to build the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline, citing climate change as the reason for the decision. The proposed 1,779-mile pipeline would have carried 800,000 barrels of carbon-heavy petroleum per day from the Canadian oil sands to the Gulf Coast. However, this decision does not affect the Canadian government's decision to mine the tar sands in the first place, an act that is environmentally disastrous. While the White House spin-doctors announce this as a decision based on a commitment to being more eco-friendly, the truth is probably more closely related to the fact that it doesn't make financial sense to build the pipeline based on today's less-than-cost price per barrel of tar sands oil.

COP21 Climate Change Agreement fails to act on animal agriculture problem



COP21, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change which took place in November and December last year in Paris was hailed a success by the 196 parties that took part in the meeting and signed the final legally-binding agreement, despite the fact that animal agriculture wasn't even officially acknowledged. The meeting was to negotiate the limiting of emissions of six greenhouse gases, including methane (which animal agriculture is the biggest producer of). However, the impact of methane emissions on global warming was only mentioned once in the COP21 when the Humane Society International sponsored a side event at the venue. While in-person protests were prohibited in Paris following the recent terror-attack, environmental supporters around the globe led protests in many cities, with a large proportion of the campaign signs being dominated by pro-vegan messages.

New Website Highlights Work of Black Vegans

A new digital project called *Black Vegans Rock* has been launched this month. The goal of the website is to spotlight black vegans who are doing incredible work and was inspired after founder, Aph Ko, wrote the article [100 Black Vegans](#). Aph realised that black vegans needed to be celebrated because there are so many who are overlooked by the mainstream white vegan movements. The project has received a grant from vegan charitable organisation *A Well-Fed World*, and the advisory board for the project consists of several established black vegan scholars and activists such as Tracye McQuirter, Dr. Amie Breeze Harper, Christopher Sebastian McJetters and Demetrius Bagley.



Look out for our interview with Aph in the next issue of Barefoot Vegan (March/April 2016) where we discuss the *Black Vegans Rock* project and why it's so important to celebrate difference when promoting equality.

In the meantime, check out the [Black Vegans Rock website](#) and connect with the project via [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). And if you're a Black Vegan that would like your work to be showcased on the website, send an email to blackvegansrock@gmail.com, with a high-resolution image or video, 500 words describing your work and links to your website/interviews/articles etc.

It's Not Too Late to Challenge Your Friends & Family to Try Vegan this January!

It's that time of year again people! Veganuary, which was launched back in 2014, aims to reduce the suffering of animals by inspiring and supporting people across the globe to go vegan for the month of January. Over the past two years, over 16,000 people have taken part; with four times as many participating in January 2015 than the year before.

Starting out as a vegan can be daunting; however, Veganuary.com is one of the most innovative and comprehensive vegan resources available – providing honest, clear and expert advice in a non-judgemental and supportive manner. Resources include a vegan starter kit, recipes, eating-out guide and product directory, not to mention frequent blogs and stories of other people's vegan stories to help inspire and motivate participants.



Last year's follow-up survey revealed that 71% of respondents felt an improvement in their health, 65% discovered something they didn't previously know about animal agriculture, and 51% decided to stay vegan!

In the months outside of the main Veganuary campaign (1 November – 31 January), Veganuary's collective focus is the *Try Vegan, Stay Vegan* campaign. This allows Veganuary to continue the momentum of the January campaign and engage with past participants, as well as extending their reach and communicating with those who are not yet familiar with veganism.

Organisers are expecting participant numbers of over 50,000 for Veganuary 2016. So what are you waiting for? Challenge your loved ones today! Sign up to participate in Veganuary 2016 at www.veganuary.com and keep up-to-date by following them on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

SOURDOUGH & SEITAN

A Match Made in Heaven

By Dulcimer Nielsen

I started working with sourdough over fifty years ago when someone gave me the gift of a little book called '*Sourdough Jack's Cookery and Other Things*'. I expanded my study of sourdough as a vegan because it adds so much to one's dietary possibilities. Seitan is one of many meat substitutes and it is not always easy to find in grocery stores, so I learned to make my own, and started experimenting with variations. I found ways to use sourdough starter and seitan together, which led me to writing '*Sourdough & Seitan*' to share my discoveries.

Sourdough is basically just fermented dough. It is an ancient method of making bread rise using wild yeasts. It also adds a probiotic element to foods, and a zingy taste to many recipes. For vegans, it can even replace eggs in some recipes. Seitan is also known as wheat meat. It is a very versatile vegan meat replacement made from vital wheat gluten.

Initially both sourdough and seitan are time-consuming and there are learning curves – again reasons for my book *Sourdough and Seitan*, which first teaches how to make these two foods, then offers recipes for using them separately and together. However, once you take the time to learn how to make and use these two foods it's not at all difficult.

When you make your own food you know what ingredients are used and how they were handled. It's

also more economical by far. I would roughly guess you can make a loaf of sourdough bread for about one-fourth the cost of a store-bought loaf. And as for seitan, I think homemade is more like a fifth of the cost of store-bought. These are just rough estimations but these kinds of savings really add up over time.

No special tools or techniques are required to make your own sourdough and seitan; a few mixing bowls; measuring cups and spoons; mixing spoons; creativity, courage ... These two ancient foods are about as simple and basic as you can get and date back thousands of years! I love creating ways to use them together – as in my 'V-Near Schnitzels', which are seitan cutlets breaded in sourdough starter and seasoned crumbs. This is one of my favourite recipes and my German-Danish husband loves them! He says no one could tell that they aren't "meat" – and no animal had to suffer!

Don't be afraid to experiment. Take my ideas and run with them to create your own. Cooking should be fun – attitude is everything!

Dulcimer Nielsen is the author of five books, and lives with her husband on the coast of Maine, US. She has been a vegan since 2000. You can purchase [*Sourdough & Seitan* from Amazon.](#)





Double-dipped Sourdough Onion Rings

From Dulcimer's book, *Sourdough & Seitan*



These onion rings are so good they will make you simply whimper. If you don't already understand the "magic" of sourdough, these will make you a believer.

You will need three bowls.

In bowl #1 mix:

- * 1 cup all-purpose unbleached flour
- * ¼ tsp. cayenne
- * ½ tsp. black pepper
- * ½ tsp. paprika (smoked paprika is great, but plain is ok)

In bowl #2 mix:

- * 1 cup sourdough starter
- * ½ cup non-dairy milk (I use plain almond or soy milk)

In bowl #3 mix:

- * 1 cup cornflake crumbs
- * ½ cup cornmeal
- * ¼ cup nutritional yeast (optional)
- * ½ cup bread crumbs (optional)
- * ½ tsp oregano

Slice a large onion into ¼ inch thick slices. Separate rings. Larger rings are best for onion rings – save the leftover small rings and bits for other uses. You will want about 6-8 large

rings per serving. Using forks or tongs (in a pinch, fingers):

Dip one onion ring into bowl #1 and coat all over with the seasoned flour.

Dip the ring into bowl #2 and coat all over on both sides with the sourdough liquid mixture. Lift up out of bowl and let excess drip off.

Dip the ring back into bowl # 1 and coat all over again with the flour.

Dip the ring back into bowl #2 and coat all over again with the liquid sourdough mixture. Lift and let excess drip off.

NOTE: This is the "double-dipped" part, and it is worth the extra steps. It makes a thicker batter which in turn takes on a thicker, crisper crumb coating.

Dip the ring into bowl #3 and coat all over with the crumbs.

Place the coated ring on a large plate.

Repeat steps 1-6 with each onion ring until you have the desired number of coated rings.

Fry the coated onion rings in plenty of extra virgin olive oil until brown and crisp on both sides. No need to deep fry. Sprinkle with a little salt (I like sea salt). Serve.



THE HEALING POWER OF FERMENTED FOODS

By Faith Canter

Up until not that long ago, much of our food was fermented. This preserved our food through the winter, when food was scarcer and allowed healthy bacteria to grow on the food, which kept us healthy as we consumed it. Then chemically-laden preservatives came along and we, for the most part, got out of the habit of fermenting foods and drinks.

The consumption of regular amounts of fermented foods and drinks promotes good gut health. By fermented, I mean cultured (food and drink traditionally made with a cultured starter) or lacto-fermented (traditionally made with salt and water). Both of these processes are highly nutritious. They are full of millions of beneficial yeasts and bacteria and wonderfully detoxifying for the digestive system (and thus the rest of the body). Different types of fermented foods have slightly different strains of probiotics, so having a good range of these foods and drinks prepared in different ways is the most beneficial to your body.

Why consume more fermented/cultured probiotic foods and drinks?

Firstly, they restore the balance of the digestive system (so if there is a yeast imbalance in the body they will help heal this). They are also high in enzymes, which help you to

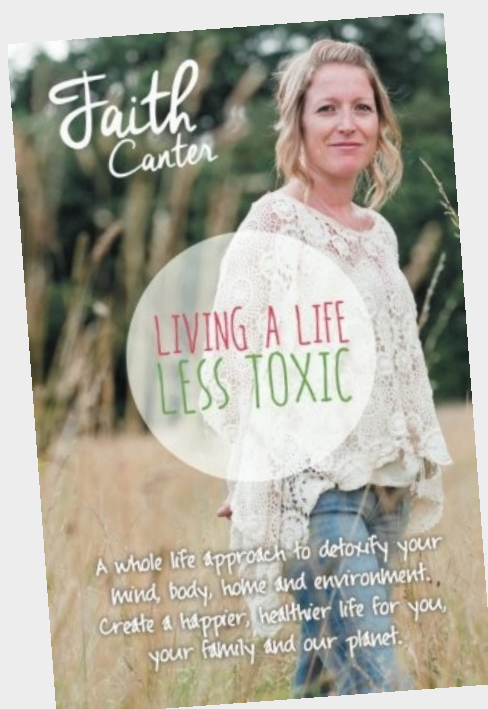
absorb and utilise the nutrients from your foods. Fermented foods promote better digestion of all foods and drinks, but especially foods that are typically hard to digest such as high fibre foods, grains, nuts, seeds and legumes (lentils, pulses, soy, etc.). Fermenting your own food and drinks is really cheap, super easy, and it means there is never any reason for any food to go to waste in your home ever again. Due to their balancing and detoxing effect, fermented foods can also aid weight loss and they help balance out hormonal issues and strengthen the immune system. They can also help clear up skin concerns and promote healthy hair. Many people find their general mood and energy levels improve when they consume fermented foods. Another wonderful bonus is that there's less food waste when you are fermenting because anything that looks like it won't last can be fermented and then kept for weeks or months longer.



TURN OVER FOR
RECIPES

3 Simple Fermented Food Recipes

It's super easy and quick to make your own fermented food and here are some of my favourite recipes...



To get more fermenting recipes check out Faith's book *Living a Life Less Toxic* or visit her [website](#) and connect with her on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).



Sauerkraut

Ingredients

- * 1 medium cabbage
- * 1 tbsp. sea salt
- Optional:
 - * 1 tbsp. caraway, coriander or fennel seeds
 - * 3 tbsp. grated ginger (I highly recommend this addition)
 - * 200 – 300g grated carrot

Directions

Remove outer leaves from the cabbage and set them aside. Shred cabbage. I like to use the grating option of my food processor for this. Shred carrots and ginger (if you're adding these). In a bowl, mix the shredded items with seeds (if you're adding these) and sea salt, then massage/squeeze or pound down with a mallet or the end of a rolling pin for 10 minutes.

Once the juices have been released, place into a wide-mouthed jar and continue to pound down until juices come up and cover the cabbage. (If this does not happen, then add a little fresh water until it covers the cabbage well.) Leave a space of 2 inches at the top. Place a whole cabbage leaf over the top of the shredded cabbage, making sure no air can get to the cabbage underneath.

If you have no cabbage leaf, then use a clean weight of some sort to weigh it down. Leave in a dark place at room temperature for around a month. You can eat it after 5 days, but it's much tastier and contains more probiotics if left longer. Make sure to burp/open the lid to let the pressure out every few days for the first couple of weeks. Transfer to the fridge once you open it or after a month or two.



Apple Cider Vinegar

Ingredients

- * 6-10 organic apples (whole or scraps of)
- * Water (to fill your chosen mason jar)

Directions

Rinse apples/scraps and cut into large chunks.

Put the apples in a bowl and cover with muslin and allow to go brown.

When sufficiently brown, put apples into a mason jar and cover with water.

Cover the jar with the muslin and leave in a dark place for 2-4 months (shorter time for scraps and longer for chunks of apple from whole apples).

Strain the apple pieces and any scum from the liquid, and bottle in an airtight container. Use as and when required.



Beet Kvass

Ingredients

- * 2 - 4 fresh beetroots
- * 40 - 60ml juice from sauerkraut
- * 1 tbsp. sea salt or Himalayan salt
- * Filtered water (to cover)

Directions

Wash beets and peel if not organic; leave skin on if organic.

Chop beets into small cubes: don't grate.

Place beets in a mason jar.

Add sauerkraut juice and salt. (If you don't want to use sauerkraut juice, double the salt. It may take longer to ferment.)

Fill jar with filtered water.

Cover with muslin and leave on the counter at room temperature for two days to ferment.

Transfer to fridge.





New
BEGINNINGS
— *are often* —
DISGUISED
• *as painful* •
ENDINGS

LAO TZU





MOTHER NATURE *heals*

Finding a Plant-Based Haven

By Sarah Rehmatullah



When I set out upon my journey to Kauai, I was ready for an adventure. Since my first visit in 1998, I had longed to return. The island life enchanted me, so exotic and beautiful. The trip was to attend a spiritual gathering. What transpired, however, planted myriad seeds for optimum physical wellbeing. My roommate, a Canadian lady, loved being out in nature, and would beckon me out for walks along the coastline. I viewed the same island with new eyes, unlike my former visit of spending most of the time in a conference room. One day we stopped off for a juice at the *Blossoming Lotus*. I warmed to the restaurant immediately. The decor was arty and waitresses peaceful. The menu looked delicious. The cuisine sounded so inspired, I desired to order one of everything. I noticed a copy of “*Vegan Fusion*”, their own cookbook, which was to become the seed of my vegan awakening.

Returning back home, I browsed the recipes, delighted to find original recipes that were so new to me. I sourced all of

was a challenge. I mostly followed a high raw diet, which included cooked food and dairy. My skin glowed from the juices, salads and fruit. I bought all the specialist equipment.

As I discussed my diet with others, many questioned raw food from an Ayurvedic perspective and digestive principles. I visited Viva Mayr in Austria, who recommended no raw food after 4pm. I realised it was time to let go of purely raw. I began to explore authentic cuisine, creating chickpea curries and dhal.

Somehow, my body was still not totally at peace.

I followed many news feeds online and noticed articles on dairy. I was horrified to learn of pus counts in milk. Friends sent posts that cow's milk is not for humans. Other posts questioned, "Are we weaned yet?" As I integrated this revelation, Cowspiracy was released and discussed. The final turning point was the true consideration after hearing the story of how the baby calves are taken from their

mother early on and also how the cow is kept eternally pregnant to produce milk.

Despite partaking of a vegetarian diet since 1995, personally veganism was a challenge to adopt. Perhaps this was mostly due to the detoxification that may easily be interpreted as lacking some nutrient that is needed (although this could be the case if not following a healthy diet). It became obvious to me, however, that a cleansing was occurring, as there would be days of exhilarating energy interspersed by days of energy dips. I recognised that I was clearing out all the toxins and hormones that may have been stored in my body, and re-patterning to a higher state of physical wellbeing. There was also considerable fat-

The peace I feel, knowing that I am not
part of the chain of harming any
animal, whilst allowing the
environment recovery, is profound.

the rare ingredients, rather mystified and on a deep learning curve. I commenced measuring in cups and learnt that cilantro is actually coriander. I ordered young coconuts and purchased a special knife to open them. Some of the recipes were raw, and this was the next step on my journey. When I learnt that enzymes and goodness is mostly destroyed when food is cooked, my logic took over. Why buy food to nourish your body, only to destroy all goodness during the cooking process? It seemed like a waste of money. So I attended a course with raw chef Karen Knowler to learn more. I was emotionally detoxing, my comfort zone abandoned. I started attending pot luck suppers to mix with others on a raw food diet, and began to learn more about the vegan side of the raw food diet. I was not yet vegan, so this

burning taking place, due to my former vegetarian diet consisting of high amounts of dairy (cheese, cream, chocolate and more). Weight-loss was no longer about deprivation, but instead occurred as a natural release. I felt my body trying to reset itself and begin running on new fuel – pure plant-based food. Dairy is very mucus forming, so my body was also unclogging from years of eating considerable quantities of cheese. My thinking is seldom cloudy now, and my body seems to be running better than ever before.

Along the way, I discovered food and drink that was totally new to me, and I discovered many new recipes that I may not have found otherwise, such as Butternut Squash Mac and Cheese, BBQ Pulled Jackfruit and Roasted Vegetable Shawarma with Habanero Sauce. My taste buds are awakening to the fact that there are many more flavours to explore and I am excited to be venturing on the vegan journey.

Becoming as eco-aware as possible is liberating. I gave up my car, recycle and reuse where possible. The peace I feel, knowing that I am not part of the chain of harming any animal, whilst allowing the environment recovery, is profound. **BV**

Sarah has recently converted to a fully vegan lifestyle. She includes raw cuisine into her diet wherever possible, having formerly spent some time eating high raw.



Sarah practices Transcendental Meditation, which introduced her to yoga and also her first experiences of vegetarian cuisine. When not whipping up delicious food, Sarah can be found writing articles, reviewing and whenever possible - travelling!

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"The one thing I've learnt through all of this is that if you want to change your life, you have to change your lifestyle."



Milan Ross, Full Flavor Vegan

LIVING LIFE TO THE FULL

Two years ago Milan Ross committed to a whole-food, plant-based diet. Since then he has released over 200 pounds and more than 30 inches from his waist and ended his dependency on medications for high blood pressure and high cholesterol. His inspirational story has led him to becoming an author, entrepreneur and highly sought after international motivational speaker. After experiencing his own amazing transformation, Milan has made it his mission in life to educate others about the amazing benefits of living a compassionate whole-food, plant-based lifestyle.

You described yourself in your younger years as being fit, healthy and slim. What was it about your lifestyle that led to your weight gain?

It's funny. Initially during the time it was happening I thought my weight gain was just that I'd slowly put on a little bit of weight. I didn't really think of myself as being depressed. I was the fat, jolly guy. I was always cracking jokes, it took the pressure off. When I looked back at it though I realised that there was an emotional thing going on there. It didn't start off that way but somewhere along the line that kicked in. Part of it was that as the weight started coming on and your life closes in around you, I realised I had friends but I wasn't connected like I am now. I had friends that I talked to and hung out with but the bigger I got the more I eventually coiled into myself. You just start to slowly shut out the world and it's not intentional. Before I knew it I was big, and I was unhappy that I was big. Things that I could do without any problem all of a sudden became a huge chore. When you first

put on the weight you always think you're still the same guy. I always thought I could run and play basketball and all those things and then you actually try it and it's like a slap in the face. You realise that you can't do it at all and so looking back it really was a form of depression. There are a lot of other people out there now that are probably experiencing the same thing but if you asked them they wouldn't tell you that they were depressed.

It was on my 30th birthday that I actually stopped and realised something was wrong but it still took me 11 years before I connected the rest of the dots. I tell people this: I'm a food addict and like any other addict I have to not allow myself to be in a position where I could be thrown off course. So I don't keep cookies and chips and sodas in the house and all of those kinds of things, I stay away from all that. I'm just glad that I woke up because it could have cost me my life. -

"I haven't done anything that anybody else can't do. I don't starve myself; I eat every three hours like clockwork. The key is what I'm eating now."

Something else that I learnt is that at 518 pounds I was endangering my life, but I could have slimmed down and not be eating right and there are people that look healthy that still die of heart attacks and strokes. As a minority, African Americans, we have the highest incidents of heart disease, which is the number one killer. So we are the number one group with the number one killer and it's preventable. I didn't know all of that. My mum died of heart disease, my dad died of heart disease, diabetes runs rampant in my family, my mum and my dad, all of my grandparents, everybody's had it, my uncles, my aunts. High blood pressure is another thing that we've all had. I thought that those things were not something I could change, it was my heritage. I used to actually say, "well, it's my heritage" and people would say, "it looks like you're a little overweight" and I'd say, "no, I'm just big boned, I wouldn't look right if I was 200 pounds, 185 pounds" and let me just tell you, I look fine!

Had you tried any other diets before committing to plant-based eating?

Two things I did religiously when I was morbidly obese; I stayed up late snacking all night long and I watched TV. So every gadget, every piece of exercise equipment, every pill, every diet where they said "if you just eat this, you don't have to do anything else and you will drop the weight", I bought it. Of course it's all a load of crap. That's not how it works.

When I started working at Whole Foods [a health-food supermarket in the US] I had never even thought about veganism. Whole Foods offers a programme that any full time employee can take advantage of. They've put over ten thousand people through this programme, which is an investment of several thousand dollars per employee. The one I went to was run by Doctor Scott Stoll. They sent me for a week for free to a five star resort in Florida



on the beach. You know it's funny, I am strong in my faith and I feel like this: my wife got MS and it should have been tragic but if she hadn't, everything that God has given us would never have happened. It was because of the MS that I went to work at Whole Foods and because I was at Whole Foods I was able to attend the programme and lose over 230 pounds. Because I lost the weight I have appeared in loads of magazines, I write a magazine column and have speaking engagements all over the world. If you had asked me two years ago if this could have been possible I would have laughed, I would have said it's impossible. But you know what? I haven't done anything that anybody else can't do. I don't starve myself; I eat every three hours like clockwork. The key is what I'm eating now. Plant-based eating doesn't mean bland and boring. You can have fun but you still eat great. I have people over and we cook for them and can't believe how good it is.

So what was it about the immersion programme and your time there that made you commit?

I chose to go to the programme because I'd been to Universal Studios in Orlando with my son and I hadn't been able to fit into the rides. That really inspired me to go in the first place but you know I'll be honest, in the airport on the way to immersion, I stopped and ate a rack of ribs. It sounds bad but it's true. I didn't know how this was going to turn out. I was terrified for two reasons. I was afraid that it might not work but as scared as I was of having it not work, which I was terrified of, I was even

“If you had asked me two years ago if this could have been possible I would have laughed, I would have said it's impossible.”



more afraid of having it actually work. I had spent more than a decade and a half being obese; I knew how to handle that. Becoming normal was something I always dreamed of but I didn't know what normal would equate to in everyday life. How would I function? I know it sounds crazy but that's really how I looked at it. For me though on day two they had a class where they asked everybody to stand up and say what they thought was the reason for being where they were. I sat in the back of the room and I was like, "I'm not saying anything to anybody. I'm gonna come here and if some of the knowledge happens to sprinkle on me by accident and I get some of it, great". I was terrified. Somehow, I found myself getting up out of my seat, walking over to the microphone and sharing my story; my mum and I were very close. I was a mama's boy my entire childhood and in 2004 my mum and I had a falling out. I journal daily, but for whatever reason I never wrote down what our fight was about. You would think that I would remember, that it would be embedded in my head but to this day I still can't tell you exactly what the fight was about. I know that I was upset. I know that she was upset. I know that things went way further than it ever should have. What ended up happening was that we stopped

talking. Before that I had been talking to my mum pretty much every day and then after our fight we didn't talk for a week. A week turned into a month, a month turned into three months, three months into a year, before I knew it we weren't talking at all. My mum and I had this tradition. I'm the youngest of five kids and so on my birthday when I was young she would wake me up at 3am in the morning so we could spend time together just the two of us. She'd make us toast and put jam on it and we'd have hot cocoa and sit in the kitchen and talk at three o'clock in the morning. As I got older, when I asked her why she did it like that she told me that when I was born she remembered that it was the same kind of moment; she was holding me at the time and talking to me but it was like the rest of the world was asleep, it was only me and her. Even after I became an adult she would call me at three o'clock in the morning on my birthday and I would get up and sit in my kitchen with toast and hot chocolate and she would sit in hers and we would talk. After we fought, I remembered thinking when my birthday came along that it was okay that we hadn't talked because surely she was going to call on my birthday. But she didn't.



"It's an environmental thing, it's a compassionate thing, and it's a health thing. This is what I like to call a "*win, win, win*". It's great for us, it's great for the planet, and it's great for all the other earthlings that we share it with; you can't beat that."

From that point on I was angry, I couldn't believe that she had not called. So we continued not talking. On September 3rd, 2008 my mother died and I never got to make it right.

So, I shared this story in immersion. I didn't even know that it had been bothering me. I told this to a room full of strangers who were bawling as I was bawling. When I went back to my hotel room that night something was different; the guilt and the shame was gone and before I ever shed a pound I had the feeling that I had lost this weight I had been carrying around for years. From day two on, everything changed and I knew it. I came out of that immersion 30 pounds lighter and six inches smaller on my waist in a week.

I guess people could say that I went into the immersion programme to lose weight so that I could turn it all into a thriving enterprise, but the truth is I did it because I wanted to be able to give better hugs to my wife, to be a better father to my son and because I didn't want to die of a heart attack and leave my wife early or have a stroke and have her take care of me for years. I also did it because I was tired of living on the side-line. Everything else that has come from it has been a blessing. I didn't even want to share my story. I had spent so much time obese. When you're obese you get ignored and you get attention all at the same time. People go out of their way to act like they don't notice you, but the whole time they'd point and whisper. It's a lonely experience. People forget that it's a person they're talking to or about. At my heaviest people would make fun of me. I'd walk into a restaurant and people would stop to see what I ordered.

When the weight started coming off I realised there's 85 million people out there that are still where I was and who have no hope. I know what it's like to wake up every day

figuring this is it, there's no way to change, it's too far gone. You're basically waiting for your time on this planet to be up because you don't really feel like you can do anything to change anything. Once I started seeing results I couldn't not share, I couldn't not tell people.

When you've had people asking you what you've done, what has been their response when you said it was a plant-based, vegan diet?

I did an interview once and they made the mistake of sharing my personal email address at the bottom of the article. Once the article went up online, I started getting thousands of emails. I thought my phone was broken. I got 30,000 emails! I started going through them and people were begging me for help, they wanted to know my secret. As soon as I started telling them my secret was just a whole-food, plant-based diet and 60 minutes of exercise each day, I kid you not, some people were responding saying stuff like "well, if you don't want to tell me what you did then that's fine".

They thought that I was holding something back from them. Surely it couldn't be that I actually just ate what I'm supposed to and worked out? They thought I wasn't giving them everything, they thought it had to be more than just eating a vegan diet and working out and going to sleep on time and drinking enough water.

Since you became vegan for your health primarily, has it made you more conscious or aware of the other ways that veganism helps the animals, people and the environment?

Absolutely. Let me say this and I'm upfront with it; I didn't go vegan initially for a conscious reason. I went vegan to save my life but after I went vegan I learned

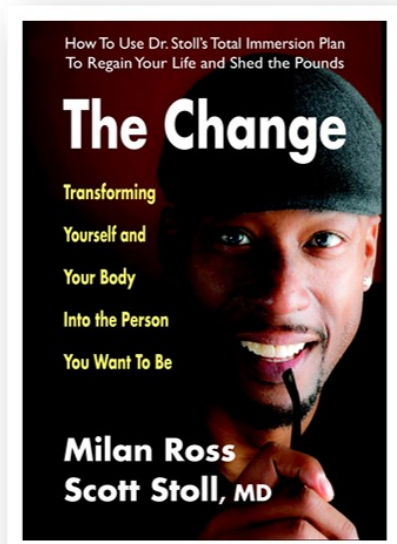
that the things we do have a huge impact on all the other animals on the planet and on our resources. It's an environmental thing, it's a compassionate thing, and it's a health thing. This is what I like to call a "win, win, win". It's great for us, it's great for the planet, and it's great for all the other earthlings that we share it with; you can't beat that.

So now I also say this though. I've seen vegan groups that are so intent with their message that it turns people off. You can't do that either. When you're screaming and throw red paint on a meat counter in a grocery store, that doesn't help the movement. What I've learnt is that when you educate people on a personal level they evolve to where they accept it on all the other levels as well. People are self-centred and it sounds bad to put it that way, but when you show them how it benefits them directly they are more receptive to the concept. In regard to health, you can teach people that you don't have to be obese; that a plant-based diet helps with diabetes, with cancer, with autoimmune disease. Health benefits might be their initial reason for going vegan but then they start doing it and they realise not only do they

feel better but their awareness grows. Now they're conscious about the unsustainability of animal agriculture. I firmly believe that it is a lifestyle and it is a lifestyle that impacts every aspect of our existence. We are products of our environment and most times people eat what they were taught to eat. Until there's a break in that chain it doesn't change and it's not that the person is bad or mean, they've just been brainwashed. We have to find a way to spread the message but we don't need to be hateful, you know what I mean?

Any final words of wisdom and encouragement?

I want anybody reading this to know one thing: if you are at home and you're thinking that you can't do this, if you're thinking that your position or your circumstances are far too bad to do this, if you're thinking that surely this can apply to everyone else but you, that's not true. Allow yourself to become fully immersed in a whole-food, plant-based diet and I want to repeat that: a whole-food, plant-based diet, not a junk-food vegan diet. The one thing I've learnt through all of this is that if you want to change your life, you have to change your lifestyle. **BV**



Milan has recently launched a range of *Full Flavor Vegan* spices, which can be purchased direct from his [website](#) and in-store at Whole Foods. Milan's book, *The Change*, which is co-authored by Dr. Scott Stoll, documents his inspirational journey, explaining how it transformed not only his body but his whole outlook on life. You can order it from his [website](#) or on [Amazon](#). You can also connect with Milan via [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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Wendy Fry

Emotional Freedom Technique for Weight Loss & Body Confidence

Imagine a really simple and easy way to eliminate food cravings, reduce weight and gain more body confidence... What will it be like for you to know you have complete control over your moods, food or booze intake, ultimately leading you to enjoy life and celebrate your body? The Emotional Freedom Technique, otherwise known as EFT or tapping, is taking the world by storm as more and more people discover its benefits.

Gary Craig created EFT, which evolved from Roger Callahan's Thought Field Therapy (TFT). Gary understood that "the cause of all negative emotions is a disruption in the body's energy system". This simple process is portable and easy to use as and when you need to stop yourself eating that extra slice of cake, when your emotions are high and you're reaching for the biscuit tin and can also be applied in situations when you want to have more body confidence.

EFT is classed as an Energy Psychology. Energy Psychology focuses on the connected relationship of energy, emotions, behaviours and health. EFT works by shifting the brain's

electrochemistry and works by stimulating energy points on the surface of the skin. EFT combines the principles of Chinese Medicine with modern psychology. Our emotional and physical health depends upon the smooth flow of energy through our body's energy meridians. Emotions affect our energy systems and when we are tuned into a negative thought, emotion, situation or event our energy system disrupts and literally responds to the thought.

By clearing and releasing emotional conflicts through EFT tapping, our energy system is -

stimulated and balances out any energy disruptions. Our energy flow is improved, and in turn our physical health and emotional wellbeing is also improved.

When emotions are running high we might find ourselves bingeing, overeating and escaping through food. Worse still we might call ourselves fat, ugly, disgusting and avoid looking in mirrors from the waist down. EFT addresses the root cause of the problem aiding you to move beyond the need to gorge and feel guilty afterwards along with the endless cycle of overeating and dieting. EFT *isn't* a diet; it's a way of life. Say "bye, bye" to the scales and make EFT your new focus!

To use EFT we tap directly on the surface of the specific 'tapping points' as shown in the diagram with light and gentle tapping movements, some people may prefer to gently rub these spots if they are using EFT in a public space. Tapping gently and stimulating these points moves the flow of energy through the entire meridian system.

EFT can be used to clear past traumas, overwhelming

There may be many things
outside of ourselves that we
cannot change; however our
inner landscapes can be re-
moulded, re-shaped and re-
created as soon as we become
aware that we have the
creativity to do so.

emotions, reduce stress and can also be used to increase relaxation, confidence happiness and joy. EFT can also be used in the moment as and when a shock may occur. Your mind and body react to a continuous flow of information coming in through your senses. Every thought you think affects your body (physiology) and emotions. Likewise every physical action affects your thinking and your mood. Thoughts can create and heighten stress, sadness, depression as well as intensify feelings of joy, happiness and love.

EFT gently aids the process of reducing in cravings leading to shift that unwanted weight and leaves you with a greater sense of body confidence and respect for yourself and your body.

EFT Craving Buster

To use EFT to manage food cravings and binges follow this process before you begin:

1. Close your eyes and imagine one specific food or drink that you crave the most
2. Image how it looks; think about the smell, the colour and the texture of it
3. Think about how it feels in your mouth, the taste of it, the feel of it on your lips, teeth and tongue
4. As you develop and think about the idea of eating it, locate where you sense this craving in your body the most (*it's different for everyone, some may sense it in their stomachs, heads, mouth or somewhere else entirely*)
5. Tune into and take your focus to this spot and ask yourself inside your own mind or out loud:
 - * Is there something that needs to be acknowledged?
 - * Is there something that needs to be healed?
 - * Is there something that needs to be cleared?
 - * Is there something that needs to be transformed?
 - * Is there something that needs filling (like a void or a whole)?
 - * If this spot were to be a feeling what would it be?

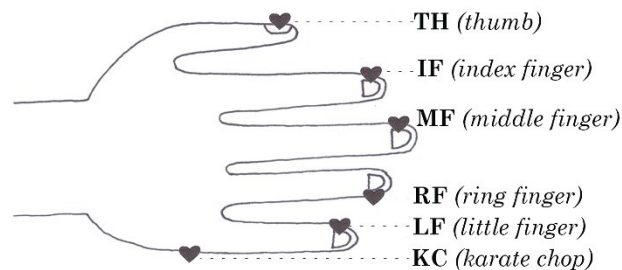
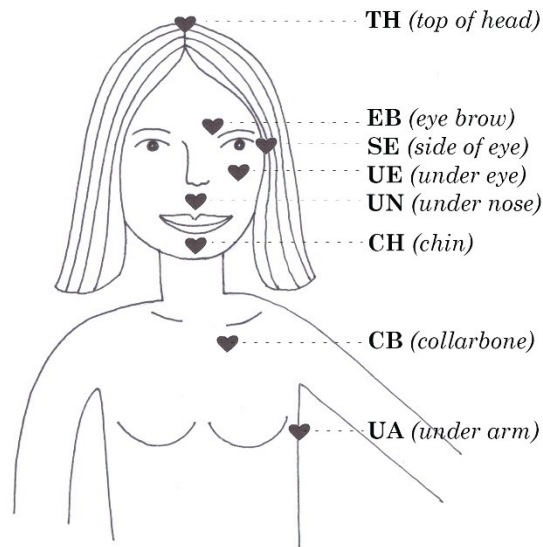
Note too if a memory comes to mind of when you have enjoyed eating this type of food (*i.e. grandmother's apple pie, being rewarded for good behaviour as a child with chocolate, drinking wine for social confidence etc.*)

When I first experienced this way of working using EFT it was very revealing. Many of my clients may be reaching out for specific foods and drink because of loneliness, fear, grief, anger, sadness disappointment etc. Whatever comes up for you is perfect for your healing and transformation, you no longer need to swallow down your emotions. Once you've gleaned the information from the above process you can apply the traditional EFT method.

EFT Tapping Points

Tap in this order...

- * Karate chop point KC
- * Top of the head TH
- * Eyebrow EB
- * Side of the eye SE
- * Under the eye UE
- * Under the nose UN
- * Under lower lip CH
- * Collar bone CB
- * Under the arm UA
- * Thumb
- * Index finger
- * Middle finger
- * Ring finger
- * Little finger



The EFT Process:

STEP 1 Recall a specific past or current problem/event that you wish to work through (use the information gained from the cravings buster technique). Be as clear as possible what the feeling, issue or problem is that you want to work on. Is the problem thought based, behaviour based, physical or emotional?

STEP 2 Determine the level of distress this brings up for you (0 not being a problem and 10 being intense). You may wish to write this down, so that you can compare the before and after scores so that you can measure the reduction in distress going down in between each tapping round.

Gather the various aspects of the problem. Where in your body do you feel the emotional issue most strongly? Does it have a colour, a shape? What does it feel like? What is its weight? Does it have a smell, a sound, a taste? We store information through our senses – visual (seeing), auditory (hearing), kinaesthetic (feeling), gustatory (taste), olfactory (smell) and the way we store a memory/emotion often relates to one or more dominant sense.

STEP 3 "SET UP": The set up is where we begin the actual EFT tapping process. While tapping with our finger tips on the karate chop point, on the side of either hand in line with the little finger, we use a 'set up statement' repeating it three times.

The traditional EFT set up statements is, "Even though I have this *name the problem or issue here*, I deeply and completely accept myself." Repeat this statement or variations of this statement on this point three times before moving on to the additional sequential tapping points. If this statement is uncomfortable for you, you may prefer to select an alternative set up statement from the choices offered further on or, make one up of your own that feels comfortable for you.

STEP 4 Follow the full tapping sequence after you have started with the karate chop point. You can tap on either side of your body with either hand. Tap round all the tapping points lightly with the finger pads in sequence, about five to seven times on each point, while repeating the reminder phrase (this is a shorter version of the problem) i.e. the issue, symptom you are

working on (this craving, this stress, this anger, this disappointment, this lack of self belief).

STEP 5 Repeat several rounds of tapping in this manner until you feel the problem starting to reduce in emotional intensity.

STEP 6 Reassess the emotional intensity of the problem using the scale 0-10.

STEP 7 Continue tapping round all points with further rounds, until the emotional craving and/or intensity reduces to a 0.

STEP 8 Now, think about the original craving/problem and see if any emotional intensity remains.

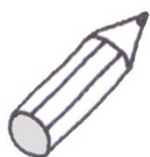
STEP 9 If any part of the craving or problem that you started with remains, work through the various aspects of the problem and persist with tapping through the tapping sequence, until the problem subsides. "Even though I have some remaining (state the problem), I deeply and completely accept myself".

Sometimes when we're tapping on a problem, it can change. It may feel as if the energy of the problem has shifted and moved around the body, some aspects of the problem, including the emotions that surface may have changed too. If necessary, to re-evaluate the problem and the aspects of it, start the procedure again from Step 1 and work through the aspects of the problem that have come up or changed as a result of tapping.

EFT will support you in dissolving and resolving the emotional overwhelm you may have been carrying, related to different areas of your life and life experiences which have been destroying your body confidence or creating a desire to over eat or hold onto unwanted weight.

Be patient with yourself and know that as long as you are tapping and using EFT to shift and change the energy around the things that have been holding you back from achieving your ideal weight and level of body confidence that's right for you, progress can be made.





Practical Body Confidence Exercise

(Use the answers from each question and apply EFT to what comes up for you).

- * **What negative beliefs, thoughts, feelings and emotions do you have about your body?**
- * **Who or what triggers these thoughts, feelings and emotions the most?** (*this could be thinking about a memory, a person you come into contact with, a social situation or a place where this happens the most frequently*)
- * **List in brief, the top three most traumatic events that you have experienced related to your body and lack of body confidence**
- * **Who or what is holding you back from loving and respecting your body?**
- * **What is preventing you from taking action to improve the way you experience your body?**
- * **Who from your past are you carrying any anger, hatred or resentment towards?**
- * **What limiting negative beliefs do you have about your body?**
- * **What limiting beliefs do you have about your level of attractiveness?** (i.e. I'm not pretty, slim, sexy enough)
- * **Who might you be comparing yourself to and is this realistic?**
- * **What positive and empowering beliefs would you like to have about yourself instead of the above?**

Use EFT to clear, transform and heal the parts of you that may be feeling less than good enough. Take the pressure off yourself to look like the air brushed visions we see in the media. Talk to your body with tender loving care, it hears everything you say. Creating long lasting change to weight

management and improving the perception of your body image will be worth doing. You have an opportunity right now to treat your body as a temple, an opportunity to view yourself differently. These opportunities bring forth the ability to learn to respect, love and honour your body completely. When we learn to be more loving and considerate to ourselves first and foremost, our inner mirror reflects to the outside world that we are happy, content and our confidence soars! **BV**



Wendy Fry is an
Emotional
Health & Love
Relationship
Consultant and
author of 'Find YOU,
*Find LOVE: Get to the heart of love
and relationships using EFT*'.

If you need help in using EFT to manage your weight and improve your body confidence, Wendy works in person in Sutton, Surrey, UK and also internationally over Skype. Visit her [website](#) and connect with her via [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).




Reaching our Full Potential

Overcoming Limiting Beliefs

By Jennifer Cain





he problems we think we have in life are rarely what they appear to be on the surface. To get to the bottom of what's really troubling us it's necessary to understand what our core-beliefs are and how they affect our thoughts, feelings, emotions and behaviours. With ThetaHealing® - a technique that uses applied kinesiology (muscle testing) to identify subconscious belief patterns - we can tap in to the wisdom of a Higher Power (God, Source, or Universe) to aid us in removing limiting beliefs and replacing them with something more conducive to happiness and healing. A limiting belief is something that we may not be aware we believe, but it has a major effect on us at a subconscious level. In Theta we compare the mind to an iceberg; the ten percent above the surface of the water (the bit you can see) is the conscious mind and the rest (ninety percent) is what's going on underneath the surface - this represents the subconscious mind.

Coming in to 2016, many of us want to make life changes and create resolutions. We can often feel disappointed when we don't stick to our resolutions and give up. Sometimes there are more subconscious blocks going on preventing us from making these desired changes and it can often feel that we are cycling through mud until we start to look at the underlying causes of why we are having trouble changing our lives.

People often think that if they say and do all the "right things" people will like them and life will go the way they want. But we are all intuitive beings and others can sense if something we believe is out of accord with how we are presenting ourselves. When it comes to our core values, there is often an overlap between what we may want to believe and how we really feel around a situation - and that's okay. It's important that we aren't afraid of that belief and don't get caught up in the "drama" of the belief; just send it to the light and replace it with something else. There are many reasons why we may have a subconscious belief that does not align with how we want to live in this lifetime, but through willingness and faith that can easily be changed.

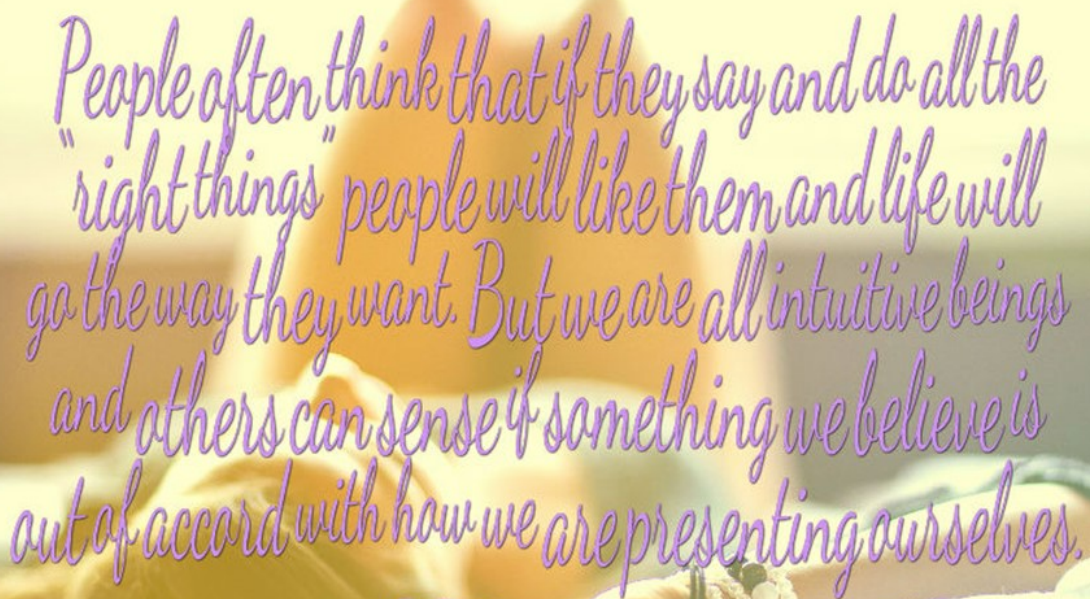
In my experience, I have found ThetaHealing® to be the quickest, most efficient and lasting way to remove my own

limiting beliefs and invite new ones in. However, if that does not resonate with you there are many other methods, some more mainstream and scientifically verified such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), that you can try. You can also go to a counsellor, therapist or a coach to help you work through issues and trauma from the past. In ThetaHealing® we work *alongside* medical professionals and other health practitioners. What is right for one person may not work for another and it is important to follow your own inner guidance when choosing the best person or modality to work with in moving forward.

It is very possible to actively choose the new beliefs and feelings we wish to have in our lives. We can never guarantee any outcome when it comes to this work as it is not an exact science - it is a similar philosophy to the science of Psychology. The study of people will never be able to be put in a set formula, but the evidence I have seen in my own life and that of my clients so far is that they have been able to change their limiting beliefs and create more harmony and positivity in their lives.

In doing this work, it can be fascinating discovering some of the strange things that we believe! Thankfully the use of muscle testing in ThetaHealing® gives some physical indication that we do actually hold a particular belief, otherwise it could be difficult to get our heads around it.

Using ThetaHealing®, we attempt to dig down to what is called the "bottom belief" as this saves time in releasing many connected limiting beliefs that are attached to it, instead of spending hours clearing lots of connected beliefs individually. We do this in a sort of interview and discussion process where the practitioner receives intuitive messages about where the problem lies - perhaps in some childhood memory or trauma from the past - and the client discovers for themselves what feelings and beliefs come up around those memories. The Higher Power guides the entire process and the practitioner acts as a witness to the healing - they are not "doing" the healing themselves.



People often think that if they say and do all the "right things" people will like them and life will go the way they want. But we are all intuitive beings and others can sense if something we believe is out of accord with how we are presenting ourselves.

Here are a few examples of some surprisingly common "bottom beliefs" that the founder of ThetaHealing®, Vianna Stibal, has discovered over her years of practice:

"I am nothing" - "I am doomed" - "I am evil"

Pretty intense stuff, huh? But it's amazing how quickly things can shift for people when we release these subconscious fears. As a practitioner, I can tell when a client believes something because when I ask them how they feel when they say a particular belief out loud (even if it sounds strange to them) they are surprised by how much emotion it arouses in them. We then use the muscle testing to further confirm that this is the belief that is contributing to the issue at hand. If a belief or fear has been successfully cleared the person will feel neutral about it when asked and the muscle testing will test negatively whereas before it was positive. These are indicators of a belief change. If the person gets hysterically excited or still feels nervous or anxious, there is more digging work to be done to release the belief.

The best recommendation I could give to someone looking to identify and heal from their limiting beliefs would be to use applied kinesiology and clear them by working with a trained ThetaHealing® practitioner. You can research videos on applied kinesiology on YouTube and there are many practitioners worldwide who are ready to help (the link to the official ThetaHealing® website is at the bottom of the article).

In ThetaHealing® a person accepts new, empowering beliefs in to their subconscious by saying "Yes" out loud. I would like to give you the opportunity to receive some healing by reading the following statements and saying "Yes" out loud in order to

receive the healing. Give it a try! It is the Universe's New Year gift to you. In Theta we use the term "Creator" to describe the Higher Power or God.

- * Can the Creator show you that you are loved, loving and loveable on all levels of your being?
- * Can the Creator teach you that it is possible for you to make positive changes to your life?
- * Can the Creator teach you that you are worthy of making positive changes in your life?

Simply say "Yes" out loud and you will receive this healing. **BV**

Jennifer is a teacher and student of the metaphysical text "A Course in Miracles". She is also a healer and an empowerment coach, offering spiritual mentorship and ThetaHealing®. You can find out more about Jennifer's work at www.risegoddess.com and you can also connect with her on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/risegoddess).



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10 Natural Ways to get Constipation Relief

By Dr. Laura Koniver, M.D.

A vegan, whole-foods diet is a great way to support our health, but even though we're getting lots of fibre from fruit and veges, there still may be times when things don't flow as well as they should do.

Moving our bowels is also essential on an energetic level, because this is an important way that we process and release old, unwanted, toxic emotions from our body - out with the old, in with the new! If we can't poop, that energetic release process gets slowed way down. We can fix it naturally though.

Constipation isn't really a topic that people like to talk about, so if you need to feel lighter and freer then why not give these 10 holistic ideas a go? Here are my top tips for easy bowel movements...

Recent medical studies reveal that drinking water has more of an impact on encouraging healthy bowel movements than fibre supplement or exercise.



Water

Recent medical studies reveal that drinking water has more of an impact on encouraging healthy bowel movements than fibre supplement or exercise. In fact, I'd go as far as to say fibre supplements clog people up more often than they help. Step away from the fibre supplements, make sure you are walking each day to stimulate bowel mobility, and drink more water. In general, a constipated person is a dehydrated person. You can fix that right now — go grab a glass of water. (I remove the fluoride from my drinking water and [this blog post](#) explains why!)

Walking

The way we encourage the bowels to start waking back up post-operatively after bowel surgery is to get the patient up out of bed and walking the hallways. Walking increases bowel mobility, which goes hand in hand with producing a bowel movement. If you want more frequent bowel movements, you gotta move more frequently, simple as that. Evaluate if you are walking enough each day and resolve to find more ways to walk further today.

Abdominal Massage

Every morning before I even get out of bed I do two things; I say a prayer of gratitude for my life and for my children, and I give my tummy a quick abdominal massage. Giving your stomach a gentle but deep, stimulating massage will wake up your bowels and is almost guaranteed to ensure a morning bowel movement for you later on that morning. Just gently rub your stomach in one big clockwise circle before you rise each morning and you will give your gut peristalsis a nudge in the right direction, literally.

Omega 3s

Use any excuse to get in more Omega 3s in the form of castor oil, flax seeds, algae or chia seeds. These supplements will not only help soothe the inflammation in your body from head to toe, inside and out, but as an added bonus it will soften your bowel movements as well. Just take enough to produce soft and easy bowel movements. If yours are too soft, just back down until you have titrated the perfect dose for you.

Magnesium

Like Vitamin D, many of us are Magnesium deficient and don't even know it. Magnesium supports nerve, muscle and heart function as well as a host of other biological functions and one of the welcome side effects of supplementing your magnesium level is softer, more frequent bowel movements. Start with 50mg daily and go up to 400 mg if necessary to find relief from your constipation.

Probiotics

Shown to have a huge mind/body connection, probiotics are still underutilised in medicine today. From eliminating colic in infants, decreasing eczema flares in children, right through to decreasing anxiety and depression in adults; probiotics are so supportive to our entire body, not just our gut. One thing is for sure, probiotics are necessary for our digestion and health. So if you are constipated, I can assure you that your bowels could use the support of more probiotics.



Digestive Enzymes

If your body could use a digestive boost to help break down foods, decrease abdominal distention and pain, and regulate your bowel movements better, give digestive enzymes a try. Often as we get older our body gets sluggish about producing enough digestive enzymes, or the ones we do produce are hampered by gall bladder sludge. Taken with meals, some patients find that digestive enzymes make a world of difference, decreasing abdominal pain after meals, decreasing bloating/distention, and smoothing out the entire digestive process.

Praise Your Poop

I'm serious! It took me years to release chronic constipation and here's how I did it... An energy healer once told me to give myself a mental "high-5" every time I poop because when we go we are literally DUMPING off old unwanted emotional baggage. It's so true. Every time we poop, we are unloading outdated baggage, old mind-frames that no longer serve us, and allowing room for the new. Look at pooping as the powerful energetic and physical release that it is!

Orgasm

Getting things flowing in our root chakra as a whole will help stimulate the release of our bowels as well. If you can't get the bowels to open, you can encourage the flow by stimulation of another kind... orgasm. While feeling

constipated sure isn't the sexiest feeling in the world, next time you want to increase the flow of release through your root chakra, give having an orgasm a try. Want other ways to stimulate the flow of your root chakra? Read this post [here...](#)

Squatting

Squatting is actually the right way to have a bowel movement. The modern toilet (while doing us lots of favours in sanitation) has done us absolutely NO favour in facilitating healthy bowel movements. Hop over and [read this article](#) right now — it's important — and find out why squatting is the ultimate solution for constipation.

I hope these ideas, tools and resources for further reading have helped support your next healthy bowel movement. *To your bowel mobility and FREEDOM! BV*

To find out more about Dr. Koniver's work visit her website, [The Intuition Physician](#) and connect with her on [Facebook](#).





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CREATING NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS THAT STICK!



By Emma Letessier

Yes, it's that time again! The New Year inspires us to reflect on all that went well the previous year and aim high for the coming months. Many of us will have set ourselves New Year's resolutions but did you know that 92% of New Year's resolutions fail? Why is that? Well, it could be that we're not goal-setting right.

Let's be honest, most of us set New Year's resolutions that we feel we ought to do, but that we aren't overly passionate about, and in most cases they're pretty vague. Time Magazine listed the top ten most commonly broken New Year's resolutions as being: *lose weight and get fit; quit smoking; learn something new; eat healthier and diet; get out of debt and save money; spend more time with family; travel to new places; be less stressed; volunteer, and drink less.*

Have you set any of these as your goals for 2016? They all sound very worthy of New Year's resolutions but they're lacking a bit in detail. Maybe you've already failed your New Year's resolutions, or you're in doubt that you're going to be able to keep them up. Fear not! Do yourself a favour and sit down for 15 minutes with a pen and paper, run through the

following and join the eight percent of people who do actually succeed...

Setting the right goals

The key to ensuring your success is to create a well formed goal or resolution, one that you are truly motivated to achieve. If your heart really isn't in it, or you're doing it for someone else and not yourself, chances are that you'll drop out midway. Make sure your goal is positive, relevant to you and empowering. Once you've set your goal – it could be losing weight and getting fit – ask yourself some of the following questions to help determine your motivation, increase your determination and decide whether or not your goal is good as it is or if you need to define it better.

- * What will this goal give me?
- * How will achieving this goal affect other parts of my life?
- * How will I know that I have achieved this goal?
- * If I don't achieve this goal how will I feel?
- * When do I want to achieve it by?



"A goal without
a plan is just a
wish"

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

Where am I now in relation to my goal?

Taking the time to assess how far you currently stand from your goal is a great way to gain insight into some of the challenges you might face and also help you to identify what skills, knowledge and experience you already possess to help you on your way. This part of the goal setting is all about raising your awareness. Evaluating your current situation can really help you to discover and create new and inspiring ways of achieving your goal, so it's important not to skip this step. Here are some questions to ask yourself:

- * Where am I now with my goal?
- * What obstacles do I face?
- * What resources do I have to help me?
- * Is there a time I have done something similar? What did I learn from this experience that can be applied now?
- * What is my main concern about this goal?

What are my options?

When it comes to looking at the options (or actions) that you could choose to help you succeed in your goal, the more you write down, the better. Start with all the obvious things first and then allow yourself to get creative and think outside the box. Even if you think you know what you'll do, don't skip this step! Write down as many options as you possibly can. These questions will help get your creative juices flowing:

- * What could I do that would move me one step closer to achieving my goal?

- * What could I do if I couldn't fail?
- * What advice would my role model give me?
- * If I had all the time, money, energy, power in the world what could I do?
- * If someone came to me and asked for advice for the very same goal, what would I say?

What's the way forward?

Now that you've written down all your options (no matter how unlikely you might think they are) it's time to decide on which one or ones you will take forward. You need to be really specific here as this will help you to commit and take responsibility for your success. Here are some questions that will help:

- * Which option feels right to me?
- * When and how will I do this?
- * On a scale of 1-10 how committed am I to this action?
- * How enthusiastic am I about this action?
- * What could stop me from taking this action forward?

Going through these four steps will increase the likelihood of succeeding in our New Year's resolutions. Remember, our dreams will remain just that unless we combine powerful purpose with a solid plan of action! You can do it! **BV**





Overcoming Cancer

My Holistic Healing Journey

Dr. Ruby Lathon had always believed that the body can heal itself and in January 2007 she was given the opportunity to put that belief to the test. When she received the news that she had thyroid cancer, she resolved to find an alternative to surgery and began a quest to heal her body naturally. She discovered how to use food as medicine and embarked on a spiritual journey of self-awareness, inner healing, and a deepened faith in God. Taking a hiatus from a successful engineering career, Dr. Lathon began teaching others about the healing powers of plant-based nutrition. We spoke with her to find out more...



How would you describe your diet and lifestyle before your cancer diagnosis?

Before the diagnosis, I was really focused on exercise and weight loss, so I was eating what I thought was a very healthy diet. I was a vegetarian and was following my personal trainer's suggestions on what to eat but I was eating a lot of boxed and processed food, and a lot of dairy and eggs for protein. Even though I thought it was the healthy version of things, I really wasn't eating many fresh foods. I was on the go a lot, so the majority of what I would eat would be something I could just grab and go; from cereal bars to a frozen, "healthy" microwaved dinner.

Also at the time I was working with a small engineering company that I helped build and the partnership wasn't going well. I knew that I needed to leave, but didn't have a clear plan. I was travelling constantly and I was stressed because I was doing a lot. When you're working with a small business you tend to do a little of everything; marketing, software development, sales presentations, plus all the little pieces in between. So stress was definitely taking a toll on me.

Looking back, what do you think was the major thing that was limiting your healing potential?

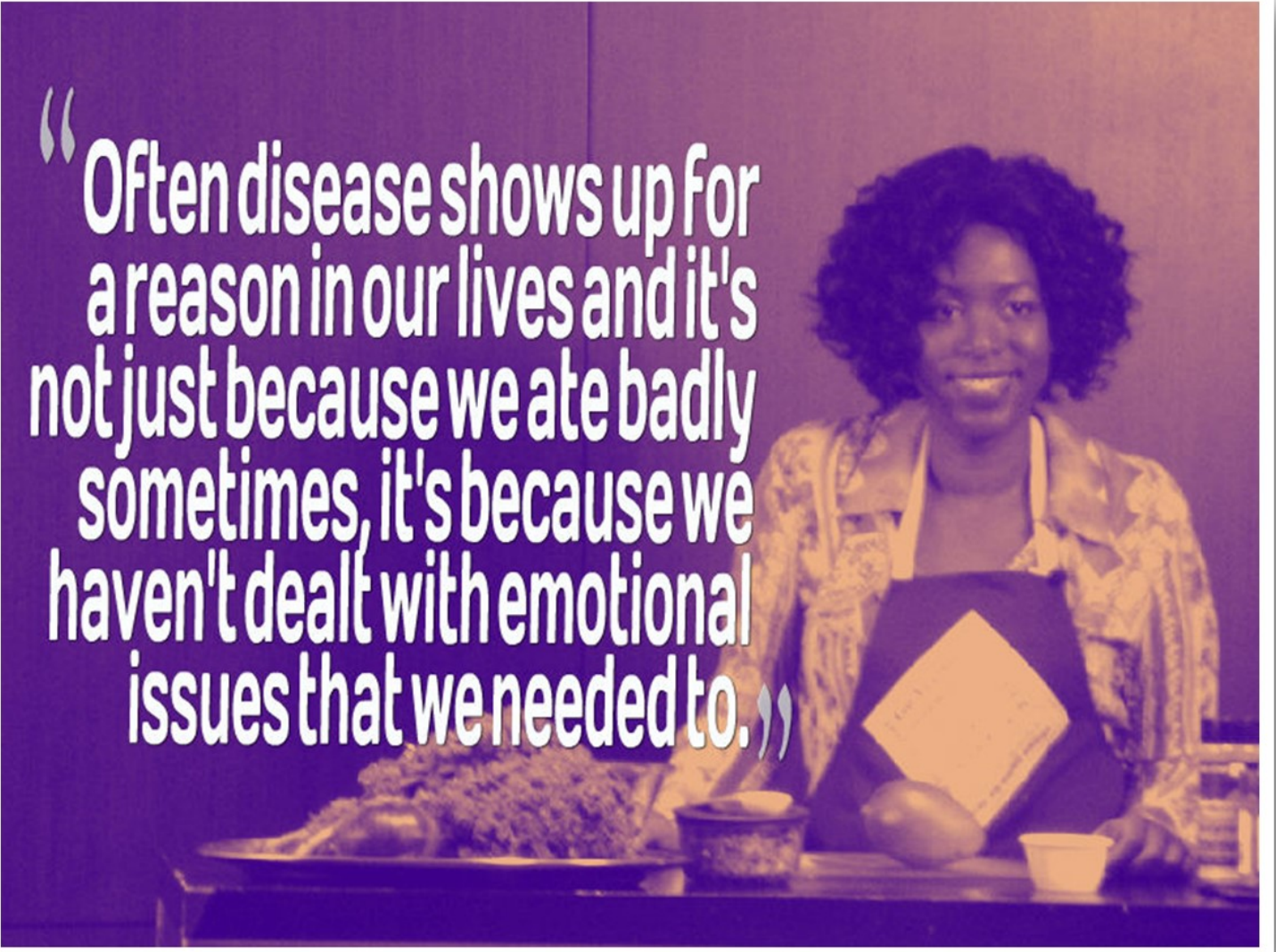
I think there are a couple of things that were probably limiting my healing potential. One was just lack of knowledge about how to heal. As someone who'd come in contact with people who had healed themselves naturally from cancer and other illnesses, I always thought that if I ever got a serious illness I would try the natural approach, just because I believed their testimonials and it made sense to me. But I was someone who had never really had any health issues other than acne so I had never researched how illness occurs or what to do. Once I chose to take the natural approach, the biggest barrier for me was the emotional piece. I really jumped on the nutritional piece right away and I understood the need for stress reduction but really getting into the mind and body connection was a little bit of a barrier for me. Being a very logical person, I

needed to know exactly why it would work. So it required a lot more research and just relaxing and trusting my intuition; learning how to get in tune with the body by listening to it and understanding that it actually gives you signals. I wasn't looking after my emotional health earlier on, which I now realise was a bit of a barrier to my healing but once I got over that hurdle things started to fall in place.

Did you experience any fear in making the decision to heal naturally on your own and if so, how did you overcome it?

Initially I did. It was a mix between defiance and fear because the doctors were telling me to do surgery and that was really the only conventional treatment they were recommending for me. That meant removing my thyroid completely and replacing the function of the thyroid with medication. To me that sounded like such an extreme option; to remove a functioning organ that was working fine otherwise and then depending upon a medication for the rest of my life. Something inside me just said, "No, I'm not doing that". Because I felt that so strongly I immediately started researching my options. Also, the endocrinologist, who was very negative, initially helped build that defiance because he told me that I could do what I wanted for a couple of months and he was still going to schedule the surgery a few months out. He was pretty much taking charge of my life right then. I was like, "Wait a minute; I think I get to decide that". He said I could do what I wanted but no one's ever been healed naturally from thyroid cancer. To me it almost sounded like the gauntlet had been thrown down.

So I just had this determination that stemmed from defiance but at the same time I had to come to grips with the possibility that the natural approach might not work. Fortunately the type of cancer I had was slow growing so I had time to change courses if I really needed to. I decided that I was going to do everything I possibly could within my control and if it didn't work I would do the surgery as a last resort; at least then I would be able



“Often disease shows up for a reason in our lives and it's not just because we ate badly sometimes, it's because we haven't dealt with emotional issues that we needed to.”

to do it with peace knowing that I took charge and did everything I possibly could.

I had to let go of the fear and then I had to get rid of negative people, particularly physicians. I changed doctors and assembled a team that supported the approach I wanted to take. Beyond that, prayer really helped me get over the fear. I put it in God's hands. I trusted that I wouldn't have more than I could handle and that's what really got me through.

We're not taught to take charge of our own health anymore. How important is that?

I work with people who have diagnoses that they don't understand, they just know the name of the illness. I tell them that they really need to know what is going on. They need to ask more questions and ask for their charts because it's highly important. I always asked the doctors to give me my chart. Then I was able to look at them and that's how I found out that my thyroid was actually shrinking to normal size by comparing my charts from a few months earlier to a current test. It

wasn't because my doctor actually looked at it and told me. If I hadn't been looking at my own charts I wouldn't have known that and that's what helped me continue on the journey to heal.

How did your family and friends react to the decision that you made?

My family was supportive. I explained to them what I was going to do and they were concerned but they were very positive. They never discouraged me from taking the natural path, they were there every step of the way. My friends on the other hand, were more sceptical. But, I know they were coming from a place of concern. I felt a little bit alone out there because most of my family lived far away and it was just me going through it but I had their support and that helped a lot.

What kind of advice would you give to people that feel like they're on their own without support after they've made their decision?

I had a friend who was studying to be a naturopathic-



doctor and she was totally in my corner and really helped walk me through it. Having her to advise me on a lot of things was really empowering. I also had a really good team of people who believed in the holistic approach and that really helped a lot. So I think it's important to find at least one knowledgeable person to support you because it can be a very daunting task and it's important to not be fearful that you're not doing the right thing. There are a number of holistic physicians, naturopathic doctors, and chiropractors who follow holistic methods. You want support from someone who's had real experience with helping someone to heal.

What things did you do as part of your healing protocol?

I switched to a plant-based diet and that was based on my research. I found over and over how a completely plant-based, whole-food diet heals the body. So I got rid of all of the boxed, processed foods and dairy that I was eating. My refrigerator went from containers to fresh produce. I also started juicing everyday because it's very powerful for healing the body. I had the benefit of going to a lifestyle treatment centre in Alabama for about three weeks to learn how to use food as medicine and that really gave me the jumpstart on what to do; learning how to boost the immune system with foods like garlic and leeks and onions and lots of greens, and using herbal teas that help build the immune system. One that's very common for cancer is Essiac tea. Then I started focusing on supplements that would help build the body like shitake mushroom, algae water, vitamin c and systemic enzymes to help reduce inflammation, flax oil for omega 3 fatty acids.

Are there any significant moments that you can pinpoint during your healing journey?

For the first five to six months, I was very anxious about the process. I'd go for my ultrasound and I'd be very nervous, hoping that the tumour was shrinking

and thinking that it should be gone by now. It was stressful. I realised I needed to let go of that stress and follow what felt right. So I took a vacation with my sister on a beach in Mexico because I needed to get away and unplug and stop all the research. As I was sitting there on the beach I knew that I had to let go, relax, cut down on what I was doing and believe, truly believe in the process. I had to let the stress go and allow my body to heal. So I came up with a more simplified nutrition plan where I really focused on what my body really needed to heal; boost the immune system, reduce inflammation, eat healthy food, that's it. Then the rest of the time I focused on meditation and visualisation and once I did that everything was different. I just relaxed and I felt good, I felt empowered. That's when I started seeing things like my thyroid shrinking; that was the turning point - really trusting the process and not allowing stress to worsen the process.



Click here to watch
Dr. Ruby's plant-
based, whole food
recipe videos.



So acknowledging the mind, body, spirit connection is a really important part of the healing process?

Exactly, that to me is the key. You can take all the supplements you want but if you're super stressed then you're counteracting those things so it has to be a holistic approach. Often disease shows up for a reason in our lives and it's not just because we ate badly sometimes, it's because we haven't dealt with emotional issues that we needed to. For me, I needed to learn how to speak up more. Even though I had this defiance, I was also the consummate peacekeeper and didn't say what I needed to say and the thyroid, when there is an expanding goiter, can eventually interfere with your vocal chords if it grows too large. I started learning about this and I realised that it was teaching me that I need to learn to speak up and defend myself. Looking at life circumstances that are going on when an illness presents itself, even if it's been going for years, can be really telling about what we need to do during the healing process to deal with things and to change those things for good in order to stay well.

So tell us about how you got the all-clear...

I was monitoring my thyroid via ultrasound. A way to monitor my progress would be to see if the cancerous tumour was shrinking and going away, but it wasn't, it was staying exactly the same. After about twelve months I'd been going through this process and I asked the doctor if we could re-biopsy the tumour because based on the research that I'd done, oftentimes the body just encapsulates things and turns it from cancerous to benign even though the tumour is still there. Reluctantly he did the biopsy and a week later the results came back and showed that not only were some of the other nodules on my thyroid benign but the previously cancerous one was as well. So right there in front of me he changed my diagnosis from follicular thyroid cancer to nodular thyroid - I no longer had cancer! I was overjoyed. I literally wished I could have done cartwheels right there in his office, that's how happy I was.

"It's never too late to change your diet or your lifestyle. A

lot of people have had miraculous recoveries even in late stage diseases."



So what are you doing to help people now that are going through a similar experience to the one you had?

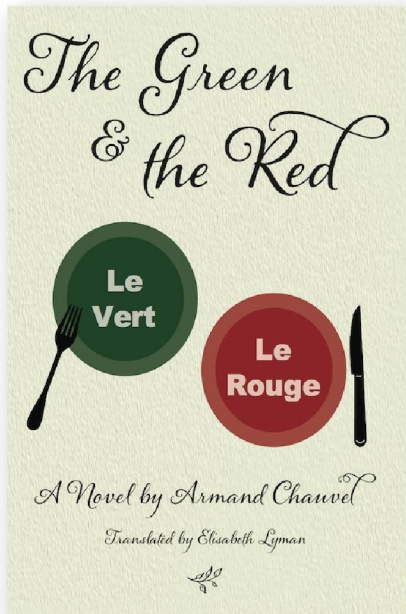
A large part of what I do is education; I give lots of talks, workshops, classes, seminars on holistic health, healing from cancer, building the immune system and the importance of the food we eat. I provide nutritional coaching, do quite a few cooking and nutrition classes, including the cooking show the "Veggie Chest", and I also work with other practitioners who handle other pieces of this puzzle. Sometimes we need a little bit more than just nutritional intervention, we need a doctor who knows how to take a natural approach to healing as well, so I work with holistic physicians, and with another naturopathic doctor, and with other people who deal with more the emotional side of things to bring all those elements together. Depending on what people need we can help them on any front. But the emphasis is on educating people to give them the tools they need to start the healing process or to stay well.

Is there a particular message you want readers to take away from your story?

I want people to know that what I did is accessible to anyone, that you can do the same thing. It's just about making that decision first and then getting the information. It's never too late to change your diet or your lifestyle. A lot of people have had miraculous recoveries even in late stage diseases. Eating healthy, supplementing and juicing is going to be beneficial regardless of where you are in the healing process. I didn't overcome my health issues because I'm super special, it's because I made a determined decision to do it and anyone can decide to do it as well. **BV**

To find out more about Dr. Ruby Lathon's work, including recipes, details on where she'll be appearing and how you can work with her and her team, visit her [website](#). You can also connect with her via [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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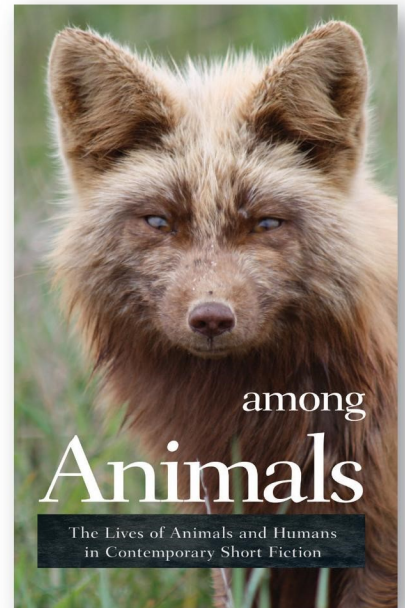
—The Goose

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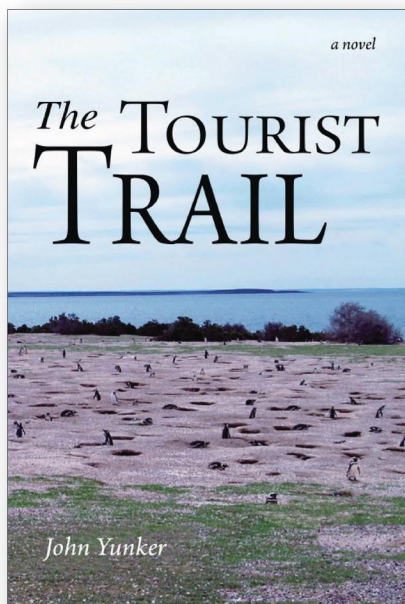
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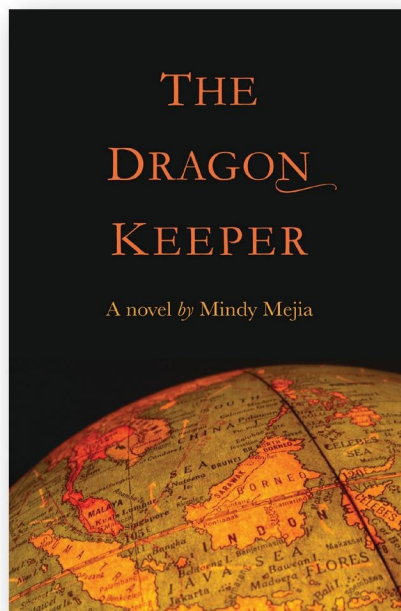
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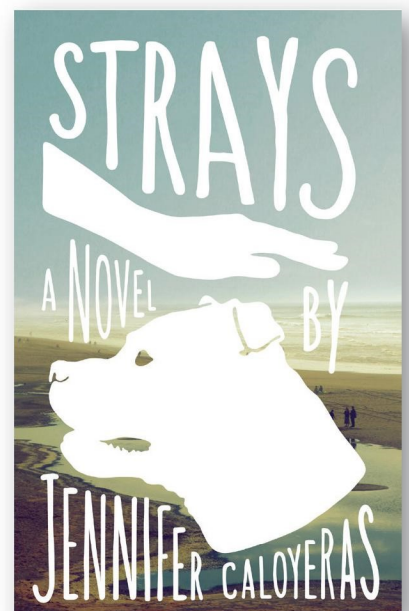
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Shaun Monson

Not the Same But Equal

Writer and director of Earthlings, Shaun Monson's latest offering is a powerful exploration of humanity's range and depth of capability; from joy, love and compassion through to anger, hate and despair. Unity gives hope for a transformation of humanity from 'living by killing to living by loving', with a clear and simple portrayal of the interconnectedness of all life. We spoke with Shaun to find about more his experience working on Earthlings and Unity and his thoughts on inspiration, consciousness and effective outreach.



You became vegetarian in the 90's after watching footage of pigs being slaughtered, but what was it that ultimately led you to becoming vegan?

Well, I think it's different for each person and I can say that with some degree of authority because I've seen people after they've watched *Earthlings* and their evolution after that is by degree. With some people it's immediate; some people can see that footage, as you probably know, and it still doesn't quite move them for whatever reason. They've been living a certain way for so long that their identity with a meat-based diet is more deeply ingrained and it just takes a little more time. I always look at it as a farmer planting seeds. He feeds, waters and nurtures them all equally and some don't grow right away as others do. So with me, I stopped eating meat right away but the dairy and the fish, I didn't give those up instantly. I just kind of lost my appetite for them and then it came pretty quickly after that. The ignorant thinking with dairy is they're not killing the cows - which they are ultimately - but the mind always looks for a way, the path of least resistance. The things that feel to us to be more removed are easier to justify and that's one of the issues we addressed in *Earthlings*. We talk about separation based on form and how we tell ourselves that this separation is okay over here because the form appears to be so different and so removed from our own. I think there is no end to the justification in the mind when it comes to resisting change.

Yes, exactly. We've been conditioned and it's not always an instantaneous change regardless of what evidence is put in front of you. Although speaking to a lot of people, *Earthlings* is one of the few tools that has the ability to convert someone overnight, so I

think you've done something pretty revolutionary there...

Without taking credit for that, it's just they saw the footage as it was composed in *Earthlings* but someone else may well have also gotten that data too and created another film. I just love that the footage speaks to people and really gets through to them. *Earthlings* is one vehicle for that information, it certainly isn't the last word. Hopefully there will be more films just like it but I am grateful to hear that it makes such an impact because when I first released it I was told by a lot of people - particularly industry people - that there would never be an audience for it. Who would willingly sit down, even if it was just for 90 minutes, and watch something like this? No one would want to. I think there's even a line in the film where Joaquin says, '*Who wants to look? No one wants to look at this*'. So the fact that it's in at least 40 languages worldwide and continues ten years later - because it's a pretty crude film, it's very small budget, it's not high definition - and the fact that humankind is willing to watch, to me speaks so well of humanity; it's beautiful. I often have people ask me if I have hope for humanity and I say absolutely. Look at *Earthlings*, this brutal, awful, horrible picture that people are watching and changing from. It gives me great hope for people.



"I often have people ask me if I have hope for humanity and I say absolutely. Look at *Earthlings*, this brutal, awful, horrible picture that people are watching and changing from. It gives me great hope for people."

just can't not do it. You just can't put it to rest. So I just dove into it and found my stride along the way.

I know that when you set out to make *Earthlings* you asked yourself, 'Who am I to do this?' I think it's quite a common fear for people that want to make a difference. How were you able to overcome that?

I've always wanted to be a film director and was writing screen plays and trying to break into the industry all through my 20s and into my 30s. When the inspiration for *Earthlings* hit me I wanted to be able to combine all the animal rights footage into one piece. At the time, there were several groups doing undercover filming. PETA, for instance, would have a video on the circus, another group had one on fur and then someone else would have a video on animal testing or rodeos or something. The idea for *Earthlings* to me just seemed so simple. Why not just make one kind of visual encyclopedia where the whole picture is documented? And then I started thinking, well I'm not an animal rights organisation. I don't have donors, orders and a big following. Who am I to do this? I just had a love for filmmaking and had been filming my whole life. But from a content point of view I was questioning if I was qualified enough to put something like *Earthlings* together. The thing is, is that when you have that kind of inspiration - like a calling or whatever you want to refer to it as - whatever it comes from, it's so overpowering that even in the face of the odds or personal doubt you

I've heard you refer to it as '*nagging inspiration*'. Do you have any belief about where that comes from or how to explain it?

I guess I'll say spirituality or consciousness; just something more than mind and body. During the writing of *Unity* it became so clear to me that we are more than just our mind and body. As we say in the movie, the body forms entirely on its own in the womb, meaning that in the womb we don't actually consciously focus on developing our lungs, our spleen, our spine, our toes, our nails. We weren't willing it to happen, it happens of its own accord. So I started thinking about why people identify completely with their mind and their bodies and yet they can't control their minds and they don't really control the functions of their bodies. We sleep a third of our lives, where we have dreams which we don't understand. So there's something more than just these five senses and this mind and body, without having to talk about religion and any particular organised belief - system. I think there are dormant things in us that are ultimately awakened. For example, a person who wasn't a vegan, who became a vegan and now can't imagine themselves before being non-vegan, that aspect of themselves was always inside and it was just awakened, it was just brought forward either by circumstance, experience, knowledge, insight, a companion, or any-



"There's an energy to everything that goes beyond this physical life and I don't know why in 2015, 2016 that is still a revolutionary, radical idea."

number of variables. So I'm very interested now in inspiration because I'd like to think it's a higher part of myself that's unfolding or being uncovered from within and I try to listen to it even though it may seem like with *Earthlings*, it's pushing me in a direction that may seem a little insurmountable for me.

Yes, that's interesting. I like that way of describing it because sometimes it can be a little bit 'woo-woo' and it freaks people out...

You know what's funny about "woo-woo-ness" and "new age-ness"? The simple truth is that one hundred years from now everybody here is going to be gone and a whole new crop of people is going to be walking around. We are passing through and we have sensations we experience beyond the five senses such as love, such as inspiration, such as *Deja Vu*. There are things that occur to us that are beyond sight, smell, touch, sound etc. and I think these are spiritual components that are right in front of us. In fact, everything in the world of form, everything and I mean everything, is passing, is temporary, even the universe. It doesn't matter if you believe in the Garden of Eden or if you believe in evolution; at some point there was nothing and then there was this. Everything in the material world is merely superimposed over the immaterial, over something else and we're passing through and that's not religion, that's fact. It's just like the atom; 94.5 percent empty, 5.5 percent form. There's an energy to everything that goes beyond this physical life and I don't know why in 2015, 2016 that is still a revolutionary, radical idea. It's

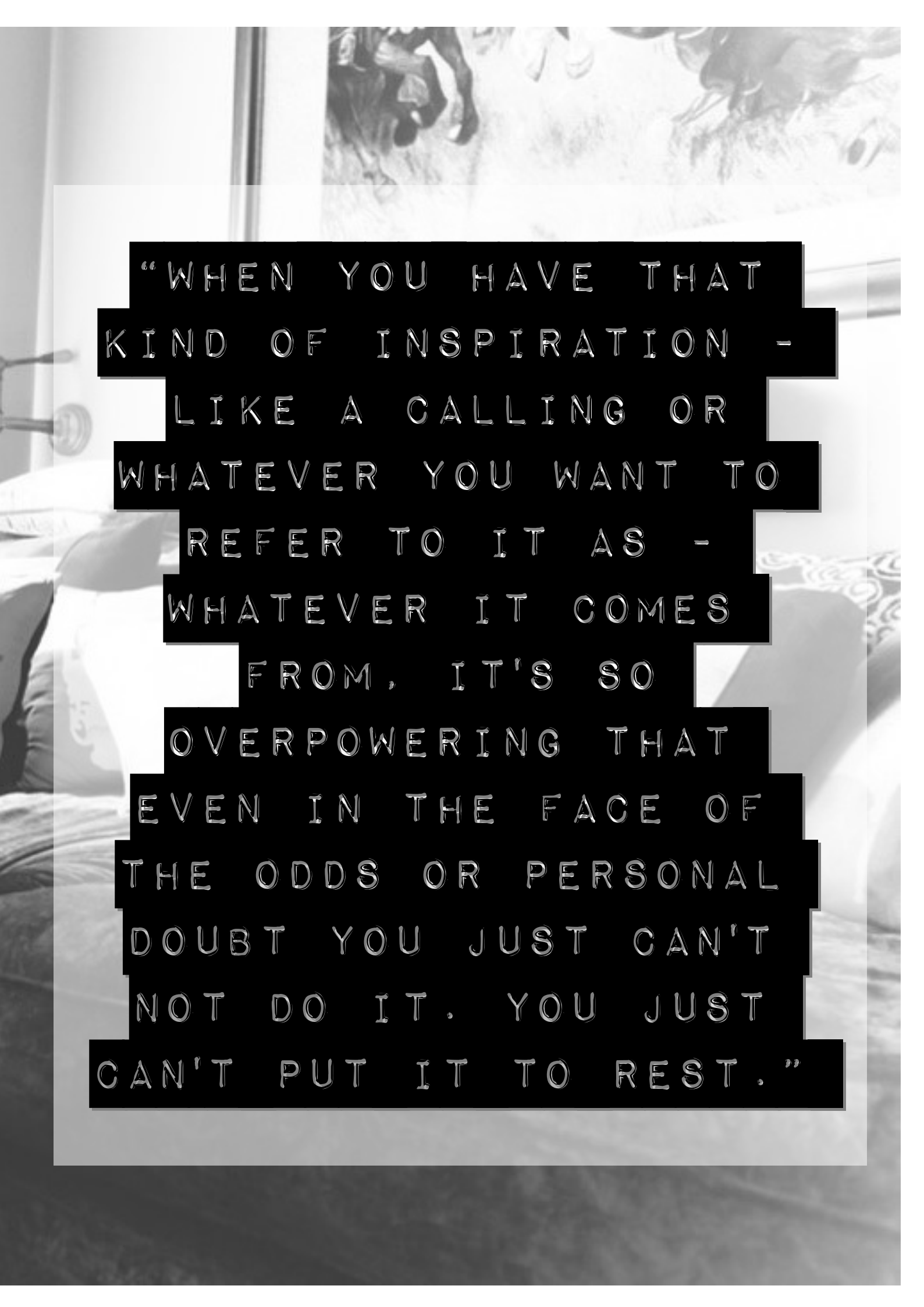
right in front of us so that's why in *Unity*, I wove this message into the narrative and I got a lot of flak for it, even from someone in my closest circle. They're like, '*what are you doing going off into this stuff for? Why don't you talk about the concrete stuff?*' And it's because the concrete stuff keeps coming and going. The concrete stuff keeps passing through. We have to go deeper and further, which is the whole point of *Unity*. It's just beholding the world, beholding all these expressions of life, beholding all these forms and not wanting to possess it, not wanting to criticise it. If we can live by loving instead of killing, imagine the planet we would be on. If we understood that simple, simple principle - not the same but equal.

You've got a third film planned, so what is the ultimate take away that you want your audience to have?

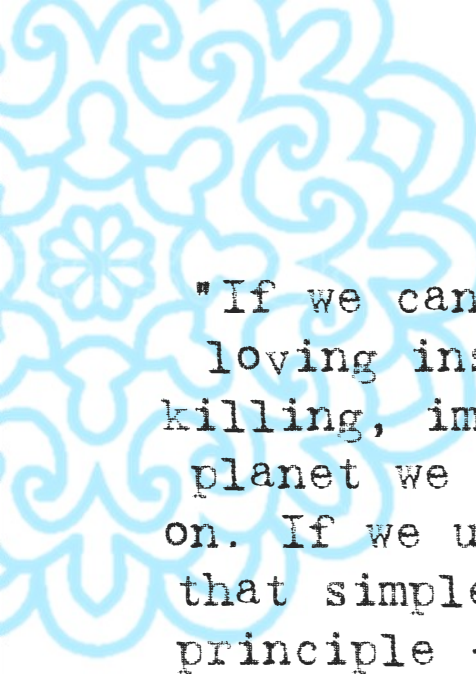
I've already written *Beings* but I'm still just trying to figure out how to do it. I'm also going to do a brand new *Earthlings*, which I've written a new script for. It's still *Earthlings*, it's just a new one. An ad agency will tell you that they have to show a product or message to people seven times before it gets through. Repetition is necessary either because people have their own opinions, they are slow to be sold on something or because there's a million other things vying for their attention. So - *Earthlings*, *Unity*, *Beings*, another *Earthlings* - with these kinds of projects there's a necessary form of repetition to it because they're small and they're competing with a lot of noise. *Earthlings* is pretty straightforward; here's the footage, here's what we do. With *Unity* I decided to take a completely different approach. I wanted to intelligently, logically, reasonably see if the audience will look at it from-







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another angle. *Beings* is more of a nature film but it's not an environmental film. I won't say too much about it but it's another way of looking at these same themes of compassion, love, not the same but equal, stuff like that.

Vegans are often accused of caring more about animals than they care about humans but it seems like today's society has become so desensitised to images of human suffering. *Unity* really juxtaposes the animal and human suffering. Was that your intention?

Yeah, it was funny during the testing phase. We showed *Unity* several times to a test audience and we had people fill out cards to see how they reacted to the film. It was very revealing because everyone mentioned the animal footage. There's human violence in this movie; there's execution, there's militaries marching, there's World War Two stuff, there's bombs going off, there's all kinds of deaths. At all that stuff we see people wince when they watched it but the comments on the cards were always about animals. There weren't many comments about humans because as you've said they've been so desensitised to it already, which is sad. And in fact it's sad in the sense that we're so desensitised to it and yet in the same breath quite remarkable that we do wince when we see the suffering of animals because we're not totally altogether callous, we do still feel. We're used to it with humans but we aren't used to it with animals. That still speaks well of us, there's still hope. We can become quite remarkable beings and that's why I think the Hitler/Gandhi metaphor is so beautiful because it shows human capacity. Look at

the range of the human being. On one hand you have someone who is completely destructive and on the other someone who is completely constructive and both are human and both are contemporaries. So that range is right there within all of us, that capacity for good as well as evil. The capacity exists for greatness, I mean, my God it's unbelievable how good you can be. No end to it probably.

As a film maker and as an artist who has a vision, you've unfortunately got to find a compromise between wanting to present what you see as the truth and making something commercially viable in order for it to be seen by the widest possible audience. What has your experience taught you about this?

With *Earthlings* no one would touch it. People were like, 'good luck with that. We admire what you're trying to do and that's great you got Joaquin but I don't know who's going to watch this'. By 2006 it was becoming heavily pirated by animal rights activists. One of my colleagues said they'd seen it streaming on about two hundred different websites that they knew of. It was put to me that we should make it free and I didn't want to do that. It's not that I thought I'd make money from *Earthlings*; I didn't do it for money. I financed it myself but I didn't want to keep losing money year after year. There were yearly costs for just maintaining my business. Then someone sent me a copy of *Earthlings* from Mexico and another production company said they were releasing it and I'm like, 'Who are these guys?' So by that time I'd had enough. It was free for ten years. I talked to Brian Wendel, the producer of *Forks over Knives*, and he said you're the only one who would give their film away for free, everybody else sells it. I'm pleased that *Earthlings* had such an impact but you-



"Too often I think we see suffering and it just brings us down, which is natural. But we've got to rewire our mind and attitude because we're trying to have a positive effect on people.

Whatever you do, turn it into fuel and plant the kind of seed that makes people curious to know a little bit more as opposed to being repelled.

That's the trick."



know, people have expected *Unity* to be free as well. We had to raise money for this film because it was a much bigger project. Now as I look back at both these experiences I see that *Earthlings* could have financed *Unity*. I wouldn't have then had to go through dealing with investors, which took me years. If I had monetised *Earthlings* better it could have financed *Unity* itself and once I pay everybody back on *Unity* I'll have that. I think I won't get an investor again for *Beings* or for the new *Earthlings*. I'll let *Unity* pay for another film and keep the cost down and not deal with all this and then we'll probably release it online ourselves. When you try to go the commercial route with content like this a whole new world opens up that has really nothing to do with your message. It's just the way that system runs and you're subjected to it and it's not a losing battle but it's extremely difficult. We had *Unity* in about six hundred screens but it was a very, very limited release and then the theatre dictated how long we had to wait until we could release it on iTunes. You get to this whole other weird place that has nothing to do with the message you're trying to share. Do you reach more people by going that way or do you end up having to go through this convoluted system that may or may not reach those people anyway? I'm still figuring out the right answer to that question to be honest. I'm still comparing the way I did *Unity* to *Earthlings* to see which way is the best to reach people. I'm not sure.

So what has it taught you about success?

Well, I have become a much better business man, I will say that. I am proud of *Earthlings* and given the resources I had and my range of understanding at the time, I'm happy with it and what was achieved. I'm learning about more effective ways of releasing content to reach more people because we do this stuff for people to see it. I'm becoming much savvier about content like this which might be considered a little bit unique and how you get that content out in the world in this day and age. It's not so much about the financial success, I mean it is in a way because I would feel guilty making a lot of money off of the suffering of animals but I also feel, not guilty, but bad in a different way because due to my lack of resources it's taken more time to get messages like this out when there is suffering happening in the world. It shouldn't have taken eight years for *Unity*; there shouldn't be ten years between *Earthlings* and *Unity*, that's ridiculous. I might make one movie every ten years and therefore people aren't going to see many movies from me before I leave the planet. That's not very efficient and that's not sharing that message quickly enough when all this suffering is happening daily. So when I look at the lack of resources from a business standpoint I feel it has slowed down the release of messages like this or the creation of more messages like this and that to me is the greater mistake. So now it's about finding a way to do this so that we have

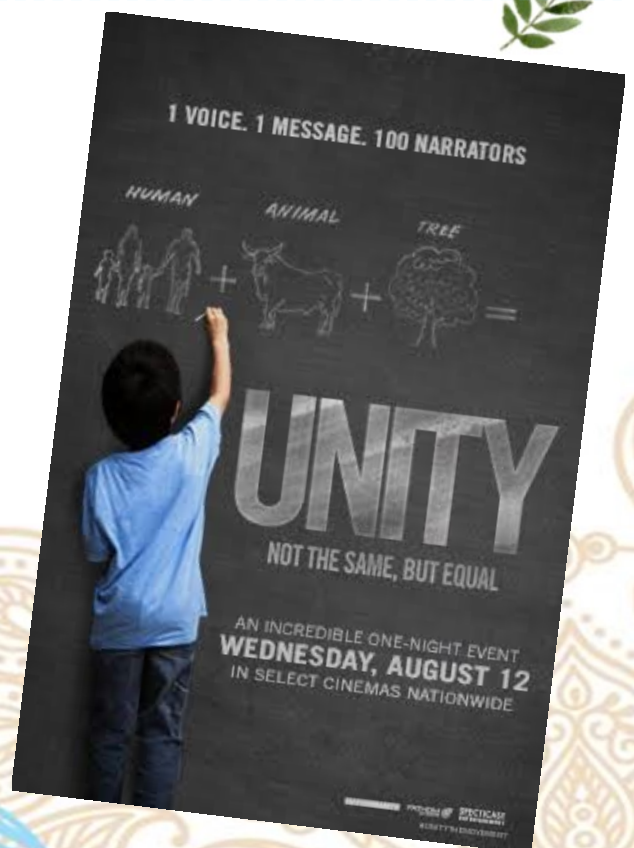
the tools in our toolbox to work on future projects or spread the message of this project further and not to just totally wait on word of mouth. That's the success I'm looking for.

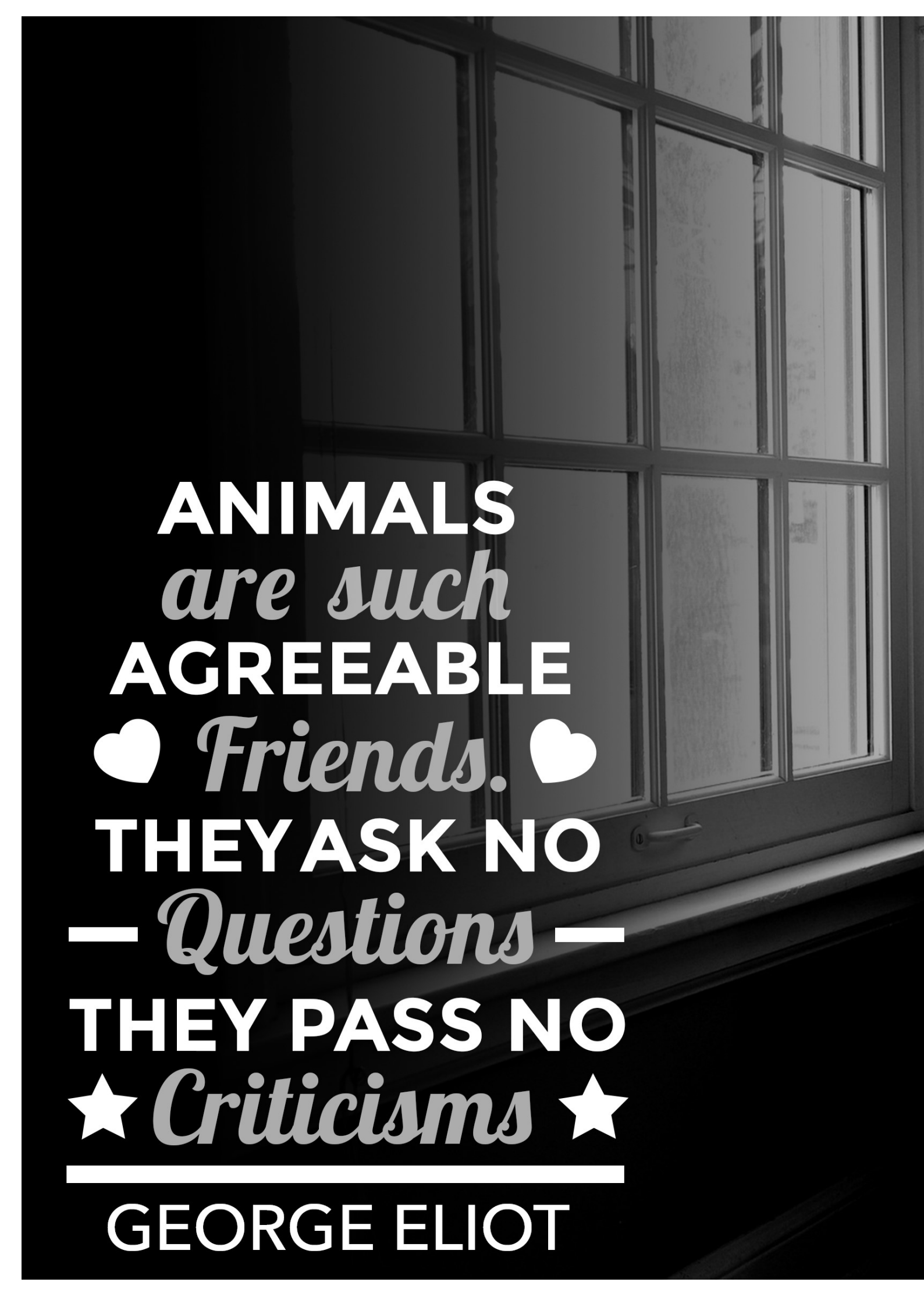
For lots of vegans it's extremely difficult to watch any kind of clips of animal suffering but you've talked in the past about having 'traumatic knowledge' and taking that pain inside, witnessing it in order to cleanse it and replace it with something else. What advice would you give to other people who want to desensitise themselves in that way without becoming disconnected?

If there is some way that you can witness such content and turn it into fuel without it making you bitter and miserable that's probably the great secret right there. You can see whatever the new exposé is and look at it with open eyes, and turn it into fuel to help educate others. It's a process to manage. If you get bitter and miserable and unhappy it won't be attractive, and it won't attract others. We want to be inspiring vegans; we want to inspire the world. We don't want to stick our fingers in their faces; we don't want to be the vegan police that is always nagging at them. If you can turn your knowledge, grim as it may be, into fuel that's inspiring and attractive and it makes people ask the next question then

you are going to be one effective teacher. You are going to be a light they are drawn to. Too often I think we see suffering and it just brings us down, which is natural. But we've got to rewire our mind and attitude because we're trying to have a positive effect on people. Whatever you do, turn it into fuel and plant the kind of seed that makes people curious to know a little bit more as opposed to being repelled. That's the trick. **BV**

Unity is now available in over 200 countries on iTunes, Vimeo, Amazon, Google Play, Microsoft, Vudu & M-GO. To watch [visit the website](#). You can also get news updates on the film on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).





ANIMALS
are such
AGREEABLE
♥ *Friends.* ♥
THEY ASK NO
— *Questions* —
THEY PASS NO
★ *Criticisms* ★

GEORGE ELIOT


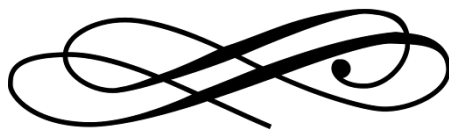






Creating Consciousness

Spread Love. Share Peace. Stay Creative. Save EArTh.



American artists Erin and diNo met by chance one day in 2011. At the time they exchanged contact details but it wasn't until a few months later that they met up again through mutual friends and began a creative journey of art and love, inspired by a passion for animals and a desire to help expand the consciousness of the planet. We spoke with them to find out more about their glorious masterPEACEs...



Tell us about your vegan journey...

(ERIN): I remember feeling worried after eating meat in high school and telling a friend I had a feeling the animals had suffered and that it was wrong. My friend told me there wasn't anything much to do about it. I felt very confused by what was normal and the feelings I felt inside. At around 19, a PETA commercial came on my TV and I was traumatised. My world completely changed and it was hard for me to know that this was the truth. For four years I never ate meat but I did not research veganism and I didn't eat a healthy diet. I bought some vegan shoes but still had some that were not vegan. I ate fried food at restaurants never thinking what the food was being fried in. I assumed veganism was extreme and that there would be nothing for me to eat. I was eating the occasional veggie burger but mostly dairy, unhealthy snacks, pasta and I wasn't replacing my protein or iron. Long after that video clip I saw I began to forget and I think my poor diet was making me want to eat meat again. I am ashamed to say I did and for about three years I put my blindfold back on and stepped away from what my true self wanted. At age 26 I again watched an animal rights video. In this video dairy cows were stuck with their heads in metal restraints and men were punching

many more. Billy, the bull calf I rescued, is an amazing animal friend to have. He is getting huge but is always so gentle and loving. Whenever I tell people about him I know it helps them make small connections that I hope in the future will lead them to lives that are cruelty free. I am happy that I am on the path I was always meant to be on and look forward to meeting more animals that need saving. I never knew art would be able to help me do this but I am so thankful to be able to use my gift for such a special cause.

(diNo): My vegan journey began later in life. Although I never really ate too much cow, I was fond of chicken for much of my life. I never liked milk, but I had an obsession/addiction with cheese. When I met Erin, we were both living non-vegan lives, but our compassion for animals was very powerful. Soon, she began a vegan lifestyle and I settled for vegetarian at first, still latching onto cheese. However, we continued to educate ourselves, and I soon formed the idea to draw *The ARTk*, a map of the world made entirely of animals for all ages. As I began, I researched a lot about the demise of some animals, and once an animal was drawn, it was never to be eaten again.

"We want to continue to show the people of this planet how truly perfect and beautiful all lifeforms and moments are upon this magical world... We also feel that since the animal world cannot speak out or defend themselves against the man-made insanity being forced upon them, we must combat it with art."

How would you describe your work?

(ERIN): I've been painting and drawing since around 2-3 years of age. My mother was my first teacher. In high school art saved me during many difficult experiences. At that time I experimented with surrealism, some abstract but mostly fantasy and subconscious reflections. At 18

them. The cows would cry and moan. Seeing this again woke me up to the true reality of what was going for animals and it broke my heart. I often wonder why I had to get off my original path but I did learn not to be judgemental of others as well as recognising how powerful conditioning can be. I am now more educated and my mission to help the animals has just begun. In 2013, Dino and I rescued a bull calf from a dairy farm and plan to help

I couldn't exactly say what my mission was other than painting what came out of my head naturally. After a baby bird I rescued died at around this same time I painted one of my first paintings that was in honour of an animal. For me I was able to heal from the sadness I felt when that baby bird I had been caring for died. I spent many years in between trying to find myself as an artist and eventually I met diNo. It was great to have a





partner who shared my love of art and would be there for me and encourage me. I also lost my dog Shelby six days after I turned 26 to congestive heart failure. The love I have with Shelby is huge to this day. The love between a human and an animal is just as special and strong as love between humans. That is because animals have souls just like us. I named my art website after her and my love of bunnies. (My first animal friend was an albino bunny who followed me around my yard and let me bring him everywhere.) I draw Shelby in many of my paintings. I know when she passed to the next world she left me a gift and that was for me to connect spiritually to animals even stronger. I finally have my art mission, which is to save nature and animals and to help make this world a loving place. I draw many animals who I have met or have not met. I draw them in a beautiful world where they are safe and at peace. I usually try to stay positive with my work but there is one piece where I have the focus on negative aspects of humanity that need to change. I hope that when people look at my art they feel at peace and also connect with the animals. I hope that my art will make the world better even in a small way.

(diNo): I would describe my art as very positive, an interconnected vision designed for all ages and all beings to become inspired by. It is very organic, free-flowing and combines subconscious meanderings with very conscious ideas, which can be read like a visual story, or diagram. I feel there are many common threads that exist between my different forms of art, and each one is always embedded with a different purpose, meaning, and

intention. I've come up with some terms in the past to classify it, but nothing ever stuck; things like 'Quantum Art', or 'MasterPEACEs', 'Visionary Surrealism'... blah. I still don't know how to classify it, yet also feel that classifying art in general should be an impossible thing. While there are various styles one can be drawn to, everyone's art is a fully unique expression of themselves. I take inspiration from every instant of my life, so it has all accumulated and led to my art being the way it is. I can't wait to see how it will progress in the future.

What drives you to create these works of art?

(BOTH): There are infinite reasons why we create what we do, and while many will have specific purposes and intentions to be expressed visually, certain underlying themes and objectives can be found in virtually everything we create. We both really want to make art that is positive and can be enjoyed by all ages, races, and species. Our cats are even mesmerised by the spinning mandalas! We truly try to make each art work have a true purpose and mission while also being packed with meaning and power. We want to continue to show the people of this planet how truly perfect and beautiful all lifeforms and moments are upon this magical world. We want to preserve the endless power of the imagination for all ages by making these interconnected works flow in a way that allows for infinite interpretations and visual wonders. We also feel that since the animal world cannot speak out or defend themselves against the man-made insanity being forced upon them, we must combat it with





art. If people can wake up to the miracles of these intelligent and innocent beings being mass murdered for profit and realise the hardships and nightmares these animals endure, then maybe they will think before they eat and shift food demands back to healthy, organic non-GMO agriculture of endless variety and deliciousness. Education is important. We want our art to encourage others to want to never stop learning about the world around them. So much so that they too then discover their creative abilities and explore them forever.

What do spirituality and consciousness mean to you and how does this play out in your work?

(diNo): They both play a very big role in how, what and why I create art. Spirituality is an unending craft that began at a very young age for me when my first thoughts on death and the mysteries of the Universe began to form. From then on, I always and still to this day, am trying to solve these mysteries, and store all that I experience as research. I am convinced that one of the best aspects of being alive today is the access to ancient manuscripts, religious/sacred texts, creation myths, and so

much more. The fact that books like the “Tibetan Book of the Dead” or the Mayan “Popol Vuh” are only a few bucks or clicks away, is unbelievable. All of it provides glimpses and hints towards a greater understanding. Yet sometimes the most miraculous knowledge can be gained by simply sitting in nature and observing the life of an ant. All this beauty is overwhelming and the more I see the people of the world appreciating nature less and less, the more it fuels my desire to artistically show the world the magic I have glimpsed and created.

"Sometimes the most miraculous knowledge can be gained by simply sitting in nature and observing the life of an ant. All this beauty is overwhelming and the more I see the people of the world appreciating nature less and less, the more it fuels my desire to artistically show the world the magic I have glimpsed and created."

As for consciousness, I love Carl Jung and discovered his work on mandalas after I had been doing my own experiments and seen some unexplainable miracles of the visual spectrum of reality. I am one hundred percent convinced that if an artwork is meaningful-



"True power lies with creativity and fostering a complimentary partnership with our planet in everything that we do. We want to spread these messages and visions we have been blessed with to the world."



enough, detailed and technical enough, under the right intentions, with the proper magic attached, a 2D artwork is capable of opening up new visual dimensions otherwise thought impossible. I think the mandala plays an important role in this, which is possibly why they are the world's most ancient art form. I am determined, as some artists before me, to visually represent infinity in such a way that no one on Earth can ignore.

(ERIN): Painting and drawing for me is a spiritual experience. I believe that art is a gift from the Universe. diNo has said that drawing/painting is meditation. I have times I struggle because I focus on detail and trying to capture everything as accurately as possible, but in the end when I reflect on the work that I do I find that connections I never intended are there that are amazing and I believe that is the magic of art. I especially see these magic connections when diNo and I work together.

What else would you like readers to know?

(BOTH): We are also animal rights and Earth-loving peaceful activists, and we love the excitement that comes along with it. There are too many negative issues and situations happening worldwide that can easily be fixed with common sense and a unifying mission designed for the benefit of Earth, with money being completely out of the equation. The first original we sold of our collaborative art went towards stopping an unlawful deer hunt/cull taking place in our favourite local nature spots and sunset hike lands. Erin also created an Indiegogo campaign and raised over \$1,700 to save a cow in Oregon. Sadly the people of Oregon had a choice to save the cow or not, and they chose with their bellies. But the money went to the *Lighthouse Sanctuary* instead, providing

much needed financial help for them and their animals. We have also rescued three cats, two bunnies, thousands of insects and sponsored a cow in Canada. We are currently painting a huge mural for *Live and Let Live Horse Sanctuary* in New Hampshire and have plans to one day open up a sanctuary of our own, incorporating animal welfare with art, education and so much more. So many people choose to give up on their dreams because the world makes it easy to lose focus and are distracted by shiny lights and radioactive toys. Yet the true power lies with creativity and fostering a complimentary partnership with our planet in everything that we do. We want to spread these messages and visions we have been blessed with to the world. This place is too perfect and it needs human help to restore its true power. Lastly, I want to be alive on Earth the moment that all humans become harmonised with the same intentions. It is possible - and it will be the greatest moment in Earth's history. Spread Love. Share Peace. Stay Creative. Save eARTH :) **BV**

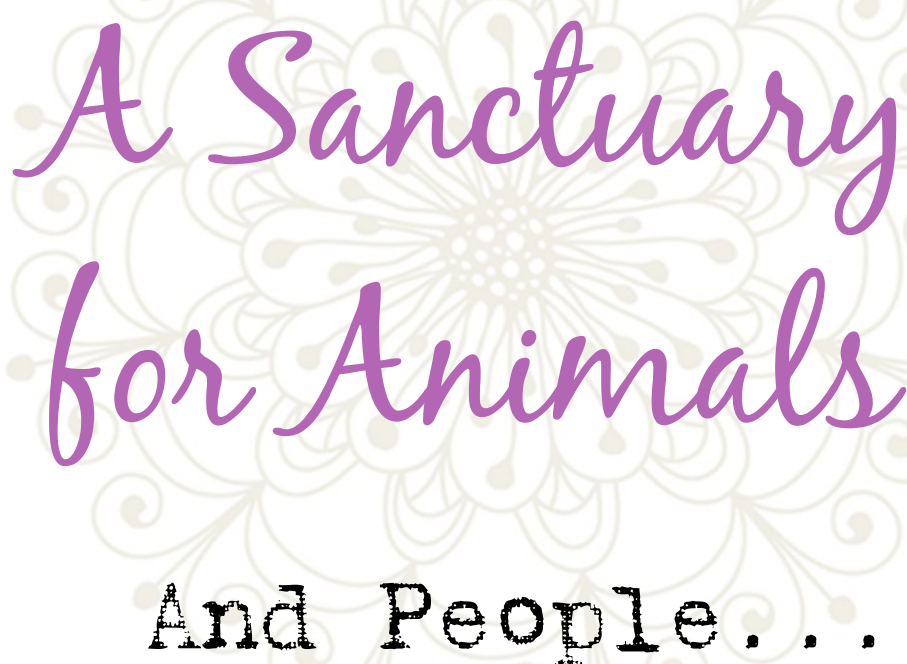
To see more of Erin and diNo's artwork and for contact details to commission a piece, visit their websites www.ARTofDiNo.com and www.ErinShelbyBun.com.





JACOBS RIDGE





A Sanctuary for Animals And People...

Jacob's Ridge is owned and run by Lynn and Julian Nicholson along with their two children, Megan and Freddie. They have lived in Spain for 10 years and for the last four years, have been at Jacob's Ridge.



"It has become clear that Jacob's Ridge is not only a sanctuary for animals, it is a sanctuary for people too. People really do grow, mentally, emotionally and spiritually."

Lynn Nicholson was working in the United Kingdom as a head of business within the Audi network, a position that had taken her 20 years to reach. One day in a meeting she realised she was writing a recipe and was shut down to everything that was going on around her. That was her moment of clarity. She went home and explained to her husband, Julian that she wanted to leave and he agreed. After talking through their options, three weeks later they were on a plane with their children Megan and Freddie, headed to Spain to start a new life together as a family.

Their sanctuary began as a private sanctuary for animals that needed a home - primarily pigs, which was named *Pig Village* and was Lynn's personal passion. However, that all changed after fostering Jacob.

"In 2011 we were fortunate enough to be given the opportunity to foster a beautiful young horse named Jacob. He had had a very difficult start and had been tied to a tree for all his life. He was undernourished and neglected," said Lynn. "The amazing people at *Easy Horse Care Rescue Centre* rescued him and due to his nature and his boisterous ways, they were seeking a foster home for him and asked if we would like to have him live with us".

Jacob quickly settled in and became a part of the Nicholson family. Circumstances changed and they moved a little further south in Spain and Jacob went with them. He was soon joined by Nero, a beautiful black donkey with a very strong character. They became the best of friends.

As the months went by they began meeting with their

new neighbours. One of those neighbours was an ageing horse breeder. He was finding the care of his horses very difficult and made the decision to sell them all. They were in a poor state. He had arranged to sell them to the meat market. When Lynn and Julian found out they couldn't stand by and see the beautiful animals destroyed. So they rallied around, made financial sacrifices and agreed to take all of the neighbour's horses.

"The learning curve was huge as was the food bill! To be honest we struggled financially but kept them all fed and housed. Four of the rescue horses were in the early stages of pregnancy and unfortunately one of the mares miscarried very early. The remaining mares went on to have three healthy foals and the herd grew overnight.

"During a particularly difficult financial period we were faced with the very real prospect of having to move the horses on; they were literally eating us out of house and home and the pressure was immense. So we had to get our thinking caps on. We had made a commitment to all the horses and to simply give up was just not an option. So we devised a plan. Jacob's Ridge is that plan in action."

Lynn and Julian began researching the prospect of combining volunteering with a holiday, glamping-style accommodation and 100% vegan all-inclusive meals. This felt like the perfect solution as it meant that the animals would receive lots of human interaction, helping them to gain trust, and people would be able to





enjoy the surroundings and the animals, without forcing any of the animals to “perform”. It was decided that the doors would be open to everyone so long as they understood and respected the vegan ethos of Jacob’s Ridge.

“When the idea was formed, a few volunteers came out in 2014 for a trial run, which went well and so we opened the doors in 2015, not sure if anyone would come or if it would work. It has literally been run by the family and people came! In fact, the year sold out!

“The work load has been immense and exhausting but incredibly rewarding. We have learnt that we need

running a tourism-funded animal sanctuary. Some of which have been being able to demonstrate how wonderful vegan food can be and to see the animals benefit from human attention, allowing them to understand that humans can be kind too.

“To look out and see people sitting under trees, just being with the pigs, grooming the donkeys, chatting to the horses, has to be one of the nicest views ever. Seeing people become vegan just by eating the food and being with the animals, without any lectures or interference, has been awesome. There was even a meat-eater who actually returned home and went fully raw vegan, just on

the connection with the pigs alone.”

Jacob’s Ridge is now home to horses, donkeys, goats, chickens, cats, dogs and of course, pigs. In 2015 alone, on the back of the volunteer programme, an additional 21 animals were rescued. Sadly, this number could have grown daily, but the volunteer programme will hopefully allow many more animals to come and join the sanctuary.

This year, there are plans for a new duck pond to house ducks and geese. Calves will also be rescued. Due to the success of Lynn’s vegan culinary prowess, a Jacob’s Ridge cookbook is being planned along with the expansion of the kitchen so that vegan cooking lessons can also be included as part of the package for volunteers.

Julian works very closely with the horses and is working

"We want people to help and get involved, but this could also mean just sitting with the animals, giving them one-to-one attention and love. It's so beneficial for them and really helps."

additional help for 2016 and have employed people to join us for the year to assist in organising everything, giving the family the opportunity to spend time together, something that was sacrificed in 2015. Everyone was involved in making sure that everything ran smoothly and that our guests had a wonderful time.”

Lynn reports that there have been many joys in

on *Liberty Training*, which involves working with horses just through energy, no contact, just trust. The results are beautiful and the connection is amazing. People gain so much through being with the horses and Julian loves to work with both to help them gain personal confidence. This relationship with the horses also ensures that should they need to be moved, have a vet check or their feet trimmed, they are relaxed and in control. In time they plan to offer this training to locals to help them understand that there are better ways to work with their horses rather than through beating them into submission. Lynn and Julian's thoughts on this are that if changes can be made through education, then those changes will last into the future, and that is more effective in the long run.

"It has become clear that Jacob's Ridge is not only a sanctuary for animals, it is a sanctuary for people too. People really do grow, mentally, emotionally and spiritually," says Lynn. "So with this in mind we have some projects planned to engage the community. One initial project is working with local teenagers who are all looking for motivation. A racing team is being formed with a group of teenage boys who are learning about team spirit, respect, the importance of being healthy and of course, understanding how being vegan can be a huge benefit to them. It is early days but already the children are finding their way to the sanctuary looking to be a part of something, which is very encouraging and the next step will be to seek funding to grow this and help to create fine, young humans for the future."

All kinds of people stay at Jacob's Ridge, all with different skills but Lynn and Julian make it clear that the sanctuary's not a boot camp.

"We want people to help and get involved, but this could also mean just sitting with the animals, giving them one-to-one attention and love. It's so beneficial for them and really helps." **BV**

If you'd like to help out financially or through providing products that could help support the sanctuary, or if you'd like to join the Nicholson's at Jacob's Ridge in 2016 you can [visit their website](#) for more information. You can connect with them via their Facebook pages for [Jacob's Ridge](#) and [Pig Village](#). Lynn will also be speaking on behalf of Jacob's Ridge at the UK Brighton VegFest in February 2016.



Animals & Elders *-together forever-*

With Pea Horsley



Pea Horsley is the UK's most highly regarded animal communicator. She is an internationally renowned workshop facilitator, columnist, inspirational speaker and the author of 'Heart to Heart'. Her most recent book is the Amazon No.1 Best Seller 'The Animal Communicator's Guide Through Life, Loss and Love' published by Hay House UK. This article has been edited from Pea's four-part-series...

ANIMALS & ELDERS: TOGETHER FOREVER.





Each year thousands of cherished companion animals are forcibly relinquished - and often euthanized - when elderly guardians go into residential care. Companion animals have played an important part in our lives ever since the first permanent human settlements were established over 14,000 years ago. Today, that bond is stronger than ever and most of us see our animals as an integral part of the family. As we get older, they are often our sole (and soul) companion at home, enhancing our lives immeasurably.

Sharing our life with a pet typically gives us an important health advantage over people who don't have animals. It also helps us connect with neighbours and our community. This is especially relevant to older people, as a recent review of over 30 years of research shows. According to the [International Federation of Ageing](#), companion animals offer 'extensive and therapeutic benefits to elderly people' which has a positive impact socially and economically. Their [report](#) highlights some interesting findings.

Those of us with companion animals have less chance of developing heart disease; have lower cholesterol and blood pressure; improved ability to cope with chronic disease; faster recovery from illness and surgery; fewer visits to the doctor and less medication; increased self-esteem, life satisfaction, positive moods and less loneliness; a more active later life; and are better able to cope with stressful life events such as bereavement.

Tragically, many people still don't understand why it matters so much for elderly people to be able to keep their companion animals with them when they go into residential care. Animals continue to be treated as disposable commodities instead of sentient beings, and the bond with their human is rarely considered.

"People don't understand that love is love," says Jessie, a young Yorkshire terrier I communicated with on this subject. When I asked how she'd feel if she and her guardian, Christina, were ever forced to separate, I sensed astonishment followed by a deep feeling of emptiness: "We mean everything to each other." Christina adds, "A part of me would be missing and I

would lose purpose. I have seen this happen to older people and it is soul-destroying."

The finality of the move into care is traumatic enough for an older person, and usually comes after a chilly cascade of other age-related losses including independence, income, health, mobility and bereavement. To then be separated from their animal, often their only remaining 'significant other', who loves them unconditionally and offers comfort, companionship and joy in a seemingly bleak-world - that is the bitter end.

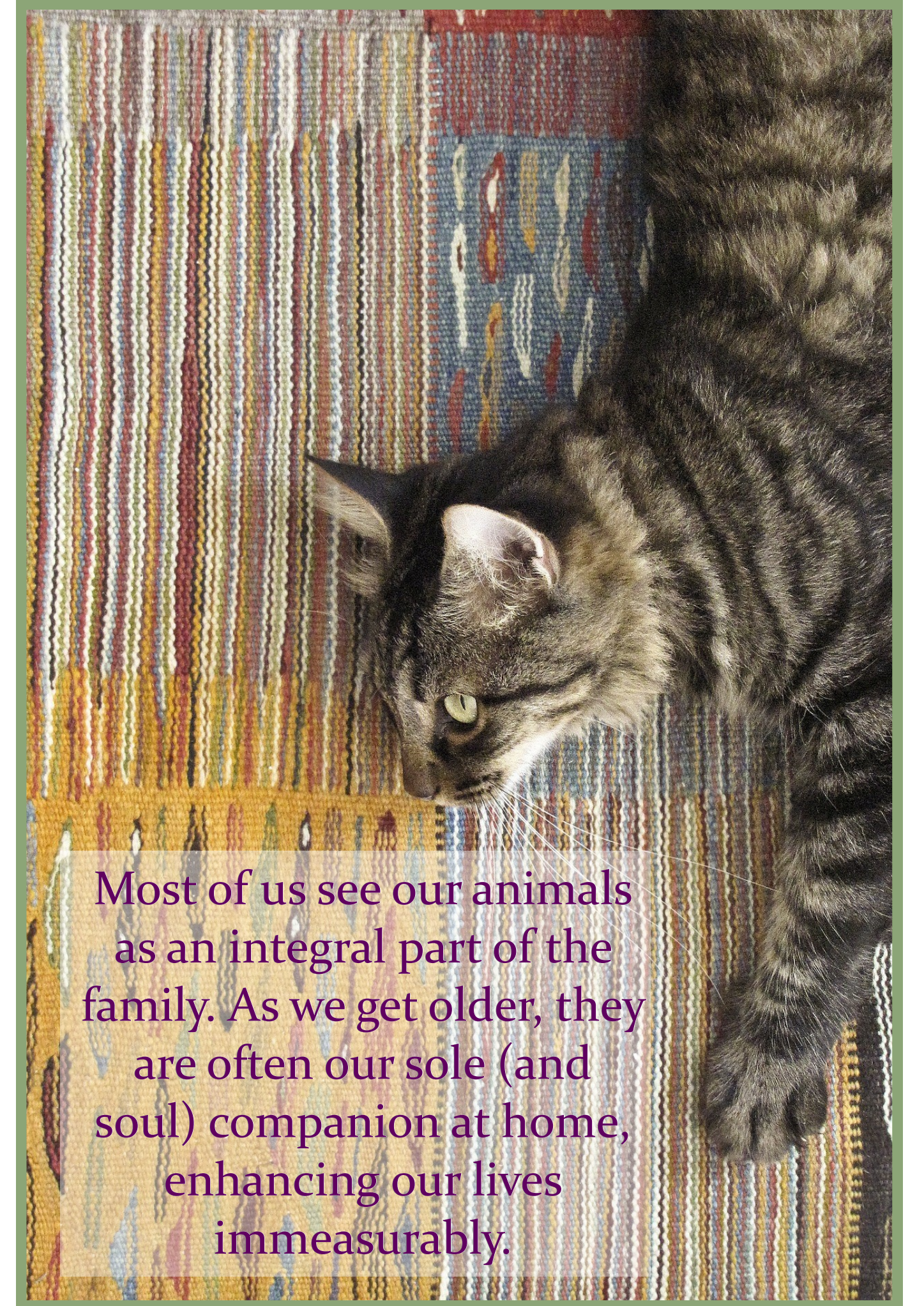
The pain of parting

Respected vet and expert on the human-animal bond, Elizabeth Ormerod, says: "Some of the most distressed people I have ever seen have been clients who have been ordered to get rid of their animals before moving into care." Their reactions can be so intense that they include chest pains, vomiting, and even breathing problems.

Sadly, it's a loss that society often trivialises, so grief is swept under the proverbial carpet. Yet it provokes reactions virtually identical to those associated with the bereavement of a human relationship such as guilt, depression, loss of appetite and health worries (especially if an animal has been euthanized or sent to a shelter).

Suddenly, an older person's reason for getting up in the morning has vanished. And all too often, they go into decline. In the UK alone, at least 140,000 companion animals are forcibly relinquished every year when our elderly go into care; more than 38,000 of these animals are euthanized, including healthy ones.

Often, well-intentioned family, friends or social workers will offer to handle this sorry task to save an elderly guardian from having to do so. In certain circumstances, such as when a guardian is suffering with the early stages of dementia, some apparently go ahead

A long-haired tabby cat with dark brown and black stripes is lying on a colorful, multi-colored striped rug. The cat is looking down and to the left, with its head resting on the rug. The rug has a complex pattern of vertical stripes in various colors including red, blue, yellow, green, and white. The cat's fur is thick and soft-looking, with a mix of brown, black, and white tones. The overall scene is warm and cozy.

Most of us see our animals
as an integral part of the
family. As we get older, they
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without asking – taking the view, perhaps, that it's one less *thing* for them to worry about. Either way, the result for the guardian is almost always one of devastation.

And what about the animals? People forget that they too, are sentient beings whose welfare needs deserve our respect and consideration - a fact now recognised by scientists and proclaimed in the UK's Cambridge Declaration of Consciousness, signed in 2012 in the presence of Stephen Hawking. Local authorities, care professionals and housing providers - as well as society in general - need to start

In the UK alone, at least
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understanding and valuing the importance of the human-animal bond, especially to the elderly.

We must take on board - and capitalise on - the enormous therapeutic benefits of companion animals, which in turn has a positive social and economic knock-on effect for local communities and society. To continue to ignore this is irrational - not to mention negligent!

There's a wealth of international scientific research available about these benefits, highlighted by organisations such as the International Federation of Ageing and the Society for Companion Animal Studies (SCAS) ([see link](#)).

For example, companion animals are known to significantly calm dementia sufferers, improving communication and normalising the institutional feel of residential care, which also lowers stress and care staff turnover.

According to global population projections, the number of people aged 65+ is expected to double to more than two billion within 30 years. Using UK stats as a guideline, around 25% will have companion animals.

So when you factor in the frightening number of animals entering shelters or being euthanized - even though they're sentient beings that offer us so much - we're facing a huge welfare issue. Add to that spiralling healthcare costs and it's a significant financial issue, too - in the UK,

dementia costs alone were calculated at £23 billion (Alzheimer Society, 2012 figures).

Avoiding care

According to research, older people avoid medical attention because they fear admission to hospital or residential care, which would mean giving up their



pet - or putting it down. Being 'pet-friendly' is a huge factor influencing people's choice of residential care accommodation. The more enlightened facilities are beginning to wake up to this fact - but most places still say 'no' to pets. Local authorities, social workers and others associated with 'care' are often just as negative.

The result is devastating heartbreak for older people - who have already given up so much - as well as a massive animal welfare issue. But, it doesn't have to be like this. Pet-friendly care facilities are a huge success story provided they are properly set up - and there's plenty of [advice](#) available. Managers note a huge improvement in environment and quality of life for both residents and staff.

That's certainly been the case at Elizabeth Court, a finalist in the Cinnamon Trust's Pet-Friendly Home of the Year Awards (2013). Their ethos is that animals bring everyone together: "Pets provide motivation, warmth, love, an excuse for exercise, a *raison d'être*," says its deputy manager, Reece Welch. The proprietors, Carol Robinson and Mandy Dade, are both animal lovers. "They are hyper-aware of the benefits of keeping pets and see the importance of ensuring life-long partners stay together for as long as possible," Reece adds.

"The animals make a difference to staff morale in the Home, as well as having a positive impact on residents' mental well-being," says Reece. "It only takes a few moments to fuss over a cat or a dog to feel better about the day."

The benefits of interacting with companion animals in residential care are significant. They include improved health/fewer prescriptions; better relationships/improved communication; the 'Institutionalised' environment becomes more 'home-like'; less stress/reduced staff turnover. Now weigh up those benefits against the effects of enforced pet loss on people entering residential care; existing health problems; new health problems can be provoked; disturbed sleep and appetite loss; and more time needed to adjust/harder to integrate with other residents.

Finding [pro-pet care facilities](#) is not easy - but there are

choices. Expert [guidance](#) is also available if you want it to get a prospective care facility to consider taking animals. But this process could be so much easier and more humane... Other developed countries including France have had pro-pet housing legislation for decades. Isn't it time we all did, too?

Back in 2009, a Care Home and Sheltered Accommodation (Domestic Pets) Bill was proposed by Nigel Waterson, then UK Conservative spokesman on older people. Had it been passed, many more people would have been allowed to keep animals in residential care; the Bill received a second reading in 2010 and enthusiastic cross-parliamentary support. It was then quietly shelved! As a result, it's been left to housing providers, local authorities (including environmental health officers) and others involved in social care to make their own policy. Sadly though, most remain negative; all too often, there's a disturbing lack of interest, knowledge or empathy.

Pet Power...

Studies show that companion animals:

- * Permanently lift the atmosphere of hospices and nursing homes.
- * Delay ageing - by caring for and talking to pets, residents increase their mobility, socialisation and mental functioning.
- * Increase quality of life - *less* tension, confusion and fatigue, more enthusiasm, interest and inspiration.

Caring attitude?

Some care facility managers felt that older people shouldn't be bothering with pets at their time of life, and that they 'probably got over it quickly' if they had given up a pet because 'it's a time of life when there are lots of losses'! (SCAS study, 2007).

"We need to explode the myths that it is difficult, dangerous or time-consuming to have pets in care," says psychologist June McNicolas, who made a [study](#) of the subject for the Society of Companion Animal Studies (SCAS) in 2007. "A lot of fears from managers and staff are unfounded."

These usually revolve around 'Health & Safety' and are often driven by inaccurate media scare stories about animals as a source of infectious disease; being sued for an animal-related fall or injury is another common concern.

Yet these fears are not based on sound evidence and those who have gone pet-friendly remain overwhelmingly positive. Infections are far more likely to come from human visitors, and statistics show that animal-caused falls or injuries are extremely rare. Given the scientifically-recognised benefits companion animals bring to the health and wellbeing of older people, Age UK has said, "We think responsible social landlords should consider this before their own convenience."

Legal challenge

A blanket ban on pets may be deemed an unfair contract condition by the Office of Fair Trading and could be challenged legally. At pro-pet Elizabeth Court, deputy manager Reece Welch says, "Unfortunately, we live in a day and age where paperwork, risk assessments and potential problems are often easier managed if avoided. But this impacts on residents' quality of life - especially those who have enjoyed a lifetime of living with animals."

As an animal lover, I can't imagine living without mine and with our rapidly ageing population and rocketing healthcare costs, I can't understand why we're still saying 'No' to companion animals in care rather than 'Yes, Yes, Yes!'

It's even stranger when government policy guidance is supposed to be all about 'improving the quality of care for older people' and 'promoting choice, independence and engagement'. Through their 'Pets for Life' Campaign, SCAS has worked hard to get the message out that older people need to be able to take their animals with them into residential care. It's worth checking out their website as they offer helpful information on everything from finding a pet-friendly care home to guidance for care professionals ([see link](#)).

Growing old doesn't have to be grim. Our animals make life liveable. As sentient beings, they are not disposable - and neither are our elderly. We shouldn't have to be parted from the animals we love because of ignorance or inconvenience. Let's do all we can to support staying together forever.

Helping hand

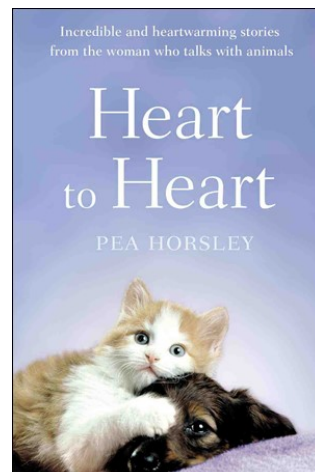
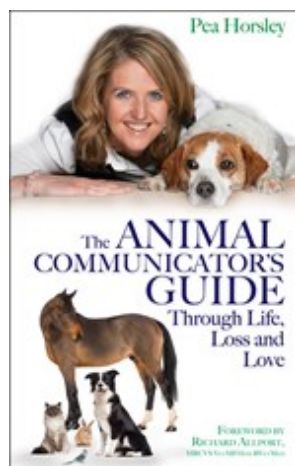
Here are some organisations and community initiatives helping older people and their animals stay together. Perhaps you could encourage something similar in your area!

[Cinnamon Trust](#) (UK)

[Pet Companion Program](#) (Australia)

[Paws Houston](#) (USA)

To find out more about Pea and the amazing work she does, visit her website [Animal Thoughts](#) and connect with her on [Facebook](#). You can also read the full series, [Animals & Elders: Together Forever](#) - from which this article was edited, which includes some wonderful stories of human and animal love bonds.





Pets provide motivation,
warmth, love, an excuse
for exercise, a raison
d'être.

The background of the image is a photograph of a vast field of yellow wildflowers, possibly buttercups, stretching towards a horizon under a heavy, grey, overcast sky. A dirt path is visible on the right side of the frame. The text is overlaid on the left and center of the image.

For
EVERYTHING

there is a
SEASON

★ *And a* ★

TIME FOR

— *every* —

PURPOSE

under the Sun

ECCLESIASTES 3:1



Nature's Healing Gifts...



When she was in the fourth grade, Demetria Clark moved next door to one of the largest essential oil wholesale suppliers in the world. That began her affinity and love affair with herbal medicine. Demetria is the author of 'Aromatherapy and Herbal Remedies for Pregnancy, Birth and Breastfeeding', 'Herbal Healing for Children and Three Hundred and Seventy Five Herbal and Aromatherapy Recipes' and also 'Aromatherapy'. [All of these can be found at Amazon.com.](https://www.amazon.com/s?k=Demetria+Clark&pf_rd_p=8a1b1b1b-1b1b-4b1b-1b1b-1b1b1b1b1b1b)



Aromatherapy & Herbal Medicine

With Demetria Clarke

Simply defined, aromatherapy is the use of scent for healing. It can be a very easy and practical everyday therapy to use at home. In fact, many types of aromatherapy applications can also be made at home. Aromatherapy is very versatile and has many uses and benefits. It's especially good for dealing with topical issues with skin, issues with mood, hair, emotional and mental health concerns. It actually has a lot of really practical applications. Aromatherapy is something that is very primal. Your first aromatherapy experience in life is when your mother smells the top of your head and you smell your mother and these are imprinting scents that stay with us forever. They're part of our primal scents, they're part of our primal being and that's what aromatherapy taps into, the more primal parts of our brain. Because of this, aromatherapy works slightly differently for each individual. There are general uses for particular types of oils, however, the reality is that each person processes scent differently and our sense of smell can invoke lots of different things in

different individuals; for example, memories, feelings, deep emotion. That's because smell activates our most primal emotions including fear, love and lust and so most major memories are often centred around a time of great joy, great love, great lust, fear or anxiety and we remember these moments. For some people lavender can smell really unpleasant and other people find it very relaxing. The reality is that you don't know how you or someone else will react to an essential oil and no matter what all of the books say, each person has their own unique experience with aromatherapy.

Aromatherapy works on a lot of different levels to improve our holistic health. Topically it has constituents in it that can actually help fight infection and viral or fungal issues. They're also really good at helping with emotional issues such as anxiety, fear, stress, and can aid in relaxation. It's really important that we research each oil before we use it to improve our holistic outlook.

"When used properly, herbs and aromatherapies have a lot less side effects than conventional medicine."

What are some benefits of using herbal and aromatherapy treatments over conventional medicine?

I find that when used properly, herbs and aromatherapies have a lot less side effects than conventional medicine. I also think that with a lot of conventional medicines (especially those that are used to fight disease) many of the diseases are becoming resistant. I also think that our bodies react better to natural medicine and more quickly in a lot of ways because it fixes the building blocks that are missing. Now I'm not saying that natural medicine would always be the best option for someone, especially someone with strong acute pain for example. You have to be really smart with your use of herbal medicine. But it can often be really beneficial for chronic issues or issues that aren't responding to conventional drugs. So if you're exhausted, taking a caffeine pill or some kind of upper isn't going to fix the problem, it's going to make the problem worse. If you're exhausted and you're using herbal remedies to help rebuild your body and you're using essential oils that will help you sleep and relax, that's going to have a greater benefit than something conventional.

What precautions do people need to take with herbal medicine?

Herbal medicine has a very low super danger rate overall. There are issues and contraindications but you have a lot less deaths and injuries that occur from one dose of an herbal remedy versus someone who takes the wrong pharmaceutical pill. That being said, there is a huge misconception that herbal medicines - because they're natural - can just be taken in any way, shape or quantity.

The first thing that you have to do if you're going to use something natural is to know what you're using. There is a different kind of regulation - or a lack of regulation - around herbal medicine and you really have to rely on the consumer to self-educate. The first thing you should do is to find some educational materials. Don't just rely on what you're seeing on the internet or on Facebook. You actually need to make sure that you are getting real education; books, courses - these are all great ways to find correct information. Make sure that you're using the medicine properly and that you're making sure that you don't have any specific contraindications that would make it so this medicine wouldn't be safe for you. Also it pays to bear in mind the 'less is more' approach. If one dosage of the herbal remedy is really working for you, even though there may be the suggestion that you could take it three times a day, you don't always have to do that. It also pays to use herbal medicine as close to its natural state as possible. Teas, foods; these are great ways to take herbal medicine. There are also tinctures and capsules and those are really beneficial too, sometimes those work better for people on the go; however, I always like to take things back to its natural state as much as possible. Make sure that you're not using herbs that are not safe, that are considered poisonous. Make sure that you fully research what you're using.





What precautions do you need to take with aromatherapy?

Not enough precautions are taken with aromatherapy. My first guideline to all people who come and study with me is you don't take essential oils internally, you do not drink them. There's a trend going around lately with people drinking essential oils but what these people run the risk of doing is burning themselves or having toxic side effects. Essential oils are not made to be drunk; that was never the idea behind their initial usage and application. There are some kinds of essential oils that go through a food grading process to then make it safe to be used in food and they're tested in food for their safety. You must also not apply essential oils neat to the skin. Neat to the skin means 'undiluted'. Essential oils can be easily diluted prior to application with creams, lotions, carrier oils, or salt.

How can we tell if an essential oil is good quality?

You can always tell if something is good quality from the bottle. Here are some things to look out for to make sure that your bottle is safe: it should be opaque, it shouldn't be clear; the bottle should not have a dropper at the top with a little bulb, that bulb can deteriorate and degrade and affect the oil and the oil can affect the bulb. It's generally not safe to use oils that come with a dropper bulb. You can purchase an oil that already contains an orifice reducer, which is absolutely fine, but you need to make sure that you are buying oils from a reputable brand. You can tell that an oil is good quality based on how well it works. Does it smell clean? Does it smell like it has additives or vegetable oils in it? You should make sure that the label says what it is. It needs to say the name of the company, the size that you're purchasing, and the company's contact information. The ingredients should be the name of the oil and the Latin name of the oil, unless it is a blend but everything else that is in it should be

labeled. You should know exactly what you're purchasing. Also essential oils shouldn't feel greasy. They're not greasy; they're almost like a wet-dry. They don't feel the same way as a traditional oil does because they're not a traditional oil

Where's the best place to start using aromatherapy and herbal remedies?

You can go to your local health food store and purchase essential oils. Get to know the different kinds of oils and discover which oils you want to work with. When you're purchasing essential oils, price isn't always an indicator of quality, so remember that. Find oils that work for you and then get started on some formulas, very simple formulas and make sure that you follow safety guidelines. Make sure that you don't use oils that are not safe. There's lots of lists out there, I have a list in my book, *Aromatherapy*, of unsafe oils. You want to make sure that you use them from proper containers; they shouldn't be stored in plastic. A great way to start working with herbal remedies is with teas. You can even purchase pre-blended teas until you learn more about it and then you can start making a few teas yourself. Most health food stores have a bulk herb section or you may have some herbs in your garden which you can use. It's always best to start close to home.

Herbs and aromatherapy can be really fun, beneficial and they can add a lot of bonuses to a healthy and active lifestyle, but you need to make sure that you're safe and that you know exactly what you're using. Make sure that your essential oils and herbs are properly labeled with their common name and their Latin name and make sure that you follow the dosage, usage and safety instructions that you can find in most of your books and resources. **BV**




ROWDY GIRL
Sanctuary



After experiencing a profound awakening in late 2014, Renee King-Sonnen convinced her husband to convert their 96 acre cattle ranch, right in the heart of Texas, into a vegan, animal sanctuary. Renee was able to save around 30 of their cows from slaughter and news of Rowdy Girl Vegan Sanctuary went viral.

Now with the animal sanctuary sorted, Renee is starting plans on incorporating the sanctuary into a veganic permaculture farm; proving to farmers everywhere that animals and humans can co-exist peacefully and in a mutually beneficial way.

Working so closely with the animals on your ranch allowed you to really get to know them. Would you say that helped open your eyes to veganism?

Yeah, that was a big catalyst. I mean, that's exactly what happened. When I came here my life completely turned upside down. I always fancied myself an animal lover, I just didn't understand how ironic it was that I was eating them and claiming to love them. When I became vegan I started seeing just how horrible it is that we're taught that we can love some animals and eat others.

So was there a defining moment for you?

It all started when Tommy wanted me to have my own calf.

Rowdy Girl was a calf, didn't have a mother, I don't know what happened to her mother. I had to give her milk every day and that was like my baby; that was my calf. I bought her for 300 dollars and I fed her and she became my little bouncing calf out there in the pasture. She'd always run toward me and want to be fed and then when the first trailer came to take the calves away I don't know what I thought. I don't know what I expected. I wasn't prepared for the emotions that I had when the mothers started crying and I wasn't prepared for the sight of the mothers running after the trailer screaming for their young. I wasn't prepared for the baby calves that were betrayed to be trying to get out of the trailer with their eyes bugged out, tears streaming-



"THESE COWS HAVE SERIOUS FEELINGS. THEY ARE THE MOST AMAZING BEINGS ON THE PLANET. I THINK COWS ARE REALLY SPIRITUALLY HIGHLY-EVOLVED AND I NEVER SAW THAT BEFORE BECAUSE I NEVER TUNED IN TO THEM THAT WAY."

down their face. I wasn't prepared for any of that and I don't know what I thought about the food on my plate but I never was taught how it got there. I knew something had to die but I never was taught that cows had feelings and they wanted to be with their babies, you're just not taught that. That's kept from you and so I started feeling betrayed.

So when I first experienced that I was trying to redeem myself. I did rituals; I made little crosses for each one of them. I put it in the ground. I said a prayer. I knew that they were someone. Even though I was still eating animals, I knew that those animals were someone and it started my journey to becoming vegan. I didn't go vegan that day but it started me asking questions, it started me trying to redeem myself somehow, it started my quest.

How was it with your husband during that time?

The ranch wasn't our entire livelihood but it was a huge investment. It's Tommy's retirement fund which he had invested into this ranch so he didn't want it to fail. When he bought this place he put all of his money into it. It's his baby and so I was messing with that. I was messing with his nest egg and I wasn't doing it on purpose. I was asking him stuff like, "How do you sleep at night?" I wanted to be the good wife, a good rancher's wife where I was tough and rough and could be able to help out there, corral the cows but we got to the point where he couldn't do it with anybody around because I would cry and scream and I would say ugly things to him. At the end of the day I started calling him a murderer and I was

accusing myself of being an accomplice to murder. I started seeing it that way, I started seeing us as slave owners and it really hurt his feelings because he's such a man of integrity. He didn't want to see himself doing anything wrong or bad and certainly not the way I was colouring it but that's the way I was seeing it. I really, really almost lost my mind. Tommy and I almost divorced. It got to the point where I couldn't stand it.

So what did you do to try and change things?

I went so far as to try to do the whole humane meat and milk thing. I went into all of that trying to redeem myself. I thought "well, if we get our milk from a local dairy then we're doing things better, if we eat our own chicken's eggs we're certainly doing things better, if I buy grass-fed beef...". Then I started asking my husband why we were buying all this grass-fed beef and organic chicken when we had our own cows and chickens here. We never slaughtered them. My husband said he couldn't kill anything here because he knew who they were; he couldn't eat his own animals. I used hard language; I used cussing words at that point because there's something screwed up about that. That's when I really started putting two and two together because I saw that it was alright for him to eat cows but it wasn't alright for him to eat his own cows. That's when I knew it was all about the money, it was all about the business, and it was all about treating animals as a commodity. It began to make me sick to my stomach. I really started seeing these animals as if they were my

family and when I was eating I would be saying things like, “well heck, I could be eating my cousin for all I know, I could be eating a long lost niece if it came like that to me”.

I've read that you started watching every kind of documentary that you could get your hands on, from *Earthlings* to *Forks over Knives* and you showed those to your husband as well...

He watched everything I put in front of him. I deliberately didn't put *Earthlings* in front of him until just recently but he watched that too. What encouraged my husband to go plant-based was *Forks over Knives*. *Cowspiracy* really helped him see what was going on in the business and the environment. *Forks over Knives* is what did it for him as far as being willing to change his diet and he's lost weight, he feels better. He's still got some room to grow as far as being completely vegan in his mind.

So you've now got the animal sanctuary up and running, but you've also got some great plans to integrate the sanctuary into a permaculture farm...

At the moment we are in the research and development stages, looking into how we can create a veganic permaculture farm. Obviously with all these animals on the property we've got manure in the ground, so we've got a

good basis to build upon. What we want to do in the spring is to start an organic garden, a plot where we can experiment so that we can eventually grow into a complete veganic farm long-term. We can't do that right away, so we'll work in stages but you have got to have a dream; you've got to have a vision to have it at all. We've got a plan, we've got a model and I am all about it, I mean I will not let this go. I believe it's necessary and I just keep putting it out there that we're looking for a veganic project manager for our farm. We are looking for that person, that team, or a couple, that wants to come here and spearhead this. We've got the place, we've got the passion, the vision and we certainly have the momentum and publicity to propel this forward. There certainly is a promise of sharing in the bounty of the produce and also a salary as we move forward. We want to be able to pay that person, we just can't right in the beginning.

So is the long term goal to be able to sell the produce at farmer's markets or to become a big supplier in the region?

Oh absolutely. We'll have a farmer's market right here. We're located on Highway 35 in Angleton so it's handy for people to get to. I know the right person or right family is going to come here and help us get the veganic farm up and running. I know it's going to happen, I believe it with everything in me that it's going to happen. -



FYI - The Rowdy Girl crew is going to be featured alongside many other inspirational vegans in [The Vegan Movie](#), which premieres this summer...



Have you been talking with your neighbors, other farmers about what your plans are, and if so what kind of response have you had from them?

I started going to a small Presbyterian church up the road and a lot of the ranchers go there, some of the old money ranchers, and they know what we're doing. They look at us like we're from Mars but they're not mean or anything. It's just they just don't understand and what we try to do is just be an education source. Tommy sometimes gets embarrassed with me when I start talking to folks because I don't criticise or put folks down but I'm real blunt about the things that I've witnessed and what I've changed and what I've seen. It makes people uncomfortable. When

we're going to buy materials at a lumberyard to do a project, a lot of the ranchers are in there and I'm always on about animal rights everywhere I go. So it's not that people are against us, they just don't understand. Tommy seems to sometimes think that we have enemies, but I don't see it that way. It's just people have a hard time talking to us about it.

Well you could just be planting little seeds and once people see what is happening with your ranch, they might want to follow suit...

People are thirsty for the truth straight up. They're thirsty for it straight up and without criticism. I think that's one of the big problems in our movement is that some of the activists that I've come across, in their desire to help, they can't find their voice without being critical, without being judgmental, without being hard. I mean I'll talk to folks and I'll laugh and I'll cry in the same session because I do understand but it's just not acceptable anymore. I understand where you're coming from but now that I know what I know it's not acceptable. These cows have serious feelings. They are the most amazing beings on the planet. I think cows are really spiritually highly evolved and I never saw that before because I never tuned in to them that way.

FYI - Laura Keats, the producer of "Pitbulls and Parolees" is shopping the Rowdy Girl crew to networks. Watch this space for a reality TV show!

Yes, they're very forgiving.

They are. I can lay down in a field with Rowdy Girl, put my head on her neck and she'll put her nose on my head. I just cry when I'm with them. I can't believe that I ever ate them.

You've also had a lot of interest from corporate sponsors with the sanctuary. What kind of opportunities do companies have for their CSR (corporate social responsibility) projects when working with Rowdy Girl?

We have the most amazing sponsors that give us all kinds of stuff. For example, *Follow Your Heart* wants to be a partner, and help us financially in the coming year. They've got vegan eggs coming out so they want to maybe have a chicken coop in their name. *LUSH* gave us a grant for eleven thousand one hundred and eighty five dollars so that we can rescue more animals. Using that money, we're going to be putting in more infrastructure; electricity, water and more buildings so that we can add more animals. They're also coming here with their employees next week volunteering.

That's great that the vegan community can support each other like that, because as we've seen in the media lately, there's some serious bullying from the animal agriculture sector who feels threatened by veganism...

And I think most of the time what goes on is hidden; you don't even know that you're being bullied. We've had some bullies. We've had some folks bullying us online and we even had some folks try to get us to go into

'humane' animal farming. I was so upset. I was livid when they approached us with the money. They literally laid it just right at our feet. They don't get it. That's why I know once you go vegan there ain't no going back. I mean, I don't care how much money somebody lays at my feet, it wouldn't matter. There ain't no doing that. I'm not selling my soul to the devil, never. **BV**

For information on the Rowdy Girl Vegan Sanctuary and Vegan Farm, including information on how to donate and volunteer, [please visit the website](#). If you're interested in the volunteer permaculture position please contact Renee through the website. You can also connect with the Rowdy Girl team via [Facebook](#) and follow Renee's story at [Vegan Journal of a Rancher's Wife](#).

Rowdy Girl is raising funds to winterise the sanctuary and keep the cows, pigs, horses, chickens and turkey safe and warm this winter. [Click here to donate](#) to their crowdfunding campaign.



2016 . . .

Time for

*Peace of
Mind*

By Lee Watson





new year offers us so much, it is overflowing with potential. To realise that potential, a healthy body and mind connection is essential. Each must be respected and cared for. As a cook, I normally write about food for the body, but

what about food for the mind? More and more people are realising the importance of nourishing and caring for our mind, it is the route of sustained happiness and contentment, leading to a richer, more peaceful and productive existence.

Finding a balance in life, as it shifts and rocks is an ongoing adventure, and a new year beckons with fresh hopes and promise. Like a blank canvas, it seems perfectly laid out for us, unblemished and waiting for the artist to arrive. How will we choose to colour the New Year? With beautiful and delicate brush strokes or quick scribbles? Looking towards it, we feel freed and compelled to make plans and resolutions, as if we are standing overlooking a vast expanse; alone on the edge of a precipice, genuinely exhilarated by what is to come. It's a wonderful time of year, in the midst of a bleak winter (in the Northern Hemisphere that is) we find the prospect of a new year renewing, light will return and from where I'm sitting, there is much to be grateful and hopeful for in 2016.

Winter is here, a time of stillness. We are naturally drawn inside; into houses and into ourselves. It is a time to get in touch with our chosen traditions and rituals and revisit some of the ethics of our ancestors or teachers, bringing us in touch with the spirit of generosity and altruism that we may feel around the festive season. A time to share kindness and compassion, a togetherness and unity that I like to think embodies what it is to be a good human being.

Being a vegan helps to keep me focused on living in a more ethical way, every meal becomes a reminder of a

better society based on compassion for all living things. Surely this is a positive message that can be carried into 2016, and as vegans we have the responsibility to portray the lifestyle in an accessible and inclusive way. Make veganism an appealing and vibrant way of living based around understanding and empathy. In my experience, this approach is highly effective and will bring about the change we all so desire... a more peaceful planet for all.

I'd like to change the world for the better and realise that I must change myself for the better first. I'm a constant work in progress. Winter gives us the opportunity to review the past year, taking in all the good and bad, and focusing on taking steps to make 2016 a more conscious and therefore productive year.

As many of you have already experienced, being a vegan is much more than caring about animal rights and changing the way we consume. Being vegan can deepen our understanding of ourselves; deepen the compassion we feel for all living beings, making us

'Do not complain and cry and pray but open your eyes and see, for the light is all about you and it is so wonderful, so beautiful, so far beyond anything of which people have dreamt, for which they have ever prayed and it is forever and forever.' Shakyamuni Buddha

more caring and sensitive to the many facets that make up the jewel of life.

This is closely linked to the spirit of meaningful and lasting change in the world. It seems obvious that the more people who take up a vegan lifestyle, the greater chance we have for a peaceful world. How we choose to communicate and embody veganism is a personal-

'If light is in your heart, you will find your way home' Rumi



decision for us all. But I feel that understanding, kindness and empathy must be at the core. We cannot affect something negative and harmful by reacting and behaving in a similar way. This takes strength and resolve.

How do we find the resolve and strength to deal with life? It may seem highly complex but it doesn't have to be. We are very much focused on knowledge in our societies and sometimes neglect the heart, the centre for nurturing and protecting ourselves and all life. All vegans are conscious of this feeling, this drive to eradicate needless suffering.

Being vegan can deepen our understanding of ourselves; deepen the compassion we feel for all living beings, making us more caring and sensitive to the many facets that make up the jewel of life.

Our hearts can guide us through life, bring us towards a more loving and joyful approach that has become less and less present in the modern world of facts, figures, goals and material gain. The mind is at the gateway to the heart, we can choose to close our hearts by keeping busy and being distracted, especially when living in societies that are based on stimulus and behaviour that is not heart-based. We must find a safe place to return to. A home within our hearts.

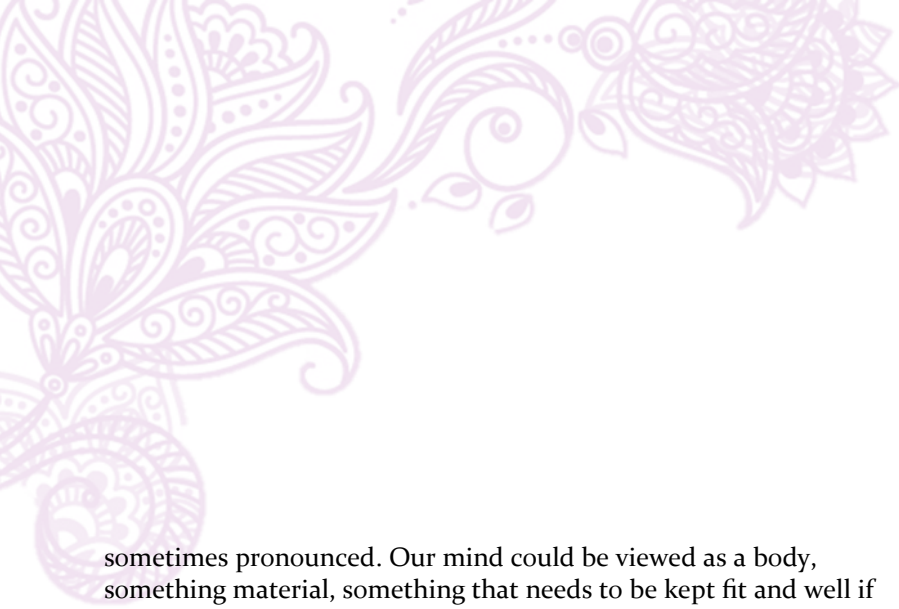
There are many ways to achieve a more peaceful mind

and it is no secret. Religious and spiritual traditions, sages and seers have been talking and writing about it since the very earliest records of human history. The fundamentals of being human has not changed and will not change.

My approach centres around the philosophy of Buddhism and Yoga primarily as they are highly practical and experiential. Practices like meditation and yoga asanas (postures) can help to quieten the mind and bring a calm, balanced, focus into our daily lives. But any activity can be transformed into an enriching process. Even washing the dishes or any household chore or work based activity can be transforming, we just need to be present, focused on what we are doing and not why or what the outcome may be. This is another form of Yoga, less known in the West, known as Karma Yoga. By becoming more aware and sensitive to our actions and thoughts, our decision making becomes clearer, we can more easily identify with who we are and what we stand for; we can react with greater clarity and strength when confronted with the trials and travails of our lives. We may also realise that it is our attachment to expectations that is a main reason for discontent.

What we put into the mind - the things we watch, read and listen to - are just like food. They can be junk or nutritious. In turn, this external stimulus has a pronounced effect on how we feel and who we will become; it can alter our internal landscape and pollute our sensitive mind. I believe that what we do day to day, minute to minute, makes us what we are as it is what we are. We are simply the moment, nothing else.

Everything has consequences, sometimes unseen,



sometimes pronounced. Our mind could be viewed as a body, something material, something that needs to be kept fit and well if we are to achieve our full potential. What we feed it matters. The habits we form go a long way to shaping our character. I think taking care of the mind is even more important than taking care of the body.

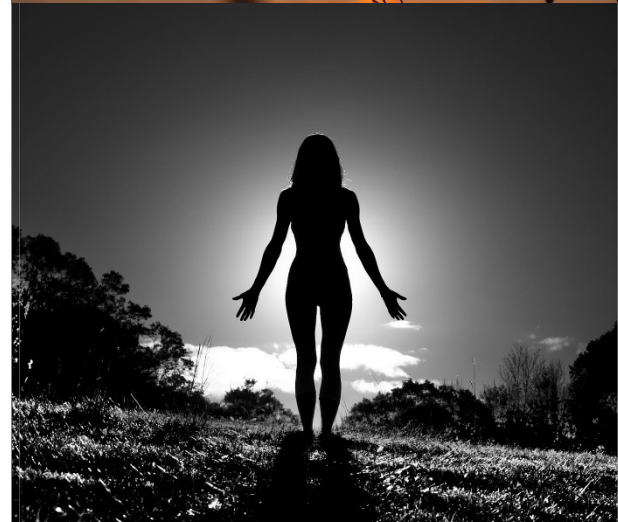
The truth is that things such as generosity, kindness, and forgiveness are the things that make ourselves truly happy. It interests me how many of the core virtues of ancient philosophies are embodied by veganism, there are so many parallels, compassion being one of the main keys to internal and external peace. The compassion that vegans show to animals is something revelatory to many and challenges one of our fundamental cultural values, our basic right to dominate and kill other species on a mass scale. Only by showing compassion to people who do not share our opinion or approach can we really make a difference. When we shake hands, we don't do it with clenched fists.

Contentment, peace and happiness is an inside job and it is certainly not easy to maintain. How many people do you know who are truly happy for much of the time? I can assure that it is possible. These people do exist!

We can make a positive effort to embrace the change that we *are* and realise the power we have and may harness with skill and sensitivity. The power for good, the power to inspire ourselves and others, the power to make peace with life and our past. The future is then a space to grow freely. We take responsibility for our lives and actions and realise that everything makes a difference, everything is linked by both subtle and gross forces. This is where a healthy mind can lead us towards a brighter perspective and a more grounded appreciation of the beauty that surrounds us, the earth that we share, the lives that we are gifted, the hope that we feel, the love that we embody. With this deeper awareness, how could we possibly wish to harm ourselves, animals and our earth? It becomes inconceivable not to shine and share only peace and good will!

Here's to 2016 being the year of increased global compassion, embodied by vegans all over the world. Veganism focuses our minds on putting other beings first. A society focused on this sentiment alone is not just a dream. Each day, we can work towards making it our reality. **BV**

Lee is the author of "*Peace & Parsnips: Vegan Cooking for Everyone*". Connect with Lee on his [website](#) or via [Facebook](#) & [Twitter](#).





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