

HOW
to create
THE PERFECT
VEGAN LIFE
Michael Lanfield



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This book is dedicated to all vegans everywhere.

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Introduction

Animal agriculture is the cause of virtually all of our problems, especially when it comes to the ethics of using and killing nonhuman animals. Vegans understand this and because so, we decided not to harm them in any way.

That is why we call ourselves vegan. The motivation for veganism is the yearning to minimize harm to other sentient beings. Our actions must align with this motivation, of loving-kindness towards animals.

It is even more vital that we also become vegan advocates so we can all live in a peaceful world one day. This story is not about you or me, but about all of us, and what we can do in our daily lives to become happier and more joyful people.

How to Create the Perfect Vegan Life, a motivational self-help guide for every vegan. Not only does it address the realities of what it means to be vegan, but it also teaches us how to best cope in a non-vegan world, while being more effective at promoting veganism.

Though this book does not address every question, rather, it gives vegans the tools needed to avoid burnout, through the practice of meditation and positive thinking.

It is disheartening to see many angry and judgmental vegans within the movement. And as such,

people view vegans as extreme, judgmental, and fanatical. This gives peaceful vegans a bad name. This is not effective advocacy and deters people away from us.

I wrote this book because of the urgency facing us in the world today, and because I too suffered from some personal and family issues the first few years being vegan. We have only one home, and we must take care of her. And because such, it is exceedingly important that we embody these ideas and implement them into our everyday lives.

1

Why Vegan Advocacy is so Important

As vegans, we all want to live in a peaceful world. We all want the world where we share and cooperate with one another, where everyone is treated fairly and has wholesome food, water, and shelter. But can we actually get there in our lifetime?

Being vegan in a non-vegan world is tough, especially when our parents, family, and friends, mock and ridicule us, and justify nonhuman animal exploitation and use like it is no big deal. It is also difficult living in a world of immense suffering and violence, where wars are raging, slaughterhouses abound, and the environment is being utterly devastated. It seems as if no one cares. As vegans, we don't understand why so many people are condoning violence. Humans love violence. It is everywhere, on TV, in the movies, in the news, and our food. And not only that, violence is supported by educational systems, Governments, the healthcare and pharmaceutical industries, military and law enforcement, and religious institutions.

If we want to live in a peaceful vegan world, we must promote veganism. Just like if we're running a marathon race, we need to focus on the finish line, and not anything in between. Promoting anything other

than veganism creates a mixed and confusing message. And that is what veganism is, a social justice issue, the way to peace. Simply stated, veganism is love.

Even if people ridicule and mock us and justify animal use, we need to be strong and stand up for what is right. As Casey Taft states in his book *Motivational Methods for Vegan Advocacy: A Clinical Psychology Perspective*, “[Assertive vegan communication] is simply the best way to get one’s point across and facilitate good communication”.¹

If vegans do not promote veganism, who will? And how will more people know about it? Will we sit silently and do nothing about the mass killings going on around us? Will we passively keep the truth from being heard?

Humans aren’t highly evolved to be able to speak nonhuman animal languages or effectively communicate with them; therefore we do our part to promote a clear, non-judgmental, and assertive vegan message.²

The issue is not how nonhumans are treated, but that they are seen as nothing but disposable units, property. Their milk, eggs, and honey are stolen from them; they are abused and then prematurely killed. This is the problem. As long as we view other beings as separate from the rest of the natural world, we will also see certain humans as different from us. That is why there is still inequality throughout the world. Slavery still exists, racism is at an all-time high, and there is discrimination within various social justice groups such

as the LGBTQIA movement. And yet, in some countries, women are considered the property of men, especially when it comes to certain religions. Child brides and brothels are commonplace in many developing countries.

That is why it is critical as vegan advocates to discuss how various social justice issues are intricately linked to one another and to veganism. We must also remember that as animal advocates, when addressing the matter with people, we must specify that animals are viewed as property, to be used, tortured, and killed. This is the problem.

Also worth noting, is the annual number of deaths of nonhumans, a number one cannot even fathom, estimated at one trillion or more, with at least 97 to 99.99 percent of them killed for food. Thus, it is crucial that we discuss with non-vegans (or pre-vegans) why it is of utmost importance to live vegan, especially when it comes to our food choices. I often use the phrase “pre-vegan” to describe non-vegans, as it demonstrates that at any time people can become vegan. Even though the majority of people are not yet vegan, I picture them already being vegan and eating a vegan burger. The more we envision others eating and living vegan, the more people will turn vegan.

Animal agriculture is directly related to many problems around the world including famine, wars, environmental devastations, and inner conflicts, etc., as I explain in my previous books *The Interconnectedness of Life*, *The Journey*, and *The Lost Love*. So, I won't go into

all the details here. If we care about animals and understand how their use is directly related to virtually every one of our human-caused problems, we will surely want to do something to put an end to the injustice. It is vital, once we understand how important veganism is, to spread the message to as many people as we can, every chance we get. Again, promoting a nonviolent, non-judgmental, and assertive veganism is the best thing we can do to advocate for a just and peaceful world for all. I have found the best way to do this is by telling our own stories of how we went vegan, using “I” statements.

Let’s start promoting veganism today. If we don’t do it, who will, and if not now, when?

2

It's Not About Us

When The Vegan Society became a registered charity in England in 1979, veganism was further refined, through the Memorandum and Articles of Association,

“Veganism denotes a philosophy and way of living which seeks to exclude—as far as is possible and practicable—all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing, or any other purpose; and by extension, promotes the development and use of animal-free alternatives for the benefit of humans, animals, and the environment. In dietary terms, it denotes the practice of dispensing with all products derived wholly or partly from animals.”¹

It is not widely known; but when Donald Watson, one of the main founders of The Vegan Society, who coined the term vegan in 1944, he did it for kindness and compassion towards animals. Dr. Will Tuttle was contacted by a friend who at the time was reading *The World Peace Diet* to Watson. Donald who was 95 at the time, told people around him that this book contained what he was trying to convey when he first coined the

term vegan. In the first issue of *The Vegan News* from November 1944, Donald Watson explained, “The questionable cruelty associated with the production of dairy produce has made it clear that lacto-vegetarianism is but a half-way house between flesh eating and a truly humane, civilized diet, and we think, therefore, that during our life here on earth we should try to evolve sufficiently to make the *full journey*”.

Therefore, we must recognize the primary motivation of veganism, which it is an ethical concern for animals; though, it does benefit both our health and the environment. And so, we must understand that veganism is not about our health or for losing weight, but instead an ethical-spiritual embodiment of love for all expressions of life. To be a vegan solely for our own health is very selfish.

When we as vegan advocates, focus on nonhuman animals, first and foremost, we sense a deep appreciation and purpose in life. The suffering of the animals come to mind, and it motivates us to want to do more for them. When we have empathy for others, there is less of a chance we will go back to eating animal foods, as the reason for our being vegan stems from a moral consideration for other beings. We are on this Earth to help others. That is our purpose; to be guardians and saviours. We can never go back to eating animal foods when our hearts are connected to every expression of life. We feel immense compassion for everyone, and we empathize and weep when we witness animal suffering. And we feel their pain as well.

We also feel compassion for the environment and other humans as well. Such experiences are becoming of people.

The meaning of life is to love and help others. It is our destiny and our calling to do so. It is not about you or me, but regarding all of us. The trees and the earth need our help; it is the nonhuman animals and people who are suffering, it is the air and the water that needs our attention. The Earth and other sentient beings are crying out to us, to save them. We've polluted the air, land, and water, and killed many species to extinction. Now is the time we do the right thing and see to it we don't harm anyone, including our precious home.

With all available technology, we no longer have the need to use animals or abuse the Earth to produce goods. We can reuse, recycle, upcycle, and compost items, using them as building materials or to create new products. Never again will we harm the environment or other animals. It is in our calling to do so. We have no time to lose. We cannot wait for Governments or corporations to rectify the situation, only we have the power to do this.

If we are shy or feel our voices shake while speaking to someone, remember it is about the animals, and not about us, and keep this in mind when advocating for them. We need to get out of our comfort zone and learn to speak on their behalf. When we understand this, we become champions, guardians, and healers of the Earth.

3

Inner Healing Through Meditation

Meditation is an excellent way to heal issues we are facing as vegan advocates. It is also a great way to create peace, tranquillity, and understand the deeper meaning of existence.

It is sometimes true that meditation may also lead to discovering the darker side of ourselves, or aspects we wouldn't have known otherwise. It is a chance to get to know the conscious being who we really are.

What exactly is meditation one might ask? From many years of quiet contemplation, I have come to realize that meditation is a spiritual practice, where one quiets the mind and understands the deeper meaning of existence and truth, which enables us to become more positive and loving human beings. Though there are various methods and meditation practices, there are no incorrect approaches to meditation.

It is not only possible to meditate while being quiet and motionless, but also while working or listening to soft, soothing music, or writing as I am doing now. Meditation and mindfulness (being fully conscious of our state of being), go hand in hand.

In the early to mid-2000s, I started focusing on inner healing, the practice what is known as “self-

inquiry meditation”, into who and what I am. It is a technique that enables us to attain self-knowledge, and it begins and emphasizes on the question of, “Who am I?”.

Eventually, after a period of time, we may discover insights, truths, and qualities about ourselves that we may have never known. And this may benefit us on our journey and path in life.

Other types of meditations include: breathing meditation (being mindful of ones breathing, breathing in and out slowly), breathing in positivity, and breathing out negativity, and The Four Viharas (meaning going home to our true nature meditating on peace, love, happiness, and joy).

How does one start a practice of meditation? Again, there are no right or wrong ways to do this. Here are a few tips when starting a meditation regime.

1. The first thing one needs is a mindset to want to meditate. Do not meditate if you are not up for it or have the feeling. However, at some point during the day, we should find time to sit in quiet contemplation.
2. Once we have accepted or are eager to start, we need to find a comfortable place and position. We can stand, sit in a chair or sit on the floor with our legs crossed. As long as we feel comfortable, we are ready to begin our regimen.

3. Before we start, for example, on self-inquiry meditation, we need to clear our mind and rid ourselves of any negative thoughts and feelings.
4. Once we have removed all of our negative thoughts, we start continuously meditating on the concept of, “Who am I?”, and take it from there.

In the course of meditation, one must come to appreciate various thoughts and feelings experienced. We should not hold back any of the sensations or emotions, even if negative thoughts arise from doing so. This is a learning experience. However, once meditating and accumulating negative feelings, after a few moments we must align ourselves back to positivity.

Meditation is vital, opening us up to a whole new world of understanding; not only for our own inner being but of the meaning of life as well.

It is imperative living in a modern capitalist world with every day of the hustle and bustle; we take a little time to calm our minds. Our minds are racing, just like we are when we rush to work or for an appointment. It seems that we don't have much time for anything, always running from place to place, eating on the go. We don't have time even for our friends, let alone for ourselves. However, meditation is excruciatingly essential, and we must set even a few minutes a day for this, preferably in the morning and evening.

I prefer to meditate while listening to meditational music such as ambient, and many times while also

writing. I also enjoy meditating out in nature, while surrounded by the beauty of the natural world.

One does not necessarily need to meditate with one's eyes closed or being still. It may also be possible to meditate while walking, of course being mindful of one's surroundings, with their eyes open. This is why it is best to meditate in a completely relaxed and motionless state, preferably in nature or wherever one feels most comfortable.

A person can never get enough of spiritual growth. There is always the need for inner healing and knowing oneself. Sometimes, we may feel that we have mastered the art of knowing who we are, but we will never fully comprehend it all. A person can never fully understand themselves, and therefore meditation is a lifelong practice and journey.

We are on a path to greater understanding and knowledge. There is a lot of work and many obstacles that bestow us along our way. This is a magical time in our lives, and we're blessed to be able to experience it.

Meditation is like a doorway into the lives of our inner being and the universe. As we contain the universe or god within us, we hold all the knowledge and truth. Therefore, we are the universe/god. I like to call this our Buddha-nature. We are all unique creatures, each with our own purpose, sharing our gifts with the world and everyone we meet along our path.

4

Our Life Purpose

A lot of people feel lost in their lives. They don't have a zest for life. A lot of times, these people experience depression and hopelessness. It is because they haven't found themselves. This is where meditation comes in. It assists us in our inner quest, which eventually leads us to our purpose.

One way to find our purpose is to discover what we love and are good at and figure a way to create an income from it. As vegan advocates, this has to translate into something we love to do while promoting veganism and making money to survive.

Let's say, for example, you own or wish to create a book publishing company, make it a vegan book publishing company, releasing vegan, and animal rights-themed materials. Or maybe you own a clothing line. Create clothing with vegan messages on them, making sure of course none of your clothes contains animal materials or is made by slave workers. If you are a musician, write vegan songs and release them to the public. You can also promote veganism monetizing your videos on YouTube. These are just some of the ways we can increase our income.

However, many people are just activists handing out leaflets or holding signs at demonstrations and protests. If you are one of these people and are asking yourself, “So, what is it that I can do to earn money?” These activists seem frustrated because they do not know what they can do to promote veganism while making money. Many of them go to their boring jobs day in and day out while knowing that millions of tortured animals are abused and killed. They feel upset because they have to work in a job that does nothing to help animals or the world, while billions of animals are suffering and slaughtered. So what are we to do in this case?

If activists are genuinely concerned about the suffering and destruction around them, they will figure a way to promote veganism while earning money from it, using their intuition.

I remember the first few times I started bearing witness to pigs and cows in trucks on their way to slaughter. I explicitly recall one interaction with a pig that I will never forget. That day I vowed I would dedicate my entire life to veganism. Even if I were unable to pay rent and had to live on the streets, I would still spread the vegan message to people. It is urgent that we get veganism out to the masses. As written in my previous books, we know how crucial this message is.

As vegan advocates, if we are serious about alleviating the suffering of nonhuman animals, and understand the devastating impact that animal

agriculture has on the Earth, then we will see to it that we work full-time getting the message out to the public.

Once we embody veganism in our daily lives, there is no time for working in meaningless jobs that do nothing to help nonhuman animals. This might mean we may need to quit our day jobs and figure a way to earn money while promoting veganism. This may be hard at first, as we are still living in a capitalist society. Though in the beginning, we might still need to work in a job part-time or receive assistance from the Government. In time, we should strive to earn a full-time income from vegan advocacy. Eventually, after becoming fully self-sustainable, we should decrease our money dependence.

If we are at all serious about the issue, then we need to promote veganism. We need to stop making excuses and start figuring out ways to earn money as a vegan advocate. This might mean we need to reduce unnecessary expenses and lower our bills, to get ahead. This might mean we need to live with roommates to save on rent or eliminate certain costs that we don't need. Here are just a few tips on how we can reduce our expenses.

- Instead of paying rent for a large apartment you don't need, you can downsize and share the place with other vegans.
- If you travel, you can couch surf, stay with friends or attend Workaways.¹ I've known people to even pitch tents or RVs outside.

- Get rid of your mobile cell phone, and use Skype, Facebook or similar free programmes to chat or video message with friends and family. If you absolutely need your phone, try reducing your monthly bill or go with a less expensive company.
- Get rid of your car and start walking and biking or using public transit. Having a car might be a convenience and may save you time, but you will save thousands every year if you ditched it. Cycling also helps the environment and improves your health and creates more independence.
- If you pay for water, heat, and electricity at home, take shorter showers and do not take baths. Never leave the water running for long and turn off lights when you leave a room. Use cold water to wash your clothes. Try to be more self-sufficient and look into recycling water and harnessing your electricity from the wind or solar power. Turn down your heat to nineteen or twenty degrees Celsius. This should be sufficient. If you are cold, put extra layers of clothes on. Also, lower your water heating temperature.
- Start a veganic fruit and vegetable garden. Even if it is a few plants grown in containers that is an excellent start.
- Find deals in supermarkets, local farmers markets or food co-ops. Ask if they have any slightly bruised produce for a discount. Wholesale shopping is also an option. Try food banks. Tell them you are vegan and to only supply you with

vegan items. Some food banks let you chose your items and are operated by local non-profits. For some people, dumpster diving is also an idea. This is an excellent way to cut down on some grocery shopping expenses.

- If you don't use the internet often, instead of paying for it at home, go to a café or better yet, a public library. Public libraries and community centres provide free wireless (Wi-Fi) internet access.
- Instead of buying new clothes, buy second hand. It will not only save you a tonne of money; it will divert less garbage into landfills.
- Try being self-sufficient by making bathroom items such as soaps, shampoos, deodorants, and food items, instead of buying them. Not only is it cheaper, but it is also healthier for us, and we become more self-sufficient and less dependent on the system. For example, use vinegar to clean your house or dishes, instead of using bleach and other chemicals that destroy our health and the environment. Bake vegan bread and deserts, instead of buying them from companies. It is much healthier and saves you money as well.
- Do not purchase crap you don't need. Become a minimalist and avoid all the items that are not necessary. The less material things you own, the less stress and worry you have, and the more money you save. Give things you no longer need away. Sell some items and donate the rest.

- Unplug all unused electrical devices that use standby electricity or put them all on timers.
- Get rid of cable TV and other monthly subscription services you don't need.
- Consider getting a vasectomy or tubal ligation and not having companion animals (pets). These drive up expenses and reduces our time spent on vegan advocacy. Of course, if we already have children or pets, we must care for them.
- Eliminating other things in our lives such as alcohol, smoking, drugs, and heavily processed foods, are not only unhealthy, they can also drive our expenses up.

The more we align ourselves with our purpose and goals, and understand how important vegan advocacy is, the less we are inclined to consume and be materialistic. Negativity and cultural programming soon fade away. Eventually, television and media news, jobs, traditional cultural beliefs like churches and Holy Scriptures, become unimportant to us.

Every person has their own idea of their standard of living. Some people may be comfortable at \$100,000 Canadian a year, while a family of five may be content with \$25,000. There are some who live frugal lives, while others live extravagantly. Therefore, who is to say how much people should earn and what type of lifestyle they live?

In a caring world, as outlined in my book *The Lost Love*, there would be no monetary system. As there is a

worldwide shift in consciousness to a world of love, money and material processions will become less important to us. Unfortunately, at the present time, for vegans living in a non-vegan world, we have to earn money to survive. As we eventually become more self-sufficient and less materialistic, we should see to it that we do away with money altogether, and instead, learn to share with one another. We give away most or all of our possessions and see to it we don't accumulate more stuff that destroys the precious environment. Instead, we should share as a family and repair and upcycle products whenever possible and practicable. This way, everyone has use of items they may occasionally need. If we do manufacture goods, they are eco-friendly and quality built to last.

5

The Modern Society

In a capitalist society, it is tough, as vegans are exposed to non-vegan advertisements, restaurants, and stores. Vegans are ridiculed and mocked every day of their lives. Even their family and close friends see their lifestyle as weird and extreme. No longer do they wish to participate in celebrations and holidays, or even go out to non-vegan restaurants, as it supports a culture of cruelty. They dislike supporting corporations that are part of animal agriculture. Educational and religious institutions teach people to consume animal foods and see animals as property. Television programming, movies, and video games are usually violent in nature and are often cruel towards animals. Living in such a world, especially for new vegans is painful. Sometimes, we feel as if we don't belong in this world, and we are considered outcasts.

There is so much beauty around us, especially when it comes to nature, but it is covered up by our capitalistic and materialistic greed. We see other living creatures as pieces of meat, and we also see ourselves in the same way. We destroy our beautiful world, ravaging the environment. Humans have minimal regard when it comes to other life forms. What are we

to do as vegan advocates, how are we to cope in this crazy world?

Modern society does not necessarily mean a kinder and more peaceful world. In fact, it is the opposite. The only way we will ever live in harmony, is to love one another. That means that we must love all beings, not just humans. Again, veganism can be described as a life based on love for all sentient creatures. In practical terms, it means eating only plant foods and eliminating all animal-derived foods: no eggs, dairy (cheese, yogurt, butter, etc.), no flesh of animals, no honey, no animal clothing, entertainment or products tested on or contain animal ingredients.

This might seem like a lot to people whose identity, culture, families, and all their friends eat the same way. That is why many people do not become vegan. Everyone around them is eating animal foods. Everywhere they turn, restaurants are serving the dead bodies and secretions of animals. There are TV, newspaper, and billboard advertisements promoting animal products. Most products in supermarkets contain some hidden animal ingredients. Every day humans are bombarded by corporations that are profiting from animal cruelty and death.

And not only that. Eating animal foods fuels our addiction as consumers, purchasing useless junk we don't need. How many TVs, cars, computers, and large houses do we need? Why are we so addicted to killing and buying tonnes of crap that is only a happy quick-

fix, until we again become depressed? When will all this madness end? When will humanity wake up?

We live in a modern world, but in a sick society. We have become flesh-eating, secretion sucking zombies destroying everything in our path. And for vegans, it is hard to cope in this crazy modern world. Humans don't realize, but we live in a herding culture. Innocent animals are gathered together in large numbers used as livestock and viewed as property and food. And we regard other humans as property as well. Children and women are enslaved, manufacturing all sorts of useless junk that creates zombies out of us and trashes the environment. Furthermore, women are viewed as sex objects and are discriminated against. The same thing goes for people in the LGBTQIA movement. They are regarded as others, different.

So what are vegans to do in a non-vegan world? As advocates of love, we need to assemble all together, to bring about massive change and universal awakening to humanity. It is not enough that we are vegan, more needs to be done. Every vegan must bring together their talents and ideas, and create the largest movement of peacemakers and healers the world has ever seen. Vegans need to take over every street corner of the world and flood the bookstores with their writings, and upload a gazillion YouTube videos and create countless documentaries. Veganism needs to be heard. Veganism needs to be in the mainstream, and it is becoming mainstream. Finally, the idea of veganism being some hippie lifestyle only practiced by the

minority few, it is now becoming the norm and exploding in numbers.

6

A Positive Mental Attitude is Essential

A general positive mind and outlook in life are essential if we want to be effective vegan advocates and to avoid burnout. As we learned in the previous chapters, it is crucial that as vegans we advocate for animals and veganism. We can't be silent; it is imperative that everyone is exposed to this message.

Being an angry and judgmental vegan is counterintuitive. I have found that vegans who exhibit anger and judgement towards non-vegans, the non-vegan tends to shut down. This is why many non-vegans consider vegans to be extreme and fanatical, and this gives other peaceful vegans a bad name.

There is a lot of suffering and violence around the world. Vegans don't live in a vegan world, and it can be hard to cope, especially when we start out as new vegans. It can also be hard to be around non-vegans and our family during the festive seasons. It is best that we view others as pre-vegans because everyone in this or another lifetime will be vegan at some point. This gives us hope for a more positive future to look forward to. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't advocate for veganism just because non-vegans may go vegan at some stage in their life. The more vegan seeds

that are planted, the faster one will go vegan. It is vital that the majority of humans go vegan as quickly as possible. It is projected that if we don't, we might not have much longer to live.

As I mentioned in my book *The Lost Love*, there are positive and negative emotions. Positive emotions such as love and compassion attract the same emotions. This is why when our thoughts are positive, we exhibit the same positive feelings on the outer level. Just like if our thoughts and actions are negative, in return negative emotions arise. That is why positivity is very important.

People ask me, "How can we be positive in a violent and destructive society?" It is hard, especially when one is a new vegan. Dr. Will Tuttle discusses the stages of veganism.¹ I've expanded some of these ideas.

Stages of Veganism

1. The early stages or *shallow veganism* is where one becomes a new vegan maybe after seeing a cruelty video or a health documentary. In this stage, one is still learning the ins and outs of being vegan. This stage might take several months or many years to overcome. Some people never survive this stage and go back to eating animal foods.
2. The next stage is the *angry vegan* or *closet vegan* stage where one gets angry and judgmental with other people. The polar opposite is a closet vegan where they find it too painful to talk about their new

vegan life. For others, this phase takes the longest to overcome with some people never fully realizing the detrimental effects of being angry or quiet, and some never go on to the next stage. At this period some people go back to eating animal products. Several people may bypass this part altogether and go directly to the next step.

3. The third stage is *deep veganism* where one embodies the true meaning of veganism. They do not judge or get angry at others, and they are calm, and assertive in their advocacy. They are often very spiritual and meditate frequently. Though they understand that there is much suffering and violence in the world, deep vegans tend to be more optimistically driven. This keeps them focused on the end goal of a vegan world.
4. There may be several stages beyond deep veganism until we get to *Eden Fruitarianism*, coined by Mango Wodzak, author of *Destination Eden* and *The Eden Fruitarian Guidebook*, and featured in the documentary film *Pure Fruit*.²⁻⁴ To learn more about Fruitarianism, read my previous books *The Interconnectedness of Life* and *The Lost Love*.

Our thoughts manifest into physical reality. Once we understand this, we know that creating negative thoughts and emotions leads to more negativity. And

therefore, we can start to remove these thoughts and incorporate positive ones into our lives.

However, for many people, this is difficult to do as they experience various mental disorders, such as *self-harm*, many forms of *OCD (Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder)*, *bipolar disorder*, *depression*, *anxiety disorders* and *panic attacks*, and *low self-esteem*.

From my experience and research, many of our mental illnesses, especially when it comes to self-harm, anxiety disorders and panic attacks, and low self-esteem, come from one not loving themselves.

A consistent negative mindset and outlook in life may lead to depression or anger issues. Thus, when one feels they have no reason to live or are in a state of severe or clinical depression, they may go back to eating some animal foods. Negativity, depression or anger may eventually lead to suicide.

As vegan advocates who experience mental disorders, they never result in positive changes or benefits in our lives. Therefore, when one fully understands the outcomes of such illnesses, one tries to rectify the situation. However, it is not all that easy said and done. One cannot just use positive affirmations and make their illnesses disappear.

Where do these illnesses come from in the first place? It usually stems from childhood or various combined factors, such as food, genes, environmental factors, peer pressure, stress, etc. The only way for someone to understand how to solve or remove their sickness is to seek the cause of the illness. Where does

this sickness originate from and what is causing us to experience it?

Once we understand the cause of our illness, we can start providing solutions to getting rid of them. This might not be easy as it requires a lot of meditation into one's inner thoughts and emotions of who we are. It may even need us to change or slightly alter our diet. It may also require the help of medical practitioners, family members, and friends.

Humans are starving, and nonhuman animals are tortured and murdered on farms and in slaughterhouses. People with mental issues, cannot begin to imagine what these creatures are going through. Their problems cannot compare to those of nonhuman animals being boiled alive or chopped up into thousands of tiny pieces. Once we feel empathy for those who are worse off than us, we can start to appreciate our lives more, and our problems begin to slowly dissipate.

Some of the mental ailments such as depression that people have are sometimes temporary; they come and go. We see better days from time to time, especially when we focus on the beauty and positivity of life.

7

A Change of Heart: A Love-Based World

Some people won't like what I am about to say because we have to face our egos. Low self-esteem and self-hate issues stem from one not loving themselves. As vegans, we cannot love other creatures until we have learned to love ourselves first. The real test for us is first to love ourselves before we love anyone else. Therefore, we cannot be animal lovers or even vegans, if we don't unconditionally love the unique, beautiful being that we are.

“If we don't love ourselves, we [will] not love others. When someone tell[s] you to love others first and to love others more than ourselves; it is impossible. If you can't love yourselves, you can't love anybody else. Therefore, we must gather up our great power so that we know in what ways we are good, what special abilities we have, what wisdom, what kind[s] of talent we have, and how big our love is. When we can recognize our virtues, we can learn how to love others.”¹

Supreme Master Ching Hai

But how does one start to love themselves when we live in a society that is based on fear and violence? Fear is violence, and the only way to eradicate fear is to remove the violence from our lives and incorporate love into it. It is that simple.

Fear and violence are darkness, and therefore, to remove the darkness from our lives, we must replace it with light. All the great saints and sages of our time have said this.

Our thoughts and feelings lead to our experiences and quality of life. Any negative thoughts or feelings about ourselves result in more of the same. Thoughts lead to our physical manifestations. If we think abundance, we will eventually have what we want, unless ego drives it.

If we focus our minds and hearts on positivity and love, the outcome will surely be a good one. We have the ability to create any life we choose. We are the writers and creators of our lives. No one can do this for us. Sure, we can seek guidance and help from a counsellor, books, or from family and friends, but only we can make the changes ourselves.

Love heals everything; all the suffering and all the violence. We have to be strong when facing a storm and endure the tides. If we don't, how can we be effective vegan advocates of change?

The subconscious mind is the one that is not entirely aware but effects our everyday actions and feelings. This part of the brain is attracting all sorts of information from all around us. Therefore it is

important that we surround ourselves with nonviolence and positivity at all times.

Being exposed to violence through movies, video games, food, religion, mass media news and advertisements, and from Governments and corporations, subconsciously plants negativity within us. When we are exposed to these messages, it increases the chances of developing into trauma and psychological issues. That is why some vegans experience trauma, depression or other illnesses, because of the subconscious exposure to violence and negativity.

The only way to eliminate the toxicity is to remove violence from our lives completely. This is why it is a good idea, to not expose ourselves to violent movies, video games, and other violent mediums as much as possible.

It is not easy, as our culture is saturated with violence and at every facet of our lives, we are bombarded with negativity and fear. Just look all around us, there is violence everywhere we turn.

It is no wonder why some of us experience inner struggles. Even I to some degree, am in need of healing. It is vital that as vegans we remove ourselves from toxic situations; otherwise, trauma may set in.

It is also helpful to see everyone, including those who are not yet vegan, as beautiful manifestations of love. There is no positive benefit viewing anyone with hate or anger. Feeling hostility towards other people solves nothing, and it is not loving. We all want to live

in a utopian world, but how can we get there if we do not unconditionally love all expressions of life?

Virtually all humans were brought up consuming the flesh and secretions of tortured and abused animals. It was nothing we ever did on our own. It was being born into a herding culture that made us view nonhuman animals as property and food. And therefore, we cannot blame, judge or get angry at others. It is the herding mentality that enables us to feel superior to other beings. We cannot get mad at the program or people who are indoctrinated by it. Hence, we need to realize we were all born and brought up eating the same way as everyone else. Some of us just awoke to the truth, while others are still wondering in the dark.

And because all life is interconnected, we are also a part of other living beings. Thus, when we harm another creature, even if it is only through our thoughts, we hurt a part of ourselves.

“People are wounded growing up in our society. Our society wounds little children terribly, through abusive remarks and bullying, and forcing them to eat the flesh and secretions of terribly treated animals. All of this is a heavy weight on children. We don’t realize it. But just the way we give birth, for gosh sakes. In many ways, we give birth the way they do it on animal agriculture. That’s not your baby that is my baby, and I am going to take care of it how I want to. We have this, quite a lot violence in the birth process and then right after

that of course, we start giving little babies animal foods. This is a massive assault on the natural wisdom, intelligence, and sensitivity of people. So it's no wonder why they aren't able to change really. We shouldn't add on to them anger and judgement too because they are already hurting. And to realize we are all wounded."²

Will Tuttle, PhD, Author of the Best-selling book
The World Peace Diet

I imagine Eden a place of non-violence, full of love. And because so, if we want there to be an Eden, we need to emulate that in our lives.

Some people claim that sometimes you need to cause violence to live in peaceful world. And this is entirely untrue. If violence created peace, we would be living in the Garden of Eden by now. These people are delusional. Our thoughts and actions lead to the same outcome. If we are kind and peaceful, we will get the same in return. If we are violent to one another, it will eventually come back to us as negative karma. And thus, the only way to create a peaceful world is to be loving towards all life.

Most psychological issues are due to events that occurred in people's childhood upbringing. People think of their past miseries, and they blame themselves for it. If they were physical, mentally or verbally abused, those thoughts keep reoccurring in their minds, and they blame and hate themselves for the situation. But the past does not exist any longer, neither does the future. The only thing that does exist is the

present moment. So we need to focus on being mindful in the now and live with benevolent intentions. If we are currently in an abusive situation, we need to remove ourselves from the place. If we do not have the means, we need to figure out how.

This might sound naïve. How can one always be positive and loving, when the world is full of suffering and violence? What if the same loving and optimistic person lived in wars zones full of guns and killing? Would they feel the same way?

What would I do if I were in an environment where I had no chance of progressing with my life, to better myself, and my future? It is sad to say, that I would probably be in a situation of immense suffering, with little to no wholesome food, clean water, shelter, or good health care. But most people reading this book are not living like that; we have food, water, and a home, and therefore, we have a moral obligation to do what we can to make this world a more peaceful and loving one. It is because of our Western culture that people in underdeveloped nations are suffering. And as a result of being indifferent towards other beings, we call animals; we also view other humans in a similar manner.

There is no argument here. Humanity is in the mess because we view nonhuman animals as property and food. When we oppress other sentient beings, we also do that to ourselves as well.

Some people ask me, what are we to do if we were starving, or being physically attacked, beaten or abused,

by another human? Will we continue being loving and not fight back? Will we let ourselves be brutally assaulted because we should love everyone? What about love healing violence principle?

We need to understand that this is a hypothetical situation, as it will most likely not happen to the majority of people reading this book, in their lifetime. Karma does not work that way. The natural law of *Cause and Effect* does not work immediately.³ There is a time lag for something to occur within the universe. That is why it is taking a long time for love to reign upon the world. In the current life, we have the opportunity to create a better world for all. We are the most fortunate ones on Earth.

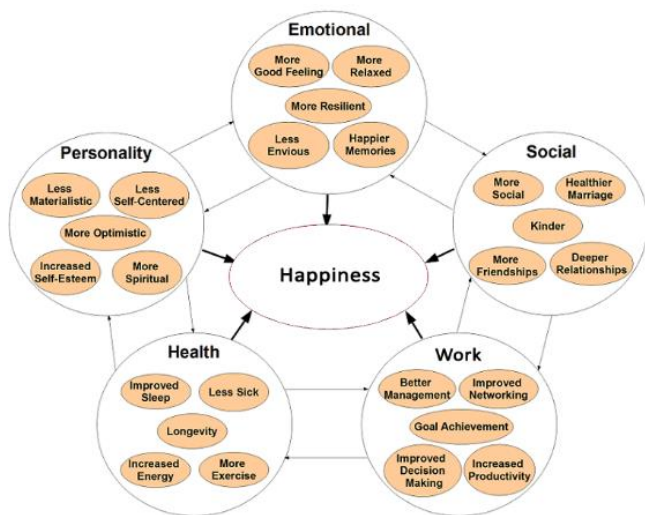
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Happiness

What does it take to be happy? For vegans, especially people that just transitioned to veganism and vegans stuck in the angry/closet vegan stage, it can be hard to feel happy in a world of immense suffering and violence. It seems like our family and friends don't want to listen to us, and they are not changing. Eventually, for some vegan advocates, it leads to depression and other mental illnesses. We then seek love from elsewhere, in a partner or soulmate, thinking that this will bring us true happiness. Many countless months or years searching for the right partner, and not finding one, or settling with the wrong person, just because we feel they're the only ones we can find, may lead to more anger, loneliness, and depression. But happiness can only come when we have cultivated love from within first. But, we must first find happiness and love within and then start loving all other sentient beings. This will eventually lead to more joy and happiness.

As seen in the following chart, all these aspects lead to happiness. The more we improve our lives in these five areas, the happier we will become. This is not a perfect chart, but it just gives us a rough idea of some

of the things we need to incorporate or improve in our lives to increase happiness.



Another item I would add somewhere to the chart would be gratitude. Being thankful and appreciative are other ways of saying gratitude. Be grateful for what you have. Be thankful for the beautiful people in your life, your friends and family, nature, and most of all, the unique and beautiful you.

I am a unique and beautiful soul, with a purpose to fulfill. There is an abundance of food in the world for everyone to enjoy. This universe is unimaginably abundant. As I bless and help others, I too am blessed and helped. There is a great abundance of love, compassion, and kindness encircling the Earth. This abundance is reflected in my thinking and feeling. I can

never possess or own anything. Materialism and consumerism fade away, as more love pours into my life. This is the inner richness, peace, harmony, and joy I experience. I give thanks for the bounty reflected in all aspects of my life, and to the people, and fulfilling relationships that I encounter along my journey. I know that we are all interconnected, and therefore, I aim to cause the least harm and to teach others to do the same. There is an abundance of creative and uplifting ideas and projects to participate in, and thus, I am never bored. And because I share my unique gifts and express my unique talents and abilities and give love, more abundance and love pours into my life. This is the natural state of my being.

As a vegan and animal advocate, knowing that we are not contributing to the suffering of other sentient beings, it leads to a more fulfilled and happy life. Countless millions of people are awakening to their natural wisdom and compassion. It is uplifting to see more people becoming vegan. We know, we are not just a speck of dust in the universe, but the universe itself.

But what does it take to be happy? Is it all so simple? When we fully realize what our purpose is, we strive to fulfill it. The meaning of life is the same for everyone. We all want to live in a world of love. But for each person, their purpose will be a little different than the next individual. What can we do to contribute to the betterment of the world? What is our unique mission? How do we spread the vegan message to

others? Again, that is something we need to work on, and it starts with meditation, as aforementioned.

Once we continue on our path to higher consciousness, we become more joyful and happier people. Helping others creates an abundance of joy because this brings us closer to our purpose. Which leads to happiness.

As a joyful vegan, there may be times when we are not happy and are faced with darkness, sadness, and depression. These are the times we need to remain strong and seek our friends and loved ones for comfort.

This is where emotional *strength* comes in. Strength is not only physical but mental and spiritual as well. In the toughest times, we need to be strong and survive the storm. Sometimes it will seem as if life around us is crumbling and we can't handle it. We even feel sometimes that we don't want to live and envision suicide. I rarely get in those situations nowadays, but when I do, I always remember about the nonhuman animals I am advocating for. I want to live in the Garden of Eden. I am envisioning that time when we will be there. It might not happen in my lifetime, but soon on this Earth. When I focus on the end goal, which is a vegan paradise and each of my goals to lead me closer there, I don't feel as depressed, and I trek on.

This is where happiness comes in. Love creates happiness. When we unconditional love all expressions of life and minimize as much harm as we can with our

heart and mind, promoting veganism, it creates immense joy and happiness.

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Living the Perfect Vegan Life

What does it take to live the perfect vegan life? Everyone has a different interpretation of the word. First, we have to define what it means to be perfect. According to the Oxford Living Dictionaries, perfect is taken from old French *perfet*, from Latin *perfectus* ‘completed,’ from the verb *perficere*, from *per-* ‘through, completely’ + *facere* ‘do.’¹

In practical terms, it means that as vegans we are loving, kind, compassionate, mentally, spiritually, and physically strong, optimistic, and amongst other qualities. And we strive to better ourselves every day. Though it is true that one cannot live a perfect life, just like no one can live totally harmless at every moment. There will be times, to some degree, we inadvertently cause harm. People are not perfect, and there are times we do make mistakes. We all have our flaws, and that is true. But we can strive to be the best versions of ourselves, each and every day, causing the least harm we can.

And this is what we must do. We must strive to be kinder and compassionate human beings. Love is the answer; it heals everything. We need not be fearful or violent towards others. Some people may call us naïve.

Harm, fear, violence and the like, cause the same in return. Therefore, if we want love, peace, harmony, kindness, and positivity in our lives, we must be just that. In the Garden of Eden, there is no violence, as violence perpetuates more of the same. This is the truth. There are three stages of truth as told by Arthur Schopenhauer, paraphrased:

“All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident.”²

It is vital as vegans we become advocates of change and a channel of love. There is no time to be working in useless jobs that get us nowhere. Playing video games, watching violence on television, and through the movies, are futile and non-productive. Every opportune chance, we need to be promoting veganism. That is the only way we will get to a vegan world. This means we need to see the good in humanity and believe they can change and awaken. We need to see the best for the future of our world.

We also need to work on our personal issues, through meditation and learning from other spiritually like-minded people. Intentional communities are great ways to bring vegans together. So are potlucks, vegan festivals, and other events where vegans congregate.

There are billions of creatures suffering at this very moment. It is urgent we rectify the situation. We cannot imagine what it's like being in their place.

Picture this. You are an animal: a cow, pig, duck, chicken or turkey. See the fear in yourself when the farmer kicks, slaps, and punches you. See the loneliness, depression, and horrific conditions, locked up in a dark, windowless shed with no sunlight, room to move, or natural conditions to perch or raise a family. See the day when the transport truck comes to get you and ships you off to slaughter. Also, picture the knife stabbing you in the throat and your blood pouring everywhere. Now witness yourself getting scalded alive. This is the reality of what we do to food animals.

This scenario happens on a massive scale every day around the world. We can't fathom the numbers of lives lost. Humans too are suffering, from eating animal foods. As a result, we succumb to mental issues, diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and certain cancers, and other illnesses. And we attribute our sickness to genes or old age.

We can create the perfect vegan life, and strive to become better beings every day. It is our moral obligation to do so. It is our destiny to teach others the truth of animal agriculture and veganism. No longer will we be silent, waiting for others to take action. We need to be the instigators of change. It is not only essential to educate pre-vegans, but also other vegans on why it is vital to be vegan advocates and working together in creating the largest social justice movement in human history. We need to mutually bond with other social justice groups to create a world of love.

One thing that all social justice movements have in common is love. We all want to live in a peaceful and loving world. And that is where assertive, nonjudgmental, and non-angry education comes in. When we live the perfect vegan life, as Walt Whitman said, paraphrased, “We do not convince by arguments, but instead by our presence.”³

And this is true. Once we become embodiments of love, we will be able to heal others just by being in their presence. Meditation and prayers can be healing channels for love.

In time, as more people turn vegan, we will soon see massive changes and transformation take place. People are indeed awakening to their natural compassion and wisdom. No longer do we have the need to use or kill animals, and all life is sacred to us. No longer do we live in fear of anyone, as we don’t cause violence. There is no stealing, hate or jealousy. As our lives are full of love, we become happier and more joyful human beings. Love heals all; it is the meaning of existence and our natural calling. We can live in harmony with all life, with Mother Earth, and with the higher power and wisdom of our intuition. When we do this, then will we have lived the perfect vegan life.

Afterword

It is not only crucial that we educate others, but also vegans who are struggling with personal and family issues. It is our duty as ethical and spiritual vegans, to help guide them along the way.

Witnessing many vegans with inner spiritual conflicts, I knew it was urgent that I write a book like this. *How to Create the Perfect Vegan Life* is a self-help guide focusing on three main issues, understanding why vegan advocacy, inner healing through meditation, and positive emotions are vital if we aspire to live in a peaceful and just world. Not only is it excruciatingly important for our inner growth and well-being, but it is also beneficial to the movement as a whole, and the healing of our world.

And therefore, it is not enough that we are vegan. Yes, this is a great accomplishment, but it is only the first step on our journey. We have to keep walking along our path, striving to reach our higher purpose. If we do not evolve, we dissolve. And therefore we must walk further. There is more to life than just our personal enjoyment and benefits. Though we do have to take personal time out to recuperate and avoid burnout, because of the severe mess humanity is in, it is essential to dedicate most of our time to vegan advocacy.

Many people are becoming vegan and joining in the celebration. Therefore, we are hopeful for the

future. And because so, our focus is to work on the three most important points discussed throughout this book. This gives us a sense of meaning and purpose in life.

This is a journey of love. At some point in time, our paths intersect and join. We meet individuals from various ethnicities and walks of life. Learning and growing, we gather the tools necessary to live in harmony with one another. It is our unique gifts and talents that we provide, that help shape the world we live in today.

“Compassion encircles the Earth for all beings everywhere.”¹

Worldwide Prayer Circle for Animals

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