



LESSON 6: "WHY SOME VEGANS FAIL"

why some vegans fail

The main motivation behind the Vegan Reset is to show you how you can combine the vegan lifestyle with a healthy and wholesome plant-based diet. That being said, I want you to know about all aspects of veganism, especially those not many talk about. While I do believe that everyone can thrive on a plant-based diet, I also want to address the cases in which some vegans (or people following a plant-based diet) fail and above all, show you how these scenarios can be avoided.

When looking at the public (bloggers etc.) cases of people failing on a plant-based diet, two main things seem to be recurring:

1. They're often plant-based, not vegan (in a nutshell, "plant-based" means you eat vegan food and "vegan" means you avoid all animal products for ethical reasons, including but not limited to food). Why is that important? When their main motivation is dietary, going back to eating animal products won't seem like a big deal. They won't necessarily understand the ethical urgency and importance of abstaining from animal products, so they won't feel the need to look for many alternatives either. If you've encountered health issues after switching to a plant-based diet, it would only seem logical to blame these issues on that particular switch and to go back to the way you ate before in order to reverse them.

2. They don't really try to make it work. Many of those stories go as follows: Person starts following a plant-based diet, encounters health problems, identifies the vegan diet as the problem, goes back to animal products, starts doing better, the end. As I will show you in the following points, there are many different reasons why people may encounter problems when going vegan and/or plant-based and many different ways of dealing with those problems:

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REASONS WHY (SOME) VEGANS FAIL (AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT)

THEY DON'T EAT ENOUGH

Plant-based food is often (but not always) much higher in volume and water content and lower in calories. This may become a problem for those who are not used to eating large quantities of food in general. Many of you have voiced, for instance, that the meals in the Vegan Reset meal plan were too big, yet the total of each day including snacks was about 2,000 calories, which corresponds to what is usually recommended as a minimum for the average woman (for men, it's 2,500 calories). Obviously, human beings come in all sizes and a 4"9 woman won't have the same caloric needs as and 6"8 man. But generally speaking, calories aren't just fuel, they are "carriers" of nutrients, so eating enough is crucial for optimum health. What can you do? If you are simply someone who doesn't like eating such high volumes of food, look for foods that are calorie and nutrient dense (such as avocados, for example).

THEY DIDN'T MAKE THE (ETHICAL) CONNECTION

I once received an email from a girl who told me that she had been trying to go vegan for over a year, but that she was still in college and constantly tempted by cheese pizzas and other dairy products. She told me that she had a deep love for animals, which was the main reason why she wanted to go vegan, but she just couldn't get herself to quit cheese. I sent her a link to the documentary *Earthlings* (warning her that the images were very graphic and to only watch it if she truly wanted to find out more about how dairy is produced. That isn't something I do every time someone asks me how to find the motivation to go fully vegan, but when they express that they love animals and are still having a hard time, I find that it often means that they haven't made that final connection yet, namely that animals are in fact no different from us (you can love an animal and still believe that there is a fundamental difference in worth between them and us). After watching the documentary that same day, she emailed me telling me that that was exactly the last push she had needed and that she

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would never be able to eat dairy again. Once you make the connection, abstaining from animal products can become incredibly easy.

THEY DON'T GET SUFFICIENT NUTRIENTS / BECOME DEFICIENT

A huge problem vegans face is that they run the risk of not getting sufficient nutrients (which can be caused by not eating enough or not eating a varied enough diet). It is very important to note this is NOT primarily due to the lack of animal products. There are many reasons why you may not be getting enough nutrients. One of them is the declining quality of the soil fruits and vegetables grow in. Most of it is not nearly as mineral rich as it could be. In addition to that, much (especially imported) produce is harvested much too soon (bananas shouldn't be green when you buy them, for example) and therefore not as nutrient dense. Since the animals we eat get their nutrients from the same source we do (plants), they face the same problem, which is why many farmers give animals supplements. It makes more sense to simply take supplements yourself than to eat the supplemented animals.

IT'S TOO DIFFICULT / NOT CONVENIENT ENOUGH

Sometimes it is simply a matter of your level of commitment. Personally, I'd rather eat cardboard than animal products. I'd also rather eat nothing than eat animals, simply because they're not "food" to me anymore. Whenever people argue that it is OK to eat animal products when nothing else is available, it is because they still view animal products as food. Note that your level of commitment can absolutely increase overtime, so please don't feel discouraged or be too hard on yourself if you don't immediately stop wanting animal products. As with most things in life, it's a process.

SOCIAL PRESSURE

Dealing with unsupportive friends, family and colleagues is by no means easy. Changing your lifestyle is challenging enough, but having to justify your decision over and over again

makes it even more difficult. On day ten, there'll be a lesson on this for those who are struggling with social pressure after going vegan.

CRAVINGS a.k.a. "LISTENING TO YOUR BODY"

When people say that their bodies need meat, what they really mean is that their bodies need nutrients such as protein and iron and that those can be found in red meat. While that is true, those nutrients can just as easily be found in plants. If you were used to getting these nutrients from animal products for years, it is only normal for you to equate them with the actual nutrients. It may take a while to adjust and get used to no longer relying on meat and co. for protein, iron and calcium (amongst others), but that doesn't mean it's not possible.

Another problem with "listening to your body" is that your body may be misguided. Here's an example: If you don't get enough food (even if the little food you are eating is healthy), your body will interpret the shortage of food as famine and so it will look for foods that are extremely high in calories and fat, even if those aren't that healthy. This explains Yoyo dieting for instance. Diets that require you to restrict your calories (and consequently nutrients) significantly aren't sustainable. That's why so many people fall off the wagon and "fail" while dieting. So, if you are experiencing cravings for animal products, know that that does not mean your body absolutely needs them. What you can do instead? Get blood work done. Instead of self diagnosing, get the actual numbers on paper. Once you know what nutrients you are deficient in, you can take action by looking for plant-based sources and/or supplements.

THEY GAVE UP TOO EASILY a.k.a. Is eating animal products the ONLY solution there is?

Veganism is not ONE diet, veganism is an ethical stance. There are many different vegan/ plant-based diets: high carb low fat, high protein, raw vegan etc. If one of them doesn't work for you, experiment with different macronutrient ratios and educate yourself about all the options there are. Many ex-vegans make it look like eating animal products was the one and only solution there was, but that is absolutely not the case.

THEY ENCOUNTERED THE “VEGAN POLICE”

Pressure from other vegans (both online and in person) is becoming a real problem. This can be incredibly overwhelming, especially if you are just starting out. Some people will make you feel like you are not “vegan enough” or like you should be doing things their way. It is very important to note that while veganism is not a diet, it is also not a character trait. It becomes easier to understand if you replace the word vegan with “common sense”. It should be common sense not to eat animals if we have no biological need for them and doing so is destroying our planet, our health and causing unnecessary suffering. In reality, many more factors like social conditioning come into play and it isn't quite as easy as it should be. The point I'm trying to make is that if a vegan is being annoying, maybe they're just an annoying person and that has nothing to do with them being vegan. Just remind yourself what and who you are doing this for and don't let others unnecessarily make you feel a certain way.