

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Various communication strategies to inspire others to consider respecting others and their rights through veganism.

START THE CONVERSATION

- **Let the conversation flow naturally. Ask them about their life and wait for them to ask you about yours.**
 - **Talk about a vegan event / restaurant you recently went to, advocacy work that you do, anything to bridge to veganism.**
- **Be creative. Vegan t-shirts can start chats.**
- **Social media is a great place to practice.**
 - **Try to interact with others as we would in person to make the most of every opportunity.**
- **Go to a vegan outreach event or start your own 😊**

Key Principles

- **Have an Open-Mind: Helps us to see positives to build on.**
- **Listen: If we listen to them they're more likely to listen to us.**
- **Be Empathetic: Remember, most of us weren't vegan before.**
- **Be Assertive: Ensure you're coming across as confident.**
- **Be Unapologetic: Saying we're sorry something upsets someone will dilute our message. Build on the emotion.**
- **Be Authentic: Share what bothers you, why you went vegan.**

- **Use Your Energy Wisely: Focus on non-vegans who choose to engage with you and are open-minded.**

OPENING / ASSESS THEIR STAGE*

Opening Question) “Have you considered veganism?”

Pre-Contemplation (Have not considered)

No ☐ Explain what veganism is. Keep things positive, high-level, and build awareness around the moral atrocities of the breeding, use, and murder of our fellow animals.

Contemplation (Have considered)

Yes ☐ They are ready for a more in depth ethical discussion. See the ‘Ethical’ section under ‘Ask’ below.

Preparation / Action (Starting to change)

Yes ☐ Ask them why they’re interested in veganism and tie in the ethical considerations if they have a different motivation.

- **Ask them if they’ve made a difficult change in their life. Tell them if they can do that they can be vegan.**
- **Empower them with the information, skills, and resources to aid with their transition.**
 - **Challenge 22+ (Facebook) Interactively offers recipes, resources, mentors and registered dietitian support.**
 - **Vegan Society (E-mails) offers 30 days of recipes, resources around the ethics, communication, and more.**

Maintenance (Already vegan)

- **Ask them why they went vegan. (Reiterate why they did it)**
- **Help them build their support network locally or online.**

- Ask them if they help build awareness and how they can help to be part of the solution using their specific skills / passion.

***People can move multiple stages at once and go in both directions**

RESPOND

- Below is a four-step approach when responding to non-vegans.
 - Every step isn't necessary for each response.
- REPEAT
 - Paraphrase what they said. *"It seems like you're saying..."*
- PRAISE
 - Focus on the positive. *"That's great you..."*
- INFORM
 - Build awareness around the topic they've raised.
 - Use 'I statements': *"I was surprised to learn that..."*
 - Also use 'We statements': *"We've been led to believe..."*
- ASK
 - Ask them an open-ended question to get them thinking.
 - If possible, phrase the question for a 'Yes' or positive response. (More detail in the following 'Ask' section)

Example

- Non-vegan: *"I only buy free-range meat."*
- Vegan: *"It sounds like you're thinking about other animals, that's great! I was surprised to learn that 'free-range' and similar labels are created by the 'industry' to keep customers. Do you think when they're killed it's still morally wrong?"*

Pro-Tips:

Focus on those who are open-minded

ASK

“I cannot teach anybody anything. I can only make them think.”

-Socrates

- **We cannot force people to embrace veganism. Our goal is to ask open-ended questions to get them thinking about veganism.**
- **Focus the interaction on our strongest point, the ethics.**

ETHICAL QUESTIONS (Rights-Based)

Goal to establish:

- **Other animals experience life through various emotions.**
- **It's likely these experiences give them various interests.**
- **Rights are a way of protecting those interests.**

Ask: ***“Do you think using other animals violates their rights?”***

No ☐ ***“Do you think other animals can experience life through emotions such as happiness, sadness, and fear?”***

“Do you think dogs and cats experience emotions?”

“What's the difference between them and other animals?”

“Do you think human animals have rights? If so, what trait do you think we have that they don't, that justifies their use?”

“Even if we’re not sure, shouldn’t we err on the side of caution?”

“Do you think that makes using other animals morally justifiable? (Good catch-all response)”

Yes ☐ Paraphrase their response and go to close section.

HEALTH QUESTIONS

Ask: *“Do you think we can be healthy without using other animals?”*

No ☐ *“Which nutrients do you think we need to use animals for?”*
(See ‘Common Justifications’ <https://goo.gl/H6iEiW>)

“Do you think given animals get their nutrient from plants, it would be more efficient to eat plants directly, rather than filter our nutrients through other animals?”

Mention how the major dietetics associations have said veganism is appropriate for all stages of life. (US, UK)

If the conversation stays on nutrition too long, praise them for thinking about their health and say your understanding is there is no biological need to use animals. Suggest they watch ‘Forks Over Knives’ or another health documentary.

< Return to Ethical questions >

Yes ☐ Reiterate that it’s completely unnecessary throughout.

<Return to Ethical questions>

Pro-Tips

- **Keep your cool, normalize veganism.**
- **Be positive: think of others as pre-vegans. (or blocked vegans)**
- **Build common ground:**
 - *“I used to feel that way too”*
 - *“I think a lot of people wonder about that”*
- **Say “Yes and...” instead “No” or “Yes, but...”**

ANIMAL TESTING

Ask: *“Do you think we should protect individuals regardless of the (alleged) outcomes?”*

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| No ☐ | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>“Do you think it's morally justifiable to violate the rights of the few so the many [may] benefit?” If yes, for humans too?</i>• <i>“Do you think we seek out alternatives to breeding, using, and killing our fellow animals through testing, such as using cells from cadavers, 3d printing, computer modeling, and so on that may actually represent what would happen in a human body better than testing on another species?”</i> |
| Questions | |
| Detail | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our fellow animals are either similar enough to us that it is immoral to test on them, or they are so different that the result are unlikely to apply to human bodies. We can't have it both ways.• Animal testing is often unreliable and cannot be used.”• Animal testing is big business. \$20B / year in U.S. alone |
| Key Stats (UK) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Every year in England 70,000 people are killed or disabled by medical drugs that passed animal tests.• 50% curiosity driven, |

- Only 13% is required by regulations
- 89% of animal research is never published

< Return to Ethical questions >

Yes ☐ Reiterate scientific uncertainty and the moral wrong of breeding, using, or killing anyone throughout.

<Return to Ethical questions>

HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS

Animal rights is an extension of human rights. These questions help to highlight that relationship.

“Do you think if we can find a way to respect animals we can find a way to respect each other?”

“Do you think we can defend both human and other animal rights?”

“Do you think slaughterhouse workers experience trauma?”

“Do you think we would have more food to feed the world if we weren’t filtering our nutrients through other animals?”

< Return to Ethical questions >

COMMON JUSTIFICATIONS

- Click here for a list of justifications and proposed responses.
 - <https://goo.gl/H6iEiW> (Best viewed on a desktop)

COMMON SCENARIOS

- Prepare for common scenarios:
 - If someone asks you where the ‘bacon,’ etc is while shopping, responding I don't eat (or use) our fellow animals might get them thinking.
 - If someone asks if you're vegan, a strong response is: "I'm vegan connected to the belief of respecting our fellow animals"

CLOSE

- *“For me, I realized that I didn’t want to support these industries. We don’t have to do it. It’s not necessary.”*
 - Introduce Challenge 22+ *(For those who seem open)*
 - Free program to start being vegan for 22 days and beyond.
 - You’re added to a Facebook group with others who are vegan-curious so that you can explore veganism together.
 - Daily challenges and helpful information.
 - A team of mentors and dieticians support you.
 - “Is that something you would be interested in?”
- *“Would you like to sign up today?” (After they show interest)*
 - No ☐ “Thank you for you for your time”
 - Yes ☐ Help them sign up on their phone

✓ 'Challenge 22+' Facebook page then 'Sign up'

- Give them a closing card (Resources / contact details)
 - Free template: www.veganinteractions.com/resources
 - Send them away feeling good
- Empower them: "You're a strong person, you can do this."
 - Compliment positive qualities they showed during the interaction. (Open-mindedness, having a good heart, etc)

Pro-Tip

- If they don't use Facebook, suggest they sign up for the Vegan Society's 30 day e-mail program. (<https://goo.gl/9PlmzR>)
 - The only required field is their e-mail.

POTENTIAL TRAPS

BACKUP PLAN

- Avoid focusing on a single interaction / winning
 - If they get agitated, stay calm and ask a different way.
- Watch body language, not just information
 - Use strategic language, crossed arms, moving away, etc.
- If the conversation loses focus, redirect back to the animals
- If unable to answer a question, praise them for their interest
 - suggest they look into for themselves:
 - Health: www.challenge22.com/nutrition (+signing up)
 - Environment: www.cowspiracy.com/facts
 - If they're resistant, move on.
 - Or refer them to www.VeganInteractions.com.
 - Don't give up on friends and family.
- If communication breaks down, save your energy

- Thank them for their time and offer them a closing card.
- If they won't disengage, explain that your focus is on open-minded people who respect life and justice.

ABOUT

- Countless influences contributed to this guide.
- See www.veganinteractions.com/resources for other documents like this, such as vegan language and responses to common justifications.
- Send comments to VeganInteractions@gmail.com

Version: 4-Mar-23

