

# Vegetarianism & Faith



**EXPLORING THE CONNECTIONS  
BETWEEN RELIGION,  
SPIRITUALITY, AND THE CHOICES  
WE MAKE ABOUT FOOD.**

# My Bias



- Priest in the Episcopal Church
  - 3-legged stool mentality
- Pluralism
- On faith, but not limited to “religion” or “faith”

# My Story



## Why vegan?

- Animals
- Health
- Environment

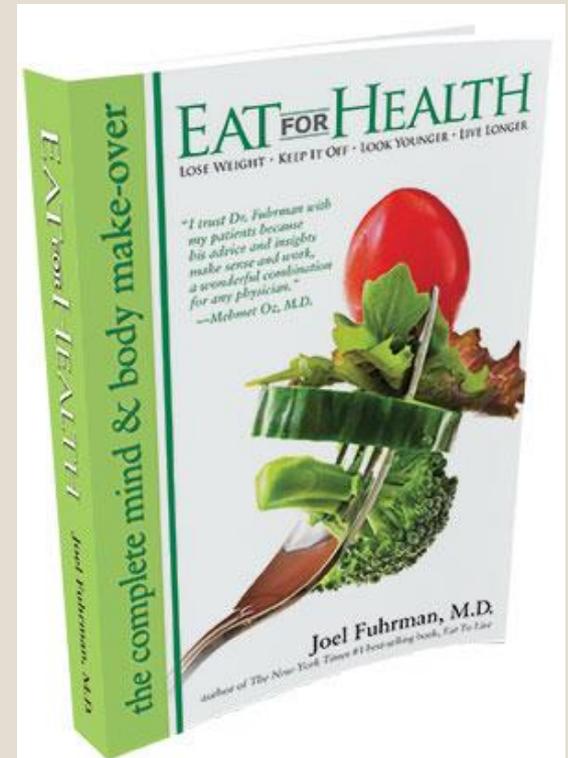
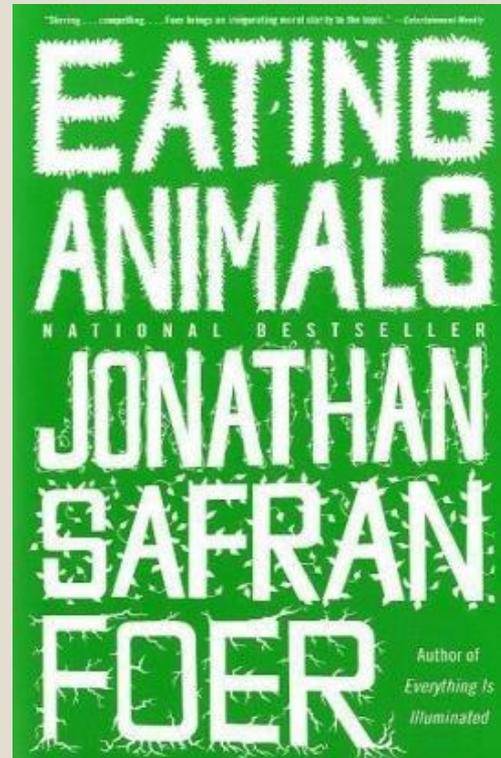
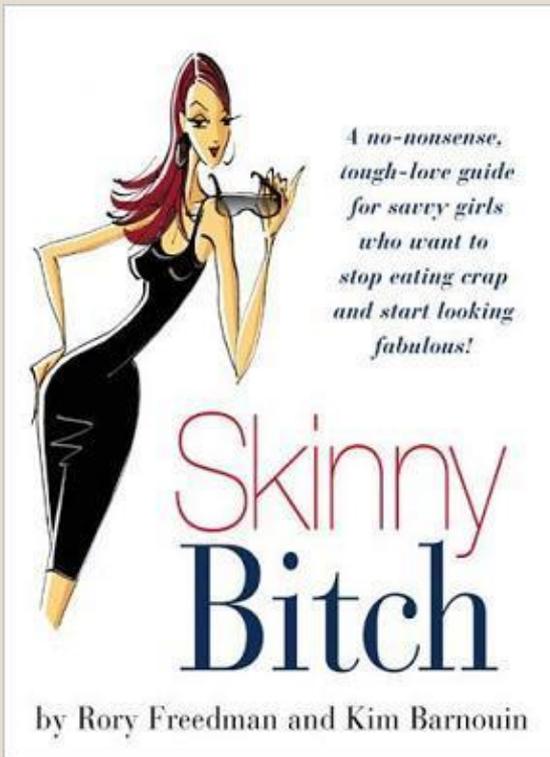


Heartland Farm Sanctuary , Verona, WI

# My Story



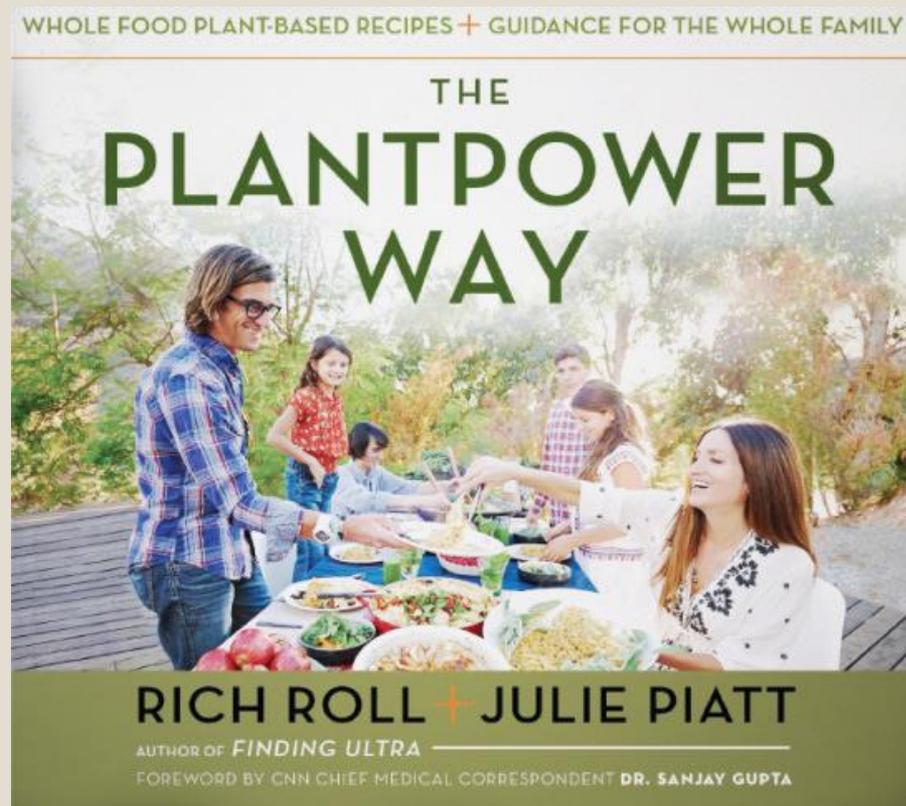
- From Omnivore to Vegan



# My Story



- Current Influences
  - Rich Roll Podcast, Gene Bauer, Coleen Patrick Godreau



# Results of Whole-Food, Plant-Based Diet



## From

- Food Addict
- Overweight / Underweight
- Prescriptions for depression and acne
- Morally conflicted

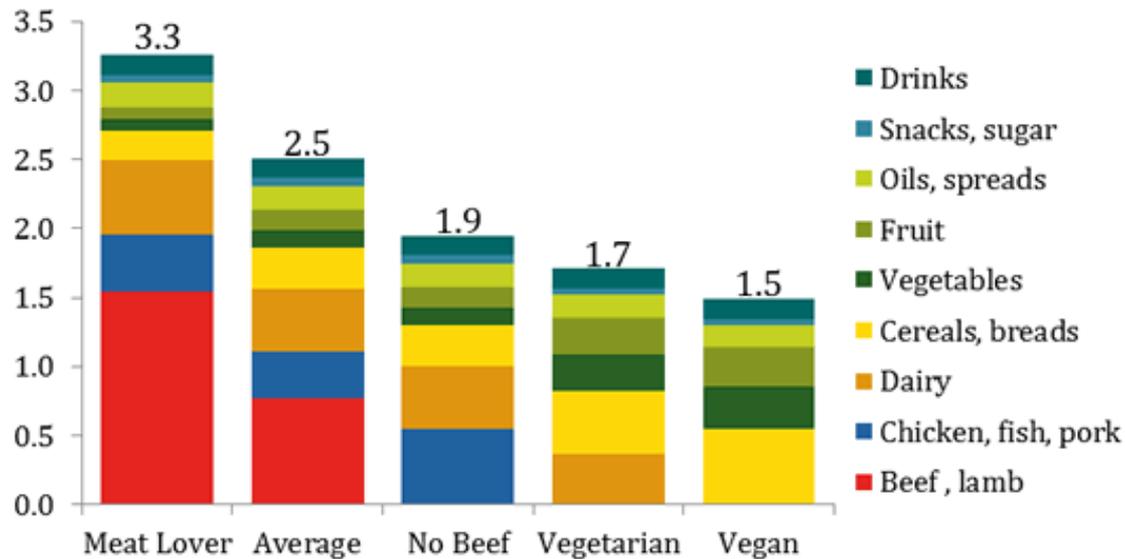
## To

- Intuitive Eater
- Naturally healthy weight
- Lighter mood and clear face (no meds)
- Actions in alignment with values
- Carbon Footprint reduced by half

# Carbon Footprint Chart



## Foodprints by Diet Type: t CO<sub>2</sub>e/person



Note: All estimates based on average food production emissions for the US. Footprints include emissions from supply chain losses, consumer waste and consumption.. Each of the four example diets is based on 2,600 kcal of food consumed per day, which in the US equates to around 3,900 kcal of supplied food.

Sources: ERS/USDA, various LCA and EIO-LCA data



# “Born Again” Conversion



*Seeing world in a transformative new way.*



# Scripture



- Genesis 1:30 - “And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.”
- Genesis 9:3 – (Post flood) Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.
- What about “dominion”?
  - We do in fact have “dominion” as a species. Not to be used as a rationalization for abuse of power.

# Scripture



- Isaiah visions ~ vegetarian.

Isaiah 65:25 – “The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither hunt nor destroy on all my holy mountain,” says the LORD.



The Peaceable Kingdom,  
Edward Hicks 1826.

# Scripture



- Animal Sacrifice in Old Testament? (*Voluntary*)
- Isaiah 43:23 - I have not *burdened thee* with a meal-offering, Nor wearied thee with frankincense.
- Jeremiah 7:22-23 - For I spoke not unto your fathers, nor commanded them on the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices; but this thing I commanded them, saying, “**Obey my voice**, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people...”

# Scripture



- “God never commanded us to sacrifice animals. His message was ‘obey my voice’... When sacrifices are first mentioned (Leviticus 1:2) the expression used is ‘when any man of you bringeth an offering,’ the first Hebrew word *ki* being literally “if”, implying that it was a voluntary act.” *Denis Giron*
- “To do charity and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice” (Proverbs 21:3).
- Hosea 6:6 - God says “What I want is mercy, not sacrifice.”

# Scripture



- Isaiah 1:11-16 – “The multitude of your sacrifices-- what are they to me?” says the LORD. “I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts? Stop bringing meaningless offerings! ... Your hands are full of blood; wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong!

# Scripture



- Daniel 1:11-16 - Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over him: “Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see.” So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days. At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food.

# Scripture



- “But ask the animals, and they will teach you; the birds of the air, and they will tell you.” —Job 12:7
- “The righteous know the needs of their animals, but the mercy of the wicked is cruel.” —Proverbs 12:106.
- “I will make for you a covenant on that day with the wild animals, the birds of the air, and the creeping things of the ground; and I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land; and I will make you lie down in safety.” —**Hosea 2:188.**

# Scripture



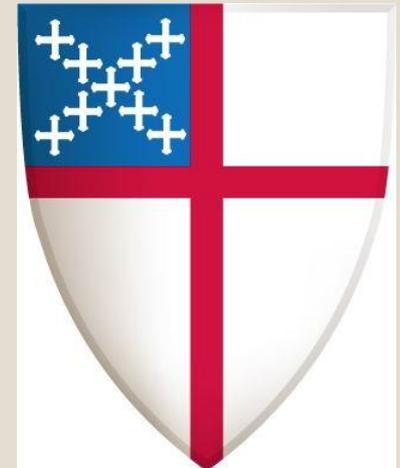
- “Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten in God’s sight.” —Luke 12:610.
- “Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your judgments are like the great deep; you save humans and animals alike, O Lord.” —Psalms 36:611.
- “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.” —Matthew 5:7

# Faith Positions @ [www.humanesociety.org](http://www.humanesociety.org)



- **Episcopal**

- The Episcopal Church was the first Christian denomination in the United States to issue an official condemnation of animal cruelty.
- A statement released in 1817 by the House of Bishops, called upon members to avoid "amusements" that involve "cruelty to the brute creation."



# Faith Positions @ [www.humanesociety.org](http://www.humanesociety.org)



- “The Episcopal Church encourage its members to ensure that husbandry methods for captive and domestic animals would prohibit suffering in such conditions as puppy mills, and factory-farms;... “The Episcopal Church's Peace and Justice Office [is instructed to] identify existing guidelines to educate its members to adhere to ethical standards in the care and treatment of animals... “The Episcopal Church, through its Office of Government Relations, [is instructed to] identify and advocate for legislation protecting animals and effective enforcement measures.”



— *From the Episcopal Church, Support Ethical Care of Animals.*

# Episcopal: On Care of Animals



- St. Francis Day Pet Blessing
- Liturgies: For a New Pet; In Remembrance of a Pet
- Notable Anglicans: C.S. Lewis, William Wilberforce
- Eucharist - Vision of God's Table



# Episcopal: On Care of Animals



## Eucharistic Prayer D

- “Fountain of life and source of all goodness, you made all things and fill them with your blessing; you created them to rejoice in the splendor of your radiance.

Countless throngs of angels stand before you to serve you night and day; and, beholding the glory of your presence, they offer you unceasing praise. Joining with them, and ***giving voice to every creature under heaven***, we acclaim you, and glorify your Name, as we sing...”

# Episcopal: On Care of Animals



## **Eucharistic Prayer D**

- You formed us in your own image, giving the whole world into our care, so that, in obedience to you, our Creator, we might rule and **SERVE** all your creatures.

# Lutheran



- Martin Luther on animals:

“Thus Christ now speaks: ...you daily see how your heavenly Father feeds the little birds in the field, without their having any care...[H]e holds them in such high esteem that he daily feeds them, as if he had only these to care for; and he takes pleasure in it, that they quite without care fly about and sing, as if they should say: I sing and am cheerful...”—from Martin Luther, Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount (re: Matthew 6:26-27).

- ELCA's Presiding Bishop, Mark S. Hanson: “We cannot love God or our human neighbor without caring for creation.”

# Judaism



- Reform Judaism

- It emphasizes *tikkun olam* (repair of the world), a concept, according to the Reform Movement, that requires Judaism to continuously re-form itself in response to the changing needs of changing times and circumstances.

- Orthodox Judaism

- 12th century rabbinic scholar Rabbi Moses Ben Maimonides taught that although Jewish Law permits the use of animals, we must always remember that animals exist for their own sake, not for ours, and that they are a good in the eyes of G-d.

“I consider therefore the following opinion as most correct according to the teaching of the Bible, and best in accordance with the results of philosophy; namely, that the Universe does not exist for man’s sake, but that each being exists for its own sake, and not because of some other thing...each part is declared to be the product of [G-d’s] will, and to satisfy by its existence the intention [of the Creator],” - *The Guide for the Perplexed*

# Islam



- “It is frequently claimed that one position or another represents ‘true’ Islam. Nevertheless, there exists no unified Islamic or Muslim view of nonhuman animals.” —*Richard Folz, "Dimension of Animals in Islamic Tradition and Muslim Culture," in A Communion of Subjects, Waldau and Patton, 2006.*

# Hinduism



- The Hindu American Foundation (HAF) and the vast majority of Hinduism's leading traditions regard the ethical treatment of animals as fundamental to the core Hindu belief that the Divine exists in all living beings, both human and non-human, and the whole world is one family. Animals and plants are not regarded as mere objects for wanton human use and consumption in the Hindu tradition. Rather, they are equally embodied with the existence of the Divine and are fully deserving of respect and human compassion.
- The concept of ahimsa, or non-violence, which was popularized by Mahatma Gandhi's passive resistance movement in India, is central to Hindu thought and applies not only to how humans interact with each other, but also to how they interact with all living beings. - *From Hindu American Foundation*

# Buddhism



- Key teachings about Buddhism and animals include: animals and humans share the same essential nature; the highest Buddhist virtue is compassion, which we are to show to all sentient beings at all times; we should do all in our power to avoid causing suffering or death for any sentient being. - *From Dharma voices for Animals*

# Unitarian Universalist



- In 2011, the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations approved a Statement of Conscience on Ethical Eating: Food and Environmental Justice. This statement calls upon members to apply their seven Principles to food choices: “Ethical eating is the application of our Principles to our food choices. What and how we eat has broad implications for our planet and society. Our values, Principles, and integrity call us to seek compassion, health, and sustainability in the production of food we raise or purchase... We acknowledge that aggressive action needs to be taken that will ensure an adequate food supply for the world population; reduce the use of energy, water, fertilizer, pesticides, and hormones in food production; mitigate climate change; and end the inhumane treatment of animals...”

# HSUS Faith Outreach



- HSUS Faith Outreach Resources
  - Create a Humane Backyard at Your Place of Worship
  - St. Francis Day in a Box
  - “Eating Mercifully,” DVD



The 26-minute documentary explores Christian perspectives on factory farming. As you'll see in the film, a growing number of Christians are changing their diet and consumer purchases because the way animals are treated in factory farms is inconsistent with their beliefs. Some are demanding better treatment of farm animals, while some are simply leaving animals off their plates altogether

# Blue Zone Communities



*“Where people live the longest.”*

- In 2004, Dan Buettner teamed up with National Geographic and the world’s best longevity researchers to identify pockets around the world where people live measurably longer better. In these “Blue Zones” they found that people reach age 100 at rates 10 times greater than in the United States. After identifying 5 of the world’s Blue Zones, Dan and National Geographic took teams of scientists to each location to identify lifestyle characteristics that might explain longevity. They found that the lifestyles of all Blue Zones residents shared nine specific characteristics. We call these characteristics the Power 9®. – [www.bluezone.org](http://www.bluezone.org) website



Nine common denominators or lifestyle traits shared by all of Blue Zone populations:

Notice:

Role of Faith/Spirituality

Plant-based



## Blue Zone

# Blue Zones & People of Faith



- Move naturally
- Right Outlook
- Know your purpose
- Downshift

# Blue Zones & People of Faith



- Eat Wisely
- 80% Rule
- Plant slant
- Wine at 5pm
- Belong
- Family first
- Belong
- Right tribe

# Farm Sanctuary



- A religious concept
- Houses of worship historically grant “sanctuary” maybe animals need our sanctuary now.
- See: Heartland Farm Sanctuary and Farm Sanctuary



# Theology



- We can experience God's love in loving and being loved by animals. It's how we can participate in bringing God's kingdom to earth (as it is in heaven).



# Conclusion



- Precedent for animal ethics in religions that informs food choices.
- For a person who knows their values, their decisions are easy.
- Our beliefs and values reflection in our actions. It only makes sense that our faith informs the choices we make about food.  
*(willful ignorance doesn't count)*

