

Vegan Language

Strategic language to help us get our message across

Why give people an opportunity to pick at our word choice rather than responding to our message? Why use words that could trigger others and cause them to shutdown?

Having an ethical discussion about the truth is enough. This document helps us to frame our points in an objective non-triggering way so we can have the most effective interactions possible.

GENERAL TERMS

Suggestion	Used to replace...	Notes
Non-Human animal	Animals	Emphasizes that we're all animals and that we're similar in the ways that matter, such as being aware and experiencing emotions such as happiness, sadness, and fear.
Human animal	People	
They	It	Consider saying 'they' when describing animals. This emphasizes that they are someone, not something.
Building awareness	Educating	This could imply that the listener is uneducated.
Spared	Saved	We're not saving animals by going vegan. The idea is that we will spare future animals from being needlessly bred and killed.
Farmed animals	Farm animals	This could imply animals are meant to be farmed.
Choose not to eat...	Can eat...	If someone asks if we <i>can</i> eat something respond that you can, but you <i>choose</i> not to. This emphasizes that it's a moral choice, not

		a dietary limitation.
Companion animal	Pet	Emphasize that animals are here with us rather than for us.
Take care of	Owner	

EUPHAMISMS

Suggestion	Used to replace...	Notes
Using an animal	Animal product, meat	Implies animals are a product and reinforces the disconnect most people have from what they're buying and the animal it came from.
Flesh	Meat	Helps break down the disconnect between packaged 'meat' and the animal it comes from.
Flesh of a cow, pig, etc.	Beef, pork, etc.	See the notes above for flesh. It's best to talk about the animal something comes from than the euphemism.
Cows milk	Milk, normal milk	See the notes above for flesh. Also helps distinguish cow's milk from vegan alternatives and that cow's milk is not normal.

GOAL SETTING AND WHAT TO CALL OTHERS

Suggestion	Used to replace...	Notes
Vegan, veganism	Plant-based, vegetarian, pescatarian, etc	I set a clear end goal by talking about veganism. If a person says they are one of these I praise the positive steps they've taken and then advocate for veganism.
Doing	Diet,	Veganism is about justice, not something

what's right	lifestyle	that we start and stop as it suits us.
Non-vegan, vegan- curious, those who aren't vegan	Carnist, meat eater, animal eater, corpse eater,	Terms like carnist are counterproductive as it may shame others or empower them to support animal use. Plus it puts the focus on eating animals, which is not all veganism is about.
	Omnivore	Omnivore suggests that this is a fixed category that can't be changed. It also implies that we can choose to eat animals, when it's not ethical to do so.

OBJECTIVE LANGUAGE

Suggestion	Used to replace...	Notes
Animal use, needlessly bred and killed, completely unnecessary	Animal abuse, cruelty, suffering, welfare	Subjective terms will leave the discussion open for people to talk about conditions or 'humane' farming.
	Treatment / mistreatment, harmed, mutilated, tortured	
	Exploitation	Technically, exploitation means mistreating someone or benefiting from a resource. It's not how we treat animals it's that we use them at all. Saying exploitation could also imply that animals are resources.
	Standard practice	Implies there's a practice that would be acceptable.

	Eating animals	This is a vegetarian message.
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TRIGGER WORDS

Suggestion	Used to replace...	Notes
Killed	Murdered	We can often say the same thing in a different way with less of a chance of the person shutting down.
Forcibly impregnated	Rape	
Inconsistent	Hypocrite	
Justification	Excuse	

COMPARISON TO HUMAN INJUSTICES

Suggestion	Used to replace...	Notes
Animal Use	Slavery, abolition, holocaust	<p>As these terms are typically used to discuss human injustices people are less likely to make the connection to animals if we use them.</p> <p>Job already hard enough getting people to think about why animals matter. These comparisons imply that animal injustices are equal to human injustices. Regardless of our perspective on this, it's not necessary to make the vegan case, so why make our jobs harder?</p>

OTHER TRIGGER WORDS

Suggestion	Used to replace...	Notes
Habit	Addiction	This can imply that the situation is beyond their control or be insensitive to those who have suffered from addiction themselves. (This is not to discount that there can be addictions around food)
Morally inconsistent	Moral schizophrenia	Excludes members of the mental health community.
Advocate	Activist	This term may make imply extreme / unlawful actions, especially with those who aren't vegan. As very few non-human activists take part in unlawful action, we may want to consider saying 'advocate' depending on the situation.

PHRASES TO AVOID

Suggestion	Notes
Calling someone a pig, cow, etc.	Comparing a person to most animals is derogatory. This builds on the view that their lives and experiences don't matter.
Kill two birds with one stone, open a can of worms, etc.	There numerous expressions like this. We should try to eliminate the use of these phrases as they lessen the value of non-human animals.
A list of phrases about animals	A list of phrases about animals
Calling animals voiceless	Anyone who's heard an animal cry out can attest that animals do have a voice. We're just not listening.
Cognitive	This term is when someone is uncomfortable with a

<p>Dissonance (Be selective with use)</p>	<p>contradictory belief. Oftentimes people aren't uncomfortable with the idea of using animals, so this phrase should be limited to when people express discomfort with animal use.</p>
<p>Kindness, compassion</p>	<p>It doesn't take kindness or compassion not to kick a dog on the street. It means we agree that animals have inherent value and that they're to be respected, not used as a resource.</p> <p>The message behind veganism should be the same. Veganism is a matter of justice. Using words like kindness or compassion dilute this message.</p>

Consistent use of these words may not be practical. The idea is to get us thinking about how the words we choose impact our message.

While language is important, getting out there and talking about veganism is important too. Don't let the fear of saying the wrong thing keep you from advocating for animals. As long as you continue to reflect on your approach and you're thoughtful about your word choice I'm sure you'll inspire others.

A quick note about social media, I'd encourage you to try to interact with others the way you would interact in person. The person the other end may be seriously considering veganism.

It's also important to consider our view of human animals. If we send others the message that humans should all be respected, it is more likely that they will believe non-human animals should be respected. This includes the 'isms' such as racism, sexism, ableism, etc.

Note: This is not meant to be exhaustive. If there's something you think should be added please e-mail me at VeganInteractions@gmail.com.

