





DISCUSSION GUIDE







Be a Voice for Animals

We all have a unique voice. These concepts helped me find mine.

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 and tattoos can start chats.**
-  **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.**

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 about the violation of animals’ rights through needless breeding and killing.

Contemplation (Have considered)

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

Preparation / Action (Starting to change)

Yes → Ask them why they’re vegan-curious and tie in the ethical considerations if they have a different motivation.

 **Ask them if they’ve ever made any changes 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 how they help build awareness.**

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...”*


 **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 the 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 it’s still violating the animal’s rights when they’re killed?”*

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.
-  You do not need to memorize these questions. The idea is to establish using animals is completely unnecessary and a violation of their rights.
-  Focus the interaction on our strongest point, the ethics.

ETHICAL QUESTIONS (Rights-Based)

Ask: *“Do you think animals are aware and care about their lives?”*

No → *“Do you think animals can experience emotions such as happiness?”*
“Do you think death deprives them of future happiness?”
“Do you think dogs and cats can experience emotions?”
“What’s the difference between them and other animals?”
“Given we all have a brain and central nervous system, do you think we could experience life in a similar way?”
“Even if we’re not sure, don’t you think we should error on the side of caution?”

Yes → *“Do you think when we use animals we violate their rights?”*
Explain that a right is a way of protecting an interest
(It’s been established above that animals have interests)

ETHICAL QUESTIONS (Continued)

Continue to ask thought-provoking questions to help them see why the animals' rights are being violated.

If they are open, proceed to the 'Close' section below

If they are resistant, thank them for their time.

(See 'Potential traps' and 'Backup Plan' below for more)

See the following sections for guidance on other topics.

HEALTH QUESTIONS

Ask: *"Do you think we can be healthy without using animals?"*

Yes → You have established there's no biological need to eat animals.

Reiterate that it's completely unnecessary throughout.

<Return to Ethical questions>

No → *"Which nutrients do you think we need to use animals for?"*
(See 'Common Justifications' section below)

"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 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 >

HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS

It's common for people to accuse vegans of not caring about human animal rights. These questions can help respond to this concern.

“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 animals?”

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

“Do you think there's common threads to different forms of oppression?”

< Return to Ethical questions >

Pro-Tips



Keep your cool, normalize veganism.



Be positive: think of others as pre-vegans.



Build common ground: “I used to feel that way too”



Use ‘I statements’: “I was surprised to learn that...”

COMMON JUSTIFICATIONS















Click here for a list of justifications and proposed responses.





<https://goo.gl/H6iEiW> (Best viewed on a desktop)









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 explore veganism 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)**
 -  **See our website for a free closing card template.**
-  **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

-  **Avoid focusing on a single interaction / winning**
 -  **The conversation will flow more naturally.**
-  **Use strategic language**
 -  **Killed vs. murdered, forcibly impregnated vs. rape, inconsistent vs. hypocrite, used vs. slaves, etc.**
 -  **Gets point across and helps to avoid people shutting down.**
See ‘Vegan Language’ www.veganinteractions.com/resources
-  **Spend your time and energy wisely**
 -  **Focus on conversations where people seem open-minded.**
 -  **Don’t give up on friends and family.**





BACKUP PLAN

-  **If they get agitated, stay calm and ask a different way.**
-  **Watch body language to make sure you’re not losing them.**
 -  **Loss of eye contact, crossed arms, moving away, etc.**
-  **If the conversation loses focus, bring it back to the animals**
-  **If unable to answer a question, praise them for their interest suggest they look into for themselves:**
 -  **Health: Forks Over Knives**
 -  **Environment: Cowspiracy**
 -  **Or refer them to www.VeganInteractions.com.**
-  **If communication breaks down, save your energy**
 -  **Thank them for their time and give them a closing card.**
(Free template: www.veganinteractions.com/resources)
 -  **If they won’t disengage, explain that your focus is on open-minded people who think needless killing is wrong.**

INTERACT WITH US






@VeganInteractions





-  **Motivational animal videos**
-  **Street interviews**
-  **Communication ideas**
-  **Connect with others and share resources, experiences, and ideas**



VeganInteractions.com

-  **Free video series explaining the concepts in this guide**
-  **Resources for the vegan-curious**
-  **Resources to improve our advocacy**

ABOUT

-  **Originally inspired by vegan psychologist Dr. Casey Taft's '*Motivational Methods for Vegan Advocacy*.'**
-  **Link to book: <https://goo.gl/d8FE5v>**
-  **Countless other influences contributed to this guide.**
-  **The language in this guide is often simplified. See 'Vegan Language' for more: www.veganinteractions.com/resources**

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