



ALEXANDRA COACHING

Start Getting Unstuck

By **Alexandra Paul**

Inspiring Others to

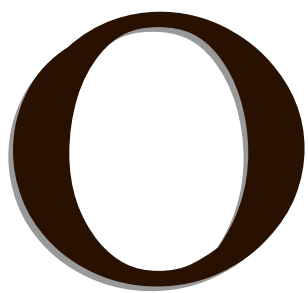
GO VEGAN

How do we vegans inspire others to move towards a more compassionate way of living? As a health coach, I specialize in helping people change their habits, but the best way to encourage people to choose veganism confounds me. This is probably because vegan is not just a behaviour, it is also a belief system.

It took me over 20 years to go from vegetarian to vegan even though my

brother was vegan, I dated a man who was vegan, I saw many horrendous videos of animal cruelty, I knew why being vegan was best for the animals, the planet and my health, and I felt shame about not giving up dairy. I was around people who proselytized and others who simply led by example and none of them was “the one thing” that got me to change. It was more an accumulation of messages for decades and then one day – boom, I decided to go vegan.

VEGANISM



On the other hand, my friend Ari and his husband Mikko literally went from meat-eaters to vegan overnight. A TV interview with actress Alicia Silverstone about her veganism sparked Ari, he then watched some factory farm videos on the internet and announced to Mikko they were going vegan pronto. They immediately cleared out their kitchen cabinets and voila – Ari and Mikko have never wavered in 8 years and are among my most dedicated activist friends.

I come from the school of thought that the best way to

inspire change is to role model the change you want to see in the world, not to cajole or push people. I believe that the Alcoholics Anonymous adage “Attraction Not Promotion” works best – if I am active, vibrant and look great, people will want to know what I am doing and hopefully they will be inspired to do it too. Until then, I will not be goaded into arguments about paleo vs. vegan or why hunters are the best environmentalists. I let those people choose their heart attacks and their ugly bear rugs because I believe debating them entrenches their beliefs even more - in an argument, each side articulates its reasoning over and over, which just

strengthens resolve. I choose to engage only those who are questioning or who *want* to make changes in their life.

But there are many ways of spreading the vegan word: Gary Yourofsky travels the world speaking out for veganism and is credited with inspiring tens of thousands of Israelis to go vegan when he lectured there. I admire him greatly, and I bet he’d probably happily debate anyone. So many people I meet have been moved to overhaul their lifestyles because of documentaries like ***Earthlings***, ***Forks Over Knives*** or ***Cowspiracy***. Amazing vegan food & fashion helps others transition away from meat, dairy, leather and wool.

