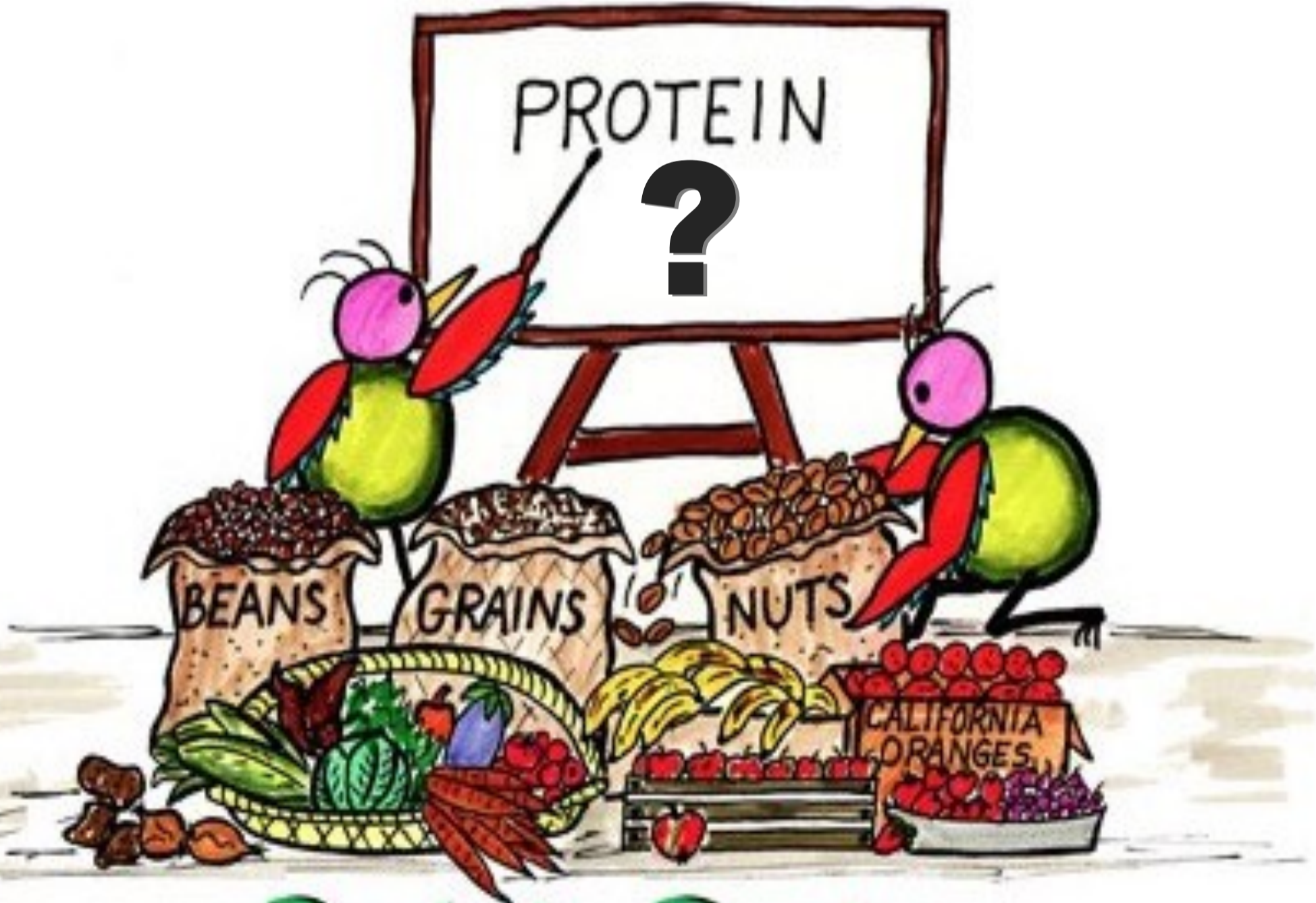




**ALEXANDRA COACHING**  
Start Getting Unstuck  
*By* **Alexandra Paul**

# How to Answer the **PROTEIN QUESTION**

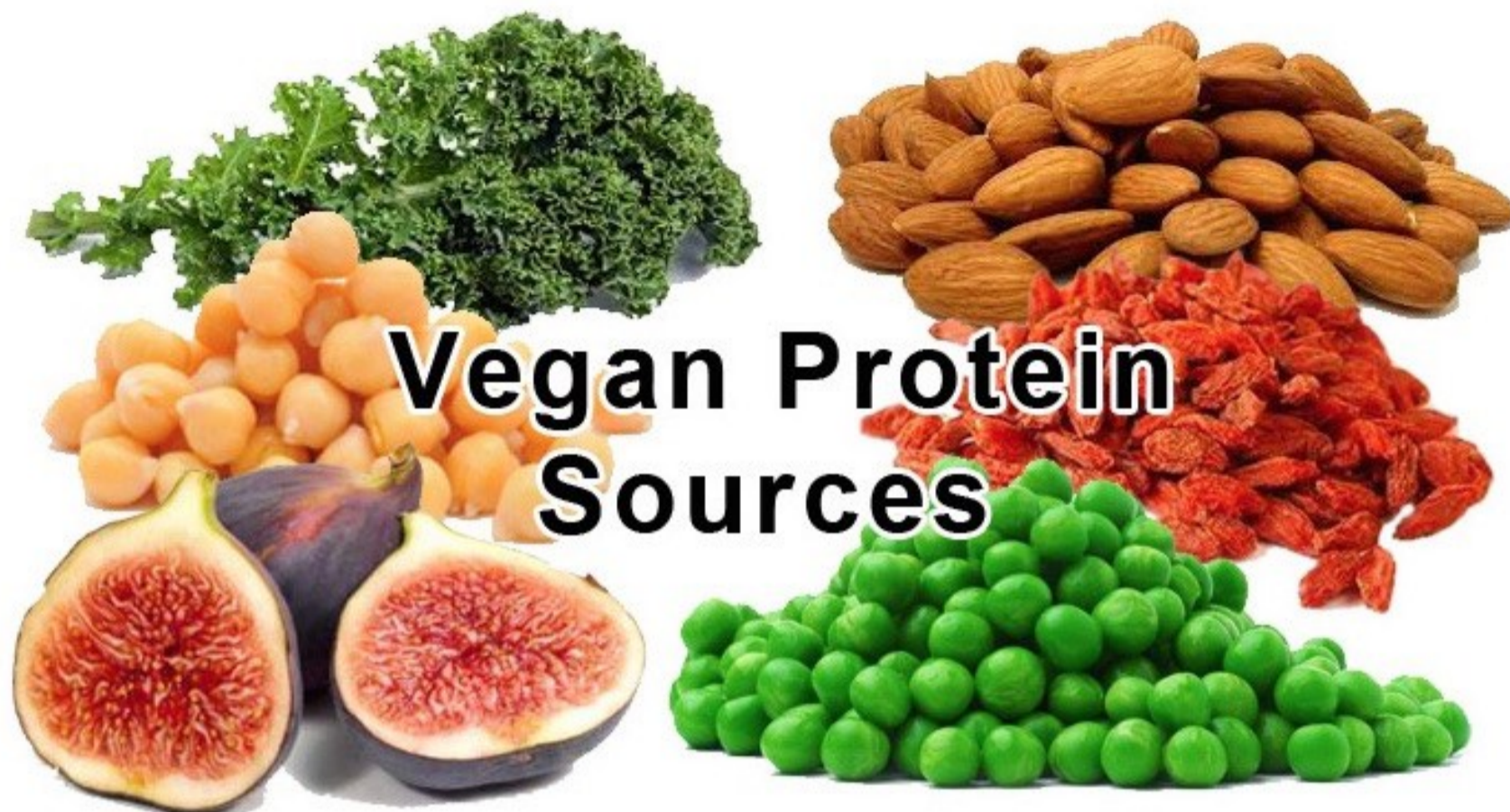


**Protein Basics**



# PROTEIN! PROTEIN! PROTEIN!

We vegans know that the #1 question we get about our diet is “Where do you get your protein?”.



**I** get it from the same place elephants, rhinos, giraffes, racehorses and bison get it – plants! If those large, muscular animals can be healthy and strong on plants why can't a mere human thrive on a vegan diet too? Our colons are long like herbivores, our teeth are more similar to a horse's than a wolf's and if you put a bunny in front of a human toddler she will be more apt to try to pet it than eat it.

The emphasis on protein from animal foods came from early experiments showing rats grow faster on animal protein than on plant protein. All animals must replenish their proteins to grow. Researchers saw that humans synthesised more efficiently amino acids from animal foods into protein because the amino acid profiles of animals match our amino acid profile more closely than those of plants. Thus animal proteins became known as “high quality” proteins.

However, is it healthy to so efficiently metabolise protein? No, according to **Dr T Colin Campbell**, whose research was the centerpiece of the

excellent documentary **Forks Over Knives**. There is such thing as too much protein, and these “high quality” proteins will unfortunately promote *undesirable* growth – like cancer cells and artery plaque. On the other hand, the amino acid compositions of plant protein (which are less effectively utilised because their profiles do not match ours as well) do not promote unwanted growth. At the time of this research, scientists did not realise the connection between disease and too much high quality protein, so the damage was done: we all grew up thinking animal protein was superior, and plant protein was inferior because it provided incomplete protein.

Even Frances Moore Lappe, the author of the 1971 book **Diet for a Small Planet** that turned me vegetarian when I was 14, thought back then that you had to combine plant foods - like rice with beans – to eat enough usable protein to be a healthy human but she has since changed her mind, along with most scientists, nutritionists and the World Health Organisation. The American Dietetic Association reversed its earlier position on protein combining and stated in 1988:

***"Plant sources of protein alone can provide adequate amounts of the essential and nonessential amino acids... Conscious combining of these foods within a given meal, as a complementary protein dictum suggests, is unnecessary."***



And yes, we can get enough protein from our normal amounts of broccoli, almonds and hummus - we do not have to stuff ourselves with plant food. US government's Recommended Daily Allowance recommends only 8-10% of our daily calories come from protein. If you are eating a *whole foods*, plant based diet, that is easy to achieve. I eat about 2,000 calories a day, which means that 160-200 of those calories should come from protein. A gram of protein is 4 calories, so my RDA is 40-50 grams of protein a day.

I started tracking my protein intake last week, and I am cutting out my protein powder supplement because I found I easily get in 45 grams amount eating whole foods - vegetables, fruits, nuts and beans. And I am feeling great, even working out hard every day.



***Alexandra Paul is a vegan actress who has appeared in over 100 films and television shows. She is also a certified health & wellness coach.  
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