



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

# The Ethical Vegan

Sometimes things happen that make me realize I cannot rest on my vegan laurels. I don't eat animals, I don't wear animals, I don't exploit animals – that's all very well & good, but is it enough?







**A**s we passed a thrift store after a nice vegan lunch, my friend Viv told me she doesn't buy any new clothes because she doesn't want to risk supporting child labor, nor does she want to put any more pressure on the environment than she has to. I thought of the white tee shirt I had just ordered on the internet that morning, and remembered that the only moral criteria I used was that it was not made of silk. Viv's comment stuck with me – why am I not considering my wider set of values as a consumer?

To be fair, for environmental reasons I do buy mostly used, - my cell phone, computer and tablet were all refurbished or pre-owned: our dishes, glasses, napkins, measuring spoons, were all bought second hand on the internet, as well as most of our furniture.

**LOVE**  
**FASHION**  
**HATE**  
**SWEATSHOPS**





**I**n the grocery store, I scrutinise packaging and choose the most environmentally sound option. But when it comes to my clothes, I do not even think about the labour issues behind them – was there slave labour, unfairly paid workers, atrocious conditions? I just turn off my brain when I walk into the clothing store, justified by the thought that Hey I am so conscientious in other areas, give me a break.

Last week, I was disgusted by the man who said, as he walked by an animal rights protest on his way to a free hot dog, “I don't want to know what is done to those pigs”. I thought, How can he just put blinders on like that? But then I realized how similar I am to him- not as a vegan but in other ways.

My conversation with Viv made me take a second look at myself. I want to be better. Now that I am practiced at buying 100% in line with my animal rights beliefs (apps like Bunny Free and Cruelty-Cutter help me figure out what has been tested and what has not), I can work to be a better environmentalist and a humanitarian too. I can educate myself about sweatshops - an internet search for “how do I know if my clothes were made in a sweatshop?” already yielded many articles,

including a Shop with a Conscience Consumer Guide [<http://www.sweatfree.org/shopping>]. I can figure out what clothes I will absolutely not buy second hand (underwear and socks for sure) but still make sure they are not made in sweatshop conditions.

It is easy for us ethical vegans to get complacent – we feel we are already making a big effort to not exploit animals – but let's remember that we can keep growing and improving into even more compassionate human beings in many other ways too.



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

**[www.AlexandraCoaching.com](http://www.AlexandraCoaching.com)**