

Effective Advocacy:

# Planning for Success

# Welcome

Thank you for taking the time to read this booklet. Activism isn't always easy, but it'll be a lot more fun and effective if you use this guide. If you ever have any questions, please e-mail us at [ActionTeam@peta.org](mailto:ActionTeam@peta.org), and we'll help you out!

## 1

## Prioritization

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Stephen Covey's book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* talks about "the tyranny of the urgent." Basically, Covey suggests that most of us are so busy with the endless deluge of whatever comes up next—the e-mail on our screen, the phone ringing with this or that emergency, and so on—that we don't have time to focus on actually accomplishing anything. How often have you thought, "I accomplished nothing!" at the end of the day? Covey helps us focus on prioritizing what is necessary, effective, and goal-oriented rather than taking care of whatever happens to be immediately in front of us. Things such as taking classes, improving your advocacy skills, organizing your life, and, of course, actually doing what is necessary to reach as many people as possible—these are the areas in which we should focus our energies in order to be as effective as possible.

All of this seems obvious when we hear someone else say it, but the fact is that most of us do not view the world this way. Especially for those of us who are working to make the world a kinder place, the suffering, misery, and challenges that we are up against are so pressing and omnipresent that we often work very, very hard but not as *effectively* as we could. Instead, we do what comes along and whatever is most immediate rather than what will be most helpful. We read every article about animals and respond to every e-mail message that comes in with a headline in all caps. But most articles don't help our activism, and if we replied to every urgent e-mail alert, we might end up doing nothing else.

Do you find yourself proactively setting goals and then accomplishing them, or do you spend a lot of time reacting in protest and outrage against injustices that we have the power to stop with careful strategizing?

# 2

## Living by Example

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Another book that offers some very useful tips for effective advocacy is Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. It's essentially a book about being mindful and understanding while interacting with others.

### Carnegie Principle 1: Dress for Success

The first of Carnegie's principles is that we should look presentable so that our appearance does not distract from our message, which, in our case, is that we need to end animal abuse.

If our goal is to be as effective as we possibly can be in behalf of animals, it is absolutely essential that we put our personal style second to our desire to be effective advocates. Ask yourself who your audience is, and play the part in order to blend in. The more you look like your audience, the easier it is for your message to stand out!

Obviously, there are forums in which green hair, body piercings, and ripped-up clothing are perfectly acceptable, but in most situations, when we reject mainstream society's standards, we are limiting our ability to help animals.

This argument applies to health as well. Unfortunately, some advocates ignore their own health. The fact is that if you look sickly or seem lethargic, you'll be a less effective advocate. Get plenty of rest and exercise! Also, if your diet consists of junk food, other potential vegans will think that that's what all vegans eat, and they'll be less likely to want to be a part of it, so please take care of yourself!

### Carnegie Principle 2: Be Respectful

The second principle is to always be respectful. Being discourteous or saying something rude is never effective.

It's one thing to be provocative but another to alienate those you're trying to reach. Sometimes people might say something unkind while you're leafleting, holding a protest, or just minding your own business at the grocery store. It's tempting to insult them right back (it feels good for a second or two!), but how does that help animals?

First, responding with a bad attitude doesn't influence the person you're speaking with. You might think that certain people just aren't reachable, but we can tell you from experience that some of the people who seem the least receptive are actually the ones who have really been challenged and are on the verge of changing their behavior. That's why they react so defensively. We must always strive to respond with respect and kindness. It can't hurt, and it might turn those people around and into advocates who will be a positive influence on their friends and family.

Reacting with anger or sarcasm also hurts animals because anyone else who happens to hear the exchange will think that you can't take a joke or are mean. Everything from your tone to your body language to the content of what you say will be picked up by those around you—guaranteed!

Saying something like, “Have a nice day,” or if it’s a slow leafleting session, “Would you like to talk about that?” not only gives you the moral high ground in the eyes of others but also leads to excellent conversations with seemingly obnoxious people. Don’t give them a reason to brush off your very important message.

The same principle applies to your nasty brother-in-law or your coworkers at your office party. No matter how right you are, the question that we must ask ourselves in every situation is “What’s in the best interests of animals?” To repeat, it is never in animals’ best interests for you to say something disrespectful to someone in a discussion about animal rights or veganism.

### **Carnegie Principle 3: Instigate—Don’t Castigate**

The third vital Carnegie principle involves the art of convincing people through dialogue. Try not to make your vegan advocacy a monologue—and especially not a rant.

All the suffering that animals endure on factory farms and in slaughterhouses is appalling. Consequently, it’s understandable to want to browbeat people into going vegan—to force them to share our sense of horror and outrage. This is not the most effective way to convince people to change their behavior, though.

When people say, “Plants feel pain!” or “Animals eat other animals!” there are, of course, many possible responses that you could use to shoot them down. But honestly, people really do believe the things that they say; they just haven’t spent much time thinking about the issues. So if you respond as though you think that they’re stupid, you will not convince them that you’re right—instead, they will feel too put off to listen to you. A wonderful way to begin your answer to a question that you think is stupid is, “That’s a question I get a lot, but if you look at it this way ...” or “I used to ask that same question, but wouldn’t you agree ....” These sorts of segues validate the other person, make you look good to anyone listening in, and continue the discussion in a way that will be far more effective than any other method you can think of.

Some people say things just to be offensive, but we can tell you from experience that even many of these people are reachable. We must first refuse to lower ourselves to that level and instead come up with a response that allows them to save a bit of face and continue the conversation. If someone is clearly antagonistic, you can even say, “I’d like to have a conversation, but if you’re not interested, check out PETA.org and watch some of the videos when you get a chance.”

If you react in this manner, you’ll be giving them a moment to embrace their better nature, and you will often find that they’ll soon be saying something like, “I have a sister who is a vegetarian.” You’ll be surprised at how someone can behave in such a nasty way at the beginning of a conversation yet come around by the end. But they won’t come around if we act aggressively, defensively, or condescendingly.

### **Carnegie Principle 4: Be Optimistic**

The fourth Carnegie principle is that we should be optimistic, upbeat, and positive. In the face of so much suffering, it can be difficult to be optimistic. Knowing about the horrific suffering that animals endure, it’s hard not to be down about it. But again, we have to ask ourselves, “What is the most effective way to help animals?” Depression and anger, however understandable, clearly

will not be as effective for animals as will a good-natured attitude. Think of the most popular people you know. They are the ones who are smiling, upbeat, laughing out loud, and having a good time. Positivity is contagious!

In his book *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell analyzes those who turn fads into trends. He has found that in every case, they are friendly and optimistic. They express a genuine interest in others, and that interest is returned by the people they interact with.

Gladwell also offers a slew of interesting anecdotes showing that *how* things are said is at least as crucial as *what* is said—whether they admit it or not, people are deeply influenced by body language and one’s tone of voice. And, of course, a positive tone and upbeat demeanor are far more effective in influencing people than a negative tone or a bad attitude. Go out of your way to make sure that you’re smiling and maintaining an upbeat demeanor while you’re talking to people about animal rights.



# 3

## Personal Purity vs. Effective Advocacy

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We must focus on what we're for, not just what we're against! Do we want others to associate us with our desire for a world free from suffering or with a list of ingredients, products, and byproducts that we're against?

The number one thing that we do wrong is that we place personal purity ahead of pragmatism. We lose sight of the fact that veganism is not an end in and of itself but rather a means of ending cruelty to animals. Being vegan is not about being perfect and being responsible for no cruelty at all—it's about decreasing suffering as much as possible.

We all know this, but it bears repeating: At some level, everything that we consume harms some humans and animals. We could all go out into the woods and live on nuts and berries, but ultimately, that would be far less effective than living lives that help influence others to adopt a vegan diet.

What animals need is your advocacy—and they need it to be as effective and influential as possible. **Ultimately, veganism can't just be about us or it will become just one more narcissistic cultural fad. Veganism must be about helping animals.**

So the issue of personal purity comes down to basic math: Adopting a vegan diet means that you're not supporting the torment and slaughter of approximately 100 animals every single year. Convincing just one more person to go vegan will save twice as many animals.

We all know that the number one reason why people don't go vegan is that they don't think that it's convenient enough, and we all know people whose reason for not going vegan is that they "can't" give up cheese, ice cream, etc. But instead of making it easier for them to help animals, we often make it more difficult. Instead of encouraging them to stop eating all animal-derived products except for cheese or ice cream, we preach to them about the oppression of cows on dairy farms. Then we go on about how we won't eat a veggie burger because of the bun, even though a tiny bit of butter in a bun contributes to significantly less suffering than any non-organic fruit or vegetable, a plastic bottle, or about 100 other things that most of us use. **Our obsession with ingredients not only obscures the animals' suffering but also essentially guarantees that those around us are not going to make any changes at all. So we've preserved our personal purity, but we've hurt animals—and that's not our goal, right?**

Always, always, always remember this: Veganism isn't a dogma. Veganism is about stopping suffering. **Veganism is not a list of ingredients or a set of rules. Being vegan is about doing our best to help animals. So it requires thought, not a checklist.**

If you're at a holiday party with meat-eaters and you're talking about how you can't eat the bread because you don't know what's in it, or you're at a restaurant and there's a veggie burger on the

menu but you give the server the third degree about the ingredients or about how it's cooked, you are forgetting the essence of being vegan. Sure, the animal-derived products in that veggie burger may be gross, and you should politely do what you're most comfortable doing, but please think about the message that you're sending to others at the table who might have otherwise considered the plight of animals but now likely think that following a vegan diet is difficult. In this situation, others are unlikely to want to ask about your diet, and they're even less likely to think of it as something that they might consider trying. Look at the big picture and you'll see that your pursuit of purity in that instance does significantly more harm to animals than consuming that tiny trace of an animal-derived product. Remember that if just one of those people follows your example, it'll save thousands of animals in that person's lifetime!

If you're worried about what you're going to eat in a restaurant, call ahead and figure out what meets your standards, and then order it with gusto. If you're worried about what you're going to eat at the office party, get on the catering committee, or just take along some great vegan food. But please—never make it seem like being concerned about animal suffering is a chore, because, of course, it's not.



# 4

## Learning From Our (Many) Mistakes

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Showing anger when discussing animal suffering ultimately hurts animals, but it's not the only mistake that well-meaning animal rights activists make. Here are a few other common errors:

### ■ We Don't Eat With Meat-Eaters

If you're not dining with meat-eaters, can you see why they might think that you're deprived, self-righteous, or both? That's the sort of club nobody wants to join. ("You can't even go to parties, can't go out to eat ... who wants to live like that?")

You can often have a good conversation at a meal in which meat is being served, as long as you're upbeat and speak mostly about your personal beliefs regarding kindness and cruelty. But if it seems like going vegan is the very last thing in the world that people want to discuss, you should say something simple such as, "You know, this is an issue that is really important to me because I care about animals. I'd love to talk with you about this later unless everyone's interested in this topic. Can I get your e-mail address?"

Boom! You've gently raised the moral issue, and you've come across as the nicest person at the table. You politely answered the question "Why are you a vegan?" and everyone who hunkered down to listen to your long moral monologue will be singing your praises for choosing not to dominate the conversation. But you raised the ethical issue, which is crucial.

One last thing to say about dining with meat-eaters: If you're going to a function in which it's appropriate to bring your own food, please take along some tasty dishes. When one person later substitutes your recipe for his or her own, that's a little victory. Few things convert people like delicious vegan food does! Check out [PETA.org](http://PETA.org) for our favorite recipes.

### ■ We Marginalize Ourselves

We must resist arguing with people about other issues, even if they try to distract us. Often people will feel more comfortable discussing an issue that they've thought a lot about, so in response to your veganism, they'll ask you about abortion, God, or politics. Stick to the animal rights issues that you care about. If someone, for instance, says that the Bible tells him or her that it's OK to eat animals, that's not the time to make a case for atheism—stick to the message of compassion, and try to convey the importance of alleviating suffering and living a positive life!

### ■ We Apologize or Minimalize

Being vegan and believing in animal rights is a choice that each individual makes, but it affects animals, the environment, human rights, and your health! Don't apologize for making a deliberate decision to make the world a better place. Be proud of your choice and stay motivated to encourage others to consider it too. All the money that the meat industry pours into lobbying and advertising will never be nearly as effective as the sincerity of compassionate individuals.

## ■ We Don't Prepare or Practice

Another thing that we do wrong—and this is fundamental to the entire subject—is that we often don't prepare and don't practice what we want to say. We've all heard arguments such as “What about abortion?” and “Don't plants feel pain?” a million times, so there is no excuse for any of us to “wing it” when responding to these questions. We should be ready to give the best answer possible in a friendly and engaging manner. To read our responses to frequently asked questions, go to [PETA.org](http://PETA.org).

We owe it to animals to have a thoughtful and constructive yet simple and focused reply ready for every question. It's also equally important to know how to initiate a conversation. Asking a question such as, “Do you have a favorite vegetarian food?” or “Do you have any animals at home?” can really open the door to a great discussion about animal rights.

## ■ We Neglect the Little Things

Finally, we have to remember the little things, such as wearing buttons and T-shirts and putting bumper stickers on our cars. Everyone with a car should have one or two animal rights bumper stickers on it (don't overdo it!). Animals never get a rest; the least that we can do is put a bumper sticker on our car. Also, when you go out, consider wearing a button, a small sticker, or a T-shirt, and carry some leaflets.

You can also spread the word in other nearly effortless ways. If you're in a health-food store or a sympathetic bookstore, you can talk to the management about distributing some vegetarian/vegan starter kits, which are filled with health tips, recipes, and information on animal rights. A lot of diners, stores, and organizations also have bulletin boards on which you can tack up a few fliers.

These are just a few effective but simple things that you can do to make a major difference for animals—if you convince one person to go vegan, you will save thousands of animals. People who see your bumper sticker or your cool T-shirt might start thinking about animal rights, and if they approach you, you will have the information that you need to talk to them about these issues. Every time that a new person thinks about animal rights or thinks, “Hey, they look pretty normal, and they advocate animal rights,” it's a victory for animals.



# 5

## Making the Case: Our Three Favorite Arguments

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It's good to know which arguments are most likely to sway others. How many people do you know who immediately took a leaflet and decided to go vegan on the spot? There are some, but it's more likely that it's a gradual process for people, and that's OK! And remember: These are more than "arguments." Try to view them as your strongest starting points for a discussion.

### 1. Farmed animals are smart, interesting, and unique.

Most people simply have no empathy for farmed animals, and if the person you're talking to doesn't empathize with the animals you're trying to save, no amount of information on factory farms and slaughterhouses will convince him or her to stop eating animals. In this case, we have found that telling people about the varied personalities of farmed animals is a very effective tactic. Help your listeners make the connection between the dogs and cats in their homes and the animals who suffer on factory farms. Remind people that cows, pigs, chickens, and other animals feel pain just as acutely as do our beloved animal companions.

You can explain that chickens often perform better on certain tests than dogs and cats do and that pigs have been shown to play video games more effectively than some primates have. Pigs also learn from one another and interact with other pigs in ways that previously had been observed only in primates.

Recent scientific evidence has also revealed that fish have memories and use tools (in the past, anthropologists claimed that tool use was what distinguished humans from other primates). Dr. Sylvia Earle, arguably the foremost living marine biologist, says that she would no more eat a fish than she would eat a cocker spaniel. Here's a person who would know, and she says that "fish are sensitive, they have personalities, they hurt when they're wounded."

To make finding this information about animal behavior easier for you, we've posted some of the best facts on our website—they're part of our "Hidden Lives" series, which now includes articles on fish, chickens, pigs, turkeys, cows, sheep, goats, ducks, geese, baboons, rats, and mice. Read more about the fascinating lives of farmed animals at [PETA.org](https://peta.org).

None of this should matter, of course—it's an animal's capacity for suffering that's important, not his or her intelligence or cognitive abilities. But for many people, it does matter; it helps them relate to animals—just as they relate better to you if you're dressed more like they are. Being able to provide facts about animals' intelligence and abilities will help people see the similarities among farmed animals, dogs and cats, and humans, and it's an effective way to help get people to endorse animal liberation and adopt a vegan diet. Of course, you don't want to bog your brain down with so many anecdotes that you can't figure out what to say when you talk to people. Simply mastering a few key facts and anecdotes about farmed animals will be more than enough when you are explaining why chickens, pigs, fish, and cows are every bit as interesting, sensitive, and deserving of compassion as any dog or cat is.

## 2. It's a matter of integrity.

We also talk about basic integrity when people ask us why we're vegan. For instance, we might say, "I don't want to pay others to do things to animals that I wouldn't do myself." Everyone agrees that cruelty to animals is a bad thing. Most people will express sadness at the horrible things that are done to animals on factory farms and at slaughter. So the big question is, "Why pay people to do things that you don't support?" In explaining his decision to go vegetarian, Percy Bysshe Shelley said that he didn't want to take part in anything that he couldn't write a pleasant poem about. In the same way, we shouldn't support things that revolt us. How many things in our lives do we directly support even though they revolt us? Of course, all of us could spend an afternoon harvesting grain or picking beans, fruit, or vegetables, but who among us would want to, even once, rip the testicles from the scrotum of a pig without giving the animal painkillers first or use a hot blade to sear the beak off a tiny chick? Who among us would want to even watch any of the procedures used to get chickens, fish, pigs, cattle, dairy foods, or eggs to the table? Who would want to spend even five minutes in a slaughterhouse observing all that blood and horror? Raising this issue with people in a conversational way can help them see that eating meat and other animal-derived products is ethically dubious—it involves paying others to do things that the average person doesn't support or believe in.

## 3. Going vegan is empowering.

Everyone wants to see the world become more just and peaceful. Everyone is worried about violence on the streets and throughout the world and wishes that they could do something to stop it. We like to talk about how adopting a vegan diet allows us to make a statement in support of compassion and against violence and suffering every single time that we order from a menu, go shopping, or open the refrigerator. There is so much violence and suffering in the world, and in most cases, we're powerless to do anything about it aside from begging politicians and corporations to make changes. When the average person wants to do something to help the world, he or she gives some money, writes letters, or maybe posts something for friends to see online, but all those actions are fairly far removed from whatever impact they might eventually have.

When we sit down to eat, however, we make a conscious decision about who we are in the world. Do we want to add to the amount of violence, misery, and bloodshed in the world, or do we want to make a kind and compassionate choice? Simply put, the meat industry engages in violence that we can stop. Plus, everyone who goes vegan stops supporting industries that devastate the environment and create—according to Human Rights Watch—the most dangerous working conditions in the nation. It's empowering to know that every time we sit down to eat, we can make a choice that saves animals, helps protect the environment, supports workers' rights, improves personal health, and aids the fight against world hunger. It's hard to think of another everyday choice that an individual can make that has such far-reaching effects.

# 6

## Answering the Tough Questions

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If you've spent any time talking about veganism or animal rights, you know that people tend to ask the same questions over and over again. The key is to validate the person asking the question, every time. Say that you used to feel the same way (if you did). Tell the person that you hear the question a lot, if you do (in order to show that he or she is just like so many others who wonder the same thing). Try to ask a clarifying question—this will make the other person feel heard and will help you construct your reply. Force the other person to think about the conversation—don't allow him or her to just listen to you passively! And remember, no matter what the question is, your basic argument in support of going vegan—that eating meat causes unnecessary cruelty—will not be challenged. You can help people realize this by asking leading questions.

The following are responses to and reflections on some of the most frequently asked questions about animal rights. Visit the FAQ section at [PETA.org](http://PETA.org) to read more.

### **“Why are you wasting your time worrying about this? Don't you have something better to do? People are starving in Africa!”**

This is an example of a type of question that reflects people's sense that there are more important things that you could be doing to make the world a better place. They might explicitly ask, “Can't you find something better to do with your energy?” or “Why don't you work on fighting global poverty, child abuse, or abortion?”

► **Remember that your goal is not to win this argument.** Of course, the people who ask these kinds of questions probably aren't spending their own time fighting global poverty, so you could easily win the argument by pointing out that they are complete hypocrites. But however tempting that might be, it's really not an effective way to bring this person around to your way of thinking. Instead, acknowledge that it's a good question. Point out that you care about humans too. And help them understand that you are simply asking them to live up to their own ethical standards, which likely include opposing cruelty to animals.

► **You may choose to say,** “I see what you're saying, and I do support groups such as Amnesty International that fight for human rights. But don't you agree that cruelty to animals should be opposed?” Once the person agrees, you might continue by pointing out, “One of the great things about helping prevent cruelty to farmed animals is that it takes no extra time. We can continue our activism against AIDS or child abuse while simply choosing a veggie burger instead of chicken flesh at lunch. Of course, if we eat the veggie burger, we will likely be around a lot longer to fight for human rights, because vegetarians are less likely to suffer from heart disease, strokes, and colon cancer. Plus, because meat production is a wasteful use of fuel, grain, and water, you will be helping to prevent global hunger by going vegetarian. It's a win-win decision for both animals and people. Here, won't you please read this brochure? I think that it will help explain why this issue is so important to me.”

**“But I just don’t care about chickens. I don’t care if they are boiled alive—they’re only chickens. Why should I care?”**

The next type of frequently asked question involves the rationalization of the person’s desire to eat flesh. These questions try to divert the issue to something that is really beside the point.

► **Remember to think about motivation and to acknowledge that the other person is reachable.**

It then becomes easier to construct a reply. Reflect what he or she says—maybe you used to think the same way and can understand the sentiment. People like to feel heard. And ask for more information rather than just launching into a monologue.

► **You may choose to say,** “Well, I know what you mean. There was a time when I didn’t care about chickens myself. Do you care about cruelty to dogs and cats?” After the person replies, you’ll be able to explain how farmed animals are the same as cats and dogs in their ability to feel pain and suffer and that they are individuals who don’t want to be intensively confined and violently killed.

But let’s say he or she continues with, “No, I really don’t care about animals at all.”

► **You may choose to say,** “I hear what you’re saying, but for me, it’s not about that. I have some friends who aren’t animal lovers, but they have adopted a vegetarian diet anyway, simply because they’re opposed to violence and cruelty. Animals on factory farms have their bodies mutilated, they’re never able to do anything that is natural and important to them, and they’re cooped up in pens where they have to stand in piles of their own waste for their entire lives. Chickens are bred and drugged to grow so quickly that they often become crippled under their own weight. I think that if you could see how bad it is, you wouldn’t want to support it. I know that this may seem like an odd question, but why do you eat meat?”

Other common rationalizations include the following:

- “Animals eat one another in nature, so why shouldn’t we eat them?”
- “Aren’t humans at the top of the food chain?”
- “Aren’t humans omnivores?”

► **You may choose to say,** “I hear what you’re saying, and I used to feel that way too. But then I realized that in all other aspects of our lives, we don’t rely on the law of the jungle, the idea that ‘might makes right,’ to determine our moral values. Wouldn’t you agree that we should have laws to protect dogs and cats from being abused?” Once you get the person’s assent on that point, you can point out that farmed animals have almost no protection under the law and that what is done to them would be illegal if dogs or cats were the victims. Then you can move on, perhaps saying something such as, “Like you, I don’t support murder, even though animals do fight territorial battles to the death. And no ethical person endorses rape, even though some animals rape as a method of procreation. As humans, we have the ability to be kind rather than cruel. And, of course, there is nothing natural about factory farming; these places are about as unnatural as it gets—I’m talking about mass cruelty, mass abuse, and mass suffering. Chickens are bred and drugged to grow so quickly that their legs often become crippled—talk about unnatural! Does that make sense to you?”

Here you grant that the question makes sense, find some common ground by discussing things that will resonate with the other person, and then steer the discussion back to cruelty.

#### **“But God put animals here for humans to use as we see fit, didn’t He?”**

Please know that people don’t say this to be callous. They say it because they honestly believe that it justifies eating meat.

► **You may choose to say**, “Yes, I hear that a lot, and religion is of course very important in this debate. Would you agree that God opposes cruelty to animals and that God approves of laws to protect dogs from being beaten to death or cats from being poisoned?” Of course, the person will agree, and then you can continue with something like this: “Actually, some of my closest friends are Jewish and Christian (or ‘I am Christian ...’), and they are vegetarians because they’re horrified by how badly God’s animals are treated. From their perspective, God designed chickens to build nests and raise their families; God designed pigs to root in the soil; God designed all animals to breathe fresh air, to play with one another, and so on. But today, animals are denied everything that God designed them to be and to do, and they’re abused horribly—they are God’s creatures, but we’re treating them as if they’re rocks or dirt or something. We’re playing God, really. And, of course, the Bible teaches compassion for animals, so the horrible cruelty inherent in meat production really does deserve condemnation. Don’t you agree that cruelty to animals is wrong?” Don’t argue about whether or not God exists or whether the person’s religion is valid. Begin by acknowledging that it’s a good question. Get the person to agree with you that cruelty to animals is ungodly. Don’t try to convince the person that he or she should have a new interpretation of the Bible, Koran, or Torah or that Jesus was a vegetarian, however strong the arguments for these points are. Meet people on their own terms. Raise issues that they will understand and that will resonate with them, and as always, bring the conversation back to cruelty.

#### **“But we’ve been eating animals for thousands of years, right?”**

► **You may choose to say**, “Yeah, we have been eating meat for a long time, but I’m not sure that’s a good excuse for continuing to do so. Up until 100 years ago, you could legally beat a dog to death, but now that’s illegal. Would you agree that making cruelty to dogs and cats illegal was a good idea?” People will, of course, agree with that, and then perhaps you can move on in the discussion to say something like, “As a species, we held slaves for most of our existence, treated women and children as property, and so on, but, of course, that didn’t make it right. One thing to realize, though, is that it’s only in the past 100 years that we’ve been able to treat farmed animals as badly as we do now. It used to be that animals had to be treated at least well enough so that they would grow and not die, but that doesn’t even apply now because of all the drugs that they’re given. It’s just so horribly cruel and so unnecessary. The fact that we’ve been doing something bad for a long time doesn’t justify continuing to do it.”

► **Validate the question, make a solid moral argument, and steer the person back to a discussion of cruelty.** Then ask a question to keep the discussion going.

# 7

## Closing: The Four Most Important Points

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OK, we're almost done, but we want to leave you with the four most crucial points.

### **1. In taking your activism seriously, don't just work harder—work smarter!**

Consider how you can be most effective. Please make time for both your activism and for becoming better at it, as though these were the most important things in your life—because for animals whose lives are worse than we can ever imagine, our activism truly is the difference between unmitigated horror and liberation!

### **2. Everything that you do matters.**

Every time that you talk to someone and every time that someone sees your button or bumper sticker, it's a mini victory. Please do both the big and the little things.

### **3. Use PETA.**

If you have anything that you want to talk to PETA about or anything that you want to brainstorm with us about—e.g., if you want to teach a cooking class and need guidance; want help with getting a video onto cable-access TV; want free leaflets, stickers, or signs (whether you need one copy or 1,000); want to organize a table for a local festival; or anything else—we are here to help. We are absolutely at the disposal of activists across the country. Please contact us at **757-622-PETA** or **ActionTeam@peta.org** if you need any help.

### **4. Realize that we are truly winning.**

It's easy to become discouraged when we're watching videos or reading about a specific instance of sadistic cruelty to animals. But honestly, we are winning, and we're winning at a rate that is lightning fast compared to the progress of any previous social justice movement. Consider how recently women were denied the right to vote and human beings were used as slaves.

Of course, the challenge is not to say, "Hey, look what those moral throwbacks were doing to each other years ago." The challenge is to ask, "What are we doing today that future societies will look back on with horror and shame? What can we do right now to make a difference?"

What we are doing to animals today is just as indefensible as what people did to other human beings just a short time ago.

Think for just a moment about how far we've come. In May 2003, a Gallup poll found that two-thirds of Americans thought that strong laws should be enacted in the U.S. to protect farmed animals from abuse. The same poll found that 96 percent of Americans thought that animals should have at least some protection. The industries that abuse animals will not be able to hold out against public opinion forever.

Indeed, things are changing: Until 1990, only one ballot initiative to protect animals had been passed at the state level—just one! Since 1990, dozens have been passed.

Animal rights activism has never been stronger or more effective around the world. More and more people are taking to the streets to show what happens on factory farms and in slaughterhouses, taking seriously the need not only to be active but also to be as effective and focused as possible. The Internet is making our advocacy efforts have even more of an impact, allowing PETA to do a better job of distributing free vegetarian/vegan starter kits and recipes, supporting local organizations, and sharing undercover videos with those who have never thought about what it looks like inside a factory farm or slaughterhouse.

Given the number of animals who are suffering in the U.S., the extent to which they are suffering, and the frivolous and gluttonous reasons why they are intentionally made to suffer so horribly, we are convinced that animal liberation is the moral imperative of our time. We firmly believe that our focus must be on ending the suffering and deaths of animals as quickly and efficiently as possible, and this can only happen with your help.

Thank you for taking the time to read this, and please get in touch. You can reach us at **ActionTeam@peta.org** or **757-622-7382**.