

## VEGANISM IS A LIFESTYLE WHOSE TIME HAS COME

Betty McLaughlin's Vegan Story

I wish I'd known years ago what I know now about healthy eating. I would have done things a lot differently!

I've been interested in health for a long time. I've also been interested in "natural" living. In fact, back in the 70's, I chose "natural childbirth" which was considered kind of "fringe" at the time. I even had a hard time finding a doctor who was willing to work with me. Back then, they wanted women to be asleep when they gave birth. These same doctors also didn't think it was important for me to quit smoking during my pregnancy. They said it would be good just to cut down to 10 cigarettes a day. Luckily, I didn't follow their advice! And I quit smoking years ago.

My son is now 40 and my daughter is in her 30's and both of them have become vegetarians on their own. I, however, ate meat all my life -- until I attended the first session of a Food for Life class, 2 months ago!

**Learning how a vegan diet can prevent and reverse disease gives me a lot of hope for the future.**

What I learned made sense and the food was delicious, so I switched to a vegan diet right away and have been loving it ever since.

I was motivated to make a change. There is cancer on both sides of my family and for sure I didn't want to go there! Plus, I've had high blood pressure for years and knew that was a real health risk. The more I learned, the more sense it made. Besides what I learned in class, I read a few books which made a real impression on me: *Dr. Neal Barnard's Program for Reversing Diabetes*, *The Cancer Survivor's Guide*, and *The China Study*. Wow! I've been

buying copies of them to give away to my friends and family so they'll know what they can do to improve their health. I don't want to be a busy-body, but I want them to have the information and then they can do whatever they want to about it.

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My whole way of thinking has changed now. I'm a lot less gullible about trends and advertisements and health claims that I hear on TV or get in the mail. My eyes have been opened about the food industry and the dairy and meat industries. The thought of eating animal flesh is repugnant to me now.

I've always loved to cook, so for me this has been kind of an adventure. Taking the class, seeing the cooking demos, tasting the food, and getting the recipes all made it easy. I think it would have been much harder if I hadn't taken the class.

I love eating this way, and it's been very good for me. I've lost 9 pounds so far, in just 2 months, without even trying! I can eat as much as I want of these healthy foods and not worry about it. I've also cut my blood pressure meds in half and I feel really good. My husband isn't as adventurous as I am about trying new things, but he's also enjoying the food and has come to like some of the foods he didn't think he would like, e.g. black beans.

Learning how a vegan diet can prevent and reverse disease gives me a lot of hope for the future. Now I know there is an answer to the spread of obesity, diabetes, cancer and heart disease. Veganism is a lifestyle whose time has come.

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