

# Compassion in the Kitchen

by Faith White

I've been an animal lover my whole life. I spend a lot of time and money rescuing dogs and cats who have been neglected and abused and help them find loving, permanent homes. I've helped everything from horses to fish, and grew up with chickens, fish, cows and pigs. I KNOW they feel fear and pain, sadness and hopelessness.. And I know they feel grateful and trusting when I'm helping them. I can see it in their eyes. At some level, they are well aware of what is going on. I, on the other hand, have only recently become aware of something as obvious as the food on my plate.

Just last November, a friend loaned me [\*Skinny Bitch\*](#), which was a real kick in the pants. It was like a train wreck -- I couldn't look away. The next day, the same friend loaned me the DVD, [\*Food, Inc.\*](#) That was it. I was done, done, done with meat! In spite of my compassion for animals, I had never thought about the fact that by eating them, I was supporting the unbelievable and unnecessary cruelty that is the daily reality of the chickens, pigs, cows, and fish that are raised for our consumption. My eyes were opened and I immediately made the choice to bring my compassion for animals into the kitchen

as well as everywhere else in my life.

My husband, Matt, had been trying to shift our diets away from the Standard American Diet (SAD) for a long time, but I had been reluctant to change what I was used to. He had high cholesterol, plus a family history of heart disease. So when I finally had my eyes opened about the connection between my diet and animal suffering, he was happy to jump right into vegetarianism with me. He found out about the [Cancer Project Food for Life Cooking Classes](#) and, as a Christmas present, signed us both up for the classes starting in January. I was a bit apprehensive, but after the first class I never looked back.



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Taking the classes and learning how to eat a healthy plant-based diet was a real turning point for us. The door opened, and the information and the inspiration just flowed. By February, Matt's cholesterol had already dropped 48 points! People I saw every day were telling me I looked really good. . . had I lost weight? Did I get a new haircut??? They couldn't put their finger on it, but they could see the change.

So many things have changed for us

since we began eating a plant-based diet. For one thing, we enjoy our food a lot more. It has more flavor, more color, and fills us up without making us feel “slugged out.” It has triggered our creativity as we learn to work with new and different combinations of plant-based foods. Our grocery bill has gone way down, and we spend a lot less time in the grocery store.

We get a box of organic produce every other week, and mostly just shop the bins at Natural Pantry for other things. Clean-up in the kitchen is also sooooo much easier.

One of the wonderful changes for me is that I have a lighter, happier, kinder attitude towards everything. I now know it is true that you cannot consume something that has endured great suffering, fear, and

pain without absorbing some of it yourself. It was such a no-brainer -- I wonder how I missed “getting it” for so long.”

I’ve had 26 years with Matt so far, and now that we are eating this healthy diet, I can see having him in my life for another 50 years! He is an awesome, creative chef and likes to cook, so we share the fun and responsibility of making delicious plant-based meals. (But he’ll NEVER get me to like Brussels sprouts, so he may as well give up!)

As a result of making this change in our diets, I now have one more new pet. Last week, a snail arrived with the parsley in our box of organic produce. I think it will be very happy living with us!

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*Take a  
Food for Life  
Nutrition & Cooking Class*