

# The Peaceful Revolution

In 1942 President FDR – husband to social justice hero Eleanor Roosevelt, signed an executive order that forcefully removed law-abiding Japanese-Americans from their homes and put them in prison camps. There was little outcry. In the 1970s, our government, along with medical doctors forced African American men to endure late stage syphilis just to see what would happen. Few with knowledge of this objected. America history began with violently removing the native people. Ardent abolitionists of the 1800's opposed giving women the right to vote, and today there are caring people who staunchly support civil rights for people of color but oppose marriage equality for LGBTQ identifying individuals. In the book, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, we learn that a large American hospital in the 1950's injected cancer cells into hundreds of patients without consent, and the only people to object were three Jewish doctors – whose views were marginalized as being, “overly sensitive,” due to the Holocaust having just happened. History is full of similar examples prompting Albert Einstein to say, “*The world is a dangerous place not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing.*”

One of the most egregious examples of the human capacity to look away and disregard injustice against others is the Holocaust, which prompted us to ask, “how did so many, “normal” people allow such a thing to happen?” The classic experiment by Stanley Milgram sought to answer this, and suggested that over half of us will go along with things that we know harm others if environmental conditions are right, saying, “**Ordinary people, simply doing their jobs, and without any particular hostility on their part, can become agents in a terrible destructive process.**” However, some cultures (and by implication their cultural practices) appear to be less vulnerable to this phenomenon. So it's worth asking ourselves...What can we do, to promote compassion and foster conditions that make individuals less likely to ignore injustice, and more able to put ourselves in the position of others so that we won't, “look on and do nothing” when injustice is threatening someone else?

**While increasingly the main vote we have is how we spend our dollars, the power of veganism is not due to its boycott of violently produced consumer goods. Rather it is the ripple effect that results each time one of us stands firmly in solidarity with justice, nonviolence and compassion. This inspires those around us to consider their own choice of where to stand. Every major human caused tragedy that has ever plagued the world, was enabled to occur for one main reason: Human beings have the capacity to ignore injustice happening to those we have been taught to, “otherize.” Throughout human history, no group has been more victimized and exploited by this phenomenon than the non-human beings that we eat, hunt, experiment on and use for our entertainment. With BILLIONS of thinking feeling, “others” tortured and killed every year.**

By embracing a vegan ethic, three times a day, we participate in an activity that seeks to prevent our complicity in violence and exploitation against the vulnerable, and actually changes brains in ways likely to create more peace and justice in the world. (According to neuroscience research, our thoughts and actions alter brain structure in ways that make it more likely we will have more thoughts and engage in more actions along the same lines.) The example of how we live each day – by modeling a conviction to practice non-violence and compassion for the most vulnerable in our diet, and in what we buy and wear, may be the single most powerful action any of us can take at this time in history. Furthermore, if those in power are successful in drilling more, and thwarting US actions to reduce worldwide carbon emissions, by becoming vegan, we reduce our own carbon and water footprint enormously – but even more important the example we set has a huge ripple effect that could be powerful!

We don't know what the next four years will bring, that's why now, more than ever before, becoming vegan matters. Please join this peaceful revolution.

(from the blog of JoAnnFarb.com)