

THE WORLD PEACE DIET Mastery Training Program



“Imagine the world we can create...”

with DR. WILL TUTTLE,
author, The World Peace Diet



Supplemental Readings

Module 3 – Awakening Our Capacities to Know and to Serve

Eco-Vegetarianism: The Greenest Diet on Earth

by Jolia Sidona Allen

If you can't imagine what a future would look like if the whole world went veg, try harder. Picture a doorway. 2050 is on the other side. With global warming knocking, it's not okay to pretend no one's home. Open the door and walk through it. An entire generation free from the threat of environmental collapse is waiting to greet you with the good news: eco-vegetarianism—a diet that demands not only going meat-free, but going organic, going local, and going zero waste—can save the planet.

Curbing Environmental Collapse

Gore's inconvenient truth is a hard swallow: if we continue on our current path, the consequences of a global climate crisis will be catastrophic, including coastal flooding, extreme weather patterns, rampant disease, and incalculable extinctions. We caught a sneak preview of the horror in New Orleans, and Katrina was only a striptease. By 2050, the Arctic Ocean could be ice-free and more than a million species worldwide could be driven to extinction. Dr. James Hansen, head of NASA's top institute studying climate, warns that we may have less than a decade before global warming reaches what he calls a “tipping point” and is unstoppable.

When it comes to protecting life on Earth as we know it, the devastating environmental consequences of factory farming are public—and planet—enemy #1. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization's recently released, remarkable 400-page report *Livestock's Long Shadow*, states that animal agriculture contributes an estimated 18 percent to global warming, trumping transportation emissions. It also projects global production of meat to more than double by 2050. Armed with this knowledge, it's impossible to ignore yet another inconvenient truth: our self-destructive addiction to red meat is killing ourselves and our planet.

Fortunately, just as mighty as the destructive forces of modern meat production—is the potential to solve our environmental problems by eliminating the demand for animal agriculture.

According to Dr. Will Tuttle, author of *The World Peace Diet*, “Large-scale vegetarianism would not only remove the most significant driving forces behind global warming, rainforest destruction, species extinction, water pollution, ocean depletion, and the other environmental catastrophes we are facing, it would transform the underlying mentality of violence, exclusivism, and reductionism that generates these catastrophes.”

Striking the same chord, best-selling author John Robbins, comments, “the lower your diet is on the food chain, the more Earth friendly it is.”

“Reducing or eliminating meat consumption is something concerned citizens can do every day to help the planet,” offers Noam Mohr, author of EarthSave International report *A New Global Warming Strategy: How Environmentalists are Overlooking Vegetarianism as the Most Effective Tool Against Climate Change in Our Lifetimes*, it’s “as simple as grabbing a veggie burger instead of a hamburger.” In spite of the helplessness many people may feel in the fight against global warming, he says, “people need to feel that there is something they can do,” and realize “the enormous impact of what you have for dinner.”

Mohr points out that while most major environmental organizations have been focused on carbon emissions, recent reports by Dr. Hansen and others show that “CO₂ emissions are not the main cause of observed atmospheric warming.” Mohr argues, “If we wish to curb global warming over the coming half-century, we must look at strategies to address non-CO₂ emissions. The strategy with the most impact is vegetarianism.” If we’re going to stop global warming now—right now—we’ve got to go after the Goliath of greenhouse gasses: Methane. Each year, according to the Information Unit on Climate Change, animal agriculture produces 100 million tons of methane, with 32 times the global warming potential of CO₂. This massive amount of potent greenhouse gas is mostly produced in the gastrointestinal tracks of cattle and passed into the atmosphere by belching and partly produced by countless, methane-exhaling lagoons of toxic sewage.

While methane itself is odorless, factory farm emissions really stink for the environment. Jamais Cascio, co-founder of the bright green environmentalist blog WorldChanging.com, recently calculated the environmental footprint of the American Cheeseburger habit: “depending upon whether we eat 1/week or 3/week on average, the annual greenhouse gas output from burger consumption is the equivalent to the annual greenhouse gas output from 4 million to 13 million SUVs.” Cascio remarks, “the Cheeseburger Footprint is about much more than raw numbers. It’s about how we live our lives, and the recognition that every action we take, even the most prosaic, can have unexpectedly profound consequences.”

Echoing these sentiments, Gidon Eshel and Pamela A. Martin from the Department of the Geophysical Sciences at the University of Chicago unearthed, in their recently published report *Diet, Energy, and Global Warming*, that the effect one’s dietary choices has on one’s planetary footprint is “an effect comparable in magnitude to the car one chooses to drive”. Their data demonstrates that the difference between eating a diet of about 20 percent animal products—below the national average of 27.7 percent—and a plant-based diet is equal to the difference between driving a hybrid (Prius) and an average sedan (Camry). Even more shocking, when the percentage of animal calories increases to 35 percent, the added Green House Gas burden “equals the difference between driving a Camry and an SUV.”

Tuttle explains the extent to which factory farming, in addition to emitting a tremendous amount of greenhouses gasses, also consumes enormous amounts of fossil fuels at all levels of meat production from the manufacturing of fertilizer and pesticides, to the pumping of water and the powering of farm machines, to the housing and transportation of livestock, to the running of slaughter operations, and the refrigeration and transportation of meat. He points out, “It’s easier

to see the gallons of fossil fuel poured directly into our cars than it is to see the gallons of fossil fuel poured into our cheese, eggs, fish sticks, hot dogs, and steaks.”

And, factory farming is the single largest land user worldwide. Livestock’s Long Shadow states: “in all, livestock production amounts to 33 percent of all agricultural land and 30 percent of the land surface of this planet.” According to the USDA, growing crops for animals takes up 80 percent of the agricultural land in the US and animals raised for food in the U.S. consume 90 percent of the soy crop, 80 percent of the corn crop, and 70 percent of its grain. Tuttle remarks, “our current practice of feeding grain to untold billions of animals and eating them forces over a billion of us to endure chronic malnutrition and starvation while another billion suffer from the obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and cancer linked with eating diets high in animal foods.”

In addition to hogging over one-third of all land fit for planting crops, the ruthless demand for more land for livestock grazing and for feedcrop production promotes both severe deforestation and, in turn, loss of biodiversity. In Latin America alone, 70 percent of formerly forested land in the Amazon is now pasture, with feed crops covering most of what’s left. Robbins points out it would only take one year to wipe out the Costa Rican rainforest if it were cleared to produce enough beef for the people of Costa Rica to eat as much beef, per person, as the people of the US. On this topic, he offers an encouraging reminder: “Every time you choose to eat plant foods rather than meat, it’s as if you were planting and tending a tree....” What he refers to as “trading tropical rainforests for cheeseburgers” threatens uncountable species, ancient tribes, the leafy lungs of our entire planet, and “what could be the medicines of the future.” Of the 35 global hotspots for biodiversity identified by Conservation International, 23 are affected by livestock production.

Livestock production also sucks up more than 8 percent of global water use, mostly for the irrigation of feed crops—a crime considering “64 percent of the world’s population [is] expected to live in water-stressed basins by 2025,” according to *Livestock’s Long Shadow*. Growing crops for farm animals requires nearly half of the US water supply, according to the USDA. Robbins exposes the huge difference in water requirements for meat vs. vegetable production: for instance, while it takes only 25 gallons of water to produce a pound of wheat, it takes 5,214 gallons to produce a pound of beef. According to Robbins’s math, “you’d save more water by not eating a pound of California beef than you would by not showering for an entire year.” In addition to wasting water, animal agriculture is the largest cause of water pollutants from animal wastes, antibiotics, hormones, chemicals from tanneries, fertilizers and pesticides from feed crops, sediments from eroded pastures. In addition, factory farming produces almost two-thirds of human-induced ammonia emissions, which contribute to acid rain and the acidification of ecosystems.

Speaking of troubled waters, are there really plenty more fish in the sea? According to Tuttle, all the major global fisheries are now depleted or in trouble, and “entire species of fish are being killed to the verge of extinction to satisfy the demand for fish meal for fattening livestock or factory farmed fish, or for seafood for humans.” He points out, “an amazing fifty percent of the world fish catch is fed to ~~the~~ needlessly imprisoned food animals, and not to people.”

According to Tuttle, “the only way we’ll be effective environmentally is to stop eating animals and to stop commodifying animals.” He says, “we turn the Earth into a commodity because we turn animals into a commodity.” He explains that “the foundation of our environmental dilemma is the mentality of violence required by our culturally indoctrinated food choices,” and that evolving, as a culture, in a way that allows us to make the connection between the food choices we make and the environmental consequences of those food choices is “a matter of resensitizing

ourselves to what we're actually doing when we buy and eat animal-sourced foods...it's a matter of waking up to the reality that lies behind the reality of our daily plates. As we awaken, we can help others to awaken as well...We're all in this together."
Or are we?

Robbins recalls the difficulty of getting the larger environmental groups to recognize the devastating impact of modern meat production ever since he published *Diet for a New America* in 1987: "One year, the Sierra Club devoted an entire issue of their monthly magazine to diet and the environment and didn't even mention the role of meat." In addition, he recalls, "I remember talking to the Board of Greenpeace, and they told me, 'We completely agree with you, but we don't want to take on this issue because we would risk alienating our donors.' I said, 'Your donors look to you to lead them, to take on the issues that really matter,' but they said their hands were tied." According to Robbins, "it is becoming increasingly obvious to just about everyone that we have a huge problem with global warming. Al Gore has done a major service in bringing this awareness to many people. I regret, though that he has hardly mentioned the degree to which modern meat production contributes to the problem."

Even Dr. Hansen, the world's leading global warming expert, neglects to acknowledge the potential for 100% reduction of methane production in the livestock sector via vegetarianism as he simply suggests, in his *"Global Warming in the 21st Century: An Alternative Scenario,"* "Ruminants offer potential for emission reduction via dietary adjustments."

Sharing a similar concern over environmentalist's tendency to overlook vegetarianism, Mohr recommends: "organizations should consider making advocating vegetarianism a major part of their global warming campaigns. At a minimum, environmental advocates should mention vegetarianism in any information about actions individuals can take to address global warming."

And according to Tuttle, "it should for sure be the #1 concern of the environmental movement to promote a plant-based diet." In response to whether or not environmentalists advocate vegetarianism in proportion to its potential to save our planet, he responds: "No, of course they don't...it is excruciatingly difficult for most people to authentically question and change the deeply-ingrained eating assumptions they inherit from their parents and culture. The forces of infant indoctrination, social pressure, and taste are well rooted and continually bolstered by all the institutions in our culture. It takes a real spiritual breakthrough to fundamentally and successfully challenge them. Most environmentalists have so far not been able to awaken these deeper levels of consciousness, but perhaps as environmental pressures increase, they, and all of us, will be impelled to question these hidden assumptions, and to actually see and respond to the proverbial elephant in the middle of the living room that is being so studiously ignored."

Not only could environmentalists be doing more to promote vegetarianism, but so could our government. Robbins remarks, "Government policy not only doesn't promote vegetarianism, it is one of the biggest impediments. The USDA has been given a dual mandate: to promote the sale of US agricultural products, and to oversee nutritional education in the country. These two directives should never have been given to one entity. In practice, the USDA seeks primarily to promote the sale of US meat and dairy products, and uses the nutritional education materials it provides to schools, and many of its policies, to further that goal." Mohr even proposes government policy could encourage vegetarianism by inflicting an "environmental tax on meat similar to one already recommended on gasoline."

But while so many have yet to, in Tuttle's words, "awaken from the cultural dream we have inherited, and to help others awaken from it as well," "there are several informed and credible

voices being raised,” whom Robbins praises such as Worldwatch Institute, ~~who~~ which “has for some years now been talking prominently about the role of meat in environmental problems, and last year the Center for Science in the Public Interest published Six Arguments for a Greener Diet: How a More Plant Based Diet Could Save Your Health and the Environment, and, “most importantly,” the UN FAO report Livestock’s Long Shadow, whose closing words of wisdom are “the livestock sector has such deep and wide-ranging environmental impacts that its should rank as one of the leading focuses for environmental policy: efforts here can produce large and multiple payoffs.”

And, if we need even more words of encouragement, there’s always the great thinkers throughout time who have said it again and again, from Leonardo da Vinci to Mahatma Gandhi, to Albert Einstein, who wrote, “Nothing will benefit human health and increase chances for survival of life on Earth as much as the evolution to a vegetarian diet.” It almost sounds too good to be true: choosing eco-vegetarianism can change the fate of our planet. Pssst. Pass it on.

Ready? Set? Go Greener!

Before you pat yourself on the back for being a vegetarian, remember that while many of the effects of eating meat-free align with environmentalist efforts, eating a plant-based diet does not default to being an environmentalist. Admit it: you’ve left home without your canvas tote. You’ve taken your soup “to go” in a Styrofoam cup. You’ve probably purchased conventionally grown bananas or even eaten a ripe mango mid-winter. These days, eating green—really green—requires more energy than just consuming a plant-based diet. Choosing eco-vegetarianism in effort to minimize the effects your food choices have on our environment, means choosing organic, local, and zero waste.

Go Organic! While the current price of organic produce is sometimes a fraction higher, if we continue to poison our planet, the environmental and overall health costs for future generations will be incomprehensible. A pamphlet put out by the jolly green giant Whole Foods Market called *Organics and You* informs its customers that organic food is produced using “agricultural management practices that promote healthy ecosystems and prohibit the use of genetically engineered seeds or crops, sewage sludge, long-lasting pesticides, herbicides or fungicides”. Sarah Rich, writer for the recent book ~~publication~~ *World Changing: A User’s Guide for the 21st Century*, recalls the 22-year-long Rodale Institute Farming System Trial, a study from which “researchers found that organic techniques used 30 percent less fossil fuel on average than chemical-dependent techniques, reduced soil erosion, and conserved water.” On the importance of choosing organic, Robbins commented, “Of course, many of us can’t get 100% of our food organic. But the more the better.”

Go Local! On the flip side of the coin, buying local—from farmers’ markets, food cooperatives, community-supported agriculture (CSA), u-picks, or farm stands—usually saves money because it cuts the transportation costs of getting your grub from farm to fork. Even more important, cutting food-miles in turn reduces air pollution: “A California tomato sold in DC has traveled about 2,800 miles - the truck transporting it produces more than 3,100 lbs of CO2 getting it there,” according to ideal bite.

“In the middle of Denver, in the middle of December, you can walk into most any supermarket and buy a ripe mango.” Rich reminds us, “This has been true for long enough that almost nobody stops to think of the remarkable distance that mango traveled or the tree it fell from, which is probably enjoying a balmy tropical day on the other side of the planet.” She goes on to explain “the baggage that mango flew in with,” including the wasted gallons of fossil fuel from the planes

and trucks, and the pounds of pesticides and preservatives prescribed for the long journey. She mentions the 100-Mile Diet, for example, a challenge undertaken by a Vancouver couple who tried to eat food that had been produced within one hundred miles of their home for a year. While the diet proved costly and difficult, Rich suggests using it as a healthy horizon from which to view your food purchases: “with the hundred-mile rule in the back of your mind, you can commit to buying local as much as possible, and when you don’t, you’ll be more aware of your food’s distant origins.”

On this note, Robbins remarks, “eating locally grown food that is in season is the friendliest for the planet. Try shopping at local farmer’s markets if you can.” If you do find yourself wandering the warmly-lit aisles of a supermarket mid-winter and spy a Florida orange so ripe with summer its skin can hardly contain the sun inside, find solace in the words of a very wise frog: “It isn’t easy being green.”

Go Zero Waste As if being a vegetarian and supporting local, organic agriculture isn’t challenging enough, add zero waste to the list. On a grand scale, zero waste is exactly what it sounds like: a visionary goal of a closed loop industrial and societal system. On a personal scale, you can be a microcosm of the movement by cutting back on your trash—Americans, on average, produce about 4 pounds each day. To cut down on excess packaging waste, buy rice, grains, nuts, flour, etc. in bulk. And, don’t forget to bring your own bags—in the US, about 12 million barrels of oil and 14 million trees go to producing plastic and paper bags each year, according to [Ideal Bite](#). As an added incentive, many supermarket giants now offer a 5-penny discount for bringing your own tote, and remember: it’s important to be a role model for other shoppers.

Sidebar 1:

Eco-vegan Goods!

Eco-Planet Organic Cookies
(<http://www.eco-planet.net/>)

Laptop Lunches Bento Box
(<http://www.reusablebags.com/store/laptop-lunches-bento-wsleeve-p-532.html>)

Posch Shopping Bags
(http://www.etsy.com/shop.php?user_id=43706)

Earthware Biodegradable GMO-Free Corn Cutlery
(<http://www.earthwarebiodegradables.com/products-c.html>)

Sidebar 2:

Resources needed to sustain a meat-based population vs. one that’s plant-based:*

Soil:

It takes 22 times the acres of land to meet the food energy needs of one person eating beef or eggs than it does for one person eating potatoes.

Water:

It takes more than 13 times the water to produce one day’s food supply for an

omnivore than it does for a vegan.

Fossil Fuels:

| It takes 27 times the petroleum to [produce](#) a hamburger than it does a soy burger.

Excrement:

The land animals confined and killed every year excrete 130 times the feces and urine produced by humans.

*Numbers calculated from statistics included in Will Tuttle's *The World Peace Diet*