BASIC BOOKS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Publication Date: November 12, 2024

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HUNGRY BEAUTIFUL ANIMALS

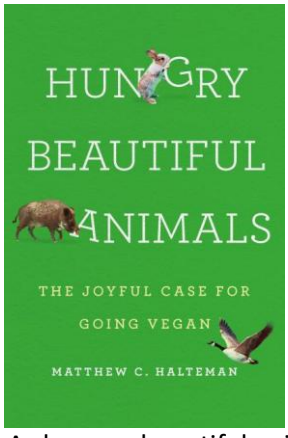
The Joyful Case for Going Vegan

by Matthew C. Halteman

"This timely exploration of the profound impact of our dietary choices on both individual and collective flourishing is essential reading for anyone who eats."
—Bryant Terry, James Beard award-winning author of *Vegetable Kingdom*

"This is a book of sacred truths, the kind of thing you read and your soul forever registers what's so."
—Kathy Freston, *New York Times* best-selling author of *The Lean*

A heartfelt, humane, and even hilarious account of why rule-obsessed veganism fails and how a focus on flourishing can bring about an abundant future for all



Chances are, when you see this is a book about the "v-word," you'll groan. According to one study, "vegans are viewed more negatively than atheists"… "only slightly more tolerated than drug addicts." This widespread unpopularity stems at least partly from the public perception that "vegan" conveys a shame-driven, restriction-based, exclusionary approach to life. Going vegan, however, is far more than an ethical question of saving the animals. It could be the answer to how we save ourselves.

In **HUNGRY BEAUTIFUL ANIMALS: The Joyful Case for Going Vegan (Basic Books; November 12, 2024) Matthew C. Halteman** aims to transform our perception of vegan living by focusing on what it promotes rather than what it restricts. The book is a love letter to life itself in all forms, and presents an imaginative vision of a true, beautiful, and good world that motivates and sustains our deepest desires to be well. As hungry, beautiful animals ourselves, we strive for healthful living and survival on this planet, and our approach to flourishing matters immensely. It's not about shame and blame, but about finding joy in the journey.

The joy of going vegan, moreover, isn't measured in one-size-fits-all linear progress. We experience it instead in growing consciousness of the healing of our inner selves and outer relationships, as our oft-conflicted physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and moral lives are harmonized through daily practices custom-fitted to our dazzlingly diverse ways and wiles. To improve our health, lifestyles, and institutions; to seek liberation from exploitation for billions of other creatures; to promote environmental justice, and to thrive while doing it: That's a lot! And yet the opportunity to experience these personal and collective transformations is within our grasp, imaginatively and practically speaking, whether one is a level-50 vegan who eats nothing that casts a shadow or a person resolving to try a new vegan recipe once per week.

This treatise is witty, reflective, and illuminating—truly, a delightful and inspiring read for anyone contemplating the future of life on this planet with humans as the dominant species. **It's not about the exclusionary identity of "veganism;" it's about the inner joy and meaning one can find on the journey of "going vegan,"** and all that can bring to how we look toward our individual and societal futures.

About the Author:
Matthew C. Halteman is professor of philosophy at Calvin University in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and fellow in the Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics, UK. He is the author of *Compassionate Eating as Care of Creation* and coeditor of *Philosophy Comes to Dinner: Arguments About the Ethics of Eating*. He lives in Grand Rapids.

About the Book:
HUNGRY BEAUTIFUL ANIMALS
The Joyful Case for Going Vegan
by Matthew C. Halteman
Published by Basic Books
Publication date: November 12, 2024
ISBN: 9781541602052 • $30 • Hardcover • 304 Pages
https://www.hungrybeautifulanimals.com

In an interview, Matthew C. Halteman can discuss:

- The value of a shift from ***obligation to opportunity*** in the way we frame our motivation for vegan living
- Vegan*ism* is an ***identity*** earned or forfeited by our success rate in rule-following; going vegan is an ***aspirational ideal*** we strive toward through daily actions, knowing in advance that perfection isn't possible
- Why **disgust** is a better emotional educator than **moral outrage** when it comes to getting critical leverage on the problems created by our food system
- The advantage of honoring the **complexity of human agency**, recognizing that part of being human is balancing our often-conflicting physical, social, emotional, intellectual and moral concerns
- The value of a shift in emphasis in our advocacy work from ***scarcity/suffering*** to ***abundance/flourishing***
- The value of **moving beyond the human/animal binary** toward a more holistic consciousness of creaturely flourishing for understanding and combating oppression
- How *Hungry Beautiful Animals* approaches **philosophy as a way of life** rather than a set of abstract theoretical views or arguments
- How a focus on **creaturely flourishing** converts naturally into concern for **environmental justice**
- How going vegan can protect us from **diseases of affluence** like heart disease, hypertension, and certain types of cancer
- How Halteman's beloved bulldog led him to think about the lives of **creatures in the food system**
- How to **set realistic goals** for going vegan to align with one's motivations, lifestyle, and budget
- Strategies for **navigating social stigma** and uncomfortable situations
- Why Halteman became an advocate for a vegan world despite **initial skepticism** and a life surrounded by good people in agriculture.

Advance praise for
Hungry Beautiful Animals

"Vegan advocacy is vitally important and urgently needed. It is also thorny terrain, which is why it needs eloquent, informed ambassadors, preferably with a sense of humor. Halteman delivers magnificently on all fronts. I utterly recommend this book!"
—**Jonathan Balcombe, New York Times best-selling author of *What a Fish Knows***

"This compelling read calls us to breathe into our humanity and to understand how our joy increases when we help bring joy to others. We are all connected, and anytime someone experiences kindness, whether human or more than human, our world is made better."
—**Gene Baur, President and Co-Founder of Farm Sanctuary**

"Matt Halteman is a brilliant writer; the man could make a book about watching grass grown sing. So imagine what he can do with the topic that is more important to him than anything else in his life other than his family. Quite simply, *Hungry Beautiful Animals* is a spectacular read - profound and also funny, and among the most beautifully constructed books I've ever read. Read this book - you won't be disappointed."
—**Bruce Friedrich, President and Founder of The Good Food Institute**

"Through storytelling, Matthew Halteman's *Hungry Beautiful Animals* offers an array of positive reasons to choose vegan, from human rights to personal health, and importantly, provides a handful of ways to choose vegan. This deeply personal book is not only reader friendly and sprinkled with good humor, but vegan friendly—joyful encouragement to leave meat, dairy, and eggs off the plate."
—**Lisa Kemmerer, author of *Animals and World Religions* and *Eating Earth: Environmental Ethics and Dietary Choice***

"Welcome to Halteman's affirming vision for all of us hungry beautiful animals. Settle into time with an author who believes in our ability to transform moral burdens into gifts of consciousness and lives of abundance. Park feelings of shame, guilt, or blame at the door—they aren't needed here. Instead, in this readable, entertaining, evocative, and joyful book, Halteman offers us vulnerable, questing, caring animals a compass for our compassion and recipes for our individual and collective flourishing."
—**Carol J. Adams, author of *The Sexual Politics of Meat***

"A visceral argument for the embrace of a joyous vegan lifestyle, advocating that we must alleviate the profound suffering of our fellow travelers on this journey through life, swallowed up in the eternity before and after."—**Christof Koch, author of *Then I Am Myself the World***

"This book is remarkable. Halteman invites his readers into an engaging journey of reflection that will leave few unchanged. He sets aside the all-too-common dour and dutiful discussions of this territory in favour of a gentle and winsome invitation to see and feel the attraction of eating differently. I challenge you to read the first few pages with confidence that you'll enjoy Halteman's company until the end."
—**David Clough, Chair in Theology and Applied Sciences, University of Aberdeen, UK**

"*Hungry Beautiful Animals* is as much a gritty, get-real book about food ethics as it is a rigorous, unpredictable spiritual memoir and a gentle unfolding of increasingly difficult questions about what it means to be a person engaged in the process of examining their life."
—**Bonnie Nadzam, research fellow, Harvard Animal Law and Policy Program**