



Can You Have Your Health AND A Social Life?

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The Key Insight

Navigating social events can be one of the most difficult and painful aspects of the plant powered journey.

- ▲ Potlucks
- ▲ Holidays
- ▲ Dinner parties
- ▲ Family gatherings
- ▲ Eating out

The good news? We can improve how we dance with these social challenges!

Review the example conversation below for some ideas on how to respond to questions about your lifestyle.

Note: There Is No Formula For A Conversation

The script below is meant to give you some ideas of how to better dance, but this won't work perfectly every time. Use the ideas as a starting point.

Afterwards, review how it went. What worked? What didn't? How can you change things to make it more effective next time?

Example Conversation

1 Experimentation vs Identification

Try saying that you are experimenting with diet rather than identifying yourself as a vegan. When you experiment, there is no identification, no opposition, and both sides are able to look at the result with less emotional attachment to the outcome. No labels = no warring ideologies = no vegan vs omnivore

3 Sympathize With Common Concerns

Most people think plant-based diets are extreme, expensive, restrictive, etc. By saying "I thought I'd only last three days" you sympathize with the concern and then counter the myth with your own experience.

5 Really Listen and Dig Deeper

We often want to counter the first objection. "I need my bacon!" Instead, ask them to tell you more about why they feel that way. If you dig deeper you create more understanding of the actual issue. You are more compassionate and they feel more understood.

7 Accept Where They Are

You and I both know that the more someone follows the plan 100%, the more successful they will be. But most people aren't ready to jump in 100%. Judge their readiness and if they aren't open to total change, engineer a win. Don't judge! Give them one simple step to move them forward.

Becky Omnivore: Hey Vicky, I noticed that you didn't have any ice cream for dessert. Can I serve you some?

*Vicky Vegan: Thank you so much for the offer, but I'm actually **1** experimenting with eating **2** non-processed food that is plant-based to see if I can bring down my blood pressure.*

Becky Omnivore: Oh wow, that's quite an experiment! How long have you been at it?

*Vicky Vegan: Oh about five years (laughs). You know it's funny, I was reading about the benefits of eating this way and thought I'd give it a try, **3** thinking I'd maybe last three days.*

Turns out it wasn't nearly as hard as I thought it'd be, and it got the results I was looking for so I just kept going with it.

Becky Omnivore: What kind of results did you get?

*Vicky Vegan: **4** To date I've lost 67 lbs and kept it off, brought my cholesterol and blood pressure into normal range, and was able to go off the blood pressure meds that I was taking. I thought I would be on those pills the rest of my life. I was sure happy to see them go!*

Becky Omnivore: I'm glad it's working for you, but for me life isn't worth living if I don't have my bacon.

*Vicky Vegan: **5** Tell me more about that. Do you usually have bacon for breakfast?*

Becky Omnivore: Yeah most days. I know I should be eating better. My husband sure would appreciate it if I lost a few pounds. But I work in a cafe and so I need a hearty breakfast to keep my energy up throughout the day.

Vicky Vegan: Well I think is quite unfortunate is how polarized plant-based eating has become.

***6** People tend to think it has to be all or nothing, and it too often becomes such a judgmental thing. But I actually don't think that going 100% right away is right for everybody. I let everyone make their own decisions, but if someone is interested in eating better, I tell them to **7** try starting out with one or two plant-based meals a week.*

Becky Omnivore: Hmm that's an interesting idea. I could probably try doing one or two meals like that, but it just seems like such a hassle. I don't like salad that much and I don't have much time to learn how to cook.

2 Try A Creative Description

Everyone already has a pre-formed idea about veganism. Explaining what you do in a creative way creates label confusion -- meaning that people don't have a previous idea about your lifestyle. They actually have to consider what you have to say before they jump to a conclusion!

You can try these "Non-processed plant-based foods, closer to nature, or real food, mostly plants."

4 Share Your Story

Do you have objective results? Weight loss, labs improved, medications ditched, chronic or life threatening conditions reversed or improved? These objective successes are powerful influencers. Share them!

6 Tell Stories Rather Than Give Advice

This one is subtle. Rather than give direct advice, tell a story about a third party. Instead of "You could get started with 1 or 2 plant-based meals a week," try "If someone is interested, I tell them to try 1-2 plant-based meals a week." If they connect the dots of how it could apply to them, it is more persuasive.

9 Use Humor

Along with vulnerability, humor is another powerful tool to disarm others and open hearts. Do you have a hilarious story about the difficulty of being plant-based? Share it! Make the other person laugh. This can move mountains.

11 Put Them On Your Team

One of the best ways to gain support is to put your guard down and ask the other person for advice. "If you were in my shoes, what would you do?" This immediately turns them from a potential detractor into a trusted ally and advisor.

Vicky Vegan: 8 Well I certainly did it the hard way and it was quite the learning curve! I spent a lot of time at first making food that wasn't 9 at good. This one time I spent four hours and fifty dollars making this mushroom gravy that was totally inedible! But I finally stumbled upon this one recipe book that has the most delicious recipes, and it's all simple to make. Even my husband Fred and the kids like most of the dishes that I make now.

Becky Omnivore: What's the recipe book called?

Vicky Vegan: Oh that's sweet of you to ask. I'll write the details down for you. Anyway, I don't mean to go and on about this. 10 so appreciate you being so open minded. Honestly the hardest thing for me is that most people don't understand that I made this change for my own reasons, and I stick with it because it's working. It isn't a judgement of what anyone else is doing and it's no walk in park being so different.

11 If I could ask...if you were committed to eating a certain way like I am yet wanted to participate in parties and social gatherings, what would you do?

Becky Omnivore: Oh, I think you are doing great Vicky. I had this idea that vegans would be so judgmental, but I haven't got that from you at all.

Vicky Vegan: That sounds great Becky, thanks for being so kind and understanding.

8 Be Vulnerable

Being vulnerable is the most powerful tool we have to create understanding, connection, and allow others to open up. It can be hard on the ego, but try being open with challenges as well as your successes. Admit that you don't know everything and struggle sometimes.

10 Thank Them For Being Open Minded

Even if they haven't been totally open, thank them for being an open minded person. We have an innate drive to act like the people we think we are. Calling others open minded makes it more likely that they will be.

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