

YOGA IS VEGAN

AN INTERVIEW WITH HOLLY SKODIS BY
ANNE CASPARSSON



“Holly Skodis, is a Connecticut-based yogi and vegan. With her own podcast Yoga Is Vegan, she reaches out and inspires people all over the world to include animal rights and veganism in the word that is fundamental in yoga: Ahimsa, non-violence.

Ten years ago Holly did her first yoga teacher training. At the same time she started to have some health problems. This made her start reading books and see films about food, and what impact a plant-based diet has on our health.

“My vegan journey started as a whole-food interest and as a plant based journey at first, linked to an improved health. Like many others I became vegetarian at first, before I opened up and embraced the ethical aspect.”

In 2016 she did another yoga teacher training, a 500 hours course, that included a vegan diet.

“Every single morning we were meditating on Ahimsa. It was so fabulous. Every day started with meditating on not doing any harm to any sentient beings on earth.”

For Holly this course woke up many thoughts and changed her way of thinking about what she ate and where it came from.

"This course was the starting point for me. It is probably why I am so patient with people; it took me a while to really get it", she says with a smile.

"Not only think about the ethics when it is convenient, but later buy this leather bag and think: 'Well, it is already there'. It really took me a while to get away from marketing, and consumerism habits. To start thinking and acting totally from an ethical position."

Today, she and her whole family are ethical vegans. In her work for a vegan world, through her podcast, she wants to reach out in a way that people feel inspired trying veganism, instead of feeling judged, shamed or blamed. She believes that the reason why still so relatively few, even in the yoga world, have embraced veganism, is a cognitive dissonance. Like in the rest of the society.

"You don't know until you know. You think that what you do is compassionate. We use words such as humane slaughter, or we "white-wash" dairy, but there is no such thing. It is brainwashing."

Her podcast has been well received by many. But she emphasizes that also in the yoga world there is no consensus and the view on Ahimsa and lifestyle changes can look very different from different yoga-traditions.



"There are a lot of problems in the yoga world. Even in defining what yoga really is at this time. And for many it has been a very tough time during the past years. Our whole society has been so traumatized during covid-19, and it is a very polarized society today."

For Holly, veganism is about causing the least amount of harm to all beings. Her aim is to peacefully inspire others, because she sees a society still very much asleep.

"I believe it is very much about making the connection. For me it started with health, and eventually it came down to animal rights. But that awareness was not there initially."

One good way in introducing veganism is through food, Holly believes.

"Today there is such a big variety of wonderful vegan food. Combining that with a retreat on a Sanctuary is a great way to make deeper connections, between humans and non-humans".

Sometimes when she teaches yoga-classes she suggests people to look at what they have been eating one day a week. Where did it come from, did it harm any-one, did it contain anything from an animal, what did it do to your body? For many it can be an eye-opener.

"Even if it can be hard, we need to stay positive, to be able to connect and inspire others. I try to balance this and do not often talk about how horrible every part of the animal industry is. I find that when I do this, people can shut down and feel defensive. It's important to me that people feel welcomed. I do talk about the dairy industry, and the process and what is going on. Yoga was traditionally a vegetarian practice and our relationship with the cow is much different in current times. I'm also a mother and find that I can connect with other mothers on that level."

She believes that there is a momentum right now, a possibility of transformation, a wakeup call.

"The pandemic and the climate changes are telling us humans: 'Time to stop eating and using animals. It just causes a disaster'. And the only solution we have is changing our relationship with animals."

Interview: Anne Casparsson



If you like to know more visit her website <https://yogaisvegan.com/> or follow her podcast Yoga is Vegan
