

## *Pat and Don Myers*

For each of us that become vegan, there is usually a story behind the decision. Here is a brief look at our story.

Ten years ago! A prediction! The Myers will be vegan in ten years.

To this prediction, we would have responded, “No way! That is fanatical and

not in keeping with our beliefs. And besides, we try to be careful with our diets—getting plenty of protein and calcium, drinking plenty of milk, following the American



recommended diet.” We had friends that were vegetarian/vegan—all the same to us. We did not judge them, but it was not for us. Besides our religion is Bahá’í, and as such, we associate with people from all around the world representing many different cultures. Hospitality and providing food for guests is the norm, and many cultures consider it rude not to eat what the cook prepares. So how could we offend people at this basic level—not eating the food provided—never!!

Ten years later, we are vegan! What happened?

Pat had her first bout with cancer

at the end of 2000. She began to hear that a vegetarian diet was good for cancer patients. Things went well with the treatment, and we went overseas in August of 2001, first to India for three months and eventually to Haifa, Israel, for nearly five years. In India at the school where we volunteered, the food served was vegetarian (mostly vegan), and we loved it. In Haifa, we worked at the Bahá’í World Centre with people from over seventy different countries, many of whom were vegetarian or mainly vegetarian. The major meal of the day—a large buffet—was prepared for the 700 plus volunteers, including much vegetarian food to meet the needs of folks from vegetarian cultures. Pat, in keeping with what she had learned from her bout with cancer, became mostly vegetarian.

Additionally, we had a son living in the Seattle area who had been vegetarian for years, and on visits to see him it was most often vegetarian fare. Then in August 2006 Pat had a reoccurrence of

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cancer; it had metastasized. We returned to the states, and Pat began treatment again. Dr. Harmon at the Avante clinic recommended primarily a vegetarian diet. So we attempted to become vegetarian. Wow!

What a struggle! It was not as easy as eating all that great food prepared for us overseas. Pat was disabled at the time, and Don was responsible for the cooking. Vegetarian just did not fit our recipes, and how could we get the protein and calcium that Pat needed?

A friend started taking [Delisa's classes](#) and kept calling Pat to go with her. After much nagging, Pat finally agreed and shared with Don that she wanted to go. To her surprise, Don said, "Well if you are going, I am too." So we both went. And here were the missing pieces of the puzzle—wonderful, easy to prepare recipes and the scientific information about a vegan diet. Now we even knew the difference between vegan and vegetarian, decided it was important enough to investigate, read several books, and became vegan. But the story does not end there.

Soon after, Don's mother at age 84 became vegan, and his sister and a friend of hers became vegan—all living in the Midwest. Then, a friend visiting from Haifa joined the vegan crowd as well, and friends in Colorado became mostly vegan. And our vegetarian son is working on being vegan.

And that is not all. Most have seen health benefits. Don lost about thirty pounds

and is no longer on cholesterol medicine. His sister has MS and has been able to get off much of her medicine, and she has more energy. The friend in Haifa lost weight and has found she no longer has headaches and has overall much better health. Pat's overall functioning has continued to improve in spite of progression of disease. The list goes on.

The big worry about offending people, especially those from other cultures with language

barriers, is no longer a concern and certainly not a reason to avoid being vegan, we decided. We figure we will just take it as it comes, and if on rare occasions it seems necessary to eat non-vegan food, we can just eat enough to be polite, and our bodies will most likely survive.

And vegan living is really compatible with our religious beliefs. One Bahá'í teaching is that humanity is developing. A quote from the Bahá'í writings states, "As humanity progresses, meat will be used less and less, for the teeth of man are not carnivorous.... When mankind is more fully developed, the eating of meat will gradually cease."

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