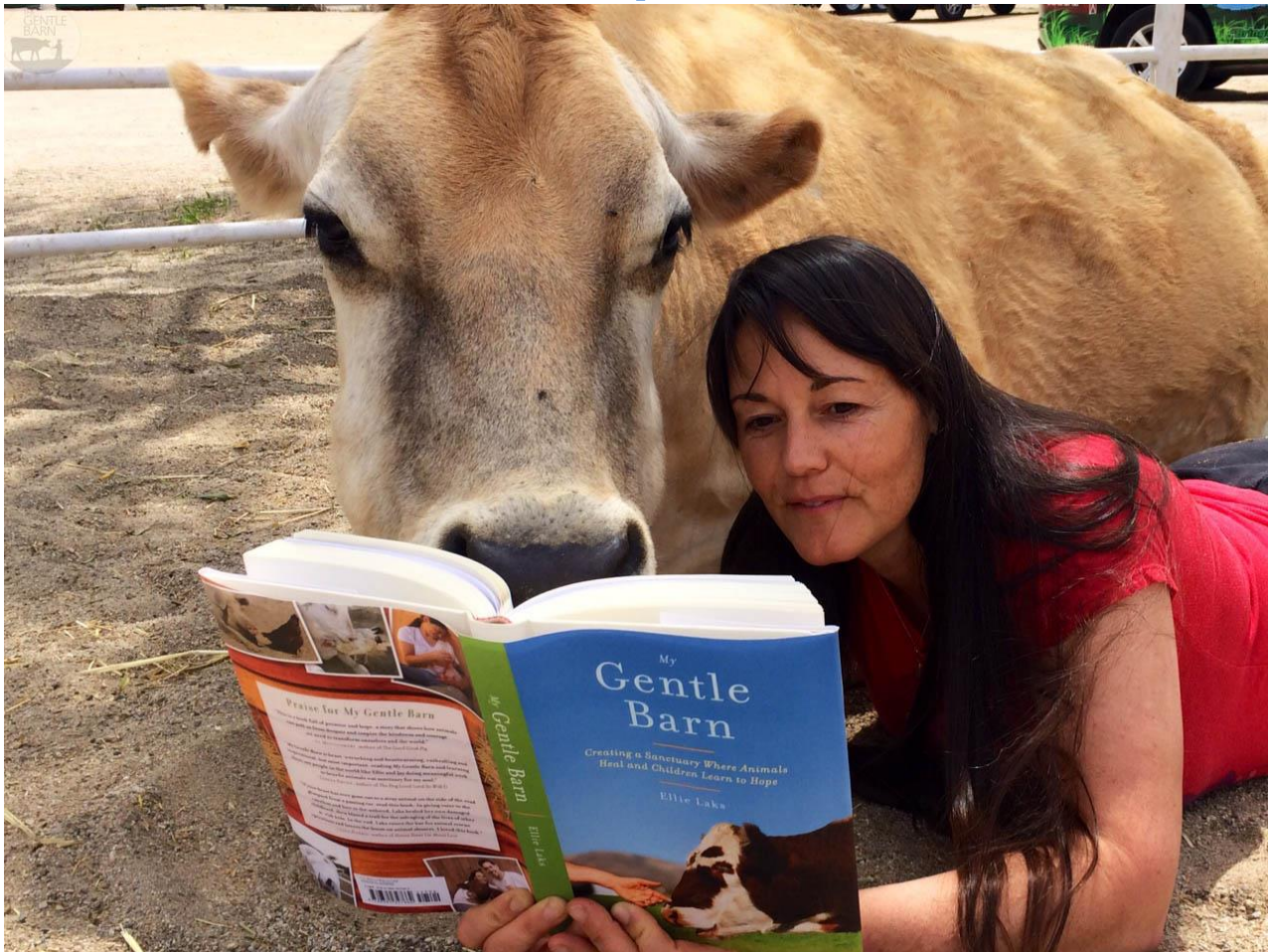


an **EVEN** exclusive interview –
with
Ellie Laks
Founder, Author,
Ted-X Speaker

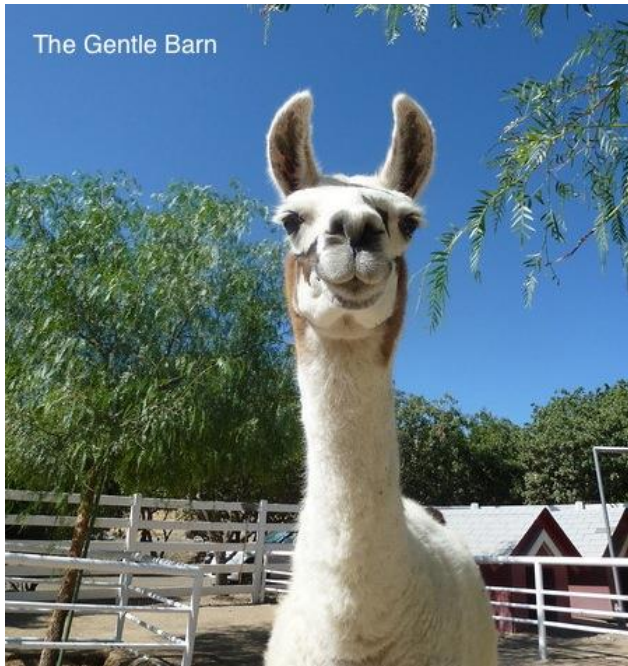


Buttercup and Ellie

Ellie Laks is the Founder of **The Gentle Barn Foundation**, a national nonprofit organization that rescues and rehabilitates unwanted animals and heals people with the same stories of abuse and neglect.

Exclusive EVEN Interview with Ellie Laks, Summer 2020

*She is a celebrated animal welfare advocate, humane educator, and the author of **My Gentle Barn: Creating a Sanctuary Where Animals Heal, and Children Learn to Hope.***



King

Ellie founded The Gentle Barn in 1999. She invented her own “gentle healing method” that allows old, sick, injured and terrified animals to fully recover using a combination of Western medicine, holistic modalities, holding therapy and lots of love. Ellie is an expert in rehabilitating orphaned and sick animals, like puppies with Parvo and calves from veal crates.

In her work at The Gentle Barn, she has hosted hundreds of thousands of visitors and developed programs for at-risk, underprivileged, and intellectually or developmentally disabled children. The rescued animals at The Gentle Barn also act as ambassadors of kindness and compassion for groups of war veterans, senior citizens, domestic abuse survivors, and those in recovery from addiction and gang affiliation.

Ellie has appeared in influential media outlets including The Ellen Show, People Magazine, Life Magazine, Animal Planet, The Huffington Post, Turning Point, Women’s World, NBC, CBS, ABC, PBS, The New York Times, and many more.

She is a highly effective and charismatic public speaker who has presented at animal rights conferences, environmental conventions, eco feminism summits, veg festivals, pet expos, universities, high schools, and corporate functions. Her message motivates audiences towards higher awareness, profound compassion, realizing dreams, and developing an enhanced sense of purpose.

To date, Ellie has saved hundreds of animals and hosted over 500,000 guests. The Gentle Barn is currently home to approximately 200 animals and has grown to include three locations; outside Los Angeles, California, Nashville Tennessee, and St. Louis, Missouri.



Ellie's goal is to open Gentle Barns in every state, so that everyone in America can have the opportunity to hug a cow, cuddle a turkey or give a pig a tummy rub.



**You can't have a bad day after hugging a cow.
- Ellie Laks**



EVEN: How did veganism become part of your life?

Ellie: At the age of 11, I realized that chicken and rice was the same thing as chicken, and stopped eating animals, but I had no idea about the truth of dairy, eggs, and honey. It wasn't until I had just started The Gentle Barn in 1999 that a guest told me about the dairy industry and I went vegan on the spot.



Ellie and Rita

It is so crazy to me that we don't know what really happens, and when we finally find out, veganism is the only obvious choice.

EVEN: Who was an influential person in your life earlier on that led you to veganism?

Ellie: The man who asked me if I was vegan and told me about the dairy and egg industry was Vegan Bob, a radio show host and animal advocate. He came to visit The GB after I had just opened it and he asked if I was vegan.

I had been vegetarian since I was 11 years old but I didn't know that the dairy and egg industry hurt animals.

He told me how the dairy industry impregnates cows, kills the babies, and steals the milk for humans to drink. And that was the day I went vegan.

EVEN: What, in your opinion, is the most misunderstood idea about veganism?

Ellie: The lies we have all grown up with, like milk does a body good, and meat is what's for dinner, and we must get protein. It is just crazy that we think it is healthier to eat animals, when the truth is that it is much healthier not to.

We have to realize that the lies in our society about eating animals were perpetuated by the meat and dairy industry to make money.

They don't have our best interest in mind. They are trying to create a successful business, and it is up to us to buy things that are kind and healthy.

EVEN: What do you think makes veganism hard for people?

Ellie: Mainstream ideas that we have to eat meat to be healthy and unknowing doctors confirming that ignorance.



If only the mainstream public could understand once and for all that eating fruits, vegetables, nuts and grains is what we are meant to eat and that is the way we will thrive.

Thanksgiving Sampling

EVEN: What one thing from your thinking in childhood do you wish you could change?

Ellie: I wish I could show the world that milk causes so much suffering to animals, and it is stealing babies from their mothers and destroying families. I wish I could have gone vegan earlier, but I had no idea about the suffering. I am grateful to know the truth now though and want to enlighten as many people as I can so they, too, can live in truth, kindness, and health.

EVEN: If you were to mentor a younger person today, what guidance might you offer? What encouraging words might you share with a newbie?

Ellie: How powerful we are as individuals and how much change we can create by going vegan, opening our hearts to animals, and connecting to nature. That going vegan is the future, and we are the change we need to see in the world.



Ellie and Barry

EVEN: What advice would you give to a vegan advocate wanting to become more of an activist?

Ellie: My advice would be to stay gentle! It is so easy to know what we know and be frustrated and angry with others who don't know.

But it is our job to stay compassionate and kind and non-judging. We must spread our message gently and lovingly for everyone.

EVEN: Do you have a favorite vegan meal or food you can tell us about that really makes veganism work for you?

Ellie: Even though I love eating vegan proteins like Beyond Meat, I really like to eat simple and healthy. My favorite meal is brown rice, delicious vegetables of all colors, and tofu. But the truth is that there is vegan everything nowadays. Being vegan has never been easier. Enjoying vegan sausages, burgers, ice cream, yogurt, cream cheese, it just gets easier and easier! Chef Jay makes (among so many yummy choices) Vegan Ratatouille and Vegan Lasagna---two of my favorites.



Ellie and Jay

EVEN: What one thing makes veganism worthwhile for you?

Ellie: Knowing that at the end of the day no one suffered or died for me to live. I sleep very well knowing that.

EVEN: Any opinion or insight on the future of veganism in today's world?

Ellie: More and more youngsters are taking to veganism naturally, more and more older people are coming to veganism for health reasons, more and more doctors are recommending veganism to their patients, there are more sanctuaries and vegan celebrities, and I believe that we will see the end of the dairy industry and the gross decline of the meat industry in our lifetime!



Sasha

Change is coming fast! And what a wonderful world it will be!

My Gentle Barn

*Creating a Sanctuary Where Animals
Heal and Children Learn to Hope*

Ellie Laks



www.gentlebarn.org

<https://www.facebook.com/MyGentleBarn/> - Ellie's Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/jayweinervp> - Jay's Facebook

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