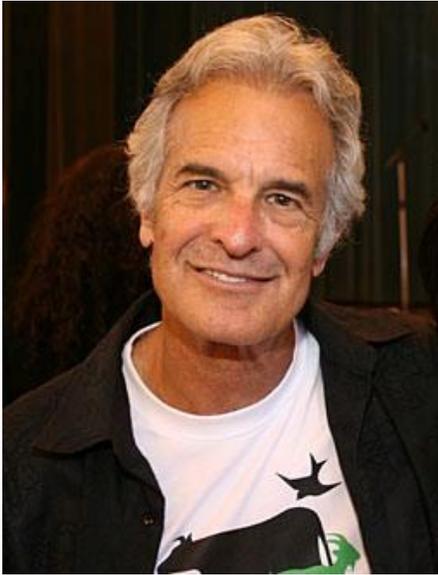


—an **EVEN** exclusive interview —



with

Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, PhD

Author, Educator, Researcher,
Animal Rights Activist

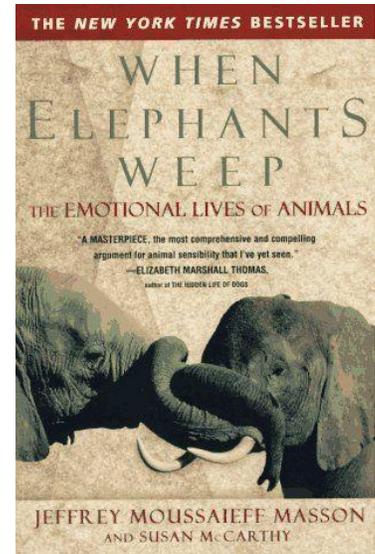
Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson is a writer who lives with his family in New Zealand. He has a 39-year-old daughter, Simone, who recently became board certified as a Nurse Practitioner in Gerontology. His wife Leila is a pediatrician and they have two sons: Ilan and Manu. They live on a beach in Auckland with three cats and Benjy the Failed Guide Dog - the hero of Jeff's book - *The Dog Who Couldn't Stop Loving*.

Jeff has a Ph.D. in Sanskrit from Harvard University. He was Professor of Sanskrit at the University of Toronto. Trained as a Freudian analyst and graduating as a full member of the International Psycho-Analytical Association, he became Project Director of the Sigmund Freud Archives in 1980.

Given access to Freud's papers in London and the Library of Congress, his research led him to publish a series of books critical of Freud, psychoanalysis, psychiatry and therapy.

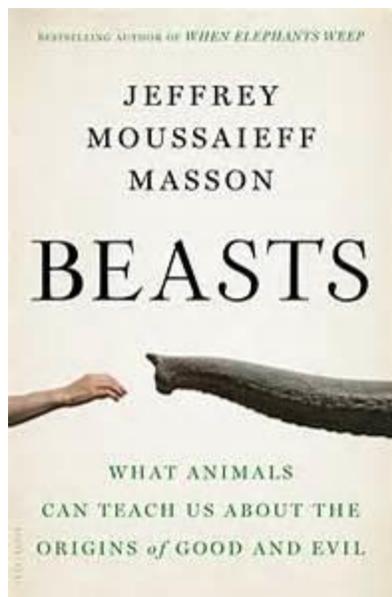
Exclusive EVEN Interview with Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, PhD, January, 2016

Skeptical that humans could be understood (at least by psychologists) Masson turned to animals. In 1995 he published *When Elephants Weep*, an international best seller, followed by the equally popular *Dogs Never Lie About Love*.



Since those two books he has published 7 more books about animals, looking in every one at their emotions:

- about cats he wrote *The Nine Emotional Lives of Cats* (along with a fable, *The Cat Who Came in from the Cold*);
- he looked at fatherhood in the animal world and the lessons to be learned for humans in *The Evolution of Fatherhood*;
- writing about the emotional world of farm animals in *The Pig Who Sang to the Moon* turned Jeff into a vegan.



Lately he wondered why animals did not engage in genocide, and wrote *Raising the Peaceable Kingdom*. He wrote an encyclopedia of his 100 favorite animals (often with an animal-rights angle) called *Altruistic Armadillos - Zenlike Zebras*. His next books were *The Face on Your Plate - The Truth About Food and Dogs Make Us Human*, about the evolution of dogs and humans in tandem.

Jeff's new book is called *Beasts: What Animals Can Teach Us About the Origins of Good and Evil*.

Masson is an animal rights activist and has been vegan since 2004. He is lives in Auckland with his wife and sons.



EVEN: How did veganism become part of your life?

Jeffrey: I was doing the research for what became my book *The Pig Who Sang to the Moon*, and the more I saw of the suffering involved in the animals whose milk and eggs we take, the more I realized that vegetarianism was not sufficient: I had to take the next step.



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

Jeffrey: Well, I once meet Cesar Chavez in California, a long time ago, and told him I was vegetarian. But do you drink milk, he asked me. Of course, I said. Well then, he replied, you are causing as much suffering to animals as if you ate their flesh. I did not understand then, only later.

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

Jeffrey: If you watch enough undercover footage, you will want to be more active.

Animals love and suffer, cry and laugh; their hearts rise up in anticipation and fall in despair...they feel. - **JMM**

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

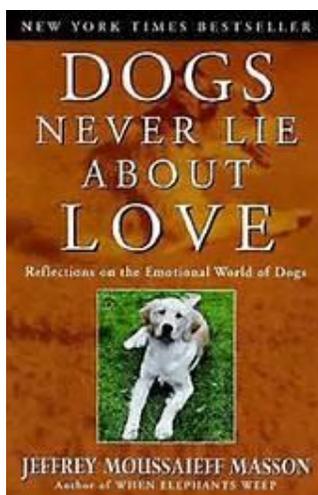
Jeffrey: I think there are lots of reasons: cheese is addictive, and vegan cheese gets better all the time, but is not there yet. Then there is societal pressure: when we travel, it is sometimes hard to find good vegan food. I tend now to always stay where I have access to a kitchen and I can prepare my own food. Open markets are great when you travel: you can find so much good organic produce. Cheap, too.

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

Jeffrey: That it is a fad, that we are joyless fanatics who just want to spoil everyone else's pleasure or that we are puritanical, holier-than-thou nerds. None of this is true. We just don't like the idea of animals suffering for our palates.

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

Jeffrey: Well, I was a vegetarian at a very early age. I even started an anti-hunting club in junior high school. I wish, though, that I had understood how veganism was one step closer to what I was really searching for.



Love for a dog during childhood is one of the deepest and purest emotions we are ever likely to have, and it remains with us for the rest of our lives. For some people, their first experience with love is with a dog. The fact that the dog returns the love so fiercely, so openly, so unambivalently, is for many children a unique and lasting experience. – **JMM** – *Dogs Never Lie About Love*

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

Jeffrey: I would tell them that the world is changing very rapidly when it comes to veganism: in Berlin where I am right now, there are hundreds of restaurants that offer vegan food. A full 5% of the population in Germany is vegan, 7% vegetarian. I was in Tel Aviv a few months ago and very surprised to find terrific vegan restaurants there, too.

We're the only animal who gets to choose what we eat, so we can choose to do what's humane and also much healthier. - **JMM**

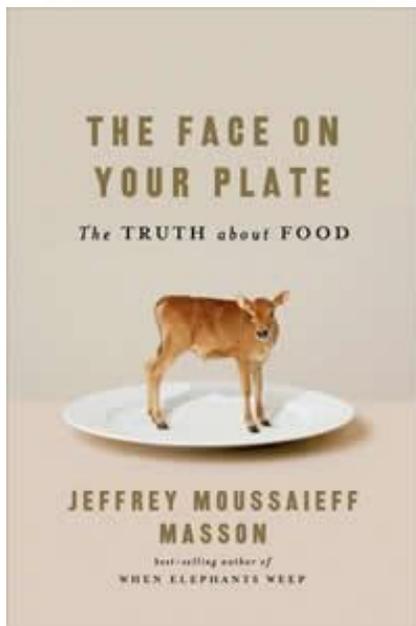
EVEN: Do you have a favorite vegan meal or food you can tell us about that really makes veganism work for you?

Jeffrey: I love chick peas, brown rice, tofu, and spinach dish. I also love rice-wraps, burritos (with corn tortillas as I don't eat gluten any longer), Thai food, Indian food (but always ask them to cook with coconut not butter), good dark chocolate. Vanilla soy-milk with a cappuccino is wonderful!



EVEN: What one thing makes veganism worthwhile for you?

Jeffrey: Knowing that I am not contributing to the torture of animals.



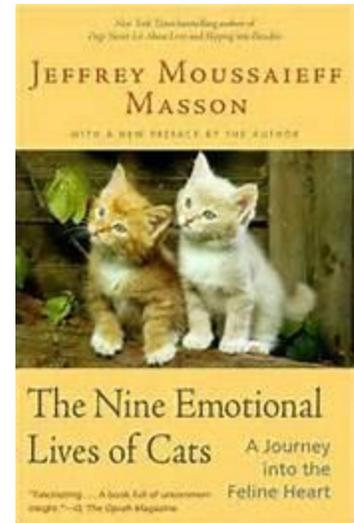
What struck me whenever I visited a farm was how much more sophisticated was the life the animals were capable of living than was assumed by those exploiting them. The more we are willing to see about their lives, the more we *will* see. Humans seem to take perverse pleasure in attributing stupidity to animals when it is almost always entirely a question of human ignorance. – **JMM**, *The Face on Your Plate: The Truth About Food*

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

Jeffrey: I can foresee a day when half the world will be vegan. Probably during the life of my grandchildren.

[More Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson Quotes](#)

The curiosity of cats is, like their affection, of a purity and intensity rarely seen in humans. We would be jaded when faced with the fiftieth paper bag. Not so our cats. – **JMM**, *The Nine Emotional Lives of Cats: A Journey into the Feline Heart*



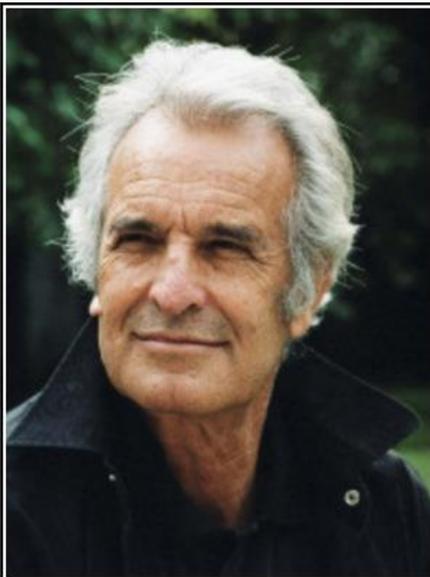
Perhaps one central reason for loving dogs is that they take us away from this obsession with ourselves. When our thoughts start to go in circles, and we seem unable to break away, wondering what horrible event the future holds for us, the dog opens a window into the delight of the moment. – **JMM**, *Dogs Never Lie About Love: Reflections on the Emotional World of Dogs*





We are not encouraged, on a daily basis, to pay careful attention to the animals we eat. On the contrary, the meat, dairy, and egg industries all actively encourage us to give thought

to our own immediate interest (taste, for example, or cheap food) but not to the real suffering involved. They do so by deliberately withholding information and by cynically presenting us with idealized images of happy animals in beautiful landscapes, scenes of bucolic happiness that do not correspond to anything in the real world. The animals involved suffer agony because of our ignorance. The least we owe them is to lessen that ignorance. – **JMM**, *The Face on Your Plate: The Truth About Food*



Animals are, like us, endangered species on an endangered planet, and we are the ones who are endangering them, it, and ourselves. They are innocent sufferers in a hell of our making.

— Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson —

AZ QUOTES

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