

EVEN Interview with **Will Tuttle**



Educator, Author, Musician, Spiritual Activist

*An exclusive EVEN interview with **Dr. Will Tuttle**, author of the #1 Amazon best-selling book, **The World Peace Diet** and recipient of the **Courage of Conscience Award**.*

Dr. Tuttle has lectured and performed widely throughout North America and Europe. He has been traveling with his spouse, Madeleine, full-time for 16 years in their solar-paneled “rolling home,” presenting over 150 lectures, retreats, workshops, and concerts annually through colleges and university groups, progressive churches, conferences, spiritual gatherings, and for yoga, meditation, vegetarian, environmental, peace, and social justice communities.

Devoted to cultural healing and awakening, he is a Dharma Master in the Zen tradition, and his Ph.D. degree from the University of California, Berkeley, focused on educating intuition and altruism in adults. He has taught college courses in creativity, humanities, mythology, religion, and philosophy, and has created 7 CD albums of original piano music. He is noted for his clear and inspiring presentations, which often include evocative animal paintings by Madeleine, a visionary artist from Switzerland.

*In 2005, Dr. Tuttle published his ground-breaking book, **The World Peace Diet**, the first book to give the big picture of the consequences of eating animal-sourced foods. He now focuses much of his time on spreading the vegan message of compassion for all life in communities throughout the world.*

[\[Read Will’s complete bio HERE.\]](#)



EVEN: How did veganism become part of your life?

Will: Through community. I ate meat and dairy because of the communities I was born and raised in, and I discovered vegetarianism primarily through discovering and living at The Farm in Tennessee back in 1975, where there were about 1,000 people all thriving on a completely plant-based diet. I became a vegan about five years later when people told

me of the cruelty of dairy and eggs, and this was sealed in my heart a few years later when I lived in a Zen monastery in South Korea that had been practicing vegan living for 650 years. Through that experience, I came to understand veganism not as a choice but as our true nature as human beings.

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

Will: I remember a guy at The Farm when I was just 22 years old, as we were walking through a field, nodding, and saying to me, “And these are vegetarian shoes.” A light bulb and I realized that vegetarianism goes much farther than food.

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

Will: My main advice would be to make an effort to live the vegan teaching as deeply as possible throughout the day. Veganism is another word for ahimsa, or non-violence, which is an all-embracing and radical inclusiveness of compassion and kindness for others, both human and non-human animals. This means taking time to meditate and connect with inner silence and inner peace, as well as taking time to connect authentically with the beauty and power of our Earth. Cultivating inner stability and joy is essential to being an effective activist, both in the short and long term. I think that integrating spirituality and activism is the heart of the matter, and this means making a commitment to both inner efforts to purify awareness and align with radical compassion for all, and outer efforts to spread the vegan message to others.

I would also encourage people to make an effort to understand what is going on behind the curtain of our culture, and see the interconnectedness of all exploitation, and also to witness through videos (and visits if possible) the ongoing human violence toward animals. This leads naturally to grief and outrage, but instead of being afraid to witness these relentless and disturbing realities, to open to them, and turn the outrage into concrete actions on behalf of others.

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

Will: There is nothing inherently difficult in veganism – it’s easy, natural, healthy, delicious, and is a win-win for everyone involved. The difficulty is that we’ve been intensively indoctrinated, and that we are creatures of habit, and that we are sensitive to the social pressures around us throughout our lives.

We are all programmed from infancy from every direction to eat animal flesh and other animal foods, and to see beings as mere commodities. It takes a remarkable effort or insight or character to be able to question this deep and essentially toxic programming, because of the enormous power of food in our social lives, and in our self-concept. Considering all this, I think it’s practically a miracle anyone manages to go vegan! There is no more benevolently revolutionary act than seeing” somethings” as “someones,” and bringing our lives into active alignment with this insight.

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

Will: That eating animal foods (or not) is a personal choice. It is no more a personal choice than slavery, rape, and murder are personal choices. There are consequences to our actions, and we live in a culture that is negligent, and teaches us to be ignorant of these consequences. But there are profound physical, psychological, cultural, spiritual, and ecological consequences to our food choices.

The second most misunderstood idea is that veganism is difficult and only for a special few – Eating a plant-based diet for ethical reasons, and doing the best we can to minimize the exploitation and cruelty we’re causing, benefits everyone, and is available to everyone. I’ve seen the most avid hunters go vegan and be so glad they did!!

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

Will: That I have to please others to earn their 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?

Will: Number one, it would be to thank and congratulate them, and to offer my support to them in this wonderful breakthrough that frees all of us.

To me, the most important insight is that the more we free others, and respect and honor their lives, the more free and honorable we become, and the more we realize happiness and self-respect in our lives. Wisdom and compassion are always available to us, and when we question and abstain from purchasing and supporting violence toward nonhuman animals, not only do we bless them and the whole interconnected web of life, but we also bless ourselves. We are all connected.

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

Will: I am easy to please! As long as it's whole-foods, plant-based, and organic, without excess salt, sugar, oil, or processed ingredients – I'll enjoy it! Love green smoothies, veggies, salad wraps, grains, nuts, and seeds – there are countless combinations. Am an especially big fan of sprouts, apples, kale, raisins, and sunflower seeds. I'm very blessed by my spouse Madeleine's joyful culinary creativity, and our 3 daily meals together are always nourishing celebrations of yumminess!

EVEN: What one thing makes veganism worthwhile for you?

Will: Being part of the foundational movement in our world that can create a world that works for all of us. We are all interconnected, and though we've been raised in a culture with an obsolete food orientation that destroys out natural wisdom and compassion, veganism is the positive alternative that each of us can choose and educate others about, also. Veganism is a never-ending upward spiraling path of spiritual growth. We can always awaken more and more authentically to the heart of

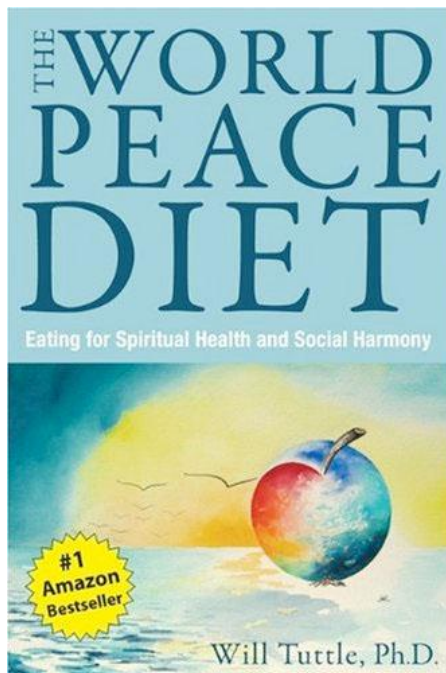
compassion for all living beings, and as we do, we become more effective advocates for animals and more fulfilled as expressions of humanity.

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

Will: I believe that these are the last days of eating animal foods! We will either peacefully transition to a more enlightened vegan practice of meals, and adopt the mentality of inclusiveness this requires, or we'll continue down the path of devastation that destroys not only the 75 million animals we're eating daily in the U.S., but our planetary ecosystems and ourselves as well.

Ultimately, I'm confident that eating animal foods is a passing delusion, like slavery and cannibalism, and that we are evolving to a higher state of awareness and behavior that is inevitably bringing us closer to our goal of peace, freedom, equality, and justice for all.

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