

EVEN Interview with **Claudia Delman**

**Outreach Manager - Physicians
Committee for Responsible
Medicine (PCRM)**

Claudia received her Master of Public Health from Loma Linda University in 2007. She has been Outreach Manager for [Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine](#) (PCRM), a nonprofit organization based in Washington, D.C. since 2000.

Claudia is a Certified Health Education Specialist responsible for outreach and education for physicians and health care providers at more than 20 medical conferences per year.

Claudia is also a flower essence practitioner with a line of flower essences for animals and people.

[Photo – Claudia and her friend, Orbit]



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**EVEN: How did veganism become part of your life?**

**Claudia:** I had been a vegetarian for a good portion of my life but when I learned about the links between veal “ranching” to dairy, I became vegan. I would never consider eating veal, so when I understood that the only reason the veal industry exists to turn the male offspring of dairy cows into veal, I did not want to contribute to that horror.

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

**Claudia:** I heard of the dairy/veal link from one of my clients (I was a hairstylist at the time) but she had read John Robbins’ *Diet for a New America*. So the most influential person in the beginning was (and always has been) John Robbins. I did finally read his book a year or so after becoming vegan. Working for Neal Barnard all these

years has also kept me around influential people like T. Colin Campbell, Brenda Davis, Rory Freedman, Meredith McCarty, and John McDougall.

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

**Claudia:** If you want to become more of an activist, start volunteering for activist vegan groups. *Vegan Action* is a great one to help; they do wonderful work on college campuses and really get the word out about reasons to be vegan. We also have an internship program at PCRM where someone can come and work with our Nutrition department or in our Research department in Washington, DC and work with us to save animals lives through advocacy.

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

**Claudia:** I think many people believe that veganism is extreme and they are not ready to accept that it really is as easy or as hard as one makes it. I also know that people get addicted to cheese and dairy products, so the shift to vegan from vegetarian can seem more difficult than the shift from omnivore to vegetarian. I know a lot of people have trouble quitting cheese; even long-time vegans' eyes may glaze over remembering New York style pizza. Big dairy (funded by our tax dollars) counts on us to become addicted to their product and breaking that addiction is like giving up cigarettes!

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

**Claudia:** The most misunderstood idea about veganism is the protein myth; that as vegans we have to worry about protein sources. There is plenty of protein in a vegan diet and, if we eat enough calories, we get enough protein.

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

**Claudia:** I made the link very early on when I was a child between an animal on my plate and an animal in the field, but my parents did not allow me to become vegetarian until I was old enough to cook for myself and I had to wait until I turned 15. However, what I would change is thinking that dissection was okay. I was my biology teacher's star student in high school and, if I could, I would truly take back all the dissections I did!

I did not understand that purpose-breeding of animals was inhumane, un-environmental, and completely unnecessary!

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

**Claudia:** I love food. I think I am lucky because there are so many varieties of food that I really like. What makes veganism work for me is that I have a wide interest in food.

**EVEN: What are the things that make veganism worthwhile for you?**

**Claudia:** Every day I know that I am helping, not hurting, animals with my diet. Additionally, I am not doing so much harm to the planet with my diet. I am healthier because I eat well, and I feel better! I think this is critical for people who advocate for plant-based eating – we need to look healthy and feel healthy so that when people meet us they can see this.

I also feel that veganism gives me a concrete way to be an environmentalist when I don't have time to clean up a beach, a park, or write a letter. It is just a small thing to be vegan but it makes me feel like I am helping create a better planet.

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

**Claudia:** In the last 20 years there have been so many changes in acceptance and recognition of veganism that it is hard to imagine what the future is going to hold. I know that at PCRМ we have completed clinical trials in which the vegan participants enjoyed the vegan diet more than the controls who had to comply with a restrictive diet which included animal products. Our studies have also shown that chronic diseases like diabetes can be reversed through a vegan diet and people can come off the drugs which treat symptoms and not the cause of their disease.

I think we will be moving more into greater acceptability of the vegan diet as a healing/preventive choice for illness. If President Clinton can adopt a mostly vegan diet then anyone can! Our unhealthy, disease-provoking, current diets have been created for us by food manufacturers, and I think in the future that many of us who are working to counteract this influence will become more mainstream. I am looking forward to this.

