

[Need We Eat Meat To Fit In?](#)

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No, it is not alright for a committed vegetarian to eat meat "even once." Just because someone else does something does not mean that you have to also. If you really believe in the reasons that you are a vegetarian you would not have to think twice to answer this question. If I were in a situation where the culture was to eat meat, I would do one of two things. First, I would explain that I am a vegetarian and why. Hopefully, the people around me would respect what I do and that would be the end of it. If this did not work, I would remove myself from the situation.

The place where my vegetarianism is questioned the most is in school. Almost daily I hear the question, "Why don't you eat meat?" Each time I am asked I have to explain it over again. Sometimes I even have fun with my explanation. I will say something like, "I don't eat anything that has walked, crawled, flown or swan." This makes the person I am talking to stop and think about what they are eating.

There are hundreds of people around me in the school cafeteria eating meat. Yet, just because all of my friends are eating meat doesn't mean that I am going to eat meat too. I will not eat meat just to fit in a place like a school where most kids were brought up in a culture that eats meat, you have to have a strong belief in vegetarianism to have it last.

I have mixed feelings about the second question: Is it necessary to create vegetarian dishes that look and taste like meat? I first look at the positive side of doing this. If you were raised in the typical meat-eating family, it would be extremely hard to suddenly stop. It would probably be a lot easier to gradually change over to a total vegetarian diet. This is where the fake meat dishes come in. It would be easier to change over to vegetarianism if you started with something

that looked like what you were used to.

Once you have become accustomed to the vegetarian diet, I would say that it would be better to say away from eating fake meat dishes. The reason for this is that if you begin eating these types of dishes you may not be able to tell the difference between "real" and "fake" meat. This could result in eating the flesh of another animal. You may do this thinking, "What could be the difference between eating the real thing and the fake." My family does not eat the "fake" meat too often, but we do eat it. It helps to add a little more variety to our diet. I have been raised with the idea that it is OK to eat. Since I have never eaten meat, I don't compare it with real meat.

However, other people who have eaten meat may eat the fake meat only because it reminds them of the real meat that they are used to. When I do eat this fake meat, the thought of eating real meat never crosses my mind. I believe in vegetarianism too strongly to ever question it. Eating the flesh of another animal is too disgusting. I owe this strong belief to being born into a vegetarian family. Unfortunately, it is not this way for many vegetarians. Many were not born into vegetarian families. For many people it was something that they had to work towards. It would be very easy for them to drop back to their meat-eating habit. Eating the fake meat would make their chance of doing just that a lot better. Therefore, I conclude that there is no clear right or wrong in this issue. The argument is strong on both sides.

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