

GABE SAPORTA A VOICE FOR ANIMALS



COBRA STARSHIP FRONTMAN GABE SAPORTA TALKS WITH ACTION FOR ANIMALS ABOUT NOT EATING MEAT.

Gabe Saporta, vegetarian and singer of the popular band Cobra Starship, has welcomed AFA setting up an outreach table at shows on Cobra Starship's headlining tours and expressed to us multiple times how important the topic of animal rights is to him. We recently talked with him about his decision to be vegetarian and love of animals.

What made you decide to become a vegetarian?

When I was 13 years old, I was away at summer camp and a kid said to me, "Why would you want to kill another living thing if it isn't necessary for you to survive? Our modern existence offers us so many suitable alternatives. Why cause the pain, suffering, and death of a living and feeling being?"

Now you have to understand that I grew up in South America, where we ate tons of meat and had parrilladas (barbeques) everyday where we would roast an entire pig. I loved meat, but that kid's words rang so true to me that I said, "I love animals. If I don't need to kill them, why would I?" It made so much sense to me that right then and there I decided to stop eating meat. It was the most abrupt change I've ever made in my life. So abrupt in fact that the following week, after coming home from camp, I was at a bar-mitzvah where they served chicken fajitas and I sincerely forgot that I no longer wanted to eat the flesh of an animal. I was eating a fajita when my friend said, "Gabe, aren't you a vegetarian now?" I totally and honestly had forgotten. Habits sometimes take a while to change, but that was the last time I ate meat.

How did being a vegetarian develop into your concern for animal rights?

At that young age, I had the intuition that eating meat was unnecessary, and I wondered, "What is compelling me to feel this way?" When I went to college I majored in Philosophy to try to understand from a moral and intellectual perspective what my instincts were already telling me: animals have rights. By animal rights I don't mean that animals have the right to vote or anything like that. I mean that they have a right to have their interests protected. As a minimum, the most basic of those interests ought to be protected: the interest to not be killed.

Throughout history, philosophers and lawmakers have justified the slaughter of animals by basically putting animals on the same moral level as vegetables: put on the earth for us to exploit. But as I thought more deeply about this, I began to question the conventional wisdom. There is a big difference between an animal and a vegetable: an animal has the ability to feel pain. As a living thing develops the ability to feel pain, it simultaneously develops a morally justifiable self-interest in not feeling that pain, and it thus works to avoid feeling pain and avoid being killed.

We should have empathy for an animal who wants to escape pain. But instead we inflict that pain, that death, on a genocidal level in a slaughterhouse—with no semblance of humanity and no regard for the pain being endured by an animal as he or she is skinned alive.

For us to evolve as a species, for our humanity to reach a new level of peace, we need to rid our lives of violence. And just because you buy a hamburger at a supermarket aisle with a sticker of a smiling cow on it doesn't mean that you are not a part of that circle of violence. As much as I love animals, at the end of the day, I don't abstain from meat for their sake. I do it for myself. I want to be able to look at myself in the mirror and know that I am not helping to cause the unnecessary death of an innocent being.



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