

ANIMAL RIGHTS conference 2004 plenary

AP 2004

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Hello Everyone!

I am really happy to be here representing The Animals Voice.

We have lots of back issues of the magazine at our table so please come and see which ones you'd like to have five or ten or a hundred copies of. And if you have never seen The Animals Voice Magazine, they'll blow your mind.

Please visit Animals Voice.com. We say 10,000 but we probably have more like 20,000 links. We are here to be the best resource we can be for everyone who wants to make a difference for animals.

We can hardly keep up with posting all the amazing work done by activists. If you are not up-to-date with the commentaries, curricula, investigations, theses, books and on and on that are created by activists, you are missing out. And we need all of YOU to send us your work.

And we can barely keep up with the mainstream media coverage of animal issues. And, if you are NOT keeping up with the mainstream media's coverage of animal issues, you are depriving yourself of the wins, you deprive yourself of victories happening all the time, every day, for animals.

A paradigm that has been one way tens of thousands of years is NOW altering... because of YOU.

People like YOU, in your chair, who for a month or five years or thirty years have stopped wearing certain clothes because of your commitment to living a life FOR animals.

People like you who gave up food or makeup or some fun stuff because of your commitments.

People like you who gave up great jobs with lots of perks when you discovered your company was profiting from hurting animals.

People like you who moved away from family and friends for the privilege of working for an organization committed to helping people help animals.

People like you who don't buy those new clothes or that new CD because you choose to spend the money on printing one more flyer or buying one more TV spot.

People like you who cry once a month or once a week or maybe even a bit every day because you're so touched by the utter devastating thoughtlessness and because you care so much for every single whiskers and fin and feather.

Given what we know, we are heroically self-contained. We can all be really really proud of every single solitary thing we do and we have every right to be moved to tears by each other.

Some of us have taken courses or read books or gone to counseling to be the best ambassadors for the animals we can be. I invite you to be here to see where in your life you can be a more effective ambassador and where and how you can be a leader.

And being a leader isn't limited to being in front of the room or at the top of an organization. It can be something as basic as always being on time for each other this weekend. We always have great excuses for not keeping our word, and every time we extend ourselves even a tiny bit beyond what's comfortable or what we're used to, we get stronger and smarter and more respectful, which means more people will listen to what we have to say.

Keep growing and expanding and be willing to have your molecules rearranged. Be here ready to have the rug pulled out from under you about what you already know. The more open we are, the more people will listen to what we have to say.

We cannot do this alone. Sorry. I'm sure there are times we've all wished we could do it alone, but it ain't gonna happen that way. We need each other. We need people. And we CAN learn from everybody.

I found a great talk online titled, Being a Leader — Where You Are.

First, a true leader is willing to live, and inspire others to rise, to a standard of upright living

Second, a true leader has a passion for an identifiable dream

Third, a true leader has an eye for preparation

Fourth, a true leader is willing to get their hands dirty

Fifth, a true leader is one who is willing to make sacrifices for the good of the objective

Sixth, a true leader learns from their mistakes

Lastly, a true leader has compassion for others

The talk was presented last month in Newark at the National Political Hip-Hop Convention.

I encourage you to find out why you're doing all the things you do. What's your purpose? What's your vision? If you can clarify that, it will make your work more poignant and more impactful. Don't be afraid to really know how YOU would like things to be.

Ending animal abuse is just not big enough for me. Stopping violence never gets to the source of violence.

MY vision is a world that works for everyone and everything, with no one and nothing left out. Everyone. Everywhere. What's your vision?

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On Saturday during lunch in Room C, we will have a Newcomers Q&A. We've never done this before and I'm very excited. Please come. Newcomers and old comers... Between now and then, write down your questions, keep track of your concerns, make notes about jargon or inuendos you don't get. We'll have a great panel: Jack Norris of Vegan Outreach, Pam Ferdin of Animal Defense League, Karen Davis of United Poultry Concerns and Janet Enoch of Animal Trust.

Please come! Saturday, lunchtime, Room C.

Thank you for listening. Thank you for your activism.