

Vedge Your Best Podcast
Episode 6
Transcript
Who Are YOU Voting For?

Air Date: October 13, 2020

Waste no more time arguing what a good man should be. Be one.

–Marcus Aurelius,

You might think you know what side of the ballot box this suburban, east coast, Plant Based, Stoic quoting, Francophile women's college alum is on... but you'd be ...well you'd undoubtedly be right.

I'm voting for Biden and Harris November 3rd, but today I need to vote for me.

MUSIC

Hello Vedge Heads,

You're listening to Vedge Your Best, the Plant Based podcast. My name is Michele Olender. I'm a Certified Life Coach, a practicing Vegan, and I'm here to try and convince you to show up, eat more plants, and not wait a single second longer, to set an impossible goal. Whatever that is for you.

Episode 6, where we ask, Who and WHAT are YOU voting for?

As I record this episode – the 6th **Vedge Your Best** episode here in a closet in coastal Rhode Island, we are in the thick of the 2020 US Presidential Election.

And as I record this, my news feed is full of outrage and judgment. I am not immune. But when I find my Brain hijacked by what I think other people should be doing I try try and follow the advice of Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius from almost 2000 years ago.

Waste no more time, arguing what a good man should be. Be one.

Who are you voting for? Not just during this election. But today. This afternoon.

What kind of world are you voting for with your decisions and choices.

The Stoics teach that being an engaged citizen is important. Their philosophy was one of civic engagement and an active life concentrating on the activities that are in the control of the individual.

Taking part in our communities, showing up, paying our taxes, voting, requesting oversight and transparency so those taxes are well spent, supporting responsible journalism, asking good questions and taking into our own hands remedies in the society that are ours to offer, including kindness, charity, these are actions that are within our control.

Who ultimately is listed on the ballot on election day, in any given year may **not** be. But there you are. Real life.

What we do have every minute of every day is an opportunity to cast mini-votes for the person WE want to be. Regardless of who is Emperor like Marcus Aurelius or President, Attorney General or Supreme Court Justice.

And that's a pretty tall order if you have as many areas to improve in as I do. Today would be a good day for me to vote for the kind of Michele who is more focused and disciplined. Today would be a great day to vote for a future Michele who is physically stronger and has greater endurance.

One thing I learned in the beginning through coaching was how those areas I wanted to improve depended so much on the emotion and energy that fueled those actions or habits I wanted to start or stop.

Trying to change something with strong feelings of self criticism or self loathing or anger or resentment.... Not that effective. Have you noticed that in your own life?

Learning a new skill or habit fueled by emotions like fun, curiosity, and self care or love for others... completely different.

In a previous episode, I mentioned the difference between an appointment on my calendar with a client or another person and having an appointment that does not include anyone else.

WHY would it be different? Because the feeling that fuels my actions to show up prepared and on time for my clients is always clear and unambiguous – “Committed”. The feeling is committed.

The feeling that sometimes accompanies my plan to do something else rather than the work I scheduled on the calendar is maybe doubt – doubt that it matters

Or maybe fear – fear that I won't do a good job or that I will not be able to do it right, or that I will be criticized...

Or maybe ambivalent – this comes up a lot for me — Maybe because I'm a gemini.

AMBIVALENT – experiencing the pull of two or multiple emotions.

Example: I have a writing session planned for 10 am and it's 10 am and I am thinking about whether there is laundry to do, or a dishwasher to empty, or a bill that has come through in my email that I better pay. None of which I would do if I had a client booked at 10am. You'll be disappointed perhaps to learn that when I am avoiding doing something like writing or working on my business or strength training, my go to avoidance behavior is not eating, or watching Netflix or online shopping or drinking tequila.... It is very often housework.

Housework, laundry, cleaning while listening to podcasts...

I know. I'm wild.

I'm a 13th generation New England Puritan on my Mother's side. And yes there are witches....You know Scarlet letter, House of Seven Gables, The Crucible...?

Maybe we will talk about that sometime.

So like everyone else in the history of the world I have things I do pretty responsibly and with a decent attitude and I have a very long list of things I think I WANT to do, but just don't. Or I do them in ineffective fits and starts

So – as in this political season

When I get overly excited and outraged about the policies, choices and behaviors of government officials and political candidates – and I do, I have a practice of bringing myself back to how Candidate Michele is showing up and whether I would vote for her.

Not only whether I would Vote for me, how do my behaviors, my purchases, my choices vote for the kind of society I want to live in.

Finally we are getting to something Plant Based today.

I started moving towards a Plant Based Vegan Diet about 10 years ago and I finally committed to those choices about 5 years ago because of my concerns for my health and even more viscerally, for my husband's health. We will talk about that more in the future.

But what keeps me committed is more than our physical health. What keeps me eating whole foods, organic when possible and local when possible is my belief that in those choices we are voting for the health of our local economies, the health of workers who are not surrounded by chemicals, pesticides and herbicides, we are voting for food that travels fewer miles,

With our purchases we are attempting NOT to vote for things like Animal Food lots, the overuse of antibiotics, single use plastics, monocultures used to feed animal agriculture, dangerous employee conditions at slaughterhouses, and hyper palatable Franken-Foods that are engineered to be over consumed and of no nutritional value.

We compost religiously.

OK that's a weird word pair that I think I regret having put together.

But we Compost and have composted for decades. Not everyone can. Obviously. Not everyone can go to Farmers Markets and Food Coops.

Not everyone can afford the time that my husband puts into food shopping. Yes, it's my husband who is the Food Forager in our family and he has been for 30 plus years. Some people golf, some people do woodwork, coach little league or work on cars, or run marathons, My husband, in his free time is a forager and loves to source local vegetables and fruits and support local farmers. Yes - we are lucky because I don't really enjoy shopping.

So we try and vote for the support of our local farmers. We try and vote for nutritious whole foods for our daily consumption, We belong to a CSA - that stands for Community supported Agriculture - where you buy a share of a local farmer's crop in advance so that they have some cash to invest in their workers, greenhouses and supplies in the winter when they have little to sell.

AND NOW lest you think that this is just self congratulatory, here are things we are voting for in our day to day lives which I am not proud of.

Single Use plastic. Before the Pandemic we had lowered our plastic use – we often brought our own containers to restaurants to get take out. But since the pandemic, businesses will understandably not use your containers, and if we want to support our local family owned restaurants and enjoy delicious vegan Lebanese food, Indian cuisine, Chinese or Vietnamese food in our area, well we have worryingly large numbers of plastic containers growing in the basement because one of the miracles I pray for is a solution to plastic.

So not proud at all of how much Plastic we are consuming.

Not proud either of how much water gets used to irrigate our garden. It was an extremely hot dry summer here in southern New England and we used a lot of water to keep our veggie garden, shrubs, trees and flowers alive. We lost quite a few things in spite of a lot of water usage. I am trying to figure out how to finally get some rain barrel systems in place – rain barrels have been on my to do list for a decade at least

and to replace the dead plants with species that will be more resilient. I am trying to learn improved mulching practices and timing for the irrigation to maximize the hydration, but the water usage especially this year was excessive and I'm not proud of it at all.

Eating plants rather than animal products is a way of limiting water usage. I will put a link in the show notes to the most recent information I have about the comparative, but obviously eating plant based is not a panacea it is not the only way to “VOTE” for responsible water management. *

So though I do personally believe that moving to a Whole Food Plant Based diet is good for the environment, good for human health and moves away from industrial animal agriculture that few people can bear to really look at, it is obviously not the only way to serve as a citizen.

There is no relative morality about who is an objectively better person.

That's a tone I sometimes hear in the Plant Based and Vegan communities – some polarizing talk – some US and THEM talk which I don't really think is very helpful.

There are so many ways to serve as citizens. I have never run for public office and I am not in a public health position. So perhaps I ought to remember to be less judgmental of those who are.

I do not create technology or pharmaceuticals, so perhaps it's up to me to advocate strongly for what I think rather than condemn.

I contribute and support various people and organizations, but you might very possibly not agree with my donations or how much I give or where I volunteer. You might think there are more pressing needs or higher priorities. And I hope that you will use your voice and your wisdom to help us all learn about those areas of need.

On November 3, I only get one vote.
But today – every day – I get to vote multiple times.

I get to vote with my choices. I get to vote with my purchasing dollars.
I get to vote with what I eat and who I spend time with and what I read and what I support.

When I find myself blaming and judging and condemning I am frittering away the energy and time I have to actually advocate for change, or argue for my point of view, or challenge myself to be braver, stronger, more literate and compassionate.

Gandhi's famous now almost cliché advice was to be the change you wish to see.
Which has been variously translated as YOU DO YOU, BOO.

So get out there and Vote, Vedge Heads.

And while you're at it, Vote with your dollars for some of your local farmers and growers and business people and eat an extra handful of greens. Vote with your time to show your health some care, some movement and some kindness.

Today I will practice shutting my phone off, redirecting my attention to the work I have and doing boring uncomfortable stretching exercises.

Thanks for listening to the podcast, please let me know how we can tackle any questions or topics you have while I learn how to record these episodes. Today's is being recorded in a closet surrounded by pillows to try and dampen the sound a bit. I will post that highly professional photo on Instagram and Facebook for your amusement.

And if you're curious how working with a coach can help you with your Plant Based goals, schedule a free mini session, the link is in the show notes.

Vedge Your Best, Podcast Production, Music and Editing by Charlie Weinshank.
Thanks Charlie.

So until next week, make it easy and just Vedge Your Best.

* Link to comparative use of water for plant vs animal proteins. [https://
blog.wholesomeculture.com/meat-vs-beans-how-much-water-is-used-to-
produce-different-types-of-protein/](https://blog.wholesomeculture.com/meat-vs-beans-how-much-water-is-used-to-produce-different-types-of-protein/)

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