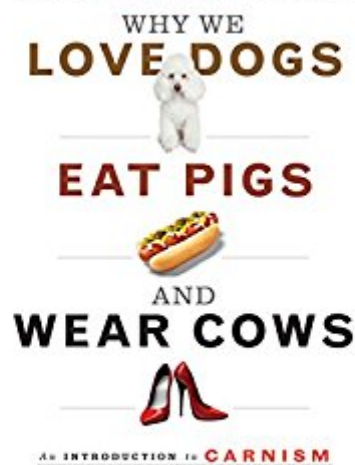




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# Why We Love Dogs, Eat Pigs, And Wear Cows: An Introduction To Carnism

Foreword by **JOHN ROBBINS**, author of *The Food Revolution*



Melanie Joy, PhD

INCLUDES BOOK GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE



## Synopsis

In her groundbreaking new book, *Why We Love Dogs, Eat Pigs, and Wear Cows*, Melanie Joy explores the invisible system that shapes our perception of the meat we eat, so that we love some animals and eat others without knowing why. She calls this system carnism. Carnism is the belief system, or ideology, that allows us to selectively choose which animals become our meat, and it is sustained by complex psychological and social mechanisms. Like other "isms" (racism, ageism, etc.), carnism is most harmful when it is unrecognized and unacknowledged. *Why We Love Dogs, Eat Pigs, and Wear Cows* names and explains this phenomenon and offers it up for examination. Unlike the many books that explain why we shouldn't eat meat, Joy's book explains why we do eat meat - and thus how we can make more informed choices as citizens and consumers.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Melanie Joy's *Why We Love Dogs, Eat Pigs, and Wear Cows* illuminates the moral incongruence at the heart of the American diet: how we can love our pets and value kindness to animals generally, yet consume meat from corporations that severely abuse and slaughter 10 billion sentient creatures a year. Dr. Joy explores the many ways we numb ourselves and disconnect from our natural empathy for farmed animals. She points out that in the affluent industrialized world, we don't eat meat because we have to, but because we choose to. We like the taste and everybody else is doing it. Joy coins the term "carnism" to describe the belief system which holds that it is ethical and appropriate to make the choice to eat animals. Dr. Joy notes that following a carnist rather than a vegetarian or vegan dietstyle is made less distressing by the fact that most of the billions of animals

Americans eat each year are literally hidden from sight. Animal agribusiness spends a fortune creating the fiction that these animals live outside on idyllic farms. Dr. Joy encourages readers to become informed about the violence and suffering bound up with mainstream food choices, and to begin reducing consumption of animals products. She sees regaining empathy for suffering farmed animals as part of a vital process of personal and societal integration, wherein values, beliefs, and behavior come into harmony. These ideas resonate with me because my wife and I dearly love our two cats, Justa and Justine, and our Bernese Mountain Dog, Pearl. Each one has a unique personality and shows great will power in realizing goals and desires. Like the humans in the household, they fully experience pain and suffering as well as contentment and joy.

Why do so many people find great delectation in their beef, pork, and chicken products but cringe at the thought of eating meat from a dog? Why can people sympathize so deeply with dogs, but remain coldly detached from the "necessary" slaughter of cows, pigs, and chickens for their eating pleasure? Melanie Joy, a psychologist, professor, and author, explains these inconsistencies in *Why We Love Dogs, Eat Pigs, and Wear Cows*. She points out that many people engage in selective empathy, feeling for some animals but not others, based on what they've learned. She asserts that much of our beliefs about animals and what is appropriate for eating is based on illogical thinking, phobic numbing, misinformation, and denial. Being told that it's okay to eat meat over and over from childhood to adulthood, being denied access to the slaughter of animals, and pushing animals' suffering from our imagination results in being a carnist, someone who eats meat, not from necessity, but from choice. I find the author's arguments, logical, convincing, and morally compelling. If we have to force ourselves to be ignorant and block our empathy in order to eat meat, then we're fooling ourselves at the detriment of animals and our own moral integrity. Thinking about animal suffering clearly, seeing the horrors that animals suffer without sugar-coating their slaughter with mythologies, considering the options we have as omnivores, and freeing ourselves from the lies (repeated they become false truths), and vegetarianism becomes the logical conclusion. The author wants us to stop denying the trauma and torture that animals suffer because of many people's choice to be carnists.

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