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Boyd Tonkin, 
*The Independent*, London
About the author
Catharine Grant is a writer, historian, and activist based in Toronto, Canada. She currently is completing her doctoral dissertation, which compares Ronald Reagan’s and Margaret Thatcher’s rhetoric on religion, race, gender and sexuality. She is also involved in various campaigns for animal rights, and social and environmental justice.

Other titles in the series
The No-Nonsense Guide to Globalization
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The New Internationalist is an independent not-for-profit publishing co-operative. Our mission is to report on issues of global justice. We publish informative current affairs and popular reference titles, complemented by world food, photography and gift books as well as calendars, diaries, maps and posters – all with a global justice world view.

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**Foreword**

*The individual is capable of both great compassion and great indifference. Humans have it within their means to nourish the former and outgrow the latter... Nothing is more powerful than an individual acting out of conscience, thus helping to bring the collective conscience to life.*

– Norman Cousins (1915-1990), Journalist and peace activist

I LEFT ENGLAND when I was about 8 years old and went to live in India. There I grew up in a house full of refugees, unwed mothers thrown out of their homes by conservative families, stray dogs, beggar children, ducks discarded from the fairgrounds – you name it. My mother welcomed them all, saying, ‘It doesn’t matter who is in need, it’s that they are in need.’ Much later, I came across writer, philosopher and social reformer John Galsworthy’s words: ‘We are not living in a private world of our own. Everything we say and do and think has its effect on everything around us.’

That’s when I realized that this was the most important lesson of my youth, of my life – not my beloved geometry, not that confounding physics, or anything else that I had learned in school. I realized, as writer and naturalist Henry Beston had pointed out many years earlier (in words that I would also cherish) that all of us, no matter our gender, race, religion, nationality, or species, are fellows; whole and complete in our own way, all capable of joy, love, friendship, grief, maternal understanding; the desire to be free and free of pain and fear, and the desire to escape a painful death; and that we are all bundles of emotion.

Animal rights is a marvelous thing, the test of whether we can examine not yesterday’s but today’s prejudices honestly and reject them as supremacist. It means embracing empathy, that invaluable ability to
put oneself in another’s place by knocking down those false barriers that place our ‘own kind’ on one side and ‘others’ on the other side and replacing them with the golden rule of ‘Do unto others’ that we humans rightly hold dear in word if not in deed.

Perhaps the hardest thing is not to turn away from the knowledge of what is done to animals in our name, but instead fearlessly to open our hearts and minds to what those ‘others’ go through, particularly when they go experience it all unwillingly and only because of our unthinking choices in life. The joy is that once we have decided to try to live without causing pain and suffering to animals, it is easy as pie to do. Do not be daunted by the enormity of their plight; rather be glad to have found out what a difference an informed and kind person can make. At PETA, we say, ‘Animal liberation is human liberation.’ Welcome to your new freedom.

*Ingrid E Newkirk*  
Founder of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), and author of *Making Kind Choices.*
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