

The roots of our
compassion towards
others begins from
respecting creatures

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The Roots of our Compassion Towards Others Begins from Respecting Creatures Our relationship towards smaller creatures reflect a deeper part of ourselves as a person. This is exactly what the Fourth Trust is trying to teach children : to respect and love nature. What started as a dream of a gentle child who cuddled earthworms in pillows became Roots and Shoots - a global network spanning 110 countries that involves young people to care for nature, community and animals. Actually, Roots & Shoots is a program of the Jane Goodall Institute that has its beginnings in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in 1991. From the voices of concern coming from 16 teenagers, a materialized vision came true through the Roots & Shoots program. The Fourth Trust is a memoir of Dr. Jane Goodall that elaborates how her childhood experience in caring for all sorts of animals taught her important values in life such as respect and care for nature.

The basic tenet of Dr. Goodall's philosophy comes from this statement " Children' relationship to animals then can be a means of teaching compassion and kindness" (Jane Goodall and Mark Bekoff, The Fourth Trust, p. 69). Even as a young child, Dr. Goodall learned about compassion by actively engaging with her natural surroundings. Living in apartment never stifled her interests for creatures as she kept a dog in their apartment. As soon as their family moved to a house with a backyard, she pursued her dream of caring for whatever animal needed her attention. Even her little misdemeanor that called the police into her house was the result of her curiosity about where eggs really come from.

The Fourth Trust tells us that children who were exposed to animals " tend to be kind to animals as adults and to be loving and compassionate individuals

“(Goodall and Bekoff, p. 68). A concrete example of this was the case of the orphan named Peter. The child’s first experience with the white rabbit taught him a different perspective in life. He suddenly became concerned about the rabbit by asking if it was hurt when he stroked it. If all children coming from disadvantaged families have the chance to interact with creatures in a loving manner, perhaps, they can become more kind to other humans as well. An animal is a creature not capable of fighting back to a human being unless it is a wild animal of course. People learn tolerance and respect when they do not abuse their power and pick on weaker beings.

Because of this situation, Dr. Goodall made it her life’s mission to spread to the world her philosophy. The dream became true when teen-agers in her community expressed their concern about nature and wildlife. In the activity named Dog in a Lifeboat, the young people come up with creative ideas to save the dog’s life without jeopardizing another human’s safety. This just shows that young people can come up with creative ideas that can promote sustainability. For every project the tools are the same and one of the knowledge imparted is “ leading to respect for all life” (Goodall & Bekoff , p. 74) which is the ultimate manifestation of Dr. Goodall’s philosophy. Man and nature can co-exist when one takes care of the other

In conclusion, the Fourth Trust is a resounding voice that tells us that our childhood dreams can be a reality when we pursue them passionately. In the case of Dr. Goodall’s dream, humanity benefitted from her beliefs as children became more compassionate and caring adults of the world around them.

Works Cited

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