

Foreword

by Dr. Jane Goodall

*B*uilding an Ark is a book after my own heart: it is all about taking action to make the world a better place. When I look at my three grandchildren and think how we have damaged the world since I was their age, I feel a deep pain — and anger.

The natural world is in deep trouble. Forests have been destroyed, chemicals have been used mindlessly and millions of people have no access to clean drinking water. As we burn fossil fuels, the climate around the globe is changing. Ice caps and glaciers are melting. Millions of people living in abject poverty are destroying the environment around them in order to survive. Others enjoy unsustainable lifestyles, demanding far more than their fair share. We are destroying our only planet and the future of our children.

It is not only humans who are suffering. Chimpanzees, our closest living relatives, the species I have been studying for more than 40 years, numbered at least one million across Africa when I began my work in 1960. There are thought to be no more than 150,000 today. Many other species are equally endangered.

It seems there has been a disconnect between the clever human brain and the compassionate human heart. We are moving ever further from the belief of most indigenous people: that the natural world and everything in it is sacred.

Deep in the heart of the forest of Gombe is a spectacular waterfall that cascades from a rocky ledge 80 feet above the stream bed. When the water drops, it displaces the air, and there is always a breeze that makes the vines and ferns sway. Sometimes, when chimpanzees approach this place and hear the thundering of the water, their hair

starts to bristle with excitement. They start a rhythmic display, standing upright in the stream bed, swaying from foot to foot, picking up and throwing large rocks, stamping and slapping in the shallow, fast-running water. Sometimes they climb the slender vines that hang beside the waterfall and push out into the spray. Then they may sit and watch the falling water, following it with their eyes. If the chimpanzees had a language to discuss the emotions that trigger these displays, might this not lead to some kind of primitive religion; an animistic worship of the mysterious forces of the natural world?

It is clear that there is no sharp line between us and chimpanzees, between us and the rest of the animal kingdom. The more we learn, the more blurry the line becomes. We are not the only beings on the planet with personalities and minds capable of rational thought and feelings. Often I lie sleepless at night thinking of all the ways in which we exploit so many other animal beings. The animals in research laboratories. The billions tortured in intensive farms. The harsh, often cruel, training of animals for circuses and other entertainment. The abuse of pets. Wild animals losing their habitat, being trapped, hunted and captured for the live animal trade. The list goes on and on.

The question I am asked most often is whether I really have hope for the future. The answer is yes, but can we do so in time? We do not, I fear, have long. We are fast approaching a time when the environment will be unable to recover from our abuses, when life on Earth as we know it will end. We must take action now,

before it is too late. That is why Ethan Smith and Guy Dauncey have written this book.

My first reason for hope is the human brain. Through millions of years, our species has survived by using our problem-solving abilities. Now that we have begun to understand and face up to the problems that threaten us, we are coming up with all kinds of ways to live in greater harmony with nature. We must reestablish that vital link between brain and heart, and join hands to find more ways to heal our planet.

My second reason for hope lies in the resilience of nature. I have visited Nagasaki, site of the second atomic bomb that ended World War II. Scientists predicted that nothing could grow there for at least 30 years. But, amazingly, plant life returned much more quickly. One sapling actually managed to survive through that ghastly bombing, and today it is a large tree. There are great cracks and fissures in the trunk, all black inside, but every spring this tree produces leaves. I carry one of those leaves with me as a powerful symbol of hope.

My third reason for hope lies in the indomitable human spirit. History is filled with the stories of individuals whose vision has led them to tackle seemingly impossible missions, and to succeed against all odds. Such leaders have the courage of their convictions to stand up against authority or corporate power. While these people stand out in history, the indomitable human spirit is illustrated by countless ordinary people who do extraordinary things.

My fourth reason for hope lies in the increasing involvement of children in determining their future. My involvement with youth began

when I realized how many high-school and university students seemed to have lost hope. They all told me more or less the same thing: that we had compromised their future, and there was nothing they could do about it. Their future has been compromised ... but it is not true that they can do nothing about it.

I started the Jane Goodall Institute's Roots & Shoots (www.RootsAndShoots.org) program for the very reason that Ethan and Guy have written *Building an Ark*: because we want, most desperately, to share our conviction that we can create the change that will save our planet.

Each Roots & Shoots group works on three kinds of projects: to improve things for humans, for the environment and for animals. We have more than 8,000 active groups in over 90 countries, and programs from preschool through university. As they work on their projects, the young people become empowered, realizing that they are creating change.

Building an Ark will give our groups so many new ideas. It will help us realize the importance of small actions we can take each day. When billions routinely make these little changes, we shall see big changes.

We must remember that we have this power, and we must start using it now, because we do not have much time. We all have to roll up our sleeves and do our bit. *Building an Ark* will help all who read it to understand how each of us can create change, help animals and make the world a better place for all.

— Jane Goodall, PhD, DBE
Founder, The Jane Goodall Institute and
UN Messenger of Peace www.janegoodall.org