

The legacy of Jane Goodall

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Dr. Jane Goodall, naturalist, and founder of the Jane Goodall Institute was a remarkable example of courage and conviction. She worked tirelessly throughout her life to raise awareness about the threats to wildlife, promote conservation, and inspire a more harmonious, sustainable relationship between people, animals, and the natural world. She passed away on the 1st October, this year.

Jane Goodall was known for her lifelong study of wild chimpanzees in Gombe, Tanzania, one of the longest running wildlife research institutions in the world. However, in the latter part of her life she expanded her focus and became a global advocate for animal welfare, species and environmental protection, human rights, and other crucial environmental issues. She urged us to remember that “every single one of us makes a difference every day – it is up to us the kind of difference we make.” For more than six decades, Goodall carried a message that was consistent, clear, and insistent: our fate is bound to the fate of the natural world.

Her legacy continues with the ongoing research at Gombe, and the chimpanzee sanctuaries established by her. I had the opportunity to visit herchimp sanctuary near Pointe Noire in the Republic of Congo. The kindness, empathy, and professionalism with which her carers look after, and socialise the chimps in captivity, and eventually re-introduce some back into nature, is unforgettable. Her legacy cannot be reduced to one discovery or one campaign. She was a scientist who redefined animals, a thinker who refused the split between reason and

reverence, a pragmatist and a mentor who invested her credibility in the young.

Dr. Jane Goodall's impact on environmental conservation is profound and enduring. She transformed our understanding of animal behaviour and challenged the boundaries between humans and other species. Her discovery that chimpanzees use tools—a trait once thought unique to humans—redefined scientific thinking and inspired generations of researchers. She also demonstrated that chimpanzees had inner lives, she blurred the categorical statement that placed humans above other animals. Her work became foundational not only for primatology, but for animal welfare and environmental ethics. Her work was not only scientific, but moral. Her research continues to yield insight into primate behaviour and ecosystem health.

Beyond her scientific achievements, Goodall became a global advocate for environmental protection. She tirelessly campaigned for wildlife conservation, habitat preservation, and animal welfare, emphasising that humanity's fate is inseparable from the health of the natural world.

She also founded Roots & Shoots, a youth-led movement active in over 140 countries, empowering young people to act for people, animals, and the environment. Her faith in the youth was not naïve. She knew the world they were inheriting — extinctions, climate disruption, inequality. But she argued that cynicism was toxic for the young. Where older audiences asked if it were too late, younger ones asked what they could do next.

Goodall was also a defender of the knowledge of Indigenous people. “If you want conservation to work, you must involve the people who live there,” she said. “If they are not part of the solution, there will be no solution.” Excluded communities were unlikely to



Dame Jane Goodall

support conservation goals. Those who benefited from sustainable use often became its fiercest defenders. Her message was consistent: respect for animals, respect for the natural world, and respect for the people who depend on it.

Jane Goodall embodied a disciplined, action orientated hope. She believed that hope requires action, not just optimism or slogans. Her hope was grounded in real experiences – witnessing environmental recovery and young people overcoming challenges. She saw hope as a responsibility, urging everyone to take meaningful steps, no matter how small, to address global issues like extinction and climate change. For her, hope meant actively working for change, such as planting trees, speaking out, voting and mentoring others. Her authority came from her direct experiences. Her credibility is rooted in acknowledging both sides but always emphasising that positive change must prevail.

Jane Goodall's life reminds us that hope is a responsibility, and that caring for the planet is everyone's responsibility. What is **your** hope, **linked to action**, for **your** environment?