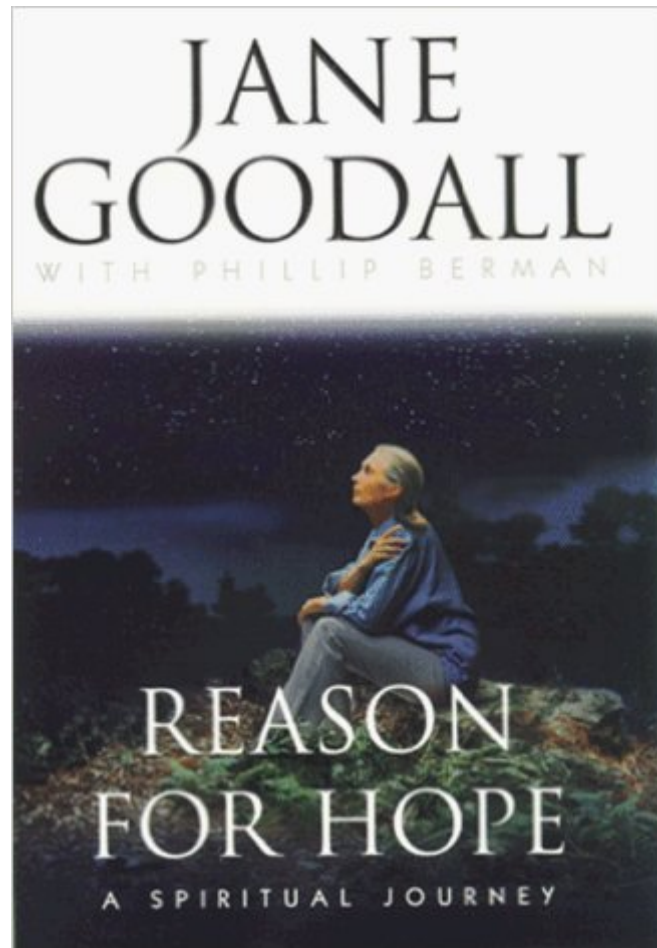


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Reason For Hope: A Spiritual Journey



Synopsis

Dr. Jane Goodall's revolutionary study of chimpanzees in Tanzania's Gombe preserve forever altered the very, definition of humanity. Now, in a poignant and insightful memoir, Jane Goodall explores her extraordinary life and personal spiritual odyssey, with observations as profound as the knowledge she has brought back from the forest.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In this rich and rewarding autobiographical journey - from infant to wizened woman in her sixth decade - Jane Goodall shares her life-defining experiences including her mentorship by Louis Leakey, the observations of chimpanzees that made her famous, and her significant relationships. The reader is right there with her through learning experiences and personal struggles and may be surprised to know about the difficulties and sacrifices even the lucky, gifted and famous have to make. Jane Goodall frequently calls on her grandmother's favorite scripture for comfort in inclement times, "as thy days, so shall thy strength be." Goodall's accounts and insightful realizations give courage and perspective for dealing with the hardship and obstacles in our own lives. One of the things I value most about this book is that Goodall addresses ethical and spiritual dimensions of science and conservation. Most scientists do not publicly discuss these larger ethical dilemmas or they sometimes engage in them but lose perspective in balancing human needs with those of other living creatures. Jane Goodall is not only willing and able to discuss these complex dimensions, but the outcome is helpful and thought-provoking. If I were a professor in any of the sciences (esp.

biology, genetics, and environmental studies) or ethics, I would leap at the opportunity to make this required reading. In her broad and clear way, Jane Goodall touches on many of the key issues and interrelations that scientists (budding or established) need to be aware of but will not find in a science textbook.

Jane Goodall reaches out to all who care for the earth and living things. Those involved in nature causes know the phenomenon of seeing so much irreparable wrong that life and effort begin to seem futile. Here is a book with at least a temporary antidote for despair. Goodall is not and does not pretend to be a great prose stylist. Maybe the simple straightforward words serve to advance her points. Her frank examination of a lifetime of ideas about spirituality is lit with sincerity, courage, and a willingness to share her most beautiful and moving moments. We return to the old question: what is spiritual, really? Does it have to do with churches or with moments of beauty and love given to us in nature and with those near to our hearts? She is not a Pollyanna, however, and shares with us enough of the dark of human behavior and the modern world to let us know she sees the same world we do. Thus, when she goes on to assert her belief in hope and the worth of continuing to act toward a better world, we have to listen and try in our hearts whether, even in the face of what we know to be true, we cannot learn again to believe. Most movingly, she admits that in accepting the imperative to do what she can to make a difference, she has had to give up the precious golden hours she once spent with the chimps. Even after her beautiful descriptions of those early magical times, we can only glimpse the poignant loss that this must be for her. Herein is the example set for all those of us who have had those moving and holy moments with nature: that from those to whom much has been given, much is to be expected.

Reason for Hope: A Spiritual Journey, by Jane Goodall with Phillip Berman, Warner Books, 1999, New York. by Marc Bekoff Reason for Hope is an amazing book by a most-amazing woman. Jane Goodall's autobiography is easy to read and will appeal to people of all ages. She writes about highly personal issues and reflects on science, religion, and spirituality. Goodall is clearly a "Jane of all trades and master of many." She wears many hats and she wears them well. Goodall is a naturalist at heart, can do multivariate statistics, write about God and spirituality, be a faithful and committed mother and wife, and find time tirelessly to share her experiences world-wide. There is so much between its covers that one can only offer a glimpse of the numerous topics that are considered in Reason for Hope. This very personal book touches on diverse issues ranging from practical matters we all face daily to more philosophical questions concerning the meaning of life

and spirituality. We learn about the events in Goodall's development that led to her views of the world, the incredible importance of family and friends, her work with Louis Leakey (her incredulity when he chose her to begin studies of chimpanzees although, and perhaps because, she had no formal training and no degree), field studies of chimpanzee behavior, conservation biology, environmental ethics, evolution and its relationship to creationism, cultural evolution, the agonizing death of Goodall's husband, Derek, the ins and outs of how much science is done behind the scenes, science and politics, and how so many scientists shy away from confronting the ethical issues that are raised by "doing science."

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