

A close-up, high-resolution photograph of a lion's face, focusing on its eyes and the texture of its fur. The lion's eyes are a golden-yellow color, and its fur is a mix of brown and tan tones. The image is used as a background for the text.

LIVE LIKE A LION

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED
FROM THE ANIMAL KINGDOM

Adapted from Good, K. (2014). 10 Important Life
Lessons we can Learn From Animals.
OneGreenPlanet. Accessed January 26, 2023.
<https://www.onegreenplanet.org/animalsandnature/important-life-lessons-we-can-learn-from-animals/>

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM THE ANIMAL KINGDOM

1. Compassion

Whether witnessed in the form of interspecies friendships or foster parenting, compassion knows no bounds with animals. The relationships we foster with our companion animals also teach us how to be compassionate as it forces us to look beyond our needs and imagine those of another who is vastly different from ourselves. Compassion is all based on being able to understand the feeling of another. Seeing a cow care for her newborn calf, suddenly, we can understand their relationship and respect it.

2. Patience

Humans value time about as much as we value money, but rarely stop to think that both of these things only exist because we agree they do. The natural world does not run on your strict schedule but according to the natural rhythms and cues of the planet. There is no rushing an animal to do anything they aren't ready to do ... if you've even stood in the rain for hours waiting for your dog to do their business ... you know.

3. How to Live in the Now

While animals may be able to anticipate their future needs, they don't worry about the future as fervently as humans do. People waste so much time obsessed with following "what will happen next" that we completely forget to enjoy the now. Take a tip from your cat, just sit and soak it all in every now and then.

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4. We're All Connected

Ecosystems only thrive when there is balance. That means that wildlife populations play off of one another to ensure their optimal success. For example, if the wolf population increases past carrying capacity, then it will cause the population of their prey to drop drastically, which can alter the vegetation in the region. While humans have sort of removed us from this direct participation in our respective ecosystems, that does not mean that our actions don't influence other species. Looking at the direct connections between animals in the wild can teach us that we're not as distant as we might think.

5. Humans Aren't as Different as We Thought

Dolphins call each other by name, elephants comfort upset friends, primates use tools, and endless other examples prove that humans are not as different as we might think. We like to believe that our intelligence and ability to feel and understand emotions is unparalleled, but more and more, we are finding this isn't the case. If there's ever been a time to reevaluate our relationship with animals, it's now.

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6. Respect Your Elders

In the wild, survival relies on the ability of older generations to impart their knowledge to younger generations. Elephant herds with older matriarchs have higher survival rates because the elder elephants can recognize the signs of drought or other oncoming natural disasters. Learning from the wisdom of the past is important for humans too, especially in an age where technology and media run rampant. Moving forward and advancing toward innovation is a wonderful thing, but we should also learn to respect the wisdom of those who came before us.

7. Responsibility

Growing up with a pet has been shown to instill a deeper understanding of responsibility and accountability in children. Not only do animals help teach children to be compassionate, but it can also help their social development. When children care for animals in a responsible manner they can see the direct effect of their actions – their parents are pleased with them, and moreover, their pets are happy and healthy. This can help children to associate responsibility with positive results, leading to more success in life.

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8. Listen Carefully

Animals' hearing abilities far surpass that of humans. While we might have evolved away from using our hearing to survive on the day-to-day, we tend to overlook the importance of this ability. Animals sit and listen before they react to situations, something we could surely all stand to do.

9. Live Lightly

It pretty much goes without saying that humans don't know how to live lightly on the planet (or at least most don't). In the wild, animals learn to live within their means – which for the most part, means their natural environment. Animals live in tune with the planet and use its resources as needed. Learning to be attuned to our surroundings and how to live without causing mass destruction to our environment would serve humans well.

10. We Must Stick Together

Animals have enemies too, but at the end of the day, having each other's back is the key to survival. Scientists have found that birds flock, bees swarm, and lions have social cliques because it maintains the stability of the ecosystem. The bottom line, groups of animals are less likely to become the victim of predators. While people might not need to worry too much about becoming the meal of a predator, it is an important lesson to learn. Being able to set aside differences and work together for the mutual benefit of our species is an incredible skill.