



*Lawrence Anthony*

**EARTH ORGANIZATION**

BECAUSE NONE SURVIVE ALONE



# LAWRENCE ANTHONY: A MESSAGE TO HUMANITY

## WHY THE EARTH ORGANIZATION



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**Herein is an excerpt from the book: *Babylon's Ark—The Incredible Wartime Rescue of the Baghdad Zoo* by Lawrence Anthony with Graham Spence.**

The text that follows is taken from the final chapter of the book. It is a priceless article of wisdom that, when shared with others, raises awareness and understanding of the vital partnership for survival each of us has with all aspects of the world around us.

The Lawrence Anthony Earth Organization (LAEO) is urgently making this message more broadly available. It is a clear statement of Dr. Anthony's humanitarian perspective and methods, and provides a valuable framework for anyone's use in dealing with environmental issues and, in fact, all of life's choices.

This publication also serves to honor Lawrence's soul mate, Nana, the matriarch of a very special herd of wild elephants who set a magnificent example in teaching the necessity of humility and respect for the natural world.

At the end of his selfless and dangerous mission to save the war-zone-traumatized lions, bears and other animals of the Baghdad Zoo, Lawrence returned to his South African home – the Thula Thula game preserve.

Upon hearing of the senseless death of his favorite zoo resident, a Bengal tiger named Malooh, he sat down to write his reflections of the world in its current state, and pondered what must be done to reverse its deteriorating condition.



*Maloooh: Bengal tiger of the Baghdad Zoo*

*Nana with Lawrence*







*Captain Burris, Lawrence, soldier and a zoo staff at entrance to Al Zawra Park, Baghdad Zoo*

**THE INCREDIBLE WARTIME  
RESCUE OF THE BAGHDAD ZOO**

# BABYLON'S ARK

LAWRENCE ANTHONY  
WITH GRAHAM SPENCE



# BABYLON'S ARK

## The Incredible Wartime Rescue of the Baghdad Zoo

I didn't sleep much that night, and when I did, I woke with the image of that beautiful tiger engraved on my mind...Maloooh the Bengal tiger [killed by the pistol of a drunken soldier] would become iconic for me in a far wider sense.

Had it all been in vain? Had a drunken imbecile who put his arm in a wild animal's cage undone all our successes achieved in the direst conditions imaginable—in a war zone? Was the symbolism just too stark, that no matter what you do, someone will just come along and undo it? Was it always other creatures that had to pay for man's follies with their lives?

The next morning I went for a long walk in the wilds and reflected on the amazing adventures of the past half-year. One thing stood out; the beautiful tiger's pointless death was our only casualty. Since I had arrived in Baghdad and found those pitiful, starving, thirst-crazed survivors in their filthy cages, not one other animal had died. Against the odds, we saved them all. The tiger had been the first fatality, but not through any fault of the Babylon's Ark team.

Slowly I started to put it all in perspective. By saving the Baghdad Zoo at least we had set an example that no one could take away from us.

Although the bitter gall still burned my gut, I began to feel a little better, and I remembered all those who had helped us in this one seemingly hopeless quest: soldiers, civilians, life-threatened zoo staff, and volunteers who cared enough to do something about a handful of criminally neglected, dying creatures.

I thought of the elite Special Forces, the frontline soldiers who in the thick of war risked their lives to find food for Uday's<sup>1</sup> lions. It was certainly no easy task searching among flying bullets for meat every day.



*Caged lions in Baghdad war zone*



*Baghdad Zoo Residents*

1. Uday was Saddam Hussein's son who adored his collection of wild cats/lions that he kept in cages under unusual conditions, using them as unwilling implements of torture to torment his prisoners.



**We already know that an extraordinary extinction of species is taking place all over the world, breaking vital links in the chain of life. We are aware that most large-fish species, including cod, marlin, swordfish, and tuna, are critically endangered, and huge dead zones are appearing in our oceans, silent places devoid of life.**

I remembered Lieutenant Szydlik and his soldiers who would toss their own rations into the starving animal's cages; and Capt. Larry Burris and his men from the Third ID who gave me protection, a place to sleep, water and food, and transport to Al Zawra Park.

I recalled how ordinary soldiers would arrive at the zoo on their own accord to ask if we were okay and how they could help... the unknown soldier who, out of the blue, gave me a generator, the sergeant who "loaned" me batteries for the water pumps, the "mercenaries" who regularly came around to check that we were safe.

There were many others, such as the CPA chief of staff, Pat Kennedy, a man with huge responsibilities who always made time for me when I needed to discuss something, squeezing me in somewhere in his tight schedule.

And of course, my Iraqi friends, Adel, Husham, and the zoo staff, who are the true heroes of this story, men who risked their lives daily to come to work in an incredibly hostile environment where to be seen cooperating with Westerners was often a death sentence. It is difficult to record in mere words their absolute courage.

I then thought back on my first walk around the Baghdad Zoo. At first, I had been so dismayed by what I saw that I genuinely considered whether shooting each animal would be the most humane thing to do.

Today I can still scarcely believe it. I had never seen animals in such dreadful condition. Even worse, that harrowing initial scenario was soon surpassed by the brutality and squalor of Luna Park and other private menageries we found. Nothing but nothing could have prepared me for those hellholes. It is a terrible indictment against the human race that it's possible for such places of brutality to exist. The Baghdad Zoo experience certainly altered my perception of my own species and inexorably pushed me to explore in more depth mankind's near-suicidal relationship with the plant and animal kingdoms. The most crucial lesson I learned in Baghdad was this: If "civilized" man is capable of routinely justifying such blatant abuse of trapped wildlife, what of the other unseen atrocities being inflicted on our planet?

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We are aware that most large-fish species, including cod, marlin, swordfish, and tuna, are critically endangered, and huge dead zones are appearing in our oceans, silent places devoid of life.



It is no secret that massive tracts of wild places and habitat are vanishing forever, taking countless animals, birds, and insects with them. Most of the planet's rivers and streams no longer function naturally, and many coral reefs and mangrove swamps, the priceless breeding grounds for aquatic life, have started dying off.

It's a cold fact of life that factory farming, where untold numbers of stressed animals are squashed into tiny pens, is the "new agriculture," and our insatiable demand for space is denuding [stripping] nature of its support systems, the same life systems we depend upon for our own survival.

We know, too, that Earth's life-giving environment is under direct threat. The very air we breathe is being altered by billions upon billions of tons of poisonous gases that are pumped into the atmosphere each year. Many of our best scientists say these gases, which are also capable of trapping the sun's heat, are causing global warming, changing weather and climate patterns, melting glaciers, and perhaps even thawing the polar ice caps.

It is, quite frankly, a litany of disasters, and if that's all common knowledge, I shudder to think of what must be happening without our knowing.

It took billions of years for nature to develop dynamic, viable relationships between Earth and its countless life forms. Now, in just over a hundred years, these natural balances are threatening to fall irrevocably out of kilter.

We are witnessing firsthand a massive disruption of Earth's life systems, and all fingers point to one culprit: man.

For the first time, Mother Nature has real competition. Our ability to transform the environment is second only to Nature herself, and we have been brutally imposing our newfound technological dominance on a long since conquered and now overwhelmed natural world.

In our ruthless quest for technology, material wealth, and scientific progress, the humanities have been sorely neglected. And, as most of us are almost completely ignorant of the character and function of other forms of life, we abuse the natural world and diminish once-robust survival systems without any real understanding of the consequences—especially for our own continued existence.

Why do we so willingly inflict harm on the only home we have? Most people intrinsically have empathy with nature. Everybody I speak to is against cruelty to animals; everybody wants fresh air, open spaces, unpolluted rivers, and a healthy livable planet. So why do we so dreadfully abuse our sole life-support system?

The answer to that is fundamental to our survival as a species.



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Life survives through biodiversity and biodiversity is achieved only as shared initiative with and through all life forms on Planet Earth. And, to do so, Homo sapiens [the species of Mankind] must live in close collaboration with the Plant and Animal Kingdoms in a healthy, life-sustaining environment. There is no other way. We are all in this game of life together. There is no divide, no "us" and "them;" no "man" separate from "nature." Homo sapiens as individuals and as a species are as much a part of life's overall thrust for survival as any other species. As living organisms, we are all of the greater whole, and as such, we are embodied with exactly the same fundamental purpose: to survive. And to do so—as individuals, families, groups, and as a species—we have to live in dynamic collaboration with the plant and animal kingdoms in a healthy, life-sustaining environment.

*Biodiversity: defined as a wide assortment of living species in a given area, and proper balance of give and take amongst them.*





**“Two-thirds of the world’s resources are now used up,” and “recent activity is putting such a strain on the natural functions of Earth that the ability of the planet’s ecosystems to sustain future generations can no longer be taken for granted.”**

There is no greater imperative. Mankind’s superior intellect and deep spiritual heritage will count for naught if we fail in this quest. Life will simply pass us by as we succumb to our own devices, and more successful life forms will evolve to replace us. The fate of uncountable species that have already disappeared into oblivion after inhabiting, sometimes dominating, the Earth for millions of years bears stark testimony to this. And we are not immune.

On the contrary, all the evidence is that we are extremely vulnerable. A report published in London’s *Guardian* newspaper in March 2005 backed by 1,350 scientists stated that “Two-thirds of the world’s resources are now used up,” and “recent activity is putting such a strain on the natural functions of Earth that the ability of the planet’s ecosystems to sustain future generations can no longer be taken for granted.”

This report is complemented by the insightful words of respected environmentalist and Catholic monk Thomas Berry, who said, “Mankind has a sense of homicide and genocide, but no apparent sense of biocide or geocide, the killing of life, or the killing of the Earth itself.”

These and many other similar observations by environmental experts reveal a fundamental overestimation of the capability of the Earth to continue to sustain life as we know it. The systematic degradation of the plant and animal kingdoms and the environment absolutely staggers me. And if you still have any doubt about what is going on, fly over the African rain forests, as I have just done, and see for yourself the deforestation, slash and burn, and uncontrolled human intrusion into these precious areas; or follow my paths through the Asian subcontinent, where untold millions living in miserable poverty suffocate the land with human waste; or into Eastern Europe, where children cough persistently from pollution; or the Middle East, where animal rights are all but nonexistent. If you can’t travel, use the Internet. I must warn you: Prepare yourself for a shock for all is decidedly not well.

It seems incomprehensible that in the face of this planet-wide tragedy the authorities continue to apply ridiculous industrial terms such as “resource takeup” or “demand utilization” to living, breathing wildlife or wild lands, of which we are an integral part, and upon which we are so utterly dependent for our own survival.

I, for one, have never felt a need to accept the status quo, or pay homage to the authorities. We are laying waste to the natural world and, in the main, the authorities, secular and non-secular, are conspicuous by their absence of imperative, rational initiative to correct this.



Our inability to think beyond ourselves or to be able to cohabit with other life forms in what is patently a massive collaborative quest for survival is surely a malady that pervades the human soul.

And speaking of the soul, will the unthinkable happen if we continue down this road to nowhere? We are doing so much damage to life itself that if we carry on in this way our future, as a species may no longer be taken for granted. And then, what next? What other order could possibly host the human spirit? The religious implications alone are profound. Ensuring that our home planet is healthy and life-sustaining is an overwhelming priority that undercuts all other human activities. The ship must first float.

Our failure to grasp these fundamental tenets of existence will be our undoing. And one thing is for certain: No cavalry is going to come charging to our rescue; we are going to have to rescue ourselves or die trying.

Workable solutions are urgently needed. Saving seals and tigers or fighting yet another oil pipeline through wilderness area, while laudable, is merely shuffling the deck chairs on the Titanic. The real issue is that our elementary accord with Earth and the plant and animal kingdoms has to be revitalized and re-understood.

The burning question is, How?

The prophets of doom are already saying it is too late, that the crude and uninformed impact of man on the planet's life systems is just too great and that we don't have enough time to turn it all around.

I don't happen to agree, but I do know that we are entering the endgame. Unless there is a swift and marked change in our attitudes and actions we could well be on our way to becoming endangered species.

I recall my initial reaction to all this as one of overwhelming helplessness, and I found myself slipping into comfortable apathy about it all. Perhaps this was just the way life worked; species do, in fact, come and go as part of life's grand design and Homo sapiens is not meant to endure forever. Massive global extinctions have already taken place—several times, in fact. There have been plenty of ice ages before. The Sahara Desert was once tropical.

In fact, it appears that dynamic, sometimes devastating, change is part of nature's weft and warp; death nurtures life and that life must continually morph its survival mediums and evolve new species as part of its overall strategy to endure. But this time around it may not be a natural phenomenon; it may well be ignorance and neglect of the natural world that will prove to be our undoing.



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**I believe the merchants of fear are wrong, that the planet can be turned around. If people are responsibly informed and allowed to grasp for themselves what is actually going on, a great many will act.**

This is no fun subject to brood over, and closing my mind to it all and simply focusing on Thula Thula and some very special wild elephants was to me a very attractive alternative indeed.

But something niggled at me. The popular cry that overpopulation was the cause of our environmental woes didn't ring entirely true. It appeared too simplistic, too primary, and I felt that it somehow disguised the truth.

I started researching the subject extensively, and I now believe that overpopulation is just an excuse that the prophets of doom are using to embrace the hopelessness of it all. Fast-developing advances in science and technology have potential to ensure we stay fed, housed, clothed, and in any event the birthrate in First World countries has already dropped substantially. In some cases it has gone into negative numbers.

I believe the merchants of fear are wrong, that the planet can be turned around. If people are responsibly informed and allowed to grasp for themselves what is actually going on, a great many will act. A friend of mine put it in a way that has stuck with me: "When one registers the fact that our very own survival depends upon the wellbeing of all life on our planet, one starts to understand that we are the ones responsible for the state we find Earth in today."

Individuals. It's all about individuals. Huge corporations and governments may appear to be impenetrable juggernauts, but individuals run all organizations. Individuals make the rules, set the pace, and individuals can change their minds.

The time is right for new conservationists to come together and dispel the tarnished "greenie" image, awaken people to the reality of what we are up against, and build ethical bridges linking commerce and industry responsibly to the environment. I have no doubt a lot of people will embrace such an initiative.

Using what my experiences in Baghdad and South Africa had taught me, I decided to do something. The symbolism of saving a handful of war-traumatized, starving animals in a square-mile tract of land was to me far beyond the actual significance of the zoo itself.

I thought I should take it further. When I returned from that walk in the wilds, in honor of a slain tiger in faraway Iraq, I sat down and drew up the outline for a new conservation society that I would call The Earth Organization. I would get together an international group of like-minded people with the ability to get things done, and we would strive to foster ethical treatment of our planet.



Ethics is the key theme. Ethics are essential to establishing a granite moral code as an environmental touchstone. That the animals of the Baghdad Zoo had been left starving and critically dehydrated was grossly unethical; that much was obvious. But what I wanted to get across now was the equally obvious fact that unless we treat our entire planet ethically, the consequences could be apocalyptic.

The Earth Organization, founded on hard lessons learned in a war zone, will focus on the most vital and mystifying question of our age: Why do we so mindlessly abuse our planet, our only home?

The answer to that lies in each of us. Therefore, we will strive to bring about understanding that we are—each one of us—responsible for more than just our family, our friends, and our job; that there is more to life than just these things. That each one of us must also bring the natural world back into its proper place in our lives, and realize that doing so is not some lofty ideal but a vital part of our personal survival.

People may feel angrily powerless in trying to stop rain-forest logging in faraway countries, but they have huge power to assist in life's survival on their doorstep. As I discovered in Baghdad, a few people on the spot can make a huge difference. There is only one way we are going to hold together this little island we call home, and that is the hard way, making as many individuals aware, one by one, of what is at stake.

Trustworthy news and reliable information about what is actually going on around us is a major priority. Man's traditional links to nature, which once formed part of all cultures and used to be passed down generation to generation, have now become lost in a sea of "civilization" and technology.

The Earth Organization will rigorously help and defend our life-giving environment, and there is a crucial need for this. We will set up carefully selected projects that will make a real difference and we will see them through to a successful conclusion.

There will be additional objectives, which will include raising awareness of how life forms need each other to persevere. Individuation from our association with nature is one of the root causes of our planet's problems and needs urgent attention.

It is also vital that our relationship with nature and the environment be included in our education systems. This is no longer something cute or nice to do; it is now a singular imperative. I would start with my nearest school board and encourage others to do the same.



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We are going to  
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Religious leaders who hold sway over billions of people now have a moral obligation to join in and play their part. I have researched the writings and teachings of many religions, and without exception there is reference one way or another to the importance of nature. If we are to attain spiritual emancipation, we have to have a healthy, life-sustaining place to attain it from. Interaction with spiritual leaders will be a particular focus of The Earth Organization.

The Earth Organization will also create a definitive guide of what can be done in our personal lives to make a difference.

There is, unfortunately, no magic wand, no easy way out. We are going to have to face up to this and do it ourselves, each of us playing our part, each setting an example for others to follow demanding of our leaders that they do the same. The future has its price and pay it we must. We have a lot of catching up to do.

And what is the alternative? Well, isn't that what we have right now? For in the absence of a workable understanding of how life survives and our part in it placing a consumer or financial value on other life forms and the environment has become man's only real motivation for condoning their existence. If it's worth money or has a use it survives—otherwise, why care? Just how wrong can you get? Dead wrong.

Thankfully, progress is already being made, and I have found that there are more than a few people around who share these ideals and want to do something about the situation. But we need many more of use to get on board to make a real difference. The focus may be on what individuals can achieve for themselves, but there also has to be a collective will in treating our planet ethically. We stand, or fall, together in the most crucial battle of the twenty-first century.

Consequently, The Earth Organization will now take this fight directly to the United Nations. We will strive for the creation of an international environmental agency with cross-border teeth to police and enhance biodiversity in each land and ocean and to ensure the balanced existence of every facet of the natural world. Such a global agency will be charged with ensuring the optimum survival of all life forms in all lands.

We truly do live in a global village. The oxygen we breathe today or the pollution darkening our sky can come in overnight on winds from a country thousands of miles away. The wholesale destruction of nature on huge tracts of the planet's surface impacts on everyone, everywhere, and must now be impeded by sensible international laws. There is no higher imperative.



Lawrence with Zulu Chief Nkosi Bigela

And as we all know that sadly the human race will never stop waging wars, we will also campaign for zoos, menageries, game reserves, animal sanctuaries, and veterinarian facilities to be classified alongside hospitals and schools as illegitimate targets of war in terms of the Geneva Convention.

There must under no circumstance be a repeat of what happened to the Baghdad Zoo.

Of course, I am aware that I am being optimistic. I know that we have an enormous uphill battle, even in overcoming skepticism. For there are many who have not yet grasped what is actually going on, and others, who even in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, still believe mankind has an inalienable right to abuse the environment and suppress other life forms. We ignore such people at our peril.

But succeed we must, and we have to start somewhere. So much of our world has been brutally wrested from us; we now have to say “enough”. No more. Perhaps if enough individuals find out what is actually going on for themselves and start doing something about it, then maybe we can stave off the fast-advancing crisis and create a beautiful, healthy, livable planet.

And I hope against hope that the battle for the Baghdad Zoo, no matter how humble, was a line in the sand.

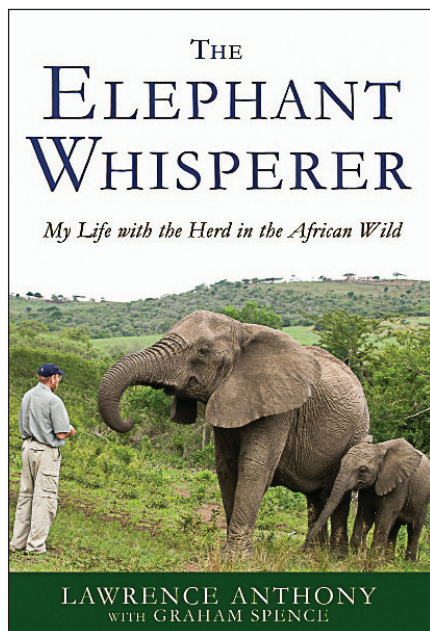
– Lawrence Anthony  
Sept. 17, 1950 - March 2, 2012

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## About Lawrence Anthony, His Herd of Wild Elephants, and the Organization He Founded



The Earth Organization was founded in 2003 by Dr. Lawrence Anthony after repeatedly witnessing the distressing effects from growing discord between mankind and the natural world.

These experiences had such a profound impact, he felt compelled to form a completely new kind of environmental and conservation organization to arrest the dangerous decline of planet Earth's species. Some of his most influencing engagements and remarkable accomplishments have been:

- His legendary relationship with a herd of wild African elephants. After rescuing them from certain death by poachers and government officials, their bond with him became such that he could call out to them in the bush near his home in South Africa and they would come to him as friends. Every time he returned from a trip, the herd would appear at his home to welcome him.
- His negotiations with top generals of an infamous and powerful African rebel army resulted in their signing a UN peace treaty, which included an agreement to stop killing the highly endangered Northern White Rhinos and the game rangers protecting them.
- The establishment of "community prosperity and wildlife preserves"—for not only the economic empowerment of indigenous people but the conservation and optimum utilization of their natural resources and wildlife.
- Entering the chaos of a war zone at the onset of the Iraqi War in 2003 in an extraordinary 5 1/2 month rescue initiative of the animals and staff of the Baghdad Zoo.

After returning from Baghdad, Dr. Anthony established The Earth Organization, dedicated to advancing real solutions to the world's environmental problems.

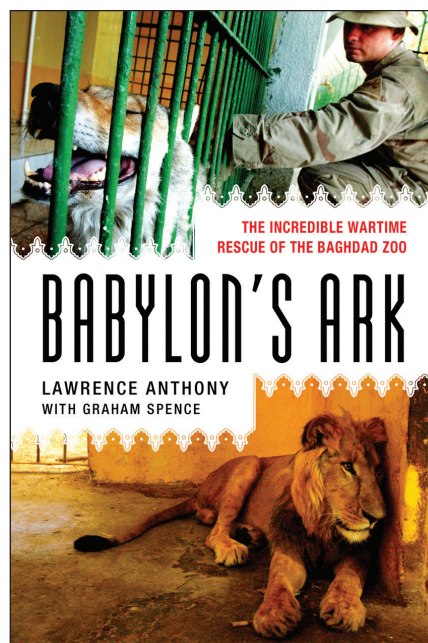
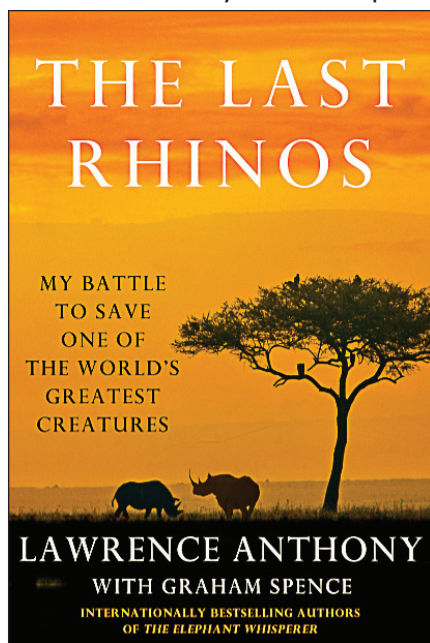
His vision was, through cooperative action and education of all stakeholders, to raise awareness of humanity's vital partnership with the natural world. Moreover, that this endeavor be science-based and involve working with industry, governments, civic leaders and communities, to deal with the challenges facing everyone, and for the betterment of all.

Many of Lawrence's bold achievements were covered by CNN, BBC, CBS, *Men's Journal*, *Elle* magazine, *Reader's Digest*, *The Smithsonian*, *Carte Blanche*, *The Globe*, and others. The media dubbed him **The Elephant Whisperer** and **The Indiana Jones of Conservation**. Lawrence co-authored 3 best-selling books:

- ***The Elephant Whisperer: My Life in the Bush with an African Herd***
- ***The Last Rhinos: My Battle to Save One of the World's Greatest Creatures***
- ***Babylon's Ark: The Incredible War-Time Rescue of the Baghdad Zoo***

Lawrence was a remarkable man dedicated to the lofty goal of bringing about a state of far greater harmony between mankind and all other species. He was honored posthumously by renaming The Earth Organization to the **Lawrence Anthony Earth Organization**.

The night he passed away in 2012, he was 300 miles from his home. Somehow his beloved herd of wild elephants perceived it, and they walked 12 miles to his house, visibly distraught. They stayed there for several hours, and then, as they do when any member of their herd dies, they disappeared for a few days into the deep thicket of the African bush to mourn their loss. Each year since, they have returned to his home on the anniversary of his departure.



**Read this astonishing story of one of the world's greatest animal rescues – soon to be made into a major motion picture!**

To purchase book:

<http://TheEarthOrganization.org/books-by-lawrence-anthony>





# Join the LAEO CoEco Movement Now! Because None Survive Alone

We have compiled a simple toolkit of materials that anyone can use to help oneself and others make better choices and live better.

This short study gives the basic knowledge and formula for Cooperative Ecology thinking and doing.

It consists of an online or offline course with a guidebook and tool kit that leads to happier living for individuals, one's friends, family, co-workers, and yes, even life forms from African elephants to ocean plankton in our natural world.

**BEGIN YOUR JOURNEY TODAY!**

More info at:

[www.theearthorganization.org](http://www.theearthorganization.org)

Select: Your CoEco Knowledge Kit

## Cooperative Ecology™

### Bringing All Life into Alignment

Dr. Anthony wanted to help people understand that none of us survive alone – that all life does best when it works *together* with other life. Increasing awareness of this easily-demonstrated truth better connects everyone with the natural world, resulting in more constructive decision-making and problem solving. It is a way of getting the world to co-operate.

He named this field **COOPERATIVE ECOLOGY** (CoEco) – an approach to living and working together with the natural world in a better and more humane way. Embracing and applying this subject to challenges related to clashing cultures, technologies, politics, economics, religions and sciences brings about better outcomes and more sustainable solutions across every area of life. As industry, governments, communities and individuals adopt a *CoEco* way of thinking and decision making, everyone in that area, including the flora and fauna, lives a better life.

The Lawrence Anthony Earth Organization (LAEO) has established educational programs around Lawrence's books, and several school texts and publications for government and industry have been produced to share and teach Cooperative Ecology as vital knowledge for each of us.

We believe that getting this information understood and spread broadly may be one of the only guarantees that humanity will be able to reverse the steep decline of the health of our environment and the Plant and Animal Kingdoms.



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Grateful acknowledgment is made to Thomas Dunne Books/St. Martin's Press for permission to utilize this excerpt from the book *Babylon's Ark: The Incredible War-Time Rescue of the Baghdad Zoo*, co-authored by Lawrence Anthony with Graham Spence.





**"So much of our world has been brutally wrested from us; we now have to say 'enough.' No more. Perhaps if enough individuals find out what is actually going on for themselves and start doing something about it, then maybe we can stave off the fast-advancing crisis and create a beautiful, healthy, livable planet."**

**Dr. Lawrence Anthony**

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