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The Island

LeisureLAND

Mums will be Mums always!



young .Next, she brings live prey which she kills in front of the young and allows them to eat . Then she brings live prey that the young catch and kill perhaps with some assistance from her. Eventually the mother's assistance is limited to preventing the prey from escaping as the young become more adept at killing. In cases where the prey is too large to carry, the mother emits a call that summons the young to her. She may incapacitate it just enough to allow the young to kill it.

The Cheetah brings back small live antelopes to the cubs so they can learn to chase and catch them. Older cheetah cubs are taken hunting by their mother and permitted to watch in order to learn the tactics which they practice in play.

Young creatures living by the sea need to learn how to fish. Seals, sea lions and polar bears dive into water, come up with live fish and release them in front of their young. The young learn how to grab the prey before it can escape and they soon become adept at fishing.

Otters eat while floating on their backs. They dive underwater to find shellfish then come up to the surface to eat it. They place a rock on their stomach and crack the shellfish against the rock to open it. This technique is taught to young otters by their mothers who do it repeatedly until the cubs learn.

Mother whales teach babies the best places in the vast ocean to find food. Whales have to travel huge distances to consume small prey and each mother had a special place which then became her calf's.

Dolphins display many human teaching innovations. These include making pointing movements towards objects with their snouts and repeating lessons. While capturing prey in front of their calves, mothers stretch out the chase eight times longer on average, repeatedly capturing, letting go and recapturing the same victim—to demonstrate techniques.

Bottlenose dolphins and killer whales teach their young a hunting technique which involves herding fish into shore where they may be caught more easily. This is a dangerous technique so the mammals teach their offspring to strand successfully by pushing them towards the beach and help them extract themselves when they get

stuck. Killer whales grab seals from beaches in Argentina. Females have been seen to rush beaches with their offspring even when no seals are around, helping their

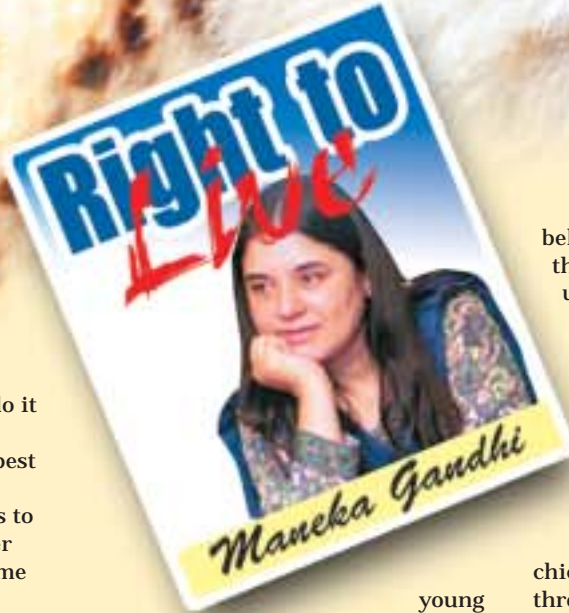
Mums are Mums. Whether human, bear, chicken or pig - a mother nurtures, protects and teaches her young to function and survive in the world. From first steps to survival skills, animal moms teach their babies the same lessons as human moms. Seals learn how to swim by riding on their mothers' backs. Lion cubs learn to hunt, baby bears learn what berries they can eat and how to snatch fish out of streams. All mothers teach their young to be independent, productive adults who support themselves.

A teacher is one who modifies his behavior in the presence of young ones even at a cost to himself, in order to set examples that can be emulated. True teaching always involves live interaction between teacher and pupil. Keeping this definition in mind, it has been found that human mothers aren't the only species who spend time teaching children.

A study in the journal, Science - Teaching in Wild Meerkats by Thornton and McAuliffe, University of Cambridge shows that meerkat mothers, like humans, teach their young how and what to eat .

Meerkats , members of the mongoose family, feed on a range of unwieldy and often dangerous prey. Meerkat hunters rapidly bite their prey's head or abdomen to disable attacks, but young pups lack experience. In order to teach pups how to handle food without harming themselves, older meerkats kill or disable the prey before providing it to the youngest pups. In the case of scorpions, they even removed the sting. As pups grow older the mothers reduce the frequency with which they killed or disabled the prey, introducing them to live prey. Like good teachers, they monitor pups after they provide food. If the pups are reluctant to handle prey, the older meerkats nudge the item towards them. Additionally, if the prey wanders off, older meerkats retrieve it for the pup till it's eaten.

In carnivores learning to hunt occurs through a series of lessons: at first the mother brings dead prey to the



young back into the sea if they get stranded.

Elephants have very long childhoods and their mothers are known to be the best teachers of all species. Like humans, baby elephants learn by watching not from instinct. At first, they don't know what to do with their trunks. They swing them, step on them and suck them just as a baby would its thumb. By about 6 to 8 months, they learn to use their trunk to eat and drink. The mothers teach their babies to cover themselves with mud to ward off sunburn, to grasp pieces of fruit with their trunks and use vegetation to scratch themselves. Elephant mothers even teach their daughters how to

behave during their periods, showing them how to walk and even where to urinate.

Birds teach chicks songs by repeating them till the fledgling learns them. Flying is also taught with clumsy chicks being picked up and made to do it again.

A hen teaches her babies to "hunt" by waddling through tall marsh grass and sticking her beak into fiddler crab holes. The chicks follow her path exactly, right through the grass that she has trampled down, and each sticks its beak into the same fiddler crab hole, one at a time.

Female foxes teach their children how to forage for earthworms. The mother watches the grass. When she finds a worm, she pokes her nose into the grass, catches it between her teeth and carefully pulls it loose from its burrow. When she gets her next worm she stretches it out and lets her pup take it. The pup pulls too hard and it breaks into half. The exercise is repeated till the pup learns to exercise the right pressure and slow watchful technique.

Chimpanzees in the wild eat hard nuts that they crack on stones using rocks or heavy branches as hammers. Parent chimps help their young to learn by leaving uncracked nuts on the

stone and a hammer nearby. If a young chimp tries to crack a nut and has trouble doing so, his mother shows him a better way to hold the hammer.

Just as human mothers teach children how to hold spoons, Chimpanzees show their young how to use twigs as tools to poke into termite hills to and eat them.

Female monkeys in Thailand show their young how to floss their teeth - using hair. Researchers from Japan have documented long-tailed macaques cleaning the spaces between their teeth in the same manner as humans. They spent double the amount of time flossing when they were being watched by their infants, deliberately teaching them how to floss.

Reactions against danger are acquired by learning. A mother deer teaches her fawn to fear man by demonstrating fear at the sight or scent of man. When a she-wolf comes near a trap with her cubs for the first time, she shows great fear. Her young ones see her reaction and learn that traps are to be avoided.

What fun it would be if our mothers could have taught us how to fear conflict, greed and jealousy.

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Some conservationists fear that orangutans could be wiped out in the wild due to the destruction of their habitat for logging, mining and palm oil plantation

Orangutans blow kisses to ward off predators

Orangutans make their voices sound deeper by 'blowing kisses' to suggest they are larger than they really are, scientists have discovered.

They give a common signal called a 'kiss-squeak' when they feel threatened.

Some of the primates held up leaves to their mouths, while producing these disturbance sounds - although some populations use their hands to achieve the same result.

Research published in Proceedings of the Royal Society B shows the noise -

which is just like the exaggerated kiss sound a human might make to a child - has developed as a survival mechanism.

Madeleine Hardus, a behavioural biologist of Utrecht University, believes the deeper sound is to deceive predators.

She said enlarging the body occurs throughout the animal kingdom, but it was rare to be found in the calling behavior of mammals.

She said other examples include furbristle in cats and air-swallowing and rising-on-legs in frogs.

Miss Hardus said: "To our knowledge this is the first evidence of how and why non-human primates affect their own calls through the use of hand and tools.

"Because dishonestly signalling larger body size might yield the greatest advantage in highly dangerous situations, we expect that the use of kiss squeaks on leaves would increase in such conditions."

Her researchers recorded the the kiss squeaks of orang utans on the island of Borneo in south eastern Asia between January 2003 and August 2005.

By following a radio-collared African leopard other researchers found that after orang utans made the kiss-squeak, the leopard gave up its hiding position and left the hunt significantly faster than would be expected by chance. A previous study observed similar responses for Asian tigers.

Miss Hardus said the results indicated that the use of tools by non-human primates are more extensive than previously thought.