

Sunday, November 2, 2008

Learning at the zoo.

^ ^ Zoos keep captive animals for the entertainment of humans. Yes, some zoos may have a higher educational and preservationist purpose. However, if attendees' entertainment motivation for going to zoos were eliminated, few would be visiting zoos, and many of those on display would no longer be put on display. ^ Nevertheless, my 2 1/2 year-old-son loves the zoo, and I admit having enjoyed myself immensely with him at the National Zoo for many hours today. One day he will know about the animal rights movement's opposition to zoos and circuses and make up his own mind. ^ Our primary motivation for driving to the zoo today was to visit the apes. All of the apes there exemplify the essential life and lawyering approach of being here now, as lived and taught by such philosophical giants as Bhagavan Das^ and Ram Dass, and as exemplified in the following story: ^ "A man is chased in the wilderness by two tigers, only to be forced off a cliff, hanging for life from a vine. One tiger waits above and the other waits below for a human meal. Two field mice gnaw away at the vine. The man sees a wild strawberry growing from the side of a cliff, reaches for it, tastes it, and -- with his life hanging in the balance -- thinks of how delicious the strawberry tastes."^ Here is another being here now story from the same websource: "A Japanese warrior was captured by his enemies and thrown into prison. That night he was unable to sleep because he feared that the next day he would be interrogated, tortured, and executed. Then the words of his Zen master came to him, 'Tomorrow is not real. It is an illusion. The only reality is now.' Heeding these words, the warrior became peaceful and fell asleep."^ As the apes moved about above our heads effortlessly along ropes, as they ate and drank, and as they sat in the moment, they were being here now, as was my son, who was moving forwards in the moment.^ Jon Katz.

Posted by Jon Katz in Persuasion at 00:00