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Tippi Hedren - Shambala and the Tiger Attack

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First, let me express my best wishes for a speedy recovery to the keeper who was attacked yesterday by the tiger at Tippi Hedren's compound.

Unfortunately, when these types of attacks occur, 99% of the time it is due to someone's failure to follow established safety protocols. Tigers are large animals – they can do unintentional damage simply due to their size. They are predators – and they are genetically wired to kill. All of that being said, they can be handled safely.

This is an opportunity for all animal facilities to revisit their safety protocols and to re-educate their staff. Whether the facility is a zoo with no contact or a training facility with full contact, now is the time to pull your staff together and review your safety programs.

Second, now is the time for the animal community to finally come together under one umbrella. The truth of the matter is that zoos, rescue facilities, and responsible private owners ALL are doing positive things for the species they care for. And, they are all doing the same work every day. They are cleaning enclosures. They are feeding their animals. They are observing the animal's behavior. They are training (whether or not they call it "training" it is occurring). They are trying to educate the public. They all love the animals they are caring for. Yet, there is such an undercurrent of division within and between animal facilities that, while we fight amongst ourselves over who is more noble, righteous, and who has the right to own the animals, the species themselves are suffering in the wild. It is time for us to join together with a shared vision. A vision of hope and survival for the species we care for.

While we have argued against each other for the past few decades, the number of tigers in the wild has dwindled from 20,000 to 2,000. Let me urge everyone in the

animal community to begin anew, joining together for the true benefit of the species. Put the petty differences aside, quit casting aspersions towards others who are performing the same work you are everyday, and join together.

The truth of the matter is that there are only two enemies. The first enemy are irresponsible owners. There are irresponsible private owners. There are irresponsible zoos. There are irresponsible preserves. Our enemy is not each other, it is those who operate to the detriment of the animals or humans who are in close proximity to the animals.

The second enemy is those who are destroying the wild environment that provides a home to each of these species. Those of us in the animal industry must band together to care for the earth over which we have been given stewardship.

Again, I wish all the best for a quick and speedy recovery for the keeper at Shambala. Let's ensure our safety protocols are being followed. And let's join together against those who would truly do the animals harm.

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