

## What is the link between Hansie Cronje and caring for animals?

**M**y late father, **J R Dendy Young**, was a hero for me. It was he who got me started on the animal cause. A lawyer and a judge, he was a champion of the underdog, human or otherwise. Justice, decency and principle were the driving forces in his life. But as a child I knew him best for his wonderful command of languages and very especially, his brilliant command of the English language. His ability to remember and recite poetry and quotations, was inspirational. A life-long student of philosophy, he could effortlessly summon to mind what the great philosophers in history had said about this or that. Not bad for a farm boy who put himself through university.

I remember clearly one of the adages he often found reason to repeat:

**"Example is a living law whose sway, men more than any other law obey."**

I've thought of this particular adage often lately as the debate heats up in the media as to how to remedy the crime and violence that has beset South Africa.

Recently, both of Cape Town's English language newspapers ran editorials lamenting the apparent loss of moral fibre in society. In the **Cape Times**, Gerald Shaw spoke of "the problem of lawlessness, which is rooted in moral alienation" and the need to rebuild a "sense of values". The **Cape Argus**, for its part, ran an editorial which stated that "South Africa's moral fibre is in desperate need of a patch-up job" and that it was difficult "to imagine how the regeneration of the South African soul and the rebuilding of the common moral fibre is going to take place." The editorial then suggested that "one obvious place to start is in the

schools."

Well, it is acknowledged at last by experts internationally that the teaching of kindness and respect for animals is a critical step in the building of moral fibre. And, as you can see from this issue of **Animal Voice**, we've now been given the opportunity to bring humane education into some schools. I trust, with your help, that our endeavour goes from strength to strength and that three years from now, humane education becomes part of the national syllabus.



**J R Dendy Young 1907 – 1998:**  
**In 1994 he publicly stated: "I have no doubt that we are embroiled in the grossest form of cruelty towards chickens. The present battery system is an ugly blot on our social conscience."**

But my late father's maxim, mentioned above, frequently rings in my ears. "Example is a living law..." Well, what kind of example exactly are we setting our kids? When it comes to the animals – and we now know that our treatment of animals is indisputably linked to our own moral fibre – we stand by and allow baboons and monkeys to suffer the extreme torment of cap-

ture and invasive research on their bodies. Well-knowing that chickens by the million are debeaked in order to 'fit' them to the extreme confinement we have devised for them, we go on buying battery eggs. We know that the consumption of meat involves cruelty beyond description and that it is one of the major causes of environmental destruction, but we go on eating it anyway. And so it goes on and on. Yes, schools are a good place to teach morals and values. But the best way to learn is from the **EXAMPLE** set by the adults of today. There is no such thing as selective morality. We need to show our kids that **WE** are moral – across the board. Wouldn't the human race stand proud if, for example, we felt as strongly about our savage cruelty to animals as we apparently do about Hansie Cronje's cheating? As things stand, the children of South Africa are exposed to horrendous cruelties perpetrated on animals by adults. The sale of live chickens by the thousand, tied up in bundles, gasping, bleeding and broken, is one of the most common sights to which underprivileged children are exposed. We, the adults, need to say "NO" to the gross exploitation and ill-treatment of animals.

Freedom of conscience – that is what we want our children to inherit, along with moral fibre and values. And we need to teach by example.

*Best wishes,  
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Editor: Animal Voice.*