



Lawrence at Thula Thula, home of the elephant the world came to know through his book, *The Elephant Whisperer*.

Please say this when writing to my views. However, we are in a crisis and legal hunting should be suspended immedi-

Graham Spence. What I have done that's helped is reading the best book – the dictionary. I have them all over my

only one example. I have much anecdotal evidence of this connection on the spiritual side of the animals and earth. In the next book I go a deeper into what I mean. I'm cautious though because sometimes people find it mumbo jumbo."

"Man's cultural and traditional links to nature that used to be passed down, generation to generation, have become lost in a sea of civilization, bureaucracy and technology."

Lawrence said the need to save the rhinos was about more than the rhinos. "Perhaps rhinos are the catalyst to take us to a point that says no more. There is a great sense of proprietorship for the first time amongst many – from the Zulu man I spoke to in the village to people all over the world. The affinity we have for the rhinos, we can bleed it onto lion, elephants and other animals. Maybe we have reached a turning point."

I badgered him about the interest

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ately until such time the crisis is over."

He alluded to the fact that the pressure that the suspension of legal hunting would cause, would trigger more people to be involved. He said that, under no circumstances, should South Africa legalise the trade in rhino horn, or sell off stockpiles in order to flood the market.

"We can't flood the market. What market? The Chinese Mafia? Do you think they'd step aside and allow the local pharmacy to sell ground rhino horn? Never. Legal or not, poachers will not stop. Worse it says we agree the rhino horn has medicinal qualities which it has none of. This would be a death sentence for rhino."

As we drove around Thula Thula, I asked him how he set about writing his books. Did he mean to tell it in story format? How long did it take him plan, then to write?

He chuckled and said: "I don't know about all that book format stuff. I just sat down and wrote. It took about a year. I have always had lots of help from

house. Every day I read and learn a new word."

He underplayed his intellect and achievements. Despite these, and there are many, it was his connection with nature that I found the most remarkable.

He was also a gentle man who pursued a deeper connection to nature. In *The Elephant Whisperer* he wrote about how the herd of elephant sauntered up to the gate when he returned from a trip to meet him, even though his arrival times were not always the same. Most intriguing was that once, when his flight from Johannesburg was delayed, the elephants had turned around long before reaching the gate. I loved this part of the book and asked about it. I just wanted to hear it again, from this awesome author. We all did, all of the friends I was with.

"Yes, it's true. They know where I am wherever I am; there is a spiritual connection. This is possible for all of us. We've lost touch of the spiritual side of ourselves, with Africa, the earth and animals. We need to reconnect. This communication with the elephants is

from Hollywood. There'd been more than passing interest; there'd been huge amounts of US dollars invested in research looking at his first book, *Babylon's Ark*, and *The Elephant Whisperer*. But, Lawrence said that in his opinion the book that would make the greatest movie would be *The Last Rhinos*.

"How would you feel about it if a movie was made from this book?"

"It would be the greatest thing possible. It would draw attention on a huge scale."

Lawrence leaves behind his wife Françoise, two sons and two grandsons, and millions of people all over the world who've read his books, and seen animals, and especially elephant, in ways they never dreamed possible.

We'd had a wonderful time at Thula Thula and I encourage you to go there and enjoy the serenity and find your connection to the earth and animals and write your own story.

**Farewell Lawrence, you legacy will inspire the conservation warriors. W**