

FOLLOWING FIFI

My Adventures Among Wild Chimpanzees: Lessons from Our Closest Relatives

JOHN CROCKER, MD | FOREWORD BY JANE GOODALL

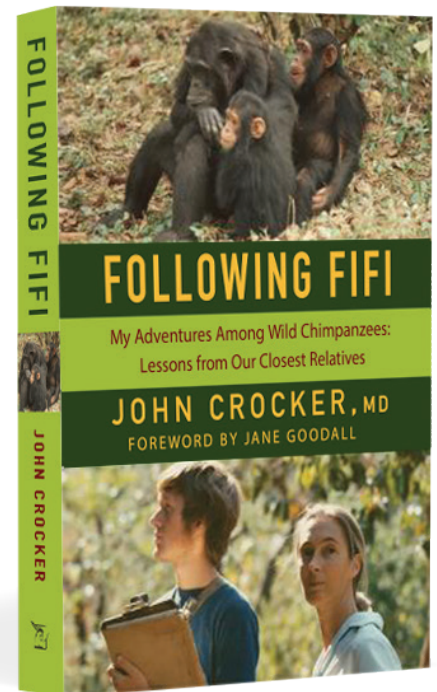
An exhilarating quest into a remote African forest to examine chimpanzees and understand the roots of human behavior.

As a young student, John Crocker embarked on the adventure of a lifetime, spending eight months in the Gombe forest working with Jane Goodall. He would follow families of wild chimpanzees from sunrise to sunset and learn the fundamental behavioral traits of these chimps as they raised their offspring.

One chimpanzee would captivate him. Her name was Fifi, and she displayed extraordinary patience and reassurance towards her infant, Freud. Upon returning home and becoming a doctor, Crocker found himself incorporating the lessons he learned from Fifi into his work as a father and physician. When he would witness his young patients rocketing around the exam room, he would picture Fifi's patience and tacit approval of Freud's uninhibited and joyful exploration.

Crocker shares how his time spent with our closest animal cousins has helped him better understand his patients with ADD, anxiety, and depression, and how primate traits hardwired into our own natural behavior help chimpanzees protect their community, raise their young, and survive. Finally, chronicling his return to Gombe thirty-six years later with his own son, he reflects on how his experience with the chimps has come full circle.

An illuminating book that will raise thought-provoking questions about the evolution of human behavior, the importance of patience, strong family bonds, and provide a greater understanding of what it means to be human. 24 pages of color photographs.



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“

A truly extraordinary book. As I read it I was transported back to those wonderful days when I lived in Gombe. It is fascinating to read how John's observations of chimpanzee children with their mothers and other family members helped him understand the problems of a human child.”

Jane Goodall, New York Times bestselling author



John Crocker has been practicing family medicine in Seattle for thirty-five years. He was born and raised in Portland, Oregon and attended Stanford University where he met Jane Goodall. He received his MD from Case Western School of Medicine in Cleveland. Dr. Crocker is a popular speaker at high schools, colleges and universities, and other educational venues on primate behavior and has written for the Huffington Post about lessons learned from our closest living relatives.



ADVANCE PRAISE

“Spending time with wild chimpanzees—and watching their mothering skills—has marked John Crocker for life and shaped his work as a family doctor. A delightful book full of love and respect for both animals and humans.”

Frans de Waal, *New York Times* bestselling author

“John Crocker’s memoir traces a unique and fascinating arc from his early fieldwork with Jane Goodall, through a career in family medicine, and then back to revisit the people and chimpanzees at Gombe Stream. Written with genuine feeling and filled with intriguing insights.”

Thor Hanson, *The Triumph of Seeds*

“Beautiful descriptions of the natural surroundings in Tanzania and the importance of spending time in nature weave their ways throughout the narrative. An absorbing tale of the profundity of the human-chimp bond and how it can inform interactions among humans.”

Kirkus Reviews

“Patience, compassion, presence, and gratitude are the values championed by Crocker, a family physician, in this eloquent and appreciative memoir of his time as a student of Jane Goodall at Gombe, Tanzania, in 1973. Crocker’s book is emotionally stirring without being overly sentimental, and is as much about human experience as it is about comparative ethology.”

Publisher’s Weekly

“John Crocker was lucky to be a student at Stanford University when Jane Goodall taught there in 1970 and recruited field assistants for her groundbreaking research with the chimpanzees of Gombe, Africa. In *Following Fifi*, John recounts his life-changing year living in a grass hut in the Gombe jungle observing and recording the chimpanzees’ behavior under Jane’s mentorship. With a wealth of insights and wry humor, he shows how this extraordinary experience inspired him to become a family doctor and a better father by applying what he learned in Gombe to his human patients and to raising his two sons.”

Clare Hodgson Meeker, award-winning *National Geographic* author of *Rhino Rescue!*

“Dr. John Crocker’s *FOLLOWING FIFI* is a rare find: A real-life adventure story that works just as well as anthropology and a common-sense guide for modern human parents. A career family physician as well as a father, Crocker recalls his experiences alongside Jane Goodall with the wild chimpanzees of Africa as an object lesson in human behavior and society. His central conclusion -- that the chimps’ primal child-raising techniques are often more effective than our oh-so-sophisticated ones, should be a tonic for today’s stressed and anxious parents.”

Peter Ames Carlin, *Bruce*



SYNOPSIS

Part One

As a college student, John Crocker took a leave from his pre-med studies to work with Jane Goodall in a remote Tanzanian forest observing families of wild chimpanzees. Having never even been camping before, Crocker gradually gained confidence in his natural surroundings living in a small hut in the middle of the Gombe forest. He followed four chimp mothers and their offspring from sunrise to sunset to learn about the crucial mothering traits needed for success and survival of the young in their community. One of the chimp mothers, Fifi, captivated his attention and taught him the most about primate mothering. He writes about his relationship with Jane, his field assistant Hamisi, the dangers and joys of forest life, and the lessons he learned from this extraordinary experience.

Part Two

Part two presents real clinical cases of patients Dr. Crocker sees every day in his medical practice with anxiety, depression and ADD which he views from an evolutionary perspective. Knowing that our DNA is ninety-six percent similar to that of chimps, Crocker illustrates how these conditions are likely hard-wired into our genes for human survival. Frodo was a stellar alpha male at Gombe yet he would have scored quite high on any ADD scale. He was a very successful leader and hunter and was in constant motion as he stalked the valleys and would pounce at the earliest signs of danger.

Part Three

In part three, Crocker returns to Gombe after thirty-six years with his college-age son and introduces him to this special place in his life. The bonding with his son, with Jane, his field assistant and seeing some of the same chimps he studied decades earlier makes for an emotional reunion. On this journey, Crocker reflects on how his time with the chimps influenced how he raised his two boys and influenced his world view.