



feral feminisms

Hacking the Anthropocene:
Do-It-Together (DIT)

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Top Ten Tiger Snake Co-Existence Tips for Beginners

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Gesturing to the limits in Judeo-Christian ideas of ownership and stewardship, traditionally expressed in the reviling and control of snakes and women, this ecofeminist work critiques unthinking modes of human dominance by parodying the proliferation of websites offering “top tips” for pet “care.” These counterpoised “top tips” suggest how human relations with snakes might be expressed differently. The work is part of an ongoing project taking place on settler-occupied Tyakoot Woorroong country. The feminist work done here to destabilise masculinist anthropocentrism therefore holds all the harms entailed in writing from a position of settler privilege. In response, but with no kind of answer, the work brings forward fictional texts of influence that depict practices of human/snake mutuality long performed in the territories now known as Australia.

So, you are ready to co-exist with a snake.

At last! No more niggling discomfort with those images of a snake under the foot of a woman under the hand of a man-god. Instead, you are helping make the oppression of others a thing of the past. Well done.

Now you have made your decision to co-exist with the snake in hir habitat, where should you start? Whether you decide to train yourself, or take classes with a private coach, these friendly tips will help get you going. And do not forget to share this helpful information with humans that visit you from other habitats. Some might never have encountered a tiger snake in hir own home before.

1. Make sure the snake has plenty to eat

No poisons! Co-existing with snakes means taking care of rats and mice. Welcome those bugs as well. Snakes feast upon the creatures who feast on you. Be sure to provide a secure feeding location so the snake can dine without disturbance. Let the wood of fallen branches rot and let the grass run riot. And don't forget to fill plenty of low dishes full of water.

2. Let other humans know you are occupying the snake's territory

It is important for people who come into your shared territory to know that you are practicing snake/human co-existence. Be warned. If you inform those yet to be educated in the benefits of co-existence, you may place the snake you are living with at risk. Some humans may want to abduct the snake and abandon hir in a territory sovereign to other snakes. Others might even volunteer to “dispatch” the snake. Don't despair. Gently remind them the snake has ancestral



rights to the habitat you have invaded. If this doesn't work, read them Victoria's Wildlife Act 1975 or the equivalent in your jurisdiction. Violence against snakes is a crime.

3. Get to know the snake that you are living with

As this is the first time you have decided to co-exist with a snake, you may feel the humanist urge to give hir a name. Names do not hurt like sticks and stones. Does gender identification matter to you? The thickness or thinness of the tail will tell you all you feel you need to know. Remember, your choice to co-exist does away with altering, injuring or otherwise compromising the body of the snake in hir habitat. No tagging! No probing! No tattoos!

4. Be aware of "habitat rules"

Co-existence means shaping your habits around the habitat of the snake. If you are not ready for the snake to share your enclosure, make sure you keep all doors and windows shut tight. Have you noticed the snake likes to relax on the pathways that gather the sun in the warmer months? Time for you to walk the long way around! A snake needs the comfort and safety of hir own space.

5. Help the snake relax when you see hir

Whatever you can do to make the snake comfortable in hir environment will be good for both of you. Keeping a safe distance is a great start. No cornering! And think twice before you take that photo. Putting your interest ahead of the interest of the snake is not co-existence.

6. Training is so important!

Make sure you are always alert and ready to learn from the snake and be ready to train other humans around you. Some humans may claim your commitment to co-existence threatens them or those they love. Remind them of your love for the snake that shares your habitat and be prepared for them to choose not to stay with you.

7. Reward, reward, reward ...

Growing into peaceful co-existence can take time. Count your achievements. A jump is better than a scream. A quiet hello is better than a jump. Give yourself a nice cup of tea after you see the snake and thank the snake for helping you improve on your old-church conditioning of fear.

8. Learn all you can about snakes

Reading stories about snakes is helpful. Try to stay away from Gothic memes and avoid the likes of Henry Lawson and May Gibbs. Seek out the snakes in Alexis Wright's novels. Enjoy the gift of Noorn, offered by Kim Scott, Ryan Brown and the Wirlomin Noongar Language and Stories Project. Works such as these smooth the co-existence learning path.



9. *Do not judge humans not ready to move into snake/human co-existence*

Perhaps you once thought like them. Perhaps one day they too might turn to snake/human co-existence.

10. *Avoid venom wherever possible*

Stay still if you see the snake. Let hir move first, then move away slowly once they are moving in the opposite direction to you. If you must walk through hir long grass, especially in early spring when hir blood runs slow and hir defences are high, wear rubber boots and make lots of noise. If you cause the snake to waste hir precious venom on you, stay calm. Don't activate those lymph glands! If you get treatment, understand the harm embedded in this lengthening of your life. Current antivenom technology is based on the capture, torture, and deaths of snakes over many years.

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