

A Siberian Tiger Story

A powerful old tiger, the leader of the pack, was preparing to go on a hunt. Gathering the young generation about him he said, 'We must go out in the plains and hunt as winter is coming. You, young fellows, must come with me, and we'll learn a thing or two together.'

The young tigers were pleased to hear this as they were very enthusiastic about learning and developing.

The first day out, The Old Tiger spotted a herd of elephants. 'Here is your chance!' he said to the young tigers. 'Look at it as a challenge, remember what I taught you and do your best!'

The young tigers decided to follow their inborn instincts and use all the experience they had. And, of course, they all wanted to impress each other, and to show off a bit in order to gain popularity among their peers.

With a roar they rushed at the elephants who ran off in all directions. Some of the tigers used the new high tech claws and tails devices their parents brought them from abroad but they did not help either. The elephants all escaped.

'What a shame!! We could not do the job properly!' thought each tiger to himself, looking very upset.

The next day the tigers came upon a herd of buffalo. 'Are there any volunteers?' asked the Old Tiger. There was silence. 'It looks as though I will have to do the job myself,' said the leader philosophically. And so he did.

The young tigers lacked initiative, and they were also too embarrassed to ask more questions. They were all waiting for instructions from the Old Tiger.

One day, a little later, the Old Tiger spotted a big buffalo and crept up on him. But the buffalo tossed him to the ground and due to his old age he could not escape. The young tigers didn't know how to help.

That winter was very severe. Many young tigers died of cold and hunger.

I learned this story from Lena Volkova, one of my project team in Uzbekistan. I have used it for a number of different purposes, and it is always open to new interpretations by participants. However, recurring messages are connected with the gulf between theory and practice and the truism that there is no substitute for experience in learning. (Rod)