

# AI-00738 Choosing to Hurt People Close To Us

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## Explain the science of why we are so comfortable hurting those we love?

While it's understandable to think we're "comfortable" hurting loved ones, it's rarely intentional or comfortable. There are various complex reasons why we might harm those we care about, and it's not always due to some inherent pleasure in doing so. Here are some key scientific explanations:

**1. Emotional Vulnerability:** Love involves opening ourselves up emotionally, making us vulnerable to hurt. This vulnerability can trigger defense mechanisms, leading to lashing out, criticism, or withdrawal as a way to protect ourselves, even if it unintentionally hurts the other person.

**2. Unmet Needs:** When our emotional or physical needs go unmet in a relationship, frustration and resentment can build. We might express this negatively towards our loved ones, hoping to get their attention and fulfill those needs.

**3. Attachment Styles:** Early childhood experiences shape our attachment styles, influencing how we connect with others. Insecure attachment styles, like anxious or avoidant, can lead to misinterpreting situations, poor communication, and hurtful behaviors.

**4. Unconscious Patterns:** Past experiences, including trauma, can create unconscious patterns of behavior. We might unintentionally repeat hurtful actions learned in previous relationships, even without realizing it.

**5. Self-Esteem:** Low self-esteem can make us insensitive to the impact of our words and actions on others. We might engage in negative communication or actions without fully understanding how much they hurt our loved ones.

**6. Communication Issues:** Difficulty communicating effectively can lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretations. When we struggle to express our needs and feelings clearly, it can unintentionally result in hurt for the other person.

**7. Mental Health:** Underlying mental health conditions like anxiety, depression, or even undiagnosed personality disorders can contribute to behaviors that harm loved ones. It's important to seek professional help if you suspect this might be a factor.

**Important to Remember:**

- Hurting loved ones is not normal or okay, regardless of the reason.
- Understanding the underlying factors can help us recognize these patterns and work towards healthier communication and behavior.
- If you find yourself consistently hurting those you care about, seeking professional help from a therapist or counselor can be incredibly beneficial.

Remember, open communication, self-awareness, and actively seeking healthy strategies for dealing with hurt and unmet needs are crucial in overcoming these harmful patterns and building stronger, more loving relationships.

**Is this same concept as "we rather choose to hurt people close to us"?**

No, the concept of "we rather choose to hurt people close to us" is an oversimplification and doesn't fully capture the complex reasons why we might unintentionally harm those we love.

While it's true that we may hurt loved ones more frequently than others, **it's crucial to understand that it's rarely a conscious choice or something we derive pleasure from.** The science points towards deeper, often subconscious, issues at play.

Here's why the statement "we rather choose to hurt people close to us" doesn't reflect the reality:

1. **Vulnerability:** As mentioned before, closeness and love involve emotional vulnerability. We let our guard down with loved ones, making us more susceptible to reacting poorly when triggered or hurt. It's not a choice to feel vulnerable, but it can lead to unintentional hurt in responses.

2. **Miscommunication:** Effective communication is a skill, and misinterpretations happen. We might say something intending humor or honesty, but it lands differently with our loved ones due to various factors. It's not a preference to miscommunicate, but it can contribute to unintended hurt.
3. **Unmet needs:** When our needs go unmet in a relationship, frustration builds. We might express this negatively towards loved ones, hoping to get their attention and address those needs. It's not a choice to fulfill needs through potentially hurtful ways, but it's a response to a deeper issue.

**Remember:** Hurting loved ones is often unintentional and stems from complex subconscious factors, not a conscious preference. Recognizing this nuance is crucial for addressing the issue constructively.

If you're concerned about hurting people close to you, focus on improving communication, understanding your triggers, and addressing any underlying emotional needs. Seeking professional help can also be incredibly beneficial in developing healthier coping mechanisms and building stronger relationships.

**On the concept of "we rather choose to hurt people close to us", what is the science behind the idea?**

While it's understandable why the statement "we rather choose to hurt people close to us" might resonate based on personal experiences, the science doesn't support it as a general truth. In fact, there's evidence suggesting the opposite: that we often **try harder to avoid hurting those we care about** compared to strangers.

Here's why the science refutes the "rather choose to hurt" claim:

**1. Biological basis of social pain:** Studies using brain imaging show activation in areas associated with physical pain when experiencing social rejection or exclusion. This suggests an internal cost associated with hurting others, especially loved ones.

**2. Evolution and social bonds:** From an evolutionary perspective, cooperation and strong social bonds were crucial for survival. Hurting those closely connected to us would undermine these bonds and harm our chances of survival.

**3. Empathy and emotional intelligence:** As social creatures, we have evolved empathy, allowing us to understand and share the feelings of others. Hurting loved ones would trigger empathy and discomfort in most individuals.

**4. Attachment styles:** Secure attachment styles, characterized by trust and healthy communication, lead to less conflict and hurt in relationships compared to insecure styles. This again contradicts the idea of actively choosing to inflict pain.

However, there are situations where someone might unintentionally hurt loved ones more frequently. This could be due to:

**1. Unmanaged emotions:** Difficulty regulating emotions like anger or frustration can lead to lashing out, even at loved ones.

**2. Communication issues:** Poor communication skills can lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretations, causing unintentional hurt.

**3. Unmet needs:** When emotional or physical needs go unmet in a relationship, frustration and resentment can build, sometimes expressed negatively towards loved ones.

**4. Unconscious patterns:** Past experiences can create unconscious patterns of relating that unintentionally harm others, even without malicious intent.

**5. Mental health conditions:** Underlying mental health issues like anxiety or depression can contribute to hurtful behaviors.

**Instead of "rather choose to hurt," a more accurate understanding:**

- We prioritize avoiding hurt to those we love, but sometimes due to complex factors, unintentional hurt occurs.
- Focusing on improving communication, self-awareness, and addressing underlying needs can help cultivate healthier relationships and reduce unintentional hurt.

Remember, the statement "we rather choose to hurt people close to us" is an oversimplification that doesn't reflect the full picture. The science underscores the complexity of human relationships and the often unintentional nature of hurt within them.