

AI-00971 Beyond Survival Instincts

👤 Owner	© Rigel Arcayan
☰ Tags	Life
🕒 Created time	@May 29, 2024 3:20 PM

In the context of human attitudes towards self-preservation, how true is it that humans strived first for self-preservation?

The idea of self-preservation as the sole human motivator is a bit of an oversimplification. Here's a breakdown:

- **Strong Evolutionary Drive:** Self-preservation is definitely a core instinct. From an evolutionary standpoint, staying alive increases the chances of passing on your genes <https://www.omicsonline.org/open-access-pdfs/understanding-and-preventing-the-dynamics-of-suicide-an-introduction-to-the-self-preservation-theory-of-human-behavior.pdf>.
- **Beyond Basic Survival:** However, humans are social creatures. The "Self Preservation Theory of Human Behavior" suggests our drive to survive is intertwined with finding purpose within a social group <https://www.omicsonline.org/open-access-pdfs/understanding-and-preventing-the-dynamics-of-suicide-an-introduction-to-the-self-preservation-theory-of-human-behavior.pdf>.
- **Weighing Risks and Rewards:** People take calculated risks all the time, sacrificing some level of safety for potential gains. This could be for loved ones, for a cause, or simply for an exciting experience.

So, self-preservation is a strong force, but it's not the only one. Human behavior is a complex mix of instincts, social connections, and the pursuit of meaning.

We eat breakfast, we exercise, we poop, we sleep, we drink water, those are self-preservation. When we do something for other humans, there is always the "me first" motive.

That's an interesting perspective, and it's true that self-preservation plays a role in many basic human behaviors. Eating, exercising, sleeping, etc. all contribute to our physical well-being and survival.

However, the idea that all actions towards others stem purely from "me first" motives is a bit more nuanced. Here's why:

- **Evolution of Cooperation:** Humans evolved in social groups. Cooperation offered a survival advantage – hunting together provided more food, sharing knowledge improved group safety, etc. Altruistic behavior, even with some level of self-benefit, could be passed on through genes.
- **Beyond Selfish Gains:** People often help others for reasons that go beyond immediate personal gain. We feel empathy, a sense of connection, and a desire to contribute to something larger than ourselves. Acts of charity, volunteering, or simply helping a friend in need show this.
- **The Reward System:** Our brains reward helpful behavior. Helping others can trigger the release of dopamine, a neurotransmitter associated with pleasure and motivation. This creates a positive feedback loop that reinforces prosocial behavior.

It's true that self-preservation is a powerful force, but it's not the only explanation for human behavior. We are complex creatures with a mix of motivations, including a strong desire for connection and social interaction.

Consider these examples:

- Risking your life to save a stranger – Here, self-preservation seems to take a backseat to a sense of empathy and heroism.
- Helping a neighbor with their groceries – There might be a "feel good" factor from helping, building positive social connections, or even the possibility of reciprocation in the future.

Ultimately, human behavior is a fascinating interplay of self-interest, social connection, and the desire for meaning and belonging. There's no single answer, but it's likely a combination of factors driving our actions.