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In their 2009 book *The Interactional Instinct: The Evolution and Acquisition of Language*, a group of researchers from UCLA led by Namhee Lee claim, 'Crucial for language acquisition is what we call the "interactional instinct." **This instinct is an innate drive among human infants to interact with their caregivers.**' These researchers have rediscovered **Aristotle's 'social instinct.'**

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The authors allow that **we** may **not** be **the only species** to have **this instinct** **but** argue that it is more (a) in humans than in other creatures. Several researchers have claimed that the acute dependence of humans on society and their interactional instinct may result from the fact that human infants are dependent on others' help for their survival and **development for an extraordinarily long time.**

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Primates* are at the top of the mammalian class in several ways. For one thing, they show **the strongest bond between mothers and their offspring**. Primate mothers, especially the great apes (which includes humans), could almost be said to form a single complex organism with their offspring. Researcher Sarah Hrdy reports that mother orangutans are in (**b**) **contact** with their young, **not losing physical contact for even an instant**, for at least the first five or six months of life.

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The interaction of mothers and children requires ⁽¹⁾a good deal of mind-reading — each needs to be able to predict what the other is going to do. Children need to know whether their mothers are going to feed them or scold them. Mothers need to know if their infants will be startled or pleased by coming experiences. Mothers and babies want to know each other's emotional and physical states. The ability of each member of a community to predict what the other will do is (c). When the young are able to learn from their mothers and others in their community, **their survivability becomes stronger.**

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When I and my family were living in the Amazon jungle and river traders or others, having been drinking all day, ran to our house, agitated and shouting angrily at us, my children would look at my face. If they saw fear in me, they felt fear themselves. If they sensed that I was calm, not panicked, then neither were they.

(2) Babies and children learn (from their parents' faces) what is in their parents' minds and they adjust their own inner mental lives accordingly. If we're OK, they're OK.

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Unlike other primates, however, **human mothers allow others** in their community **to** interact with, hold, and feed **their babies**. Human primates will happily raise one another's offspring in most cases, thus providing all with **a greater likelihood of survival** past infancy. ⁽³⁾The young of **other primates** are **less likely to** survive the death of their mother. This is due to the rigid relationships they build with their mothers to the exclusion of others.

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Hrdy says, '**No mammal** in the world has produced young that **take longer to mature or depend on so many others** for so long as did humans in prehistoric times ... these incredibly costly, large-brained offspring grew up slowly.' During this prolonged period of development, human infants need help. **They cannot survive without interaction.**