

pushed out through the birth canal a year before he or she can walk, are bets so huge that a woman can't even put her chips on the table by herself. She needs help in the last months of pregnancy, help to deliver the baby, and help to feed and care for the child for years after the birth. Given this big wage, there is an enormous adaptive challenge: to care for the vulnerable and expensive child, keep it safe, keep it alive, keep it from harm.

It is just not conceivable that the chapter on mothering in the book of human nature is entirely blank, leaving it for mothers to learn everything by cultural instruction or trial and error. Mothers who were innately sensitive to signs of suffering, distress, or neediness improved their odds, relative to their less sensitive sisters.

And it's not only mothers who need innate knowledge. Given the number of people who pool their resources to bet on each child, evolution favored women and (to a lesser extent) men who had an automatic reaction to signs of need or suffering, such as crying, from children in their midst (who, in



FIGURE 7.2. *Baby Gogo, Max, and Gogo.*

ancient times, were likely to be kin).⁴ The suffering of your own children is the original trigger of one of the key modules of the Care foundation. (I'll often refer to foundations using only the first of their two names—Care rather than Care/Harm.) This module works with other related modules⁵ to meet the adaptive challenge of protecting and caring for children.

This is not a just-so story. It is my retelling of the beginning of attachment theory, a well-supported theory that describes the system by which mothers and children regulate each other's behavior so that the child gets a good mix of protection and opportunities for independent exploration.⁶

The set of current triggers for any module is often much larger than the set of original triggers. The photo in figure 7.2 illustrates this expansion in four ways. First, you might find it cute. If you do, it's because your mind is automatically responsive to certain proportions and patterns that distinguish human children from adults. Cuteness primes us to care, nurture, protect, and interact.⁷ It gets the elephant leaning. Second, although this is not your child, you might still have an instant emotional response because the Care foundation can be triggered by any child. Third, you might find my son's companions (Gogo and Baby Gogo) cute, even though they are not real children, because they were designed by a toy company to trigger your Care foundation. Fourth, Max loves Gogo; he screams when I accidentally sit on Gogo, and he often says, "I am Gogo's mommy," because his attachment system and Care foundation are developing normally.

If your buttons can get pushed by a photo of a child sleeping with two stuffed monkeys, just imagine how you'd feel if you saw a child or a cute animal facing the threat of violence, as in figure 7.3.

It makes no evolutionary sense for you to care about what happens to my son Max, or a hungry child in a faraway coun-