

YOU ONLY CARE ABOUT 150 PEOPLE

A Quick Guide to Dunbar's Number

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Ever wonder why it's so hard to keep caring about everyone you know? The classmate who used to be your best friend left town, and now you two don't even talk. Or maybe, the uncle, who used to be your favourite, barely ever crosses your thoughts. This sort of thing can be explained by Dunbar's Number.

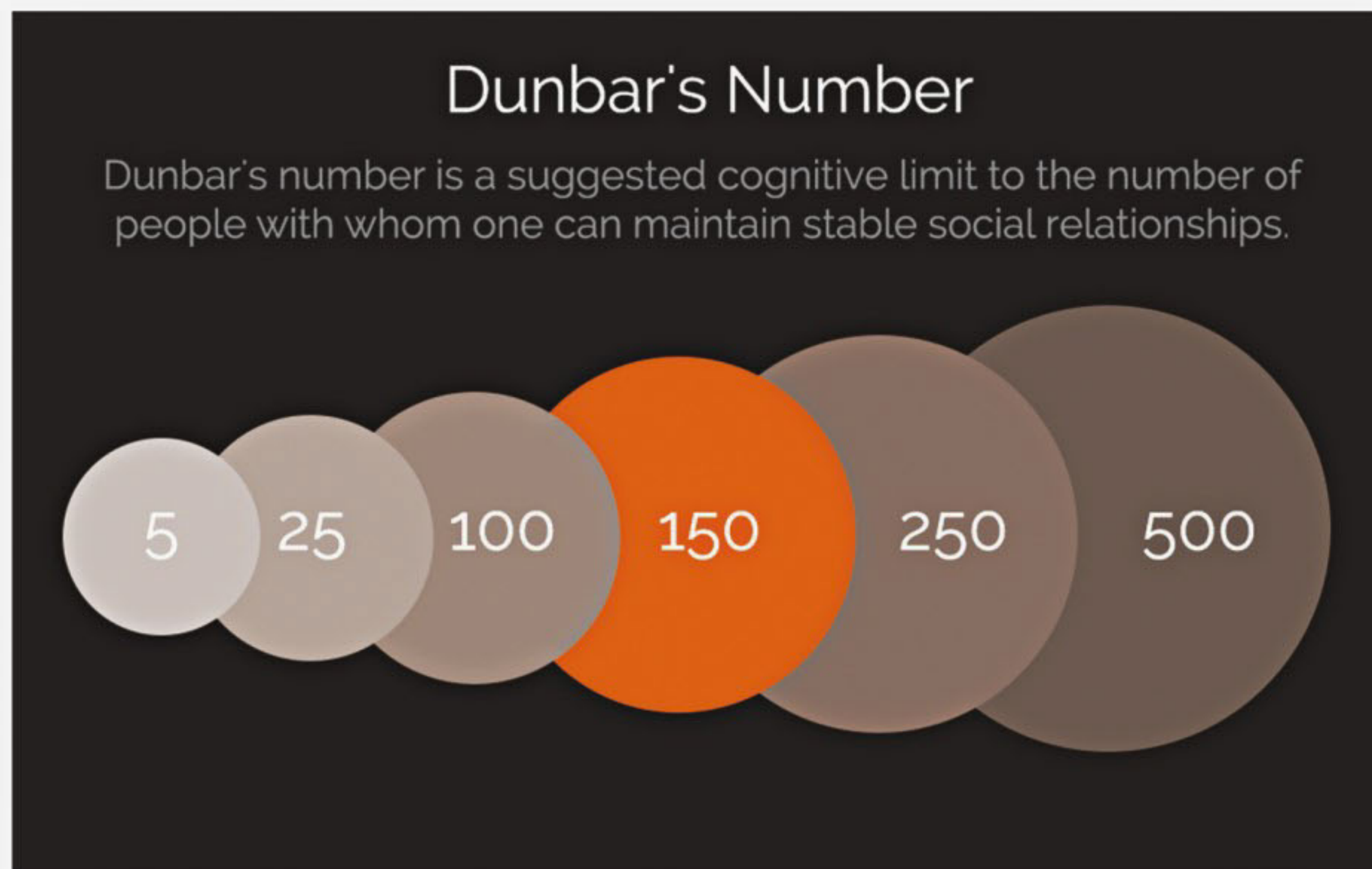
In the 1990s, British anthropologist Robin Dunbar first suggested that there is a limit to how many people we can maintain a stable social relationship with. That number, Dunbar's Number, is around 150. Other researches placed the number between 100 and 250.

For monkeys, who have smaller brains than us, the number is around 50.

Dunbar's number was found through research on primate brains, and researchers found that they could predict the group size of the species with stunning accuracy just from analysing the brain.

Dunbar's number has fascinating implications. Below are some of them:

- Because we can care about such a limited number of people, we prioritise. This number is the reason why we drift apart from those who were once so important.
- This is why those who can remember everyone's names and keep up with a lot



of acquaintances are so rare. Their brains are literally wired differently.

- It shows why the death of a friend would hurt you more than a group of school kids dying in an accident. It's not just because you didn't know them. Those people were outside your "sphere of care".

- Dunbar's number is the reason why we resort to simplifying every issue into an "us vs. them" theme. It's also the reason behind us grouping up with a certain

number of people in any setting – social cliques, friend groups and such. Our brains cannot handle more people than that.

- Many of us would harm people outside our 150 to help those within it. That explains a lot of criminal behaviour.

- The low number of people we can stably care about is one of the reasons behind us breaking into families as a social unit.

- Speaking of society, this is why being confined within the rules and regulations of one bothers us so much. Those rules were made so you would get along with people you really don't care about. It can understandably be annoying.

- This is also probably why modern society is worse in the behaviour department. Due to urbanisation, improvements in communication technology and such, we are forced to interact with much more people than we care to. That naturally gives birth to rude behaviour and the general air of unpleasantness everywhere.

So what can we take from knowing all this? Let's check:

- Most of us are horrible monsters caring about a very tiny number of people.
- Not caring about others is how we end up inflicting trauma on others. It can't be changed without conscious effort.

Let's make that extra effort to make the world a bit better. Who knows, by improving the lives of those outside your spheres of care, you might end up helping those inside it too.

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TEST ON JEALOUSY

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Jealousy is one of, if not the most, difficult emotions to admit to. We are accustomed to accusing others of jealousy, but rarely ever recognise our own. Perhaps this is because having to accept being a jealous person is quite equivalent to saying that we are the proverbial green-eyed monster we all loathed growing up.

The following are a series of questions to prove you are not jealous, or, more probably, ease you into acknowledging the fact that you indeed suffer from it.

Does it burn you inside, the thought of someone being better than you or achieving something you have not?

Do you cringe when you hear others flattering the "pretty" girl for her looks, or watch people mob the football team captain just for a selfie? Does it not feel like the world is rubbing it in your face; reminding you that you are not good enough?



Every time you hear someone else attaining something great in life, do you feel that the probability of you doing the same drops?

Is one of the worst nightmares you have involve you walking down a hall of trophies and your name not being etched on even one?

Whenever you see a person you consider to be "better" than you, do you feel like they could easily take away the very little you already own?

When the new colleague receives a good word, do you feel the



chances of a promotion slipping away? When the pretty girl or the handsome guy walks past your significant other, do you involuntarily find your grip a little tighter?

Among the many struggles of friendships and relationships, is one of the worst being happy for the success of those you are close to?

Does it horrify you that one day these people you hold so close will be too good for you and it would just have been better if you had their triumph instead?

Do you have bouts of ungratefulness because you know that whatever you will get in life will probably not be enough to make you the most content or the happiest person?

Does it hurt feeling that others have been gifted so much while you've been granted so little? Do you feel suffocated, not by anything in particular, but rather by the things you don't possess?

Are there days when you feel like the only way you could ever be happy is if you could hide from the people you envy and their accomplishments?

If you didn't have to compare yourself to the highlights of people's lives for one day, you could finally rest, right? After having to exhaust yourself like that, who in this world could be more deserving?

If you have answered affirmatively to any or all of these questions, then I offer you my sincerest condolences. I am afraid you are *indeed* a jealous person.