

From WarmLightXO to you  

This list is in no particular order and not all of it might pertain to you. Take what helps and leave the rest. Please feel free to reach out with any feedback or ideas!

Reasons not to harm:

- ★ The reality of harming is that you can damage nerves, tendons, and everything under the skin. At the moment you might hate yourself so much that you don't care about the damage caused, but tomorrow, if you're in pain, it's going to add stress to you physically and therefore mentally. It's going to make life harder, not easier. You don't need life to be any harder.
- ★ Self-harming can become a habit, something to turn to when the slightest difficulties arise. Being in a place where you self-harm because of every minor inconvenience is exhausting. Every time you hurt yourself, you're making it that much easier for it to become a bigger and bigger problem.
- ★ No one self-harms for no reason. It indicates that someone needs a problem solved. It does something for you, whether it is relief or communicating distress or numbing or calming. You wouldn't do it otherwise. Unfortunately, it is not an effective long-term strategy. After a while, you need to do more and more to get the same effects. Eventually, it stops working completely. You run out of skin, you run out of pain you can endure, and it hasn't made things right. This feels even more miserable than you did before you started self-harming.
- ★ Self-harm - even if no one suspects it or even downright asks you - involves lying. Lying about what you were doing, how that got there, why you winced, why you won't wear shorts or a bathing suit. Lying about being "okay." Lying puts a strain on external and internal relationships and personal mental health.
- ★ As long as you're in a pattern of self-harming, your mental health doesn't have a prayer of improving, or even maintaining. When you give in to that urge, your confidence, assurance, and peace decline. You see the world from a different point of view when you're hurting yourself and everything looks bleaker.
- ★ Freedom and independence! The marks left from self-harming mean that it's probable someone will find out eventually and try to protect you. It's nice to be trusted to shave and cut vegetables and use a stove without someone checking me for marks.
- ★ It's great to be able to trust yourself. By engaging in self-destructive acts, you trust yourself less. No one wants to be that person who flakes out, but it's what you're on your way to becoming if you don't keep promises to yourself.
- ★ Self-harm doesn't heal pain, it delays it. When you push down or away your feelings, they get stronger and hurt a lot more when you finally feel them. It's much easier and more beneficial to feel the first time around.

- ★ Every time you hurt yourself, you have the potential to accidentally do more than you intended. If you happen to do more damage than you meant to, you can try to patch it up myself and potentially do some real damage or you can go to the hospital. More often than not this means outing yourself, (which sucks) and maybe spending time in the psych ward (which really sucks).
- ★ Dealing with mental illness is exhausting. Part of what makes mental illness so difficult is all the extra things you have to think about on a day-to-day basis. When you cut yourself or hurt yourself in any other way, it tends to leave a mark of a scar of some kind. Generally, these marks freak the heck out of other people and you're going to have to cover these up. This is a huge pain in the butt, and it's scary. When you're about to hurt yourself, think about the fact that one action could mean months of exhausting thought and careful covering to make sure that you never expose those dirty little secrets.
- ★ When you've made it past the overwhelming emotion, or lack thereof, and you find that your safe spaces have been stained, it's a special kind of disgust that you can't shake. Your actions now do have effects later on.
- ★ Speaking of residual effects, let's talk about what it feels like to wake up the day after you've hurt yourself. When you're in the moment, the pain is often the point. It's kind of romantic, it serves a purpose. It makes you feel better or it gives you a release or something. But the next morning you get out of bed and your body burns. You go about your daily life but little things remind you that your body is angry. The pain isn't romantic anymore. It's not doing anything. It's just making you miserable. The pain you're causing yourself isn't just the pain of this moment, it's the pain of the whole time it takes for your harm to heal.
- ★ You may want to tell yourself that it's no one else's business, but that's simply false. It impacts other people and makes the people who care about you hurt. If you can't prioritize your own health and safety, prioritize the people in your life.
- ★ There are things you have chosen not to do because of harming. There are many things you just haven't been able to do because of harming. More often than not, they're completely unrelated to mental health and are simply parts of my life that you have had to deny because of the marks on your body or the pain that you're in, or the open wounds. You don't think about all the little ways that you will be limited when you're hiding your body and hurting, but it will damage your life in unexpected ways.
- ★ Self-harm takes a lot of emotional energy. It takes time. It's often done at night when you feel like crap or when you're finally alone. It takes away from the time you could have to rejuvenate yourself, to sleep, to rest.
- ★ It doesn't fix the problem. If you hurt yourself, you're creating more pain instead of dealing with your painful emotions directly. And yes, it freaking hurts to feel

painful emotions. But painful emotions don't leave a permanent mark. They make you feel lousy for a while but they always pass.

- ★ Self-harming can make you feel like your feelings don't count. Punishing yourself can make you feel worse. Your feelings count and they matter. Your feelings are real. If no one around you gets your feelings, it doesn't make your feelings wrong or bad. You feel things because it's natural and normal. It's part of being human.
- ★ We don't want to live in a world where it's okay for people to hurt themselves. We create our world. Every minute of every day, the choices we make influence other people. Even if you try to hide your self-destructive habits, they have a ripple effect. If you hurt yourself, then you're telling people around you that it's okay to self-destruct. You're a role model, even if surrounded by strangers. You never know who is looking up to me. You sure as heck don't want to reach anyone that it's okay to self-harm. You can't hurt yourself and have this double standard where you tell other people that they shouldn't hurt themselves. Words aren't everything. Actions speak much louder than words and people pick up on actions even when you try to hide them.
- ★ Your friends don't want this for you. Some of them know what you have to be feeling to cause yourself harm, and all of them believe in your strength to refrain.
- ★ Guilt. It can feel so horrible when you self-harm, and it's easy to compensate by engaging in other harmful behaviors, which make you feel worse. When you feel guilty, you might tend to isolate yourself, which is bad for your mental health and your relationships.
- ★ As long as you're engaging in self-harming behaviors, you likely won't be as open about it and won't be as likely to help others going through similar things. You also probably won't talk about mental health very freely, and thus stop raising awareness and advocating for better treatment of individuals dealing with mental illness(es).
- ★ You don't want possible siblings, cousins, or children to see new scars and think it's okay to do that to themselves. Refuse to be ashamed of or lie about the scars you do have, but you don't want to create more and risk the influence.
- ★ It worries the people in your life. If your family or friends were to see scars, they'd worry.
- ★ DEAR HEAVENS THE ITCHING. Yes, a reason to not harm is that it itches.