

What Attachment Style are YOU?



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Have you ever found yourself dating someone new and everything is going along great for weeks, perhaps even months, only to be suddenly and inexplicably ghosted? Or alternatively, have you yourself become overwhelmed with feelings of anxiety and apprehension for no real explainable reason and found yourself backing out of relationships? When venturing into the world of dating, it may seem like we need to bring along a case of duct tape and a gallon of gorilla glue to hold all the broken pieces together, but the real solution isn't about fixing the other person. The key to successful relationships of any kind is self-awareness and self-development which, in turn, allows us to show up at our best!

Typically, our habit pattern is to look outside of ourselves when searching for reasons and explanations as to why things don't work out. It's easier to lay blame than it is to take ownership and responsibility, but ask yourself "how is this working for me"? Perhaps it's time to shift in a different direction. When we dig deep within, we uncover core wounds that subconsciously sabotage us from experiencing true peace, happiness and connection.

At the very heart of human connection exists what is known as our attachment style. Founded by psychoanalyst John Bowlby in the 1950's and whose work was carried on by Mary Ainsworth, "attachment theory outlines how your bond with your primary caregivers sets the foundation for how you connect and interact in relationships". Understanding the basics of attachment styles can have a huge impact on how we relate with friends, family, colleagues and romantic partners. When we can recognize our own core wounds, as well as that of others, it allows for understanding to take the place of judgment and the ability to create more genuine connections with the potential for success.

There are 4 classifications of attachment styles:

SECURE

- ability to regulate emotions
- easily trusting of others
- effective communication skills
- ability to seek emotional support
- comfortable being alone
- comfortable in close relationships
- ability to self-reflect in partnerships
- easy to connect with
- able to manage conflict well
- high self-esteem
- emotionally available

ANXIOUS ATTACHMENT

- clingy tendencies
- highly sensitive to criticism (real or perceived)
- needs approval from others
- jealous tendencies

ANXIOUS ATTACHMENT (CONT'D)

- difficulty being alone
- low self-esteem
- feels unworthy of love
- intense fear of rejection
- significant fear of abandonment
- difficulty trusting others

DISMISSIVE AVOIDANT

- persistently avoids emotional or physical intimacy
- feels a strong sense of independence
- uncomfortable expressing feelings
- dismissive of others
- difficulty trusting people
- feels threatened by anyone who tries to get close
- spends more time alone than interacting with others
- believes they don't need others in their life
- issues surrounding commitment

DISORGANIZED/FEARFUL AVOIDANT

- fears rejection
- inability to regulate emotions
- contradictory behaviours
- high levels of anxiety
- difficulty trusting others
- signs of both avoidant and anxious attachment styles





Attachment style behaviour is typically carried out subconsciously, meaning we are not actively aware of the patterns. Unconsciously, our minds expect our romantic partner to act as our caregiver did during childhood and our mind begins to operate on auto-pilot based on these negative past experiences. Although these patterns seem hardwired, the great news is that they can be changed and rehabilitated into a healthy, secure attachment style.

The first step to healing is to embrace mindfulness. Allow yourself to look within, not through the lens of judgment, but through self-love and compassion. Our mindfulness journey will not only bring knowledge of our own attachment styles, but will help us to better manage our emotions, confront our fears and communicate our needs to others. Respecting boundaries helps to foster healthy bonds and creates a safe space for all relationships to grow. Recognizing our triggers also affords us the opportunity to communicate our true feelings in the moment in place of reactionary and sometimes volatile confrontations. We will also be more willing to embrace vulnerability as a powerful vehicle to experience love and inclusion in every area of our life. In our romantic relationships, acknowledging and understanding different attachment styles prompts us to embrace compromise and opens doors to conversation as opposed to conflict and controversy.

Becoming aware and embracing the attachment theory principles can have

a profound effect on our relationship with ourselves, as well as those around us. It can set the stage for us to show up differently and, in turn, create the opportunity to experience life and relationships differently. As we open our hearts and minds, we also open the door to connect and thrive in peace.

To learn more about Attachment Style Theory, I would highly recommend checking out The Personal Development School online. Thais Gibson, author, speaker, counsellor and founder, has a vast selection of videos on Youtube that are an excellent source of clear concise information and it's free!

Remember to be gentle with yourself. It's always about taking small, but steady steps forward by making small, yet powerful changes each day. Don't get overwhelmed, just keep taking that next right step...*it simply begins with you!*



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