

Discover Your Attachment Style

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A person's attachment style reflects how they relate to others in a relationship. There are four main attachment styles: secure, anxious, avoidant, and disorganized. Many people have a primary attachment style that shows up in most or all of their relationships, although they may also have characteristics of other styles. To understand your own attachment style, read through the following statements and put a check mark by any you identify with.

- 1. When my partner hasn't contacted me, I get anxious.
- 2. Getting into a relationship means I lose my independence.
- 3. Having a relationship end is one of my major fears.
- 4. I need a lot of space when I get emotionally close to someone.
- 5. I call or text a lot when my partner is out.
- 6. I prefer long-distance relationships so I can have my freedom.
- 7. I have been told I am "needy" or "clingy" in relationships.
- 8. I have been told I am "distant" or "aloof" in relationships.
- 9. I will do whatever it takes to keep a relationship going.
- 10. I would be okay with never having a relationship again.

To obtain a total score, tally the number of items you marked in each section:

Odd-numbered items: _____ Even-numbered items: _____

If you checked off more odd-numbered items, you might have an *anxious* attachment style. The following characteristics may be true for you:

- Your caregivers were unpredictable or smothering.
- Losing a relationship is one of your worst fears.
- You feel anxious when separated from your partner for even short periods.
- You consider others' feelings more than your own.
- You need closeness and intimacy to feel comfortable.
- You tend to get passive-aggressive toward your partner when you are upset.
- You don't state your needs, wants, and feelings due to fears of rejection.

If you checked off more even-numbered items, you might have an *avoidant* attachment style, meaning the following may be true for you:

- Your caregivers were distant and unresponsive to your needs.
- You take great pride in your ability to be independent and self-reliant.
- You view a relationship as a possible threat to your independence.
- You may appear aloof and distant to others.
- You tend to be uncomfortable with emotional intimacy.
- You can be rigid, critical, or intolerant of others.
- You gravitate toward long-distance relationships.

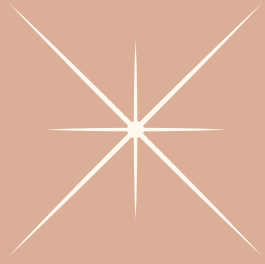
If you checked off a mix of odd and even numbers, you might have a *disorganized* attachment style. In this case, the following may be true for you:

- Your caregivers were unpredictable and abusive.
- You have great difficulty coping with adversity.
- You are not sure what your needs and wants are in a relationship.
- You may dissociate and detach from your feelings.
- You have difficulty asking for help and trusting others.
- You want emotional intimacy with another person, but it also terrifies you.
- You push partners away but then feel abandoned and pursue them.

If you checked off fewer than five items total, you might have a *secure* attachment style. You might resonate with the following experiences:

- Your caregivers were emotionally stable and met your needs.
- You feel comfortable with emotional intimacy.
- You feel the goal of a relationship is interdependence, not dependence.
- You proactively practice daily self-care.
- You notice when you are emotionally "off" and can get yourself back on track.
- You directly communicate your needs, wants, and feelings.

Consider sharing your results with your mental health professional so you can explore together how your primary attachment style may be affecting your relationships and well-being.



How Your Attachment Style Impacts Your Relationships

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Your attachment style is formed in your relationships with your caregivers in childhood, but it goes on to affect the way you relate with other people in your life. If you were raised by gaslighters or are in a current relationship with a gaslighter, you might have an anxious, avoidant, or disorganized attachment style. If you were raised by emotionally stable, attentive caregivers (or if you have worked to overcome the challenges of your initial attachment style), you may have a secure attachment style instead. The following paragraphs describe how the different styles typically affect our relationships.

In **secure attachment**, partners are interdependent. Each person has their own interests, but they also form a collective "we." If the relationship ends, a person with secure attachment may be upset. Still, they know they learned a lot from the relationship and will be able to move on.

In **anxious attachment**, a person may become preoccupied with thoughts of their partner leaving them. They may consent to whatever their partner wants to preserve the relationship, even when it goes against their own needs and desires. A person with anxious attachment may see the dissolution of a relationship as something to be avoided at all costs.

In **avoidant attachment**, independence is emphasized to the point where there is a lack of emotional attachment to a partner. Someone with avoidant attachment may see vulnerability and time spent with their partner as a threat to their independence. They may prefer long-distance relationships as a way to maintain emotional distance as well.

In **disorganized attachment**, there are features of both anxious attachment and avoidant attachment. A person may want their partner to be emotionally closer to them but fear such intimacy at the same time because it makes them feel vulnerable to being hurt. As a result, they may alternate between pushing their partner away and pursuing them again.