

UNLOCK THE  
SECRETS OF EACH  
**Attachment  
Style**



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# FOREWORD

Insecure attachment develops in childhood (primarily) when caregivers exhibit contrasting and inconsistent behavior. For example, they might be loving one moment, and then highly reactive or abusive the next. Rather than the child feeling safe to reach for their caregiver, they are often afraid or unsure of the response. This becomes the patterning for how the child believes love should be given and received, and is carried into adulthood.

But you CAN change this pattern! You can learn to rewrite your internal scripts and create powerful new habits that help you create passionate, more connected relationships with your partner, friends and family.

This guide is intended to:

- 1- raise awareness, as a first step, of the core wounds, beliefs, emotional patterns, communication style and coping mechanisms of each attachment style.
- 2- help deepen the understanding you have of your OWN patterns.
- 3- help deepen the understanding you have of OTHERS with the intent of moving towards harmony, compassion and deeper connections.

Becoming securely attached will improve every relationship in your life, including the one to yourself. I hope this guide brings reflection and clarity to the answers you are seeking.

With much respect and gratitude,  
Bev

ANXIOUS  
PREOCCUPIED  
(AP)  
ATTACHMENT

## COMMON PATTERNS FOR ANXIOUS ATTACHMENT:

### Common Characteristics:

- Charismatic
- Thoughtful
- Kind
- Attentive in Close Relationships
- Warm
- Likeable
- Moves quickly in relationships of all types
- Friendly
- Flexible
- Supportive
- Collaborative
- Trusting of connection
- Prioritizes relationships
- Value social interaction and inclusion

### CORE WOUNDS:

- I AM/WILL BE ABANDONED
- I AM UNSAFE
- I AM/WILL BE ALONE
- I AM NOT GOOD ENOUGH
- I AM/WILL BE REJECTED
- I AM/WILL BE UNLOVED
- I AM EXCLUDED
- I AM/WILL BE DISLIKED
- I AM BAD

### COMMON EMOTIONAL PATTERNS

- Lonely
- Insecure
- Fearful
- Anxious
- Worry
- Desperation
- Regret
- Sad

### Fears (based largely on Core Wounds)

- Not being good enough
- Being rejected
- Failing
- Being disliked, excluded
- Getting in trouble/being seen as "bad"
- Being abandoned in some way (ex. being fired out of the blue or everyone turning on them)

### NEEDS IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS:

- Love, intimacy
- Closeness, connection
- Validation, reassurance
- Approval, importance
- Certainty, consistency
- Presence, to feel seen, heard, understood
- Inclusion, community
- Collaboration, teamwork

### BEHAVIORAL COPING MECHANISMS & HANDLING CONFLICT:

- Often avoid conflict by people-pleasing
- If there is conflict, quick to work to resolve it between people
- More focused on interpersonal conflict than work conflict (Ex. How a promotion affects their interpersonal dynamic – more likely to focus on friendship than work regulations)
- Conflict impacts them deeply (can create significant distress for them)
- Flexible and willing to discuss and resolve conflict
- Often willing to communicate if a conflict has already taken place
- Effective compromisers
- Likely to put their need for approval from others ahead of their own preferred outcome
- Sometimes try to manage others' feelings around conflict above their own



### Needs (GENERAL):

- Validation
- Encouragement
- To feel seen and heard
- To feel valued
- Respond significantly better to positive re-enforcement
- To feel important
- To feel included
- To express their opinions
- To feel a sense of certainty in life

### RELATIONSHIP TO BOUNDARIES

- Often without boundaries in close relationships
- Eventually will feel unloved or emotionally abandoned when others put up boundaries with them as it is not part of their way they've learned to attach to others
- Feel afraid of abandonment if they set boundaries
- Self-sabotage boundaries because they prioritize proximity
- Often don't realize the importance of healthy boundaries in relationships



- **How They Communicate**

- Often from the point of view of how they feel
- Over-explain things at times
- Communicate fairly directly
- Can be indirect at times to avoid disapproval or interpersonal conflict
- Often very agreeable, use agreeable language
- Often like to discuss their feelings and perceptions about things
- Good at sharing their internal world with others, open
- Vulnerable

**AP Coping Mechanisms:**

- Clinginess (trying to maintain proximity)
- Trying to gently provoke the expression of care from a partner (ex. Make jealous to provoke response)
- Testing
- Seeking validation
- Attention or approval-seeking behaviors
- Expression of panic, anxiety, neediness
- Criticism of partner
- Fawning

**Common AP Expectations:**

- A) My partner should soothe my emotions
- B) My partner should give me certainty at all times
- C) My partner should know how I feel/read my mind
- D) My partner is responsible for meeting all of my needs (and vice versa)
- E) My partner should be available
- F) The romantic relationship should be the highest priority
- G) Romantic gestures in a relationship should be frequent

FEARFUL  
AVOIDANT  
(FA)  
ATTACHMENT



## COMMON PATTERNS FOR FEARFUL AVOIDANT ATTACHMENT:

### Common Characteristics:

- Present
- Hypervigilant
- Charming
- Likable
- Generous in close relationships
- Intense
- Hot and cold in close relationships
- Suspicious
- Hypervigilant
- Extremist at times
- All or nothing thinkers
- Emotional
- Deep
- Nurturing
- Resilient
- Headstrong

### CORE WOUNDS

- I AM/WILL BE BETRAYED
- I AM UNSAFE
- I AM UNWORTHY
- I AM BAD
- I AM/WILL BE ABANDONED
- I AM TRAPPED
- I AM HELPLESS/POWERLESS/OUT OF CONTROL
- I AM NOT GOOD ENOUGH
- I AM DISRESPECTED
- I AM/WILL BE UNLOVED
- I AM WEAK

### COMMON EMOTIONAL PATTERNS:

- Angry
- Hurt
- Frustrated (when feeling trapped)
- Overwhelmed
- Pressured
- Guilty
- Ashamed
- Anxious
- Offended

### **Fears (based largely on Core Wounds)**

- Being betrayed
- Feeling unworthy
- Feeling trapped, helpless or powerless
- Being publicly shamed
- Getting in trouble/being seen as "bad"
- Being verbally or emotionally attacked (strong "fight back" response)

### **NEEDS IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS**

- Emotional Depth
- Passion
- Trust
- Presence
- Safety
- Novelty
- Growth
- Independence
- Freedom
- Intimacy
- To feel wanted

### **RELATIONSHIP TO BOUNDARIES**

- Often without boundaries in close relationships
- Eventually will become frustrated with feeling taken advantage of (partially due to their lack of boundaries) and at times lash out feel guilty go back to being boundaryless/over-giving
- May feel like they are good at setting boundaries but if you look closely, they are setting boundaries almost exclusively from a place of charged emotion/anger This is different than being an empowered, assertive boundary setter without having to get angry



### **How they handle conflict**

- Oscillate from people-pleasing to wanting to stand up for themselves at times (under-expression to over-expression)
- Sometimes jump the gun/make assumptions about a situation before completely investigating it
- Can act from a place of panic and volatility at times
- Feel a need to "over-defend" themselves in conflict at times
- Can become spiteful if they feel hurt
- Ultimately once the dust has settled, they are often excellent at empathizing and seeing another's perspective
- Like to handle things directly (approach-oriented > avoidant)
- Likely to put their need for approval from others ahead of their own preferred outcome at times
- At times will try to manage others' feelings around conflict above their own
- Can struggle with guilt post-conflict
- Sometimes can be a bit too sharp with their words

### **Needs (General)**

- Growth/opportunity
- To feel empowered
- To feel seen and heard
- To feel connected
- Respond well to criticism if it is delivered respectfully
- To feel understood by others
- To express their opinions
- To feel respected by others
- To feel emotionally connected

### **Common Expectations**

- That nobody should ever break their trust
- No lying, ever
- Their romantic partner should be as giving as they are
- Their romantic partner should always respect their independence
- They should always feel wanted by their partner
- Partner should always make them feel wanted
- Partner should be faithful in thought, emotion, opinion, action

#### **BEHAVIORAL COPING MECHANISMS:**

- Testing
- Withdrawing to decompress
- Stonewalling
- Spitefulness
- Criticism
- Emotional volatility
- Fight, flight, freeze and fawning
- Excess of "creature comforts" (Ex. Binging on TV, food, gaming, alcohol, gambling etc. > Not always the case but can be common)

#### **How They Communicate**

- Over-explain things at times
- Communicate very directly
- Can oscillate from being agreeable to confrontational
- Often like to discuss their feelings and perceptions about things
- Sometimes avoid anything too personal (how they feel, anything private or vulnerable)
- Do not share their needs enough (Ex. "I need support")
- Will sometimes pretend they are doing better than they are/avoid showing weakness

#### **What triggers them about others**

- If they feel disrespected
- If they feel dismissed or ignored
- Feeling taken advantage of
- Sudden changes in patterns
- Feeling like they are "bad" or did something they should feel guilty about
- Feeling unheard or bulldozed
- If they feel like someone is competing with them
- Boundary violations
- If they see someone bullying others (will really rally behind the underdog)
- Trust violations! \*
- Feeling trapped/stuck
- Incompetency in others (as they often feel like they have to be perfect and it's an injustice when others aren't held to the same standard)

DISMISSIVE  
AVOIDANT  
(DA)  
ATTACHMENT

## COMMON PATTERNS FOR DISMISSIVE AVOIDANT ATTACHMENT:

### Common Characteristics

- Intellectual
- Conflict-avoidant
- Practical
- Grounded in their approach
- Don't let their emotions take over
- Independent
- Think things through carefully
- Enjoy endless learning
- Value security
- Prioritize harmony and practicality in relationships
- Deeply care about autonomy
- Can avoid things instead of approaching them head-on
- Good at speaking up for their survival needs
- Express their boundaries
- Comfortable asking for what they feel they deserve
- Resilient
- Work well under pressure
- Analytical
- May shut down when feeling stressed
- Take criticism very personally
- Slow to warm up in relationships
- Guarded

### Core Wounds:

- I am unsafe
- I am defective
- I am trapped
- I am helpless/incapable
- I am weak (if vulnerable)
- I am not good enough
- I am/will be powerless
- "Why bother" belief response

### COMMON EMOTIONAL PATTERNS:

- Shame
- Low-level anxiety
- Irritation
- Impatience
- Frustration
- Overwhelm
- Numbness
- Exhaustion/depletion

## **NEEDS IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS**

- Safety
- Harmony
- Acceptance
- Trust
- Comfort
- Learning/intellectual connection
- Appreciation & Acknowledgement
- Independence
- Freedom
- Understanding
- To feel wanted

## **Fears (based largely on Core Wounds)**

- Fear of being shamed
- Fear of being criticized and hurt by criticism
- Fear of being "unsafe"
- Fear of having to jump too far outside of their comfort zone
- Fear of having to work with others too much and it draining their energy
- Fear of seeming incompetent
- Having conflict
- Feeling trapped or having to over-commit to things

## **RELATIONSHIP TO BOUNDARIES**

- Excellent at setting large, strong boundaries
- Assume others are good at setting their boundaries and will speak up for themselves too
- May struggle to set many small boundaries (which is why they opt for large boundaries)
- May not know how to communicate, negotiate or set boundaries in romantic relationships around emotional situations
- May disconnect or become avoidant if they feel that a boundary has been crossed
- May assume others don't understand them and their boundaries
- May set boundaries via actions more than via words

### **How they handle conflict**

- Often avoid conflict
- Will internalize their frustrations more often than not
- Will sometimes pretend they agree and then do what they want anyways (avoidance strategy to get out of conflict in the moment)
- May even prefer to stop talking to people altogether other than approach conflict
- Are careful not to use awful words in conflict, will try to remain neutral
- Can remain fairly non-emotional and grounded if they do enter into conflict
- Rational
- Will try to see both sides
- Will analyze situations until they feel like they've come up with the most rational approach

### **Needs (General) - from all areas of life:**

- To feel safe
- Intellectual stimulation
- An environment with consistent learning
- Positive re-enforcement/words of affirmation
- To feel valued
- To feel acknowledged
- Freedom to be independent, autonomy
- To feel like their opinions are heard and taken into consideration
- A certain degree of space
- Prefer to not work intensively with people or in teams
- To feel that if they do speak up, their stance on a topic will be valued
- To feel respected
- To feel like the people around them are logical and rational

### **Common Expectations**

- My partner should always be understanding when I need space
- Conflict should not be occurring in this relationship
- Being with a partner shouldn't mean making compromises (expect to keep relationship to self fully untouched)
- My partner and I should each meet our own needs and then come together without too much investment
- My partner shouldn't soothe through me/emotionally rely on me
- My partner should be the perfect match (subconsciously seeking this as a strategy to avoid conflict > flaw finding)
- My level of independence shouldn't change (vs. healthy interdependence)



### **BEHAVIORAL COPING MECHANISMS:**

- Withdrawing to decompress
- Stonewalling
- Ignoring/dismissing
- Passive aggression
- Numbing
- Avoiding
- Excess of "creature comforts" Ex. Binging on TV, food, gaming, alcohol, gambling etc.  
(Not always the case but can be common)

### **How They Communicate**

- Communicate more actions than words
- May communicate very indirectly over text or when trying to avoid conflict
- Avoids conflict or tries to get out of it as quickly as possible (sometimes without resolution)
- Represses feelings and may minimize others' feelings incidentally
- Often avoid anything too personal (how they feel, anything private or vulnerable)
- Do not share their needs enough outside of survival needs (Ex. "I need support")
- Will sometimes pretend they are doing better than they are/avoid showing weakness
- May engage in more surface conversation until they are comfortable

### **What triggers them about others**

- When others violate their boundaries
- When people make decisions very quickly or emotionally (or pressure them to)
- If they are criticized
- If they feel misunderstood
- Being pressured in relationships
- If people "emotionally dump" on them too often
- Being humiliated/shamed in front of a group (or feedback that is taken this way)
- If they feel they are being controlled or freedom/autonomy are violated
- Codependency
- Feeling trapped or forced into something they don't want to do



**SECURE  
ATTACHMENT**

## COMMON PATTERNS FOR SECURE ATTACHMENT:

The Secure Attachment is much more neutral in regard to patterns, the weaknesses, fears etc. are more difficult to discuss because they become very personal based on what is unresolved and less likely to fit a "pattern" based on attachment. If I discuss their weaknesses less it isn't to idealize them, but to simply not put "filler" around experiences that don't fit well into a patterned format at this point.

### Common Characteristics:

- Emotionally regulated
- Balanced
- Excellent at sharing boundaries
- Clear on their needs
- Don't mind conflict but don't end up in unnecessary conflict
- Can often focus better (less real estate in their mind taken up by core wounds, fears, unmet needs and resentments)
- Good at speaking up for themselves and asking for opportunity or a raise
- Good at working with others
- Strong communicators
- Can hear and understand multiple people's perspectives
- Not quick to be involved in drama, good at treading and staying away from it
- Feel worthy of asking for their needs, of sharing their opinion
- Naturally more comfortable sharing feelings and opinions with others
- Active listeners
- Less likely to take things personally
- Trusting
- Stable
- Trustworthy
- Honest

### Emotional Patterns & Core Wounds:

- These do not follow a specific patterns
- General SA individuals are more optimistic, calm, open, joyful and present (due to less trauma and greater nervous system regulation)
- Core wounds will be based on individual experiences from the past rather than overarching themes based on attachment style

### **How they communicate through challenges with other attachment styles:**

- Are often fair
- Considerate
- Conscientious
- Open when communicating
- Good at listening to others and taking their opinions into consideration
- Have no problem asserting themselves if they feel it is the right thing
- Value their own opinions and will share them with others
- Will speak up if they feel there is a problem
- Want everyone to get along and be a team
- Respectful
- Generally quite patient

### **How they handle conflict**

- Very much value working through conflict
- Don't like to leave things unresolved
- Feel relatively comfortable working through conflict though obviously don't seek it out
- Communicate effectively
- Don't take things as personally (Likely to be less triggered/charged)
- Good at asserting their boundaries
- Don't mind being vulnerable
- Can share their feelings
- Can validate the other person's feelings and perspectives well
- Will be respectful in conflict-oriented situations
- Want both parties to feel happy about the resolution
- Fair

### **Needs**

- Stability
- Harmony
- Growth
- Connection
- Empowerment
- Clarity
- Certainty
- Open to change (in a healthy amount)
- Balance (work-life balance)
- To be heard
- Enjoyment\*

### **Relationship to Boundaries (They won't be perfect, but here are some patterns)**

- Assertive
- Respectful of self and others
- Clear at communicating
- Authentic
- Fairly consistent at communicating boundaries
- Validate others' emotions and perspectives
- Attuned to self
- Take self into consideration\*
- Feel worthy of setting boundaries

### **BEHAVIORAL COPING MECHANISMS:**

- Will speak up
- Will see needs through
- Will go to partner to work things out
- Can also self-soothe well
- Will try to deal with things more immediately, dislike repressing
- May seek external help or support from family and friends
- Will take time to reflect when needed

### **Common Expectations**

- My partner should want to resolve things
- Conflict is normal but should not be excessive
- Both parties should be able to be heard, understood and seen in a relationship
- Interdependence
- My partner and I can emotionally rely on each other
- My partner and I will work through things when we are faced with challenges
- Difficult moments will happen in relationships but we will work as a team through them
- We should have a relationship to all areas of life when with each other

### **What triggers them about others**

- Whatever is unresolved from their past (less likely to fall into a patterned category)
- Disrespect, toxicity, unfairness etc. (WAY outside of their comfort zone)

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Certified Attachment Practitioner

As a child, I lived in a very unpredictable and chaotic environment where I never knew if I could rely on my parents to meet my emotional needs. This led me to absorb unhealthy relationship ideas based on what I was witnessing: I believed relationships were supposed to be unbalanced, uncertain, and overall chaotic. If you have a fearful avoidant attachment style, you probably relate to my experience, and navigating relationships can be particularly difficult for you.

I relied heavily on the work and tools of Thais Gibson, Gabor Mate, and Bessel Van Der Kolk during my own healing journey from a Fearful Avoidant (FA) to becoming securely attached.

Prior to becoming a Certified Attachment Practitioner, I was an Executive Leader, University Lecturer and published author, having obtained my Masters' Degree in 2006. I have spent my entire career (25+ years) working with adults in the realm of personal growth and professional development.

I feel honored to now be working one-on-one with individuals/couples, and offering tailored and highly interactive workshops to groups on a variety of topics related to attachment, including work styles, communication and effective boundary setting.

I can be reached by email: [bev@securelyloved.com](mailto:bev@securelyloved.com)  
I look forward to meeting you and working together!

As long as we have unhealed core wounds at the subconscious level, we'll keep projecting them onto our reality and relive the pain over and over.

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THIS  
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