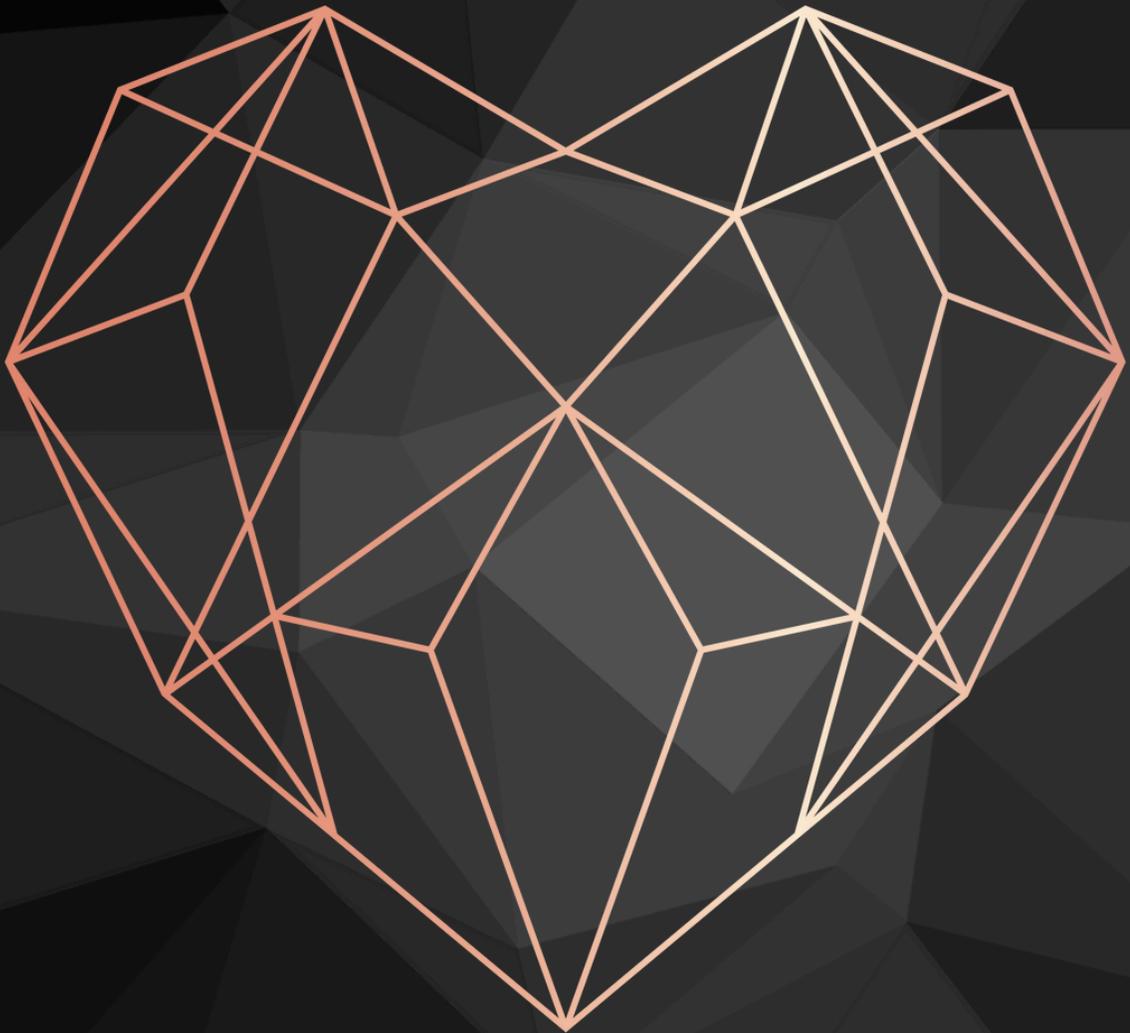


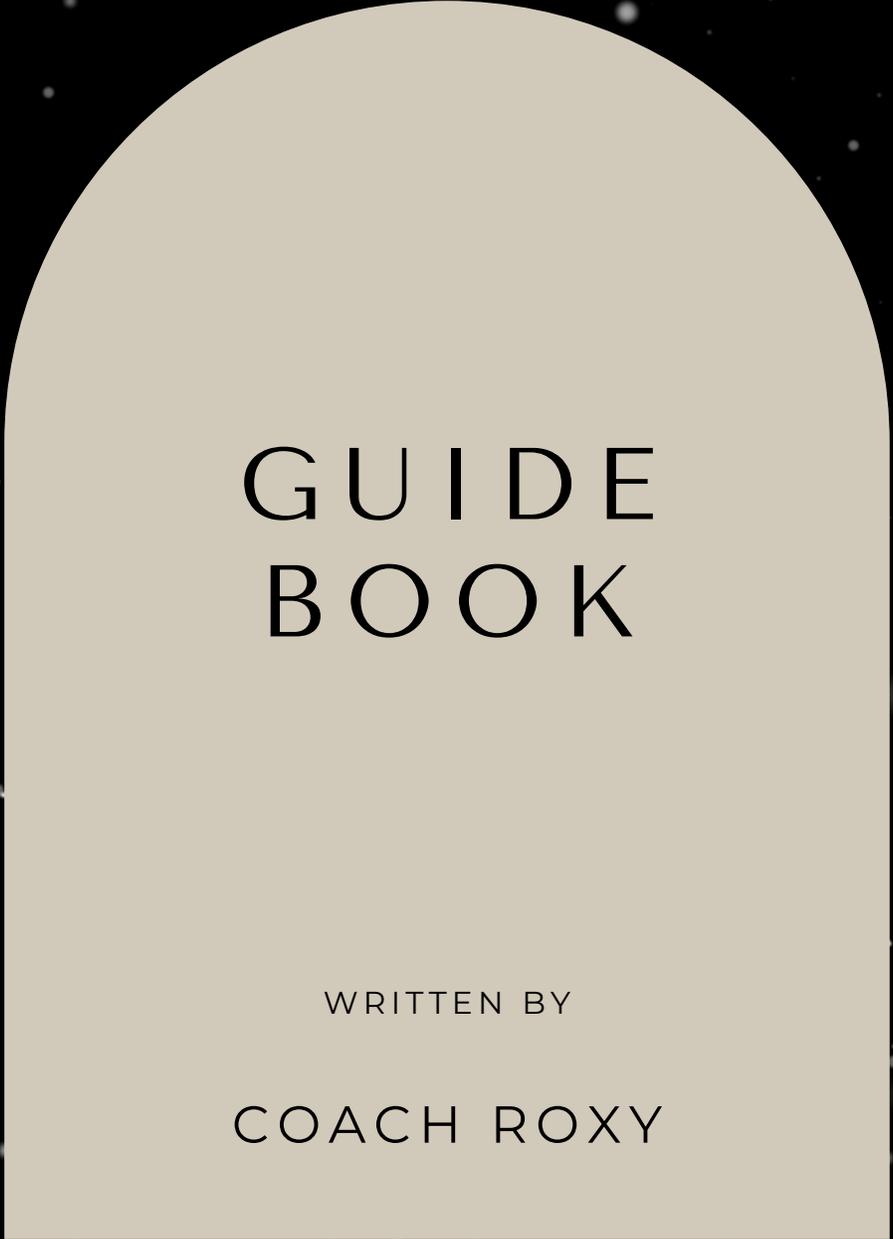
DECODED LOVE'S

# ATTACHMENT GUIDE



UNDERSTANDING ATTACHMENT  
THEORY

DECODED LOVE STYLES.COM



GUIDE  
BOOK

WRITTEN BY

COACH ROXY



# WELCOME!

Aloha! I'm Roxy, a relationship coach based in Hawaii. I specialize in Integrated Attachment Theory and I'm thrilled that you're here seeking to understand yourself and taking the first step towards self-improvement.

This guide will provide an overview of attachment theory and help you understand each of the four attachment styles. It also includes tips on how you can better support each style in relationships.

I appreciate you taking the time to read this E-Book and I hope you enjoy. Mahalo!

*Coach Roxy*



# CONTENTS

**03** AUTHOR PAGE

**05** WHAT IS ATTACHEMENT THEORY?

**07** ATTACHMENT OVERVIEW

**09** SECURE ATTACHMENT

**12** ANXIOUS PREOCCUPIED

**17** DISMISSIVE AVOIDANT

**22** FEARFUL AVOIDANT

CHAPTER

# 01

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WHAT IS ATTACHMENT  
THEORY?

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

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# 01 / WHAT IS ATTACHMENT THEORY?

Attachment theory is all about how our early relationships with caregivers can affect how we develop emotionally and socially. It looks at how we form connections with others and how these connections can shape our behaviors and expectations in future relationships. The theory also explores how our early experiences influence our adult relationships and our ability to form healthy connections with others.

Attachment theory first emerged in the mid-20th century with British psychologist John Bowlby, who was influenced by ethologist Konrad Lorenz and psychoanalyst Melanie Klein. Bowlby's work laid the groundwork for understanding how our early relationships with caregivers can impact our emotional and social development. Later on, Mary Ainsworth's "Strange Situation" study in the 1970s built upon Bowlby's theory by identifying different attachment styles in children, further emphasizing the long-term impact of early attachment experiences on relationships and emotional well-being. This research led to the continued exploration and development of attachment theory, which has since been widely applied in various fields such as therapy, counseling, and understanding cultural diversity.



Attachment dramatically impacts how we grow and develop. Our early attachment experiences can shape our ability to form and maintain relationships, manage emotions, and navigate the world. Research has shown that secure attachment in childhood is linked to better social and emotional development, while insecure attachment can lead to difficulties in these areas. Understanding how attachment impacts our growth can help us recognize and address any challenges we may face in relationships and emotional well-being.

CHAPTER

02

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ATTACHMENT OVERVIEW

WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT

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# 02 / ATTACHMENT OVERVIEW

There are four main attachment styles: secure, anxious-preoccupied, dismissive-avoidant, and fearful-avoidant attachment. Attachment styles exist on a spectrum, allowing for variation in how individuals approach relationships. Attachment styles are not classified as mental illnesses, diagnoses, or disorders. Instead, they represent a set of learned behaviors that are not permanent or fixed and can evolve over time as they are malleable.

Attachment behaviors come from beliefs rooted in the subconscious part of the mind. The subconscious creates programs based on repeating emotions. Whenever someone has a strong emotional experience, it leaves an imprint in the subconscious. The more this emotion is repeated, the stronger the imprint becomes, eventually forming a set of beliefs and behaviors. This repetition of emotion essentially creates the subconscious mind's set of programs.

Attachments are predominantly developed during childhood but can also form later in life or adulthood, depending on individual experiences and circumstances. For instance, a person who experiences significant trauma or major life changes as an adult may form new attachments based on these experiences.

People mainly display a dominant attachment style, but someone can have a mixture of one or more styles. For instance, a person may be 80 percent secure and 20 percent anxious-preoccupied. Their primary and secondary styles may mean they are secure in relationships but display anxious traits depending on the triggering situation.

Attachment styles are a way to understand how people form and maintain relationships. Instead of putting labels or limiting people, they're a tool for developing self-awareness and showing empathy. They help you build stronger connections with others.

CHAPTER  
03

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SECURE ATTACHMENT

OVERVIEW

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## 03/ SECURE ATTACHMENT

Individuals who have secure attachment styles had caregivers who were supportive and consistently responsive to their needs during childhood. These caregivers provided stability, emotional support, physical connection, communication, and predictability, which allowed the child to grow up feeling safe and loved. As adults, secure individuals feel comfortable being vulnerable and can express and regulate their emotions. They can give and receive support and are less likely to be triggered than their insecure counterparts. However, individuals with secure attachment styles may exhibit a secondary attachment style, which is not necessarily a result of inconsistent caregiving patterns.

### THOUGHTS AND BELIEFS

Secure individuals believe they are worthy of love and are confident in expressing their needs. Secure individuals believe in having a balanced relationship based on understanding, respect, and boundaries. They believe both partners should be able to openly communicate their needs and work on healthily resolving conflict.

Secure attachment styles are confident and comfortable in relationships, know how to connect with others, and can resolve conflicts. However, they may feel confused or frustrated in relationships with partners who have an insecure attachment style. They can connect with others fairly easily.

- They enjoy the company of others but can also be by themselves.
- Are open and comfortable being in a relationship.
- Know how to communicate and resolve issues when it comes to conflict.
- Can be vulnerable and set healthy boundaries.
- Struggle to be in relationships with others who don't have a secure attachment style.
- Know how to express emotions and regulate them.
- Don't get triggered as easily or as often as others.



CHAPTER

04

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ANXIOUS PREOCCUPIED  
ATTACHMENT

OVERVIEW

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## 04/ THE ANXIOUS PREOCCUPIED

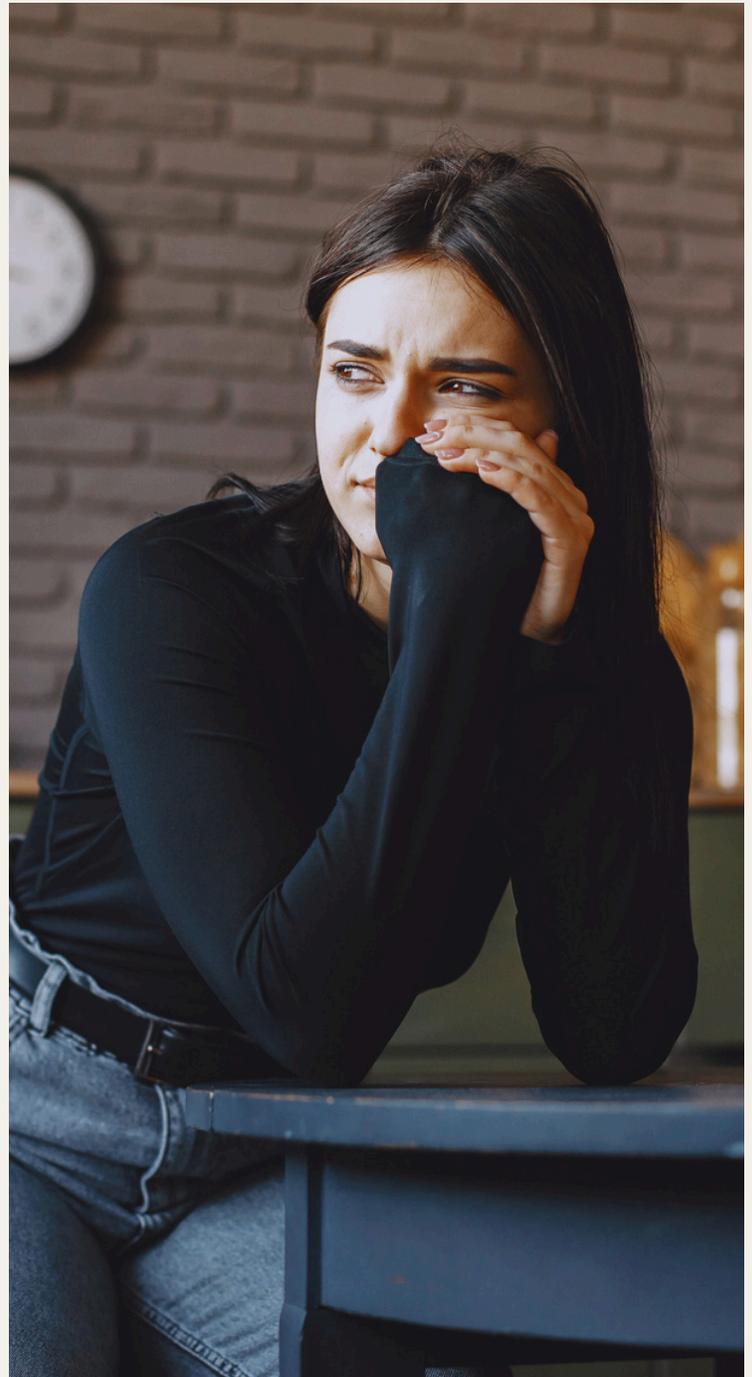
The anxious attachment style develops when a child experiences inconsistent care during their upbringing. This means that either one or both caregivers were emotionally available to the child but unable to provide a consistent level of support. The inconsistency could be due to various reasons, such as a supportive but absent parent or parents who were emotionally connected but had busy work schedules. This causes the child to develop a fear of abandonment. This carries over into adulthood, where they project this fear of abandonment onto their partners.

### THOUGHTS AND BELIEFS

Individuals with an anxious preoccupied attachment style often believe that they are unworthy, unloved, and unsafe. They tend to fear rejection, abandonment, and loneliness. They unconsciously project these beliefs onto their adult relationships and worry their partner may abandon them. They believe that seeking the approval of others and people-pleasing will prevent this fear from resurfacing.

Anxious preoccupied individuals are warm and empathetic. They value relationships and enjoy connecting with others, but relationships can cause them great anxiety. They have an underlying fear of abandonment, which causes them to become "clingy" and attach to others fairly quickly. They have a tendency to people-please and put others before themselves.

- They don't like being alone and fear they may be alone forever.
- Might panic or worry when their partner starts pulling away or withdrawing.
- Are hyper-attuned to other's behaviors, facial expressions, and actions.
- Are co-dependent on others.
- Want a committed relationship with a partner who will prioritize them.
- Expect their partner always to be available and know what they need.
- Overthink and jump to conclusions easily.



# 4

## HOW TO MAKE IT WORK WITH AN ANXIOUS PREOCCUPIED

Anxious-preoccupied individuals often crave reassurance and validation in their relationships. They may need frequent affirmation of love and support to feel secure. Your role as a partner is crucial in this process. It's important to communicate openly and show consistent availability and responsiveness to build trust and alleviate their fears of abandonment. Understanding their need for closeness and empathy towards their emotions is also important. Creating a safe and supportive environment where they feel valued and understood can help foster a healthy and fulfilling relationship with an anxious-preoccupied individual.

Due to experiencing inconsistent caregivers during their childhood, individuals with an anxious-preoccupied attachment style place a high value on consistency and predictability in their relationships. They seek a steady and reliable amount of support from their partners or loved ones, as this provides them with a sense of security and comfort in their relationships.

Anxious preoccupied individuals tend to respond well to positive reinforcement in the form of verbal words of affirmation and encouragement. They often benefit from hearing reassurances and positive feedback to help alleviate their anxiety and build their confidence. For instance, in situations where a partner is traveling out of town, individuals with this attachment style would greatly appreciate their partner offering verbal reassurances about the time apart and making an effort to check in with them regularly, as it provides the needed emotional support and reassurance.



Individuals with an anxious-preoccupied attachment style place a high priority on spending quality time with their partners and desire a strong, deep emotional connection. They feel most supported when their partners actively allocate time to be present with them, engage in meaningful conversations, and show genuine interest in their thoughts and feelings.

Partners play a crucial role in supporting and providing reassurance and validation for individuals with anxious-preoccupied attachment styles. However, it is also important for anxious-preoccupied individuals to focus on developing the ability to self-soothe and to cultivate self-awareness regarding their insecurities. This can involve practices such as identifying triggers for anxiety, learning techniques for self-calming, and engaging in introspective reflection to understand the root causes of their insecurities. By developing these skills, individuals can become more self-reliant in managing their emotions and building healthier relationships.



CHAPTER  
05

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DISMISSIVE AVOIDANT  
ATTACHMENT

OVERVIEW

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## 05 / THE DISMISSIVE AVOIDANT

The dismissive-avoidant attachment style typically stems from the emotional neglect that a child experiences during their upbringing. At a young age, the child learns that their caregivers cannot provide them with the emotional support they need, leading to them believing they can only rely on themselves to fulfill their needs. They were taught to suppress their emotions or were discouraged from expressing them openly. As they grow up, they become hyper-dependent and tend to withdraw from relationships whenever their partners require emotional vulnerability.

### THOUGHTS AND BELIEFS

People with a dismissive-avoidant attachment style have developed a belief during their childhood that they are inherently flawed, which makes them feel defective. Due to this belief, they may find it difficult to establish an emotional connection with others, as they perceive vulnerability as a weakness. They tend to avoid depending on others and believe that everyone is responsible for themselves because they think no one else will fulfill their needs.

Dismissive avoidants are intellectual and independent individuals. They want a caring and supportive partner, but relationships can feel overwhelming. They might withdraw or become distant in relationships when faced with emotional situations that require vulnerability. They tend to disconnect when people start getting closer to protect their sense of independence and autonomy, and they find it hard to connect to their own emotions.

- They don't like depending or relying on others.
- Being vulnerable or expressing emotion is difficult. They find it hard to emotionally connect with others.
- Fear long-term commitments or being trapped in a relationship.
- Place a high value on independence and autonomy.
- Are considered more of a “thinker” rather than a “feeler”.
- Don't do well with criticism.
- Shut down and become cold when facing relationship issues.



## HOW TO MAKE IT WORK WITH A DISMISSIVE AVOIDANT

When you're supporting someone with a dismissive-avoidant attachment style, it's crucial to respect their need for space and independence. Show understanding and reassurance, and be patient and supportive as they navigate their feelings and relationships. Creating a comfortable environment where they feel safe sharing their emotions is also beneficial. By being consistent, reliable, and empathetic, you can help build trust and security in your relationship with them. Remember, giving them space to process their emotions on their own, while also being there for support when they need it, is key to nurturing a healthy and understanding relationship.

When interacting with someone with a dismissive-avoidant attachment style, it's vital to be direct and clear in your communication. They highly value honesty and straightforwardness, so openly expressing your thoughts and feelings is essential. They do not easily interpret indirect messages and will not try to decipher what people mean, which can lead to confusion. By being direct, you can help establish trust and mutual understanding with them.

The dismissive-avoidants, often shaped by early experiences, value consistency and clarity in their relationships. By consistently expressing your needs over time, this creates predictability, where they start to develop a sense of safety and security. This is especially important for dismissive-avoidant individuals, as they may not have felt safe in their childhood due to inconsistent or unpredictable caregiving.



People with a dismissive-avoidant attachment style really want to feel accepted and struggle with handling criticism because it really hurts them. When they're in a conflict, using harsh words can make them withdraw and shut down. To work through conflicts with dismissive-avoidant individuals, it's best to avoid criticizing and instead focus on more positive ways to address the real issues. This can mean having open and understanding conversations, really listening, and finding solutions that work for everyone. For instance, if they're avoiding a difficult conversation, you can suggest a structured approach like writing down their thoughts and discussing them later.



Dismissive avoidants experienced emotional neglect as children, so it's crucial to help them navigate their emotions and understand their feelings in order to have a healthy and fulfilling relationship. By creating a safe space for them to express themselves and also expressing your own needs, you can build a strong connection.

CHAPTER  
06

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FEARFUL AVOIDANT  
ATTACHMENT

OVERVIEW

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## 06/ THE FEARFUL AVOIDANT

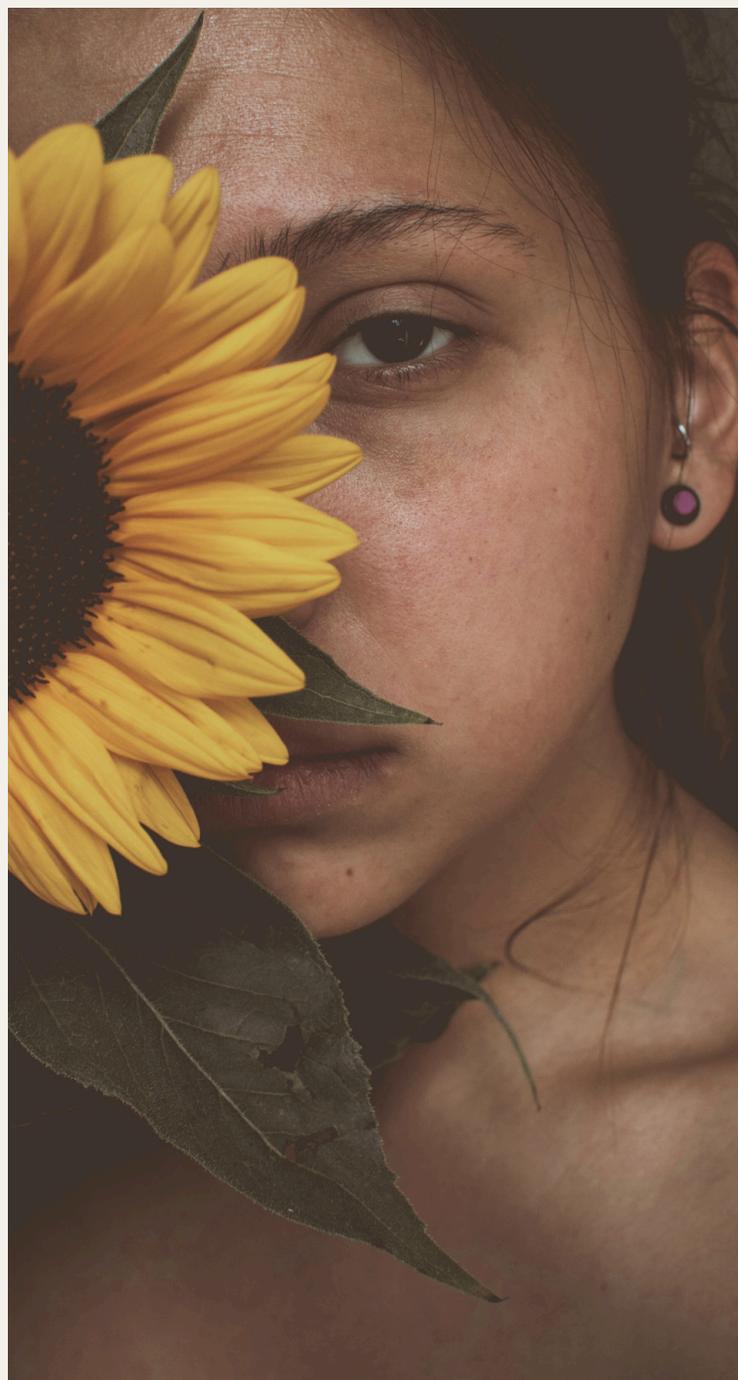
The fearful-avoidant attachment style is developed when a child experiences a turbulent household due to emotional, physical, or sexual abuse. The parent is still emotionally available, but the child may develop a lack of trust for them. The childhood environment is chaotic and unpredictable, causing uncertainty and instability. This results in the child shifting between wanting a close connection and distancing themselves. As adults, this behavior carries over into their relationships, where the fearful-avoidant individual projects their internal feelings onto their partners, constantly switching between wanting a close connection to being distant and wanting independence. They desire their partner to meet their emotional needs but cannot fully trust them.

### THOUGHTS AND BELIEFS

Individuals who have a fearful-avoidant attachment style tend to believe that their partner will betray them and that they are unlovable or don't matter. They have learned from their childhood experiences that relationships are supposed to be chaotic and tumultuous. They often feel that the people they love or care about will eventually abandon them, and they tend to have all-or-nothing thinking.

Fearful-avoidants are very giving and caring individuals. They desire a deep and loving connection but fear they might get hurt. They tend to be hot and cold, confused about their feelings in relationships, and have an underlying fear of betrayal. Their relationships are often intense and tumultuous due to their inconsistent upbringing. They tend to swing between feeling anxious and being avoidant.

- They don't like relying on others or asking for help.
- Have difficulty trusting others but crave a deep connection.
- Are hypervigilant and overanalyze people's actions, microexpressions, or body language to see if something is off.
- Think of the "worst case scenario" constantly look out for any signs of betrayal.
- Desire a relationship filled with passion, intense emotion, and chemistry.
- Value independency and autonomy.
- Have intense and chaotic relationships



# 6

## HOW TO MAKE IT WORK WITH A FEARFUL AVOIDANT

Building trust and open communication is not only vital but also beneficial for individuals with a fearful-avoidant attachment style. These individuals often desire both independence and closeness, which can create a complex dynamic in their relationships. It's important for partners to understand and respect their need for space and autonomy, while also providing reassurance and emotional support when necessary. By fostering trust and open communication, partners can help these individuals overcome their feelings of insecurity and fear of rejection. Creating a safe and understanding environment can help them feel more secure in the relationship.

Fearful-avoidant individuals place a significant emphasis on the need for transparency in their relationships. They deeply desire their partners to be open and honest, as this is essential for establishing a solid sense of trust and safety within the relationship. It is crucial to positively reinforce trust for a fearful-avoidant person, as they harbor an underlying fear of betrayal that significantly impacts their relationship approach.

Fearful-avoidants value a safe and open environment to express their emotions and needs. They often find it challenging to communicate their own needs and may feel resentful when they perceive that their needs are not being met. Partners need to encourage and support them in practicing vulnerability, as this is essential for them to express their needs and emotions openly. By providing a supportive and understanding environment, partners can help fearful-avoidant individuals to feel more secure in expressing themselves.



Fearful-avoidant individuals seek deep connections and desire quality time with their partners. Their emotional well-being thrives when they feel genuinely seen, heard, and truly understood by their partners. As a result of growing up in an environment characterized by trauma and unpredictability, these individuals may hold beliefs about love being chaotic. Partners can play a crucial role in helping them challenge and reconsider these beliefs on love and relationships. They can actively listen, validate their partner's feelings, and gently challenge their negative beliefs by offering alternative, more positive perspectives. Additionally, creating a safe and stable environment, free from judgment and criticism, can aid in reshaping the individual's negative thinking patterns.



To establish a healthier connection with a fearful avoidant partner, it is important to consistently offer trust and reliability, while also encouraging them to open up and be vulnerable.



## CONCLUSION

In summary, it's important to understand that there are four distinct attachment styles: secure, anxious-preoccupied, dismissive-avoidant, and fearful-avoidant. Each of these styles comes with its own set of expectations, views, and needs when it comes to love and relationships. Understanding the specifics of each attachment style allows us to develop self-awareness and cultivate healthier ways of engaging in our connections with others. It's important for individuals with insecure attachment styles to actively work towards healing and strive to become secure in order to have long-lasting sustainable relationships.

If you want to learn how to heal your attachment style and become secure in just a matter of weeks, please visit [DecodedLoveStyles.com](https://DecodedLoveStyles.com) to join the coaching program. Thanks for reading and I look forward to seeing you there!



*Decoded Love*

**COACHING**

UNLOCK YOUR LOVE STYLE