Adult Attachment Styles

How do you connect?

Below are some characteristics and behaviors of each attachment style. Be mindful that this is not an exhaustive list, and you may have characteristics from each category.

Secure Attachment Style

- Capable of conveying emotions appropriately and constructively.
- Capable of sending and receiving healthy expressions of intimacy.
- Capable of drawing healthy, appropriate, and reasonable boundaries when required.
- Feel secure being alone as well as with a companion.
- Tend to have a positive view of relationships and personal interactions.
- More likely to handle interpersonal difficulties in stride. Discuss issues to solve problems, rather than to attack a person.
- Resilient in the face of relational dissolution. Capable of grieving, learning, and moving on.

Anxious-Preoccupied Attachment Style

- Inclined to feel more nervous and less secure about relationships in general, and romantic relationships in particular.
- Inclined to have many stressors in relationships based on both real and imagined happenings. These stressors can manifest themselves through a variety of possible issues such as neediness, possessiveness, jealousy, control, mood swings, oversensitivity, obsessiveness, etc.
- Reluctant to give people the benefit of the doubt, tendency for automatic negative thinking when interpreting others' intentions, words, and actions.
- Requires constant stroking of love and validation to feel secure and accepted. Responds negatively when not provided with regular positive reinforcement.
- Drama oriented. Constantly working on (sometimes inventing) relationship issues in order to seek validation, reassurance, and acceptance. Some feel more comfortable with stormy relationships than calm and peaceful ones.
- Dislike being without company. Struggle being by oneself.
- History of emotionally turbulent relationships.

Dismissive-Avoidant Attachment Style

- Highly self-directed and self-sufficient. Independent behaviorally and emotionally.
- Avoid true intimacy which makes one vulnerable and may subject the Dismissive-Avoidant to emotional obligations.

- Desire freedom physically and emotionally ("No one puts a collar on me." Pushes away those who get too close ("I need room to breathe.")
- Other priorities in life often supersede a romantic relationship, such as work, social life, personal projects and passions, travel, fun, etc. In these situations, the partner is frequently excluded, or holds only a marginal presence.
- Many have commitment issues. Some prefer to be single than to settle down. Even in committed relationships, they prize autonomy above much else.
- May have many acquaintances, but few truly close relationships.
- Some may be passive-aggressive and/or narcissistic.

Fearful-Avoidant Attachment Style

- Often associated with highly challenging life experiences such as grief, abandonment, and abuse.
- Desire but simultaneously resist intimacy. Much inner conflict.
- Struggle with having confidence in and relying on others.
- Fear annihilation, physically and/or emotionally in loving, intimate situations.
- Similar to the Anxious-Preoccupied Style, suspicious of others' intentions, words, and actions.
- Like the Dismissive-Avoidant Style, pushes people away and has few genuinely close relationships.

Reflection

Which attachment style feels most familiar to you?

□ Secure
□ Anxious
□ Avoidant
□ Disorganized

Evidence from my relationships

What behaviors, thoughts, or emotions make you identify with that style?

_____

_____

_____

Attachment Triggers

When do you notice the strongest emotional reactions?

□ Conflict
□ Lack of communication
□ Feeling criticized
□ Emotional closeness
□ Being asked for support
□ Feeling dependent on others
□ Other: _____

Moving Toward Secure Attachment

Instead of...	Practice...
Assuming rejection	Asking for clarification
Avoiding difficult conversations	Communicating needs directly
Seeking constant reassurance	Self-soothing before reaching out
Shutting down emotionally	Naming feelings honestly
People-pleasing	Setting healthy boundaries