Attachment Styles

Relationships: Understanding How You Connect With Others

Your attachment style is the pattern you tend to fall into when you want to feel close to someone and safe with them. Psychiatrist John Bowlby and psychologist Mary Ainsworth first studied these patterns in young children, and later researchers found similar ones in adult relationships. This worksheet is for reflection. It is not a test or a diagnosis, and most people see a bit of themselves in more than one style.

1 The four styles

Secure At ease with closeness	You can get close to people and also feel fine on your own. You trust that the people who care about you will be there for you.
Anxious Worries about being left	You want a lot of closeness and reassurance. When someone pulls away or is slow to reply, you may worry that they are losing interest and work hard to reconnect.
Avoidant Uneasy with too much closeness	You value your independence and may feel crowded when someone wants more from you. You might keep your feelings to yourself and pull back when things get serious.
Fearful-avoidant Wants closeness, fears it too	You want to be close, but closeness also feels risky. You may move toward people and then pull away, which can feel confusing for you and for them.

Why does this work? *Many researchers measure adult attachment on two sliding scales: how much you worry about being rejected, and how uneasy you feel depending on other people. Where you sit can shift over time, and noticing your pattern gives you a chance to choose how to respond.*

2 Where do you sit right now?

Think about your closest relationships over the past year and circle a number on each scale.

How much do I worry that people I love will leave me or lose interest? (0 = not at all, 10 = a lot)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How uneasy do I feel when someone wants to be close to me or depend on me? (0 = not at all, 10 = very)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

**This worksheet provides information but is not a substitute for therapy. It works best with guidance from a professional.*

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3 Read your scales and notice your patterns

Low on both scales sounds more secure. High worry sounds more anxious, high unease sounds more avoidant, and high on both sounds more fearful-avoidant. Your answers may be different with a partner, a parent, and a friend. Now think of a few moments when you felt unsure of someone's care, such as a slow reply or a cancelled plan, and write what happened.

What happened	What I felt	What I did	Which style it sounds like
My partner was quiet all evening.	*Worried they were upset with me*	*Asked again and again if something was wrong*	*Anxious*

4 Moving toward security

When I feel unsure in a relationship, what helps me feel steady?

Who in my life helps me feel safe, and what do they do that helps?

One thing I could do differently the next time my pattern shows up:

Example: Tell my partner I feel uneasy and ask to talk, instead of sending more texts

Attachment patterns often begin in childhood, and they can change. If your pattern is causing pain in your relationships, a therapist can help you understand where it comes from and build a stronger sense of security.

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