

## PREOCCUPIED ATTACHMENT STYLE (ALSO REFERRED TO AS ANXIOUS OR AMBIVALENT)

- Can be incredibly generous and attentive to those they care about
- Experiences a lot of anxiety in relationships, worries about the status, "label," and state of relationship
- Sensitive to perceiving abandonment - requiring a lot of soothing, reassurance, and attention to cope with hyper-vigilance
- Tend to blame their emotions and anxiety on others (although unintentional, an aspect of early programming)



**How it feels typically?** Relationships are very important to you. Something just feels right about having someone special. Your fantasy of an ideal relationship is one where your partner just “gets” you down to your core. It’s imperative to you that there is the promise or possibility of feeling truly understood. This “feeling understood” can at times, unfortunately, be misconstrued into attraction for those who have similar dysfunctions in life. You love to love, however you may end up feeling angry, resentful, or disappointed in a relationship in which you don’t feel deeply understood - you may expect them to read our mind and to make matters worse, you may not know how to ask for your needs.

### Within a Relationship:

- Trouble can start once you settle into commitment or close to it. The person who seemed so promising at first, attentive and understanding, eventually skips a beat or gets distracted with life, and that’s when you remember that people aren’t always what they seem, no matter how nice, perfect, and giving you are
- You’ve had a script running, perhaps since childhood, fearing what can happen when you depend on someone, “I need them, but they will disappoint me,” causing over-focus on others, as if you can control let-down by predicting it
- You tend to put others' needs first, while not realizing you've abandoned yourself and your own needs
- You feel anxious or hurt even for minor incidents, like slow, short texts, or a curt nod as oppose to a glowing greeting
- Your gut churns with doubt and anxiety - subconsciously assuming you will be disappointed once again
- When your anxiety is on full display, you threaten the relationship, make ultimatums, do and say things you later regret, like “I can't trust you,” “You don't even want me,” or turn into outright anger, “You don’t give a crap about me.”
- When triggered it’s as if you need to show how much pain you’re in to connect - but it shows up extreme ways
- Deep down you are starving for the feeling of security you crave, but instead your behavior can push others away
- When calm, you're good at ironing things out, but each incident reinforces familiar pain, beliefs and assumptions, “You can’t be depend on others and if you don’t act ‘perfect’ they will leave you.”
- You may wonder if you’re too needy for anyone to deal with you. You know you ask for extra, but you also GIVE extra.

**Where it stems from typically?** Can stem from being put in an unfair position to help a parent feel better when they were having a hard time. It is natural to care and pitch in, especially when it’s our parents. But we humans are meant to live in larger social constructs of multi-generational families (similar to a tribe, rather than one or two adults raising children. When a child defaults into having to emotionally support an adult (something a child inevitably does not have the resources or know-how to do) they are doing it out of a sense of survival anxiety, which builds a blueprint of what’s needed to get love and an insatiable drive to give and care for another in order to get approval.

- This child didn't learn to find safety within - a sense of self-trust and self-worth, along with boundary-setting skills.
- It’s familiar to play rescuer, give, over-care and over-perform – as well as over-demand – in your closest relationships.
- May have memories in childhood of being unhappy with the amount of attention and care you received from one or both of your parents. Yet you had a least one caregiver, even if it was a grandparent or nanny, who was there in significant ways and you felt truly loved. Albeit, inconsistent and you couldn’t rely on love being there when you needed it. It’s the same inconsistency that drives your anxiety now, when relationships deepen, along with your fears and “co-dependence” on another person increases.