

"A current event can have only the vaguest resemblance to a past traumatic situation and this can be enough to trigger the psyche's hard-wiring for a fight, flight, or freeze response."

Pete Walker, MA

flight, fight, freeze, fawn
STRESS TYPES IN RELATIONSHIPS

The first step is to gain awareness of your default Stress-Reaction Type(s) and the ways you automatically react to stress, painful emotions, triggers and relationship distress.

With awareness, you can mindfully begin to choose Healthy Responses from all of the Four Types, instead of mindlessly reacting with maladaptive reactions.

Without awareness, we tend to react to or attempt to numb stressful feelings, resulting in a slew of multi-layered, counterproductive, even polarizing, maladaptive protective behaviors, like alcohol and food binging, obsessing and controlling.

Fawn types tend to fall into people-pleasing, placating, taking over-responsibility ('rescuing'), over-doing, or over-forgiving (without putting into place safety measures and boundaries to protect ourselves).



FIGHT TYPE

Outbursts
Aggressive
Controlling
Criticizing
Righteous

FLIGHT TYPE

Anxiety
Perfectionistic
Over-Analytical
Impulsive
Busy-aholic

FREEZE TYPE

Depression
Dissociation, Fogginess
Detached
Emptiness
Hopelessness

FAWN TYPE

People Pleasing
Boundaryless
Codependency
Compliant
Selfless

We may feel distress when we feel 'too much closeness' or 'too much space'

identifying REACTION PATTERNS WHEN EMOTIONS, STRESS, INTIMACY, UNKNOWNNS OR VULNERABILITY ARE TOO MUCH

Fight Type Maladaptive Reactions: Expressing and Poking Behaviors (Strive To: Feel Right, Respected and In Control)

I express my protective emotions, like anger or hurt, at my partner or at others

I demand immediate conversation for problem resolution, instead of allowing time to calm down ('never go to bed angry')

I blame my unmet needs on others: "You hurt me," "You stress me out," etc.

I need others to 'hear me out' and understand why I feel the way I do

I prioritize arguing and defending what I know is 'right from wrong'

I can come across as prickly as in 'I have a temper and will use it'

If I feel disrespected, I will demand respect by saying things like, "You need to respect me," or "You don't respect me enough"

I have yelled at someone with anger at least once in the last month

I have lashed out with anger at least once in the last year by name-calling, swearing at or physically fighting

I feel I have the right to enforce my values and opinions on others

I am quick to assert my complaints, disappointments, honest opinions and beliefs (whether asked for or not)

I have had migraines or severe headaches (possible sign of repressing instead of processing anger)

I defend against feeling vulnerable or ignored by detecting and telling others what they are doing 'wrong'

If I feel wronged, I get hot-headed and 'nip it in the bud' right away

I am told I'm opinionated or controlling

THERE ARE HEALTHY, BALANCED ASPECTS TO EACH OF THE FOUR TYPES

HEALTHY ADAPTIVE FIGHT RESPONSES

FIGHT TYPE

Assertive
Forthright
Boundaries
Protective
Moxie

HEALTHY, BALANCED, ADAPTIVE RESPONSES

FIGHT TYPE

Assertive
Forthright
Boundaries
Protective
Moxie

FLIGHT TYPE

Healthy Retreat
Perserverance
Industrious
Spontaneous
Disengagement

FREEZE TYPE

Poised Readiness
Independent
Safety Focus
Skeptical
Peaceful

FAWN TYPE

Love and Service
Compromise
Empathic
Peacemaking
Forgiving

Flight Type Reactions: Running and Distracting Behaviors (Strive To: Be Self-Sufficient, Not Be Naive or Taken for Granted)

I tend to take space away from someone if I feel unappreciated (hopefully they feel what's it's like to miss me)

If I feel ignored, I won't let on that i'm hurt, I move on and remind myself I am fine alone

I tend to make assumptions or 'mind-read,' instead of asking questions and getting clarity

Sometimes I ruminate, analyze, and can't stop thinking and/or talking about what happened

I tend to resent people that put too much pressure on me or have high expectations of me

I tend to flee or disappear without stating my need for space

I have had anxiety or panic attacks

I turn to food, alcohol or another substance to try to avoid stressful feelings, pressure or other painful emotions

I may over-shop, play too many video games, or similar types of behaviors to distract myself from stress or emotions

I go through my partner's phone, social media, or other ways of 'investigating' instead of communicating

I distract myself from being present, 'in my body' with my feelings, so I tend to fidget, get hyper, or multi-task (ADHD)

I tend to ruminate on ways I screwed up, said something wrong, or was imperfect

If I detect possible rejection, I am quick to cut the person off for good by breaking-up or ending a friendship

I have been known to 'act-out' by leaving my partner, only to come back to make amends (another example is cheating)

I can get stubborn and refuse to communicate my genuine needs and wants (I don't want to receive love when I'm mad)

I am quick to get mad at myself, berate and criticize myself in my mind (allows me to feel self-sufficient and in-control)

THERE ARE HEALTHY, BALANCED ASPECTS TO EACH OF THE FOUR TYPES**HEALTHY ADAPTIVE FLIGHT RESPONSES**

FLIGHT TYPE
 Healthy Retreat
 Perserverance
 Industrious
 Spontaneous
 Disengagement

HEALTHY, BALANCED, ADAPTIVE RESPONSES**FIGHT TYPE**

Assertive
 Forthright
 Boundaries
 Protective
 Moxie

FLIGHT TYPE

Healthy Retreat
 Perserverance
 Industrious
 Spontaneous
 Disengagement

FREEZE TYPE

Poised Readiness
 Independent
 Safety Focus
 Skeptical
 Peaceful

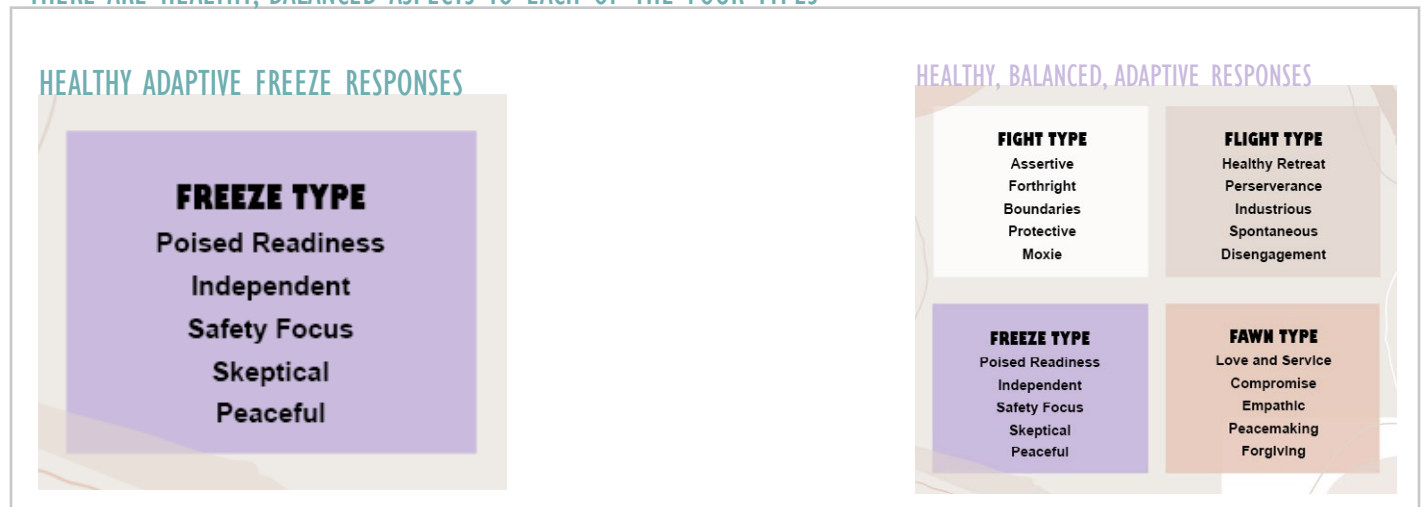
FAWN TYPE

Love and Service
 Compromise
 Empathic
 Peacemaking
 Forgiving

Freeze Type Reactions: Hiding and Avoiding Behaviors (Strive To: Feel Harmless, Safe, Innocent and Not Blamed)

- I tend to shut-down, try to ignore what happened and avoid conflict at all costs
- I suppress my genuine wants, needs, and limits from myself and others (usually to avoid feeling vulnerable or disappointed)
- I tend to minimize my own or others' feelings and experiences (I say things like, "Oh stop, you're fine.")
- My mind automatically clouds and shuts-down so I can't feel my emotions and instincts, sometimes for days (ADD)
- I get tongue-tied and shocked into physical immobility like a deer in the headlights
- I can end up feeling 'stuck' procrastinating or failing to get things done
- I may appear depressed, disconnected, insensitive or uninterested or guarded (although unintentional)
- If I feel I may get hurt or rejected, I may put up a 'wall of indifference' to protect myself, like a 'poker face'
- I tend to emotionally retreat into a closed-off state that feels harmless and safe
- I will avoid emotional, physical, or sexual intimacy as a way to maintain distance (instead of communicating)
- I may act in ways that invite others to shame me, like over-drink (making them the critical 'bad guy' and me 'harmless')
- I isolate and reverberate times people hurt and disappointed me; this helps feel temporarily safe, albeit a false sense of safety
- If I feel hurt or disappointed, I may appear indifferent and non-engaging with a 'why bother' attitude
- If I feel ignored, I usually feel like it's not really a surprise to have my needs unmet
- I would rather be quiet than blamed, told I failed, or that I am inadequate

THERE ARE HEALTHY, BALANCED ASPECTS TO EACH OF THE FOUR TYPES



Fawn Type Reactions: Submitting and Pleasing Behaviors (Strive To: Feel Liked, Good, Heroic, Peacemaker or Rescuer)

- I take the blame and even apologize for other people's feelings or for things that are not directly my fault
- I sway from my own values to avoid others' rejection or anger (or put aside my own interests in order to do what others want)
- I need to feel like the 'good guy' no matter what, so I will submit or please to resolve conflict
- I am highly empathic and hypervigilant about others' emotions and I tend to take on those feelings
- I hide my values, beliefs, needs or wants when I detect they may differ from those of others
- I tend to accept sexual attention and 'friends with benefits,' even though I really want genuine connection and love
- I am driven to gain the approval of others over my own self-approval
- If I feel ignored, I try harder, give more, and take on more responsibility to rescue the relationship
- I am quick to get mad at myself, berate and criticize myself in my mind (similar to FLIGHT type)
- If hurt, I smooth things over and down-play how upset I am, even to myself (I may say to myself, "Don't be mad, be fine.")
- I say 'yes' to avoid conflict or guilt, even though I really want to say 'no'
- I tend to give unsolicited advice or make other people's problems my own (it gives me sense of worthiness)
- I feel my needs and boundaries are not important (this may even feel strong)
- I focus more on other others feelings than my own (which also allows me to hide my feelings)
- I need reassurance right away that everything is ok (even multiple texts, calls, attempts to talk, or visits to get relief)
- I will make jokes even during serious matters, anything to keep things light (includes self-deprecating jokes)

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