

CHAPTER VI

The Secure Attachment Style



The Secure Attachment Style





EARLY CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCE

Secure attachment develops when a child's needs are met by their caregivers. They feel safe, protected, loved, and valued.

Approximately two out of three kids grow up to become secure attachers – that's a pretty good percentage!



However, this doesn't mean that their caregivers were perfect or flawless.

Everyone makes mistakes, and that's OK – it's impossible to be an ideal parent 24/7.

Whether it's picking your child up an hour late from nursery or leaving them unattended for a few moments with your friend's cherished flatscreen TV – we all make mistakes. It's inevitable.

The point is, though, that the caregivers of a secure child – and that includes your caregivers – managed to fulfill the child's needs and not break their trust. Be mindful, though – your parents certainly did it right, but perhaps not perfectly – and that's OK too! You can be securely attached and still have some bugbears with them!



SECURE ATTACHMENT

[reminder - the following terms are in line with the original terminologies and do not reflect our opinions]

THE “RESPONSIVE” MOTHER

Caregivers of securely attached children tend to be readily available and sensitive to their child’s needs. If their child cries, they are promptly on hand and will respond in the way that the child wants, whether it’s by cuddling, helping them to communicate, soothing them with kind words, or distracting them with play or by making funny faces. **This caregiver is emotionally in-tune with her child.**

As a result, the child knows that when they need something, Mom will be there to help them. This leads to them becoming a receptive child.

THE “RECEPTIVE” CHILD

The child of a responsive caregiver understands that they are their safety net – because they are nearby in case anything scary happens, they are safe to explore their world.

Eventually, through feeling safe and loved, the child begins to develop a sense of independence. They start to soothe themselves and control their own emotions when upset. They can see themselves through their caregiver’s adoring eyes – worthy of the love and affection that they give them.

As the child grows up, they know that they will continue to be loved and supported unconditionally.

Their experiences have taught them to trust that their needs can be met by other people, so they have a bright and positive outlook on others because they know that they'll be there for them if needed.

They explore their world with confidence and joy, eventually evolving into a secure adult.

THE SECURE ADULT

Securely attached adults tend to have a strong understanding of who they are as a person. **They have easy access to their early memories and they can deal with their emotions without too many difficulties. They typically have a positive outlook of themselves, as well as of other people.** This feeds into their attitudes regarding their romantic relationships; they are comfortable allowing another person to become emotionally close to them. Essentially, this means that securely attached adults have a pretty smooth ride when it comes to initiating and maintaining a successful romantic relationship.

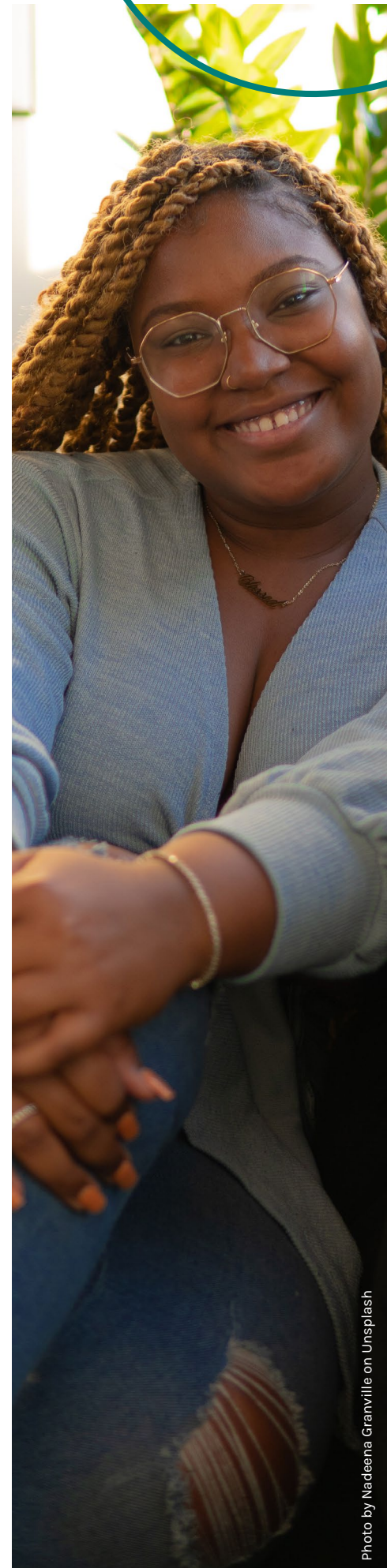


PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS

Your attachment style is not the only factor of your personality. You also have genetic and physical characteristics, as well as personal experiences which affected how you developed. However, the following features are typical of people with a secure attachment:

- Open, straightforward, and easy-going
- Don't cause drama and make a big deal out of things
- Calm and balanced
- Aware of their emotions
- Feel comfortable sharing private thoughts and feelings
- Value and trust people
- Empathic and caring but know boundaries
- Comfortable with mutual dependency
- Like being able to rely on others and have others depend on them
- Can accept criticism without significant distress
- Have good self-reflection skills and understand the consequences of behaviors in social contexts

Secure adults are generally *more connected with their feelings than insecure adults*. They're likely to be balanced, but this doesn't mean that they can't exhibit extremes of emotion or behavior but they typically manage their feelings and emotions more adaptively.



As warm, social people, secure attachers find it easy to bond with others and usually have many contacts. A secure adult might seek comfort, support, and guidance from their loved ones in times of need. In turn, they are comfortable offering those same things to others. In general, secure attachers value attachment to others, and they are comfortable with mutual dependency, yet they don't need constant reassurance and attention. They know their worth.

Which of your personality characteristics can you identify as potentially being a product of your attachment style? The



Identifying Your Personality Characteristics exercise in the workbook may help if you need some guidance in pinpointing these characteristics.

Jimmy, 37, is a secure adult. He has a great social network and a robust support system. And that's no surprise, as he's always cared for the people around him. Jimmy pays attention to the people he meets, he's genuinely interested in them, and he's always willing to help when someone's in need.

Besides, Jimmy is calm and easy-going. He's never pushy or angry at people when they don't do what he wants, doesn't talk behind people's backs, and has probably never created drama in his entire life. Jimmy values people's personal opinions and choices, and whenever those conflict with his own, he speaks openly yet doesn't make a big deal out of it.

Even though almost everyone who meets Jimmy wants to be in his life, Jimmy knows how to set boundaries. He prioritizes the time he spends with his closest contacts - his partner Christine, his childhood friends, and his family members - as well as the time he wants to spend on his own.

Still, Jimmy's always up for a good time and loves meeting new people. On weekends, he and Christine invite people over - friends, family, colleagues, etc. And despite the parties, dinners, lunches, and other activities they host, Jimmy and Christine always spare some weekend time just for themselves. They read, cook, or do some yoga together.

Jimmy is genuinely happy. He loves his girlfriend, he loves his life, and he loves himself. Yet, like everyone else, he, too, feels down sometimes. Whenever that happens, he shares his worries with his loved ones - usually Christine. He knows that she'll listen and won't judge him; he trusts her.

Remember, Jimmy is fiction! If he was a real person, he too would have bad days, become angry at his friends after a hard day, or forget his sister's birthday when he's busy. He might also be disappointed in others when he feels like they let him down. However, because he's securely attached, he's less likely to feel victimized, abandoned, or betrayed by others. He will also not feel less than others - he is able to get over it.

Do you ever wonder whether your thoughts about yourself influence your actions and their consequences? A self-fulfilling prophecy is when our beliefs about ourselves result in a specific outcome. As a secure attacher, you may be less likely to experience negative automatic thoughts, but it doesn't mean that you don't. If you would like some support in figuring out whether your thoughts



and actions result in self-fulfilling prophecies, refer to the Self-Fulfilling Prophecies exercise in the workbook

1.1 Secure Attachment and Self-Development

At this stage, you're already likely aware that securely attached adults have an overall positive view of themselves and other people's intentions towards them; because their needs were met as a child, they consider themselves worthy of love and don't fear rejection. Essentially, they have healthy self-esteem.

On the contrary, having an insecure attachment style influences the formation of healthy self-esteem because if your needs weren't met as a child, then you might come to believe that your needs, and, thus, you, don't matter.

This can cause people to repeatedly choose adult relationships that are unsatisfying to them, so they tend to repeatedly experience romantic failure without truly understanding why.

When their relationships continue to fail, it reinforces their belief that they are unworthy of love, possibly even subconsciously causing them to behave in a way that sabotages their relationship – hence, this cycle of unhealthy relationships and low self-esteem continues.

As you already know – our attachment styles are not set in stone, and, therefore, nor is our self-esteem. In this section, we'll discuss what self-esteem, sense of self, and sense of agency are before discussing how to use some self-development techniques to improve your outlook on yourself, your world, and how you fit into it (even though you may not need it!).



SECURE ATTACHMENT AND SELF-ESTEEM

Your self-esteem or self-worth is how you feel about yourself or the opinion that you have about yourself. It is how valuable and worthwhile that you believe yourself to be. Your levels of self-esteem are often due to your experiences, especially those from when you were a child. Hence, since the way that we view ourselves and others is rooted in our attachment styles, our type of attachment is seen as closely related to our self-esteem.

Your levels of self-esteem are not related to how capable or successful you *actually* are – you could have an amazingly accomplished career, social life, or love life and still have low levels of self-esteem. Instead, self-esteem is more about how positive you feel about yourself and your life. In fact, you have a general self-esteem and a focused self-esteem that relate to different fields or activities in your life (for example, you might have low general self-esteem but can still admit that you are a talented footballer).

Someone with a secure attachment tends to have a positive self-image, a strong sense of self, and healthy self-esteem. Seeing as they have a favorable view of themselves, they don't need constant reassurance from others to feel valued or worthy of love. This doesn't mean that they don't want intimacy or personal closeness – they simply feel good on their own as well as in relationships.

Secure attachers also have a favorable view of others; they tend to trust their partners and do not feel the need to be jealous of others or doubt their loved one's intentions.

Someone with a secure attachment can accept affection and act warm and loving to their partners. They have the ability to build meaningful, long-lasting romantic relationships because they are secure in themselves.

However, having a secure attachment isn't a guarantee for having healthy self-esteem. Plenty of people with this attachment style have experienced knocks to their self-confidence and may wonder how to rebuild their self image. After all, even if you're securely attached, it can't hurt to explore who you truly are!

To help determine whether you have a healthy self-esteem, or if this is an aspect of yourself that you need to work on, refer to



the Unveiling Your Self-Esteem exercise in the workbook.



SENSE OF SELF AND SECURE ATTACHMENT

People with low self-esteem tend to protect themselves by steering clear of any form of a challenge as they see them as inevitable mistakes waiting to happen. On the contrary, someone with robust self-esteem welcomes them as an opportunity to achieve personal growth. Combined with their aversion to tasks that might help them personally grow and the belief that their opinions and needs don't matter, someone with low self-esteem might never really get to know who they are as a person – they never really establish who they are. They lack a *sense of self*.

A sense of self is your understanding of the characteristics that you think define you. This might be your talents, likes, dislikes, moral code, or personality traits – all of these things contribute to who you are. Knowing who you are as a person makes it easier to acknowledge your positive attributes -the ones that you should be proud of and identify and change the ones you would like to improve. However, having a vague or ill-defined sense of self makes it difficult to know who you are, so it's tough to understand what you want out of life and your relationships.

But here's the good news; we already know how adaptable to our environment our brains are – otherwise, we wouldn't have developed an attachment style so early in life, but this flexibility can have promising implications for the future too!




Photo by Toa Heftiba on Unsplash

Neuroplasticity is the ability of our brain to adapt to our environment. When we learn something different or try to make novel habits, our brains make new connections between their neurons.

This happens naturally every day as we adapt to new situations, but it's also something that we can encourage and promote. Essentially, from the day we are born until the day we die, our brain rewires itself in response to what we need it to do.

This extraordinary ability means that you can develop a strong sense of self and use it to build your self-esteem. Using self-development techniques, you can hone your talents, interests, and goals and use them to grow in regards to who you are as an individual and increase your sense of self and self-esteem. Ultimately, self-development helps you to create an authentic sense of yourself – to feel content in your own skin and reach your full potential and happiness level in life.

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a bright green card. The card has white text on it. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the hand and the card's edges.

What can you do
today that you
couldn't do a year
ago?

Photo by Mikel Parera on Unsplash

SENSE OF AGENCY AND SECURE ATTACHMENT

A sense of agency, sometimes known as self-agency, is the feeling of control that you get over your actions and consequences. When you complete an action voluntarily, you tend to feel as though you are in charge; the action isn't just happening to you – you chose to do it. You affect your environment, and even more importantly, you build a mental image of yourself and how you impact your environment.

Someone with a strong sense of agency knows that they can influence the people and objects in their environment to get the kind of reaction that they want. For example, when a little boy uses his favorite action figure to knock down some Lego buildings, he knows the cause and effect of his actions on his environment.

Essentially, having a sense of agency means that you feel like you're in the driving seat when it comes to your choices and actions.

On the contrary, someone with a poor sense of agency might believe that they are powerless in their world – they think that things just happen to them and they have no control over it. *The world is happening to them.* For example, think of a voodoo doll; someone else is inflicting pinpricks on the doll and putting it in all sorts of predicaments. It has no control over what is happening to it. Someone with a poor sense of agency might see themselves as similar to the voodoo doll; they might feel like they have little to no control over their environment and other people's actions in it.



However, secure attachers's formative periods mean that they may be more confident than insecure attachers about their level of control over and impact on their world. As a result, they have a:

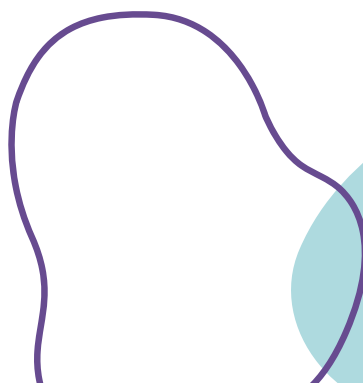
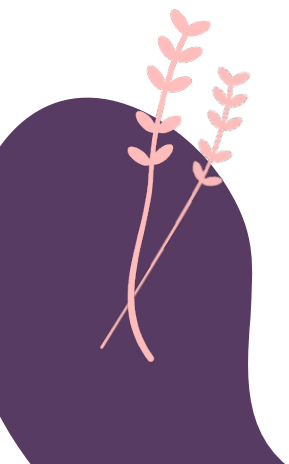
1. POSITIVE VIEW OF SELF

Securely attached adults have a favorable view of themselves. They do not need reassurance all the time from others to feel valued or worthy of love (but they may appreciate it!). Yet, this does not mean they reject or do not want intimacy or emotional closeness. They simply can manage to be on their own as well as in relationships.

2. POSITIVE VIEW OF OTHERS

Securely attached people also have a favorable view of others. They tend to trust their partners and do not feel the need to be jealous of others or doubt their loved one's intentions. They can accept displays of affection without fear or confusion. They are usually warm, loving, and lovable. They are capable of building and maintaining meaningful and long-lasting romantic relationships. They are comfortable with proximity and bond easily with others.

Although you may have a secure attachment style, you may still want to further develop your sense of self and sense of agency. If this is the case, the Self-Development exercises in the workbook may help you to figure out more of a sense of who you truly are as an individual.



TYPICAL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF A SECURELY ATTACHED PERSON

Strengths:

- You have a favorable view of yourself
- You have a favorable view of others
- You can solve problems on your own, but you're not afraid to ask for support if you need it
- You're confident about your value and strengths
- You trust the people close to you
- You are less likely to feel hopeless about life
- You have strong relationships and social support
- People enjoy being in your company

Weaknesses:

- Although there are no downsides to being securely attached, often people with this attachment style may still have some characteristics of an insecure attachment style. Try to consider the following strengths and weaknesses of the different attachment styles and whether you identify with any. This may help you to resolve any underlying issues that you may experience in your relationships and personal life.



Photo by Isaiah Mcclean on Unsplash

TYPICAL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE ANXIOUS/ PREOCCUPIED ATTACHMENT STYLE

Strengths:

- Caring & empathetic
- Precise, careful, and hard-working
- Likeable and agreeable
- Open to making new contacts and relationships
- Friendly and understands how to make new connections
- Doesn't give up on others easily- has a forgiving nature
- Values family, friends, and partners

Weaknesses:

- Might disregard their own opinions and interests in order to avoid confrontation
- Takes care of others needs first, so their own needs are often neglected
- May become perfectionistic and obsessive
- Loves attention and compliments in the beginning of a relationship, but may become anxious if these start to wane ("if people really get to know me, they won't like me anymore")
- Might become manipulative in their desire to achieve closeness
- May ignore red flags in relationships and stick with people who are bad for them
- Fear that others will leave, reject, or abandon them

TYPICAL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE AVOIDANT/ DISMISSIVE ATTACHMENT STYLE

Strengths:

- Capable of taking care of themselves
- Fiercely independent
- Tough and emotionally stable
- Don't seek attention and external validation
- Don't rely on the opinions or preferences of others - they make decisions based on their own evaluation of the situation
- They know their worth and are rarely shaken by criticism
- Can be social and maintain many contacts if they choose to
- Don't demand or expect others to do things for them
- Rarely feel let down by others

Weaknesses:

- Not comfortable with emotional closeness
- Don't let people in - it's hard for people to get to know them
- Don't trust people in general – sometimes they may even think negatively of others
- Lack awareness of their inner world, such as their emotions, needs, and fears
- May present a false self to the world
- Might refuse to let others be there for them and demonstrate love
- They may back off and distance themselves when others try to get close to them
- They typically suppress their emotions



TYPICAL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE DISORGANIZED ATTACHMENT STYLE

(often a mix of anxious and avoidant traits)

Strengths:

- Can be resilient when times are tough
- Often desire closeness to others
- May be capable of taking care of themselves
- Can be social and fun to be around
- Value their connections with others
- May not give up on others easily

Weaknesses:

- May be uncomfortable with emotional closeness
- Often struggle to trust others
- Difficulty seeking help when they need it
- Have a hard time opening up to others
- Fear that others will reject or abandon them
- Have trouble managing their emotions - may be moody and prone to creating conflict
- Difficulty with forming and maintaining relationships
- Might seek out emotional closeness and then turn away from it
- May see the world as an unsafe place

We all have strengths and weaknesses, and some of these can be attributed to our attachment style. You might even recognize some of your weaknesses in the traits of an insecure attachment style. For support in uncovering your strengths and weaknesses, as well as how they have affected your life, please refer to the

 Discovering Your Strengths and Weaknesses exercise in the workbook.

Reflection

Some of the information that we have gone through in this section might feel emotional or triggering to you - even if it is in a positive way. We encourage you to take a few minutes to tune in to the feelings and emotions that you might be experiencing, as well as any changes that you notice within your body

II.

FRIENDSHIPS & SOCIAL GROUPS

Every friendship dynamic is different, but your attachment style likely affects how you relate to your friends. Remember, your first experiences of relationships probably met your desire for emotional closeness. As a result, you may have certain subconscious expectations of how other people will meet your needs.

The following are some behaviors that you might recognize in yourself if you're securely attached - you may even recognize some of your friend's characteristics.

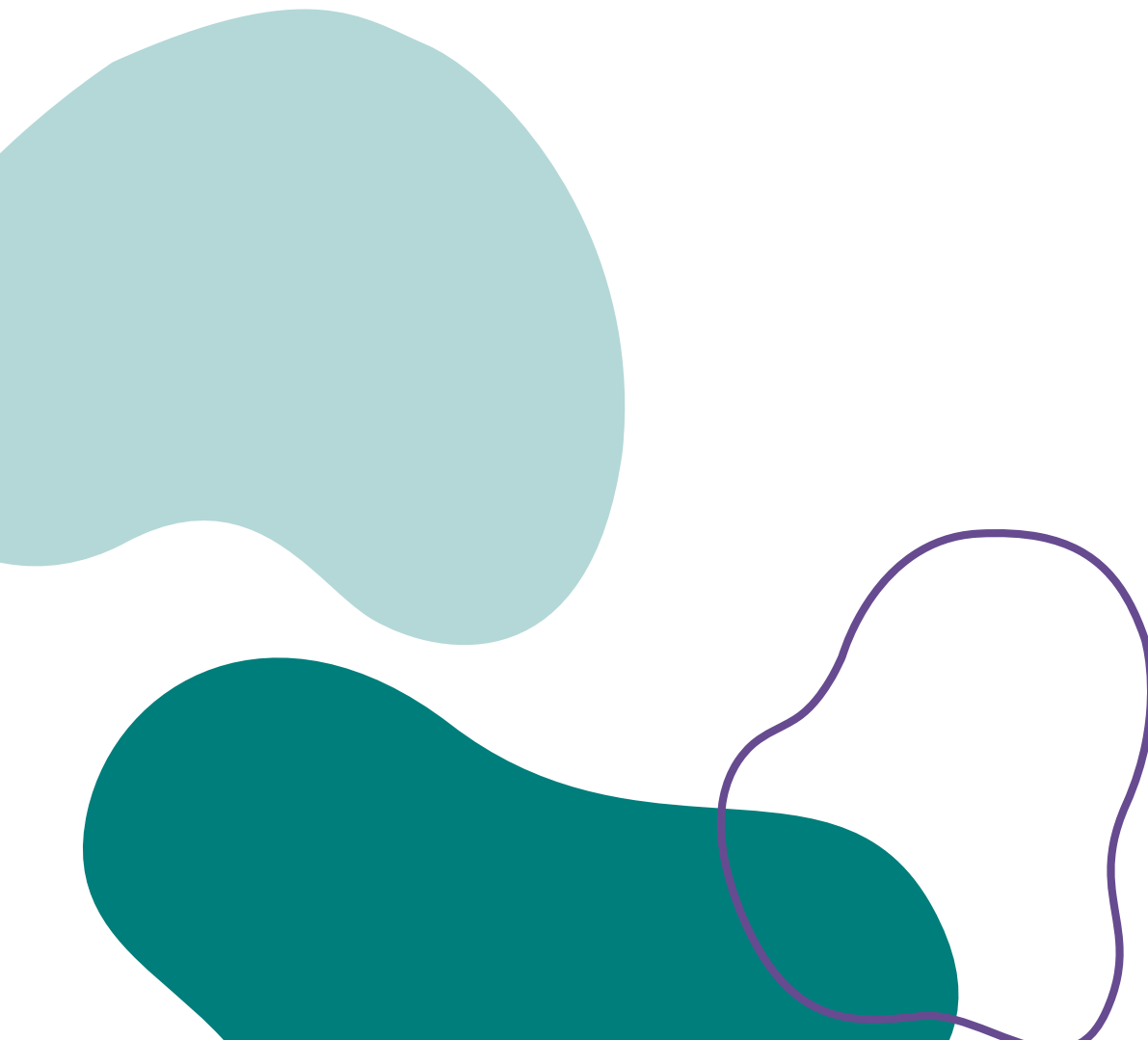
Being securely attached means that you feel positive about yourself and others; therefore, you likely feel comfortable allowing yourself to be vulnerable in your friendships and social circles. Securely attached people are also more likely to be effective communicators, meaning that others feel safe approaching them for comfort. They aren't afraid to ask for support when they need it.

They also don't take things too personally, such as a friend canceling plans last-minute, because they're secure in the stability of the friendship.

As a secure attacher, people may gravitate towards you as you have a strong sense of assurance about yourself that permits the development of trusting, long-lasting, and deep friendships.

Although you routinely reach out to others, you also respect their boundaries. Although you seek social support when you need it, you're also content to be by yourself.

For help determining how your current social groups operate, how you behave within them, and what you potentially need from your friendships (if anything), please refer to the Friendships and Social Groups exercise in the workbook.



III.

INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

First of all, remember that your attachment style doesn't predict everything in your love life (or your life in general). You are much more complex than that – you are a result of your genetics, temperament, and experiences, as well as your attachment style. All of this can affect who you are as a unique person. Here, we're exploring how you are fortunate enough to be able to rely on your secure attachment, but remember – nobody is 100% secure!

3.1 General Profile

Secure attachment means generally feeling safe and comfortable in relationships, including intimate ones. A secure person isn't overly threatened by emotional closeness. You, as a securely attached person, may even read that and be puzzled; *“But...why would relationships be a threat?”*

Well, emotional closeness can trigger personal fears such as abandonment or intimacy for people with insecure attachments. For this reason, relationships can be challenging for them, which can cause a variety of problems.

But this isn't a significant issue for you – as a secure attacher, you are less reluctant to feel and show intimacy. You might also find it relatively easy to bond with others; secure attachers don't need to pretend to be something that they're not – they are more comfortable in their own skin and can typically communicate their thoughts and wants clearly to others. They also don't feel the

need to hide their feelings to avoid confrontation. Most importantly, secure attachers are aware of their worth and the role that they play in relationships.

Secure people are more likely to trust their romantic partners, so they are less suspicious or jealous. Therefore, they feel no need to cause unnecessary drama or manipulate their loved ones to get what they want. If a relationship isn't working out, they're probably going to approach it reasonably.

For example, if two partners have tried everything within reason to make their relationship work, but nothing is improving, then the secure attacher will likely make the pragmatic choice and move on.

Sometimes, secure partners may attract insecure partners, and they may be able to help them address their need for emotional security. Sometimes it works (with a bit of trial and error and often external help), sometimes it doesn't. For previous reasons, secure attachers might let go of unhealthy relationships more quickly due to their social support and solid sense of self. However, when they find the right partner, secure people can build stable and loving relationships.

If you would like to reflect on your previous intimate relationships, what they meant to you, and the role(s) that you played within them, then please refer to the Intimate



Relationships exercise in the workbook.



3.2 Attachment Style Partnership Pairing

It takes two...to make a relationship work.

As a secure attacher, it might be relatively easy for you to form and be in a relationship, especially seeing as your actions aren't driven by anxiety or avoidance but solely by your desire to be with someone. You're one of the lucky ones.

Unfortunately, for people with attachment issues, things can be a bit more complicated. Let's see what happens when securely attached adults enter a relationship with an insecure attacher:

SECURE-ANXIOUS RELATIONSHIPS

Anxious attachers need someone patient and understanding around what makes them tick – possibly someone like Finn Hudson from *Glee*. Finn, Rachel Berry's on-screen boyfriend, has endless patience with Rachel's schtick. He puts up with her constant cries for attention and demands that he should quit the football team so other girls don't flirt with him.

Don't be mistaken – not all anxious attachers are like Rachel Berry. Obviously, her character is written for drama, but she's still a cookie-cutter example of an anxious attacher!

A securely attached person is the ideal personality type for an anxious attacher; they're able to form healthy relationships because they're comfortable letting their guard down. This means that they're naturally able to provide the intimacy and reassurance that an anxiously attached person craves. In time, an anxious attacher would even be able to relax into the relationship because of the stability that a securely attached partner provides.

Isabella's long-term boyfriend, Dan, is securely attached. Isabella is a likeable, friendly, and social person. She's known for always having a smile on her face. But Isabella's also a chatterbox, and her constant need for attention keeps her chirping away.

Easy-going and somewhat introverted, Dan seems unfazed by Isabella's chattiness, and he often makes a loving joke about what a chatterbox she is. His obvious delight in Isabella makes her feel like he is genuinely appreciative of her, and she feels free just to be herself.

From the first date on, Dan made her feel at ease. She doesn't worry that her boyfriend will see her as needy and controlling if she wants to spend more time with him (as she did in her previous relationships). "And," Isabella laughs, "he texts me back quickly, so I don't have to feel worried."



SECURE-DISMISSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Jonathan and Luke had been dating for about six months. Both were marine biologists in Miami and had quite a bit in common. Luke, typically a quiet person, really enjoyed Jonathan's goofy sense of humor; when they were together, they were always laughing.

Jonathan was happy to see Luke in person a few days a week, though they did speak daily. Luke, however, was starting to get frustrated with the relationship; he wanted more than just a couple of dates a week. Yet, he couldn't get Jonathan to open up and share his feelings.

Six months into the relationship, Luke was sent to Costa Rica along with his coworker Jason. The two went out for dinner and, after a few drinks, Luke explained his frustrations with Jonathan to Jason. Jason hugged him and told him he deserved more. When Luke returned to Miami, he broke up with Jonathan and, within weeks, he had moved in with Jason.

Secure attachers could provide their dismissive partners with the space they need. This way, the romantic relationship might not feel so overwhelming for the avoidant attacher. Yet, such relationships might be frustrating for a secure person who desires closeness and affection. But with patience and effective communication, their stability may help an avoidant partner to become more confident in the relationship and slowly allow themselves to become more vulnerable.

SECURE-SECURE RELATIONSHIPS

My Big Fat Greek Wedding is an excellent romantic comedy – it's just impossible not to get a warm feeling watching Toula and Ian fall in love. Both partners are so supportive of each other and show a natural warmth and easy intimacy in their relationship. Communication is open between them, and they tell each other their worst fears and secrets.

Of course, because it's a movie, there's going to be drama – but to resolve the issues that arise from their cultural differences, both Toula and Ian make compromises and sacrifices for each other.

For example, Ian baptizes himself to be Greek, and he allows Toula's family to plan the wedding. Absolute relationship goals!

By now, I think you're getting an idea about how secure relationships function - warm and loving, with lots of sharing and open communication. A secure couple value togetherness but also give each other the independence to do their own thing. Unsurprisingly, these relationships tend to be joyful and long-lasting. Of course, this doesn't mean that life won't throw hurdles at you or that you both won't change within the relationship.



SECURE-DISORGANIZED RELATIONSHIPS

Secure partners may be able to provide stability for a disorganized partner in a relationship as they may help them regulate their moods and emotions. A secure partner is more likely to have a positive outlook than a disorganized partner, which may fulfill the disorganized attacher's need for emotional closeness.

However, sometimes professional support or guidance may be required depending on the disorganized attacher's history and outlook.

3.3 Dating Online and in Person

The dating landscape of recent years is a new and often tough-to-navigate landscape. The constant evolution of smartphones and dating apps means that the potential to meet the right person rests in the palms of our hands. However, how do we traverse the masses of people who also wish to avail of the convenience of online dating to best ensure our chances of meeting a compatible partner?



Photo by Christiana Rivers on Unsplash

Using your knowledge of your attachment style and its compatibility with the other styles may increase your chances of meeting an appropriate match. Although there is no surefire way of determining someone's attachment style through an app or on the first meet-up, keeping an eye out for certain attachment traits may help you determine whether a potential partner is a good fit for you.

Try to keep in mind, however, that even if you're not technically compatible with another attachment style, this doesn't mean that a fledgling relationship is doomed to fail. **We all have individual differences that affect how we behave within relationships.**

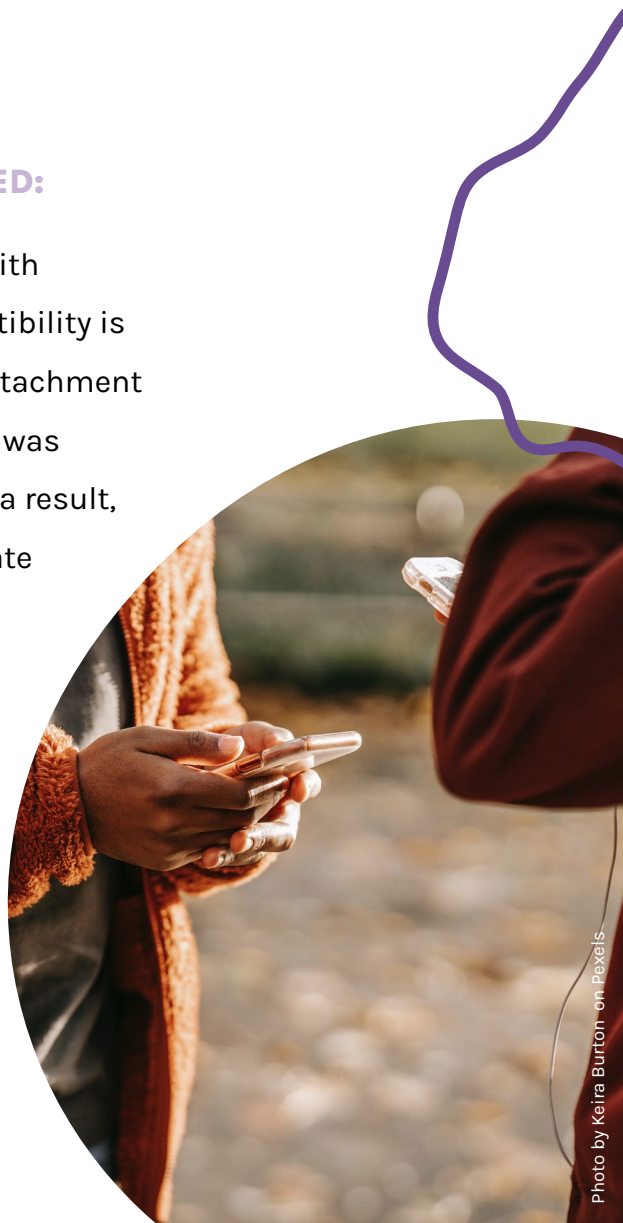
Therefore, if there is enough of a spark between two people, then it is entirely possible to overcome the challenges presented by attachment traits through either personal or professional work. After all, we have to believe that love can conquer all!

HOW TO TELL IF SOMEONE IS SECURELY ATTACHED:

A fellow secure attacher is an ideal match for someone with either a secure or insecure attachment style. This compatibility is mostly due to a secure attacher's early bond with their attachment figure(s); their need for security, proximity, and affection was met by their caregiver(s) during their formative years. As a result, someone with a secure attachment can effectively regulate their own emotions and those of others, typically has a positive outlook on themselves and others, and desires a healthy amount of affection and intimacy.

ONLINE

You can tell whether someone has a secure attachment style through a dating app based on their messages and manner of communication. For starters,



their profile will have their essential information, but probably won't over divulge too much. However, if they're interested in you, someone with a secure attachment won't hesitate to connect.

A secure attacher will ask questions about you rather than just speaking about themselves because they are interested in who you are as a person. Furthermore, they will also likely maintain a steady stream of messages without being too persistent or disappearing for days on end. Although they will be direct with you in your interactions, they won't overshare personal information - this doesn't mean that a secure attacher won't open up more with time. Still, they won't do so too early in the relationship.

IN PERSON

Similar to meeting through an app, when meeting a secure attacher face-to-face, they will not continuously talk about themselves but instead will be interested in getting to know who you are as a person. Thus, they will ask you personal questions about your life and share personal information about themselves within reason. The secure attacher will be open, warm, and friendly. If they're interested in you, then they will communicate that through their conversation and non-verbal communication; such as through open body language and steady eye contact.

Furthermore, as the date progresses, you may be able to glean information about the individual's past relationships. If they are securely attached, they may have had a couple of long-term relationships, but may also have spent periods of time alone. This is due to a secure attacher's comfort both in a relationship and by themselves.

HOW TO TELL IF SOMEONE IS ANXIOUSLY ATTACHED:

You might be more likely to match with someone with an anxious attachment style over any other on a dating app. This is because - according to statistics - anxious attachers are more likely to use online dating than the other attachment styles. Someone with the anxious attachment style typically fears rejection and intensely desires love and acceptance. Thus, they tend to act hypervigilant towards any threat to a relationship and can even push someone away inadvertently. However, a secure attacher can help an anxious attacher to regulate their emotions and feel secure within a relationship. So how can you tell whether someone is anxiously attached either online or in person?

ONLINE:

Anxious attachers may initially masquerade as secure attachers during an online conversation as their first impressions are that of a chatty and open person. However, it likely won't take long for their anxious attachment traits to burgeon; instead of asking questions about you, an anxious attacher will talk about themselves in order to impress you and reduce the risk of rejection. They may also attempt to forge intimacy and closeness within the relationship by divulging personal information too early.

IN PERSON:

Similar to making a connection with an anxious attacher online, when you meet them in person, they may focus mostly on talking about themselves. Thus, pay attention to whether they ask you questions about yourself or whether the focus remains on them. What's more, their anxious attachment style may manifest in non-verbal ways, such as fidgeting, attempting to stand or sit too

close, or maintaining too much eye contact in an attempt to seek connection and acceptance.

HOW TO TELL IF SOMEONE IS AVOIDANTLY ATTACHED:

An avoidant attacher typically feels unsafe in intimate situations. Thus, they like to establish boundaries within a relationship in an attempt to avoid emotional closeness and avoid affection. However, a secure attacher can help an avoidant attacher break down their boundaries in a way that feels safe for them, eventually helping them not become as triggered by emotional closeness in relationships. So how can you tell whether someone is avoidantly attached either online or in person?

ONLINE:

The avoidant style is relatively easy to identify through app dating compared to the other attachment styles; they may be quite reserved during the early stages of your connection and perhaps not message too much or resist opening up regarding personal information. What's more, when you do talk/message, they may focus on non personal topics such as films or books that they enjoy, their job, or sports that they play.

Also, if an avoidant attacher loses interest in the relationship, they may back off by not messaging or "ghosting" you. This disappearing act can happen quite suddenly, in particular, after an emotional breakthrough or disclosure.

IN PERSON:

Much of an avoidant attacher's behaviors in person will be similar to those through app dating; they will resist intimate or emotional

disclosures. However, in person, an avoidant attacher will not only be closed off in their verbal communication, but also in their non-verbal expression; they may be quite closed and reserved in their body language and have difficulty maintaining eye contact. For example, they may look at your chin or mouth as a strategy to avoid another person's gaze. Attempting to force eye contact or probing too much into an avoidant attacher's life may cause the avoidant attacher to feel unsafe, and they may retreat from the connection.

HOW TO TELL IF SOMEONE HAS A DISORGANIZED ATTACHMENT:

Since someone with a disorganized attachment may vacillate between the anxious and avoidant dimensions of attachment depending on their mood and circumstances, they may be prone to unpredictable behaviors and difficulties regulating their emotions. Because of their chaotic formative period, they both strongly desire and fear intimacy and emotional closeness. Even for a secure attacher, this level of unpredictability can be difficult to manage. However, a secure attacher is often emotionally equipped to help someone with a disorganized attachment regulate their emotions in a balanced and healthy way.

Thus, a successful and loving relationship between secure and disorganized attachers is entirely possible. However, in some cases, the disorganized individual may require professional support to process previous trauma or instability issues. So how can you tell whether someone has a disorganized attachment, either online or in person?



ONLINE:

On a dating app, someone with a disorganized attachment style typically leans towards more anxious patterns of behavior because of their innate desire for connection. Therefore, they are likely to disclose personal information quite quickly in an attempt to establish a close and intimate bond with the other person. They may also talk about themselves a lot and not ask questions about the person they matched with. However, if things progress too quickly, they may back off and “ghost” the other person, meaning they may stop messaging without any clear reason.

IN PERSON:

Again, a disorganized attacher is as likely to vacillate between anxious and avoidant traits in person, just like they do online. Thus, they may alternate between both styles depending on their mood and circumstance. For example, when you first meet them, they might be eager to connect and talk a lot about themselves. They may also hold eye contact and attempt to sit or stand in close proximity. Alternatively, they may just as easily be uncomfortable disclosing personal information, be withdrawn in their body language, and avoid eye contact by looking at your mouth or chin. It can be challenging to determine which traits a disorganized attacher will manifest on a certain day.

Although you have a secure attachment style, you may still find that there are certain things that a partner does that irritate you or perhaps even trigger traits of an insecure attachment style. If you would like to, or need guidance in, identifying your personal triggers in an intimate relationship, then refer to the Identifying Your Triggers in a Relationship exercise in the workbook.





3.4 Attachment in the Bedroom

By this point, you're aware of how secure people behave in relationships, so now it's time to see how they typically act when it comes to one particular part of relationships.

Let's talk about sex. Can your attachment style influence your sex life? And if so, how?

First thing's first - attachment absolutely does influence your sex life.

Think about it. Sex bonds two people. It creates intimacy and an emotional connection. On the one hand, it's how we tell someone, "Hey - I think you're hot!" but on the other, it expresses our love for them. And all of these factors connect to our attachment system.

By the way, when referring to your sex life, we're not just talking about the actual physical act of love-making. We're talking about your outlook on it, the way you think and feel about it, and the ways that you use sex to meet your emotional (not sexual) needs.

This is what we'll be covering in the following section.

HOW DOES SECURE ATTACHMENT AFFECT YOUR SEX LIFE?

In general, secure attachers tend to be satisfied with their sex lives and have a positive attitude towards sex. Two main factors contribute to that:

First, secure attachers feel good about themselves. A secure adult doesn't worry or stress too much about how they look, and they don't feel uncomfortable when sexual partners look at or touch their body. Although most people, securely attached or not, have some insecurities about their appearance, a secure person doesn't let it ruin an enjoyable experience.

Secure attachers tend to value themselves and know their worth. And that's super important when it comes to good sex. After all, how can you enjoy sex if you're too busy critiquing your looks and feeling bad about yourself?

Second, secure attachers trust their partners. When there's mutual trust and respect, neither party feels uncomfortable sharing their desires and preferences and will also do their best to satisfy their partner's sexual needs. A secure person trusts that their partner has good intentions and will be respectful, loving, and understanding. This makes it more likely that the couple will experiment and have fun in the bedroom -feeling secure and safe makes it easy for secure attachers to have satisfying sex.



As a result, securely attached adults tend to feel positive about their sex lives. They typically engage in sexual activities to express love for their partners.

Of course, we're talking about the ideal secure adult who has no complexes and no negative experiences in their past! A great sex life is, above all, a journey of learning about each other and communicating your needs.

IV.

ATTACHMENT AND PARENTING

One of the most significant predictors in our parenting style is the attachment style that we developed with our own caregivers – after all, it influences how we act in the important relationships in our lives, and our relationship with our children is no exception. Even though you are securely attached, you may still have characteristics or traits of an insecure attachment based on how you were parented. However, even though you may be prone to repeating your caregivers' behavior, it doesn't mean that you actually will – **you are not doomed to repeat the past.**

How you understand and make sense of your childhood and your behaviors in your adult relationships can be an even more significant predictor of what kind of parent you might be. No parent is perfect – you'll inevitably make mistakes. Still, if you enable yourself to repair any ruptures in the relationship, your child will likely grow up with a secure attachment!

For these reasons, if you are aware that you have some characteristics of an insecure attachment style, you must remain vigilant about these behaviors.

To the best of your ability, consciously evaluate whether you have created an emotionally consistent environment for them and pay attention to whether you are meeting their emotional needs. Understanding is the first step to breaking the cycle.

4.1 How to Raise Your Child to Have a Secure Attachment

If you can remember, for a child to develop a secure attachment, they need to develop in an environment where they feel **safe, seen and known, comforted, valued, and support for being their best self.**

It's essential to create a compassionate and warm environment for the child, one in which their caregiver can self-regulate their own emotions and reactions to upsetting stimuli. Doing so will help pass on these skills to their child as they learn through modeling and observation. It's also essential to view a child as an individual so that you are comfortable with them exploring; children with a secure attachment see their caregiver as a safe base from which they can explore their world with confidence.

They are satisfied with the knowledge that their caregiver is nearby and that they have someone to turn to if they get scared. This facilitates the belief that other people will be there for them.



V.

ATTACHMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

It's not just family and romantic relationships that can be affected by your attachment style – you might be more naturally inclined to act a certain way in the workplace, too, for both the positive and negative!

George, 35, works in a music production company. Every week, from Monday to Friday, he wakes up at 5:30 am, showers, has a quick snack, and travels to his office by bike. It takes him about an hour to get there, so by around quarter to 8; he already has his headphones on and a few tabs open on his desktop.

George is excited about his job and loves being in his office. That's why he's always there on time. He works hard, but not at the expense of his good mood and well-being. He's focused and "in a flow" – he gets things done, and he tries his best not to let his boss or colleagues down.

Besides loving the work that he does, George enjoys being around his colleagues. In fact, he likes being around people in general. He's always cheerful, helpful, and notably kind to the people he works with. George loves being in a team – collaborating, attending meetings, and when needed, supervising and guiding newcomers. In turn, George's coworkers enjoy being around him. They value and respect him, and they trust that he'll always help them or step in when there's a problem situation.

Being securely attached has benefits for all social contexts, including the work environment. OK, so obviously George is pretty well-rounded and works within the perfect team – being secure in the workplace might not look exactly like this, but it does have its benefits!

Employees with this attachment style feel comfortable and relaxed regarding relationships at work – regardless of whether they're colleagues, supervisors, or leaders.

Others in the workplace see secure attachers as valuable team members - possibly due to their ability to form strong bonds with people.

What's more, securely attached employees tend to be more satisfied with their jobs, working conditions, and coworkers. They also get sick less than insecure employees and are usually described as; *“the least likely to put off work, least likely to have difficulty completing tasks, and least likely to fear failure and rejection from coworkers,”* (Hazan & Shaver, 1990). They're also likely to trust others and see their bosses positively.



5.1 Securely Attached Individuals May Make Better Leaders

Secure attachers are not only great employees, but they typically also have the potential to be great leaders.

If they climb to the position of leader, they would likely be able to sustain their focus on work objectives and still be sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. Secure leaders are thought to show concern and care about their employees' well-being, which can only lead to a balanced, healthy work environment. Actions such as these are known to improve company productivity and success – so, everyone wins!



VI.

RECOGNIZING YOUR SUPERPOWERS

By now, you will have learned about your attachment style in-depth, your personal characteristics, strengths and weaknesses, the way you engage in relationships by identifying your triggers, your needs, your soothing mechanisms, and more. You also continued to learn about different types of scenarios for dating and behaviors in the workplace. If you would like some help with identifying your attachment related personal superpowers,

✎ then please refer to the Identifying Your Superpowers exercise in the workbook. Perhaps even try to identify ones that could be attributable to one of the insecure attachment styles.



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PART IV

The Secure Style Exercise Workbook



EXERCISE 1 | EARLY CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCE


1a. How we interpret our childhood can help us to understand how our attachment style developed. Try to think of an early memory that aligns with your secure attachment style. (If you do not have any clear memories from your childhood, try to think of a recent memory or a story that your relatives might have told you about your childhood that supports your attachment style).

EXAMPLES OF EARLY MEMORIES

Mary specifically remembers the day she got lost from her mother at the mall. Every detail, including how she felt, who helped her, and the relief she experienced once she found her mother, are still clear in her memory.

Natalia's early memory is her first sleepover at a friend's house. She remembers feeling so happy that she never wanted to leave and was sad when her parents came to get her.

Boz recalls being terrified of the dark. He remembers the stories his mom read to reassure him and the big cardboard sword his father made to help him beat the monsters in his room.



1b. Note your early memories if you can:

EARLY MEMORY	PEOPLE INVOLVED	PEOPLE’S REACTION	HOW I FELT

1c. As someone with a secure attachment, you likely had caregiver(s) that parented consistently. This means that you probably had your needs met and you felt safe, loved, and valued as a child. Based on this information, what is your interpretation of security? For example: My dad was always there to tuck me into bed at night. It always made me feel safe.

How does your interpretation of security align with the early memories you wrote above?

With an attachment style that is the consequence of successfully met needs, let’s dig deeper. Write down the basic childhood needs that you remember from your own childhood, see with your own children, or other people in general. Fill out the table below:

CHILDHOOD NEEDS	MET/UNMET (GIVE EXAMPLE)	HOW I EXPRESSED THIS NEED	CONSEQUENCES IN CHILDHOOD	MY BELIEFS ABOUT MYSELF AS A RESULT
Example: Security (other examples might include love, food, play, etc.)	Met - My dad tucked me in so I felt safe.	I used to pull at his sleeve at bedtime and cry if he didn’t respond quickly enough.	I felt secure in other relationships and around other people.	I believe that I am worthy of love and safety.

EXERCISE 2 | IDENTIFYING YOUR PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS

2a. Identifying your personality characteristics

Our formative years can impact the development of our personality. Which of your personality characteristics can you identify as potentially being a product of your attachment style? Try to consider your less-than-positive traits - you might even discover that you share some with the other attachment styles!

For example:

- a. I am pretty resilient - I can bounce back from rejection pretty well.
- b. I trust my partner. We don't have a perfect relationship, but that's OK.
- c. I just assume that everything is going to work out because it always has.

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

Examples of personality characteristics:

- Confidence
- Creative
- Addictive
- Generous
- Warmth
- Independence
- Helpful
- Honest
- Hostility
- Sensitive
- Adaptable
- Patient
- Skepticism
- Explosive
- Curious
- Fair
- Self control
- Self reliance
- Empathetic
- Balanced
- Apprehensive
- Trusting
- Energetic
- Perfectionism
- Impulsive
- Courageous

2b. Based on the characteristics you wrote down above, which of the following is:

1. The most challenging for you?
2. The most challenging for your friends to handle?
3. The most difficult to handle at work?
4. The one you would like to change? (if any)
5. The one you would like to cultivate more?
6. The one that gets you in trouble?
7. The one that brings you positive attention?

EXERCISE 3 | SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECIES

3a. Do your thoughts about yourself influence your actions and their consequences?

Before you fill in the following table, we should cover the concept of self-fulfilling prophecy. Due to a cycle of negative thinking's influence on your feelings and actions, you may become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Self-fulfilling prophecies are when our subconscious beliefs and expectations influence our actions and result in a specific outcome.

For example, Elaine is 28 and single. She has repeatedly experienced rejection in the past with men that she has liked, but she has recently become close with her new work friend, Mauricio, and she has been hoping he will ask her out, but so far, he hasn't. Elaine is sure that if she asks Mauricio out on a date that he will say no, but she manages to pluck up the courage to do it regardless. The next time she sees Mauricio in the corridor, Elaine tucks her chin into her neck and mutters, "I know you're probably not interested, but I was wondering if you'd like to go out for dinner or something? Don't worry if you're busy." Just as Elaine predicted, Mauricio turns her down. This is a clear-cut example of how someone's thoughts affected their actions and resulted in a self-fulfilling prophecy.



3b. Based on this information, please check all that apply and offer a real-life example. If it does not apply, write **N/A**. (Remember, as a secure attacher, you may have less negative examples of self-fulfilling behavior but it doesn't mean that you don't have negative thoughts which can affect how you act. Try to think of extra examples of how negative thoughts may have created a self-fulfilling prophecy for you. We will provide some blank spaces for you to fill in).

I HAVE...	BY...	THE RESULT OF THIS WAS...	WERE YOU BEING A SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY?
<i>Example: Been open and straightforward</i>	<i>Being easy-going and asserting my wants</i>	<i>I got what I wanted and needed</i>	Yes
Been open and straightforward			
Kept calm in stressful situations			
Been aware of my emotion and expressed it			
Valued and trusted people			
Shown empathy and caring			
Set boundaries with flexibility when needed			
Relied on others for help			
Comfortable trusting people			
Accepted criticism without significant distress			

EXERCISE 4 | UNVEILING YOUR SENSE OF SELF-ESTEEM

Your sense of self-esteem is essentially how positive you feel about yourself and your life. If you have healthy self-esteem, then you likely generally have a positive outlook. However, if you have low self-esteem, then you might struggle to see your positive aspects and modify your behaviour to become what you think others want you to be. As a secure attacher, you may be more likely to have a healthy sense of self-esteem. However, your life experiences may have affected how positive you feel about yourself and your life.

Complete the following sentences as honestly as you can:

1. I am naturally good at
2. I am excellent at
3. My family says I am great at
4. My friends think I am good at
5. At work/school I am praised for being

6. I am happy when I am able to

7. Something that I am proud of about myself is

8. When I think of myself, the first thing that comes to mind is

9. My view of myself is

in comparison to my view of others (e.g. favorable, unfavorable, etc.)

EXERCISE 5 | SELF-DEVELOPMENT EXERCISES

The following exercises can help you to determine what is truly important to you in life, and help you to uncover an honest sense of who you are:

5a. WHAT ARE YOUR VALUES?

Awareness of your values can be hugely helpful in determining a sense of self. Your values are the traits and characteristics that you admire in yourself or others. For example, maybe you have a friend who's empathetic and trustworthy, or perhaps you have one that is particularly gregarious - it's up to you to figure out what your values are and whether you're living your life according to them. They will keep you on the right track to leading a fulfilled life that's true to your sense of self and help you engage in rewarding relationships.

What values are important to you?

5b. WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY?

What makes you feel like the best version of yourself? Everyone has things or people that make them feel truly at home in their own skin. Identifying these things can help determine the things that you value the most and tell you a lot about who you are as a person.

What makes you happy?

5c. ARE MY CHOICES MY OWN?

Do you typically ask other people to choose what you watch together? Where you go for food? Maybe you say “yes” to others just to make them happy. Whereas these things might be trivial, they may indicate that you make choices based on someone else’s interests rather than on your own. Perhaps ask yourself whether you would make the same choices if you were by yourself. Having a solid sense of self means choosing activities that are grounded in *your* interests and goals.

Is it easy for you to make decisions? To let someone else make them? Are you flexible when you allow someone else to make choices?

5d. IDENTIFY YOUR RESOURCES

Having a solid sense of self means that you acknowledge that you have resources. We all have strengths, and it's essential to identify them if we want to achieve the goals that we set for ourselves. What's more, increased awareness of your skillset means that you're more likely to have a healthy sense of self and improved self-esteem.

Our personal resources come from an understanding of our strengths and weaknesses. Both can be useful if we know how to balance them.

EXERCISE 6 | DISCOVERING YOUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

We all have strengths and weaknesses, and some of these can be attributed to our attachment style.

6a. Out of the strengths and weaknesses discussed above and in your profile, which ones do you identify with related to your attachment style (possibly even consider those associated with the insecure attachment styles)? Think of 3 or 4.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES

6b. For each strength, or each weakness you wrote down, now think/write:

An episode when it has been protective/helpful to you.

For example: I typically have a positive opinion of others. This helped me to be rational about a certain friend's intentions when I felt like they did wrong by me.

A time when it has hurt you in some way:

For example: I am able to regulate other people's emotions pretty well, but on a particular occasion I felt like a certain person took advantage of that.

Events influenced by this:

For example: this caused me to feel uncomfortable around them because they were too reliant on me.

Give a characteristic of yourself that defines your personality:

For example: I am a positive person. People see me as upbeat.

6c. Write down your most successful accomplishment:

For example: I graduated college

Which characteristic helped you succeed in this accomplishment?

For example: I am hard-working and resilient

6d. What is the most important role you have fulfilled?

For example: partner, lover, daughter, friend

Which characteristic helped you with this role? For example: being trustworthy or open

Is this characteristic associated with a strength or weakness that you wrote above?

6e. When you faced a significant obstacle, what skills helped you to overcome this obstacle?

6f. What skills do others recognize in you that you are surprised to hear about?


If you cannot think of skills that others recognize in you, think of compliments you receive (at work or outside of it) and write these down

6g. What is still missing? What strengths or skills do you still want to achieve?

What is getting in the way of you achieving them?

For example: trust in others, support system, intrinsic motivation, commitment to long term projects, the ability to maintain relationships in the workplace, capacity to work in a team.

Do you think that the weaknesses you mentioned above are related to your attachment style in any way? How so?



6h. By now, you've probably come to predict that your sense of agency is affected by your attachment style; similar to low levels of self-esteem, having an insecure attachment style may leave you more susceptible to having a poor sense of agency. As a secure attacher, you may be confident about your level of control and impact over your world. Still, if you feel like you might benefit from improving your sense of agency, it might be useful to ask yourself the following questions:

Do you prefer doing things immediately or put them on the long finger?

Are you listening to your gut/intuition when you make a decision?

Do you act spontaneously or considerately? In what areas of your life?

How is your concentration? In different situations?



EXERCISE 7 | FRIENDSHIPS AND SOCIAL GROUPS

Our attachment style often influences how we behave in our friendships and social groups. Use the following exercises to determine how your social groups operate, as well as what you might need from these groups (if anything) to feel fulfilled within them. Even secure attachers sometimes wish to improve their social skills in certain ways!

7a. From the words below, pick five that best describes your social support system (feel free to think ones that aren't listed):

- Meaningful
- Long term
- Turbulent
- Co-dependent
- Harmonious
- Awkward
- Supportive
- Formally cordial
- Expressive
- Chaotic
- Intimate
- Bitter
- Uncomfortable
- Intense
- Small
- Expansive
- Secretive
- Lonely
- Professional
- Love-hate
- Short term
- Distant
- Social
- Companion
- Intellectual
- Learning-based
- Competitive
- Stable
- Tempestuous
- Unstable
- One-sided
- Remote
- Hollow

7b. What do you look for in a social support system? Check all that apply to you or try to think of ones that aren't listed:

- Connection
- Sense of belonging
- Fun
- Understanding
- Validation
- Support
- Parent
- Close bonds
- Professional partnership
- Social acceptance
- Someone to do stuff with
- For emergencies

7c. What are your typical behaviors toward members in your social support system? (Again, feel free to think of ones that aren't listed)

- Judgmental
- Understanding
- Agreeable
- Caretaker, the "mom/dad"
- Strict
- Jealousy
- Strong-minded
- Crazy fun
- Distant
- Straightforward
- Direct
- No tolerance for BS
- Chill
- Easy to get along

7d. Reflecting on the last two questions: how do your behaviors support your needs from your social support?

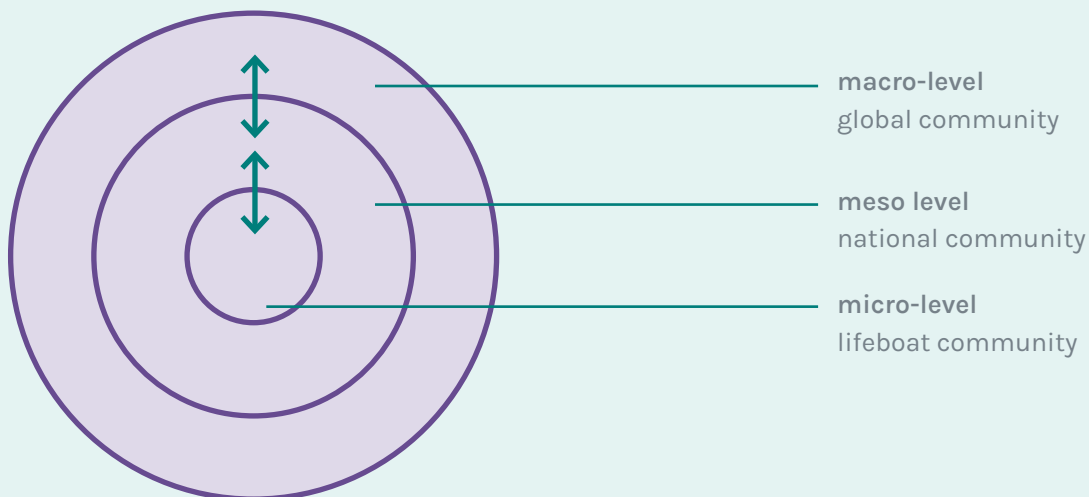
For example: I show others that they can trust me and I can count on others when needed

7e. Take a look at the following graph. Write down people or relationships that are part of your circles:

Macro level: the people in your wider community, e.g. your work colleagues

Meso level: the groups that you associate with, such as wider friend group

Micro level: the significant people in your life, such as your partner, best friends, etc.



7f. Reflecting on these relationships, what are some recurrent issues/mishaps you come across with the relationships you have on a:

Micro-level:

Meso level:

Macro-level

Examples of issues are trust difficulties, dependence tendencies, miscommunications, lack of interest, lack of chemistry, difficulties forgiving, struggles connecting in big groups, etc.

7g. Which of these issues you wrote down are the most bothersome to you:

7h. Where do you believe these issues stem from?

7i. Regarding your bothersome issues, place each one in one of these three columns:

Predicting factors | Perpetuating factors | Protective factors

Note: predicting factors are things that trigger your problematic issues. It might be someone not answering their phone, not replying to messages quickly enough, or using a certain tone of voice. Perpetuating factors are things that maintain these problems, for example, conflict within a friend group, or feeling down about yourself around others. Protective factors are those that you do to protect yourself from experiencing negative emotions, such as isolating yourself, freezing people out, or being too accepting.

EXERCISE 8 | INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

Having a secure attachment doesn't guarantee a secure relationship; secure partners may attract insecure partners, and circumstances can impact the trajectory of a relationship. However, being securely attached often influences how someone with this attachment style behaves in an intimate relationship.

Reflect on your intimate relationships (regardless of how long they lasted).

Relationship 1.

Your role as a partner: (e.g., the avoidant, the cheerleader, the giver, the boss, etc.)

Your partner's role in the relationship:

Relationship 2. (not required)

Your role as a partner:

Your partner's role in the relationship:

Relationship 3. (not required)

Your role as a partner:

Your partner's role in the relationship:

Relationship 4. (not required)

Your role as a partner:

Your partner's role in the relationship:

EXERCISE 9 | IDENTIFYING YOUR TRIGGERS IN A RELATIONSHIP

We all have individual triggers in a relationship – you might even find that you have ones that are indicative of traits of an insecure attachment style.

9a. Use the following sections to help identify your triggers in specific areas within an intimate relationship:

Communication

E.g., partner keeps asking too many questions

Expressions of affection

E.g., my partner wants public displays of affection

Time spent together

E.g., my partner wants to spend time with my family

Values or beliefs

E.g., wants to share everything with me

9b. Now that you have identified your triggers in a relationship, try to identify what you need in a relationship to prevent your attachment traits from being triggered:

Communication

E.g., someone who gives me time to process my thoughts

Expressions of affection

E.g., someone who respects my boundaries

Time spent together

E.g., respects my time alone

Values or beliefs

E.g., does not judge my beliefs

9c. What actions can you take if you recognize that your attachment traits are being triggered?

That your partner can do for you

E.g., verbalize understanding for my boundaries

That you can do for yourself

E.g., deep breathing, turn off my phone, listen to music

Grounding strategies for myself

E.g., name the color of things around me, things I can smell, things I can hear



9d. List 10 things that make you feel safe in a relationship:

For example: understanding, consistency, words of affirmation, etc.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

Place a * next to the ones that are a direct product of your attachment style

EXERCISE 10 | IDENTIFYING YOUR SUPERPOWERS

Use the following table to help you identify your attachment related superpowers. Do your best to reconsider attributes that you might currently view as a challenge or weakness – you may even start to recognize them as a strength instead.

IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS	IN OTHER RELATIONSHIPS (FRIENDS, FAMILY, ETC.)	IN THE BEDROOM/ INTIMACY	AT WORK
<i>For example: I'm trusting and open with my partners</i>	<i>I respect other people's boundaries</i>	<i>I can communicate my needs and listen to those of my partners</i>	<i>I'm a great team member and people seem to like working with me</i>