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ON ATTACHMENT

LEARNING MORE ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIP STYLE

WHAT IS ATTACHMENT THEORY?

- Tool for understanding relationship styles, especially romantic relationships.

There are Four Styles of Attachment

1. Secure (50% population)
2. Anxious (20% population)
3. Avoidant (25% population)
4. Anxious-avoidant (5% population)

Remember: like differentiation, you likely inherit the same attachment as you witnessed in your Family of Origin.

UNDERSTANDING SECURE ATTACHMENT



Someone who is Securely Attached is:

- Comfortable with intimacy
- Warm and loving
- Reliable & consistent
- Able to make decisions with you
- Takes a flexible view of relationships
- Communicates relationship issues well
- Closeness creates further closeness

UNDERSTANDING ANXIOUS ATTACHMENT



Someone who is Anxiously Attached:

- Wants a lot of closeness in the relationship
- Worries about rejection
- Plays games to keep your attention and interest
- Acts out instead of trying to resolve the problem between you
- Lets you set the tone of the relationship so as not to get hurt

UNDERSTANDING AVOIDANT ATTACHMENT



Someone who is Avoidantly Attached:

- Sends mixed signals
- Values their independence greatly, & uses that to create distance in the connection
- Uses distancing strategies, either emotional, mental, or physical
- Emphasizes boundaries in the relationship
- Leaves you guessing about their feelings or intentions in the relationship

UNDERSTANDING ANXIOUS-AVOIDANT ATTACHMENT



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Someone who is Anxiously-Avoidantly Attached:

- A blend of anxious & avoidant depending on:
 - The partner's attachment style
 - The main relationship issues
 - The current conflict
- It's a constant interpersonal & intrapersonal push-pull dynamic

GOOD NEWS ...



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ATTACHMENT STYLES ARE STABLE BUT
PLASTIC. THAT IS, YOU ARE ABLE TO SHIFT
YOUR ATTACHMENT STYLE DEPENDING ON
WHO YOU ARE IN RELATIONSHIP WITH.

HOW TO SHIFT YOUR ATTACHMENT STYLE TOWARDS SECURE

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Remember: because attachment styles are stable but plastic, it is possible to shift your attachment.

However:

- **It is only possible to shift towards secure if one partner is already secure.**
- IE: If you are anxiously attached, but are in a relationship with a securely attached partner, it is possible to move towards a secure attachment for yourself.

UNDERSTANDING THE 'ANXIOUS-AVOIDANT TRAP'

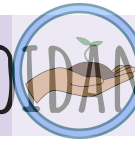


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Common relationship dynamic between an anxiously-attached partner, and an avoidantly-attached partner (opposites attract). Common symptoms include:

- Stable instability - **unhealthy homeostasis**
- The feeling of being 'on a rollercoaster' in the relationship
- An emotional counterbalance in self-worth and esteem (ie - avoidant inflates their ego, while anxious feels needy & incapable).

MORE ON THE ANXIOUS-AVOIDANT TRAP



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Push-Pull Dynamic:

- Anxious partner pushes towards intimacy
- Avoidant partner pulls away.

Eventually the relationship will come to a head over this dynamic,

- Anxious partner threatens something big (ie - threatening to leave the relationship or move out)
- Avoidant partner concedes.

With Avoidant's concession towards intimacy,

- There is intense relief by anxious, creating a feeling of closeness in the relationship.
- With this increased closeness, avoidant pushes away, anxious begins pursuing
- The cycle repeats itself.

HOW ATTACHMENT THEORY RELATES TO DIFFERENTIATION



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Remember: differentiation is the ability to hold onto your sense of self within the incredible pressures of a system.

- People with high levels of differentiation often exhibit the behaviors of a securely attached individual, which include the ability to:
 - Manage and express emotions effectively
 - Communicate with values-focused language
 - Balance attunement with boundaries
 - Balance independence and connectedness

REMEMBER ...

YOU CAN MOVE TOWARDS A SECURE ATTACHMENT AS YOU
INCREASE YOUR LEVEL OF DIFFERENTIATION.



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