



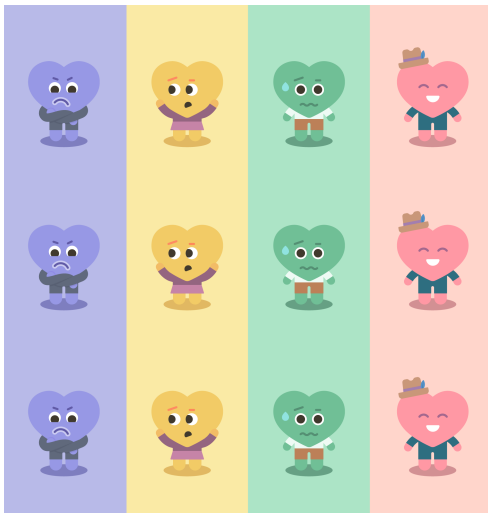
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ATTACHMENT STYLES, ARTICLES, BOOKS & MORE!

This month's newsletter focusses on attachment styles. You may or may not have heard about these, but everyone has an attachment style. We explore what they are, and how they affect your life. And there's also links to articles and books that you might find interesting.

And don't forget, our last article was about narcissism, and how we all need some of it. Click [here](#) to learn more, and to access all our previous articles.

If you're interested in our
previous articles, please click
[here](#)

If you've got a suggestion for an
article, or there's something
more you would like to hear
about, please send us an email
- click [here](#)

WHAT'S YOUR STYLE?

By Amanda Pulford

Director and Clinical Psychologist

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Attachment styles develop in childhood, and continue with us throughout adulthood. Sometimes they're helpful, sometimes they're not. And they can influence everything from parenting, to partners, to friendships, and even work. Read on to find out more about attachment styles, and changing attachment styles.

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What Is An Attachment Style?

Attachment refers to the particular way in which we relate to other people. Our attachment can play out in how we relate in intimate relationships, how we parent children, how we form friendships, and in our workplace. Attachment influences how we react to our needs, and how we go about getting our needs met.

How Do Attachment Styles Develop?

Our attachment style is formed at the very beginning of our life, during our first five years, or earlier. It is formed through the relationship that we had with our major caregivers at that time.

Understanding our style of attachment is helpful because it offers us insight into how we felt and developed in our childhood. It also clarifies ways that we might be challenged as an adult, and informs what we can do to change or improve our close relationships, our parenting, or our work relationships.

What Are The Types of Attachment?

Young children need to develop a relationship with at least one primary caregiver in order for their social and emotional development to occur normally. Without this attachment, they will suffer serious psychological and social impairment. During the first five years, how the caregivers respond to their children, particularly during times of distress, establishes the types of patterns of attachment their children form. These patterns will go on to guide the child's feelings, thoughts and expectations as an adult in future relationships.

Secure Attachment

Ideally, children form an emotional attachment to an adult who is attuned to them – someone who is sensitive and responsive in their interactions with them. It is vital that this attachment

figure remain a consistent caregiver throughout the child's early life. Children also need to use the adult as a secure base from which to explore the world and become more independent.

Secure children feel safe, seen and soothed.

Avoidant Attachment

There are caregivers who are emotionally unavailable and, as a result, they are insensitive to and unaware of the needs of their children. They have little or no response when a child is hurting or distressed. These caregivers discourage crying and encourage independence. Children pull away from needing anything from anyone else and are self-contained.

Avoidant children feel unsafe, unseen and not important.

Anxious Attachment

Some caregivers are inconsistently attuned to their children. At times their responses are appropriate and nurturing but at other times they are intrusive and insensitive. Children with this kind of parenting are confused and insecure, not knowing what type of treatment to expect. They often feel suspicious and distrustful of their caregiver but at the same time they act clingy and desperate.

Anxious children feel insecure, suspicious yet are desperate for connection.

Chaotic Attachment

When a parent or caregiver is abusive to a child, the child experiences the physical and emotional cruelty and frightening behaviour as being life-threatening. This child is caught in a terrible dilemma: their survival instincts are telling them to flee to safety but safety is the very person who is terrifying them. The attachment figure is the source of the child's distress. In these situations, children typically disassociate from their selves and their environment.

Chaotic children feel conflicted and often detach to cope with their environment.

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How Do These Types Influence My Life?

The childhood attachment style that you develop, carries through to your adult life. People who formed secure attachments in childhood have secure attachment patterns in adulthood. People who formed avoidant attachments in childhood have avoidant attachment patterns in adulthood ... and so on.

Secure Attachment

Secure people have a strong sense of themselves and they desire close associations with others. They basically have a positive view of themselves, their partners and their relationships. They can meet both their own needs and another's needs.

Secure adults are balanced: they are both secure in their independence and in their close relationships.

Avoidant Attachment

Avoidant people tend to be loners; they regard relationships and emotions as being relatively unimportant. They are thinkers and suppress their feelings. Their typical response to conflict and stressful situations is to avoid them by distancing themselves. They believe that the way to get their needs met is to act like they don't have any.

Avoidant adults are not balanced: they are inward and isolated, and emotionally removed from themselves and others.

Anxious Attachment

Anxious adults are self-critical and insecure. They seek approval and reassurance from others, yet this never relieves their self-doubt. In their relationships, deep-seated feelings that they are going to be rejected make them worried and not trusting. This drives them to act clingy and overly dependent with their partner. They rely on their close relationships to meet their needs, rather than meeting their own needs.

Anxious adults are not balanced: their

insecurity leaves them turned against themselves and emotionally desperate in their relationships.

Chaotic Attachment

Chaotic people continue to be somewhat detached from themselves, since, as children, they detached from their feelings during times of trauma. They desire relationships and are comfortable in them until they get emotionally close.

At this point, the feelings that were repressed in childhood begin to resurface and, with no awareness of them being from the past, they are experienced in the present. The person is no longer in life today but rather, is suddenly re-living an old trauma.

Chaotic adults are not balanced: they do not have a coherent sense of themselves nor do they have a clear connection with others.

Can I Change My Attachment Style?

The good news is ... absolutely! The attachment style you developed as a child based on your relationship with your caregiver doesn't have to define your ways of relating in the here and now. If you come to know your attachment style, you can uncover ways you are defending yourself from getting close and being emotionally connected and work toward forming an 'earned secure attachment'.

You can challenge your attachment style and behaviours by choosing a partner with a secure attachment, and work on developing yourself in that relationship. Working with a professional can also be helpful for identifying your attachment style, changing attachment patterns, and earning a secure attachment.

The Take Away

Attachment styles aren't something that we have choice over when we're children; however, as adults, we do have choice about how we work with them, and we can change them.

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Articles

If you want to learn more about attachment and attachment styles, you might find the following articles of interest.

Attachment Styles

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/finding-love-the-scientific-take/201709/attachment-styles>

The connection between childhood attachment styles and adult relationships.

How Your Attachment Style Affects Your Parenting

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/compassion-matters/201510/how-your-attachment-style-affects-your-parenting>

Like it or not, our childhood has a lot to do with how we parent. In fact, research has shown that our attachment style with our own parents is the biggest predictor of the attachment style we'll have with our child.

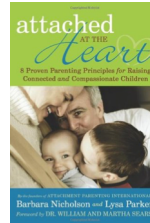
What is Your Relationship Attachment Style?

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/communication-success/201507/what-is-your-relationship-attachment-style>

What is your interpersonal attachment style, and how might it affect your relationship?

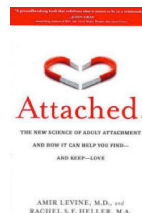
Books ...

Following are two books that explore attachment styles, and attachment styles in relationships ... great reads!



Attached at the Heart: 8 Proven Parenting Principles for Raising Connected and Compassionate Children
by Barbara Nicholson and Lysa Parker

No other parenting book is as comprehensive in its scope, from an overview of attachment theory and current child development research to practical strategies for everyday situations.



Attached : The New Science of Adult Attachment and How it Can Help You Find and Keep Love by Amir Levine and Rachel Heller

Attached guides readers in determining what attachment style they and their mate (or potential mate) follow, offering a road map for building stronger, more fulfilling connections with the people they love.

As always, if you would like some help, please feel free to contact us on 0488 954 195,
admin@awakenpsychology.com.au or [click here](#)

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