

Find & Keep Love

UNDERSTANDING THE BEHAVIORS
THAT GET IN THE WAY OF A HAPPY,
HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP



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One

AM I SECURE?

Humans are wired for attachment.

When my clients say, "I'll just be alone forever," I know they don't mean it.

We are designed to be interdependent, and it's ok to want someone to depend upon.

In fact, science demonstrates that the more our needs ARE met in our dependency years, the more confident and independent we can become.

Our emotional needs continue to vie for attention as adults though, and research again demonstrates that when we feel safely partnered, we can feel secure enough to venture forth in other endeavors.

One of my favorite quotes below clearly indicates this healthy bond:



*"The greatest gift you can give somebody is your own personal development. I used to say, "If you take care of me, I will take care of you." Now I say, I will take care of me for you, if you will take care of you for me."
~Jim Rohn*



The lesser alternative, I suppose, would be, "if you don't take care of yourself for me, it's going to be really hard for me to take care of myself for you."

In fact, science has even proven that partners will coregulate. Handholding especially can bring down heart rates, blood pressure and stress activity in the brain of the other person.

That's why dying alone during Covid was so tragic. We aren't meant to be alone, and we physically and emotionally need someone to be there for us!

"So why is it so hard for me to find a partner then?" my clients ask.

An answer is found in the attachment styles we develop in our childhood and carry with us.

Understanding them, and being willing to work on them, can make a difference in who we attract and to whom we are attracted.

It's important to understand that attachment styles are defense mechanisms, which is a way we have been built to survive. It doesn't mean we are bad or wrong or broken.



In the book **Attached** by Amir Levine and Rachel Heller, they describe three main styles of attachment:

The first is **Secure Attachment** style.

We are lucky if we have this one. It means our primary caregiver kissed our boo boos when we were little and showed up for us consistently.

We felt safe most of the time and trusted the people and the world in general.

To me, these are the long-term relationship people. They stay in it for the long haul because their belief is simply, “why not?” They assume the best in people and have no reason not to. They take the highs and lows of a relationship in stride.

My hunch is you won’t find many of these people in the online dating pool, but when you do it’s best to spot the qualities quickly and get them off the market straight away!

However, if we don’t possess a secure attachment style ourselves, we may describe these people as missing a spark, no passion, boring, or too nice. Secure people aren’t about drama, they like closeness and intimacy, and we if we tend toward anxious or avoidant styles, we may miss the cues of a stable, reliable, healthy relationship staring us in the face.



Two

AM I ANXIOUS?

The second is **Anxious Attachment** style.

Anxious people may have had a childhood where the caregiver was inconsistent with their attention and meeting the child's needs, so the child was not certain of what to expect.

Anxious children may find it difficult to separate from their caregivers, be generally anxious, be inconsolable or have difficulty regulating their emotions.

As adults, they could be described by partners as needy or clingy because they require reassurance, closeness, and can be an emotional roller coaster.

Anxious people, especially women, often find themselves attracted to avoidant partners.



*"You're only as troubled as the
relationship you're in."
~Attached*



Three

AM I AVOIDANT?

The third style, **Avoidant Attachment**, is mainly what my female clients come in complaining about as they search for love.

The dating pool is swarming with them because these types cycle through relationships fairly quickly and are unlikely to pair up with another avoidant.

Avoidants are the ones that feel suffocated or stifled by intimacy. They may have grown up with only some needs met and others never met. Maybe they could count on a bottle, but not on being held. They learned it's safer to do it themselves, not trust, and not ask for help. They also tend to blame external circumstances for not being able to find the right relationship.

They may start a relationship with “love bombs” but then they pull away, distance themselves, pride themselves on being extremely independent, and can leave an anxious style never knowing where they stand in the relationship.

Avoidants can be uncompromising and use distancing—both physical and emotional. They lack clear intentions and fear being taken advantage of.

So, I suspect at this point you are feeling hopeless. Don't! Awareness is always the first step to success.



Four

HOW DO I FIND THE RIGHT PARTNER?

The underlying theme of the book and attachment, in general, is that **the right person will bring out the best in each of us.**

And, as many of us have experienced, the wrong person will definitely bring out the worst in us.

So, before the next interaction, here are some points to remember and look for:





Red Flags of Avoidant Style:

- Pride themselves on being independent
- Feel stifled by physical and intimate closeness
- Aren't open books
- Don't express their feelings
- Flirt with others
- Focus on tiny imperfections in a partner
- Pull away
- Mentally "check-out"
- Leave things unclear and act secretive
- Can stay with someone long term but often say "I'm not ready to commit"
- They confuse self-reliance and independence.

Remember we are interdependent beings and so we sometimes rely on others for help, support, and connection.

The defenses of Avoidants are all ways to keep their biological drive from attaching because they have learned it's not safe to rely on anyone.

A warning to women who think "I can change him. I can be the one to help him see it's safe to be close." Without an awareness to their defenses, a willingness to directly work on it in therapy or coaching, and a person wanting to change; it will be impossible. Avoidants can make changes though when a major life change or challenge pushes them into reflection.



Red Flags of Anxious Style:

- Are sensitive to others' emotions and rejection
- Jump to conclusions but are often misinterpreting another's feelings
- Obsess about their partner
- When activated they may use protest behavior:
 - call or reach out excessively
 - withdraw
 - keep score
 - act hostile
 - threaten to leave the relationship
 - manipulate
 - incite jealousy

Remember, anxious styles are seeking to connect and reestablish connection because that feels safer than being alone.

Anxious styles are not broken because they need connection, reassurance, and security.

Don't feel ashamed for needing these things or shamed by someone for it.



five

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW BETTER SO I CAN DO BETTER?

1

Think like a Securely Attached person

An example in the book is thinking about how we are with our pets. With our pets, we are quick to forgive. We are trusting, show love and affection easily, know the intimacy is mutual, don't question it and feel mostly satisfied.

Remember this is both parties.

Can you give and receive in this way in your relationships?

If not, who is doing more of the giving?

If it's you doing the giving, how does that make you feel?



2

Communicate your needs from day one

Effective communication is the cornerstone of a good relationship.

I think it's also one of the hardest things to do.

We must be vulnerable to communicating effectively and this means we could get rejected.

I like to think of it as collecting more data. If we are vulnerable with someone, (you can just dip a toe at first; don't do a deep dive) and they respond poorly that says a lot about them and provides us with more information about them and the status of things.

Use phrases like: “the story I’m telling myself right now is...” or, “my interpretation of that comment, behavior, body/facial cue was ___ tell me where I’m wrong....” or “I feel ___ when you ___ and I would prefer if you responded by ___”

If your partner rolls their eyes, walks away, gets angrier, blames you, etc. then you have some good information about the health of that relationship.



When we make these attempts to communicate, it's a **bid for connection**. You may get rejected.

The next step is to then go away and comfort or soothe yourself until you feel calm.

Some ways to self-soothe are to:

- journal
- go for a walk or run
- take a warm shower or bath
- snuggle up and take a nap
- call someone you know will be kind and supportive
- reach out to your coach or therapist
- read
- remind yourself how brave that was and that you are learning and growing every day.



"What is self-soothing? Using all the senses to calm the mind, toning down the threat system when overwhelmed by emotion, anchoring the mind to the present and comforting oneself through the distress."

~Dr. Julie Smith



R E F L E C T I O N

Did you try some effective communication using phrases like the ones above?

How did it feel to be so vulnerable?

Did you survive it?

Did your partner respond in a way you hoped or reject your bid?

If you were rejected, how did you comfort or soothe yourself after feeling rejection?

If they responded to your bid, how did that feel?



3

There are many partners that can make you happy, not just one ideal.

Avoidant attachment styles tend to have an ideal of that one elusive partner.

They tend to look for tiny things that don't match up to the ideal and nitpick.

It's important to remember there is more than one perfect partner for us. No one is going to meet all the criteria we have listed. No one will 100% keep us happy, not mess up, meet our needs, etc.

Work on the relationship you have if you can. Accept the minor flaws as human (remember our dog just chewed up our Ray Bans, but we still love them.)

Note: if there is domestic violence i.e., verbal, or physical abuse, addictions that are not being treated it is best to leave this relationship immediately. Please see the link on the last page for signs of abuse.



4

Never take the blame for a date's bad behavior.

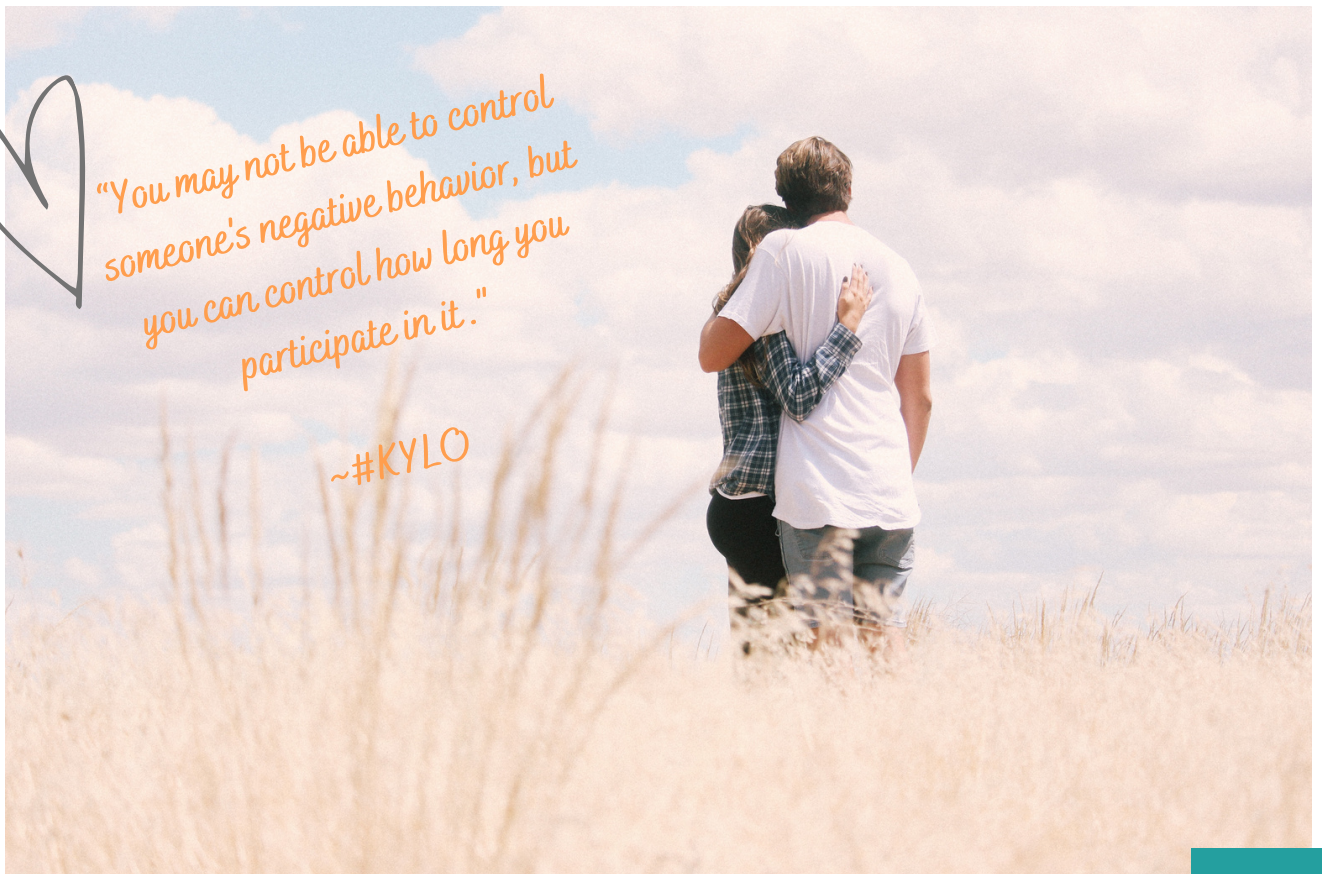
As I always tell my clients: "other people's behavior is always about them."

If someone disrespects you, insults you, doesn't respect your boundaries e.g., shows up late, pushes you to be more affectionate, tells you that you shouldn't feel a certain way, etc. and if they respond poorly to your setting limits that is not about you. You did nothing wrong.



"You may not be able to control someone's negative behavior, but you can control how long you participate in it."

~#KYLO





5

A secure person respects themselves and expects to be treated with respect and care.

We can all take a page from this manual.

When we value ourselves and believe in our own worth, it is easier to attract people who value themselves and will therefore value us just as much.

No one is perfect. We all make mistakes, fail, show our flaws, but this doesn't make us unworthy of love and respect. It makes us human. If someone can't make room for our 'humaning' then that means they are struggling with their own sense of worth.



*"Your self-worth is determined by you.
You don't have to depend on someone to
tell you who you are"*

~Beyoncé



If you are in a committed relationship with an avoidant or an anxious style, don't despair.

There are many ways to effect change.

One is to become aware of the ways we protest our partners' unwelcome behavior. We may:

- text or call excessively if we are anxious or decide when he/she finally replies we won't reply for the same amount of time.
- withdraw or give the silent treatment
- keep score
- act hostile by rolling our eyes
- sigh
- walk away.
- threaten to leave or divorce
- say mean things in the heat of the moment
- manipulate or make our partner feel jealous



R E F L E C T I O N

Do you or your partner do any of these behaviors?

What is happening right before these protest behaviors?

What are you feeling when these behaviors happen to you or just before you do them?

Are you feeling stifled, afraid, vulnerable, hurt?

A series of 18 horizontal dashed lines for writing.



We may also have thoughts the authors call **activating strategies**.

This is when we seek a sense of security and have thoughts and feelings that compel us to get close.

- We can't stop thinking about them
- We amplify their good qualities
- We feel less anxious when in touch with them
- We believe there is no one else for us and no other options.
- We believe they can change
- We believe they could be better with someone else so no one else can have them

With therapy or coaching, and a willingness to dive into this, there is the opportunity for better.

How many of us have left a bad relationship—maybe it took years—but we look back with utter confusion as to why we stayed so long, or why we put up with so much?

When we know better, we do better.

When we can recognize the signs of a healthy partner, we are well on our way.

Never give up on love and especially on loving yourself. ❤️



R E F L E C T I O N

Am I using activating strategies to stay in a relationship I know on some level isn't healthy for me?

What are some signs my emotional needs are not being met?

If there was magical fairy dust sprinkled on my pillow tonight, and I woke up with an ideal relationship, what would I notice had changed first?



Six RESOURCES

Attachment Quiz: Which style are you?

<https://dianepooleheller.com/attachment-test/>

Domestic violence link-use the incognito browser if you have concerns about your partner finding this link

<https://www.thehotline.org/identify-abuse/domestic-abuse-warning-signs/>

Books on effective communication and relationships:

Attached: The New Science of Adult Attachment and How It Can Help You Find--And Keep—Love

by Levine & Heller

The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work: A Practical Guide from the Country's Foremost Relationship Expert

by John Gottman

Hold Me Tight: Seven Conversations for a Lifetime of Love

by Sue Johnson



THANK YOU!



I hope you've enjoyed this e-book and it has provided some help.

I'm Jenn, and I'm a life coach and seasoned therapist. I have almost 20 years of experience in helping ambitious women who know they can be even better, if they could just get out of their own heads!

I help women transform by teaching them ways to overcome their self-doubt, insecurities and fears and boost their self-confidence so they can live a life of peace and passion.

Whether it's your job, your relationships, or something else, I love helping women feel empowered and come to a place of love and acceptance for the beauty and strength they already have within.

Nothing is sexier than a woman on fire!

I've written this e-book to help you get started, but I also have a blog, an e-blast once a month and of course 1:1 coaching services.

Please **[sign up HERE](#)** for my communications or

[Book a free 30-minute exploration call!](#)

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