

Attachment Styles Made Ridiculously Simple

Please note: There is some rather vulgar language in here; if you know vulgar language bothers you please refrain from reading the table. This handout, prepared by Shoshana Garfield for the ACEP 2015 Attachment Workshop in Reston, is meant to humorously entertain as well as support one's development in understanding some basic attachment styles. This handout is designed to give you a flavour of the following attachment styles: Secure, Avoidant, and Preoccupied/Anxious. This last category, Preoccupied, is further divided here into two categories, Preoccupied Clingy and Preoccupied Caregiving. Preoccupied Clingy is what is usually called Preoccupied Anxious. Although Preoccupied Caregiving is a subset of Preoccupied, so very many practitioners and therapists fall into this category that I felt I really needed to share the information. My wish for you - Enjoy! :)

	Secure	Avoidant	Preoccupied Clingy	Preoccupied Caregiving
Description	Fundamental safety, basically healthy relating	Entitled, angry, shut down emotionally, prone to outbursts	Needy and desperate, feels incomplete without someone to cling to, usually partner, kids will do, or work. Or religion. Just about anyone, or anything, really.	Needy and desperate, feels incomplete without someone/something to take care of. If insufficient people are around to aim their care out and at, animals will do.
Focus	Balanced – self/others	Me, me, me	Others, but really Self	Others, focus on saving self more hidden
Behaves as if...	Varies	Everyone is a shit	My special someone is my hero(ine) (heroin)	Everyone else is more important than I am
About the self	I'm OK	I'm a shit, covered up by fuck-off attitude	I'm a shit, covered up by 'help me' or 'poor me' attitude	I'm a shit, covered up by a 'help you' attitude
Characterised interaction with others	Generally equitable relations	Controlling and/or Victim	Controlling and/or Victim	Controlling and/or Victim and/or Saint
Source of happiness	Circumstances staying pleasant, can tolerate a 'rocked boat'. Or, from internal, indestructible source	The outside world, esp, having power	The outside world, esp - The beloved's approval, but anyone's will do, boss, colleagues, friends, kids, kid's teachers - <i>anyone</i>	The outside world, esp, being needed

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Safety	World is basically a safe place	The world is never a safe place, at least not for more than a minute at a time, and then safety disappears again	The world is safe when I am with my beloved, otherwise, I'm fucked	The world can be safe for those under my wings, but not really for me. Luckily for others, I'm willing to martyr myself
If I don't get what I (think I) need...	I'm OK	I die inside / feels like I die	I die inside/ feels like I die	I die inside/ feels like I die
How they handle conflict	Deal with it, in a myriad of different ways, but no grudge	Blames the other, holds a grudge	Blames the other, holds a grudge... and, blames self completely, thinks oneself a shit	Tends to take too much responsibility onto self, can also blame the other
To be in a relationship with a person like this is...	Lovely if securely attached too	One walks on eggshells, can never do enough	Can get sucked dry, can't satisfy seemingly insatiable need for attention	Intense and warm but often oddly lacking intimacy, or at least two-way intimacy; can feel pressure to not grow up or become more independent, they keep privacy but you are exposed
What other people tend to think about them...	Generally well thought of, tolerable peccadillos notwithstanding	Tetchy, distant, hard to get to know, hard to please, hard work, selfish git	At first: flattering, intense. Turns into: Barnacle, hard work, selfish git	At first: Really nice. Then: Really nice but something is off. Often hard work, often in ways difficult to define