

By Dr. Paula Davis



# Introduction to Attachment Theory Part 2

## Individual Differences

- Although Bowlby had shown that most children will become attached by the second half of their first year of life, the nature and quality of this relationship differed greatly from child to child.
- So how can we classify different attachment behaviours and how can we measure them accurately?

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Some infants were especially relaxed & secure in the presence of their caregiver, other seemed more anxious & uncertain.

So how can we classify different attachment behaviours & how can we measure them accurately?

## Attachment Theory: Ainsworth

- This dilemma was answered by *Mary Ainsworth* et al. (1978), who helped to expand Bowlby's theory and was responsible for new directions.
- Her ideas empirically tested Bowlby's innovative ideas.
- She developed 4 scales to rate a mother's way of being with her baby and its impact on later development.

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Bowlby & Ainsworth worked independently of each other in their early careers

Both were influenced by Freud & psychoanalytic thinkers.

Ainsworth joined Bowlby's research unit in 1950 to analyse Robertson's data.

She was impressed with his naturalistic observation.

She decided she would emulate his methods in her own research to come later.

## Attachment Theory: Ainsworth

- She formulated the concept of maternal sensitivity to infant signals and its role in the development of infant-mother attachment patterns.
- Ainsworth contributed to the concept of an attachment figure as a '*secure base*' from which the infant can explore their world.

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Ainsworth interested in how parenting affected children & could it be measured?

Interested in how attachment injuries affect children- not one time event but chronic:

Persistent, day to day times when parents insensitive:

*"Don't bother me. I haven't got time for that. Don't get up on my lap, I don't have time for you."*

The chaotic, all over the place parent, there one day & not next, so caught up in own emotional needs, not there for child.



Added something new to Bowlby's research- the "secure base" phenomenon which she tested by designing a procedure known as "The Strange Situation".



1950 married/accompanied husband to London.

Responded to ad in *London Times* involving research under John Bowlby into effect on personality development of separation from mother in early childhood.

Even though neither realised at the time, this reset whole direction of her professional career.



## Uganda Project

In 1953 the Ainsworth's headed for Uganda where her husband took a position at East African Institute of Social Research at Kampala.

With help from the Institute, Mary investigated infant-mother attachment.

She recruited 26 families with unweaned babies (aged 1-24 mths) whom she observed every 2 weeks for 2 hours per visit for up to 9 mths

It was in Uganda that Mary Ainsworth studied mothers & infants in their natural environment, observing & recording as much as possible.

(Bowlby had decided earlier it was too difficult to do this kind of study).



Ainsworth & her researchers closely observed mothers and children in their homes.  
Visits took place in family living room (with an interpreter.

Careful attention was paid to each mother's style of responding to her infant in a number of fundamental areas:

Feeding, crying, cuddling, eye contact, and smiling.

Particular focus was onset of proximity-promoting signals & behaviours especially when preferentially directed toward the mother.

Uganda data was a rich source of study of individual differences.

Three infant patterns were observed:

*1. Securely attached* infants cried little/seemed content to explore in presence of mother

*2. Insecurely attached* infants cried frequently even when held by mothers & explored little

3. Not yet attached infants showed no differential behaviour to mother.

Uganda



Mother's enjoyment of breast-feeding  
correlated with infant security

Secure attachment significantly correlated with maternal sensitivity (mothers who were sensitive to infant signals).

Babies of sensitive mothers tended to be securely attached.

Babies of less sensitive mothers were likely to be more insecure.

In 1955 she returned to Baltimore & took a post lecturing at John Hopkins University→

Uganda research put aside until 1958 when she analysed & published the data after joining the faculty at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

## The Baltimore Project:

Mary  
Ainsworth



In 1963 Ainsworth conducted her second observational research- a longitudinal study of infants in Baltimore.

These were termed *naturalistic observations* with narrative reports (interviews played lesser role).

At that time, it was unique methodology to place emphasis on meaningful behaviour patterns in their context.

26 families were recruited prenatally with 18 home visits of 4 hours beginning in the first month, ending at 54 weeks (72 hours of data collection)

Results revealed the emergence of striking individual differences in characteristic mother-infant interaction patterns in the first 3 mths of life,

in response to how sensitively, appropriately, & promptly mothers

responded to infant's signals.

Mary Ainsworth concluded that the 'securely attached infants' used their mothers as a **'secure base'**.



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- Maternal sensitivity in 1<sup>st</sup> quarter was associated with more harmonious mother-infant relations in 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.
- Babies whose mothers were highly responsive to crying during early months tended to cry less, relying more on facial expressions to communicate.
- Infants whose mothers provided much tender holding during 1<sup>st</sup> quarter sought contact less often during 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, but when occurred, rated as more satisfying & affectionate.





Ainsworth further designed a test-like standard procedure in the 1960's to examine the balance of attachment/exploratory behaviours, under conditions of high/low stress in a laboratory setting. Instead of measuring it at home, she brought Mum & baby to the lab.

Initially it was a controversial laboratory procedure for 1 year olds → 20 minute miniature drama with 8 episodes.

Created situation called, *The Strange Situation*, where parent came to lab with child.

Because it was strange situation, she rationalised it would create anxiety in child & this would trigger attachment behaviour.

Mother-child dyads were observed in a playroom under four conditions:

- initial mother-child interaction
- mother leaves infant alone in playroom (imagine a 12<sup>th</sup> old child getting pretty upset when mum leaves).
- friendly stranger enters playroom
- mother returns and greets child (how does child respond when mum comes back? She wanted to know how the baby used Mum to calm his/her feelings when she returned after separation.)



In designing this study, Ainsworth & her colleagues wanted to explore:

- 1) essence of attachment- how does child deal with emotion in relation to mother?
- 2) 2) Amount of exploration (e.g. playing with new toys) child engages in throughout.

They reasoned that if attachment had developed well, infants & toddlers should use their caregiver as a *secure base* from which to explore the environment.

In addition, when a caregiver leaves the room for a brief period of time, the child should show separation anxiety, & an unfamiliar adult should be less comforting than the caregiver.



## The Strange Situation

- **Thus originated well-known *The Strange Situation* classification system.**
- ***The Strange Situation* is the most widely used technique for measuring the quality of attachment between 1 & 2 years of age.**

The strange room situation is a **STANDARDISED PROCEDURE** which means that it can be easily replicated.

*The Strange Situation* is most widely used technique for measuring quality of attachment between 1 & 2 years of age.

This concept has generated an incredible body of research focused on understanding the social, emotional, & interpersonal development of children.

Substantial empirical evidence that supports existence of core elements of attachment theory (Grossmann, 1985).

However, critics highlight that the isolated, controlled events of strange situation might not necessarily reflect interactions that would happen in infant's natural environment→

## Attachment Patterns

Secure Attachment Style POSITIVE SELF/ POSITIVE OTHER	Dismissive Attachment Style POSITIVE SELF/ NEGATIVE OTHER
Preoccupied Attachment Style NEGATIVE SELF/ POSITIVE OTHER	Unresolved/ Disorganised/ Fearful Attachment Style NEGATIVE SELF/ NEGATIVE OTHER

## Attachment Styles

### *1. Securely Attached:*

- Explores room when mother is present, plays with toys, protests mildly; explores less when mother is not present, shows pleasure; re-establishes positive interactions when mother returns.

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1. One group of infants protested & cried on separation, but when mother returned, expected to be picked up, calmed down, comforted, soothed, greeted her with pleasure & easy to console- & would be immediately- nestled into mother.

Explores room when mother is present, plays with toys, protests mildly, when mum absent.

Feels safe to explore because feels safe.

She labelled this group *securely attached*.

When observed in home, mothers found to be sensitive to children, when cried they picked them up- attuned to child's needs.

Responsive, sensitive *Secure Attachment* is developed.

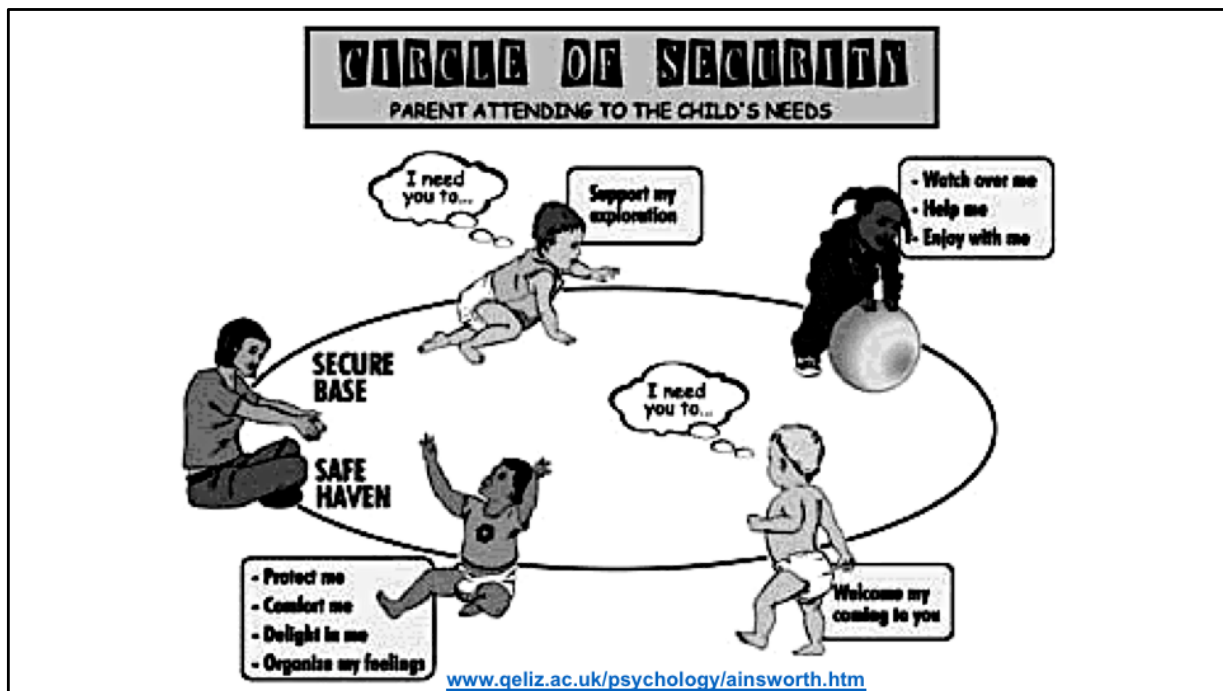
These children have secure base which enables them to go out into world & explore.

Predictive of later well-being- resilient to stress, free or autonomous, *secure* approach to attachment as adult.



## Attachment Styles

Secure Attachment Style POSITIVE SELF/ POSITIVE OTHER	Dismissive Attachment Style POSITIVE SELF/ NEGATIVE OTHER
Ambivalent/Preoccupied Attachment Style NEGATIVE SELF/ POSITIVE OTHER	Disorganized/ Fearful Attachment Style NEGATIVE SELF/ NEGATIVE OTHER



### Concept of 'Secure Base':

Originally referred to the care-giver to whom the child turns to when distressed.

They may provide insecure attachment but without some form of secure base, survival is impossible.

### Adult Attachment Style:

A securely attached person can draw on the support of others when needed.

They can talk coherently & with appropriate affect about psychological pain/difficulty.

Researchers followed people for 16 to 20yrs - strong correlation between attachment style when 18mths old to 18yrs old.



**“Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.” (Tolstoy’s Anna Karenina, 1917)**

## Attachment Styles

### 2. *Insecure Avoidant Attachment:*

The second group of infants was characterised by a lack of distress during parental separation, and avoidance of the parent upon return.

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### ***Insecure avoidant attachment:***

Infant shows insecurity by avoiding mother during the anxiety-inducing strange situation.

When mum left room, these kids were as cool as a cucumber- showed few overt signs of distress on separation.

Researchers did not know how they think about this.

Looked like kid had it together, a well-disciplined home.

But when they hooked these kids up to physical measures of anxiety (heart rate monitor, skin conductance test), they were just as anxious, even more so than other kids in face of threat of loss, but hid it from themselves & others.

When mum came back into room, flat, did not move toward her, moved away, sometimes acted coldly toward her.

So how did child handle anxiety in relation to mum?

Did not feel she would be available so moved away, played with toys, not exploratory play, but a little.

## Attachment Styles

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“My mother always made it clear to me that my place in the world was unlikely to differ ever from her own. There was no reason why Mrs. Buffen or her daughter should care to speak to me. I had nothing to offer people like the Buffens, therefore why should they bother to acknowledge my existence? It was consistent with her view of affection or friendship as a system of rewards, blackmail, calculation and aggrandizement in which people would only come off best or worst. Nothing ever strikes me with such despair and disbelief as the truly cold heart. It disarms utterly and never ceases to do so. I wish it were otherwise.” (John Osborne, *A Better Class of Person*)

***Insecure avoidant attachment:***

Rejection was key theme displayed by mothers of avoidant-response children.

They had great difficulty expressing sensitivity to their children's cries.

Viewed cries as manipulation/weakness rather than legitimate expression of neediness.

Predictive of later difficulty relating to peers or having a well-developed autographical sense of self.





**Insecure  
Avoidant  
Attachment  
morphs into  
Dismissive  
Adult Style**

**Avoidant (child) becomes Dismissing (adult) attachment style:**

What begins with an attempt to regulate attachment behaviour in relation to a primary caregiver who does not provide, contact, comfort or soothes distress, becomes defensive self-reliance, cool and distant relations with partners, & cool or hostile relationships with peers.

Dismissing adult minimises importance of attachment.

Believe selves to be worthy & competent (in overblown sense)., but negative view of others- can't rely on others to be there for me.

***Rules for relationship:***

Others are not reliable, dependable, or trustworthy when it comes to my needs.

Other people always let you down just when you need them the most.

*"I can't rely on others to meet my needs, therefore I must rely on myself alone."*

Believe others are basically inept at meeting their emotional needs.

Believe I can take care of myself, don't need anyone else especially to provide comfort & support in times of distress.

Deny feelings of vulnerability & longing for connection.

Philosophy is:

*“Suck up pain, quit whining, pull yourself up by your own bootstraps; don’t get too close, and when you’re upset, don’t talk about your feelings. It will only cause trouble. People, don’t need to hear about your pain. They have enough to do without having to listen to you whine.”*



In The Strange Situation, avoidant children did not believe mum would be there for them so turned away & turned into themselves.

Dismissing adult emphasises things instead of people, e.g., workaholic- expends themselves at work & has nothing emotionally left when comes home;

Turns to drugs, alcohol, sex, addictions to fill what is missing.  
They don't do relationships well.  
Put deepest feelings on the edge; difficult to access them.

One of major clues in cg is to ask about feelings,  
They will give you actions (I go to the yard & do this; I find something to do; I don't let my feelings out).

How you do feelings mirrors how you do relationships & intimacy?  
If you keep feelings on the periphery of life you will keep people on periphery of life.

May have many friendships & be fun-loving, caring people, but it is in closest

relationships you see the attachment style- they need distance (have to keep at a distance as they won't be there for me).

Keep everybody out there as friends but do not let anybody in as intimate.



[http://the-love-compass.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Avoidant-Dollarphotoclub\\_26159672.jpg](http://the-love-compass.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Avoidant-Dollarphotoclub_26159672.jpg)

Dismissive adults desire relationship, and can be very loving, but find it difficult to listen sensitively to thoughts & feelings of others they are closest to.

May see sensitivity as weakness.

Loved ones often feel very unloved & abandoned.

Struggle with disclosure of private thoughts & feelings.

By disclosing intimate thoughts/feelings one becomes vulnerable to being hurt all over again.

Because it opens them up to their thoughts and experiences, to criticism & misinterpretation. This is scary to Dismissive adults.

*“...the desire for relationship is not ugly. It is not a sign of weakness, but an important part of who God made us to be. In fact, fear or avoidance of relationship is an indication that something is wrong with us. All psychological pathology can be linked to the urge to flee or dominate relationships. And the person who is closed to relationships is equally closed to God.”*

*(Dan Allender & Tremper Longman 111, Breaking the Idols of Your Heart)*

## Attachment Styles

Secure Attachment Style POSITIVE SELF/ POSITIVE OTHER	Dismissive Attachment Style POSITIVE SELF/ NEGATIVE OTHER
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## Attachment Styles

### *3. Insecure Ambivalent or Resistant Attachment:*

The third group tended to be clingy from the beginning, were afraid to explore the room, became terribly anxious upon separation, yet displayed angry, resistive behaviour upon the parent's return.

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### ***Insecure ambivalent or resistant attachment:***

Very, very upset when mum leaves room & often cries loudly.

When mum comes back, did not know whether to run to her or punish her.

May cling to mother/seeking contact, then resist her by fighting against the closeness (kicking, squirming, pushing away her/toys).

Continues to alternate between anger/clinging to mother & remains distressed despite mother's attempts to comfort.

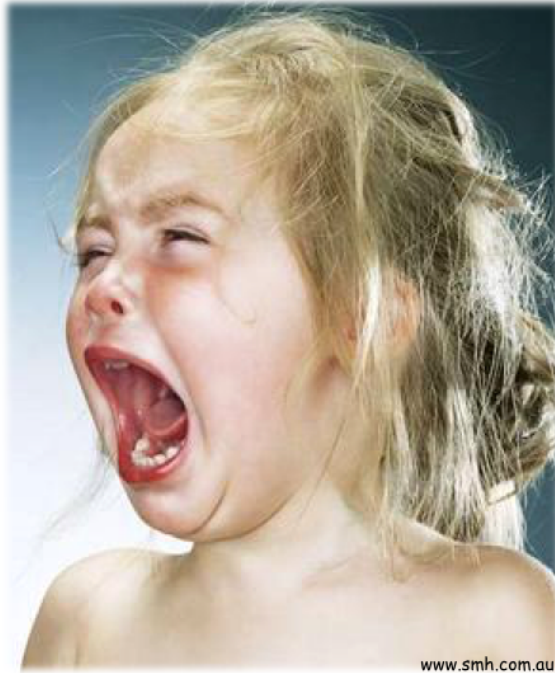
So angry & upset at her leaving they remained anxious, did not know how to let mum comfort.



Even though she picks it up, it will not easily be comforted.

Exploratory play inhibited.

Insecure  
Ambivalent  
Attachment



***Insecure ambivalent or resistant attachment:***

Hallmark of mothers is inconsistent & unreliable.

Some days were wonderful, responsive & attuned to baby's cries,

But for no apparent reason, they became either distant & aloof, irritable & grumpy, or exceedingly intrusive & interfering.

Sometimes treated kids as though they should be taking care of them (role reversal).

Parents preoccupied with own set of worries & unavailable or neglectful of kids.

They might complain of feeling unloved, unwanted, or unappreciated by

their baby.

Predictive of adult uncertainty & *anxiety* in social situations.



<http://assets.rebelcircus.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/clingy-toddler-21.jpg>

### ***Ambivalent attachment style (cont.):***

Tendency to express distress through medically unexplainable physical symptoms rather than emotional pain:

E.g., developing headaches while doing unpleasant activities rather than saying, *“No, I can’t do this. It’s too stressful.”*

Stroufe’s research (1983) revealed that as children, ambivalents seemed to be desperately trying to influence mother.

Many seemed hooked to her unpredictable & haphazard style & fact that she does come through on occasion.

Child believes that if they plead & make a big enough fuss, she will respond, even if out of guilt.

So constantly trying to hold on to her or punish her for being unavailable.

Child emphasises feelings of helplessness in order to elicit care.

Wildly addicted to her & their efforts to make her change.

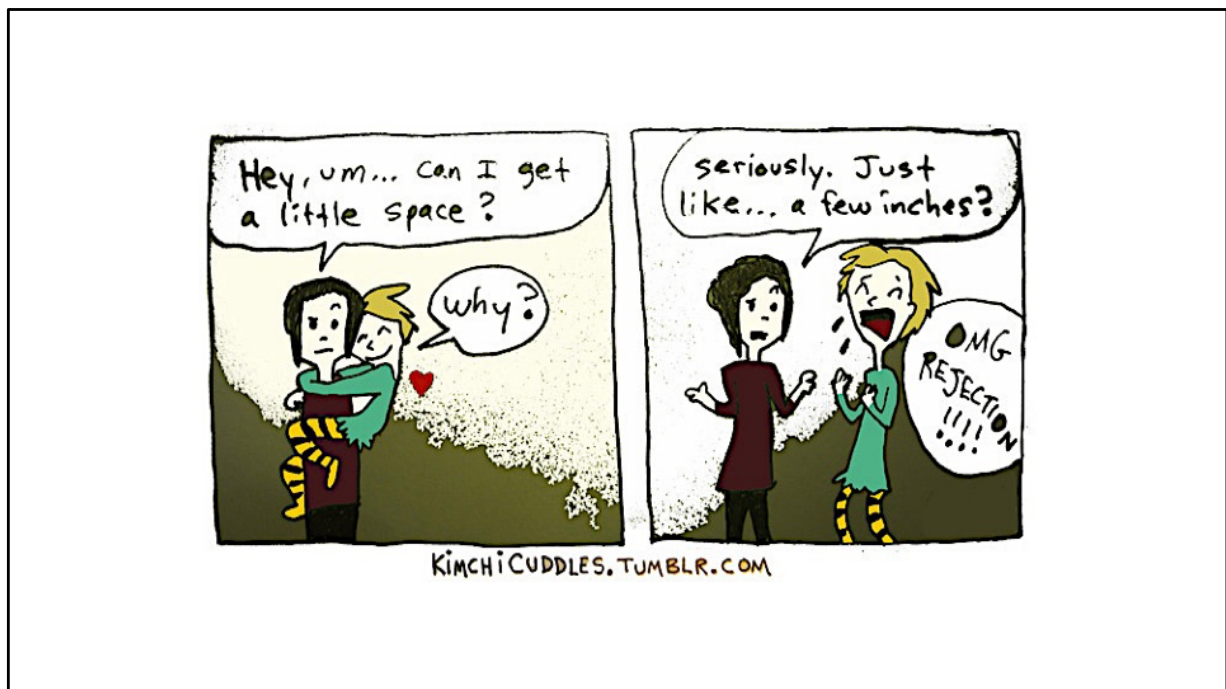
They fret for her, & for themselves & often become parentified (caretakers of

their parent) or develop school phobia -

fear that they will lose their mother or that she will become unbearably lonely if they dare let her out of their sight.



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***Preoccupied (adult) attachment style:***

In adulthood, relationship with mum will probably remain stormy because child is still trying desperately to get her to be what they need her to be.

& especially to help them contain distress- to perform the holding function that they have still not learned to perform for themselves.

There are often grisly power struggles which leave ambivalent with unconscious fantasies of mutilation, dismemberment, retaliation & desertion, making them even more shamefully unworthy of being close to others without knowing why.

This becomes template for all close relationships.



[http://the-love-compass.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Anxious-attachment-Dollarphotoclub\\_60616380-](http://the-love-compass.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Anxious-attachment-Dollarphotoclub_60616380-)

### **Adult Preoccupied Style**

What begins with attempts to keep track of, or hold onto an unreliable caretaker during infancy leads to an attempt to hold onto partners, but done in ways that frequently backfire & produce more hurt feelings, anger & insecurity.

They become enmeshed in unhealthy ways & in later life become similarly addicted to potential attachment figures (crushes on teachers) & later, romantic figures.

Need for connectedness always on high; hypervigilant & clingy.

Idealised romances.

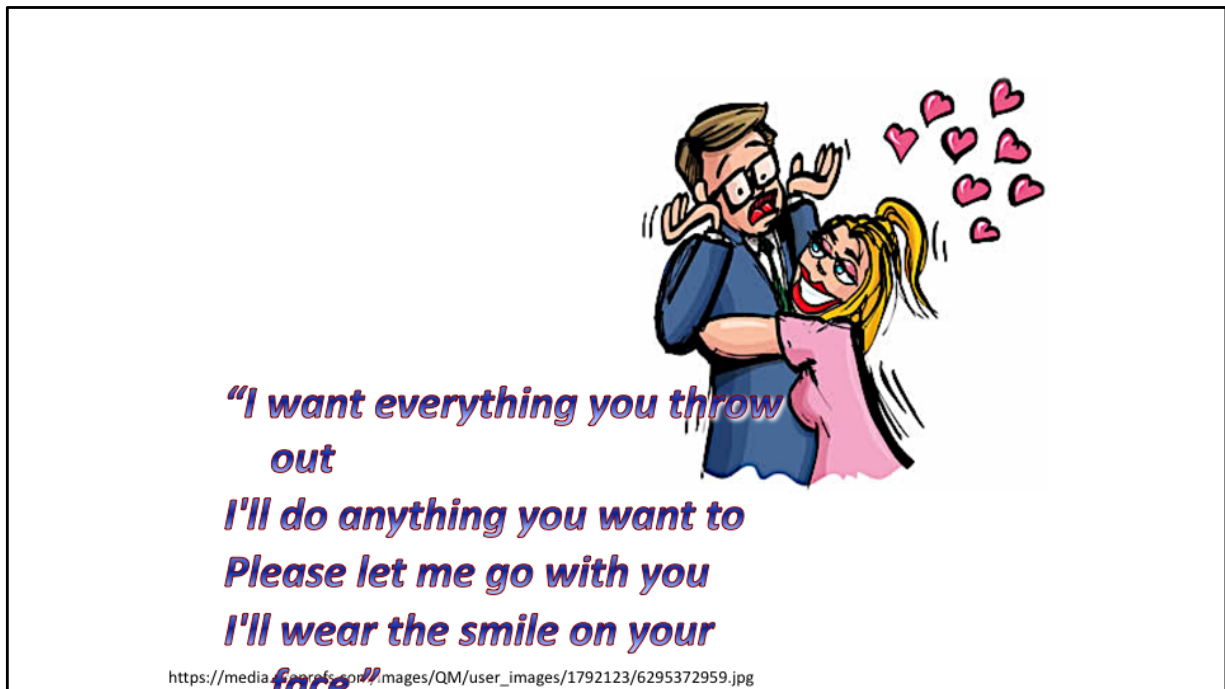
But beneath this, they do not believe they have what it takes to get what they need from another person- ashamed of who they are.

*“There has to be something very wrong with me & something very wrong with the immense love that flows out of me towards my parents that is somehow not*



*accepted.”*

Inside they hold a cauldron of passion- rage, aggression, hatred, envy, self-hatred & persecutory anxiety that is unmanageable & often out of control.



**Relationship rules:**

*"I'm poor at getting the love and comfort I need"*

*"I have to please my loved ones or I will be worthless and unlovable."*

*"Don't abandon me"*

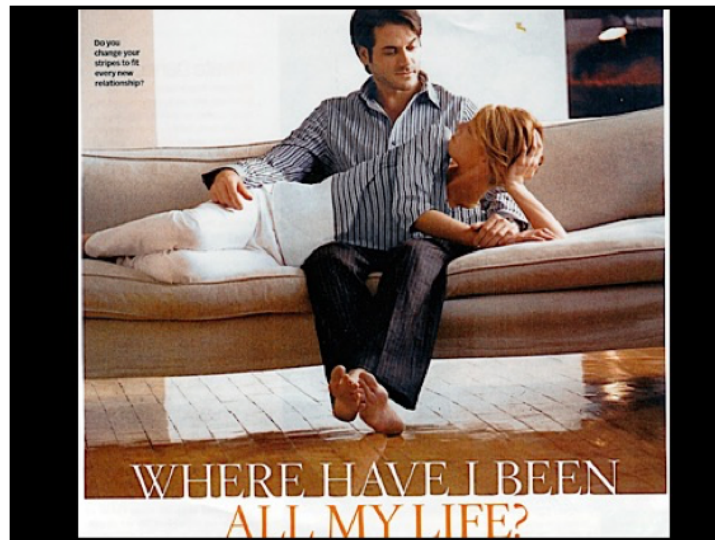
Fear of abandonment goes to very core of how this person sees themselves/ how they expect others to see them.

Results in an internal war like Daisy game: *"She loves me/she loves me not."*

They become relationship addict.

Susan Sontag describes this romantic love as, *"giving yourself to be flayed and knowing that at any moment the other person may just walk off with your skin."*

Cannot let other know them for fear of rejection.



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### Adult Preoccupied Style

Desperate dependency results in **core beliefs**:

*"I am/feel incompetent."*

*"I struggle to handle things on my own."*

*"I need a strong protector to care & do things for me."*

*"This is a cold & dangerous world where people will hurt me & disaster will strike at any time, so I need to play it safe and stay close to those who are stronger & wiser."*

Produces destructive feelings/ behaviours:

Very low self-confidence

Fear of making decisions/looking to others to make life decisions

Rarely expressing disagreement with others

Frequently seeking assurance, nurturance, support

Feeling obsessed with fear of being left alone

Feeling helpless when alone

Desperately seeking new relationships when others end

Frequently subordinating themselves to others

Perpetually seeking advice  
Often working below their ability level  
Accepting unpleasant tasks to please others

## Preoccupied Attachment Style

3 shades of dependency:

1. The anxious dependent
2. The melodramatic dependent
3. The angry dependent

## Preoccupied Attachment Style

### 1. The anxious dependent:

- *"I feel flawed; no one could possibly like me;*
- *Every failure verifies I am flawed*
- *If someone rejects me, it also proves I am flawed;*
- *Those who like me must not really know who I am or else they're poor judges of character;*
- *If I feel embarrassed, it will be overwhelming and unbearable."*

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### – **Ambivalent (child) or Preoccupied (adult) attachment style (cont.):**

#### **1. The anxious dependent**

- Behave like turtles without their shells → feel vulnerable all the time.
- All they want is security & to be protected, but they never get it.
- Instead, live with a sense of foreboding/danger/ being defective/inadequate → follows them like a black cloud.
- Live with dismal sense that others will reject them.
- Greatest fear is that others will get to know they are defective/inadequate.
- Therefore, hesitant to start rels before they know they won't be rejected, yet a storm of desire clashes with fears of rejection.

#### Common characteristics:

- A tendency to avoid close rels because of fear of rejection
- An unwillingness to get involved in activities that require social interaction
- A pattern of restraint/reservation within social situations
- Excessive fear of criticism
- Low self esteem, a feeling that the person is fundamentally flawed or defective
- A tendency to exaggerate risks, especially the risk of being embarrassed socially
- A tendency to be easily sidetracked & overwhelmed by otherwise minor failures/disappointments.

## Preoccupied Attachment Style

### 2. The melodramatic dependent:

- Attention-seeking
- Tend to rely on looks/ theatrical displays of emotion
- *"I must be the centre of attention or I'm not worthy/ lovable;*
- *I need someone, especially a strong man, to constantly offer me reassurance and praise or I will feel awful about myself;*
- *In order for others to want to be around me, I must always be fun and exciting."*

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### **Ambivalent (child) or Preoccupied (adult) attachment style (cont.):**

#### **2. The melodramatic dependent:**

Attention-seeking → esp. men/ while anxious dependents withdraw, melodramatic are more active.  
Tend to rely on looks/theatrical displays of emotion → others see them as shallow/immature/ living life like a child hoping to find a perch on Daddy's knee.

Life themes:

"onstage" all the time as seek to be centre of attention

Tend to perceive relationships as closer than they really are

Are strongly impacted by the opinions of others

Pay excessive attention to physical appearance/always want to stay looking young

Dress in sexually provocative ways but get little pleasure from sex

Shift emotions rapidly, often quite dramatically

Speak in a very impressionistic way, paying little attention to details

Though emotional displays may be quite dramatic, they try to downplay stronger emotions & present themselves in a favourable light (Downplay emotions → especially fear of abandonment.)

# Preoccupied Attachment Style

## 3. The angry dependent:

- a) Primary adaptive anger
  - Recognises when wronged/ mistreated
  - Validating anger/ righteous indignation
  - *“This isn’t fair. I don’t deserve what you’ve done to hurt me.”*
- b) Secondary maladaptive anger
  - Ignores event that provoked anger/ suppresses it
  - Repressed anger/ over-controlled because person is afraid to be direct about it

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–**Ambivalent (child) or Preoccupied (adult) attachment style (cont.):**

## 2. The angry dependent

- a) **Primary adaptive anger**
  - Recognises when wronged/mistreated
  - Validating anger/righteous indignation
  - “This isn’t fair. I don’t deserve what you’ve done to hurt me.”*
  - (e.g. husband comes home late & dinner is ruined→ now sleep on couch.)
- b) **Secondary maladaptive anger**
  - Ignores event that provoked anger/suppresses it
  - Repressed anger/over-controlled because person is afraid to be direct about it
  - However, anger will surface in time→ perhaps physically ( high blood pressure, ulcers, etc) or emotionally (irritability, nagging, etc.)
  - (eg. In above example, wife initially ignores anger/suppresses it, but in time, exhibits physical symptoms, & becomes passive-aggressive, or displaces anger→ nags him because of his clothes on floor or because he is not a good spiritual leader!)
  - Causes unsatisfying emotional wars where other person goes silent & disengages.
  - Angry dependent’s beliefs about self reinforced→ so when anger, however indirectly expressed, goes unacknowledged, it degenerates into rage→ relationship deteriorates→ fulfils worst nightmare→ sinks into a morbid depression or devastating anxiety may consume the soul.



## Attachment Styles

Secure Attachment Style POSITIVE SELF/ POSITIVE OTHER	Dismissive Attachment Style POSITIVE SELF/ NEGATIVE OTHER
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## Attachment Styles

4. A 4<sup>th</sup> classification was added later by Mary Main & Solomon in 1990 for those who defied classification in one of preceding 3 categories. They appear much more disorganised.



### 4. Insecure Disorganised Attachment

[http://www.psychalive.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/iStock\\_000003332263Small.jpg](http://www.psychalive.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/iStock_000003332263Small.jpg)

#### ***Insecure disorganised attachment:***

Disorganised & disoriented during the strange situation.

Often appear dazed, confused & fearful.

Show diverse range of confused behaviours .

Would get upset when mum left but when she returned they go running toward her as if they wanted to be picked up & then stop in their tracks & fall prostrate on floor.

Did not know what to do, might stare off into space.

Came from abusive homes- parent is source of terror/alarm.

Source & solution to child's anxiety (eg, alcoholic home).

Parents who yell or lose it, can be calm, then go off.

Yelling scrambles brain like eggs, don't know how to organise or integrate it.

Turn anger on themselves.

Teenagers who have intense suicidal ideation often come from screaming homes.

What begins with conflicted, disorganised, disoriented behaviour in relation to a frightening or frightened caregiver, may translate into desperate, ineffective attempts to regulate attachment anxiety through approach and avoidance.

Child experiences loss of safe haven:

Parents are both *“source and the solution to”* their fear & anxiety.

No solution/no safe haven but ought to be.

Mommie Dearest



## Attachment: The School-Age Child

### *DSM-IV: Reactive Attachment Disorder:*

- Persistent disregard for the child's emotional needs for comfort, stimulation, and affection;
- Persistent disregard for the child's physical needs; an,
- Repeated changes of primary caregivers.

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### ***Disorganised Attachment Style (cont.):***

How would the above affect the development of trust?

Essential for & psychological well-being.

What effect does betrayal of trust have on the developing self?

Doris Brothers (1995) suggests that the ability to trust others develops throughout the life cycle:

It becomes increasingly realistic, abstract, complex & differentiated.

Trauma impedes the development of these qualities & ability to relate successfully with others.

## Attachment: The School-Age Child

- Bruce Perry (1995) describes 2 persistent patterns of traumatised children:
  1. A high degree of dissociation and withdrawal;  
and,
  2. A persistent, highly aroused vigilant state.
- These lead to deficiencies in every area of development and later psychopathology.

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### ***Disorganized Attachment Style (cont.):***

Both patterns show an extreme lack of development of words to convey intentions & emotions as well as differentiating self from non-self.

Efforts to communicate tend to be chaotic with fragmented meaning.



<http://i.huffpost.com/gen/4666362/images/o-PARENT-GUILT-facebook.jpg>

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### ***Disorganised Attachment Style (cont.):***

When memories of trauma are buried, they are stored in cerebral morgue-drawers in different parts of the brain.

Researchers have used brain-imaging techniques to show that when trauma victims are reminded of their tragedy, the parts of the brain associated with intense emotions and visual images “turn on” and become active.

Simultaneously, the part of the brain associated with speech “turns off”.

The result is what Basal van der Kolk calls “speechless terror” - the inability to tell the story of the horrific event.

Victims successfully bury & function, but surfaces in situations involving intimacy, aggression, abandonment, fear.

Transgenerational- frightened parent is frightening parent.

## *Disorganised child becomes a Fearful Adult*



[https://fthmb.tqn.com/OZ3VnaO1\\_nRRIT5oK383v6w29yo=/735x0/suicidal-ideation-56a09c9b5f9b58eba4b20f99.jpg](https://fthmb.tqn.com/OZ3VnaO1_nRRIT5oK383v6w29yo=/735x0/suicidal-ideation-56a09c9b5f9b58eba4b20f99.jpg)

Predictive of adult difficulty with social relationships & emotional regulation.

Can become dissociated/fragmented (possible risk for developing PTSD).

Pervasive negative view of self & negative view of others.

They want to be loved but feel too flawed/ want other people to love them but feel they can't be trusted & are not safe.

Often feel frozen or cycle back & forth between ambivalent & avoidant style- sometimes won't let anyone in then finally suck them in, cling & obsess & become completely preoccupied,

E.g., Can be incredibly loving one day, then want to shoot you the next; smallest thing can set them off.

Mixed message!

Feelings can be all over the place at times, then totally disconnected or dissociated-



more prone to severe forms of dissociation, e.g., borderline personality disorder.

## *Disorganised child becomes a Fearful Adult*



[https://www.mentalhelp.net/content/uploads/2015/10/xmentalhelp-shutterstock289596209-comforting\\_a\\_friend.jpg.pagespeed.ic.m2VMXRAPQB.jpg](https://www.mentalhelp.net/content/uploads/2015/10/xmentalhelp-shutterstock289596209-comforting_a_friend.jpg.pagespeed.ic.m2VMXRAPQB.jpg)

When they come from invalidating/abusive backgrounds (not just less than ideal), person turns inward, looks more to fantasy to satisfy rather than actual relationships.

Internal self-talk becomes severe- vicious (more than self-defeating),

e.g. micro-suicidal behaviour like drinking too much, driving too fast, engaging in high risk behaviour,

to actual suicidal behaviour where literally report hearing thoughts (not psychotic) in side their heads like, *"You don't deserve to be alive. Everybody would be better off without you."*

Fantasy & isolation are used to try to self-soothe.

We were made for relationship.

If we can't do that- drive us to brink of suicide.

Ultimately they come to believe there is no one there for them; no one who could possible love them because of their flawedness & unworthiness- start looking for ways to exit the world.

## Childhood Attachment Styles (Measured by the “Strange Situation”)

- Secure (65%)
- Insecure Ambivalent or Resistant (10%)
  - High distress when separated
  - Angry when caregiver returns
- Insecure Avoidant (20%)
  - Low distress when separated
  - Ignore caregiver when he/she returns
- Insecure Disorganized (5%)
  - Highly distressed when separated
  - Approach/avoidance toward returning caregiver

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The percentage of occurrence of each attachment style is approximately the same in infants and adults.

# EXERCISE

- Discuss: Can you identify your *internal working model* and attachment belief system that acts as a template for your adult relationships?



<http://www.jovenbebe.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/inflamación-intestinal-en-bebes-prematuros.jpg>

## Why does attachment style matter?

### Secure

- Self confidence
- Self esteem
- Ability to cope with life stress
- Emotional Control

### Disorganised

- Relationship problems
- Emotional problems
- Violence and aggression

But it's not deterministic – other factors such as life stress are likely to influence life outcomes.

Children with secure attachment can develop problems and most children with insecure attachment do not have significant problems (Sroufe et al, 2006; Prior and Glaser, 2006).

Interestingly, Henry Nouwen defined community as *“a place where the person you least want to live with always lives.”*



[http://jewishjournal.com/images/community\\_connections.jpg](http://jewishjournal.com/images/community_connections.jpg)

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## Cultural Differences in Attachment

Country	Number of studies	Percentage of each attachment type		
		Secure	Insecure-avoidant	Insecure-resistant
Great Britain	1	75	22	3
Germany	3	57	35	8
Netherlands	4	67	26	7
Sweden	1	74	22	4
Japan	2	58	5	27
Israel	2	64	7	29
United States	18	65	21	14
China	1	50	25	25
Mean		65	21	14

Van IJzendoorn & Kroonenburg (1985) meta-analysis of studies comparing attachment type across different cultures

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Examined almost 2,000 Ainsworth strange situation classifications obtained in 8 different countries.

Data also suggest a pattern of cross-cultural differences, in which avoidant classifications emerge as relatively more prevalent in Western European countries & resistant classifications as relatively more frequent in Israel & Japan.

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However, Golding (2002)<sup>15</sup> argues different cultures have different child rearing practices, so this significantly reduces internal validity.

E.g., Japanese babies are rarely separated from their mothers and this explains why they reacted violently with tears during separation leading them to be classed as insecure resistant when they are not.

Also, babies brought up in Israel are rarely exposed to strangers which explains their violent protests to strangers in the SS.



## Cultural Differences in Attachment

- Secure
  - Consistent & responsive parenting [common in all cultures]
- Insecure Ambivalent or Resistant
  - Inconsistent parenting [Israel--Kibbutz]
- Insecure Avoidant
  - Less responsive parenting [Northern Europe]
  - Overly responsive [Japan]
- Insecure Disorganized
  - Severely neglectful or abusive caregiving [Romanian orphans]

(Van IJzendoorn, M.H., & Kroonenberg, P.M. 1988, Cross-cultural patterns of attachment: A meta-analysis of the strange situation, in *Child Development*, 59, 147-156)

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Furthermore, the sample of the meta analysis may not be representative as 27 studies were carried out in individualistic cultures (where independence is encouraged) and only 5 in collectivist cultures (a higher degree of interdependence).

Cross-cultural studies suggest that the secure pattern of attachment in infancy is universally considered the most desirable pattern by mothers (van IJzendoorn & Sagi, 1999).

# **E X E R C I S E**

- Can you over-respond to an infant's cries and spoil them?



<http://www.jovenbebe.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/inflamación-intestinal-en-bebes-prematuros.jpg>

**"My advice to mothers is not to miss an opportunity to show affection to their babies. Don't hesitate to pick the baby up when he wants to be picked up. And don't feel you have to put him down because it's not good for him to be fussed over. It's all right to fuss over your babies, especially during their first year of life.**

**It's almost as if you wait for the baby to give the signals, and then you respond to the signals. Responding to infant signals fosters a secure infant who in later months does not mind being put down and who will independently explore his environment."**

**Mary Ainsworth**



***“We all leave childhood with wounds.  
In time we may transform our  
liabilities into gifts. The faults that  
pockmark the psyche may become the  
source of a man’s or woman’s beauty.  
The injuries we have suffered invite us  
to assume the most human of all  
vocations- to heal ourselves and  
others.”***

Sam Keen

# E X E R C I S E

- How might 'secure base' parenting pave the pathway to a loving relationship with God in later life?



<http://www.securebasepriming.org/www/images/logo.JPG>

One study on Christian college students in US found those with insecure attachment styles felt anxious, overwhelmed and angry.

Ambivalent style tended to doubt their salvation very frequently, wondering if they had really said the right thing to God when they were saved or if they had somehow committed the unpardonable sin.

Avoidant more likely to have given up on God & begun following sinful habits.

*(G. Habermas & Gary Sibcy, "Religious Doubt and Negative Emotionality: The Development of the Religious Doubt Scale," 2001)*

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