

How Do I love Thee?: A Brief Introduction to Attachment Theory

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Which is Most Like You?

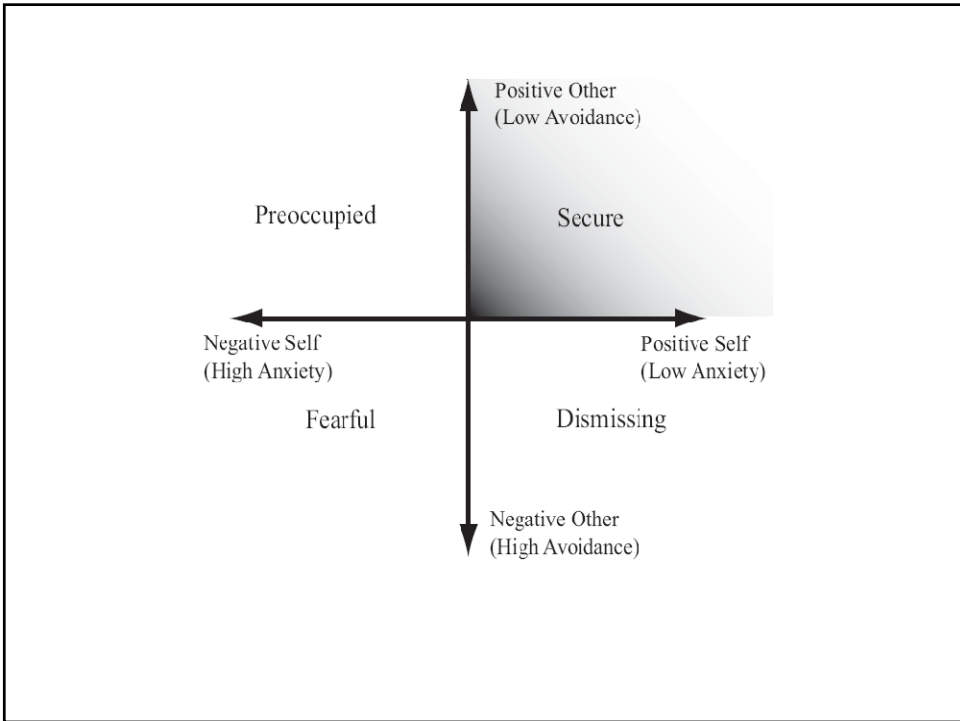
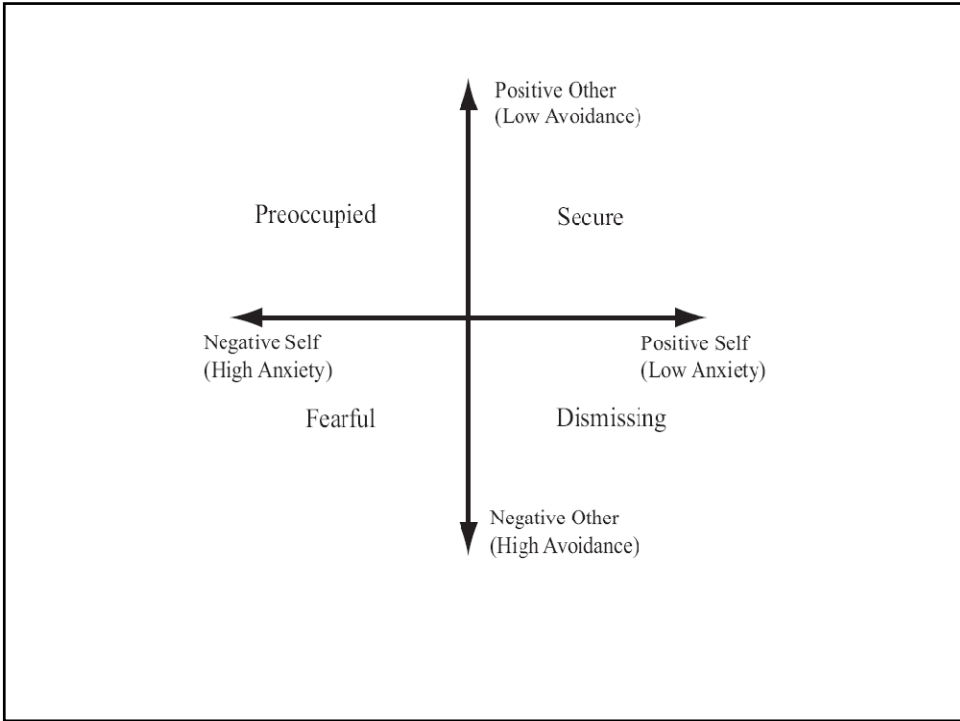
- It is easy for me to become emotionally close to others. I am comfortable depending on others and having others depend on me. I don't worry about being alone or having others not accept me.
- I am comfortable without close emotional relationships. It is very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient, and I prefer not to depend on others or have others depend on me.
- I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others, but I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I am uncomfortable being without close relationships, but I sometimes worry that others don't value me as much as I value them.
- I am uncomfortable getting close to others. I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them. I worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.

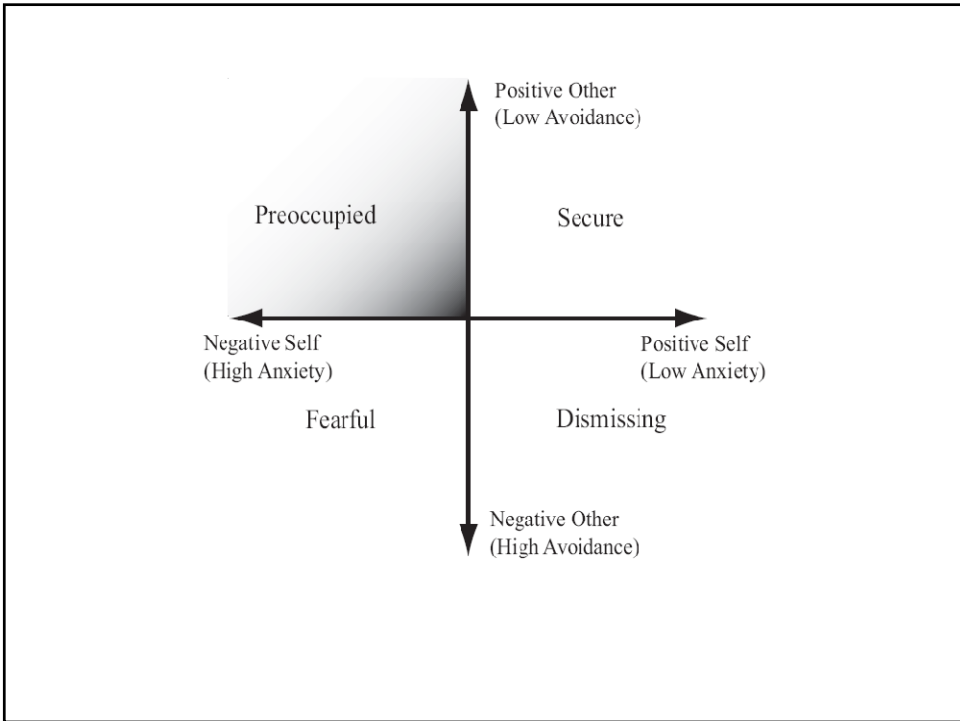
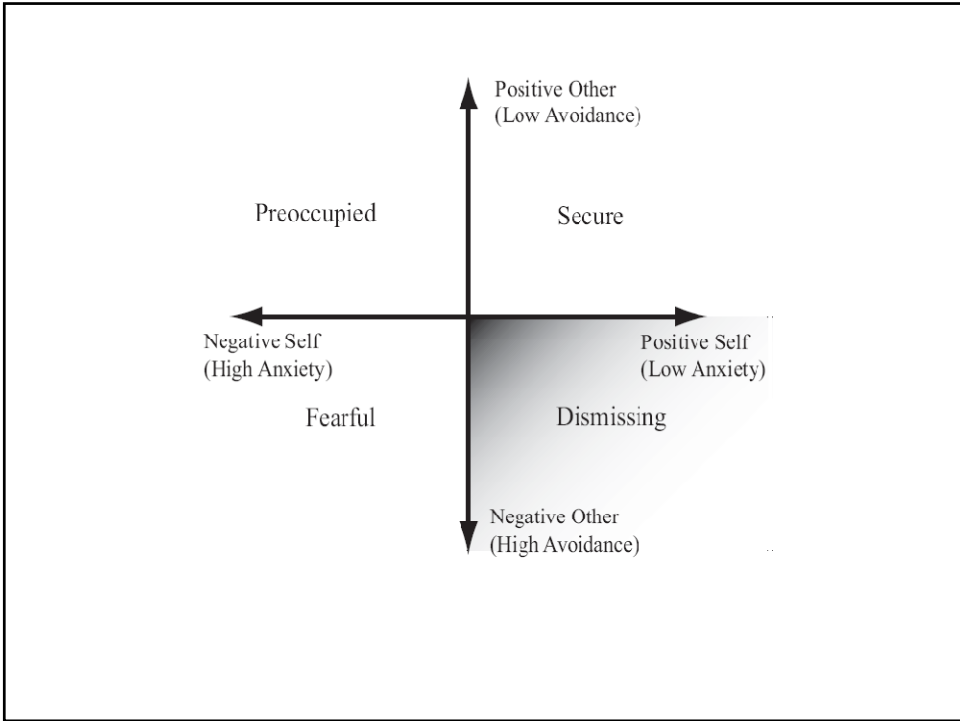
What was that?

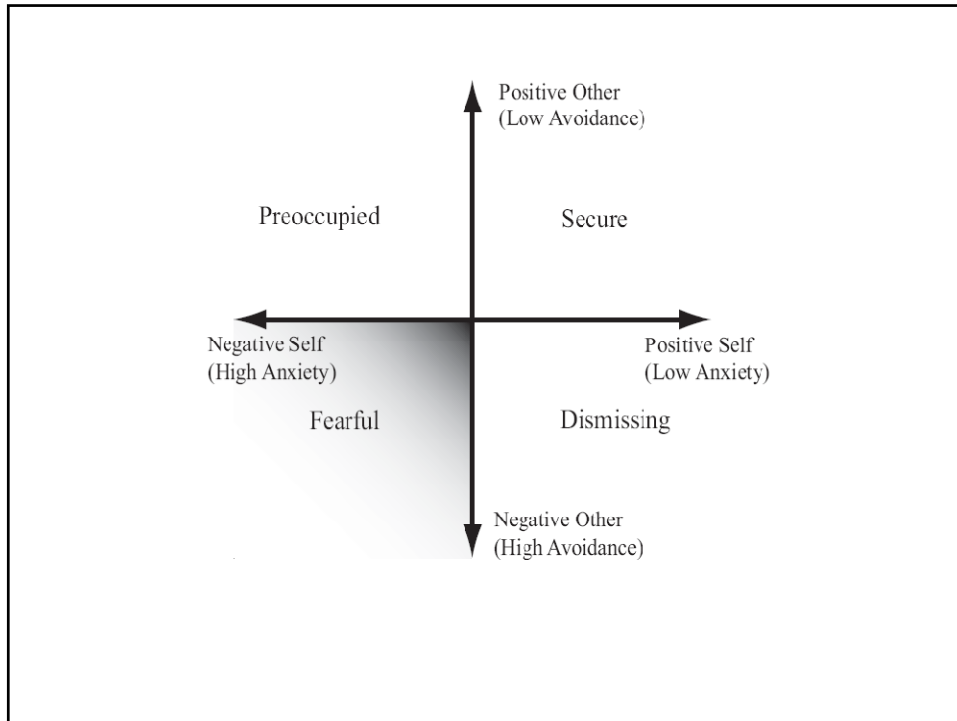
- **Secure**
 - It is easy for me to become emotionally close to others. I am comfortable depending on others and having others depend on me. I don't worry about being alone or having others not accept me.
- **Dismissing**
 - I am comfortable without close emotional relationships. It is very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient, and I prefer not to depend on others or have others depend on me.
- **Preoccupied**
 - I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others, but I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I am uncomfortable being without close relationships, but I sometimes worry that others don't value me as much as I value them.
- **Fearful**
 - I am uncomfortable getting close to others. I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them. I worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.

What was that?

- **4 Category Model of Attachment Styles (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991)**
 - Categories represent types of attachment that that reflect how we think about ourselves and others (Working Models).
 - Working Model of Other – “Whether or not the attachment figure is judged to be the sort of person who in general responds to calls for support and protection...” (Bowlby, 1973, p. 203-204)
 - Working Model of Self – “Whether or not the self is judged to be the sort of person toward whom... the attachment figure is likely to respond in a helpful way.” (Bowlby, 1973, p. 203-204)







**Where Do These Attachment
Styles Come From?**

Origins of Attachment Theory

- Attachment is Bonding
- The Infant – Caregiver Bond
 - Early Theories Focused on the Role of Feeding as the Source of the Bond.
 - Freud = the oral stage
 - Behaviorism = Food as primary reinforcer, caregiver as secondary reinforcer paired with food.
 - John Bowlby's work in the 50's and 60's Challenged this notion.
 - Bowlby suggests that Comfort/Safety was the source of the Bond

Bowlby, 1988

“To remain in easy access to a familiar individual known to be ready and willing to come to our aid in an emergency is clearly a good insurance policy- whatever our age.”

The Path to a New Theory

- Observations of children at the London Child Guidance Clinic
 - Orphaned children did not form bonds with the nursing staff, even though their physical needs were being met.
- Lorenz (1935) – Attachment in Geese.
 - Newborn Geese feed themselves but they still form caregiver bonds (imprinting)
- The Harlows (1958) – Attachment in Rhesus Monkeys

Two types of artificial mothers



Harlow (1958) Studies



Bowlby's Theory of Attachment

- Attachment is a psychological system that evolved keep infants and caregivers in close proximity which provides physical safety.
- Attachment Behavioral System Bowlby(1969/1982)
 - Threat
 - ◆ Activates the Attachment Behavioral System.
 - Signaling Behavior / Proximity Seeking
 - ◆ Brings caregiver close to the infant.
 - Contact with Caregiver (Secure Base) creates feelings of security
 - Deactivation of the Attachment Behavioral System
 - ◆ Other behavioral systems are activated.
 - ◆ Exploration, Feeding, Socialization
 - The Absence of secure base impairs our interactions with the world

Part II:

Individual Differences in Infancy

- Bowlby talked about a normative model where everybody forms attachments.
- Ainsworth (1978) found individual differences in quality of parent-child bond.
- She developed an individual differences model based on structured observations of mother-child dyads in Ghana and U.S.

Introduction to Ainsworth's Strange Situation

- Assessed organization of attachment and exploratory behavior around caregiver.

Series of eight episodes

- Mother with child
- Stranger enters
- Mother leaves
- Stranger leaves
- Mother returns
- Mother leaves
- Stranger returns
- Mother returns

The Strange Situation



Attachment Classifications

- Attachment Four Classification Coding System:
- A = Avoidant
- B = Secure
- C = Ambivalent
- D = Disorganized

Attachment in Adulthood

Romantic Relationships (Pair-bonds) as Attachment relationships. (Hazan & Ziefman, 1997)

- Based on the assumption that attachment patterns observed in infancy are the result of the same underlying processes found in adult relationships.
 - Operation of the Attachment Behavioral System
 - Working Models of Attachment

2. Attachment in Close and/or Romantic Adult Relationships

Romantic Relationships (Pair-bonds) as Attachment relationships. (Hazan & Ziefman, 1997)

-Distinct from c-p and p-c attachment

- a single relationship involves both the attachment (safe haven, secure base behavior) and care-giving (serving as a safe haven or secure base) behavioral systems.
- Includes the Sexual Behavioral system that is largely responsible for establishing and maintaining proximity between partners while attachment bonds develop.

What was I Again?

- Secure
 - It is easy for me to become emotionally close to others. I am comfortable depending on others and having others depend on me. I don't worry about being alone or having others not accept me.
- Dismissing
 - I am comfortable without close emotional relationships. It is very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient, and I prefer not to depend on others or have others depend on me.
- Preoccupied
 - I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others, but I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I am uncomfortable being without close relationships, but I sometimes worry that others don't value me as much as I value them.
- Fearful
 - I am uncomfortable getting close to others. I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them. I worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.

Complex Issues

- Does a Single Category Really Describe Me?
- Can I have more than One Type of Attachment?
- Are they Categories or Dimensions?
- Is My Attachment the Same in Different Relationships?
- Is Attachment a Characteristic of a Relationship or a Personality Variable?
- If I was/am Insecure am I Doomed to Stay this Way?
- Will my attachment affect my children in the future?

Correlates of Adult Attachment

- Relationship Functioning
- Competence
- Psychological Well-being

Correlates of Adult Attachment

- Relationship Functioning
 - Secure individuals report satisfaction and more intimacy in close relationships (Feeney & Noller, 1996).
 - Securely attached individuals behave more constructively during conflict (Pietromonaco, Greenwood, & Barrett, 2004)
 - Anxious individuals report more negative emotions during conflict. (Pietromonaco, Greenwood, & Barrett, 2004)
 - Secure individuals are more likely to provide their partners with support when they are distressed, compared to avoidant individuals (Simpson, Rholes, & Nelligan, 1992).

Correlates of Adult Attachment

● Competence

■ Secure individuals

- Report high levels of exploration curiosity, cognitive flexibility and openness to new experiences; (Mikulincer, 1997).
- Strike a balance between relationship needs and work or school needs. (Hazan & Shaver, 1990; Aspelmeier & Kerns, 2003).

Correlates of Adult Attachment

● Competence

■ Anxious (Preoccupied/Ambivalent) individuals

- Report high levels of anxiety about their academic and job performance.
- Often report that relationships interfere with school and work.

■ Avoidant (Dismissing) individuals

- Report a strong focus on academic or work activities, to the exclusion of personal relationships.

Correlates of Adult Attachment

- Correlates of Adult Attachment
 - Psychological Well-being in non-clinical samples
 - Secure attachment
 - Lower levels of self reported psychopathology: (Aspelmeier, Elliot, & Smith, in press; Cooper, et al., 2004; Mickelson, Kessler, & Shaver, 1997)
 - SCL-90 and SCL-90 R (Derogatis & Lazarus, 1994)
 - Trauma Symptoms Inventory (TSI; Briere, 1995)
 - Composite International Diagnostic Interview (CIDI; World Health Organization, 1990)
 - Higher levels of intrapersonal adjustment: Low Distress, High self concept, internal locus of control, fewer risky sexual behaviors, less substance use, and higher educational achievement.

Correlates of Adult Attachment

- Correlates of Adult Attachment
 - Psychological Well-being in non-clinical samples
 - Insecure Attachment –
 - Attachment styles reflecting high Anxiety (Fearful [Anxious/Avoidant] and Preoccupied [Ambivalent]) are most strongly associated with poor adjustment, risky behavior, and psychopathology. (Aspelmeier et al., in press; Cooper et al., 2004; Mickelson et al., 1997)
 - Avoidant/low Anxiety Attachment is frequently uncorrelated with self reports of psychological functioning. However, reports from others suggest that they are not as well adjusted as Secure individuals (Aspelmeier et al., in press; Kobak & Sceery, 1988; Dozier & Lee, 1995)

