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## Understanding your Quiz Results

Thank you for taking the quiz. We want to help you understand your quiz results. Here are some questions we will answer below:

1. What does the number of my score mean?
2. What if I had scores close together in two categories?
3. What if I had high scores in three or more categories?
4. None of my scores were above 4. What does this mean?
5. Where do I start?

Our (Milan and Kay's) biggest problem during the first 15 years of our marriage was we didn't know what we didn't know! A parent can only pass on the relational skills they possess no matter how much they love us. We were missing important skills our parents were missing from their own years growing up. The quiz will help you discover your Love Style or Attachment Style. Each of the five styles: the Avoider, Pleaser, Vacillator, Controller and Victim indicate certain ways you struggle to manage stress effectively, connect to others successfully in close relationships, and communicate clearly in difficult conversations. Your Love Style will reveal areas you didn't get all you needed from your family of origin to help your relationships thrive. With a specific diagnosis of what was missing we learned new skills and that was the beginning of deep change. We want that for each of you too.

### 1. What does the number of my score mean?

The total maximum score for each one of the five styles is fifteen. Love Styles exist on a continuum from mild to strong.

- A score of 1 to 3 would be very mild indicating this is NOT an area needing growth.
- A score of 3 to 8 would be in the medium range. Learn more about each style with medium range scores and consider growth goals that would benefit your relationships.
- Any score above 8 is an indication you should invest time in understanding this style (or styles). Read more on each style with a score above 8. Determine if the description(s) of any of these styles describe how you interact in relationships. A score of 8 to 15 indicates this style has a great impact on your life and greatly affects how you relate to others.

As you evaluate your scores, it is wise to ask those close to you (a spouse, child, friend, or sibling) if they experience these traits as they relate to you. **We recommend you start with the style you exhibit the most in the relationship you most want to change.**

## **2. What if I had scores close together in two categories?**

Below we will share the most common areas for close scores in more than one category.

### **A. My scores were similar for the Pleaser and Avoider: Are you an Avoider or Pleaser?**

What are the similarities between the Avoider and the Pleaser? Neither style likes to deal with negative messy emotions. Pleasers don't like conflict, so they avoid difficult feelings. The Avoider views feelings as a foreign language they don't speak. If an Avoider and Pleaser marry, they will report that they rarely fight. This is because each avoids problems as problems involve difficult emotions. Pleasers and Avoiders both minimize bad news as they don't have the skills to deal with challenging emotions.

How are these two styles different? Pleasers are more empathetic than Avoiders and will try and indirectly "fix" to make things better. They want to alleviate suffering and make it go away by excusing, distracting, minimizing, and looking at the "bright side." To the Pleaser, showing love equals rescuing others from difficult emotions and painful consequences rather than letting them learn from mistakes.

Unlike Pleasers, Avoiders lack empathy and think every mistake should have a consequence because they put such high value on responsibility. While Pleasers can be too soft, Avoiders can be too harsh. While Pleasers "fix" difficult emotions, Avoiders dismiss difficult emotions by saying things like, "Settle down," "Stop crying, it won't change anything," and "Forget it and move forward."

### **B. My scores were similar for the Pleaser and Vacillator: Are you a Pleaser or a Vacillator?**

Pleasers are like Vacillators in one way. They both like proximity and try to please to make others happy. However, their motives differ. Pleasers are nice to avoid conflict and rejection. Vacillators are nice to gain attention and be noticed. Many times, at our conferences someone will come up and say, "I think I am a Pleaser, but I'm not sure. We always ask this question, "Do you get mad?" If the answer is, "No, I don't get angry," then we can be pretty sure they are a Pleaser. Pleasers don't get angry as it might cause conflict and Pleasers are terrified of fighting because they don't want anyone to be angry with them. Pleasers believe anger isn't "nice" and Pleasers value harmony. In fact, learning to feel and express anger is a growth goal for Pleasers.

If the answer is, “Yes I get mad,” then our next guess is this. “I think you may be a Vacillator.” Vacillators try to please to make some sort of connection happen. If their efforts do not produce the desired effect, then Vacillators get mad whereas Pleasers will just try harder. The Vacillator’s anger may be direct and loud, or it may be a sudden dark mood that sends a clear message of displeasure. Eventually Vacillators re-engage (without resolution) and the pattern repeats.

Vacillators go through predictable stages. First, they protest (anger), then feel despair (this will never change), then detach for short or long periods of time. In the protest phase the Vacillator is angry. In the despair phase, Vacillators retreat and ruminate about the problem. After years of this cycle, Vacillators may permanently detach and give up trying. At this point they may say, “I think I’m an Avoider.” In reality, a detached Vacillator is a more accurate description.

Avoiders don’t have a pattern of protest, despair, and detachment. They have never expressed disappointment over a lack of connection. Are you a detached Vacillator? Then anger has probably diminished as you have given up on the relationship. We see a danger at this point for the Vacillator’s anger to turn into a root of bitterness. While this bitterness may feel justified, bitterness takes a toll on body, mind, and spirit. In fact, the Bible says it damages not only you but others around you. Read Hebrews 12:14-17.

### **C. My scores were similar for the Vacillator and Controller: Are you a Vacillator or Controller?**

There are similarities between the Vacillator and Controller. Of all the styles these two are the quickest to anger. It is easy to judge the anger and conclude these are the “worst” styles. Let’s remember Avoiders, Pleasers and Victims tend to be dishonest and minimize the truth to avoid conflict. Lying isn’t one of God’s favorite character traits either. Remember, each broken love style was developed as a coping method in childhood to deal with pain and a lack of emotional connection.

Vacillators and Controllers tend to be angry about different things. Vacillators are angry because they are disappointed and wished for something they didn’t get. Vacillators want connection and desire to be seen, heard, and tended to without asking directly for what they want. Controllers are not driven toward connection as much as control and get angry because someone has threatened their authority and made them feel powerless. Control is about keeping these painful childhood memories from being re-experienced in adulthood. If a Controller is in charge and keeps everyone in line, painful feelings can stay submerged. Because of the Controller’s traumatic childhood experiences, powerlessness is associated with humiliation and shame so feeling helpless and overwhelmed is a huge trigger and reminder of childhood to be avoided at all costs.

We can see how the Vacillator and Controller display anger for different reasons. Depending on the degree of the injury both the Vacillator and Controller’s anger can be

intense, scary, and overwhelming to others. Anger without ownership, resolution, and apologies is destructive to all relationships. A read through the book of Proverbs is a wake-up call to the destructiveness of unchecked anger. For both styles, expressing the feelings under the anger is important. Usually anxiety, insecurity, or feeling overwhelmed or hurt are the primary emotions that end up getting expressed as anger. Growth comes from seeing anger as a red flag to stop, get the list of Soul Words, and identify underlying emotions.

Controllers are more cut off from the pain of childhood while Vacillators are much more aware and willing to talk about painful experiences during their childhood years. Vacillators easily feel abandoned while Controllers easily feel threatened. Vacillators are triggered by unmet expectations whereas Controllers are triggered by loss of control and the feeling of powerlessness. Neither of these styles like anyone disagreeing with them. Vacillators feel if others really understood them, they would agree with all their thoughts and opinions, so they feel misunderstood, rejected, and abandoned when others disagree. Controllers see disagreement as a threat to their power and get angry to intimidate others into compliance.

#### **D. My scores were similar for the Pleaser and Victim: Are you a Pleaser or a Victim?**

As kids, both Pleasers and Victims try to “be good” for the purpose of not adding more stress to the family system or parents. Perhaps a parent had outbursts of anger or there was a sibling that was out of control. Perhaps one or both parents were like kids themselves and someone had to take charge. Pleasers and Victims are both afraid of conflict and will go out of their way to appease, fix, and calm down an agitated person. Both styles lack boundaries and have a difficult time standing up to others when they disagree.

What’s the difference? We might think of a Pleaser as a classic co- dependent. They learned to “care- take” as kids, and they stay in the role as adults. Pleasers have a difficult time giving an accurate report of their childhood experiences as they would not want to say anything bad about their parents. They see their childhood history in an idealized way and often don’t recognize they lost parts of themselves by constantly focusing on others.

Victims on the other hand have a lot of unresolved traumas. They learned to tolerate the intolerable as kids. The parent that was supposed to protect them and comfort them was more often a source of fear or even terror or neglected the kids. When a Victim tries to describe their childhood, the story will often be chaotic, disorganized, choppy, and hard to follow. Since childhood was confusing, the story about their history is confusing too. It’s hard to explain because it doesn’t make sense when a parent mistreats or neglects a child.

While both Pleasers and Victims have a lot of anxiety, Victims endured more trauma as kids and often learned to cope by disconnecting, freezing, and dissociating during fearful events. This method of coping may continue into adulthood. Numbing out is a way to forget trauma and move on and there is often a lot of pain to forget. Pleasers, having endured fewer traumas as kids, tend to stay more present and anxiously try to fix an agitated person.

### **3. None of my scores were above four, what does this mean?**

There are **three** common possibilities:

1. First, low scores across the board may indicate you are more of a Secure Connector. Perhaps you had great parents who were able to listen, connect deeply on an emotional level, and offer comfort and guidance when you were distressed. Your parents communicated with you in respectful ways and spent time with you to understand your unique talents and gifts. If you are a Secure Connector, you learned how to repair ruptures and mend hurts.
2. The second option is you have already done a lot of personal work to develop and change.
3. Third, your self-awareness is low, and you are not sure how to answer the questions.

### **4. What does it mean if I had high scores in three or more categories?**

We want to share some extra information with you because you had a high score in three areas on our How We Love Quiz. What does this mean and how you can be hopeful and move forward? Many times, people with these scores had a difficult childhood with some sort of suffering. Perhaps when you were growing up there was a death, divorce, parental addiction, or a difficult stepparent(s). Some of you may have experienced physical, emotional, or sexual abuse from a parent, sibling, babysitter, or family acquaintance.

Perhaps you were in the foster system and had multiple caretakers or had a parent with mental illness. There are many possibilities, but for a child it's very difficult to make sense of trauma. Children often assume it's their fault. All kids work hard to understand why things happen and to make sense of their world and surroundings. Life can be very confusing when things don't make sense.

When suffering occurs, a child needs acknowledgement, validation, compassion, comfort, and protection. This kind of support lessens the impact of trauma. Without a supportive adult when difficulties are ongoing, a child is left to cope on their own. Kids from hard backgrounds may try various Attachment Styles to manage the distress.

Perhaps as a child you tried to be good and please hoping things would improve. Avoidance and detaching are another coping mechanism. Some kids keep hope alive and idealize the future when escape from the family is possible. Others become angry and controlling for good reason. Other children may construct a whole imaginary world where they are safe and in control.

It's easy to see why suffering can cause high scores in more than one category. It means you tried many different ways to cope. If this is your experience Milan and I have great compassion for you. We have cried along with many people as they have told us about sad, difficult, and sometimes horrific events that occurred during their childhoods. Sometimes the pain is unimaginable. We are terribly sorry for the suffering of any child.

Where can you start? We suggest picking one relationship that you most want to change and focus on the Love Style you display in that one important relationship. Use the book and workbook to help chart a path of growth. It's difficult to heal without compassion, tenderness, and caring from another person. That means you need to find a safe person who can listen to your story. This may be a group, therapist, a trauma therapist, or close friends.

If anger is an issue, we want you to remember this: You have a right to be angry about what happened to you growing up. It makes sense. It's how you handle your anger now as an adult that may cause problems. It harms you and others when your anger is directed at the wrong people. Other people in your adult life may be the lightning rod for anger from your past. What's missing in most cases is grief. Many children who suffer have no place to grieve and no one with whom to grieve. Grieving is really the main antidote to anger. Angry people have most often shut off tears. So, we encourage you to learn to grieve so the wounds can heal. The goal is to have compassion for the child you once were. We want to acknowledge it's not an easy journey, but we believe there is hope for healing. We hope our book and website will help you on that journey. It will be our joy and delight if that is true.

We hope this is helpful!  
Blessings,  
Milan and Kay