

Understanding Your Attachment Style



The Path to Overcoming
Unhelpful Patterns and
Building Healthy,
Secure Relationships

Marc
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WORKBOOK

How to Use This Guide

This workbook is a companion to *Understanding Your Attachment Style*. It's designed to help you apply what you read, deepen your insight, and track your growth as you move through the three steps: Develop Insight, Become More Aware, and Show Up to Practice. Use it alongside the book or on its own to review core ideas. Each section summarizes a chapter, defines key terms, and includes exercises to help you connect the concepts to your own experiences.

If you are working through this workbook with a group, here are three suggested reading schedules to choose from. I encourage you to choose a schedule that will allow your group to carefully consider and discuss each reading and exercise, not merely get through an assignment.

4-week schedule

- **Week One:** Step One
- **Week Two:** Step Two
- **Week Three:** Step Three
- **Week Four:** Epilogue - final thoughts

6-week schedule

- **Week One:** Preface - Chapter 2
- **Week Two:** Chapters 3 - 5
- **Week Three:** Chapters 6 - 8
- **Week Four:** Chapters 9- 11
- **Week Five:** Chapters 12 - 14
- **Week Six:** Epilogue

8-week schedule

- **Week One:** Preface - Chapter 2
- **Week Two:** Chapter 3 - 4
- **Week Three:** Chapters 5 - 6
- **Week Four:** Chapters 7 - 8
- **Week Five:** Chapters 9 - 10
- **Week Six:** Chapter 11 -12
- **Week Seven:** Chapter 13-14
- **Week Eight:** Epilogue

“Only once we become more dissatisfied with our own reactive patterns than we are with others’ does transformation become possible.”

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The introduction to *Understanding Your Attachment Style* begins with Marc's honest reflection on his own struggle to change the ways he reacted in relationships. He discovered that trying harder to "love better" wasn't enough because you can't do what you haven't yet learned. This realization set him on a journey to understand how early life experiences shape the ways we connect and respond to others.

Marc explains that many of our relationship struggles have less to do with effort and more to do with how our emotional responses were programmed in childhood. The attachment patterns we formed then continue to influence how we relate, trust, and seek closeness as adults. But the encouraging message is that these patterns can change. By gaining insight, developing awareness, and practicing new responses, we can "earn" secure attachment and experience healthier, more satisfying relationships.

The book outlines three practical steps for growth: Develop Insight, Become More Aware, and Show Up to Practice. These steps mirror any learning process, first understanding what's happening, then noticing patterns, and finally applying new skills until they become natural.

Marc reassures readers that this work is not about blame or perfection. It's about learning new ways of relating that bring peace and connection. With intention and practice, change is possible. As Marc reminds us, transformation begins the moment we decide to take responsibility for our own patterns and choose growth over staying stuck.

STEP ONE

“When our emotional needs are consistently met by another, we feel attuned to them, and form a secure bond.”

DEVELOP INSIGHT

CHAPTER 1

How We Attach (or Don't)

This chapter introduces how attachment, the way we connect emotionally to others, develops from our earliest experiences. Just as hunger drives us to seek food, our emotions drive us to seek connection and safety. When those needs are met with care and consistency, we feel secure. When they're ignored, dismissed, or inconsistently met, we develop protective strategies that shape our attachment styles.

Marc explains that emotional intelligence begins with recognizing the feelings beneath behavior and the needs behind those feelings. When caregivers can tune in and respond with empathy, called attunement, children learn that their emotions are understood and manageable. This creates a foundation of trust and emotional safety that carries into adulthood.

Through everyday examples, Marc shows how secure attachment forms and contrasts it with the five insecure styles: Avoider, Pleaser, Vacillator, Controller, and Victim. Each develops as a way to cope when emotional needs aren't met.

Understanding these early patterns helps readers see how their past shaped their present, and why certain emotional triggers or relationship struggles feel so automatic. This awareness is the first step toward rewriting those old patterns and building more secure, connected relationships today.

Self-Reflection Questions: Chapter 1

1. What did you notice about how you relate to others today? Do you verbalize your emotions securely or dramatize your emotions insecurely?

2. As you read this chapter, what childhood memories did you recall? What insights— into yourself or others— did you glean?

3. What confirmed something you already knew about yourself or others?

Self-Reflection Questions: Chapter 1

4. What attachment styles did your parents have when you were growing up? While reading, what attachment style resonated for you or as the one you may be instilling in your children?

5. What insights did you gain from reflecting on how your parents raised you, with what you know about your grandparents, and how your parents' own attachment styles developed?

“Trust, safety, and affection from our caregivers...is the infrastructure for how we learn to form relationships in what’s called the cycle of bonding.”

CHAPTER 2

CHAPTER 2

The Cycle of Bonding

Marc explains how early care shapes our ability to trust and connect. Through consistent, warm parenting—like Emily with her daughter Avery—children learn the cycle of bonding: connection, exploration, and safe return. These early experiences form emotional “blueprints” that guide adult relationships.

Inconsistent or distant care can create anxiety, avoidance, or over-reliance, but new, secure relationships and practices like Reflect-Connect-Respond can help rewire old patterns and build trust.

Key Takeaways

- Cycle of bonding: Connect → Explore → Return safely.
- Early care shapes emotional “templates” for life.
- Consistency = security; inconsistency = coping patterns.
- Emotional memories form before language—our bodies remember safety or fear.
- Repair is possible through new, secure relationships and empathetic communication.

Self-Reflection Questions: Chapter 2

1. How attuned were your parents to your emotions and how responsive were they to your needs during childhood?

2. How attuned and responsive are your spouse and/or parents to your emotions and needs now?

3. What childhood stages do you think you did not successfully complete? What hindered your progress?

Self-Reflection Questions: Chapter 2

4. Have you learned attentive, active, and reflective listening skills? Which ones do you need to grow in?

5. Can you identify someone who can be a secure base to affirm, comfort, and appropriately challenge you as you grow?

“You cannot reason your
way out of something you
have experienced your way
into.”

CHAPTER 3

CHAPTER 3

Reprogramming the Amygdala

In this chapter, Marc explains how the brain's threat-system—centered on the amygdala—can hijack our emotional responses and keep us locked into old patterns of reacting. He uses the story of Oliver, who developed a lingering fear of dogs after a childhood incident, to illustrate how one event can embed itself in our nervous system. The amygdala, he explains, learns associations from these early experiences and can trigger fight, flight, or freeze responses in everyday situations—even when the danger isn't real.

Marc links these automatic brain reactions to our attachment histories: when our primary caregivers could not consistently soothe or attune to us, the threat system becomes hyper-vigilant and reactive. He describes how insecure attachment styles often show up as habitual reactions rather than conscious choices. The hopeful part of the chapter: because our brains remain plastic, new experiences and intentional awareness can rewire those old neural pathways—helping us move from reaction to response, from defensiveness to emotional safety.

Self-Reflection Questions: Chapter 3

1. What significant negative experiences have you had and how have these affected the way you react?

2. What associations have you formed to strong feelings such as abandonment, fear, and inadequacy as a result of these experiences?

Self-Reflection Questions: Chapter 3

3. Are you aware when your amygdala is hijacking your brain?

4. Do you most often fight, flight, freeze, or fawn? Can you think of what you have intentionally done to develop your “observing self”?

“When we believe we have no choice other than to remain the way we currently are, then the only solution we see is for others to simply accept our traits and adjust to us.”

CHAPTER 4

CHAPTER 4

Knowing Thyself

Marc invites you to deepen your self-awareness by exploring how emotions, history, and hidden vulnerabilities shape your responses in relationships. He opens with Kevin's story: when his girlfriend arrived late, instead of instantly reacting with anger, Kevin noticed tightness in his chest, recognised his anxiety and sadness, and connected it to earlier abandonment wounds. That moment of noticing changed everything...he didn't react the way he used to.

Marc emphasises that emotional intelligence is more than managing moods, it's being able to name what you feel, trace it back to what you need, and link it to where it started. Without this self-understanding, you'll struggle to truly understand others. He contrasts sympathy ("I'm sorry you feel that way") with empathy ("I can feel how you feel"), and explains why many people default to anger: because anger hides something else: fear, shame, or hurt.

The chapter also digs into shame, especially the quiet, hidden shame that says "There's something wrong with me." That kind of shame often drives us into old protective habits: pleasing, controlling, withdrawing, or blaming. Marc reminds us: knowing your story doesn't mean you're stuck in it. It means you're free to rewrite it.

In short: this chapter is about choosing self-understanding over blaming others, recognizing that you aren't just how you were built...but how you're willing to become.

Key points:

- Emotional intelligence begins with knowing yourself: noticing what you feel, why you feel it, and where it came from.
- Anger is often a cover-emotion, look beneath it for fear, hurt, or shame.
- Hidden shame makes us believe we're unchangeable; recognising it is the first step to growth.
- You have a choice. Your attachment style doesn't define you forever; your willingness to understand and respond differently do.

Self-Reflection Questions: Chapter 4

1. How emotionally intelligent do you consider yourself? Are you able to regularly identify a range of emotions you experience and connect them to corresponding needs?

2. Are you aware of and can you communicate vulnerable primary emotions under your anger?

Self-Reflection Questions: Chapter 4

3. How many of these self- protective strategies sounded familiar for what you regularly do?

4. Have you been struggling with secret shame that you've not been aware of ?

5. Did you have a parent who helped you process challenges, mistakes, and difficult emotions with acceptance, empathy, comfort, and reassurance?

6. Can you differentiate between "who you are" and "how you are"? How eager do you feel to learn more skills to address your current shortcomings?

STEP TWO

“No one will ever be totally free from any type of insecurity. The good news is, we can all continually grow.”

BECOME MORE AWARE

CHAPTER 5

Become More Aware

This chapter explores the Avoider attachment style, people who often seem “fine” on the outside but have learned to suppress emotions and needs. Avoiders usually grew up in environments where emotional closeness was limited, parents emphasized independence and achievement, or expressing feelings was discouraged. The message they internalized? “You’re fine. Take care of yourself. Don’t need anyone.”

Avoiders often succeed in careers and life because of their focus on responsibility, performance, and independence. They may appear calm and capable, but beneath the surface, their avoidance of emotions can create challenges in relationships. Emotional connection can feel uncomfortable or “needy,” triggering shame or anxiety.

The chapter explains common triggers for Avoiders using the acronym **EVILBUDS**:

- Emotional connection
- Vulnerability
- Inadequacy
- Let downs (self or others)
- Burden (others’ needs)
- Underperformance
- Dependency
- Shame

Avoiders cope by denying, dismissing, or minimizing emotions, distancing themselves, or distracting with work and activities. They tend to avoid conflict, fix problems rather than validate feelings, and keep relationships at a manageable emotional distance. Over time, this can frustrate partners or loved ones who seek emotional intimacy.

Marc emphasizes that Avoider patterns are learned coping strategies: they were adaptive in childhood but can become maladaptive in adult relationships. Becoming aware of these patterns is the first step toward building healthier connections.

Self-Reflection Questions: Chapter 5

1. If you have Avoider tendencies, how do you think your childhood shaped you to be this way?

2. Growing up, did you have a parent who was an Avoider? What impact do you think this had on your attachment to that parent and on your expectations about others meeting your emotional needs in adult relationships?

Self-Reflection Questions: Chapter 5

3. Is your spouse an Avoider? If so, now that you better understand how their insecure attachment style formed through a developmental deficit of not receiving enough emotional connection during childhood, what do you think you can do to help them practice connecting on a deeper emotional level? How can you begin to build compassion for the child they once were, who missed out on the emotional support needed to understand both their own emotions and yours?

4. Is one of your children showing signs of developing an Avoider attachment style? What factors might be contributing to this, and how can you support them in recognizing and connecting with their emotions more deeply?

“Pleaser children
will develop a lack
of confidence in
their own abilities
if they are not
encouraged.”

CHAPTER 6

CHAPTER 6

Pleasers Want to Help You Feel Better

This chapter explores the Pleaser attachment style, using Noah's story to illustrate how a child's early experiences with a dysregulated, emotionally unavailable, or overly dependent parent can shape lifelong patterns of seeking approval and harmony. When children learn that their parent's mood depends on their own behavior, they suppress their own needs to keep the peace. This conditioning forms the foundation of the Pleaser's adult relational style—where safety is maintained through compliance, caretaking, and avoidance of conflict.

Pleasers develop hypervigilance to others' moods, anxiety about separation or rejection, and difficulty asserting their own needs. They often become high-performing "good kids" and later, self-sacrificing adults who overextend themselves in relationships and work. Their primary triggers revolve around perceived disapproval or emotional distance (summarized by the acronym SCARED). Though outwardly kind and accommodating, Pleasers often struggle with anxiety, burnout, resentment, and poor boundaries.

Marc connects these behaviors to learned helplessness—the tendency to endure uncomfortable situations rather than believe one can change them—showing how early emotional conditioning leads Pleasers to freeze or fawn rather than assert or confront.

Key points:

1. Root of the Pleaser Style: Grows from childhood experiences where emotional safety depended on keeping parents calm, happy, or stable.
2. Core Motivation: Pleasers regulate others to reduce their own anxiety—believing harmony equals safety.
3. Common Triggers: Separation, conflict, anger, rejection, disapproval, disappointment, distress (SCARED).
4. Hidden Cost: Chronic anxiety, poor boundaries, and learned helplessness that limit authentic self-expression.
5. Growth Path: Healing involves learning to tolerate conflict, set boundaries, and value one's own needs as equal to others'.

Self-Reflection Questions: Chapter 6

1. If you have Pleaser tendencies, how do you think your childhood shaped you to be this way?

2. Growing up, did you have a parent who was a Pleaser or a parent you were afraid of? Maybe you had a parent who was highly critical or chronically depressed? What effect do you think this had on your attachment to them and your anxiety levels in your adult relationships?

Self-Reflection Questions: Chapter 6

3. Is your spouse a Pleaser? If so, what do you think you can do to encourage them to not give in and tolerate your disappointment when they differ from you? How can you encourage their assertiveness, now that you know more about how their insecure attachment style stems from fearfulness and anxiety in childhood?

4. Is one of your children showing signs of developing a Pleaser attachment style? What factors might be contributing to this, and how can you support them in recognizing and managing their fearfulness so they can grow in confidence and emotional security?

**“Resolution can
be difficult with
Vacillators because
they are often too
angry or hopeless
to receive closeness.”**

CHAPTER 7

CHAPTER 7

Vacillators Long for More

In this chapter, Marc explains the Vacillator attachment style, people who crave deep connection but feel torn between closeness and fear of rejection. Through Jonathan and Maria's story, Marc shows how Vacillators idealize relationships, react strongly when they feel misunderstood, and struggle with emotional ambivalence.

Childhood Roots:

Vacillators often had inconsistent parents—sometimes loving, other times unavailable, creating anxiety and longing for steady affection.

Adult Patterns and Triggers:

They confuse intensity with intimacy, idealize others, and feel hurt when reality disappoints. Marc uses MUDWARS (Misunderstood, Unseen, Disappointed, Waiting, Abandoned, Rejected, Shame) to describe their common triggers, which lead to rumination, anger, and emotional withdrawal.

Key Takeaways:

- Vacillators seek idealized love and connection but fear rejection.
- Their anger hides shame and unmet needs.
- Healing comes from recognizing triggers and practicing steady, realistic connection.

Self-Reflection Questions: Chapter 7

1. If you have Vacillator tendencies, how do you think your childhood shaped you to be this way?

2. Growing up, did you have a parent who was a Vacillator or one who was intermittently available? Or did a parent die or leave? How do you think this experience affected your attachment to that parent and shaped your expectations of others in adult relationships—especially regarding their willingness or ability to connect with you and meet your emotional needs?

Self-Reflection Questions: Chapter 7

3. Is your spouse a Vacillator? If so, how do you think you can acknowledge the pain beneath their anger or hopelessness while maintaining boundaries and not getting caught in their push-pull behavior—especially now that you understand their insecure attachment likely comes from real or perceived childhood abandonment?

4. Is one of your children showing signs of developing a Vacillator attachment style? What factors might be contributing to this, and how can you provide the consistency they need while helping them recognize and manage their preoccupation with hurts, ambivalence, idealization, and disappointment?

“These primal needs for safety and attachment conflict and create the ‘disorganized’ reaction.”

CHAPTER 8

CHAPTER 8

Controllers and Victims Facing Their Unsolvable Struggle (Disorganized Attachment)

This chapter explains how Disorganized attachment forms in chaotic or abusive childhoods and creates two survival patterns: the Controller and the Victim. These patterns are adaptive strategies, not moral failings, shaped by early experiences of danger and unpredictability.

Key Points:

- Controllers: Respond to threat by asserting power and control to prevent harm. Can appear decisive and protective but may use anger or intimidation to manage fear and shame.
- Victims: Respond by freezing, withdrawing, or dissociating. Tend to be passive, tolerant of danger, and struggle to assert themselves in relationships.
- Relationship Dynamics: Controllers are often drawn to Victims, and Victims may seek Controllers, creating intense but often destructive cycles.
- Internal Experience: Both carry shame and powerlessness; Controllers mask it with anger, Victims internalize it with helplessness or depression.
- Triggers: Victims react to anger with submission and dissociation; Controllers react to criticism with rage. Calm periods can feel stressful due to learned patterns from childhood.
- Attachment & Intimacy: Early chaos can link adrenaline and intensity with connection, affecting adult relationships.

Self-Reflection Questions: Chapter 8

1. Growing up, did you have a parent who was abusive, dangerous, chaotic, controlling, victim-like, or neglectful? If so, what impact do you think this had on your attachment to them and on your ability to trust others as safe, consistent, and reliable to meet your needs in your adult relationships?

2. Is your spouse a Controller? Are you fearful of them? If so, what steps do you need to take to get to safety and what boundaries do you need to set to find balance in your relationship?

Self-Reflection Questions: Chapter 8

3. Is your spouse a Victim? If so, and you are a Controller, are you willing to go through an anger management program, individual therapy, addiction recovery, and/or a structured therapeutic separation while financially supporting them until you can be safe? If you are not a Controller, what can you do to encourage your spouse to develop an adult voice and move to becoming an empowered survivor?

4. Do you have a friend or family member who has tendencies of a Controller or Victim attachment style? While maintaining appropriate boundaries, how can you show compassion for them, understanding their childhood was dangerous or chaotic and they need time and effort to grow beyond those experiences?

Self-Reflection Questions: Chapter 8

5. Are you an adoptive or foster parent of a child who came from a chaotic home? If so, do you know their specific experiences of abuse, neglect, or extreme inconsistency from a caregiver that might fuel their fear that their needs can't be met by you? What do you think you can do to help them feel safe? What support do you need, knowing that it will take time for them to trust and learn how to be in a safe relationship with you?

**“Earning secure
attachment means us
doing internal
reconditioning work.”**

CHAPTER 9

CHAPTER 9

Security Is Still Possible— The Secure Connector

In Chapter Nine, Marc explains that secure attachment is something we can develop, even if we didn't get it as kids. It's not about being perfect, but about noticing your emotions, managing reactions, and learning how to respond in ways that build connection with others. Secure attachment is "earned" through self-awareness, patience, and practice, not something you magically get overnight.

Marc also talks about how kids with secure parents learn essential skills like empathy, expressing feelings, taking risks, and bouncing back from mistakes. These early lessons—like sharing, apologizing, and waiting your turn—teach children they are safe, valued, and capable, laying the groundwork for secure relationships later in life.

As adults, "Secure Connectors" carry these skills forward. They attract healthy relationships, recognize unhealthy dynamics, set boundaries, and step back when relationships aren't balanced. Healthy connections involve compromise, listening, sharing, empathy, and forgiveness. Even if you didn't have these lessons growing up, you can still practice them and build secure, meaningful connections.

Self-Reflection Questions: Chapter 9

1. Which characteristics of the Secure Connector stood out as surprising or especially noteworthy?

2. Were you able to recognize anyone you know in some of the description, or did it sound like an ideal persona that's not truly achievable?

Self-Reflection Questions: Chapter 9

3. Which of these lessons did you learn growing up? Who taught them to you? Which of these lessons have you learned in adulthood? Who taught them to you? Can that person serve as a secure base for continued growth?

4. Which of these lessons do you still need to learn? Are there specific ones you're more eager or ready to begin with?

STEP THREE

“Practicing your specific goals is how you earn secure attachment.”

SHOW UP TO PRACTICE

CHAPTER 10

Growth Goals

Personal growth and secure attachment develop through consistent practice, not just awareness. Understanding your emotional triggers and how your past shaped you is the first step—but real change happens when you repeatedly choose healthier responses, even when it’s uncomfortable. Like building muscle, emotional maturity comes through daily effort, honesty, and vulnerability.

- Avoiders grow by reconnecting emotionally—naming feelings, letting others in, and valuing connection over performance.
- Pleasers strengthen confidence by expressing needs, setting boundaries, and tolerating others’ displeasure without losing themselves.
- Vacillators learn balance by managing reactivity, avoiding idealization, and staying grounded in the present.
- Controllers transform control into trust by grieving past pain, listening with empathy, and building respect instead of fear.
- Victims reclaim power by recognizing survival patterns, grounding in the present, setting boundaries, and seeking safety and support.

Growth takes patience and repetition. Rank your goals, focus on the most important ones, and practice them daily. Secure, healthy relationships don’t happen by accident—they’re the result of intentional, consistent effort to grow beyond old patterns.

Self-Reflection Questions: Chapter 10

1. What are your top areas of growth? (Listing them in priority order can help you focus your efforts on the areas that will bring you the greatest return as you begin the growth process.) If doing this as a group study, sharing these with others can help you see you're not alone.

2. Are you willing to ask those closest to you: "Which one of these growth goals would make the biggest difference to our relationship?" Find out why and list their feedback here.

**“Emotions are indicators,
not dictators.”**

CHAPTER 11

CHAPTER 11

Resistance

Resistance is like emotional weightlifting. Your old habits push back when you try to grow. Feeling uncomfortable, overwhelmed, or frustrated in the growth process at times and wanting to go back to what seems easiest is understandable. However, discomfort and emotions aren't the enemy. Emotions can be signals of areas you need to grow in, while discomfort when doing the secure thing can indicate you're doing the work.

For example, Marc writes: Avoiders rely on themselves, laugh off pain, and avoid vulnerable feelings. In Chapter Eleven, Marc writes about Darren who grew up without anyone helping him to understand the abuse he endured, so now doesn't see vulnerability as useful.

Avoiders get stuck when they:

- Ignore shame, sadness, fear.
- See emotions as weakness.
- Dismiss feelings with humor or logic.

This chapter describes the unique resistance each insecure attachment style faces and how they can push back.

Self-Reflection Questions: Chapter 11

1. Which ways do you see yourself justifying insecurities that stifle your growth?

2. Is it easier to recognize areas needing growth in others than to admit ways you remain stuck?

Self-Reflection Questions: Chapter 11

3. What resistance can you commit to overcoming, even when others don't do their part?

4. Who do you trust to hold you accountable to address your resistance so you can "show up to practice"?

“We can also change a situation by having scripts to say or by practicing new behaviors.”

CHAPTER 12

CHAPTER 12

Rewiring Neural Pathways

Our brains are like giant road maps. Every experience lays down a pathway connecting the situation, emotion, bodily feeling, need, action, and belief. The more we travel a pathway, especially from repeating habits or strong emotional experiences, the more automatic it becomes. That's why some behaviors stick even when we don't want them to, and why one big negative event can shape how we react for a long time.

The good news? We can intentionally create new pathways. Changing behaviors, thoughts, bodily reactions, and situations helps the brain rewire. For example: slow your breathing to calm panic, practice new scripts or behaviors, and consciously challenge old, insecure beliefs. Beliefs are like anchors, they can drag you down or keep you grounded. Replacing "I'm defective if I mess up" with "I deserve to be loved even when I make mistakes" is hard, but possible with intention and safe experiences.

Another key tool is reframing, catch yourself fixating on old worries and trace them back to past experiences. Then, pause, notice, and consciously choose a new response. Over time, these small steps strengthen healthier neural pathways, helping you respond with confidence instead of old patterns.

Self-Reflection Questions: Chapter 12

1. Have you developed a “lion” mind—one that can stay grounded by noticing and naming emotions and thought patterns? Or do you find yourself with more like a “dog” mind, easily pulled along and distracted by whatever your emotions and thoughts are doing in the moment?

2. What are some insecure beliefs you have been holding on to that are dragging you into the depths of insecurity with them? Where in your history did these come from?

3. What are more helpful beliefs you can start holding on to as secure anchors during emotional storms to prevent your reactivity?

**“Giving an apology is an
act of courage.”**

CHAPTER 13

CHAPTER 13

The Importance of Repair

Conflict is inevitable in close relationships, but how we handle it shapes connection. Caleb and Ashley illustrate the most common pattern between a couple: Caleb, an Avoider, withdraws from conflicts, waiting for them to blow over; Ashley, a Vacillator, pursues with criticisms and blame, then waits for Caleb to come to her to apologize and acknowledge her hurt feelings, without expecting to give apologies herself. Without repair, unresolved hurt compounds, creating "neural pathway reference points" that fuel future conflicts.

Forgiveness vs. Grace: Forgiveness releases someone from the debt of their offense; grace gives favor they don't deserve. Holding onto resentment or contempt poisons us, while forgiveness rewires our brain, reducing the power of past hurts. "Emotional forgiveness" (feeling like forgiving) often follows "decisional forgiveness" (choosing to forgive even if the feeling hasn't come yet.)

Apologies: Sincere apologies are critical for repair and forgiveness. True apologies are about the other person's pain (remorse), not our own shame. Avoid "but" statements, self-justifications, or blaming; these undermine the repair process. Apologizing fosters humility, rebuilds trust, and narrows the "injustice gap" that makes offering forgiveness difficult.

Self-Reflection Questions: Chapter 13

1. What were the lessons from your family-of-origin on repair and forgiveness?

2. Did you have a parent who apologized to you when they were wrong, or you were harmed? Was it a full apology with the Five A's? If, not, which ones were missing and how did that affect your relationship with them?

3. Who do you need to apologize to and who do you need to forgive?

Self-Reflection Questions: Chapter 13

4. Which parts of the apology process do you find most challenging or need to improve in?

5. In what areas of the forgiveness process could you improve or deepen your understanding?

“It’s not how difficult your childhood was that determines if you can earn secure attachment, it’s how you can make sense of what happened to you.”

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 14

Measuring Progress and Avoiding Pitfalls

Growth isn't a light switch we can flip on and off...it's gradual, sometimes messy, and definitely non-linear. Take Sherrie, for example: instead of yelling at her son Jake when he got frustrated about his video game, she paused, took a few deep breaths, and helped him put words to his feelings. That small step shows real progress, even if it's imperfect.

Marc writes that repeated practice helps rewire old habits, so over time, calm responses and secure connections become more natural. Measuring growth means noticing the small wins, outbursts that are shorter or less intense, conflicts that get repaired more quickly, and the ability to reflect on our feelings and triggers without getting lost in them.

Conflicts are actually opportunities to learn, not just to prove who's right. Listening well, really holding space for someone without judgment or defense, can make all the difference. Even when emotions are misplaced or mislabelled, slowing down to connect them to past patterns helps build understanding and stronger relationships.

Progress isn't about perfection; it's about showing up, reflecting, and trying again. Each small step matters, and over time, all those tiny wins add up to real change.

Self-Reflection Questions: Chapter 14

1. How quickly can you recover, repair, and reconnect?

2. Can you separate your thoughts from your feelings and communicate each of these accurately?

3. Which pitfalls or objections you read about in this chapter keep you stuck?

Self-Reflection Questions: Chapter 14

4. Is your desire to earn secure attachment greater than your insecure attachment style defiance to not grow?

EPILOGUE

Continuing Your Growth Journey

Now that you've reached the end of the book, it's important to continue taking concrete steps if you want to earn your secure attachment. Reading this material was an essential first step, but transformation happens through consistent practice, reflection, and application. Since we rarely retain everything we read—especially after only one pass—returning to these concepts regularly will help keep them active in your mind and present in your relationships.

Just like a coach—who continually reminds you of your goals, helps you correct your course, and encourages you to stay focused—as you review this content, your follow-through on the practices you've committed to will naturally increase.

Over time, with repetition, openness, and honesty, these new skills will begin to feel more instinctive. Eventually, these practices integrate into your daily life—habits of connection that reflect a growing, grounded, and more secure attachment.

This week's assignment is to take the following **Attachment Assessment** and answer the follow up questions.

ASSESSMENT

Answer (H) (O) (S) (R) (N) Not that I
with: Habitually Often Sometimes Rarely could notice
(>80%) (50–79%) (20–49%) (5–19%) (<5% of the time)
Mother = Father = / Example (H) (O) (S) (R) (N)

Attachment Assessment

1. My mother/father told me “I love you.” (H) (O) (S) (R) (N)
2. My mother/father hugged, kissed, and touched me (H) (O) (S) (R) (N) in ways so I felt loved.
3. My mother/father acknowledged and talked to me (H) (O) (S) (R) (N) about my emotions.
4. My mother/father understood the ways I acted (H) (O) (S) (R) (N) when I was hurt or stressed.
5. My mother/father comforted me when I was sad (H) (O) (S) (R) (N) or hurting.
6. My mother/father allowed me to express anger and (H) (O) (S) (R) (N) negative emotions.
7. My mother/father responded to my emotions with (H) (O) (S) (R) (N) empathy and validation.
8. My mother/father modeled for me and taught me (H) (O) (S) (R) (N) how to navigate conflict.
9. My mother/father disciplined me to teach life (H) (O) (S) (R) (N) lessons rather than punitively.
10. My mother/father offered me forgiveness and (H) (O) (S) (R) (N) grace.
11. My mother/father allowed me to have a “do over” (H) (O) (S) (R) (N) when I made a mistake.
12. My mother/father apologized to me when they (H) (O) (S) (R) (N) wronged me.
13. My mother/father made me feel safe. (H) (O) (S) (R) (N)
14. My mother/father allowed me to have privacy and (H) (O) (S) (R) (N) space to individuate.
15. My mother/father spent time with me doing the (H) (O) (S) (R) (N) things I liked to do.
16. My mother/father laughed with me. (H) (O) (S) (R) (N)

ASSESSMENT

17. My mother/father spent time listening to me and hearing my requests. (H) (O) (S) (R) (N)
18. My mother/father allowed me to influence them to say “yes.” (H) (O) (S) (R) (N)
19. My mother/father encouraged and respected my opinions on topics. (H) (O) (S) (R) (N)
20. My mother/father knew who I truly was and understood me. (H) (O) (S) (R) (N)
21. My mother/father knew my strengths and helped me understand them. (H) (O) (S) (R) (N)
22. My mother/father helped me understand my personality and learning style. (H) (O) (S) (R) (N)
23. My mother/father taught me how to do new things. (H) (O) (S) (R) (N)
24. My mother/father showed belief in me to accomplish things. (H) (O) (S) (R) (N)
25. My mother/father encouraged me when I was failing or unsure. (H) (O) (S) (R) (N)
26. My mother/father prayed with me and taught me about God and values. (H) (O) (S) (R) (N)
27. My mother/father were comfortable talking to me about sex. (H) (O) (S) (R) (N)
28. My mother/father made me feel like I belonged in my family. (H) (O) (S) (R) (N)

Self-Reflection Questions: Epilogue

1. After taking the Attachment Assessment, in what ways did your father and mother differ in how they met your attachment needs?

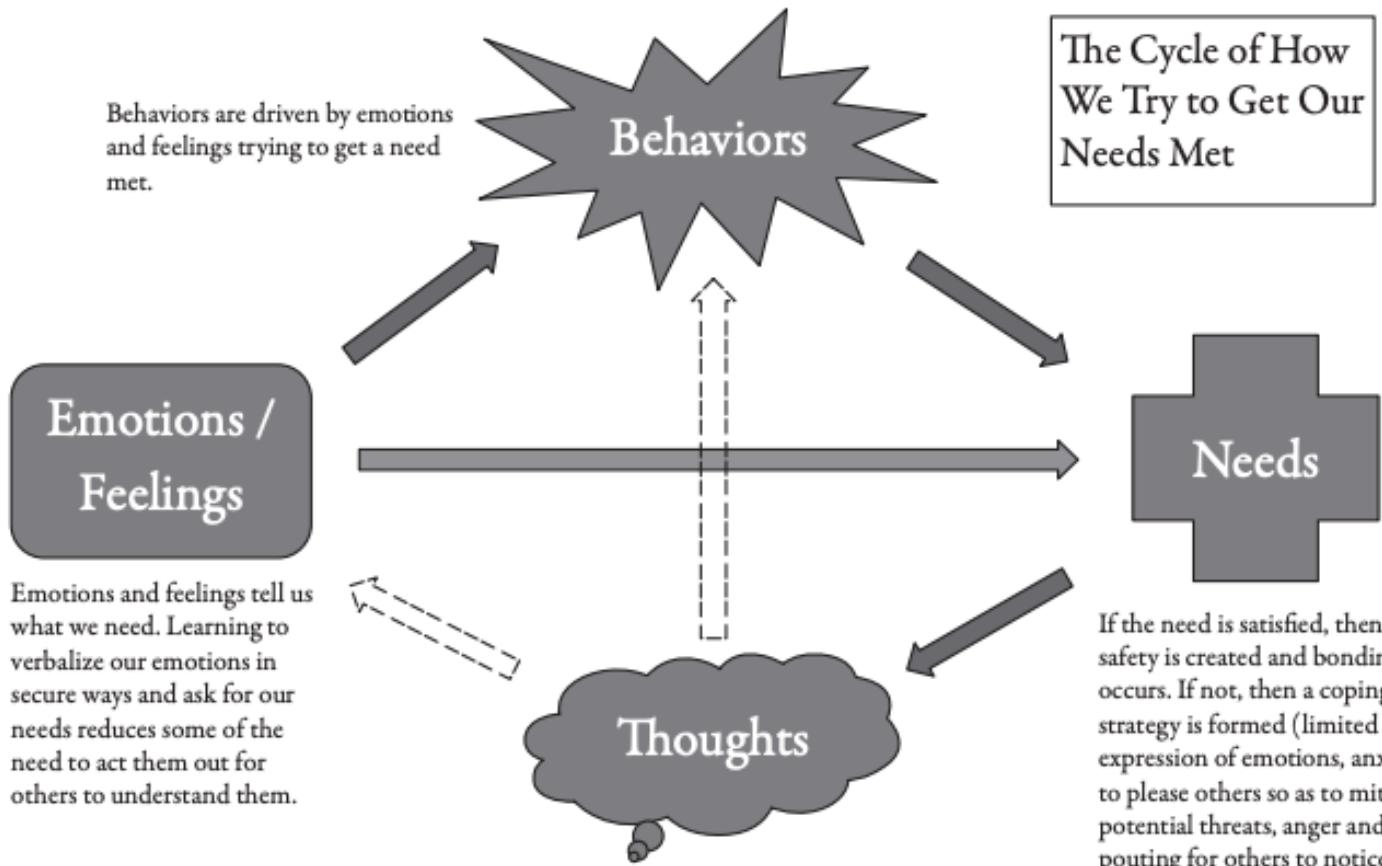
2. How might the degree to which your parents met your needs have influenced your sense of identity, competence, relational security, and belonging?

3. If you have growing children, in what areas do you think you could improve in order to strengthen their attachment security with you and others? What specific steps do you plan to take?

Self-Reflection Questions: Epilogue

4. If you have adult sons and daughters and they are willing to take the assessment and share their results with you, what areas of unmet needs or attachment deficits did they identify?

5. Using the "Reflect-Connect-Respond" technique, try engaging them in a conversation about some of these areas and see if you can help them heal. Write about how that conversation went.



Satisfied or unsatisfied needs fuel thoughts about how future behaviors can get needs met and either result in positive feelings from the need being met or drive despair over unmet needs and the likelihood of them continuing to not be met in the future. Beliefs are then formed about ourselves from repeated or significant experiences. (Example: "I am seen, known, loved, and important, and my needs can get met", or "I am not seen, known, loved, or important, and it's hopeless for my needs to get met" or "I need to do [XYZ] in order to get my needs met.")

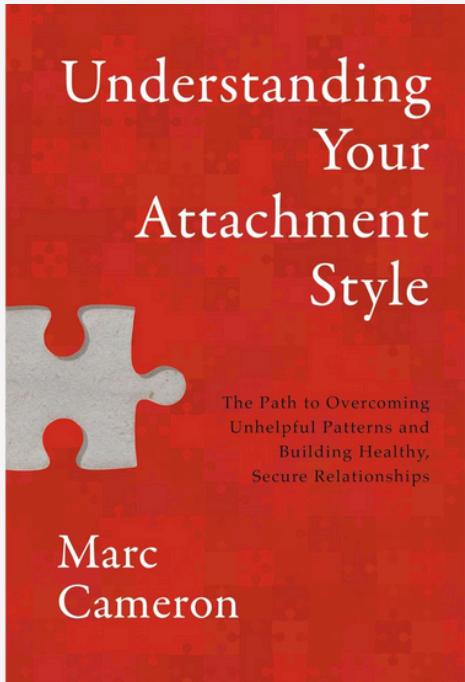
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THE CYCLE OF HOW WE TRY TO GET OUR NEEDS MET

ABOUT THE BOOK

From a licensed marriage and family therapist, this empathetic book is the key to achieving secure relationships with your loved ones and breaking away from painful patterns.

Our individual attachment style plays a crucial role in the quality of our relationships and is often the strongest predictor of how secure and connected we feel with others. Yet, many people remain unaware of their own attachment style—let alone how to shift from an unhealthy style to one that fosters safer, healthier, and more fulfilling relationships. Fortunately, awareness around attachment theory has grown significantly in the past decade. As this framework becomes increasingly central to modern mental health discussions, Marc Cameron is emerging as a leading voice in bringing this awareness. Marc and his wife, Amy, have taken up the mantle of leading the How We Love brand, the organization founded by renowned attachment experts Milan and Kay Yerkovich. Building on the foundation of their groundbreaking book *How We Love* (with over 400,000 copies sold), Marc helps readers uncover and understand the attachment style they developed in childhood.



In this book, Cameron thoroughly explains each attachment style and provides easy methods for you to self-identify with yours. He offers clear, practical steps for moving toward a secure attachment style, providing the insight and direction so many are seeking to improve both their inner lives and relationships.

Understanding Your Attachment Style will not only help you understand your attachment style but also guides you through overcoming barriers associated with each style so that you can enjoy the healthy, loving connections you were designed for.