



## INSECURE ATTACHMENT RELATIONSHIP DYNAMICS: THE CORE CONCERNS

1. We disappear and lose ourselves in relationships, often times attempting to be more of who we think our partner wants or needs us to be, instead of who we know ourselves to be. Therefore, we choose to practice being true to ourselves and applying mindful, prudent discernment when selecting mates and building trusting relationships.
2. Our experience of vulnerability and intimacy in relationships activates various levels and forms of distress (fear, anxiety, hyper-vigilance, checking out) that get in the way of creating secure attachment bonds with others. Therefore, we choose to practice skillful management of our distress.
3. Although we value and deeply desire reliable, emotionally fulfilling connections with others, we struggle to create and sustain successful relationships in our lives. Therefore, we choose to practice seeing our patterns of relating clearly and then working to change them.
4. We experience shame and feelings of insecurity in our intimate relationships where we doubt our worth and/or lovability. We are insecure about our emotional needs (having them, expressing them, and getting them met). Therefore, we choose to practice strengthening our sense-of-self through self-love, self-acceptance, and self-kindness.
5. We have a heightened awareness of loneliness, longing, and feeling empty. We chronically feel as if something is missing, especially if we are not in a primary, partner relationship. Therefore, we choose to practice purposeful, nourishing engagement with others and seek out all forms of relationships, not just romantic ones.
6. We have a childhood history that includes some aspect of being emotionally ignored, neglected, abandoned, unseen, unheard, misunderstood, or rejected. We had a home life where consistent, reliable, warm emotional attunement and limbic resonance were lacking. Therefore, we choose to heal and integrate the attachment trauma that these childhood experiences have created.
7. We realize after seeing dysfunctional patterns in our failed relationships that attachment trauma is not something that we can “just let it go;” but in fact, requires purposeful healing attention. We choose to educate ourselves about attachment trauma, including the best strategies for healing (body-based therapies, emotional re-experiencing, and neuroplasticity).



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8. We have developed adaptive, insecure attachment styles ranging in presentation from a need to pull-away and distance from intimacy (due to fear of enmeshment) or a need to move closer and pursue intimacy (due to fear of abandonment). Additional attachment behaviors can include appearing preoccupied, ambivalent, fearful, dismissive, or confused-disorganized. Regardless of our individual style, we choose to learn the new skills needed in order to practice and nurture secure attachment.

9. We struggle with painful endings. We don't want relationships to end, even when they're stale, lifeless, dysfunctional, unhealthy, mismatched, toxic, or hurtful. We hang on, despite reality, and often stay in relationships way too long. Primal panic and abandonment fear activate in our nervous system during endings and we implode into inconsolable grief and haunting sadness. Therefore, we choose to practice the art of graceful letting go and skillful grieving.

10. We choose emotionally unavailable partners because in certain ways we also are emotionally unavailable. Most of us are repeating and recreating old family dynamics in our adult relationships. Emotional unavailability is familiar to us. We were trained to tolerate and accept crumbs of non-engagement. Therefore, we choose to practice balanced emotional reciprocity in our relationships with intimate partners who are emotionally responsive.

11. We distort reality in our relationships by practicing selective seeing. When it comes to noticing red flags, we have a tendency to overlook and override our gut-instinct. We assign meaning to relationships and interactions with people where no such meaning exists. We sometimes create fantasy bonds as a substitute for real relating. Therefore, we choose to practice consistent reality-testing in order to stay honest with ourselves.

12. We often fail to question our inherited romantic narratives regarding the purpose of relationships and how they work. We believe the assumptions taught us by romanticism, such as waiting for divine intervention to deliver to us our chosen soulmate -- someone who fully understands us, someone who is devoted to us in adoration, someone who becomes our savior, someone who completes us, and lastly, someone who never leaves. Therefore, we choose to practice pragmatic realism and question our core beliefs.