

Traumatic Attachment Patterns

Recognizing the signs of traumatic attachment can help us in adult relationships. Am I putting up with too much? Or am I not willing to put up with anything? Am I confusing my partner with my reactions to distance and closeness? Do I need to leave this relationship, or am I just triggered?

Check the signs of traumatic attachment that you recognize:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty with not being listened to | <input type="checkbox"/> Wanting to run away when we get close |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty when people don't understand me | <input type="checkbox"/> Can't bear being alone/apart |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Worrying that he or she doesn't love me | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling suffocated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of being abandoned | <input type="checkbox"/> Putting up with abusive behavior |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of being cheated on | <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to put up with rude behavior |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not wanting to be touched | <input type="checkbox"/> Not letting my partner in; unable to share feelings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wanting to be held all the time; only feeling safe when someone is there | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling rage when feelings are hurt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Worrying I'm not good enough | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling unlovable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Worrying the other person isn't good enough for me | <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to tolerate partner's anger |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wanting to leave bad relationships but I can't | <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to tolerate partner's silence |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to set boundaries or say, "This is not okay" |

Remember that these patterns developed as a way to survive when you were very young. They were the best you could do in a bad situation.

Changing Our Attachment Patterns

Not every survival pattern *has* to be changed. Check those that, if changed, would help you to have easier or better relationships.

Preference for Distance:

- Wanting to run away when we get close
- Feeling suffocated
- Not trusting my partner
- Believing I'm being cheated on
- Not wanting to be touched
- Feeling rage when feelings are hurt
- Worrying the other person is not good enough for me
- Unable to tolerate neediness, sadness, or insecurity in my partner
- Not putting up with rude or insensitive behavior
- Getting angry, pushing my partner away
- Stop talking when I'm upset

Preference for Closeness:

- Unable to bear being alone/apart
- Difficulty with not being listened to
- Putting up with abusive behavior
- Difficulty when people don't understand me or aren't concerned
- Worrying that he or she doesn't love me or that I'm going to be betrayed
- Fear of being abandoned
- Wanting to be held all the time; only feeling safe when someone is there
- Feeling unlovable when my feelings are hurt
- Unable to tolerate anger or silence
- Unable to set boundaries or say, "This is not okay"

Assume that these are triggered reactions. What happens when you notice them as just signs that you are triggered? What changes?