

Chapter 3

How Secure Are You in Your Marriage?

This chapter flows as follows:

- (1) Quiz on your how attached you feel to your spouse.
- (2) A brief description of the 4 types of attachment.
- (3) Illustrations of each of the four types.
- (4) Exercises for the two of you to do to become more secure with each other.

Quiz

Circle each
that is True



- A1. My spouse is there for me when I need him/her.
- A2. I feel safe with my spouse.
- A3. My spouse accepts me as I am.
- A4. My spouse responds to my needs.
- A5. I trust my spouse.
- A6. My spouse has my best interests at heart.
- A7. My spouse respects me.
- A8. My spouse makes me feel that I am a person of worth and value.

- B1.** I wish my partner wanted to get as close to me as I do with him/her.
- B2.** I resent it when my partner spends time with others instead of me.
- B3.** I become upset when my partner does not give me the attention I need.
- B4.** I am worried that my spouse does not love me as much as I do him/her.
- B5.** When out of sight, I worry my spouse will become interested in someone else.
- B6.** I wish my spouse made me more of a priority in his/her life.
- B7.** I am not sure my spouse will be there when I need him/her.
- B8.** I feel the need to monitor my spouse to alleviate my anxiety about our relationship.

- C1.** I usually do not share my concerns with my spouse.
- C2.** At home, I am most content when we function in different spaces.
- C3.** My spouse seeks greater closeness with me than I am comfortable with.
- C4.** I do not like depending on my spouse.
- C5.** The more my spouse pressures me to be closer to him/her, the more I pull away.
- C6.** I do not like sharing how I feel deep down with my spouse.
- C7.** I avoid dealing with my mate's emotions.

C8. I generally do not ask my spouse for help, comfort, or advice.

D1. I am uncertain whether I should bond with my spouse or keep my distance.

D2. I would like a closer relationship with my spouse but am apprehensive.

D3. I struggle with my need to be close to my spouse vs. my need to feel safe.

D4. I would like to be closer to my spouse but I don't know how.

D5. I want a strong bond with my spouse but experience resistance the closer I get.

D6. I often feel paralyzed between wanting to approach my spouse and wanting to avoid him/her.

D7. Though I don't like feeling alone, I'm afraid I will be hurt if I become too attached to my spouse.

D8. I enjoy being with my spouse but feel discomfort if our dialogue goes too deep.

Score Your Answers

1. Write down how many statements you circled for each box on the previous page:

Box **A** _____

Box **B** _____

Box **C** _____

Box **D** _____

The score in box **A** shows how **secure** you are in the relationship.

The score in boxes **B**, **C**, and **D** indicate how **insecure** you are in the relationship.

1. **Multiply** your score in box **A** by 3.

Your **secure** score is _____

2. **Add** the scores from Box **B + C + D**.

Your **insecure** score is: _____

- 3 Compare the two scores. How secure do you feel in the relationship compared to how insecure you feel?

A SECURE	B ANXIOUS
C AVOIDANT	D DISORIENTED

To better understand what each of these four boxes means, see the explanations and illustrations on the pages that follow.

A. Secure Relationship

- √ Your self-image is positive and your view of your spouse is positive.

- √ You are there for each other.
- √ Love is mutual and consistent.
- √ You comfortably engage with each other.
- √ Responding to and meeting each other's needs is not a burden.
- √ You feel safe, emotionally secure, and happy in the relationship.

B. Anxious Relationship

- √ Your self-image is negative while your view of your spouse is positive.
- √ Your spouse is not there for you (i.e. not *consistently* available or responsive to your needs).
- √ You are upset because of the separation.
- √ You worry about rejection & abandonment.
- √ You want more attention.
- √ You are angry and criticize your spouse because you feel distant, dismissed, or unimportant.
- √ You're clingy, demanding, controlling, and/or manipulative.

C. Avoidant Relationship

- √ Your self-image is positive while your view of your spouse is negative.
- √ You are very independent and self-directed.
- √ You detach from emotional engagement.

- √ You are uncomfortable sharing your emotions.
- √ You provide little to no emotional support for your spouse.
- √ You are threatened by too much closeness and are relieved by separation.
- √ You are more interested in work, projects, or activities than the relationship.

D. Disoriented Relationship

- √ Your self-image is negative and your view of your spouse is negative.
- √ You are both anxious and avoidant at the at the same time.
- √ Imagery: Hugging your spouse with your right arm while inserting the left arm between the two of you to make sure your spouse doesn't get too close.
- √ You want intimacy but simultaneously fend it off.
- √ Said one woman, "I need to know he's there and get so angry when he isn't. But then when he comes closer, I can't bear to be touched so I withdraw."
- √ You are filled with confusion or fear. You get this profound feeling of instability. You don't know which way to turn.

Illustrations of Each Type of Attachment

A. From Insecure To Secure



Shortly after marriage, I came to realize that my wife, Mary, was a more secure person in herself than I was. At night, when she

was asleep, I used to think to myself that she “breathed” more securely than I did. That was almost 50 years ago.

Over time, Mary’s unwavering love, respect, and loyalty toward me gave me a sense of security I would not have experienced otherwise.

Case in point: Some 20 years ago, I volunteered to teach a class of adults. Mary was there. Driving home after the class, she uncharacteristically told me what a poor job I did. She had heard me effectively speak hundreds of times to larger groups of people. But I always went in with prepared notes in those more formal settings. In this situation, I took a more “off-the-cuff” approach.

This tiny slice of life is almost not worth talking about. I mention it not because of Mary’s reaction to me, but because of *my*

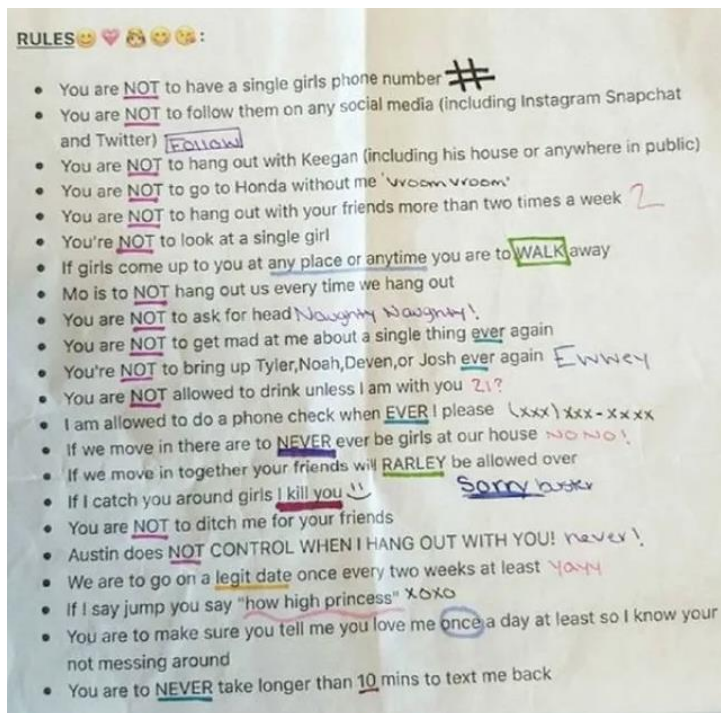
reaction to her. I did not feel attacked. I did not feel put down or diminished. Stated otherwise, it was not the response of an insecure person.

How can this be? Because I knew that Mary's comments did not come close to disturbing our underlying bond. She always had my best interests at heart. Always. So, what is there to feel insecure about or defend against when someone loyal to you wants you to shine?

Dr. Ken Newberger

B. Anxious Attachment

In Britain, a young woman compiled the following list of 22 rules for her boyfriend. These rules show how severe anxious attachment can be. I reproduced the list of rules below for readability.



- You are NOT to have a single girls phone #
- You are NOT to follow them on any social media (including Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter)
- You are NOT to hang out with Keegan (including his house or anywhere in public)
- You are NOT to go to Honda without me
- You are NOT to hang out with your friends more than two times a week
- You are NOT to look at a single girl
- If girls come up to you at any place or anytime you are to WALK away
- Mo is to NOT hang out [with] us every time we hang out
- You are NOT to ask for head
- You are NOT to get mad at me about a single thing ever again
- You are NOT to bring up Tyler, Noah, Deven, or Josh ever again
- You are NOT allowed to drink unless I am with you
- I am allowed to do a phone check when EVER I please
- If we move in there are NEVER to be girls at our house
- If we move in together your friends will RARELY be allowed over
- If I catch you around girls I kill you
- You are NOT to ditch me for your friends
- Austin does NOT CONTROL WHEN I HANG OUT WITH YOU!

- We are to go on a legit date once every two weeks at least
- If I say jump you say “how high princess”
- You are to make sure you tell me you love me once a day at least so I know your not messing around
- You are to NEVER take longer than 10 mins to text me back

C: Avoidant Attachment



“I was talking to a friend about how I seem to lose interest in someone once they start showing interest in me and she suggested I read up about avoidant attachment style.

“After learning what it is, my past relationships just make sense. I won’t get into full detail but the patterns of my behavior are just consistent with the signs. I’m utterly scared of getting close to someone even though that’s all I really want. I tend to depend on myself and myself alone.

“When things start to get serious, I shut down and try to leave asap. I become overly critical of my partner and our relationship as a whole to justify the break-up. I keep most of my relationships and friendships shallow....

“On one hand, it actually feels good to know that there’s a term for this. At least now I know what’s wrong with me and I can recognize the patterns of my own behavior. It’s just horrible and I don’t want to be like this anymore. I want to be able to get close to people.” Posted on Reddit

D. Disorganized Attachment

What does disorganized attachment feel like to you? One person answered, “A rollercoaster. I want to be close to people, but I feel repulsed by the idea of vulnerability, unless I’m fawning [being overly attentive], in which case all thoughts of my own self-preservation go flying out of the window. I naturally put distance between people when things start becoming more intimate, and I don’t even notice it. I constantly feel alone and want to stop feeling that way, but I feel panicked when I try to pursue closer relationships. I am extremely sensitive to perceived rejection, completely normal comments can make me spiral for days because I perceived them as an abandonment. Alternating between wanting to lash out at people I care about, wanting to run as far away

as I can get, and wanting to cling to them and never let go. And constantly arguing with myself over which response is ideal.”

Posted on Reddit



The following video, created by Dr. Sue Johnson and Dr. Ed Tronick, contains two eye-opening examples showing what happens when (a) there is a break in a secure bond between a mother and child, and (b) conflict between an anxious wife and an avoidant husband. Click this link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OyCHT9AbD_Y#t=75s

The video shows the need for a secure bond in our most important relationships.



Discuss

Does the video as it relates to the two of you.

Discuss your responses to the quiz.

Do you relate to any of description or the illustrations?

For each circled number in **A**, let your spouse know why you appreciate their actions.

In light of **B**, **C**, and **D**, what can your spouse begin to do to make you feel more secure in the relationship?



Exercise

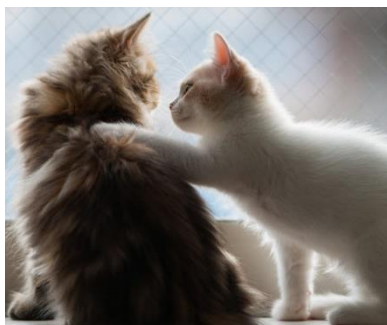
Gestures of Love and Affection

This beginning exercise will help the two of you become more supportive of each other.

1. Print off the exercise on the pages below.
2. Each person completes their own form.
3. Number each line according to its importance to you on a scale of 1 to 4:
 - 1 = Very Important
 - 2 = Important
 - 3 = Nice, but Not Important
 - 4 = Don't Want
4. When you are both finished, exchange your completed page with your spouse.
5. Each day, act on at least one of your spouse's items marked 1 and 2. Ignore the 3s and 4s. Don't tell your spouse when you are doing it.
6. At the end of the day, ask each other which gesture(s) the other did. If you can't recall, no worries. Each new day, try to pay closer attention. Over time you will be more aware.
7. **Do this exercise at least:** 5 days in week one, 4 days in week two, and 3 days in week three. If you go through your spouse's entire list before the weeks are over, go back and

repeat a gesture. Hopefully, you will establish these gestures of love & affection well enough to continue naturally.

Gestures of Love and Affection



- ___ Make eye contact with me
- ___ Smile at me
- ___ Leave me love notes (post it, text messages, cards, etc.).
- ___ Make coffee, a snack, or a meal for me.
- ___ Affirm me / appreciate me.
- ___ Speak well of me in front of others.
- ___ Compliment me on my efforts, accomplishments, and/or looks.
- ___ Surprise me with something that you know I would like.
- ___ Help me when I need it.
- ___ Touch base with me throughout the workday.
- ___ Ask me about my day.
- ___ Share with me how your day went.

- ___ Regularly communicate with me when we are apart for an extended period.
- ___ Share your inner world with me.
- ___ Take walks with me.
- ___ Comfort me when I am upset.
- ___ Be kind to me by ___ (fill-in the blank).
- ___ Pray with me.
- ___ Go out on a date / have fun with me.
- ___ Attend a social event with me.
- ___ Listen to me without giving me advice (unless I ask for it).
- ___ Tell me you love me.
- ___ Be affectionate with me.
- ___ Hold my hand / Touch me.
- ___ Scratch my back.
- ___ Give me a massage.
- ___ Hug me.
- ___ Cuddle with me.
- ___ Kiss me.
- ___ Make love to me.
- ___ Begin a routine to get in better shape so we can physically enjoy each other more.
- ___ Other things we can do together (write)
- ___ Other things you can do for me that I would appreciate (write)

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