

Identify Ways an Emotional Unavailability May Have Impacted You

I have worked with many clients who experienced healthy childhoods and secure attachment throughout life, yet noticed a change in how they feel about love, since a certain relationship in adulthood. Factually, our attachment style is formed in early childhood, based on how we were cared for and emotionally attuned to by our parents. However, our "good enough" secure attachment style may falter and waver within a toxic relationship that ends up shifting our ability to connect and relate, causing an attachment injury.

- In order to maneuver in a rhythm of connection within a relationship, it takes two to tango. It requires empathy, vulnerability, emotional attunement, and an ability to drop into a state of connected, present moment, emotional awareness and fluidity. Akin to a dance, an ebb and flow of giving and receiving together.
- If this level of connection is not created (or is lost for an extended period of time), it can result in relationship distress and impact the health of the individuals within the relationships, cause emotional neglect symptoms and attachment injury. Attachment injury can result in Insecure Attachment Types, such as Avoidant or Anxious.

Identify What May Be True for You

Found yourself accepting "crumbs" of relating. With time this can become internalized impacting your sense of attractiveness, self-worth and lovability (delayed texting, ghosting, cold, confusion about relationship status)

Confusion around your sense of self, your identity and your worthiness

Confusion around your lovability, whether your needs and desires to be loved are valid or "too much"

Feeling alone, rejected, misunderstood within the relationship, so you may protest/demand attention in subtle or overt ways in attempt to avoid the anxiety and emotional pain of feeling alone, abandoned, and/or rejected

Lose your voice and "shrink" yourself, become a doormat, or sacrifice yourself to keep the relationship together

Become a "fake shell" within your intimate relationship (hiding opinions, passions, substance of who you are)

Feel "invisible" because you may have had to force yourself to stay in the relationship no matter what

Hyper-vigilance within the relationships, over detecting, worrying, jealousy, and/or angst about getting hurt

Overwhelming anxiety about not feeling good enough for your partner or worthy of his/her love and affection

Lack of the emotional depth you desire, to the point of painful emotions of loneliness and despair

Neediness and clingyness, over-texting, over-sharing, over-giving, over-pleasing, placating

Lose your ability to be emotionally available due to failed attempts in the past to connect, so you give up

Pretending to be ok even though deep down you are starving for real connection (your instincts and nervous system will continue to stir up emotions and be on "alert" due to not being connected with)

Self-betrayal (choosing to be in denial and attempting to override discomfort instead of leaving relationship)

Escaping or numbing hurt feelings (subconsciously or consciously) with alcohol, food, shopping, working, etc.

Healthy Connection & Rhythm of Emotional Attachment

The good news is you can recover from attachment injury, whether it stems from childhood or an intimate relationship in adulthood. You may not have even realized how toxic your relationship was, especially if you didn't experience physical, mental or overt emotional abuse. Yet it may have eaten away at your self-worth and sense of lovability. This can show-up in your next relationship in a secure and healthy way.

I recommend this video from Alan Robarge, "Toxic Attachment Trauma After Emotional Neglect"

<https://youtu.be/3Rd8C2oII00>