

# Attachment Styles Questionnaire (ASQ) ©

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(Adapted from Collins, 1996 and Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994)

| <p>Please read each of the following 20 statements and rate the extent to which it describes your feelings about romantic relationships. Please think about all your relationships (past and present) and respond in terms of how you generally feel in these relationships. If you have never been involved in a romantic relationship, answer in terms of how you <i>think</i> you would feel. Please use the following scale and circle a number to the right of each statement:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">           0 _____ 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4<br/>           Not At All Characteristic of Me <span style="margin-left: 150px;">Very Characteristic of Me</span> </p> | Not at All Characteristic of Me | A Little | Moderately | Quite a Bit | Very Characteristic of Me |
|--|---------------------------------|----------|------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1. I often worry that a partner will not want to stay with me.   | 0                               | 1        | 2          | 3           | 4                         |
| 2. I am nervous when anyone gets too close to me.  | 0                               | 1        | 2          | 3           | 4                         |
| 3. I find it relatively easy to get close to people.   | 0                               | 1        | 2          | 3           | 4                         |
| 4. I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like.   | 0                               | 1        | 2          | 3           | 4                         |
| 5. It is very important to me to feel independent.   | 0                               | 1        | 2          | 3           | 4                         |
| 6. I often worry that partners do not really love me.  | 0                               | 1        | 2          | 3           | 4                         |
| 7. Partners often want to be closer or more intimate than I feel comfortable being.  | 0                               | 1        | 2          | 3           | 4                         |
| 8. I am comfortable depending on others.   | 0                               | 1        | 2          | 3           | 4                         |
| 9. I often want to get closer to others than they want to get to me.   | 0                               | 1        | 2          | 3           | 4                         |
| 10. I prefer not to depend on others.  | 0                               | 1        | 2          | 3           | 4                         |
| 11. I worry that partners don't value me as much as I value them.  | 0                               | 1        | 2          | 3           | 4                         |
| 12. I am <u>un</u> comfortable when others want to be too emotionally close to me.   | 0                               | 1        | 2          | 3           | 4                         |
| 13. I am comfortable developing close relationships with others.   | 0                               | 1        | 2          | 3           | 4                         |
| 14. I am <u>not</u> sure that I can always depend on others to be there when I need them.  | 0                               | 1        | 2          | 3           | 4                         |
| 15. It is very important to me to feel self-sufficient.  | 0                               | 1        | 2          | 3           | 4                         |
| 16. I worry about others not accepting me.   | 0                               | 1        | 2          | 3           | 4                         |
| 17. I often worry about someone getting too close to me.   | 0                               | 1        | 2          | 3           | 4                         |
| 18. I know that people will be there when I need them.   | 0                               | 1        | 2          | 3           | 4                         |
| 19. Sometimes people do not want to get close to me because I want so much to be close to them.  | 0                               | 1        | 2          | 3           | 4                         |
| 20. I do not want to feel like I need anyone or anything.  | 0                               | 1        | 2          | 3           | 4                         |

### Directions for Scoring the ASQ:

There are five subscale scores, which are calculated as follows:

- (1) Anxious-Preoccupied attachment: Add the responses to items 1, 6, 11 & 16.
- (2) Fearful-Avoidant attachment: Add the responses to items 2, 7, 12 & 17.
- (3) Secure attachment: Add the responses to items 3, 8, 13 & 18.
- (4) Merging attachment: Add the responses to items 4, 9, 14, & 19.
- (5) Dismissive-Ambivalent attachment: Add the responses to items 5, 10, 15 & 20.

Scores on any of these five subscales of 11 or higher are significant. It is possible to score 11 or higher on more than one subscale, but the *highest* subscale score is likely a person's *primary* attachment style.

Attachment theory has always recognized the importance of intimacy. Bowlby (1988) wrote, "Attachment theory regards the propensity to make intimate emotional bonds to particular individuals as a basic component of human nature, already present in germinal form in the neonate and continuing through adult life into old age" (pp.120–121). The desire for intimacy has biological roots and has important implications for attachment. Relationships that frequently satisfy the desire for intimacy lead to more secure attachments. Relationships that rarely satisfy the desire for intimacy lead to less secure attachments. Research has demonstrated how each attachment style relates to the willingness to self-disclose, the willingness to rely on partners, and the willingness to engage in physical intimacy. The secure attachment style is generally related to more self-disclosure, more reliance on partners, and more physical intimacy than other attachment styles. However, the amount of intimacy in a relationship can vary due to personality variables and situational circumstances, and so each attachment style may function to adapt an individual to the particular context of intimacy in which they live.

Can there be too much of a good thing, like intimacy? Yes. Sometimes too much intimacy can be experienced as suffocating by one's partner. Wanting to catch a breath, or to be allowed an opportunity to "miss" their partner or relationship, people in this situation desire less closeness with their partners. The relationship between attachment styles and desire for less closeness is somewhat predictable. People who have fearful-avoidant, anxious-preoccupied and merging attachment styles typically want *greater* closeness with their partners. People who have dismissive-avoidant attachment styles typically want *less* closeness with their partners.

People with the **anxious-preoccupied attachment** style tend to agree with the following statement: "I am uncomfortable being without close relationships, but I sometimes worry that others don't value me as much as I value them." Tending to be quite emotionally expressive, people with this style of attachment seek high levels of intimacy, approval, and responsiveness from attachment figures. Compared with securely attached people, people who are anxious or preoccupied with attachment tend to have less positive views about themselves. They may feel a sense of anxiousness that only recedes when in contact with the attachment figure. They may doubt their worth as a person and blame themselves for a lack of responsiveness from the attachment figure. They may also look to their partner to rescue, or "complete" them.

People with a **fearful-avoidant attachment** style frequently have experienced traumatic events and losses, such as physical or sexual abuse in childhood and adolescence. They may agree with the following statements: "I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them. I sometimes worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to other people." They see relationships as a source of getting their needs met, but if they get too close, their partner may hurt them. These mixed feelings are combined with sometimes unconscious, negative views about both themselves *and* their attachments. They commonly view themselves as unworthy of responsiveness from their attachments, and may not trust the intentions of their attachments. Similar to the dismissive-ambivalent attachment style, people with a fearful-avoidant attachment style seek *less* intimacy from attachments and frequently suppress their feelings. Therefore, they are much less comfortable expressing affection.

Persons with a **secure attachment** style tend to agree with the following statements: "It is relatively easy for me to become emotionally close to others. I am comfortable depending on others and having others depend on me. I don't worry about being alone or others not accepting me." This style of attachment usually results from a history of warm and responsive interactions with their attachments. Securely attached people tend to have positive views of both themselves *and* their attachments, as well as positive views of their relationships. They frequently report greater satisfaction and adjustment in their relationships than people with other attachment styles. Securely attached people feel comfortable both with intimacy and with independence. About 50% of people report a secure attachment style.

Persons reporting a **merging attachment** style tend to value intimacy to such an extent that they can become overly dependent on the attachment figure. They tend to agree with the following statement: "I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others, but I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like." They may exhibit high levels of worry, emotional dysregulation (having difficulty managing the intensity and expression of one's emotions), and impulsiveness in their relationships. They may be overly sensitive to what they perceive to be triggering conditions that provoke feelings of worry and anxiety, and may also overreact to situations and circumstances by seeking additional psychological and/or physical closeness to an attachment figure, who may or may not respond positively to these persistent demands.

People with a **dismissive-ambivalent attachment** style tend to agree with the following statements: "It is important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient", and "I prefer not to depend on others or have others depend on me." For persons with this attachment style, the desire for independence may appear as an attempt to avoid attachment altogether. They view themselves as self-sufficient and invulnerable to feelings associated with being closely attached to others. They often deny needing close relationships. Not surprisingly, they seek less intimacy with attachments, whom they often view less positively than they view themselves. People with a dismissive-ambivalent attachment style tend to hide their feelings and tend to distance themselves from potential sources of rejection (i.e., their attachments or relationships). Coping strategies frequently employed include anxiety suppression and emotional distancing.

The link between attachment styles and marital satisfaction has been firmly established in the research literature. One mechanism by which attachment styles may influence marital satisfaction is **communication**. Secure attachment styles may lead to more constructive communication and more intimate self-disclosures, which in turn increase relationship satisfaction. Other mechanisms by which attachment styles may influence relationship satisfaction include emotional expressiveness, strategies for coping with conflict, and perceived support from partners. Partners who want to make the dance of intimacy work in their relationships must choreograph their particular dance so that each partner gets some of their needs for intimacy and distance met. So, communicate about needs and wants, and listen to what your partner is asking for. Relationships require work, and intimacy and distance regulation is a key component to work out.