

Healing Avoidant Attachment

Healing attachment injury is never easy since these habits and responses are ingrained into our brain structure (neural pathways) in early development. Fortunately, healing is always possible at any age. You can move toward more secure attachment with focused and regular practices by learning and implementing secure attachment skills.

Possibilities include:

- Take calculated risks with your partner by sharing your feelings and allowing vulnerability in small, yet consistent increments.
- When your partner expresses their needs, listen to them and reflect them back, so that they feel heard and validated by you.
- Practice sharing your own needs with your partner. You can start small.
- Focus on the needs of the *partnership* rather than the needs of only "I" or "me."
- Practice empathy when confronted by your partner by trying on their perspective.
- Expand your awareness beyond yourself and your thoughts, try to identify small things your partner does for you.
- Learn to ask for help and to accept help when it's given.
- Seek a couples' therapist with attachment experience.
- Observe your inherent longing to feel connected and allow yourself to experience those feelings.
- Engage in activities that include your partner.
- Learn to find comfort, peace, and vitality in your relationship rather than solely within yourself or in sources outside of your relationship.

Many small steps can increase awareness and the ability to move toward secure attachment, but as with healing any attachment injury, the practice requires **commitment**. When we think of healing attachment injury, it should be thought of as a **journey** more than a destination. Many attachment injuries see improvement, but old habits can occasionally creep back in and that's okay. It's important to recognize progress every step of the way and to give up the expectation of perfection. You are human!