

Attachment style

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Psych 211

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12/03/2024

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An internal working model is a mental framework that determines how one perceives, interprets, and responds to social situations. Internal working models are a big part of attachment theory establishing a personal guide for future behavior and how they conduct relationships. The internal working model is established early in childhood. It's based on a person's early experiences with their primary caregivers, such as parents or grandparents. Internal working models, similar to attachment styles, relate to attachment theory. Particularly, attachment styles describe patterns in which attachment presents itself. Attachment styles include: secure, anxious, avoidant, and disorganized. Usually, attachment styles are based on how a person's primary caregivers interacted with them as an infant, and how those interactions affect their adult relationships. However, following longitudinal studies, researchers have theorized that in adulthood attachment styles are increasingly based on recent interpersonal experiences rather than early childhood relationships.

The Development of Attachment Styles

Chris Fraley and Glenn Roisman continue to explore why adults are secure or insecure in relationships by examining longitudinal research rather than retrospective reports. The researchers divided their findings into four key lessons that illustrate why the relationship between early caregiving attachments and adult attachment styles is weak and inconsistent across longitudinal studies. The researchers define adult attachment styles or orientations to refer to a self-reported constellation of knowledge, expectations, and insecurities that people hold about themselves. (Fraley and Roisman 2019). Secure attachment is characterized by comfort in relying on others for support, while insecure attachment possesses a fear of

abandonment and reluctance to open up. Studies show that securely attached individuals tend to be more committed, supportive, adaptive, and less depressive in relationships.

Fraley and Roisman present four key lessons regarding attachment and its long-term effects. The first lesson highlights findings from longitudinal studies, which revealed that individuals who were insecure at 18, were more likely to have experienced less supportive parenting over time, not exclusively in early childhood. Additionally, these individuals often came from families with less stability, and had lower quality friendships. This lesson proved the possible associations however, emphasizing that they are small in magnitude. The second lesson showed that socialization is more influential in early childhood but as people develop, selection effects begin to play a larger role. This conclusion came from analyzing the socialization theory and deciding that it also entails a person driven effect. "attachment theory assumes both socialization (environment to person) and selection (person to environment) effects." (Fraley and Roisman 2019). The third lesson highlights that early development significantly influences adult attachment, but to a lesser extent. Early attachments, based on caregiver dependency, contrast with adult attachments, which require emotional security, intimacy, and companionship. Unlike the one-sided nature of infant-caregiver relationships, adult relationships strive for equal contributions. Both require presence and responsiveness, to form a basis of safety and security. Lastly, the final lesson points out three key areas for future research: individuals can adapt their attachment styles to various interpersonal experiences; secure attachments with parents do not guarantee secure attachments in unfamiliar relationships; and the most effective adult attachments are shaped by ongoing attachment experiences (Fraley and Roisman, 2019).

Personal attachment

After completing an attachment style test, I was found to have a secure adult attachment. This healthy attachment has become an integral part of my internal working model, shaping how I perceive myself, others, and the world around me. Growing up, I was fortunate to have a caring, responsive, and emotionally available mother and grandmother who consistently met my needs, both physical and emotional. This stable and nurturing environment allowed me to form a strong sense of self-worth, trust in others, and confidence in my ability to navigate life's challenges. Throughout my adolescence and adulthood, I've carried this secure attachment into my friendships and romantic relationships, fostering open communication, emotional intimacy, and a balanced approach to independence and interdependence. Personally, I feel my values are how I conduct myself, and my values are set on a healthy foundation. My secure attachment style has enabled me to develop resilience in the face of adversity, as I trust in my own abilities and the support of loved ones to overcome difficulties. It has also allowed me to approach new, unfamiliar relationships with openness, curiosity, and a positive outlook.

For me, the most interesting aspect of attachment theory is the concept of a secure base that develops in early childhood, and leads to the formation of an internal working model. I find it interesting that although early caregiving relationships have an impact, your environment and personal relationships shape your attachment overtime. This aspect of the theory provides insight that even if your upbringing resulted in disorganized attachments, you can still develop a secure attachment style later down the road.

References

- Fraley , R. C., & Roisman, G. I. (2019). *The development of adult attachment styles: four lessons*. [Www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com); Elsevier.