

EBOOK

UNDERSTANDING  
attachment  
styles

AND HOW TO HELP HEAL  
THEM

STACEY KOCHER

# HOW ATTACHMENT STYLES DEVELOP

Attachment refers to the emotional connection formed with another individual. This bond begins to develop in the early stages of life.

A deeper understanding of attachment emerges when we observe how infants react to being separated from their primary caregivers.

Children who actively sought closeness to their attachment figure after a separation were more likely to receive comfort, leading to the development of a secure attachment to them.

# More about Attachment Styles

Attachment styles develop through the ways our conscious, subconscious, and unconscious minds interact. The conscious mind helps us make daily decisions, while deeper memories sit in the unconscious. The subconscious collects repeated experiences and turns them into habits that influence how we show up in relationships. These habits can sometimes pull us away from the connection we want.

These styles are not fixed or negative. They reflect what we've learned over time. With intention and self-awareness, new patterns can replace old ones, allowing healthier connections to grow. Change becomes real through steady practice and compassion.

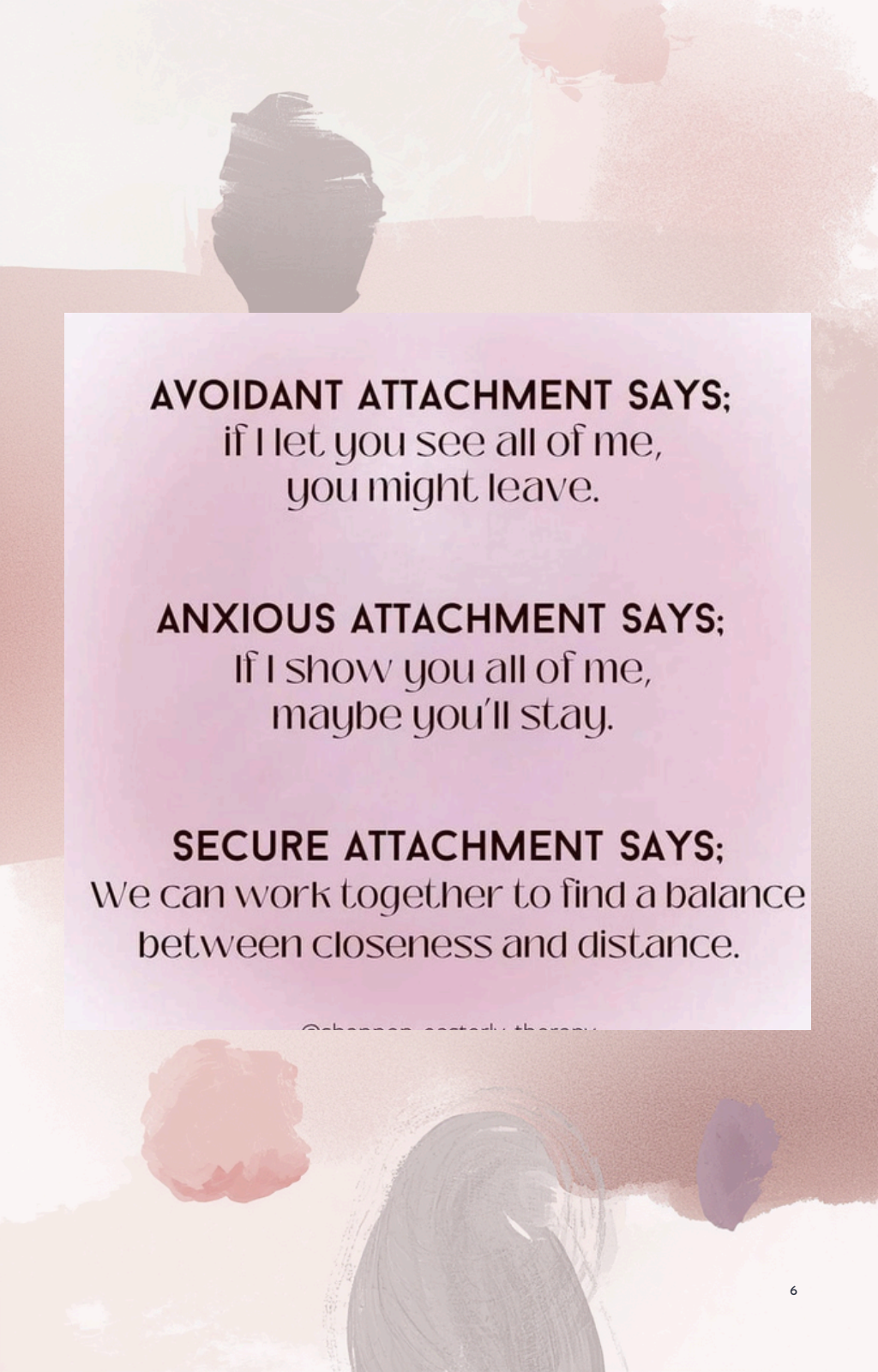
# Attachment Theory

(basically)

THE WAY OUR CAREGIVERS CONNECTED WITH,  
RESPONDED TO, AND NURTURED US INFLUENCES  
HOW WE WILL CONNECT WITH, RESPOND TO,  
AND NURTURE OURSELVES AND OTHERS.

# The 4 Attachment Styles

- ANXIOUS  
PREOCCUPIED
- DISMISSIVE  
AVOIDANT
- FEARFUL AVOIDANT
- SECURE



**AVOIDANT ATTACHMENT SAYS;**  
if I let you see all of me,  
you might leave.

**ANXIOUS ATTACHMENT SAYS;**  
If I show you all of me,  
maybe you'll stay.

**SECURE ATTACHMENT SAYS;**  
We can work together to find a balance  
between closeness and distance.

@shannon\_carterly\_therapy

# Root causes

**ANXIOUS PREOCCUPIED - INCONSISTENCY**

**REAL OR PERCEIVED ABANDONMENT BY THE CAREGIVER**

Dismissive avoidant - Emotional neglect or neglect  
in general by the care giver

Fearful avoidant - Chaos, Trauma or abuse in the home or  
from caregiver. Emotional or physical

**SECURE - CONSISTENCY, PRESENCE AND LOVE  
GIVEN BY THE CAREGIVER.**

## LOVE AND ATTACHMENT STYLE

### Secure

- positive, stable view of self
- positive, stable view of others
- interdependent
- comfortable with intimacy
- open & trusting
- sees self as equal partner
- tends to stay connected when apart
- sets & respects boundaries
- relies on self & others to manage distress
- welcomes diverse perspectives
- seeks connection, provides space

### Anxious (Pursuer)

- negative, insecure view of self
- positive, stable view of others
- tends toward dependence
- fear of losing relationship
- emotional ups and downs
- elevates partner above self
- tends toward clinginess when apart
- worries about being disappointed or abandoned
- anxious with diverse perspectives
- tends to be the pursuer in the relationship

### Avoidant (Withdrawer)

- positive, unstable view of self
- negative insecure, view of others
- independent & self-reliant
- fearful of intimacy
- elevates self above partner
- reluctant to rely on others
- views dependence as sign of weakness
- sets rigid boundaries (puts up walls)
- challenges diverse perspectives
- seeks distance, avoids attachment
- avoids or withdraws from conflict

### Fearful (Disorganized)

- negative, insecure view of self
- negative, insecure view of others
- seeks & avoids closeness
- longs for love & rejects intimacy
- struggles with scorekeeping
- fluctuates between expressive/ supportive & distant/unavailable
- sets & then doesn't maintain or respect boundaries
- embraces & rejects diverse perspectives
- pursues & withdraws to avoid being hurt

# You need to know

It is quite common to experience an insecure attachment style, while secure attachment is relatively rare. This is largely due to the fact that it is unrealistic to meet a child's needs 100% of the time. If you find yourself with an insecure attachment style, know that you are not broken or damaged.

# UNDERSTANDING INSECURE ATTACHMENT WOUNDS IN ADULthood

ATTACHMENT WOUNDS OFTEN  
MANIFEST DURING ADULthood,  
STEMMING FROM UNMET NEEDS  
EXPERIENCED IN CHILDHOOD. EACH  
ATTACHMENT STYLE IS ASSOCIATED  
WITH DISTINCT TYPES OF WOUNDS.

We will first look at the broad themes for each attachment style and then go into more depth.

DISMISSIVE  
AVOIDANT

WHAT IS  
LOVE?

PREOCCUPIED

I WILL BE  
ABANDONED

FEARFUL  
AVOIDANT

CHAOS EQUALS  
CONNECTION

# ANXIOUS PREOCCUPIED

## COMMON CHARACTERISTICS

- Charismatic
- Kind
- Attentive in close relationships
- Warm
- Likeable
- Friendly
- Prioritizes their relationship and social interactions

## CORE WOUNDS

### I AM/WILL BE....

- Abandoned
- Unsafe
- Not good enough
- Unloved
- Excluded
- Disliked

# ANXIOUS PREOCCUPIED

## EMOTIONAL TEND/PATTERNS

- Sadness
- Lonely
- Insecure
- Fearful
- Anxious
- Worry
- Depression
- Regret

## COPING MECHANISMS

- Clingyness
- Gently provoke expression of care from partner ( ex: make jealous)
- Seeking validation
- Criticism of partner
- Fawning
- Expression of panic, anxiety, and neediness

# ANXIOUS PREOCCUPIED

## RELATIONSHIP EXPECTATIONS

### MY PARTNER SHOULD...

- Soothe my emotions
- Give me certainty at all times
- Know how I feel/ read my mind
- Meet all my needs and vice versa
- Should be available all times
- Put romantic relationship as highest priority

## RELATIONSHIP NEEDS

- Love
- Intimacy
- Connection
- Reassurance
- Importance
- Certainty
- Consistency
- Presence
- Feel seen, heard, and understood
- Inclusion
- Teamwork

# DISMISSIVE AVOIDANT

## COMMON CHARACTERISTICS

- Intellectual
- Logical
- Rational
- Grounded
- Practical
- Hard working
- Resourceful
- Ambitious
- Guarded, slow moving in relationships
- Often disconnected from emotions, repress

## CORE WOUNDS

### I AM/WILL BE...

- Defective (shame wound)
- Unsafe
- Trapped
- Weak, when vulnerable
- Not good enough
- Powerless
- Helpless/Incapable

# DISMISSIVE AVOIDANT

## EMOTIONAL TEND/PATTERNS

- Shame
- Low level Anxiety
- Irritation
- Impatience (more with people than situations)
- Frustrated
- Annoyed
- Drained
- Overwhelmed

## COPING MECHANISMS

- Withdrawing to decompress
- Stonewalling
- Ignoring/dismissing
- Passive Aggression
- Numbing
- Avoiding
- Excess to the “creature comforts”

# DISMISSIVE AVOIDANT

## RELATIONSHIP EXPECTATIONS

### MY PARTNER SHOULD....

- Always be understanding when I need space
- NOT soothe through me or emotionally rely on me
- Should be a PERFECT match AND NO conflict should occur in the relationship.
- NOT expect my level of independence to change vs. healthy interdependence

## RELATIONSHIP NEEDS

- Autonomy
- Freedom
- Independence
- Appreciation
- Acknowledgement
- Understanding
- Support
- Harmony
- Peace
- Stability
- Certainty
- Time to decompress

# FEARFUL AVOIDANT

## COMMON CHARACTERISTICS

- Present
- Hypervigilant
- Charming
- Likable
- Generous in close relationships
- Intense
- Deep
- Nurturing
- Resilient
- Headstrong
- Hot/Cold in relationships
- Suspicious

## CORE WOUNDS

### I AM/WILL BE...

- Betrayed
- Unsafe
- Unworthy
- Bad
- Abandoned
- Trapped
- Helpless/out of control
- Not good enough
- unloved
- Weak ( if too emotional or available to others

# FEARFUL AVOIDANT

## EMOTIONAL TEND/PATTERNS

- Angry
- Hurt
- Frustrated (when feel trapped)
- Overwhelmed
- Pressured
- Guilty
- Ashamed
- Anxious
- Offended

## COPING MECHANISMS

- Testing
- Withdrawing to decompress
- Stonewalling
- Spitefulness
- Criticism
- Emotional Volatility
- Fight, Flight, Freeze and Fawning
- Excess of “creature comforts”

# FEARFUL AVOIDANT

## RELATIONSHIP EXPECTATIONS

### MY PARTNER SHOULD....

- NEVER lie
- NEVER break their trust
- ALWAYS respect their independence
- ALWAYS make them feel wanted
- As giving as they are
- Should be faithful in thought, emotion, opinion and action.

## RELATIONSHIP NEEDS

- Emotional Depth
- Passion
- Trust
- Presence
- Safety
- Novelty
- Growth
- Independence
- Freedom
- Intimacy
- To feel wanted

# SECURELY ATTACHED

## COMMON CHARACTERISTICS

- Stable
- Emotionally balanced
- Good at communicating
- Well Adjusted
- Healthy Self Esteem
- Patient
- Comfortable setting boundaries
- Steady
- Consistent
- Accountable

## CORE WOUNDS

- Core wounds will be situational
- Will be less intense
- Will be less frequent

# SECURELY ATTACHED

## EMOTIONAL TEND/PATTERNS

- Optimistic
- Open
- Present
- Joyful
- Calm

There is not a specific pattern for the Secure attachment.

“Patterns” are individual based compared to the overarching themes of the Insecure attachment styles


## COPING MECHANISMS

- Conflict Resolution
- Vulnerability
- Self Soothing
- Identifying and actioning needs
- Reflection

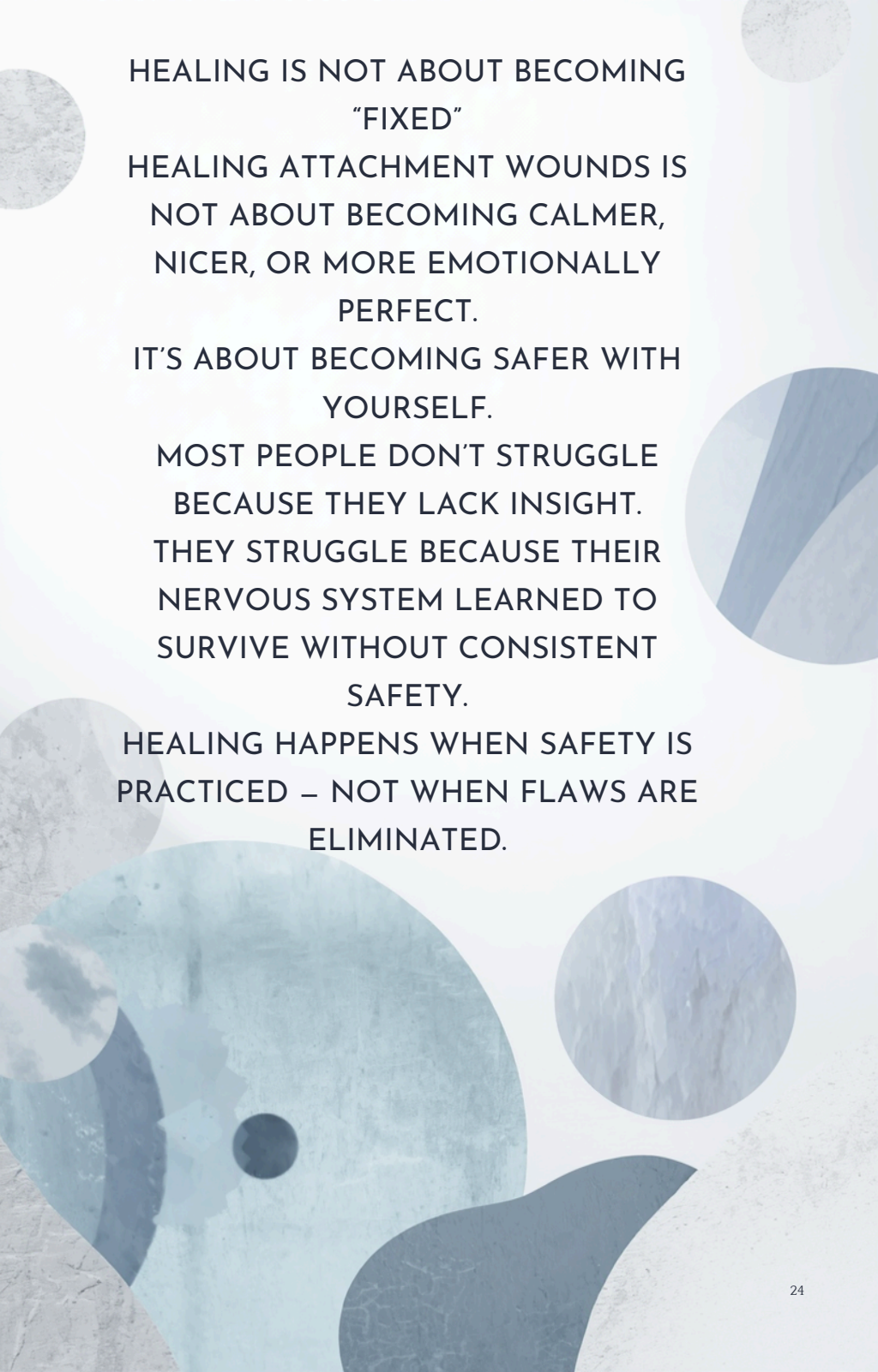
# SECURELY ATTACHED

## RELATIONSHIP NEEDS

- Stability
- Harmony
- Growth
- Connection
- Empowerment
- Clarity
- Certainty
- Open to change
- To be heard
- Enjoyment
- Peace
- Communication
- Accountability
- Consistency

The background features a complex, layered composition of organic and abstract elements. On the left, there are thin, brown, branch-like structures with small, dried floral or seed-like details. The central and right portions are dominated by large, overlapping, wavy shapes in shades of light blue, grey, and white, creating a sense of depth and movement. Several solid-colored circles are scattered throughout: a prominent purple circle in the upper right, a blue circle in the middle left, and a grey circle below it. At the bottom, a dark blue, textured, wavy shape resembling a river or a piece of fabric flows across the frame. The overall aesthetic is soft, textured, and contemplative.

**HEALING YOUR INSECURE  
ATTACHMENT PATTERNS IS  
POSSIBLE. WITH TIME, PATIENCE,  
AND UNDERSTANDING, REAL  
CHANGE CAN HAPPEN.**



HEALING IS NOT ABOUT BECOMING  
“FIXED”

HEALING ATTACHMENT WOUNDS IS  
NOT ABOUT BECOMING CALMER,  
NICER, OR MORE EMOTIONALLY  
PERFECT.

IT'S ABOUT BECOMING SAFER WITH  
YOURSELF.

MOST PEOPLE DON'T STRUGGLE  
BECAUSE THEY LACK INSIGHT.  
THEY STRUGGLE BECAUSE THEIR  
NERVOUS SYSTEM LEARNED TO  
SURVIVE WITHOUT CONSISTENT  
SAFETY.

HEALING HAPPENS WHEN SAFETY IS  
PRACTICED – NOT WHEN FLAWS ARE  
ELIMINATED.

## TIPS FOR ALL INSECURE ATTACHMENT STYLES

**Communicate:** Feeling triggered often brings up old habits of shutting down, especially if that helped you cope when you were young. Instead of pushing the feelings aside, let your partner know what's coming up for you and what might be driving your reaction.

**Journal:** Journalling can help you understand and soothe younger parts of yourself. Reflect on: What moment triggered me? What emotion came up? Why does it hurt? What belief or wound is behind it? Is this belief real now, or is it old pain resurfacing? What need wants attention, and how can I meet it with care? Stay warm and compassionate toward yourself.

**Talk to your inner child:** When something stirs you, it may be an unmet need from long ago. Visualize your younger self and speak to them with care. Welcome every feeling, soothe their worries, and remind them of their safety. Offer yourself comfort, space, and gentle affirmations.

# Triggers

Being triggered is an opportunity to look at something we are unable to see with our eyes.

An important aspect to consider when discussing triggers is the distinction between the emotions they evoke and the thoughts or beliefs that accompany them. While the emotions triggered are undoubtedly real and valid, the assumptions and beliefs tied to these feelings might not accurately reflect the current reality. It's crucial to acknowledge that our perceptions can be influenced by past experiences, biases, or fears, which may distort our understanding of the present situation. Therefore, it is beneficial to critically evaluate these thoughts and seek to separate them from the raw emotions, allowing for a more grounded and balanced perspective. This approach not only aids in personal growth and emotional regulation but also fosters healthier relationships and communication with others.

# Self-Regulation Tools to Use While Triggered

1. Pause all communication for 10–20 minutes
2. Physiological sigh (double inhale, long exhale)
3. Hand on chest + slow exhale
4. Cold water on face or wrists
5. Ground through feet into the floor
6. Name 5 things you see
7. Name the emotion (one word only)
8. Name the body sensation
9. Containment phrase: I am safe right now
10. Delay decisions until regulated
11. Write thoughts instead of sending messages
12. Gentle movement (walk, stretch, shake)
13. Warmth regulation (tea, blanket)
14. Soften jaw, shoulders, and hands
15. Orient to present moment safety
16. Self-hug or arm squeeze
17. Slow counting breaths
18. Rock or sway gently
19. Listen to calming sound or music
20. Set a return-to-connection time
21. Ask for a pause instead of withdrawing
22. Reality-check story vs facts
23. Say: This feeling will pass
24. Sit upright with supported spine
25. Ground with texture (stone, fabric)
26. Look at something comforting
27. Hum or sigh slowly
28. Breathe into belly
29. Notice breath without changing it
30. Choose one tool only and stay with it

Reminder: Regulation first. Communication second. Meaning last.

# REFLECTION

How are you feeling right now? How has this been for you? Will you continue to use the structure to focus on soothing your attachment wounds? Take some time to reflect.



# Secure Attachment Repair Guide

## When repair is needed

- There was withdrawal, shutdown or disappearance
- There was protest, defensiveness or escalation
- Someone felt hurt, unseen, or unsafe
- You notice lingering tension and distance

## Step 1: Regulate First

- Pause the conversation if needed
- Regulate your body
- Remind yourself: this is about safety, not winning

## Step 2: Name your part

- Acknowledge your behavior ( not the other persons)
- Avoid justifying, explaining or blaming
- Use calm, simple language

## Step 3: Validate Impact

- Acknowledge how it may have felt for them
- Validation does NOT equal agreement
- Focus on emotional impact, not intent

## Step 4: Express care + commitment

- State that the relationship matters to you
- Reaffirm desire for connection and repair
- Name what you'll do differently next time

## Step 5: Invite Reconnection

- Ask what would help them feel okay again
- Respect timing if they need space
- Follow through consistently

Repair script “ I see my part. I’m sorry for \_\_\_\_\_. I care about us and want to reconnect.”

**If this ebook spoke to you, it may be because a part of you is ready for something new. You're noticing your patterns, responding with more awareness, and building a sense of safety from the inside out. That's meaningful work.**

**You can grow a lot on your own, yet many pieces of attachment healing tend to strengthen within supportive relationships—where steadiness, care, and real-time repair can unfold.**

**If you'd like guidance as you continue, coaching offers a dependable space to explore and grow.**

**You don't need to have it all figured out.**

**What matters most is your willingness to show up.**

**If you feel ready for support, the door is open.**

**~ Stacey Kocher ~**

**Certified Relationship/ Attachment Theory Coach**

**Website: [www.staceykcoaching.com](http://www.staceykcoaching.com)**

**Email: [info@staceykcoaching.com](mailto:info@staceykcoaching.com)**