



FaithWorks Counseling

Dr. Debbie Harnois

2901 University Avenue, Suite 17

Columbus, GA 31907

706.366.9691

www.FaithWorksCounseling17.com

Understanding Attachment Styles in Dating Relationships

Why do I act this way in relationships? Why do I choose certain partners?

Your attachment style helps explain how you connect, trust, and respond to closeness in relationships.



What is an Attachment Style?

Your attachment style is shaped by early relationships and life experiences. It influences:

- How you give and receive love
- How you handle conflict
- How safe or anxious you feel in relationships



The 4 Main Attachment Styles



1. Secure Attachment

“I feel safe being close and also being myself.”

What it looks like:

- Comfortable with closeness and independence
- Communicates needs openly
- Trusts others and feels worthy of love
- Handles conflict in a healthy, calm way

In dating:

- Chooses stable, respectful partners
- Doesn't play games, manipulate or chase
- Builds balanced, mutual relationships



2. Anxious Attachment

“I'm afraid of losing you.”

What it looks like:

- Craves closeness and reassurance
- Worries about being rejected or abandoned
- Overthinks texts, actions, or tone
- May feel “too much” or not enough

In dating:

- May chase unavailable partners
- Needs frequent reassurance
- Feels anxious when communication changes

Common thought:

👉 “If they pull away, it must mean something is wrong with me.”

3. Avoidant Attachment

“I don’t want to depend on anyone.”

What it looks like:

- Values independence over closeness
- Struggles to express emotions
- Pulls away when things feel too serious
- May seem distant or emotionally unavailable

In dating:

- Keeps partners at arm’s length
- Avoids deep conversations
- May shut down during conflict

Common thought:

👉 “I’m better off handling things on my own.”

4. Fearful-Avoidant (Disorganized)

“I want closeness... but I’m afraid of it.”

What it looks like:

- Push-pull behavior (come close, then withdraw)
- Fear of being hurt, but desire connection
- Difficulty trusting others
- Emotional ups and downs

In dating:

- Intense relationships with highs and lows
- May feel confused about what they want
- Struggles with consistency

Common thought:

👉 “I want love, but I don’t feel safe in it.”

Why This Matters in Dating

Your attachment style can influence:

- Who you are attracted to
- How you respond to conflict
- Why certain patterns keep repeating

 Example:

Anxious + Avoidant = “push-pull” cycle



The Good News: You Can Grow

Attachment styles are not permanent. With awareness and practice, you can move toward a more secure attachment.



Steps Toward Secure Attachment:

- Notice your patterns without judging yourself
- Communicate your needs clearly
- Practice calming your emotions (breathing, grounding)
- Set healthy boundaries
- Choose relationships that feel safe and respectful



Reflection Questions:

- Which attachment style sounds most like me?
- How do I react when I feel unsure in a relationship?
- What kind of partner do I tend to choose?
- What would a healthy, secure relationship look like for me?



Optional Faith-Based Reflection

- “Above all, love each other deeply...” — 1 Peter 4:8
- “God is not a God of confusion but of peace.” — 1 Corinthians 14:33



Healthy love reflects peace, safety, and consistency—not confusion or fear.