



# Recognizing Secure Attachment Needs:

Creating safety and connection together



Some people are surprised to discover that loving someone is not always the same thing as creating a secure emotional attachment with them. Despite what you might think, caring deeply for another person, wishing for their happiness, and even wanting to protect them from harm or pain, does not guarantee they will actually *feel* securely attached in your relationship. This can be quite disheartening when you have invested a great deal of time and energy in a particular relationship, believing you have loved them to the best of your ability. While the hallmarks of a secure emotional attachment are safety and connection, the trick is that the *way* these are experienced is different for each individual. The things that make you feel securely attached to your partner may not necessarily work for them. When these attachment needs are not explicitly articulated, and, potentially, out of alignment between partners, the unfortunate result is often a deep feeling of dissatisfaction and disconnection.

This is why it is so important for people to not only recognize and understand their own personal attachment needs, but also those of their partners as well. Creating the lived sense of emotional safety and connection with someone else directly hinges on our desire, willingness *and* capacity to track and effectively meet their attachment needs, and vice versa. Working with attachment needs is the genuine source code to fulfilling and sustainable intimacy; without directly tending to them, we are always walking on shaky ground.

The purpose of this worksheet is to help partners identify and figure out where they stand in terms of their attunement to each other's basic attachment needs. Take a moment to look over the following list of relational needs and the associated statements below. Knowing that there are many nuances and complexities to each relationship, gauge and mark the degree to which your relationship generally addresses each of the needs from the list at the current moment. Take notes in the spaces provided about any important observations that come up, making sure to highlight the particular needs that feel most relevant to you. Hopefully, these prompts will also reveal some of the ways secure attachment is already present in your relationship, as well as be an opportunity to illuminate and clarify areas that may want more attention and relational tending.

## Needs That Support Secure Attachment in Adult Relationships

Safety	Consistency	Expressed desire
Trust	Predictability	Playfulness
Presence	Reciprocity	Physical nurturing
Emotional attunement	Being seen and heard	Relational repair
Autonomy	Intimacy	Feeling Special/Valued

**1. Safety** – We consider the wellbeing of each other and of our relationship, and the relationship feels like a safe place to show up as our authentic selves.

**What are the areas of your relationship where you feel there is safety? (For example, communication, conflict, sex, personal boundaries, finances, emotional vulnerability)**

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**What are the areas of your relationship where you feel there is a lack of safety?**

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**Based on your previous answers, is this a need you want to work more on together in this relationship?** \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Trust** – We have basic trust in each other and in the relationship, and genuinely believe our partner is honest about their feelings and has our best interest at heart.

**What are the areas of your relationship where you feel there is trust? (For example,**

communication, conflict, sex, personal boundaries, finances, emotional vulnerability)

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**What are the areas of your relationship where you feel there is a lack of trust?**

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**Based on your previous answers, is this a need you want to work more on together in this relationship?** \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Presence** – We are actively present in the relationship and consistently make the effort to be emotionally available for each other.

**What are the areas of your relationship where you feel there is presence? (For example, communication, conflict, sex, personal boundaries, finances, emotional vulnerability)**

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**What are the areas of your relationship where you feel there is a lack of presence?**

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**Based on your previous answers, is this a need you want to work more on together in this relationship?** \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Consistency** – There is a felt experience of consistency and reliability between us, both emotionally and logistically.

**What are the areas of your relationship where you feel there is consistency? (For example, communication, conflict, sex, personal boundaries, finances, emotional vulnerability)**

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**What are the areas of your relationship where you feel there is a lack of consistency?**

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**Based on your previous answers, is this a need you want to work more on together in this relationship?** \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Predictability** – There is a sufficient level of predictability in our relationship that allows my nervous system to rest.

**What are the areas of your relationship where you feel there is predictability? (For example, communication, conflict, sex, personal boundaries, finances, emotional vulnerability)**

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**What are the areas of your relationship where you feel there is a lack of predictability?**

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**Based on your previous answers, is this a need you want to work more on together in this relationship?** \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Reciprocity** – We take turns giving and receiving, in conversation and in other forms of intimacy.

**What are the areas of your relationship where you feel there is reciprocity? (For example, communication, conflict, sex, personal boundaries, finances, emotional vulnerability)**

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**What are the areas of your relationship where you feel there is a lack of reciprocity?**

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**Based on your previous answers, is this a need you want to work more on together in this relationship?** \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Emotional attunement** – We both show interest in and track what the other is feeling, as well as stay aware of own internal experiences.

**What are the areas of your relationship where you feel there is emotional attunement? (For example, communication, conflict, sex, personal boundaries, finances, emotional vulnerability)**

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**What are the areas of your relationship where you feel there is a lack of emotional attunement?**

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**Based on your previous answers, is this a need you want to work more on together in this relationship?** \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Being seen and heard** – When we express feelings and needs we feel listened to and we validate each other’s experiences.

**What are the areas of your relationship where you feel seen and heard?**

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**What are the areas of your relationship where you do not feel seen and heard?**

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**Based on your previous answers, is this a need you want to work more on together in this relationship?** \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Physical Nurturing** – Our relationship includes skin to skin touch, eye gazing, hugs, holding hands, etc., in ways that feel nourishing.

**What are the areas of your relationship where you feel there is physical nurturing?**

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**What are the areas of your relationship where you feel there is a lack of physical nurturing?**

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**Based on your previous answers, is this a need you want to work more on together in this relationship?** \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Expressed Desire and Erotic Permission** – There is mutual permission for and expression of erotic desire that feeds our passion for one another.

**Do you feel there is sufficient expressed desire and permission to be erotic in this relationship?**

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**Is this a need you want to work more on together in this relationship?**

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**11. Playfulness** – There is a shared experience of humor and playfulness in our interactions.

**What are the areas of your relationship where you feel there is playfulness?**

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**What are the areas of your relationship where you feel there is a lack of playfulness?**

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**Based on your previous answers, is this a need you want to work more on together in this relationship?** \_\_\_\_\_

**12. Relational Repair** – When misattunements occur (as they do), each of us can acknowledge and take accountability for the hurt we cause one another—even when that hurt is unintentional. Each of us is committed to addressing difficult things as they arise instead of

letting things fester or become sources of disconnection and emotional distance.

**Do you feel there is sufficient relational repair in this relationship?**

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**Is this a need you want to work more on together in this relationship?**

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**13. Autonomy** – We give each other the space and freedom to be individuals and recognize the importance of self-care.

**What are the areas of your relationship where you feel there is autonomy?**

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**What are the areas of your relationship where you feel there is a lack of autonomy?**

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**Based on your previous answers, is this a need you want to work more on together in this relationship?** \_\_\_\_\_

**14. Intimacy** – We value and prioritize creating space for sharing and receiving each other's internal experiences, i.e., thoughts and feelings, without trying to dismiss, fix, or change them.

**What are the areas of your relationship where you feel there is intimacy?**

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**What are the areas of your relationship where you feel there is a lack of intimacy?**

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**Based on your previous answers, is this a need you want to work more on together in this relationship?** \_\_\_\_\_

**15. Feeling Special/Valued** – We have a tangible and felt sense that our partner consistently prioritizes us in their life and genuinely wants to spend time together.

**What are the areas of your relationship where you feel special or valued by your partner?**

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**What are the areas of your relationship where you do not feel special or valued by your partner?**

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**Based on your previous answers, is this a need you want to work more on together in this relationship?** \_\_\_\_\_



Now take a moment to rank the following attachment needs in the order of their importance for you. Understanding the importance of these fundamental needs for yourself will give you and your partner a much clearer sense of where to prioritize the time and energy that you invest in your relationship.

<b>Safety</b>	<b>Consistency</b>	<b>Expressed desire</b>
<b>Trust</b>	<b>Predictability</b>	<b>Playfulness</b>
<b>Presence</b>	<b>Reciprocity</b>	<b>Physical nurturing</b>
<b>Emotional attunement</b>	<b>Being seen and heard</b>	<b>Relational repair</b>
<b>Autonomy</b>	<b>Intimacy</b>	<b>Feeling Special/Valued</b>



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|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. _____ (Most Important) | 9. _____                    |
| 2. _____                  | 10. _____                   |
| 3. _____                  | 11. _____                   |
| 4. _____                  | 12. _____                   |
| 5. _____                  | 13. _____                   |
| 6. _____                  | 14. _____                   |
| 7. _____                  | 15. _____ (Least Important) |
| 8. _____                  |                             |

**Based on your previous answers, what were the needs you identified as being something you're wanting to work more on together in this relationship? Write (Y) for yes in the space provided to indicate the needs you want to work on more.**

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|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Safety _____               | 9. Being seen and heard _____    |
| 2. Trust _____                | 10. Intimacy _____               |
| 3. Presence _____             | 11. Expressed desire _____       |
| 4. Emotional attunement _____ | 12. Playfulness _____            |
| 5. Autonomy _____             | 13. Physical nurturing _____     |
| 6. Consistency _____          | 14. Relational repair _____      |
| 7. Predictability _____       | 15. Feeling special/valued _____ |
| 8. Reciprocity _____          |                                  |