

## LOVE VS. ATTACHMENT

### How do you know if what you feel for someone is love or attachment?

A relationship based in insecure attachment is not grounded in reality because many of us learned, through painful childhood experiences, illusion is *seemingly* safer. As adults we continued creating safe, fictional stories, waiting for the other person to show up exactly as we wanted them to (dating checklists, anyone?). Subconsciously we wanted them to rescue us from the pain we felt as a child. Unfortunately reality tells a different story, so we end up waiting for our fictionalized partner forever.

Insecure attachment is insidious—affecting all areas of our lives (not just intimate relationships). While it takes a lot of deep work to move from insecure attachment to true love, there are some distinct characteristics to help you understand the difference. Place a check next to each one you experience in your relationships—past or current.

#### LOVE

- Openness and expansiveness in your chest
- Embracing vulnerability as a strength, not a weakness
- Strong feeling of your own self-worth
- Trust in yourself and the other person
- Growing closer to your partner every day
- Empathy, understanding and forgiveness
- Ability to give AND receive unconditionally
- Listening without judgment
- Communicating even when you would rather walk away
- Sharing your feelings openly and honestly
- Taking responsibility for your actions
- Learning more about yourself through your partner and growing together
- Knowing you'll be ok even if the relationship doesn't work out

#### ATTACHMENT

- Overwhelming bouts of anxiety
- Clinging tightly for fear they might leave
- Shutting down emotionally instead of opening up
- Idealizing your relationship instead of seeing it for what it truly is
- Never feeling like your partner is enough
- Relying on your partner for your own fulfillment
- Looking for evidence of cheating or wrongdoing
- Not accepting your feelings and emotions
- Waiting for the other shoe to drop
- Feeling stuck, trapped and without options
- Blaming your partner for your unhappiness
- Hiding who you truly are, afraid of rejection
- Always needing to “win” or be right
- Withholding information to gain the upper hand

If you have any checks in the ATTACHED column, I invite you to listen to my weekly [Journey of Attachment Podcast Series](#) where I dive deep into different topics related to insecure attachment. Self-awareness is the first step, so I'll help you identify where it shows up in your life. Then it's your choice whether or not to take action. It takes courage and a willingness to change, but the good news is it IS possible. We all have the power to change our lives!