

Altering one's Attachment Style can lead to a blissful Life

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"I'm like the acclimatised water, That flows happily in the sea of Life and adopt to any situation, As water, vapour and ice" [1]

–Saniya Inamdar

Abstract—In this study we propose that attachment categorizes human knowledge and perception from "the cradle to the grave." It is an emotional bond that includes reinstating of concern, contentment and bliss. This paper reveals that any individual with the secure attachment style is coupled with better correlation of dedication, conviction, and satisfaction than were the insecure, avoidant or ambivalent style. Altering one's attachment style does not mean the person becomes a deadpan or is oblivious to life and its twist and turns and nuances. Much to the contrary this is being extremely sensitive and sensible and able to digest the idiosyncrasies of life as they come and keep the inner calm intact so that the tranquillity of mind and heart within remains unperturbed. It doesn't always mean that you cover your face with a veil and ignore life's unpleasant situations. It simply means that you draw near unpleasantness in a more constructive and fruitful way. This advocates that the best is going to happen, not the worst.

Keywords—Attachment; relationship, nurturer, frustration, secured, alter, behaviour, compassion, feelings and emotions.

I. INTRODUCTION

"Attachment is a deep and enduring emotional bond that connects one person to another across time and space. Attachment does not have to be reciprocal. One person may have an attachment to an individual which is not shared." Have we as an individual ever thought of changing our stereotypic thinking so as to have a better life? What if we could be familiar with our "critical inner voice" [2] listen to it and change it so as to have a blissful life? The critical inner voice is a subtle energy. Very often we are aware that we are criticizing ourselves, getting involved in positive or negative self-talk, and really going for the things we want in life. However, we are seldom apprised of how we are sabotaging ourselves with self-protective thoughts, thoughts luring us into bad behaviour.

Man is an incredibly adaptive creature who has within him resilience, patience and satisfaction and learns to adapt and adjust to his destiny in order to have a sound and happy life. He retains the imbibed values, perceptions, emotions throughout his life which he has inherited from his parents and remote ancestors at a very tender age which later forms our internal working models. These working models in turn act as outlets which give vent to our feelings and emotions. Our early interactions create our internal psyche of how our future relationships will transpire and of how we will direct ourselves for fulfilling our needs. They influence and self-regulate our personality largely by giving us synergy and strength to encounter and oscillate between the happy and sad phases of life. But as each individual is distinct in personality few cannot fight back their emotions and emerge successfully out of this situation. They on the other hand go through terrible mental storm and find themselves entrapped in the pit of loneliness and meaninglessness towards life.

The mask through which we interpret the world and the world interprets us influences our thoughts, feelings, and behaviour to a great extent. To ask a few questions, “What’s wrong with me?” is perhaps the most common question we mostly hear from the patients who suffer from any personality disorder. They are found assessing the mystery of their own behaviour patterns. “What panics me away from getting close to someone who really loves me?” “What drives me crazily to long for the person who continually rejects me?” The reply to these questions can recurrently be found in a complex combination intertwined with the unique human experiences we undergo in our day to day life. Our most primitive attachments significantly contribute to the riddle of how we jell-up to others in our lives. Since the time we are in our mother’s womb till our death which includes all the phases of life that is childhood, adulthood, middle age and old age. These alterations powerfully colours the lens through which we view the world.

British psychologist John Bowlby was the first attachment theorist, describing attachment as a "lasting psychological connectedness between human beings"[3]. He observed a few implications for his theory, that children grow fearless and confident if in their early stages of upbringing their nurturer is fully responsive towards them .Secondly, he assumed that this confidence becomes fictitious during a critical period of development, and that the expectations that are formed are grilled inside ones head for the rest of one’s life. Lastly, he revealed that these expectations that are formed are linked to one’s real experiences. That is, children develop expectations that their caregivers will be responsive to their needs because, in their experience, their caregivers have been responsive in the past. Hence, Attachment theory throws lights on the relationships and bonds between people, particularly long-term relationships including those between a parent and child, partners and friends.

We can start by exploring our attachment style with our Parents, friends and partner. To elaborate on this point let us take into consideration a few relationships:

A. Parent-child relationship

This is the purest form of relationship wherein there is no scope of jealousy, hatred. Miscommunication or any wrong deeds as the bond they share is most sacred and pious. This Parent-child attachment bond shapes an infant's brain, profoundly influencing their self-esteem, their expectations of others, and their ability to attract and maintain successful adult relationships [4]. By learning about attachment, one can build healthier, attuned relationships, and communicate more effectively. But many a times we come across instances where in either the child is not convinced with the opinion of the parents or the parents are not convinced with their ward. In such circumstances it is of utmost importance that one of them has to compromise and change their attachment style to some extent so as to have a happy-go-lucky life. Besides, if both of them are adamant, rigid and not willing to alter their attachment style it may lead to negative consequences like constant disputes at home, child disrespecting his parents, not concentrating on his studies or even leaving his house for worse .Parents on the other hand may get completely frustrated, irritated, annoyed with the child’s behavioural pattern which will lead to the misbalance of the entire family’s peace[4]. Hence altering one’s attachment style is of prime importance to have a mirthful life.

B. Individuals relationship with friend

As it is well said that, The best cosmetic for the lips is truth, for the voice is prayers, for the eyes is pity, for the hands is charity and for the life is "Friendship". Thus, one should radically accept any and every individual. One should alter patterns for the best possible adaptations to our social world in order to have more sound and healthy relationships. A sound relationship with friends and family helps one to recreate one’s life and have a satisfying and loving relationship with all individuals. It is a very emotional bond and thus the individual should be accepted with all his flaws and differences,

if one is in true sense connected with the person. Also appreciating the other person's perspective is vital to have a deep rooted bonding for a long-lasting relationship.

C. Relationship with Partner

Every individual was pre-programmed to bond with one very important person in his life journey that is his partner. Our style of attachment impinges on a lot of things ranging from our partner selection to how well we reciprocate and get involved in our relationships, how you share a sacred bond which gradually progresses with each passing day. But on the contrary there are times when individuals with different background, opinions and culture come together at times show no compatibility. One may find oneself in a complete bizarre state of mind as he is rigid, adamant and is not willing to change his attachment style and thus finds himself ensnared in the storm of frustration, alienation and irritation towards life.[6] That is why being acquainted with our attachment style can help us enhancing our strengths and vulnerabilities in a relationship.

II. ATTACHMENT STYLES

2.1 Secure Attachment:

Research shows that people having a Secure Attachment style are the ones who are more confident, stable, willing to take up task, more courageous and are indeed less prone for any kind of mental or personality disorder. In this style children are emotionally bonded to their primary caregivers [5] who reassures them, makes them feel at ease by nurturing proper values and by giving them timely attention. On the contrary when the nurturer leaves the child behind though the child may be a little restless initially but somewhere in his subconscious mind the child knows that his caregiver primarily his mother will definitely return to provide same level of comfort and affection he desired for [5]. They see their fosterer as some super power and a secure support from which they can endeavour out to explore widely but to whom they can always return to for shelter and support.

Secure attachment results from:

- Emotional and physical well being
- Consistency with nurturer
- Tranquil and soothing experiences
- Bonding and good rapport with caregiver
- No recurrent moves or placements
- Mature and adroit parenting
- Rapid development of mind and body

2.2 Insecure attachment:

Individuals who undergo traumatic childhood, experiences bewildering, frightening, or broken emotional occurrences during their early years often grow into adults who have complexity understanding their own emotions and the feelings of others. This inhibits their capability to fabricate or sustain flourishing relationships. These individuals are more inclined to having an insecure attachment style. These people turn out to be insecure, less confident, isolated, disorganized, not willing to take up task, tend to be passive as compared to secured ones. For instance, if the nurturer is pre-occupied and is unable to spend enough time with his child he is attuned to be in his own world with his fragmented thoughts, notions, avoiding any close, emotional connections and affiliations. Further this insecure attachment style reflects in their understanding of true relationship in their adulthood which makes them numb to the love, affection and needs of their partner [7].

Hence, insecure attachment results from:

- Ignorance by the caregiver
- Parting from caregiver
- Repeated moves and instability
- Upsetting instances and experiences
- Upsetting instances and experiences
- Snooping and inconsistent parenting
- Addiction to drugs, alcohol due to lack of love and affection (emotional needs)
- Slow development of mind and body

2.3 Ambivalent and few other attachment styles :

When a caregiver is unable to build a strong attachment bond with the child the Ambivalent Attachment style takes it root. It flourishes ruining the overall growth and development of the child making him insecure, unsafe and unwanted. The child is disconnected and isolated particularly with mothers at a very tender age which is witnessed in his conduct or behaviour. He or she is unable to connect with the normal world, as the lack of maternal affection has created a long-lasting void in his heart. In **avoidant attachment** the individuals tend to become pseudo-independent, due to their unresolved childhood issues which take them close to being an avoidant personality. They rarely look up to other individuals for fulfilling their mental and emotional needs in life. This attachment style propounds from the hostile and ignorant caregivers who are pre-occupied in their own world completely neglecting their responsibilities as a parent. On the same ground we can relate one more attachment style that is **disorganized attachment** style in which individuals are seen in a perplexed state of mind wherein they become astounded with the minute changes and happenings in and around their surroundings. Another type of insecure personality is referred to as **“avoidant” or “dismissive.”** People who display avoidance are also afraid of what will happen if they get too close to someone, but their strategy is to actively resist intimacy in the first place. Avoidant people are generally not supportive and responsive when their partners are distressed, and feel uncomfortable turning to others when they need support themselves. They assume that others will behave badly, so they push their lovers away in an effort to create emotional distance. This attempt to deflect or avert deep feelings often backfires. Avoidant people cannot escape thinking about their close relationships no matter how hard they try not to ponder over things.[2]

So, once we identify our attachment style, one can definitely head towards leading an absolutely blissful life. Significantly we can highlight on some remarkable techniques and trend as to how one can alter his or her attachment style. One crucial way is to be in a secure and long-term relationship with a person who has a sound attachment style than what you have and try to adapt his style for the better. Next alternative is to go in for REBT which is Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy. Therapies will help an individual to combat his mental storm, dissatisfaction, worthlessness, exasperation and emotional displacement [10]. “REBT is essentially a cognitive and directive behavioural process...” [9] which is a person centred therapy. REBT followers unconditionally accept all individuals and also teach them to unconditionally accept themselves.

III . TECHNIQUES OF RATIONAL EMOTIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY

- **Positive Self-talk:** Positive thinking often starts with self-talk. Self-talk is the endless stream of unspoken thoughts that run through your head. These recurrent thoughts and beliefs can be positive or negative. Some of your self-talk originates from logic and reason. Other self-talk may occur from misapprehension that you craft because of lack of knowledge. If the thoughts that run through your head are mostly negative, your stance on life is more likely to be gloomy. If your thoughts are mostly positive, you're likely to be an optimist.

- **Effective ways to behave, act and feel:** Individuals are asked to role play certain behaviours in the presumed surroundings created by the therapist wherein they are given situation on which they have to think and react. Thus the therapist vividly explains them the significant difference between healthy and unhealthy thinking.
- **Emotive Techniques:** It facilitates individuals to comprehend the value of “Unconditional self-acceptance” even though the behaviour may be complex to acknowledge, they can visualize themselves and others in an optimistic manner.
- **Disputing irrational belief:** It’s a revelation that pessimistic events almost always have a positive side to them. In addition to it, reframing or creating an illusionary picture in mind and channelizing one’s energies into more constructive and productive things will lead one to the epitome of mental peace and serenity.

According to Carl Rogers “The innermost core of human nature is essentially purposive, forward moving, constructive, realistic and quite trustworthy. He regarded the person as the active force of energy oriented towards future goals and self-directed purposes, rather than as a creature pushed and pulled by forces beyond his or her control.” [8,9] The above words of wisdom evidently entails the faith of an inbuilt compassion deep rooted in human nature, a conviction, that if the inherent flair of this nature is allowed to unfurl and flourish, optimum personal development and efficacy will upshot.

IV. CONCLUSION

Thus it can be truly concluded that altering one’s attachment style can lead one to a blissful life. Undoubtedly one’s earliest attachments extensively contribute to how one may relate in his/her life, but this does not mean that one should strongly adhere to one’s childhood experiences and be obstinate in altering his/her unyielding attitude towards life. The best style to approach life in a better way would be, not to get too fanatical about the past but to evolve the present for a pleasant and satisfying future. If an individual comes to know his/her attachment style, he/she can uncover ways of defending themselves from getting close and being emotionally connected. Besides, they can work towards forming a secure attachment style. Therapies have the potential to make all the difference to any individual who may be struggling in darkness to make some sense out of his life and its vagaries. If one is willing to modify or alter one’s attachment style and wishes to progressively move ahead in life above one’s own pride and prejudice, one has to give up a lot of things in which one is use to wallowing as if in a great comfort zone. To move ahead, then one has to start finding total discomfort in the comfort zone. One has to develop a healthy disrespect for false comfort, and an eagerness for a life that may appear tough on the surface but that actually carves a path towards a blissful life, no matter the hardships. A blissful life means having an inner sanctuary of peace that is not disturbed by pettiness around or the filth in the surrounding or the unfaithfulness of the kith and kin or the deception of dear ones or the physical pain and mental trauma that life may inflict upon one. Hence it can be observed that an individual who has gained that magical power to withhold his mental turmoil and alter his attachment style gradually gets ready for the glory and enlightenment that comes from nowhere outside but actually from within the depths of one’s uncluttered being. So soar higher and gleam!!

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