

A IS FOR ATTACHMENT

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In this chapter, we cover some of the most powerful research findings about attraction and attachment.



Behaviour that helps people grow close and relationships to stand the test of time.

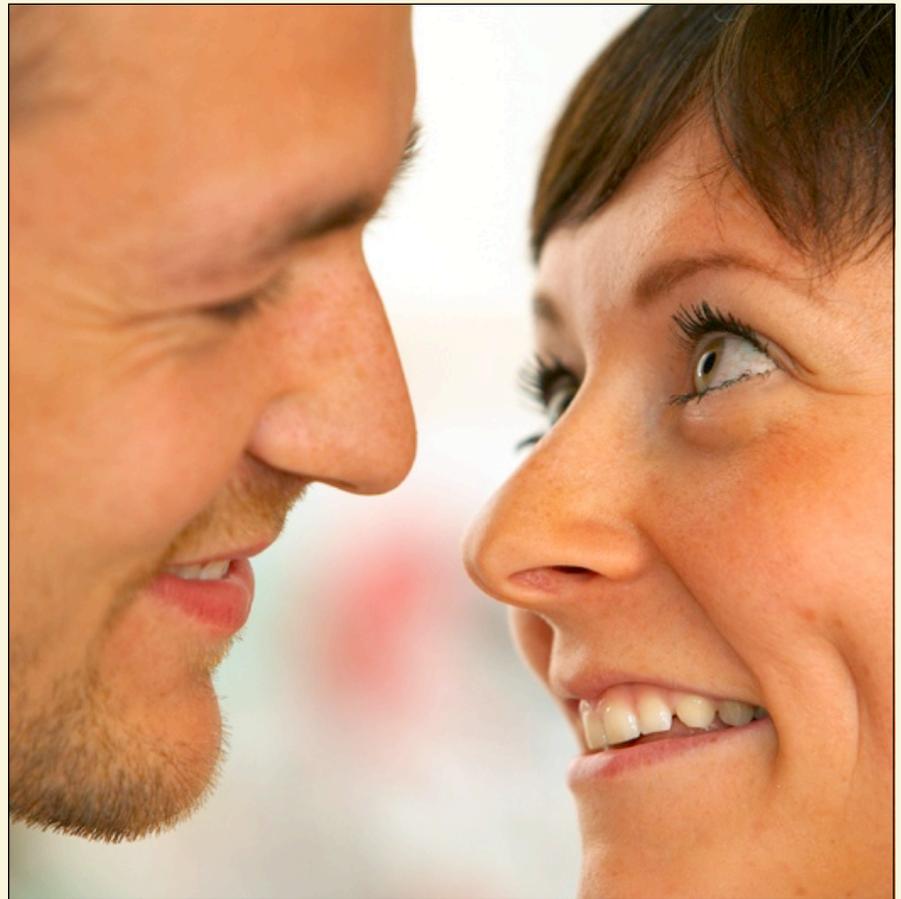
I love these important human rituals of attachment and hope that you will too...

Traditional Attachment Rituals

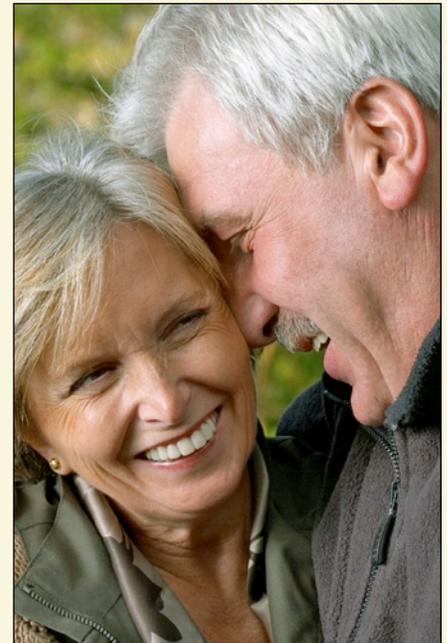
- Sending flowers.
- Exchanging rings.
- Giving a framed picture of yourself for a desk or locker at work and one for their phone or wallet.
- Giving something with your perfume on it.
- Acting as trustworthy guide when the person you wish to build attachment with is disoriented.
- Most important: greeting your partner warmly when you see them while looking them in the eyes. Try saying their name when you do this in a slightly higher pitch than your usual tone, sounding pleased to see them and cheerful. Practice these rituals from time to time and keep track of the results in your notes.



Don't build attachment by talking about someone or something that you both don't like! Relationships built on a common enemy are not honest or strong. Be honest and tell your partner you enjoy having them close and specific details of what you like about them.



Julie was worried about John and his assistant Jill at work. She felt jealous, but instead of confronting him with vague fears, Julie had a beautiful photo of her and the kids framed for the wall of his office and one for his desk and wallet too. She began sending flowers to his work now and then with 'thanks for a wonderful night' on the card. This reminded John of their attachment while he was at work and also put their relationship in front of Jill on a daily basis. Soon Julie started feeling comfortable to talk to Jill on the phone occasionally, reminding her of ways that her husband needed help. This took pressure off John who now feels more comfortable around Jill because the boundaries are clearer and his attachment to Julie is 'on display'.





These same rituals work with family and kids!

As a child do you remember a relative who said your name and showed they were glad to see you every time they greeted you? This same relative may have chosen gifts to remind you of them and even flowers on your birthday or special occasions. Because of this I bet you thought about this person and felt much closer to them than your other relatives. Between mother and daughter, flowers or a locket with a photo of you together or between father and son a framed photo or special book with a personal note in the inset will help keep these relationships attached, healthy and loving. Women can use perfumed cards and nearly all the same rituals as described for lovers. Again, nothing is more powerful than saying your kids' names warmly in greeting!

Attachment is Built Stronger With Dependence

Don't feel resentful about ways that your partner may come to depend on you. Cook nice meals or find ways to show you care which they will appreciate. *Don't overdo this however.*

This is not about trying to please your partner to get something in return. Be gracious and make the things you do acts of love that you are happy to offer while staying focused on your own schedule and your own personal goals. Small acts such as these, done with no thought of you receiving anything in return are what strong families and love are built on.

With children, taking the time to make them a cooked breakfast each morning may do more than put warmth in their body through food. Be happy about being in service to your family in these ways. It is how you show them that you are there for them and that you love them. If the service comes with an expectation of something in return (beyond courtesy, good manners and respect) it will not build attachment but more likely resentment.

"I love it when you ..." is more powerful than "I love you". Talk in detail about what you like about the person you want to build attachment with.

Kim will sometimes cook my favorite dinner even when she is busy and knows that I will be getting in late. She will say, "I am in my office working if you need me; your dinner is in the oven." I love her so much better when she does this than when I had to be home at a certain time for meals that she had put too much work into and I was left feeling I owed her something (and that she might get upset if I didn't deliver my end of a bargain I hadn't asked for!).

I know people who are criticized for doing their adult children's laundry, yet these same parents have leverage with their children that other parents don't have. Their kids still listen to them and consider their advice!

This kind of dependence can be created quickly by taking your loved one somewhere where they do not know anyone, (or even the language) or their way around and so you get the chance to play gracious guide. People will quickly attach to someone who they feel to be a trustworthy guide when they are disoriented.

Remind your partner that you accept and care about them by speaking to them warmly every time you greet them. Say their name like you like them and look them in the eyes. *Try not to bring up difficulties or problems until later when they are 'collected' and feel loved and safe with you.* Be dependable, understanding, and have a light manner and good sense of humor. Work towards being a good friend.

Give 'Good Face'

To create great attachment, it helps to understand a bit about how we are responding to each other's faces, on a subconscious level.

It is no coincidence that the covers of magazines feature faces, faces and more faces! Our brains are wired to connect face-to-face with people and this internal facial recognition and the feelings it evokes in us is one of the strongest forms of attachment.

Even though you have never met your nightly TV news reader, because you have watched their face so closely and so often, you will probably feel somehow that they are your friend. If you saw this same news readers face while walking down the street, it would probably even take you a moment to remember that of course they will not recognize or know you.

Attraction and attachment to a face depends very little on the color of your eyes or makeup, etc., but it does matter enormously how your features are put together (and how you use them!).

On the most basic, subconscious level, our minds are checking for three things. When we look at faces, we ask ourselves:

Human? (the gene check!)

Healthy? (the proximity check)

Friendly? (the danger check)

The first of these deals with the basic proportions of your face, for instance, the distance between your eyes, nose and mouth and the shape of your face and hairline. There is a map in our heads of what we consider 'essentially human' and anything close to this is attractive on a deep level inside of us.

Any face that deviates very far from

this 'map' likewise can create a repellant first reaction - as I discovered when I turned the aisle in my supermarket the other day when a man who had obviously suffered a terrible injury to his face was coming the other direction. He had two eyes, a nose and a mouth but they had not been put back together in the right proportions. I am embarrassed to say that I jumped back in fright as I saw him suddenly in front of me.

I felt ashamed of my reaction, and like to think I would manage it better next time, but really my response was completely involuntary and again, this is wired very deeply into our brain circuitry, as is the reaction when we see shapes such as spiders, whether they are real, plastic or even cut outs.

Our mind is wired to subconsciously look for indicators that all is well genetically with a prospective partner. This spills over into our judgements of everyone we meet, not just people who are potential partners for us.

Now, bear in mind that the spirit and personality of a person massively tempers these impressions. Once others are acquainted with us, the positive connection can completely reshape their idea of what is beautiful or good-looking. But it is helpful to use these hardwired responses to our advantage where ever possible, to help us create and build attachment.

There are many ways to 'give good face' but to get the general guide for eyebrows and hairline - which are very easy to adjust - check out www.beautyanalysis.com.

It is also very important to notice how we use our faces and facial muscle tone. I have noticed a few men who look great when they look in the mirror or in

photos but don't notice that in day-to-day life they allow their bottom or top lip to curl or sag slightly on one side giving them a totally different appearance than they realize. (So Elvis got away with it - doesn't mean we all can!) Facial exercises can help with this.

The second check we are doing is for health, which subconsciously tells us how close we want to get!

Health-related issues strongly affect our appearance. These are things that we can manage and influence. Health issues can create effects where people's eyes do not track exactly in unison and/or their faces may be asymmetrical and eyes dull or glazed.

These are very powerful markers and may warn (at a subconscious level) that the person has parasites (causing asymmetrical features), poor diet or infections. All of these signals silently shout "stay away" to others and will cause you to be perceived as far less attractive.

Diet has a significant effect on how healthy you are and how healthy you appear. A low sugar diet helps with intestinal health and immunity and fights parasites. Also, research has shown that a diet full of natural, colorful foods creates healthy skin tones in ways that can't be replicated by tanning or other methods.

The third and final element is whether your face comes across as friendly. The greeting method described previously in this section will go a long way to putting your face in the 'friendly' category, regardless of physical shape and features.

Again, the principles at www.beautyanalysis.com will also help give the friendly impression you want.

An intimidating pair of eyebrows, for instance, can undo an otherwise friendly and open face, and can be easily managed to be more welcoming. Look for little tufts, or ‘horns’ of hair rising above the line of your eyebrows in the center. You may wish to remove these with tweezers if you find you have them.

So, in summary, before you spend a fortune on beauty goo and pots of face paint (or worse, conclude that you need surgical help) to ‘give good face’, start with our workbook exercises on this!

Shape what you can, accept what you can’t - rejoicing in the ‘character’ it gives you - then use what you have in the best way you can. The Workbook exercises and tips will help you to present your face in the best possible light.

Attachment is NOT About Gifts!

From reading this chapter so far you may get the idea that attachment is about how beautiful you are or about making a person feel a debt to you because you have given them gifts.

If you give people gifts (including time and attention) that a person never asked for, and expect something in return, this will be likely to breed resentment rather than attachment.

Likewise, if you see love as a beauty contest; rather than finding you attractive, people may instead find you uptight or even a bore.

This is because the memory of your face, your photo, the flowers (or the hand knitted sweater with your scent on it) are much more than gifts but instead should be symbols or reminders of *how you make that person feel*.

If there is no bond or rapport between you before you give these type of gifts, you are only going to make a person feel burdened to repay a debt they didn’t ask for.

Likewise with your face . . . A person is likely to feel good when they see a face they remember as warm and accepting of them and this will evoke much stronger feelings of attachment than beauty alone.

Habitually doing things to try to please a person or giving gifts to try to create a sense of indebtedness with people you love can be a sign of codependence. If this is a habit with you, I recommend you check out our book, [10 Steps to Overcome Codependence](http://www.kimandstevesbookshop.com). (www.kimandstevesbookshop.com)

Genuine attachment is something you can help foster but is rarely contrived. Trying to be the prettiest or most handsome or giving gifts that aim to make you look good is not what building attachment is about.

Instead it is about knowing your own boundaries and what you feel comfortable with and being able to share that feeling of security and love with the people that you want close to you.

It is about noticing your loved one’s needs and feelings and being able to ‘lock step’ with them in a way that shows you are on the same wavelength and that you truly know them, understand them and care.

Resolving Conflict Helps Build Attachment

It takes patience and courage to listen and show empathy when another person is upset with us, but in reality, this is the fastest way to resolve differences. Arguing or avoiding the issue will only make it drag on and upset the offended person even more than they are already.

Truly resolving disagreements can only happen with an increased level of understanding. When this happens it will always deepen the trust and attachment in a relationship. Unresolved conflict, on the other hand, will erode trust and weaken the attachment between you.

Read over our conflict resolution process in Part 2 - The Exercise Manual. How do you currently respond to criticism? Do you argue or act defensive? Or perhaps you apologize before you have really taken the time to empathize and reach that new level of understanding. This one is tough, but really practicing this process (before introducing it to your partner) will most likely do more than anything to build lasting attachment and trust between you.

Being able to '[stay onboard](#)' and not lose the connection or become emotional when our partner or children express negativity or doubts will certainly help build trust so the relationship can deepen and mature. Check out my popular article on this—including the answer to why people test us by being rude—here: <https://thelovesafetynet.com/v-tone-emotional-self-defense/>

This is not the same as allowing someone to belittle or insult you. That is something you need to put limits on if you want to earn a person's respect. I talk about this in depth in my series [dealing with verbal abuse](#).

If someone is being disrespectful or rude it is not time to empathise or negotiate, but time instead to set a boundary. "I am not discussing anything with you until you can be civil", may be a good way to end the conversation. This is a good time to get on with your own agenda and not be working to change their mind or make things better. My family know if they are rude or disrespectful to me, negotiations cease immediately with me saying, "I can't discuss this with you until you can talk to me respectfully." This has sometimes meant in the past that Steve and my kids have missed out on doing things they were trying to 'push through' an agreement on (more on agreements in the next chapter) by being rude or aggressive. Tough as it can be to disappoint pushy family members, this can be a very important lesson.