

What is TRUST and why is it important?

Trust is an indicator of ATTACHMENT. Attachment is simply the connection between two people or things. With spiritual abuse and cult recovery, we are looking at broken attachments in three key areas:

- Relationship with self
- Relationship with others
- Relationship with God/higher power

Attachment

Attachment is the basic framework for understanding human connection. That is, how well a person is connected to others. Early connections establish a pattern for later connections in life.

https://momentousinstitute.org/blog/what-is-attachment

Neuroscientists believe that attachment is such a primal need that there are networks of neurons in the brain dedicated to setting it in motion in the first place and a hormone—oxytocin—that fosters the process.

https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/attachment

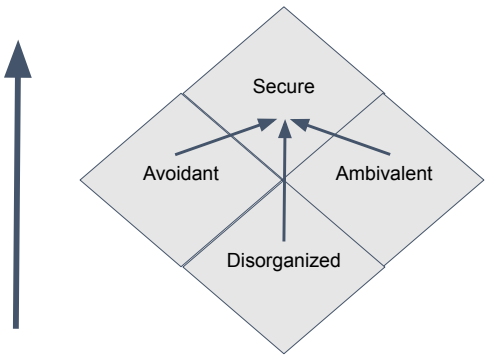
The central theme of attachment theory is that primary caregivers who are available and responsive to an infant's needs allow the child to develop a sense of security. The infant knows that the caregiver is dependable, which creates a secure base for the child to then explore the world.

https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-attachment-theory-2795337

- Attachment begins in infancy
- Attachment informs all of our later relationships
- Insecure attachment styles can be repaired with work, time, and the presence of healthy attachments.

Attachment

The Goal is to move upward toward healthy, secure attachments.



Christian Science and Attachment

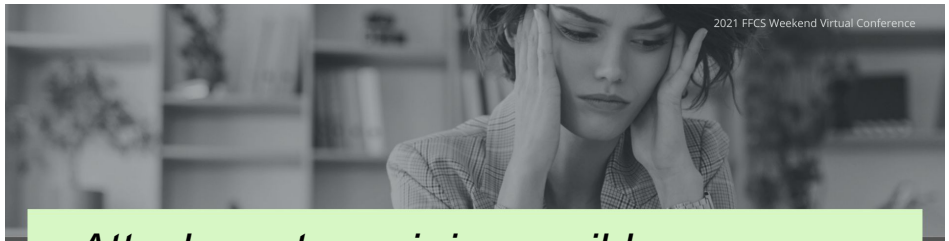
Teachings that detract from attachment include not responding to physical and medical needs, teaching that matter is not real, and not validating or helping a child explore an inner emotional world.

Patterning often reflects that of a child who has undergone severe neglect. This tends to result in Insecure attachment of some variety:

- Avoidant if parent consistently didn't respond to signal cries or needs
- Ambivalent if parent was sometimes very present and sometimes very absent (inconsistent)
- Disorganized if both patterns were present in some combination

Earning Secure attachment often requires that the ex-CS member find healthy, secure relationships and/or re-parent himself/herself. This is very extensive work, but can help an ex-CS member experience growth despite starting from a relational deficit in terms of attachment.*

**please note that relational deficit can exist even if the parent is loving and caring. Often these parents are not aware of what they are doing or what the child needs at the time, but they are doing their best! Also note that in SGA/MGA contexts, they are just passing down what they know!*



*Attachment repair is possible across the lifespan! Your brain is capable of healing thanks to **neuroplasticity**, or the ability of your brain to form new neural pathways.*

Healing Attachment with Self

The attachment with self is primarily how much you trust the feedback your body, mind, and emotions are giving you. While this is an obvious challenge for ex-CS members, there are a few things we can focus on to help grow this internal sense of trust:

1. **Remember that "trusting your own gut" is not incongruent with a Christian position.** The idea of *imago dei,* or being made in the image of God means that our body and self reflect the character of God.
1. **Practice mindfulness.** Many people coming from a faith perspective choose to meditate or reflect on God or Scripture and that is helpful! Also, learning to recognize and name emotions and how emotions feel in your body can be a powerful mindfulness practice for former CSers.
1. **Safety is of utmost importance.** We are most able to grow when we are not in fight/flight/freeze mode. Learning what safety feels like takes time and practice.

PACE as an Attachment reminder with SELF

A helpful way to remember basic principles of attachment is the acronym PACE:*

- **Playfulness.** Keeping a light mood with yourself as you learn something new!
- **Acceptance.** Reminding yourself that you are created in the image of God and that you are doing your best to learn new things!
- **Curiosity.** Adopting a posture of self-discovery and questioning why you do things the way you do and what might be underneath various behaviors.
- **Empathy.** Being patient with yourself and acknowledging that what you are doing is hard. And it isn't fair-- you are grieving not being taught these self-attachment principles as a child or young adult. Also remember that you are not alone and there are other ex-CS members who are going through similar processes, but it is WORTH IT!

**PACE is a model created by Daniel Hughes. See Resources page for link to his website.*

How do I learn to trust others again?

Tips for attaching safely with others

- Remember that not everyone is trustworthy.
- Trust your own gut in when/how you feel safe.
- Take it slow and evaluate often.
- Be careful not to impose an artificial timeline on yourself.
- Balance RISK-taking in relationships with SAFETY-finding.
- It's ok to not trust at first or to allow trust to be earned over time.

"It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man."
Psalm 118:8

Other related resources:

Healing Your Attachment Wounds (2017), an ebook by Diane Poole Heller. This is an INCREDIBLE resource for recovering if you have identified attachment wounds. The book also includes practical mindfulness exercises in finding safety and strengthening secure attachments.

Bold Love (1992), by Allender and Longman. This book helps to draw a model for boundary-making from the wisdom literature in the Bible. The last three chapters on how to love a normal sinner, how to love a fool, and how to love an evil person are especially helpful.

PACE was a model created by Daniel Hughes. You can find more info about him and his work on his website: http://www.danielhughes.org/p.a.c.e..html