

# Family Attachment Family Relationships

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The family is the primary abode of a child. The first institution in which he/she opens eyes, breathes, and grows. The first place where one's mind and soul get formed. It is within the framework of the family that a child gets to know the concept of relationship with others.

The child who initially seeks solace in his/her mother's arms, gradually learns that there are other people who exist around him/her; strangers whom he/she begins to recognize in the process of his/her growth and cries upon seeing them, and familiar faces who give him/her a sense of safety and deserve his/her smile. In this stage of his/her psychological development, the child experiences attachment.

"Emotional bond or attachment" should be considered one of the instinctive and biological needs of every human being and this is the reason that made "Abraham Maslow" dedicate the third layer of his pyramid to this need.

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## ■ Emotional Attachment to Mother

As a matter of fact, the first emotional attachment a child finds is to his/her mother and it is in the relationship with the mother that the main structure of his mind gets formed in the early days of his/her life and it is this relationship and attachment that determines the future of his relationships.

Psychologists have through their research confirmed the fact that a child's need for a mother is not merely confined to nutrition and survival. Numerous experiments that have been conducted on humans and animals prove that even if a child is well-fed by strangers, he/she still requires the presence of a mother to psychologically feel safe.

## ■ Attachment Theory

The first person to come up with the "Attachment Theory" in the 1970s was the English psychiatrist and psychoanalyst John Bowlby who believed that the kind of attachment we have to ourselves, to the world, and to the people around us is rooted in our relationship with our primary caregivers.

In this sense, attachment is the sense of safety, which takes shape within the family framework, especially the mother, in one's childhood; the safest point of peace in the life of a child whose main concern is survival and safety. In fact, the biological dimension of this theory is about maintaining human survival and its psychological goal is the feeling of security.

Generally speaking, establishing any kind of effective communication with another person the result of which would be a sense of satisfaction and happiness falls within the purview of attachment. This is the feeling that assures us of having a place in someone's soul and mind who is concerned about us. It is the same feeling that makes us report the level of satisfaction with ourselves, relationships, and life.

What Bowlby and his students obtained through their scientific and experimental studies over the years proves the claim that the family, as the core of life, and the mother and the type of attachment she has with her child as the first caregiver, have a great impact on the quality of the child's psyche and affect his/her future relationships.

Understanding attachment patterns is the key to understanding part of the many complexities of human behavior and ultimately serves as a light to illuminate the path of better upbringing for future generation.

In his theory, John Bowlby has divided attachment

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patterns into three groups: 1. Secure attachment, 2. Anxious-ambivalent attachment, and 3. Anxious-avoidant and dismissive-avoidant attachment.

### ■ Secure Attachment

The fact is that children who are raised in kind, sympathetic, caring, and supportive families will often be adults with a “secure attachment” pattern. Such a child sees the world as a safe place where disagreeable events take place occasionally. In fact, the initial draft of his/her mind is that the world is a flower garden whose flowers may sometimes be accompanied by some thorns. If the parent goes away from the child’s eyes, he becomes restless, but when the mother returns, he/she experiences peace.

These people are the same children who have had reliable parents and caregivers who were always there to do away with the child’s troubles. The outcome of this quality of relationship in childhood is an adult person who considers himself/herself responsible in the universe and has a sense of gratitude.

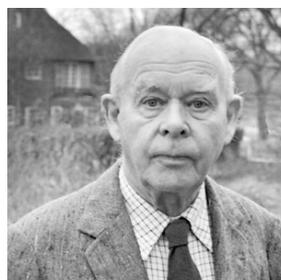
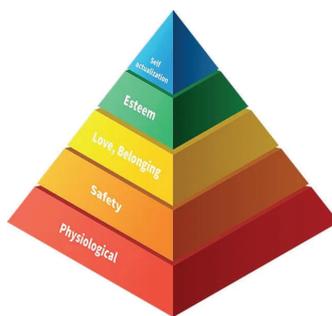
Such a child becomes a more empathetic adult and a more flexible human being; a mature person who can manage the symptoms of anger and anxiety. One who does not consider the world and others as scary and unsafe; one who enjoys both his solitude as well as being with others. The ability of this group of adults to manage emotions is the result of having secure attachment during childhood.

### ■ Anxious-ambivalent Attachment

The opposite of secure attachment is referred to as “Anxious-



*Abraham Maslow*



*Edward John Mostyn Bowlby*

ambivalent Attachment”. When the parent or caregiver is not always present, the child learns to live alone in the world. He/she unwittingly suppresses the need for a relationship and receiving help. He/she is the child who does not feel sad in the absence of a caregiver and does not even feel happy when the caregiver returns.

These people are children who have not been caressed by their parents and emotional inhibition is one of their most prominent characteristics in their adulthood. Adults who avoid expressing their feelings and generally prefer solitude to being in relations with others.

Such people do not generally care about ending their emotional relationships. Researchers admit that children with anxious-ambivalent attachment pattern, apart from the fact that they suffer from the unhealthy consequences of their pattern in social relationships, add fuel to this unhealthy cycle and act ineffectively in relation to their children - when they become parents - if they do not correct their relationship behavior.

### ■ Anxious-avoidant and dismissive-avoidant attachment

A child who is anxious and disturbed in the absence of parents cries a lot and when his parents return, he/she starts clinging to them. In such situations, parents do not show consistent behavior in the sense that they are sometimes supportive and sometimes repulsive! The consequence of these unhealthy behavior change in parents is creating an unpleasant feeling of fear of loss in the child.



From the viewpoint of the public, this type of attachment is interpreted as a dependent personality. Impulses such as pathological jealousy in emotional relationships and overly sad behaviors at the end of emotional relationships are the prominent characteristics of adults with this pattern of attachment.

People who suffer from insecure attachment are those who have been rejected and suffered from being ignored during their childhood, those who have witnessed the death of a loved one and are often in a state of fear and anxiety.

In fact, the result of John Bowlby's attachment theory is attention to the importance of the family and especially the mother as the first role model in the child's life. It clarifies the necessity that mere formation of married life is not a sign of mental health and the important function of the family is the upbringing and development of children in a healthy environment. This platform requires knowledgeable parents who are familiar with the nuances of their functional problems and disorders before marriage and then take steps to form a healthy family with the aim of helping the growth and development of their society.

