

Anxious Attachment in Women: The Worksheet

There is a version of this pattern that never looks anxious from the outside. It looks like being amazing: remembering his mother's birthday, smoothing the friend group's fallouts, reading the room before the room knows it has a mood, being the one who makes everything work. The fear of being left is in there -- but it has been converted, somewhere along the line, into a strategy: become so useful, so attuned, so low-maintenance-while-maintaining-everyone that leaving you would be logistically unthinkable. It is exhausting, it is invisible, and it is praised. This sheet is for that version.

Who this is for: Women who earn their place in relationships through effort and attunement, hint rather than ask, and privately keep the books on everything they give.

The five exercises

1. The over-functioning audit

Count what you actually carry, and mark which loads are hedges.

The full list -- practical, social, emotional:

Marked: love-item or hedge, one by one:

My honest ratio:

The single biggest hedge -- what it costs me weekly, and what leaving-insurance it is buying:

2. Price the mind-reading

Total up what the constant attunement costs, and check its accuracy.

Three-day scan tally:

Five reads, checked against reality -- hits and misses:

One recent adjustment I made to a mood that turned out not to exist:

Hours per week the scanning costs, honestly:

3. Retire the hint economy

Track your indirect asks and what they actually return.

Indirect ask one -- the real want, the float format, the return:

Indirect asks two and three:

Indirect ask four, and the pattern across all of them:

The one I most resented him missing -- rewritten here as a direct sentence:

4. Direct-ask training

Practise asking in receivable format, at ascending stakes.

Week one ask, verbatim, and the answer:

Week two ask and answer:

Week three ask and answer:

Week four -- the real ask, verbatim:

For any no I received: predicted damage vs actual damage:

5. The under-functioning experiment

Put down one carried load for a fortnight and record what actually happens.

The load I am putting down, and the fortnight's dates:

Day-by-day: what actually happened (events, not fears):

Which of the three outcomes I got:

What the outcome tells me, and the direct conversation it sets up, if any:

The fear I had on day one, re-read on day fourteen:

This worksheet is free to print, photocopy and share, including with clients. It is self-reflection material, not a diagnosis, an assessment or a substitute for professional support. If a relationship involves fear, control or coercion, or if working through this raises more than feels manageable, please speak to a doctor, a therapist or a domestic abuse service.