

The Avoidant Attachment Checklist

This pattern is genuinely hard to self-report, and not because you are dishonest -- because its moves feel like reasons at the time. "I was busy" was true. The flaw you noticed in them was real. The weekend needed protecting. A trait quiz asks whether you "fear intimacy" and gets an accurate no, because fear is not what it feels like from inside; it feels like preference, schedule and standards. So this checklist skips the feelings entirely and asks about moves -- what you observably did in four situations where the pattern, if present, will have left prints.

Who this is for: Anyone told they are avoidant who does not recognise themselves in the descriptions -- and anyone who half-suspects their reasons for distance are load-bearing in a way reasons should not be.

The four situations, plus the two readings

Situation 1 -- Someone coming closer

Tick what you did the last time closeness stepped up a level.

Went noticeably quieter in the days after a close moment [] -- got suddenly busy in a way I did not fight [] -- cancelled or shortened the next planned meeting []

Noticed a flaw in them that had not bothered me before [] -- thought about an ex, or an idealised alternative, more than usual []

Deflected or made a joke when they said something sincere [] -- did not reciprocate a disclosure or an "I love you" and changed the subject []

Felt crowded by a message frequency that had previously been fine [] -- re-established a boundary that had not been under threat []

Section count: ____ /9. The close moment was: ____ . Date: ____

Situation 2 -- The settled stretch

Tick what was true during the last calm, established period.

Kept significant parts of my life (money, plans, a friendship, a struggle) undisclosed as policy [] -- maintained a mental list of what is wrong with the relationship []

Held the relationship at a set temperature -- warmer was deflected, not just cooler [] -- felt most affectionate toward them when they were absent or asleep []

Deferred concrete next steps (meeting family, moving in, booking ahead) without refusing them outright []

Needed a recovery day after extended time together, reliably [] -- envied single friends more than I said []

Answered "how are you really" with logistics [] -- was described by them as hard to reach, and privately agreed []

Section count: ____ /9. Date: ____

Situation 3 -- The difficult conversation

Tick what you did in the last conversation that got emotional.

Went quiet or monosyllabic as it got emotional [] -- physically left, or engineered an interruption [] -- switched to logic and debate-mode while they were upset []

Conceded quickly to end it rather than because I agreed [] -- said "I don't know" to direct questions about what I felt or wanted, as a door-closer []

Let a silence stand that I knew they were suffering in [] -- resolved privately to raise something and never did []

Described their reaction as dramatic or too much, at least internally [] -- felt the strongest urge mid-conversation to be anywhere else, and followed it []

Section count: ____ /9. Date: ____

Situation 4 -- The exit

Tick the machinery of your last significant ending.

Decided privately, well before saying anything [] -- the ending surprised them in a way that surprised me []

Felt mainly relief in the first weeks [] -- was functional immediately and took pride in it []

Something substantial arrived months later, set off by something small [] -- never quite connected that arrival to the ending []

Remembered the relationship better than I rated it while inside it [] -- reached back toward them (or nearly did) after the anxious partner stopped pursuing []

Section count: ____ /8. Ending was (month/year): ____

Reading the counts

Turn the four dated counts into a shape, and choose one working front.

My four counts: S1 ____ /9, S2 ____ /9, S3 ____ /9, S4 ____ /8:

The shape, in one sentence:

My chosen front, and the tool:

Re-run date (one month): ____

The differential: pattern, or temperament?

Five checks that separate avoidant attachment from introversion and genuine preference.

My distance follows: social exertion generally [] or increases in closeness specifically [] -- with an example of each I can actually cite:

After my recharge time, do I return warmer, or re-entrenched?

Do the flaw-finding items (S1) fire on schedule after close moments, or randomly, or not really?

Can I be reached DURING my alone time by the closest person without resentment, in practice?

Verdict: mostly temperament [] / mostly pattern [] / pattern riding on temperament [] -- and what I will do with it:

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.