

The Secure Attachment Checklist

Secure is the style everyone claims -- on trait quizzes it is the flattering answer, and calm is easy to mistake for it. But security is not a mood; it is what you DO under four specific pressures: when someone bids for your attention, when conflict opens, when distance happens, and when life load spikes. This checklist verifies rather than flatters. Tick it against real, dated events, run the avoidant-calm differential at the end honestly, and what you have is either confirmation worth keeping or a more accurate starting point -- both of which beat a pleasant misreading.

Who this is for: Anyone verifying their own security (including the earned kind), and anyone reading a new partner's pattern who wants better instruments than "seems really chill".

The four pressures, plus the two readings

Pressure 1 -- Under bids

Tick what happens when someone reaches for attention or care.

Responded to most small bids within moments, even just with "one sec, tell me in five" [] -- put the phone down for a direct bid at least once []

Missed a bid, noticed later, and named it ("you wanted me earlier and I was elsewhere -- what was it?") []

Received a clumsy or grumpy bid as a bid rather than as an attack []

Made my own bids in plain form ("come sit with me", "I want your opinion") without testing whether they would be noticed []

Section count: ____ /5. Week of: ____

Pressure 2 -- Under conflict

Tick what you actually did in the last real disagreement.

Raised the issue within days of it arising, at roughly its actual size [] -- criticised the behaviour, not the person, mostly []

Stayed in the conversation while it was uncomfortable, without leaving or flooding [] -- called a pause WITH a return time when it got too hot []

Conceded something they were right about, out loud [] -- held my actual point without raising the volume []

Moved first on repair at least once recently, without keeping score of who moved last time [] -- the relationship was visibly normal again within a day or two []

Section count: ____ /8. The disagreement was about: _____. Date: _____

Pressure 3 -- Under distance

Tick what ran while apart, or while they needed space.

Their space request landed as information, not as threat or as victory [] -- I granted it without a tax (no sulk, no cold counter-space) []

Apart, I thought of them warmly but got on with my own days [] -- contact while apart was easy and unmetered, neither constant nor performed []

I asked for my own space, plainly, when I needed it ("I need a quiet night, see you tomorrow") []

Reunion was ordinary -- no re-entry interrogation, no re-entry chill []

Section count: ____ /6. The distance was: _____. Date: _____

Pressure 4 -- Under load

Tick what happened to your relational functioning in the last heavy stretch.

Told the people close to me I was running on less, before they had to deduce it [] -- asked for something specific (cover, patience, help) at least once []

My irritability came with a label and an apology-in-advance or -in-arrears [] -- I did not disappear; I shrank honestly ("short walks only, but I'm here") []

Accepted help that was offered without repaying it instantly []

When I dropped a ball with someone, I repaired it within the week []

Section count: ____ /6. The load was: _____. Date: _____

Reading the counts

What the shape says, and what to do with thin sections.

My four counts: P1 ____ /5, P2 ____ /8, P3 ____ /6, P4 ____ /6:

Thinnest section, and its work order:

Were my ticks backed by dated, recent events -- or by self-image? (Re-tick any section where the honest answer is self-image.)

Re-run date: ____

The differential: secure, or avoidant-calm? (and two other traps)

The checks that catch the three most common false positives.

Avoidant-calm check: is my P3 score high while my P1 bid-making is thin and my P2 shows containment rather than engagement? [yes/no] -- evidence:

Stakes check: were my dated events actually high-stakes for me? What is the hardest thing this checklist got tested against?

History check: did I pass this with a steady partner but fail its equivalent in my last difficult relationship? What does that say about untested corners?

Earned-secure check (if applicable): under my worst recent load, did the old pattern visit -- and did I route back within days? (Routing back counts FOR security, not against it.)

Final honest verdict: verified secure [] / secure-with-thin-sections [] / avoidant-calm misread [] / untested [] -- and next step for the box I ticked:

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.