

How to Create A Secure Attachment

1. Focus On Healing

Childhood situations and experiences that promote insecure attachments also tend to create shame and self-esteem issues. Living with shame can result in self-neglect (focusing on everyone else's needs while ignoring your own), self-criticism, self-sabotage, and even self-destructive behaviors. Beginning to heal from these symptoms will help you lay the foundation to form secure attachments and build self-esteem.

These feelings and behaviors are often connected to a deeply rooted, self-imposed belief that an individual does not deserve happiness or healthy relationships. While healthy guilt can help an individual make better choices, the shame and self-loathing that often accompany an insecure attachment style can make a person feel perpetually stuck in insecurity and play games with their mental health.

Many people wonder how to forgive themselves for mistakes they've made in the past. While the process of self-forgiveness is a highly personal one, the following steps are a great place to start:

- **Evaluate your past decisions.** Were some of the factors involved out of your control? Did you do what you felt was best at the time? How do you see your actions differently today?
- **Earn your forgiveness.** Steps toward forgiveness include taking responsibility for your actions, apologizing, and making amends. If you find that forgiving yourself is difficult, try writing out a meaningful apology to yourself. You can also apologize to anyone else who may have been hurt, and you may be able to identify actions to make things right. Finally, vow to move forward.
- **Aim for progress, not perfection.** If this process seems easier said than done, use self-compassion exercises to keep you moving through the healing process, such as this [meaningful exercise](#) offered by the Nonviolent Communication Organization (NVC).

2. Build Self-Esteem

Self-forgiveness provides a fresh start. Once you are no longer bogged down by the pain of the past, you can work on building yourself up. You might have years of experience with negative self-talk, shame, and criticism, so it's time to turn things around. Here are some practical and secure ways to build self-esteem and help create this attachment style:

- **Make yourself a priority:** People with low self-esteem tend to neglect themselves. They can ignore their health, hygiene, and emotional wellbeing because they don't feel worthy of self-care

or self-compassion. If you're in the habit of neglecting your personal needs and desires, make a list of the things you've neglected. Do you need to go to the dentist? Does your diet need adjustments to keep you healthy and satisfied? Would you like to give up drinking or smoking? Once you have a list, commit to tackling these issues one by one, and practice self-compassion if you find yourself falling into old patterns. Remember, it's not about perfection.

- **The three compliments journal:** This exercise is included in a great [self-esteem-building article](https://enlightenmentportal.com/development/self-esteem-building-activities/) (<https://enlightenmentportal.com/development/self-esteem-building-activities/>). You'll need a blank notebook and a pen or a pencil to get started. Then all you have to do is jot down three compliments to yourself each morning. Looking in the mirror can be part of the ritual, but if this practice seems awkward or uncomfortable, a mirror isn't required. The goal here is to acknowledge your positive attributes on a regular basis. This private practice will help you see yourself in a more positive light.
- **Try a new hobby:** Part of learning to value yourself is finding activities you love and pursuing them wholeheartedly. If you enjoy taking photos, take up photography. Try a new sport or physical activity or settle into a crafting activity that calms you. Not sure which hobby to try? Check out the [world's largest list of hobbies](https://www.notsoboringlife.com/list-of-hobbies/) (<https://www.notsoboringlife.com/list-of-hobbies/>) to discover an activity you love!
- **Practice positive self-talk:** For individuals who have spent their lives filled with negative self-talk and shame, this process can seem daunting, but it's worth the effort. Whether in a journal or just in your head, remind yourself of your talents, positive attributes, and accomplishments, big and small. When harmful and very personal thoughts creep up, make a conscious effort to combat them with positivity. For example, you may think, "I can't do anything right." Stop yourself by stating, "That isn't true; I'm great at a lot of things, including _____ and _____." By fighting off negative thoughts, becoming self-aware, and replacing them with positive ones, you'll build self-esteem, feel confident, and begin to create a secure attachment style that will allow you to trust yourself and others.

-Kelly Spears