



INTEGRATE TO LIVE

Restore Resilience. Cultivate Community. Impact your World

Week 24 Transcript: Earned-Secure Behaviors

Your adult attachment style can be changed at any point in your life. This is another miraculous reality about our ability to change our brains. Neuroplasticity allows the neurons in the brain to adjust their activities in response to new situations or to changes in the environment.

So, regardless of our early relational pattern that was formed, we can still develop strong and healthy connections, and a sense of security and confidence to go with it. This process is called earned-secure attachment.

It's not something you can just read about and gain through knowledge. It must be experienced and involves practicing specific behaviors within connected relationships.

Our brains are social organs and transformation is an interactive partnership between two social beings. The more we put earned-secure actions into practice in our primary relationships, the more securely attached we'll become.

The insecure attachment styles we talked about previously include anxious/ambivalent, avoidant and disorganized. I'm going to highlight some of the common insecure reactions of these relational patterns and then show you some secure resilient actions you can put into practice instead.

This is going to be a bulleted list to increase awareness, so just pay attention to which ones you see yourself in. You'll have opportunity to identify more closely with them in the action guide this week.

Some common Insecure Reactions in relationships are:

Mind reading and jumping to conclusions without asking questions or getting curious.

Passive-aggressive behaviors like sarcasm, the silent treatment, or deliberate button pushing.

All-or-nothing thinking that leads to putting the person on a pedestal or catastrophizing the outcome of the relationship.



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Recalling only the negative of the other person or bringing up past offenses while in a conflict.

Manipulating the situation to get attention or get your way.

Picking a fight to get some kind of reaction out of the other person.

Hostile behaviors like dirty looks, rolling your eyes or getting up and stomping out of the room.

Withdrawing by acting busy or appearing unapproachable.

Excessively attempting to connect through repetitive emailing, calling or texting.

Tit for tat: Keeping score and making sure you pay them back “blow for blow”.

Distancing mentally or physically, isolating and shutting people out.

Feeling the need to get away.

Making critical remarks and belittling others.

Minimizing emotional sharing and limiting vulnerability in relationship.

Expressing rage or violent behavior toward another person.

Repressing feelings of love and concern. Being aloof and self-sufficient.

Dismissing the needs and emotional cues of others. Ignoring them, not listening.

Ok. Take a deep breath. That is quite a list.

It's a universal, yet hard to look into, mirror. We all see bits of ourselves in this list of common Insecure Reactions in relationships.



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There is so much compassion available in this inventory, because we know that all of our relational behaviors were developed from our survival system in our nervous system adapting to our environment through experience.

Having the courage to recognize yourself, and practice earned-secure behaviors from that place, will radically change your relational world.

This may come as a surprise to you, but making sense of our stories and integrating our life narrative is the most important indicator of developing a secure attachment style.

It's not whether we had a secure environment growing up, but that we can tell our story with a colorful understanding of the full emotional landscape throughout our lives.

Other Common Earned-Secure Actions that we've already been practicing throughout the program include: regulating our emotions, practicing curiosity and listening with empathy.

Some additional Earned-Secure Actions in relationships are:

Reaching for connection when we feel the impulse to shut down or withdraw.

Keeping the conflict "current" and refusing the compulsion to drag past misunderstandings or unhealed wounds into the argument.

Speaking and acting in an encouraging way. Choosing to find one positive trait or action you can highlight and acknowledge with the other person.

Making yourself available to others.

Practicing effective communication: be honest, clear and straight-forward. Express how you feel and ask for what you need.



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This isn't about making a demand. With any needs request, the person you are speaking to can say yes, no or counter-offer. But, they can't respond directly if you haven't communicated clearly.

Now, I know where you parents are going with this. You're curious how we encourage secure attachment in our children.

As parents this can stress us out. We think we have to be these things all of the time or we will mess up our kid. It's not true. They say we only need to be "good enough" parents and create secure behaviors 33% of the time.

The most important Secure Actions to practice with our children are:

Mindfully attuning to our needs and their needs. You don't have to meet everyone's needs, but acknowledging and empathizing with them will create connection.

Be flexible in our responses.

Monitor and be intentional with our tone of voice and facial expressions.

Mess up. Be an imperfect, good enough parent, and circle back and repair the mistake. Messing up and repairing the blunder is actually healthier and more integrative than never making a mistake in the first place.

Here's a mantra for you parents: Perceptive over Perfect. Quit trying to be perfect and instead place your attention on becoming more perceptive. Pay attention, both to yourself and your child. Regulate your own nervous system first, so you can create a safe and welcoming environment for others.



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Reaching for connection and confessing our short-comings strengthens the emotional resiliency in our relationships. As a community, let's all do one big relational pivot this week as we move toward earned-secure attachment in our relationships.

Be sure to download the action guide to support this process and share what you are learning on our group page.