

4 Attachment Principles: These 4 principles are derived from Mary Ainsworth's research on how caregivers facilitate secure attachment in their infants. When caregivers exhibit these behaviors, we see infants exhibit secure base, safe haven, separation protest and proximity seeking in healthy ways.

1. Sensitivity to signals:
 - a. Recognize that the person is signaling a need, accurately interpret the signal, and make every attempt to meet that need in a timely manner
2. Acceptance vs. rejection of needs
 - a. Make positive attributions about the child's behavior, for example, when a kid takes food and hides it in their room and understanding they do this because they were food insecure in their biological family home or when a parentified kid tries to parent a sibling in a new foster home, the parents can say "I know you are trying to help and I can handle it or I think you are used to taking care of your brother, let me help or it's my job as a parent to"
 - b. Recognize that children's behaviors are their best attempt at getting their needs met
3. Physical and psychological availability
 - a. Be physically and emotionally present
4. Cooperation vs. interference in ongoing behavior
 - a. Be your child's cheerleader as they attempt to meet their goals

In relationships, sometimes both people are engaging in the infant side of the behavioral dance, but neither is providing the 4 primary attachment figure behaviors necessary for the partner to feel secure in the relationship. Most of us have baggage from how we were raised that gets in the way of being able to do the 4 adult primary attachment figure behaviors. So we might be dismissive or preoccupied or unresolved about our own history and that gets in our way as we parent and as we do other intimate relationships.

http://www.psychology.sunysb.edu/attachment/measures/content/aai_interview.pdf

We don't have to be perfect or have been raised perfectly. We just have to know our issues and make different choices in how we respond to the needs of our partners. When two people are able to do that, they can be happily married!