

Out In the World

LEARNING FROM THE WORK OF BOWLBY AND AINSWORTH

3 ATTACHMENT TYPES



Secure
Attachment



Insecure-
Avoidant
Attachment



Insecure-
Ambivalent
Attachment

Attachment Theory

Our attachment style is developed early in life and the roots run deep. If we quickly scan close friendships and relationships in our lives, we'd likely notice common signs that lead back to how attachments were created in our early years.

Bowlby's attachment theory helps us understand the powerful imprint of our early attachment experiences on our adult lives. Bowlby and Ainsworth stress that people have an enduring need for attachment and that the nature of our most formative attachment patterns impact our approach to relationships and ability to trust.

Take some time to delve deeper into this body of research to self-examine patterns of connectedness and communication in order to understand how these interactions have molded your emotional and social development.

What We'll Cover

1: Three Types of Attachment

2: The Coach Approach

3: Insights for Action Planning

1: THREE TYPES OF ATTACHMENT

Consider your earliest attachment experiences.

Which of the three types of attachment do you most relate to?

SECURE	INSECURE AVOIDANT	INSECURE AMBIVALENT
<p>Early Story Consistent, supportive, emotionally available attachment figure</p> <p>Resulting Attachment Characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of security and safety • Confidence • Expectation of positive intent and outcomes • Connective 	<p>Early Story Unavailable, rejecting, or insensitive attachment figure</p> <p>Resulting Attachment Characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rejecting verbally or physically • Avoidant and resistant of connection • Insecure • Distant 	<p>Early Story Inconsistent availability from attachment figure</p> <p>Resulting Attachment Characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detached or withdrawn • Overly cautious and withholding of trust • Apathetic • Conflicted

Explore connections between your early attachment experiences and how you approach relationships with others.

What has been the impact?

Do your interactions in some ways reflect the characteristics detailed above?

2: The Coach Approach

Now review the characteristics of attachment styles as they generally show up for a coach or leader. Highlight the ones with which you most identify.

Which style seems most familiar to you?

SECURE	INSECURE AVOIDANT	INSECURE AMBIVALENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Readily Available• Affirming• Consistently Present• Confident• Predictable• Easy to connect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unavailable• Direct• Independent• Insensitive• Distant• Unapproachable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indiscriminately Available• Withdrawn• Cautious• Unpredictable• Isolating• Detached

Understanding and appreciating your particular attachment style allows you to better manage yourself and see where your work might be in developing agility in relating to others.

How can an awareness of your dominant style help you see your client with more clarity?

How are you able to be present and listen through your client's eyes and heart rather than getting hooked by an old frame of reference?

The good news is that Ainsworth asserts that attachment styles are malleable. Our goal as a coach is to be willing and able to develop in order to better connect and forge healthy attachments with those who we coach and lead.

How do you think your attachment tendencies have historically affected your role as a coach or leader?

Even if your dominant experience in your early years is predominantly reflected in the Secure Attachment style, you might have leanings or threads that creep in from other attachment style characteristics.

Where are areas of growth you can continue to work on to be the best coach?

Upon reflection of your attachment style, how have you adjusted and adapted from your early script to cultivate the healthiest and most resilient you?

3: Insights for Action Planning

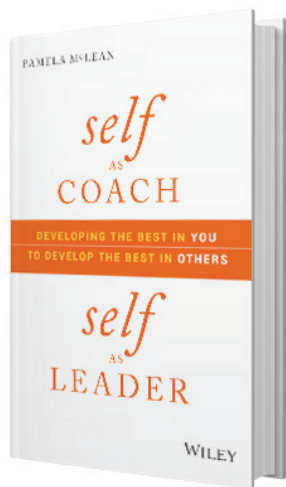
Holistic Professional Development

As you are reading, reflecting on the “Out in Your World” questions, and completing the Coach’s Worksheets, begin to think of how you can leverage your whole, cultivated self to affect change in your future work.

What is one key insight you can take forward from Bowlby and Ainsworth’s theory of attachment to contribute toward your overall self-development plan for coaching improvement?

How will increasing your depth of understanding of your inner landscape and attachment tendencies help you do your best work towards affecting change as a coach or leader?

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Buy the Book

For more details or to buy a copy of Pamela McLean's *Self as Coach, Self as Leader* [click here](#).

About the Author

Pamela McLean, PhD, is the CEO and cofounder of Hudson Institute of Coaching, an organization providing a full suite of coaching services inside organizations and widely known as one of the leading coach training programs in the United States for over 30 years. McLean brings more than three decades of experience as a clinical and organizational psychologist, a master coach, coach supervisor, and leader and contributor in the field of coaching. McLean has written extensively and authored [The Completely Revised Handbook of Coaching](#) (2012) and [LifeForward: Charting the Journey Ahead](#). (2015).



About The Hudson Institute of Coaching

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Contact Us

1.800.582.4401
info@hudsoninstitute.com