

Exercise: How Well Do You Balance Autonomy and Closeness?

Relationships are, of course, more of an ongoing, dynamic balancing act than achieving some continuously held equilibrium. With that in mind, which of the following pictures *best* represents your ideal relationship? And which picture best represents your current relationship, or your most recent one?

Extremely Overlapping

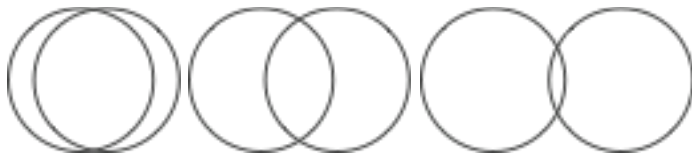
Anxious Style

Moderately Overlapping

Secure Style

Separate, Touching

Avoidant Style



These styles are expressed in the following statements:

Secure Style:

I am comfortable sharing intimate thoughts and feelings with my partner.

I enjoy pursuing interests apart from my partner.

I feel loved by my partner even when we pursue interests separately from each other.

Even when we disagree, I expect that my partner will still respect and value my opinions and me.

Anxious Style:

I am most comfortable when my partner and I share all of our thoughts, feelings, and interests—when we seem to have merged into one.

I am inclined to pursue what my partner enjoys, putting aside my own interests.

I am inclined to defer my values or opinions to my partner's values and opinions.

Whenever I sense my partner being distant, I feel driven to reconnect (for example, frequently calling or texting); or I act angrily, such as by withdrawing or being nasty.

Avoidant Style:

I am uncomfortable sharing intimate thoughts and feelings with my partner.

I take pride in being self-reliant enough not to need my partner.

I am uncomfortable depending on my partner.

I am uncomfortable with my partner depending on me.

I enjoy pursuing interests apart from my partner.