

## **attachment.**

Emotional attachment/bonding is the deep, enduring emotional connection between ourselves and specific people that we know and that are important to us. This emotional attachment, or bonding, is one of the most important phenomena in our emotional and social experience. Children internalize their attachment experiences with their parents (primary caregivers), and these internalized parental attachments then serve as the foundation for all future relationships. When our attachments/emotional bonds are joy based, we want to be near the people we are attached to, and we go to them for comfort and protection in times of distress.

## **attachment, dismissive.**

Dismissive attachment is established by repeated experiences of having your parents ignore you, reject you, dismiss the importance of emotional connection, or disparage the importance of emotional connection. For example, if you are growing up in an emotional desert of being persistently ignored and/or rejected, you can come to the self-protective conclusion: “If I can’t get it, it won’t hurt so bad if I don’t need it or want it.” You then try to teach yourself, both consciously and unconsciously, to not need or want emotional connection. In most cases, you develop dismissive attachment because your parents have predominantly dismissive attachment. If this is the case, they will make it much easier for you to adopt this same form of attachment. In addition to ignoring and/or rejecting your attempts to connect with them, they will model dismissive attachment by appearing not to need or want emotional connection—they won’t initiate emotional intimacy, they won’t ask for it, and they won’t express distress at not having it. Sometimes they will make it even easier for you to adopt the dismissive style of attachment by explicitly dismissing and/or disparaging the importance of emotional connection, with comments such as: “Don’t come cryin’ to me. If I came home crying, my father would whip me till I stopped. If you’re gonna cry, go to your room till you’re done,” or “What do you want a hug for? Only sissies and fagots need hugs.” Or they might pick up a book such as *Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child*,<sup>1</sup> and comment “All that touchy-feely therapy crap is just a waste of time and money.”

In a relationship with dismissive attachment, you do *not* feel felt, seen, understood, or connected. You have the sense that if you share your heart with vulnerability and transparency, the other person will ignore or disparage your

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1. John Gottman with Joan DeClaire, *Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997). This is actually an excellent book, despite what might be said about it by people with dismissive attachment.

attempt to initiate emotional intimacy (as opposed to see you, understand you, attune to you, and respond appropriately to what you share). In a relationship with dismissive attachment, you have a deep, subjective, intuitive *feeling* that emotional intimacy is not seen as important, and that your needs for relational connection will be ignored or disparaged.

### **attachment, disorganized.**

Disorganized attachment is established by repeated experiences of a primary caregiver doing things that are overwhelming, frightening, and chaotic—experiences where the primary caregiver that you want to go to for comfort and safety is actually the source of your distress. When this happens, you *simultaneously* experience *both* an intense attachment drive to be with the person who is your primary caregiver *and* an intense self-protection drive to get away from this same person as the source of your distress. In a relationship with disorganized attachment, you feel that you need to be with the person, *and* that you need to get away from the person. You feel that something terrible will happen if you leave the person, *and* that something terrible will happen if you stay with them. In a relationship with disorganized attachment, you feel that you must stay with the person to be okay, *and* you know the person is unsafe and will hurt you. In any experience or memory that includes the disorganized attachment dilemma (the person you need to comfort and protect you is the source of your distress), in addition to feeling fearful you will also feel profoundly confused and disorganized.

### **attachment, distracted.**

Distracted attachment is established by repeated experiences of having your parents be unpredictable with respect to relational, emotional connection. On some occasions when you come to them with the need and desire for emotional connection, they see you, understand you, share your emotions, join you in your experience, want to be with you, and respond appropriately to the situation you are bringing to them. However, on other occasions when you come to them with the need and desire for emotional connection, they are distracted and emotionally unavailable. In these situations, they might pretend to be with you and attune to you, but you can tell that they are not fully present—you can tell that they are not really attuning to you, and they do not respond with what you need for the unique situation you are bringing to them.

In a relationship with distracted attachment, you know what you are looking for and you know that it's possible, but on any given occasion you don't know whether or not you will get the attuned emotional connection that you need. In a relationship with distracted attachment, you never know what you are going to get—you cannot *depend* on the person for attuned connection. In a relationship with distracted attachment, you have a deep, subjective sense of insecurity regarding whether attuned emotional connection will be available when you need it.

**attachment pain.**

Attachment pain is the unique pain we feel when separated (either temporarily or permanently) from key attachment figures, such as family members and close friends. The unresolved content in traumatic memories can include attachment pain, so that attachment pain in the present can be caused by triggering; but attachment pain can also be caused by truth-based separation or loss in the present, such as when a spouse dies.

**attachment, secure.**

Secure attachment is established by repeated experiences of having your parents be available when you need them, repeated experiences of having your parents attune to you (see you, understand you, share your emotions, join you in your experience, and be glad to be with you), repeated experiences of having your parents respond appropriately to the unique situations you bring to them, and repeated experiences of successful repair after some kind of conflict has caused a rupture in the relationship. In a relationship with secure attachment you *feel* seen, understood, felt, loved, connected, and relationally safe. You feel safe to share your heart with vulnerability and transparency, with the expectation that the other person will see you, understand you, attune to you, and respond appropriately to what you share. In a relationship with secure attachment, you are aware that conflict can arise, but you are confident that problems can be resolved. You have a deep, subjective, intuitive *feeling* that the relationship is safe and stable. In a relationship with secure attachment, you have a deep, subjective sense of security that emotional connection and attunement will be available when you need them.

If your parents do *not* consistently attune to you and respond appropriately to you, and if you do not consistently experience successful repair after some kind of conflict has caused a rupture in the relationship, then instead of developing secure attachment you will develop one or more of the forms of insecure attachment.

**attunement.**

Attunement is an especially important form of interpersonal emotional connection. I am successfully *offering* attunement if I see you, hear you, correctly understand your internal experience, *join* you in the emotions you're experiencing, genuinely care about you, and am glad to be with you; and you have successfully *received* my attunement if you *feel* seen, heard, and understood, if you *feel* that I am *with* you in your experience, and if you *feel* that I care about you and that I am glad to be with you. As discussed in chapter 18, the Lord has designed our brains so that if something causes us to fall into non-relational mode, receiving attunement will quickly, smoothly, and consistently bring us back into relational mode.

**autobiographical memory.** *See* memory, autobiographical.

**blending, psychological blending, psychologically blended.**

Psychological blending is when implicit memory content *blends together* with the mental content corresponding to our experiences in the present, so that we *do not perceive any subjective difference* between the implicit memory content and content corresponding to the present. For example, when I am **psychologically blended** with childhood memories, instead of standing in my untriggered, adult ego state, and thinking about autobiographical memories from the childhood experiences as if they were part of my past history, I will experience the childhood implicit memory thoughts and emotions as *blended together* with the thoughts and emotions from my adult ego state. I will *not perceive any subjective difference* between the implicit memory content and the content corresponding to my current adult experience, and the implicit memory thoughts and emotions will *feel true in the present*.

**capacity.**

When we refer to the capacity of a physical system, we're referring to how much it can hold or how much it can carry. For example, the capacity of a bucket refers to how much liquid it can hold before overflowing, the capacity of a bridge refers to how much weight it can carry before it collapses, and the capacity of an electrical circuit refers to how much current it can handle before blowing a fuse or burning out components. When we refer to *capacity in the context of emotional healing*, we're referring to the capacity of the person's biological brain, non-biological mind, and spirit—we're referring to *how much biological, psychological, and spiritual intensity a person can handle before some part of his combined brain-mind-spirit system "blows a fuse," and causes the person to malfunction and/or disconnect in some way*.

**confabulation.**

Confabulation is a special kind of fabrication, where the person makes something up based on her best guess regarding what might be the answer, but with *no conscious awareness that she is just guessing and no deliberate intent to deceive*. Confabulation is most dramatically seen in people who have severely damaged explicit memory combined with minimal conscious awareness of their explicit memory deficit, such as people with Korsakov's syndrome. However, we all engage in much more subtle forms of confabulation when our Verbal Logical Explainers (VLEs) are unknowingly working with raw material that includes "invisible" implicit memory content.

**contingent interaction/communication.**

*Contingent* interaction/communication means that our responses are directly related to (*contingent upon*) what the other is experiencing and communicating. For example, if I meet my godson in the park and he comes running to me

with a big smile, a contingent interaction would be to greet him with, “Hey! It’s good to see you! It looks like you’re having a good day.” And if I’m walking through the park and I see him standing by himself and crying, a contingent interaction would be to kneel down beside him and quietly ask, “What’s the matter? Tell me what happened.” In contrast, if I see him alone and crying, a *noncontingent* interaction would be to ignore his distress and greet him with, “Hey! It’s good to see you! Isn’t this a beautiful day?” For excellent additional discussion of contingent interactions, see Daniel J. Siegel and Mary Hartzell, *Parenting from the Inside Out* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/ Putnam, 2003), especially pages 80–85.

**dismissive attachment.** *See* attachment, dismissive.

**disorganized attachment.** *See* attachment, disorganized.

**distorted interpretations (lies).**

Unsuccessful processing of a painful experiences often results in distorted interpretations regarding the meaning of the experience. These distorted interpretations (lies) are then stored as part of the memories for the inadequately processed painful experiences. The memories that carry the unprocessed content from the trauma also carry the distorted interpretations (lies) that are associated with the traumatic events. The trauma-associated lies contribute to the toxic power that unprocessed trauma exerts on the person’s life, and trauma-associated lies can also hinder the process of trying to resolve the traumatic memories.

**distracted attachment.** *See* attachment, distracted.

**explicit memory.** *See* memory, explicit.

**extrapolate.**

“Extrapolate” is the scientific, technical term for making educated guesses—for studying information we *do* have, and then using this information to make educated guesses about the answers to related questions regarding which we *do not* yet have direct, confirmed information. For example, if we are observing a woman driving her car, and we verify that she has traveled one mile at two minutes, three miles at six minutes, and five miles at ten minutes, then based on this known data (represented by the bolded line in figure G.1), we can *extrapolate* (represented by the grey, dashed line) that she will probably have traveled eight miles by the time she has been on the road for sixteen minutes. Similarly, if a person hates broccoli but loves apples, dislikes carrots but enjoys oranges, avoids peas but likes strawberries, detests cauliflower but loves pears, and has an aversion to beans but delights in raspberries; we can *extrapolate* to make the educated guess that she will dislike other vegetables, such as brussels sprouts and radishes, and that she will like other fruits, such as pineapples and peaches.

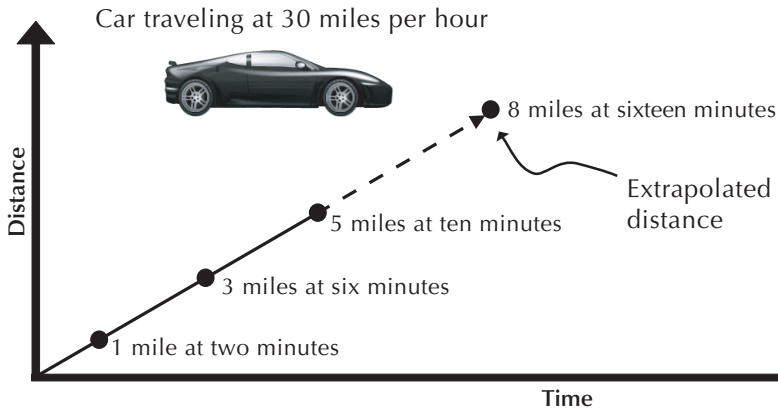


Figure G.1 Extrapolation is using information we do have to make guesses about information we don't have.

As described in chapter 4, Charlotte using her graphics software to repair a damaged photograph provides another good example. She makes an *educated guess* that missing material from the damaged spot probably looked a lot like parts of the picture immediately adjacent to the flaw, and therefore repairs the scene by filling in the hole with a sample from this nearby material.

**implicit memory.** See memory, implicit.

### **interactive connection with the Lord.**

I am experiencing an *interactive* connection with the Lord when I perceive his presence in some way, and it *feels* true that we are having a living, real-time, mutual, contingent *interaction*. When I am experiencing an interactive connection, it *feels* true that the Lord sees, hears, and understands the emotions and thoughts I am experiencing and communicating, and it also *feels* true that he is offering contingent responses to my emotions and thoughts.

### **maturity skills, psychological/spiritual maturity skills.**

As a person develops physically, she encounters many physical skills that she must master in order to thrive physically. For example, she must learn to coordinate her feet and legs and trunk in the complex skills of walking and running; she must learn to coordinate the movements of her fingers and thumbs in the many complex skills of manipulating objects with her hands; she must learn to coordinate the movements of her teeth, tongue, lips, and vocal cords in the complex skill of talking; etc. These are physical skills that you learn during the process of physical development—skills that you learn as you grow in physical maturity. Mastering these physical skills is an important part of maturing physically. Similarly, as a person develops psychologically/spiritually, she encounters many psychological/spiritual skills that she must master in order to

thrive psychologically/spiritually. For example, she must learn to handle painful emotions—to stay emotionally connected, to maintain (or regain) access to her relational circuits, and to think and behave appropriately while feeling painful emotions; she must learn to be aware of and care for her own needs; she must learn to be aware of and care for the needs of others; etc. These are psychological/spiritual skills that you learn during the process of psychological/spiritual development—skills that you learn as you grow in psychological/spiritual maturity. Mastering these psychological/spiritual skills is an important part of maturing psychologically/spiritually.

When checking to see whether this theory fits your experience, it is important to remember that the subjective experience of using most of these skills is more like the subjective experience of walking than the subjective experience of doing long division. You can be aware of and understand these skills with your logical, analytical, linguistic left-hemisphere neurological circuits; but the actual skill is not learned by or carried in your left prefrontal cortex, and therefore does not *feel, subjectively*, like a logical, analytical, language-based skill.<sup>2</sup> You can have a logical, analytical, language-based understanding of walking, but this left hemisphere understanding is not what actually enables you to walk. The subjective experience of most of these psychological/spiritual maturity skills is very similar. You can be aware of them and understand them with your logical, analytical, linguistic left-hemisphere circuits, but the actual skills are not learned by, or carried in, your left prefrontal cortex. In fact, most of the time we use these skills so smoothly and intuitively that our logical, analytical, linguistic left hemisphere is hardly even aware of them.

When checking to see whether this theory fits your experience, it is also important to remember that we learn some of the most important psychological/spiritual maturity skills very early in childhood, so that we do not have any conscious autobiographical memory of the actual learning process. This is another way in which these maturity skills are more like walking than long division—you have conscious autobiographical memory for learning how to do long division, but not for learning how to walk. See “Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and the God Who Is with Us ~ Part II” essay series for additional discussion regarding maturity skills (available as a free download from [www.kclehman.com](http://www.kclehman.com)).

### **memory, autobiographical.**

Autobiographical memory is memory for the *story of your life*. For example, let’s say that you were woken up this morning by the paper boy throwing the newspaper through your living room window at 5:30 a.m., and that you spent the next hour picking up broken glass. Your memory for this story about what happened to you this morning would be autobiographical memory. Remembering the meaning of the word “autobiography” helps me to remember the definition

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2. For those of you who are already familiar with the five levels of brain function, yes, these are left prefrontal cortex level 5 circuits and left prefrontal cortex level 5 skills.

of autobiographical memory. If I wrote a *book* about the *story* of my life, it would be called an *autobiography*; similarly, *memory* for the *story* of my life is *autobiographical memory*.

### **memory, explicit.**

Explicit memory recall is what we all think of as “remembering.” Explicit memory *feels* like “normal” memory. When I recall events through the explicit memory system, it *feels, subjectively*, like I’m remembering something from my personal past experience. For example, if I ask you, “What did you do this morning?” you will tell me about being awakened by the paper boy throwing the newspaper through your living room window at 5:30 this morning, and how you spent the next hour picking up broken glass, and you will *feel* like you are remembering something from your personal past. This *conscious, autobiographical* memory about your personal experiences is explicit memory.

### **memory, implicit.**

Implicit memory is all memory phenomena that *does not* include the subjective experience of “I’m remembering something from my personal past experience.” Implicit memory content *does not* feel like “normal” memory. When the implicit memory systems are activated, our minds and brains recall memory material, but it does not *feel, subjectively* like explicit autobiographical memory. Since implicit memory does not *feel* like what we think of as memory, we usually *do not* have any awareness that we are remembering or being affected by past experience when we recall and/or use learned information through one of the implicit memory systems.<sup>3</sup> When this happens, the person perceives that the implicit memory material, such as the beliefs and emotions associated with a childhood traumatic event, *are true in the present*. We sometimes refer to implicit memory as “invisible” memory, since it usually affects us *without being “seen”* by our conscious minds.

Note: Even if we are *cognitively* aware that we are being affected by some kind of memory phenomena (for example, we learn to recognize emotional triggering as an implicit memory phenomena), we still don’t have the *subjective experience* of “I am remembering something from my personal past experience.”

### **mis-attuning, mis-attunement, mis-attunement pain:**

Mis-attunement can be thought of as the opposite of attunement. For example, let’s say you are in distress, but unfortunately you are with a friend who does not have the capacity or maturity skills to offer attunement, and he is becoming increasingly uncomfortable with your distress. Eventually, in order to make his own discomfort stop, he gives you a big smile and states, “Don’t feel bad—just think happy thoughts!” That is, instead of understanding your situation, being

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3. You can learn to recognize the subjective experience of implicit memory being activated with a lot of deliberate practice, but most people have very little awareness or insight regarding implicit memory phenomena.



empathetically *with* you in your pain, and being *glad* to be with you (even when you are in pain), he tries to make his own discomfort go away by just telling you to be different. This would be *mis*-attunement. When we are in distress, and a friend misses attunement in this way, the resulting unpleasant subjective experience is what I call mis-attunement pain. Similarly, this unpleasant experience could be described as *painfully mis-attuning*.

### **nervous system, “the big picture.”**

The nervous system can be divided into the central nervous system (the brain and the spinal cord), and the peripheral nervous system, which includes everything outside of the brain and the spinal cord. The peripheral nervous system can then be divided into the pyramidal (voluntary) nervous system, which is responsible for all voluntary muscle movements, and the autonomic (involuntary) nervous system. If you want to lift your foot, your pyramidal (voluntary) nervous system will carry the conscious command from your brain to the muscles in your leg. In contrast, your autonomic (involuntary) nervous system cares for the many bodily functions that do not normally come into conscious awareness, such as maintaining an appropriate heart rate, regulating your blood pressure, and producing saliva in preparation for a meal. The autonomic nervous system is then divided into the sympathetic branch, the parasympathetic branch, and the enteric (or gastro-intestinal) branch.

### **nervous system, parasympathetic.**

As the direct counterpart of the sympathetic nervous system, the parasympathetic nervous system is responsible for calming the many aspects of physical arousal associated with intense emotions.

### **nervous system, sympathetic.**

The sympathetic nervous system is responsible for activating the many aspects of physical arousal associated with intense emotions. For example, when we encounter danger, the sympathetic nervous system activates the physiological changes associated with the fear and anger of the fight-or-flight response—the increased alertness, the increased muscle tension, the increased blood flow, and a variety of other physical reactions that prepare our bodies to either fight or flee.

### **pain-processing pathway.**

When we encounter pain, our brain-mind-spirit system always tries to process the painful experience. There is a very deliberate pathway that this pain processing attempt will follow, and there are specific processing tasks that we must complete as we travel along this pathway, such as maintaining organized attachment, staying connected, staying relational, navigating the situation in a satisfying way, and correctly interpreting the meaning of the experience. When we are able to successfully complete this processing journey, we get

through the painful experience without being traumatized—we emotionally and cognitively “metabolize” the experience in a healthy way, and instead of having any toxic power in our lives, the adequately processed painful experience contributes to our knowledge, skills, empathy, wisdom, and maturity. Unfortunately, various problems and/or limitations can block successful processing; and when we are *not* able to complete the processing journey, then the painful experience becomes a traumatic experience, and the memories for these traumatic experiences carry unresolved toxic content.

**parasympathetic nervous system.** *See* nervous system, parasympathetic.

**psychological/spiritual maturity skills.** *See* maturity skills.

**secure attachment.** *See* attachment, secure.

**sympathetic nervous system.** *See* nervous system, sympathetic.

**trauma (psychological trauma), traumatic memory.**

A painful experience becomes a traumatic experience (a psychological trauma) when we are *not* able to successfully complete one or more of the tasks in the pain-processing pathway. Therefore, *our definition of trauma is a painful experience that has not been fully processed.* If we do not get help processing a traumatic event at the time it occurs, the experience will be *stored* in this unprocessed state, and becomes a **traumatic memory**. Traumatic memories are *qualitatively* different than non-traumatic memories—traumatic memories carry toxic content from unresolved painful experiences, and they are processed, stored, and retrieved differently than memories for experiences that have been fully resolved. When these memories are activated at any point in the future, *implicit memory content from the unresolved trauma comes forward and feels true in the present.* For example, implicit memory content from unresolved traumatic events might include unprocessed physical sensations, unresolved negative emotions, feelings of inadequacy, confusion, and distorted interpretations (lies); and this implicit memory content will disrupt our ability to function as it comes forward and invisibly blends with our experience in the present.

In contrast, when we *are* able to successfully complete all of the tasks in the pain-processing pathway, we can go through a painful experience *without being traumatized.* We emotionally and cognitively “metabolize” the experience in a healthy way, and memory for the experience is stored as **non-traumatic memory**, where it contributes to knowledge, skills, wisdom, maturity, and conscious autobiographical memory for our personal history. Non-traumatic memories do *not* carry any toxic content. When these memories are activated at any point in the future, they contribute valuable resources as opposed to interfering with our ability to function.

**trigger, triggered, triggering.**

A “**trigger**” is any stimulus in the present that activates memory content. Technically, a trigger can activate both traumatic and non-traumatic memories. For example, an angry comment from your spouse may activate traumatic memories of being frightened by bullies on the playground, whereas a favorite song might activate positive memories from the special evening you spent with your spouse on your last anniversary. However, most people use “trigger,” “triggered,” and “triggering” in relation to traumatic memories.

With respect to psychological trauma, we are “**triggered**” when something in the present causes our brains/minds to open traumatic memories, so that unresolved content from these memories is activated. When unresolved traumatic experiences are activated, various aspects of the experiences, such as unprocessed physical sensations, unresolved negative emotions, feelings of inadequacy, confusion, and distorted interpretations come forward and *feel true in the present*. Whenever implicit memory content from unresolved trauma is active in the present, we are triggered; and whenever we are triggered, implicit memory content from unresolved trauma is active in the present.

We use “**triggering**” to refer to the overall phenomena of people being triggered. For example, “Triggering is one of the biggest causes of conflict at family reunions,” or “There sure is a lot of triggering going on in our difficult council meetings about the new pastor.”

“**Trigger**,” “**triggered**,” and “**triggering**” can also be used as verbs. For example, “If I watch a documentary about kids with dyslexia, it will probably **trigger** my memories of having difficulty with learning to read,” “Watching this documentary about kids with dyslexia is really **triggering** my memories of having difficulty learning to read,” and “When I watched the documentary about kids with dyslexia, it really **triggered** my memories of having difficulty learning to read.”