



Patterns of Relating: An Adult Attachment Perspective

By Malcolm L. West PhD, Adrienne E. Sheldon-Keller PhD

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Theories of adult attachment provide new perspectives for understanding, studying, and changing an adult's ability to form life-sustaining personal relationships. Asserting that patterns of social and asocial behavior are strategies for coping with issues of attachment, the authors demonstrate the unique merits of adult attachment theory both as a means for investigating social behavior and as a construct to guide clinical practice. Describing the characteristics and role of attachment in the adult years, the volume offers authoritative exposition of the essential concepts of attachment theory and presents thoughtful and creative proposals for its further development. As such, this illuminating work represents an important first step toward the classification of adult attachment theory as a field of study in its own right.

The book first defines reciprocal attachment relationships for adults using criteria that are congruent with the definition for infants and children. Detailed case studies illustrate the clinical relevance of attachment as an organizational construct, and principles currently used to explain biological development are applied to the study of personality development. Discussing the view that models of attachment always have affective content, the authors explain that these models are centered around a pattern of feelings that can be observed throughout the individual's life.

In an insightful examination of insecure attachment, the book shows how these feelings are inevitably associated with the feared loss of security invested in the attachment relationship, then explores defensive processes from an attachment perspective. The authors describe their methodologies for assessing both the underlying dimensions of adult reciprocal attachment and the primary patterns of insecure attachment. They discuss the contribution of patterns of insecure attachment to the differential diagnosis of a subset of personality disorders. Demonstrating how attachment theory can be used to guide psychotherapy, the book also points out that attachment theory can be useful in indicating when psychotherapy has been effective. Finally, important distinctions are drawn between adult reciprocal attachment and other interpersonal constructs such as

dependency, romantic love, and social support.

An ideal introduction to adult attachment theory, this volume provides a powerful tool for both social research and therapeutic intervention. As such, it will be welcomed by researchers, clinicians, and students interested in the ways adult relationships affect mental health.

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Editorial Review

Review

"This is a first rate addition to the rapidly growing literature on attachment in adult life. The authors anchor their concept of reciprocal attachment firmly in established theory then move it boldly forward with solid empirical and clinical investigations. Well referenced and highly readable." --K.S. Adam, M.D., McMaster University

"Adult attachment has become one of the more important areas of research and theory in psychology. It promises to be a significant point of intersection between clinical and research approaches and interests. West and Keller's book comes along at a most auspicious time. Bowlby believes that attachment is a central concern throughout one's life; West and Keller elucidate and develop Bowlby's claim in a fruitful and important direction. This book will be of great interest to anyone concerned with the very human need for significant attachments." --Morris Eagle, Ph.D., University of Toronto

"The authors have skillfully tackled the problem of defining and assessing adult attachment. Their approach is well grounded in the developmental attachment literature....A very original and creative extension of attachment theory to adult clinical populations." --Roger Kobak, Ph.D., University of Delaware

"Highly recommended. Undergraduate through professional. "
(*Choice* 1994-04-10)

"...an introduction to adult attachment theory, this volume offers a tool for both social research and therapeutic intervention."
(*Child and Family Behavior Therapy* 1994-04-10)

From the Back Cover

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About the Author

Malcolm L. West, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Calgary.
Adrienne E. Sheldon-Keller, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Virginia.

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Is it you who having spare time and then spend it whole day through watching television programs or just lying on the bed? Do you need something totally new? This Patterns of Relating: An Adult Attachment Perspective can be the answer, oh how comes? A fresh book you know. You are consequently out of date, spending your spare time by reading in this brand new era is common not a nerd activity. So what these guides have than the others?

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