



Rosario Counseling & Associates February 2013 E-News

How Parental Bonds Influence Adult Relationships

Did you know how you relate to other people is deeply rooted in the verbal and nonverbal communications developed between your mother and you? *Attachment* is a deep and enduring emotional bond that connects one person to another across time and space (Ainsworth, 1973; Bowlby, 1969). The connection formed between mother and child is known as the *attachment bond*, and is instrumental in shaping all of our future relationships.

According to the *attachment bond theory* pioneered by English psychiatrist John Bowlby and American psychologist Mary Ainsworth the mother-child bond is the primary force in infant development. The *attachment bond* shapes an infant's brain, profoundly influencing self-esteem, expectations of others, and ability to attract and maintain successful adult relationships. In addition this relationship is the spring board to calming ourselves, being aware of our feelings and our ability to bounce back from misfortune.

Foundational to trust, mood regulation, learning, and adaptive relational skills is *secure attachment*. Research reveals the infant/adult interactions that result in a successful, *secure attachment*, are those where infant feels safe and understood when the mother responds to their cries and accurately interprets their changing needs. Unsuccessful or *insecure attachment* occurs when there is a failure in this communication of feelings.

In adulthood securely attached individuals manage stress, stay "tuned in" with emotions and use communicative body language. In addition they may be playful in a mutually engaging manner as well as readily forgiving, relinquishing grudges. Relationships where both people are tuned in to each other's emotions are called *attuned relationships*.

As adults our secure attachment bond shapes our abilities to feel safe, develop meaningful connections with others, and balance emotions by experiencing comfort and security.

By learning about attachment, you can build healthier, attuned relationships, and communicate more effectively.

Adaptation from article *Shaping Adult Relationships* by Jeanne Segal, Ph.D. and Jaelline Jaffe, Ph.D.

If you or someone you know would like help building healthy relationships, please call us at (919) 649-5882. One of our caring, experienced therapists can help.



Robin Rosario, MA, LPCS

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809 Spring Forest Rd, Suite
1000

Raleigh, NC 27609

(919) 649-5882

www.rosariocounseling.com

Book of the Month!

Attachments: Why You Love, Feel, and Act the Way You Do
Dr Tim Clinton & Dr Gary Sibcy