

Am I Needy or Is He Emotionally Unavailable? – 6 Relationship Experts Reveal How To Find Out

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Trust yourself, and if your partner is unavailable, make sure that you yourself are truly available and then keep your mind open to what else the universe has to offer



If you are experiencing an issue in your relationship and questioning whether you are too needy or if your partner is too unavailable, let's start with some self inventory.

Do you take responsibility for meeting your own needs, or are you often looking for other people to meet them or to complete you?

One of the hallmarks of maturity is taking responsibility for ourselves, that includes our happiness, our wants, our needs, and our dreams.

While It can be wonderful to share a life with someone, that does not mean that they are responsible for you. It is more attractive to be a partner who can be self-contained and does not put a burden on the other person to always give them attention or to make them happy.

If you are doing this, it may be the result of childhood issues that can include unmet needs from your family of origin or parents.

Do some work on yourself with professional help and take a look at what you bring to the table. You might attract a higher quality person if you have more to offer compared to what you need from someone.

If your partner is unavailable, it will reveal itself more and more as time goes on.

There should be a natural growth and progression in a relationship, and as the two of you resolve conflicts together, you will get closer. If you want to get

closer and he is unwilling to do so, he may not even want to relationship on the same level that you do. Some people only want a relationship to go so far, and will not go beyond that.

Others will say that they want a relationship, but once they get into it, cannot follow through.

Usually the small signs and behaviors will indicate his level of interest and availability for a relationship. This is not something that you will need to guess. You will know.

Trust yourself, and if your partner is unavailable, make sure that you yourself are truly available and then keep your mind open to what else the universe has to offer.

Anita Gadhia-Smith, PsyD, LCSW-C, LICSW – www.drgadhiasmith.com

Self-awareness is key and learn about your attachment style and your partner's attachment style



Possibly both!

This relationship dynamic is incredibly common and we can understand it more clearly through the lens of attachment theory.

There are 3 main attachment styles that we can carry in adult relationships.

Secure attachment, anxious attachment, and avoidant attachment. I will go over each in more detail.

A securely attached person finds it easy to trust and balance both positive and negative aspects of a relationship.

They do not over-worry about the relationship dynamics and can easily communicate their own needs as well as support their partners needs in a balanced way.

A securely attached person tends to have high self esteem, finds it easy to share their feelings with others, and is able to tolerate both closeness and independence in a relationship.

Secure attachment is the obvious goal in most relationships, however, most people have to work toward this internal security.

An anxiously attached person has a great capacity for love and closeness, but they tend to worry about whether their partner is able to meet their emotional needs.

They are sharply attuned to fluctuations in their partner's mood and behavior and tend to take them personally. They may act out in ways to get their partner's attention and only feel at ease when their partner provides emotional reassurance.

An avoidantly attached person on the other hand tends to prefer independence and autonomy.

Though they want to be close and intimate with others, they don't spend much time worrying about their relationship. They tend to be hyper aware of behaviors from their partner that appear to control or encroach on their personal space, causing them to crave more distance.

Ironically, it is extremely common for people with avoidant and anxious attachment to find themselves paired up.

Both partners become triggered by each other's needs (i.e. the more anxious [or "needy"] you get, the more avoidant [or "emotionally unavailable"] he gets, and vice versa) making for an impossible situation!

A quick way to gain insight is to take the online attachment quiz [here](#). Here you can decipher both you and your partner's attachment styles.

You can explore this question deeper by reading the book *Attached* by Dr. Amir Levine and Rachel S. F. Heller, which I highly recommend! They help you understand the ins and outs of your attachment style and provide insight for how to work towards secure attachment.

Seeking counseling is another great way to address your attachment style and find ways to have more security in your relationships. I have helped many young adults discover security and self confidence so that they can navigate and choose relationships that are healthy and sustainable.

Bottom line: you are not alone in this struggle.

Self-awareness is the key to lasting change.

If you are curious about yourself and willing to be vulnerable, new relationship opportunities will arise in ways you never thought possible.

Laura Houd, MA, LPC – www.intraconnectionsounseling.com

Getting feedback from your partner, while not foolproof, is probably a good place to start



Nobody can tell you what you need. Nobody can tell you what “normal” or appropriate needs are.

I suppose if a man isn't meeting your needs you could be tempted to label him emotionally unavailable, and you could be right. But emotional availability is as subjective as neediness. Ultimately you still come down to whether or not your needs are being met.

Even a pattern of men who don't meet your needs doesn't answer the question as to whether you are needy or they are unavailable.

As opposed to being needy, you could have a pattern of choosing emotionally unavailable men. While problematic, it's really a different issue, probably based more on fear of intimacy than on emotional need.

Getting feedback from your partner, while not foolproof, is probably a good place to start.

- Does he find you needy, and if so, specifically why?
- Do you get this kind of feedback from friends or family?
- Does the feedback ring true to you?

Any kind of consistent feedback is cause for self-reflection, maybe with a therapist whose feedback you can trust to be more objective.

Ultimately, there is no normal.

There is what you want in your life, physically, emotionally and spiritually. That being said, the better able you are to take care of your own

needs, the less reliant you will be on others. Of course, you will still want someone who is emotionally available.

No woman is an island! However, wanting and needing are two different things. Needing too much makes you vulnerable to bad choices. Wanting to share your life with someone makes you a normal part of the human race.

Sally LeBoy, MFT – www.sallyleboymft.com

Watch out for the below signs



If you have found yourself wondering if you are being needy or if he is emotionally unavailable, know that you are not alone. Use this as a chance to reflect on the signs and have important conversations that will move your relationship forward.

Signs he may be emotionally unavailable:

-No Compromise

Is he inflexible in adapting his routine for your needs, or unwilling to make compromises in how you spend time, if it doesn't revolve around what's consistently revolve around what is best for him?

-Short Term Intimacy

Emotionally unavailable people tend to have an alluring ability to build short-term intimacy.

If your partner says their prior relationships all ended when deeper intimacy usually begins to evolve, see this for the red flag that it is. Emotionally unavailable people can get caught up in patterns of chasing the push-pull dynamic and can avoid the deeper vulnerability that building long-lasting intimacy requires.

- Early Seduction

Someone who isn't available emotionally can also be prone to the art of seduction, but can use it as a tool for power-play and conquest, rather than as means of cultivating deeper connection.

-Seeking Perfection

Is he looking for your flaws, or does he embrace those parts of you that make you perfectly imperfect? Emotionally unavailable people look for reasons to distance themselves.

-Evasiveness

Is he secretive about his friends, past, or any major aspect of his life? When someone is emotionally unavailable, they can use evasiveness as a shield against deeper intimacy.

Signs You May Be Too Needy:

–You Look Outside Yourself for Validation

Do you find yourself seeking his acceptance or reassurance consistently to ease anxious thoughts or feelings of mistrust? Do you constantly call or text, check his social media, or become worried when he doesn't respond to you right away?

-You Adapt to His Every Whim

If you find yourself too eager to compromise about even the things that are most important to you, you are being too accommodating. See this as a chance to go inward with self-compassion, to reflect on what you need for more balanced connection in your life.

-You Easily Forgive Hurtful Actions

If you are too needy, your ability to forgive hurtful actions may come from a place of codependency. If you find yourself able to consistently rationalize destructive behaviors and easily forgiving painful actions, see this as a sign as well.

-You Find Yourself Consistently Giving More

If you call and text him more than he contacts you, find yourself consistently making plans with him and doing sweet nothings but aren't receiving the same appreciation in return, take note.

Building deeper intimacy, requires trust, vulnerability and our willingness to show up authentically.

If you are unsure if he is emotionally unavailable or if you are too needy, seeking professional help can provide you the foundations for support you need to reflect honestly and act intentionally and proactively to cultivate the long lasting connection that you seek.

Delia Berinde, MS, LPCC – www.lookingforwardcounseling.com

Watch out for the below signs



Are you in a dating relationship where you're consistently left wondering whether you're needy or the guy you're with is emotionally unavailable?

Let's explore some possibilities below.

First of all, know that you could be facing a combination of both factors:

He could be emotionally unavailable, which in turn leaves you feeling needy. Or, perhaps, you exhibit needy behaviors that lead him to pull away, making him appear unavailable.

First, let's look at your side of the pattern.

To help with your own self-reflection, ask yourself whether you frequently feel needy in relationships.

- In other words, is your tendency to feel needy a pattern?
- Do you often feel like you give more than you receive when it comes to love, communication, and attention?
- Do you look to the person you're dating to fill all of your needs for emotional support, socializing, and fun?

Keep in mind that in the healthiest relationships, there is a healthy balance between time spent alone, time spent with a partner, and time spent with friends or doing hobbies.

The person you're dating should not be expected to be your sole support system—it's too much pressure, and we benefit from having others in our emotional realm who support us.

If you've done some self-reflection and recognize that you don't tend to be needy in relationships, take a look at his behaviors.

Signs of an emotionally unavailable partner could include any or all of the following: broken communication (he doesn't respond, or responds much later nearly all of the time); he is not present when you are facing difficulty; he is uncomfortable discussing basic emotions and needs in the relationship; and you may have a hard time truly connecting with him because you sense his distance.

If you notice some of these signs, you may be dating someone who isn't emotionally available enough to be a healthy partner to you.

True emotional unavailability is unlikely to change without true dedication to understanding its cause and working on it; is he showing willingness and taking action on this?

If not, and if being in this relationship is causing you undue stress, it may be best to re-think the relationship.

Being in a relationship where you frequently feel your emotional needs are going unmet is a really difficult and lonely place to be.

Consider working with a therapist individually to discover if you have a pattern of falling for emotionally unavailable men. And ensure that you get support from friends/family who are emotionally healthy and available.

An emotionally healthy partner should be reasonably consistent in communicating with you, should be able to listen to you, express caring feelings, and show that he's trying to be there for you during difficult times.

Keep in mind that sometimes men show support differently; just ask yourself if he seems genuinely interested in you and in trying to be there for you.

Jennifer Meyer, M.A., LPC, NCC – www.jenmeyercounseling.com

Know your attachment style as well as your partner's attachment style



Russell Simmons, an entrepreneur who has made millions of dollars, is quoted as saying “Whatever you chase will run away from you. So, stop chasing success and realize you already have it all.”

When we take the first part of this quote and apply it to romantic relationships, it describes a common phenomenon.

When asking yourself the question, “Am I needy or is he emotionally unavailable?” the answer may be “yes” to both.

When it comes to dating and romantic relationships, it happens very regularly where someone who has an anxious attachment style finds themselves in relationship after relationship with someone who has an avoidant attachment style.

Attachment styles are formed very early in our lives, normally by the time we are three years old.

Though they can change throughout our life based off of positive or negative experiences we have, the attachment that we form early in life with our parents influences us into adulthood.

- Someone who forms an **anxious attachment style** wants to be very close to their partner, tends to be sensitive to any potential signs of rejection (i.e. a text that isn’t answered right away) and gets upset easily if things don’t go their way in the relationship.
- Someone who forms an **avoidant attachment style** on the other hand feels uncomfortable with too much closeness, struggles to

open up emotionally, and wants to maintain independence when in a relationship.

One person in the relationship could be classified as needy while the other could be described as being emotionally unavailable.

When these two attachment styles come together, the partner with the anxious attachment style gets triggered. If they sense their partner pulling away, they want to draw them back in closer.

They may do this by sending multiple texts in a row, worrying too much about what their partner is doing, and wanting to spend excessive amounts of time together in an effort to bring their partner back and feel better.

Meanwhile, the partner with the avoidant attachment style doesn't realize anything is wrong because their natural way of being is to be removed and distant.

They don't see the big deal in not texting back right away or in spending lots of time apart. As the anxious partner tries harder and harder to bring them closer, the avoidant partner may start to feel stifled and pull back more and more because they don't want too much closeness.

So what can you do if you think this dynamic is going on in your relationship?

If the two of you can commit to attend therapy (either together as a couple or individually) to start improving your attachment style, there may be hope.

Otherwise, the answer is to find a partner with a secure attachment style who will not trigger you as much as a partner with an avoidant attachment style will.

I recommend reading the book *“Attached”* by Amir Levine and Rachel Heller to learn more about your attachment needs and how to find a healthy relationship.

Michelle Henderson, MA, LMHC – www.nextchapter-counseling.com

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