

Love Styles Assessment & Master Chart

Understanding how your nervous system, attachment, and early experiences shape your relationships

Your love style is the pattern your nervous system and attachment system use to feel safe in relationships. These patterns often develop in childhood through ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences). **Love styles are not flaws** — they are adaptive strategies your body uses to protect you. Understanding your love style helps you recognise relationship patterns, identify triggers, build healthier connection, and align your behaviour with God's design for relational flourishing.

"Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins." — 1 Peter 4:8

Four Love Styles Overview

Love Style	Core Pattern	Nervous System Strategy
Avoider	Freeze / Withdrawal	Distance & independence
Pleaser / Fawn	Fawn	People-pleasing / accommodating
Vacillator	Flight + Fight	Seeks connection then pulls away
Controller	Fight / Hyper-Vigilance	Manage / control environment
Connector	Ventral Vagal / Regulated	Expresses needs safely (the goal)

*Note: The **Connector / Secure** style is the healing goal — a regulated, safe way of relating.*

Self-Assessment Instructions

Read each statement and rate yourself from **0 to 4**. Add up your score for each section. Your highest score indicates your primary love style. Two high scores (within 3 points) may indicate a blended style.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
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1. Avoider		Score: _____ / 20
I prefer independence over closeness.	0 1 2 3 4	
I struggle to share my emotions.	0 1 2 3 4	
I feel uncomfortable when others get too close.	0 1 2 3 4	
I often withdraw in conflict.	0 1 2 3 4	
I value self-sufficiency above connection.	0 1 2 3 4	
<p>◆ Reflection Journal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>When have I noticed myself withdrawing in relationships?</i> • <i>How did my body feel in those moments?</i> <hr/> <hr/>		

2. Pleaser / Fawn		Score: _____ / 20
I put others' needs before my own.	0 1 2 3 4	
I fear rejection or abandonment.	0 1 2 3 4	
I struggle to say no, even when I want to.	0 1 2 3 4	
I try to keep the peace at my own expense.	0 1 2 3 4	
I feel responsible for others' feelings.	0 1 2 3 4	
<p>◆ Reflection Journal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Where do I over-accommodate others?</i> • <i>How does it affect my body or emotions?</i> <hr/> <hr/>		

3. Vacillator	Score: _____ / 20
I worry people will leave me.	0 1 2 3 4
I feel torn between wanting closeness and wanting space.	0 1 2 3 4
I feel insecure in relationships.	0 1 2 3 4
I sometimes cling, then pull away.	0 1 2 3 4
I struggle to trust consistency in others.	0 1 2 3 4
<p>◆ Reflection Journal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>When have I felt stuck in this push-pull pattern?</i> • <i>What triggers these swings?</i> <hr/> <hr/>	

4. Controller	Score: _____ / 20
I feel safest when I'm in control.	0 1 2 3 4
I struggle to trust others' competence.	0 1 2 3 4
I can be critical or controlling to prevent chaos.	0 1 2 3 4
I push for my way to maintain peace or safety.	0 1 2 3 4
I have difficulty surrendering in relationships.	0 1 2 3 4
<p>◆ Reflection Journal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Where do I try to control others?</i> • <i>How does it affect my connection and my nervous system?</i> <hr/> <hr/>	

Master Chart: Love Styles at a Glance

Use this reference to understand the full picture of each love style — where it comes from, how it shows up, and where healing begins.

Love Style	Attachment	Nervous System	Core Strategy	Key Behaviours	Healing Focus
Avoider	Avoidant / Dismissive	Freeze / Shutdown	Protects through distance	Emotional distancing, reluctance to be vulnerable	Build safety, vulnerability, body awareness
Pleaser / Fawn	Anxious / Preoccupied	Fawn	Protects by pleasing	Over-accommodation, difficulty saying no	Boundaries, self-expression, parasympathetic activation
Vacillator	Anxious / Disorganized	Flight + Fight	Protects by swinging	Clinginess then pulling away	Nervous system regulation, consistency
Controller	Avoidant / Fearful	Fight / Hyper-Vigilance	Protects through control	Managing others, critical, difficulty trusting	Surrender, trust, regulate nervous system
Connector	Secure	Ventral Vagal / Regulated	Expresses needs safely	Balanced, communicates openly, healthy boundaries	Maintain regulation, spiritual integration

Scoring & Interpretation

Highest single score	This is your primary love style — your nervous system's default relational pattern.
Two high scores (within 3 pts)	You may have a blended style — both patterns show up depending on context.
All scores similar	You may be in transition or have strong situational adaptation. Choose the style that resonates most emotionally.
Low scores overall	You may lean toward the Connector / Secure style — continue nurturing this strength!

How Love Styles Interact

Understanding how different love styles interact can reveal why certain relationships feel comfortable, activating, or draining. These patterns are not fixed — awareness and healing work can transform every pairing toward security and mutual flourishing.

Avoider + Pleaser / Fawn | The Classic Pursuer–Distancer

Pattern:

The Pleaser pursues closeness and approval while the Avoider withdraws to regulate. The more the Pleaser moves toward, the more the Avoider retreats — triggering the Pleaser's abandonment fear and the Avoider's overwhelm. Both feel unseen.

Core Trigger:

Pleaser feels rejected; Avoider feels smothered.

Path to Healing:

Avoider practises tolerating closeness in small doses; Pleaser learns to self-soothe and voice needs directly.

Vacillator + Avoider | Hot-and-Cold Meets Shutdown

Pattern:

The Vacillator craves deep connection but swings between clinging and withdrawing. The Avoider, already wired for distance, interprets the swings as chaos and shuts down further. Vacillator reads Avoider's shutdown as proof of abandonment, escalating intensity.

Core Trigger:

Vacillator escalates; Avoider disappears emotionally.

Path to Healing:

Vacillator builds nervous system regulation; Avoider increases emotional presence in small steps.

Vacillator + Pleaser / Fawn | Intensity Meets Accommodation

Pattern:

The Vacillator's emotional swings are met by the Pleaser's frantic effort to keep the peace. The Pleaser over-gives to manage the Vacillator's moods, creating resentment beneath the surface. The Vacillator may escalate further, sensing something is being withheld.

Core Trigger:

Pleaser silences real feelings; Vacillator senses inauthenticity.

Path to Healing:

Pleaser practises honest expression; Vacillator builds tolerance for imperfect responses.

Controller + Pleaser / Fawn | Power Imbalance / Compliance Loop

Pattern:

The Controller's need to manage meets the Pleaser's willingness to comply. On the surface this feels stable, but the Pleaser quietly loses their voice while the Controller gains false confirmation that control is necessary. Resentment and distance grow over time.

Core Trigger:

Pleaser loses identity; Controller mistakes compliance for trust.

Path to Healing:

Pleaser rebuilds voice and boundaries; Controller practises trusting others' autonomy.

Controller + Vacillator | Power Struggle / Escalating Conflict

Pattern:

The Vacillator's emotional unpredictability activates the Controller's hyper-vigilance. The Controller responds with criticism or rigidity; the Vacillator reacts with emotional intensity. Both nervous systems escalate — fight meets fight.

Core Trigger:

Mutual escalation; neither can de-escalate without regulation skills.

Path to Healing:

Both need nervous system tools; Controller learns surrender, Vacillator learns consistency.

Avoider + Avoider | Parallel Lives / Comfortable Distance

Pattern:

Two Avoiders can feel like a harmonious match initially — low conflict, high independence. Over time, emotional intimacy never deepens. Neither reaches toward the other; connection slowly thins into coexistence.

Core Trigger:

Crisis or grief — neither knows how to move toward the other for support.

Path to Healing:

Both practise intentional vulnerability and scheduled connection rituals.

Any Style + Connector (Secure) | The Healing Relationship

Pattern:

A Connector partner offers a regulated, non-reactive presence that can gently challenge insecure patterns without reinforcing them. They neither pursue anxiously nor withdraw dismissively. Over time this co-regulation creates a corrective relational experience.

Core Trigger:

Insecure partner may initially distrust or test the Connector's consistency.

Path to Healing:

Insecure partner learns that safety is real; Connector maintains boundaries to avoid carrying the full relational load.

Reflection Prompts

- How does my love style show up in my closest relationships?
- How does this pattern connect to my nervous system survival strategy?
- Where do I notice recurring triggers?
- How could God's presence help me feel safe in love?
- One small step today toward healthier relational patterns: _____

Spiritual Integration Practice

Place your hand over your heart. Take a slow, deep exhale. Then reflect on this prayer:

"Lord, help me see my relational patterns. Teach me to love from safety and peace. Heal the parts of me that protect through fear. Let Your Kingdom of Peace shape my heart in every relationship."

Scripture Anchors

"Love is patient and kind..." — 1 Corinthians 13:4–5

"Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins." — 1 Peter 4:8

Personal Journal

Use this space to record your observations, relationship patterns, emotional and physical sensations, and prayers.

Observations & Patterns:

Emotional / Physical Sensations:

Prayers & Reflections:

Recommended Reading

How We Love by Milan Yerkovich & Kay Yerkovich (2nd ed., 2017). WaterBrook Press, Colorado Springs, CO. The foundational text for the Love Styles framework explored in this assessment. Draws on attachment theory and early childhood experiences to identify five love imprints — Avoider, Pleaser, Vacillator, Controller, and Victim — and charts a path toward secure connection through the Connector style. Includes self-assessments, couple exercises, and a faith-integrated approach to relational healing. Available at howwelove.com