

Us...

- Why we wanted nothing to do with marriage
- Our back story of failure and insecurity
- What changed when we got married
- How we learned to face interpersonal stress, together
- Children & Mutuality
- Ellen's Autoimmune condition & vitality



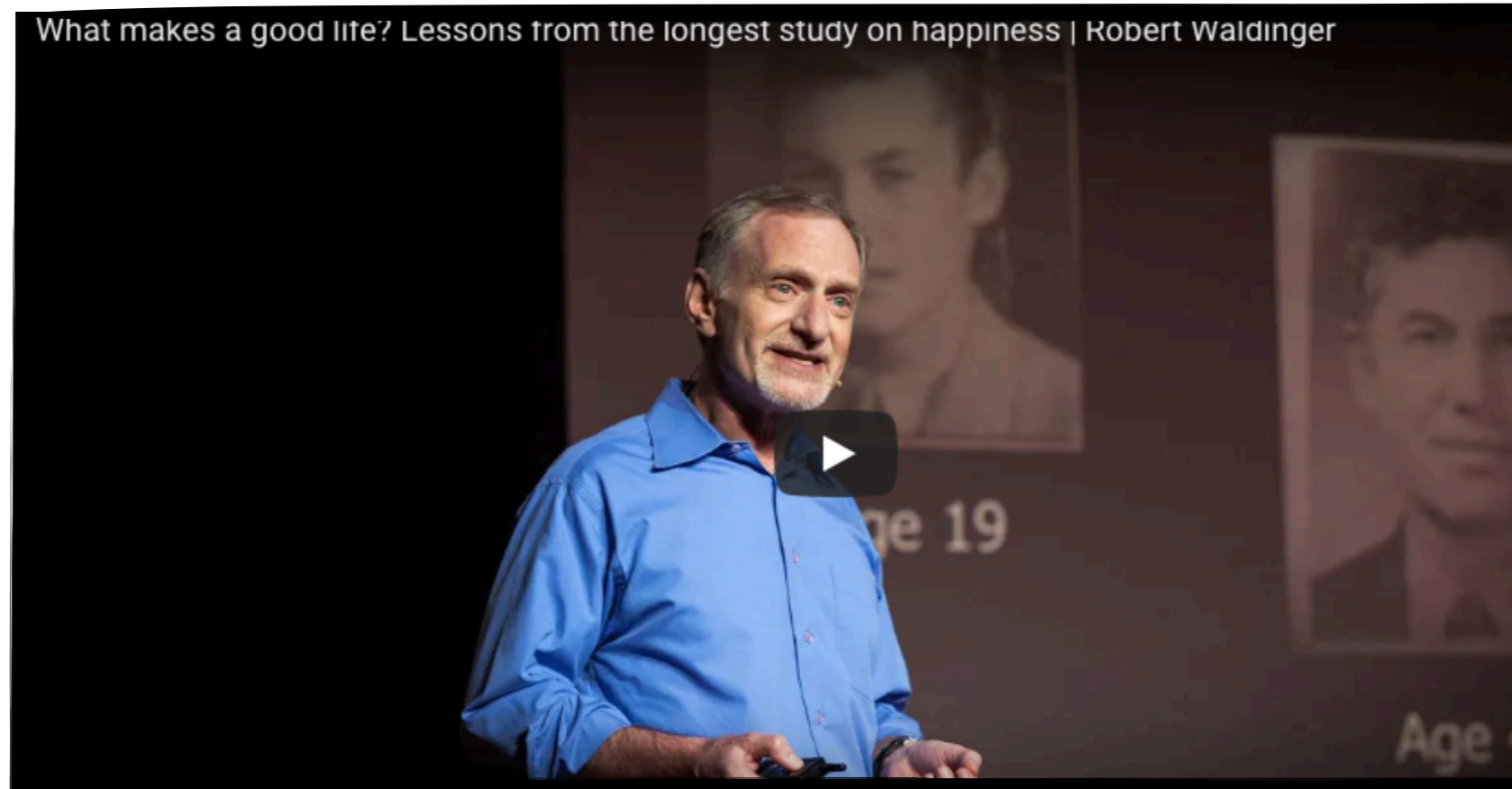
What we'll cover

- We'll be using the lens of attachment theory and the research that secure attachments promote resilience and well being in children and adults.
- The cost of loneliness and challenging adult partnerships
- The benefits of good relationships over the lifespan
- Adult Attachment & Your Relational Blueprint
- The 2 main types of attachment

Implications of living with insecure attachment patterns in relationships

- Dr Julianne Holt-Lunstad- BYU. **Loneliness and Social Isolation as Risk Factors for Mortality.** They gathered 148 articles across 34 years. Then did their own study for 7 years based on an analysis of more than 300,000 people. Results were consistent across gender, length of follow-up, and world region.
- Social isolation:
 - Is as bad for your health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day or being an alcoholic.
 - Does more damage to your health than not exercising
 - Twice as harmful as obesity.
- The support of family, friends and neighbors can increase your chances of living to a healthy old age by 50 per cent.

Implications of living with insecure attachment patterns in relationships



- 80-year Harvard Study (Ted Talk that's been viewed 15,000,000 times)

Implications of living with insecure attachment patterns in relationships

- Findings:
 - People with unhappy marriages felt more emotional and physical pain than people with happy marriages
 - Those who kept warm relationships live longer and happier
 - Isolated people not prioritizing relationships often died earlier
 - People who had strong social support experienced less mental deterioration as they aged
 - Women who felt securely attached to their partners were less depressed and more happy in their relationships two-and-a-half years later, and also had better memory functions than those with frequent marital conflicts.

Implications of living with insecure attachment patterns in relationships

- 2.5 year study of 81 elderly couples were interviewed to examine how securely attached partnerships measured cognition and well being.

Implications of living with insecure attachment patterns in relationships

- Findings:
 - A more “secure” relationship was linked concurrently with greater marital satisfaction, fewer depressive symptoms, better mood, and less frequent marital conflicts.
 - A more “secure” relationship predicted lower levels of negative affect, less depression, and greater life satisfaction 2.5 years later.
 - For women, a more “secure” relationship predicted better memory 2.5 years later and attenuated the link between frequency of marital conflict and memory deficits.

Clinical implications of living with insecure attachment patterns in relationships

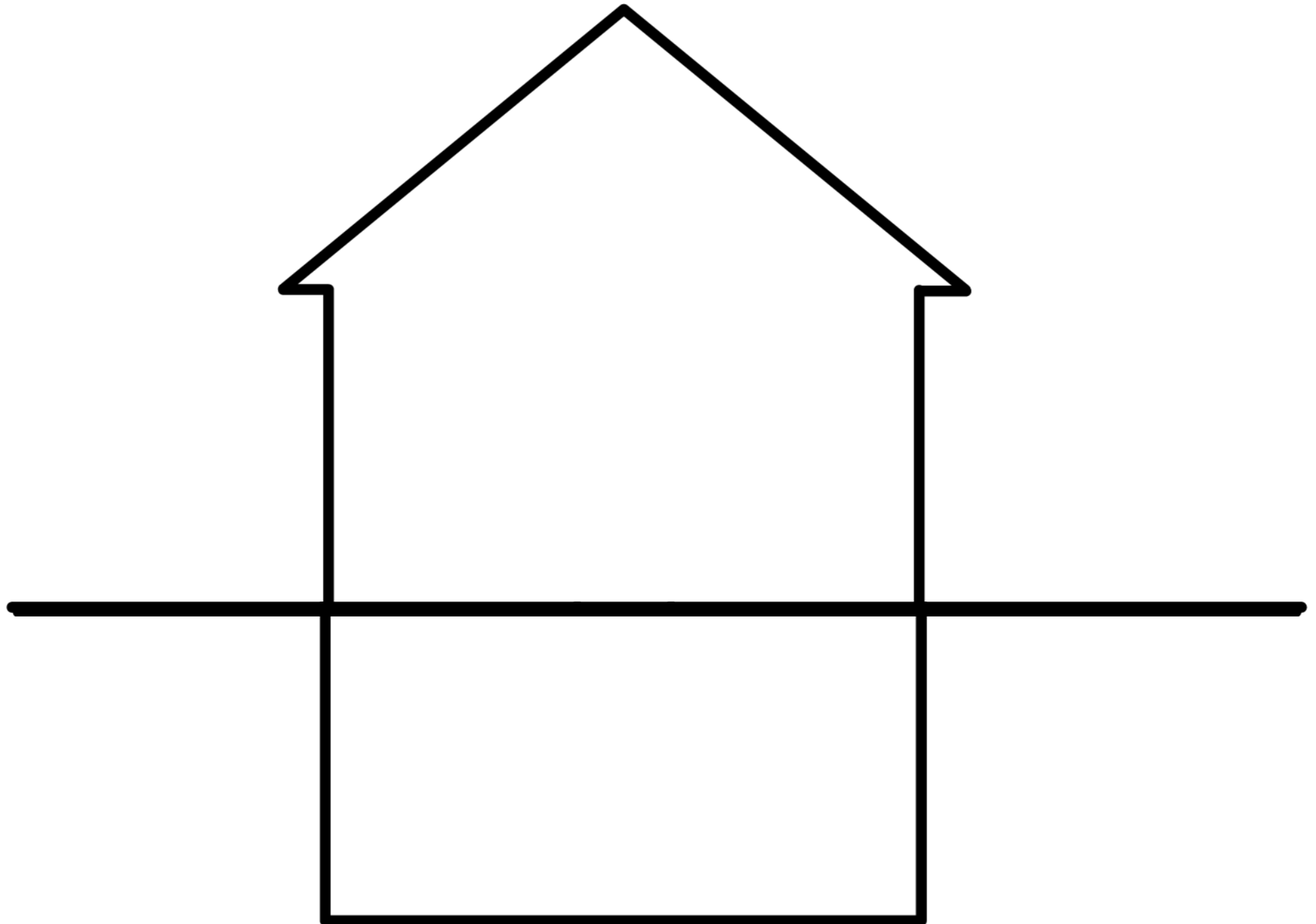
- Couples in good relationships that navigate conflict respectfully, live 10 yrs longer (The Gottman Institute)



This research reminds us...

- Securely attached adult relationships lead to good health and well being over the lifespan
- But what is attachment, and what makes some adult relationships insecure and challenging while other relationships are secure, strong, and expansive?
- It all starts with our relational blueprint...

Relational Blueprint



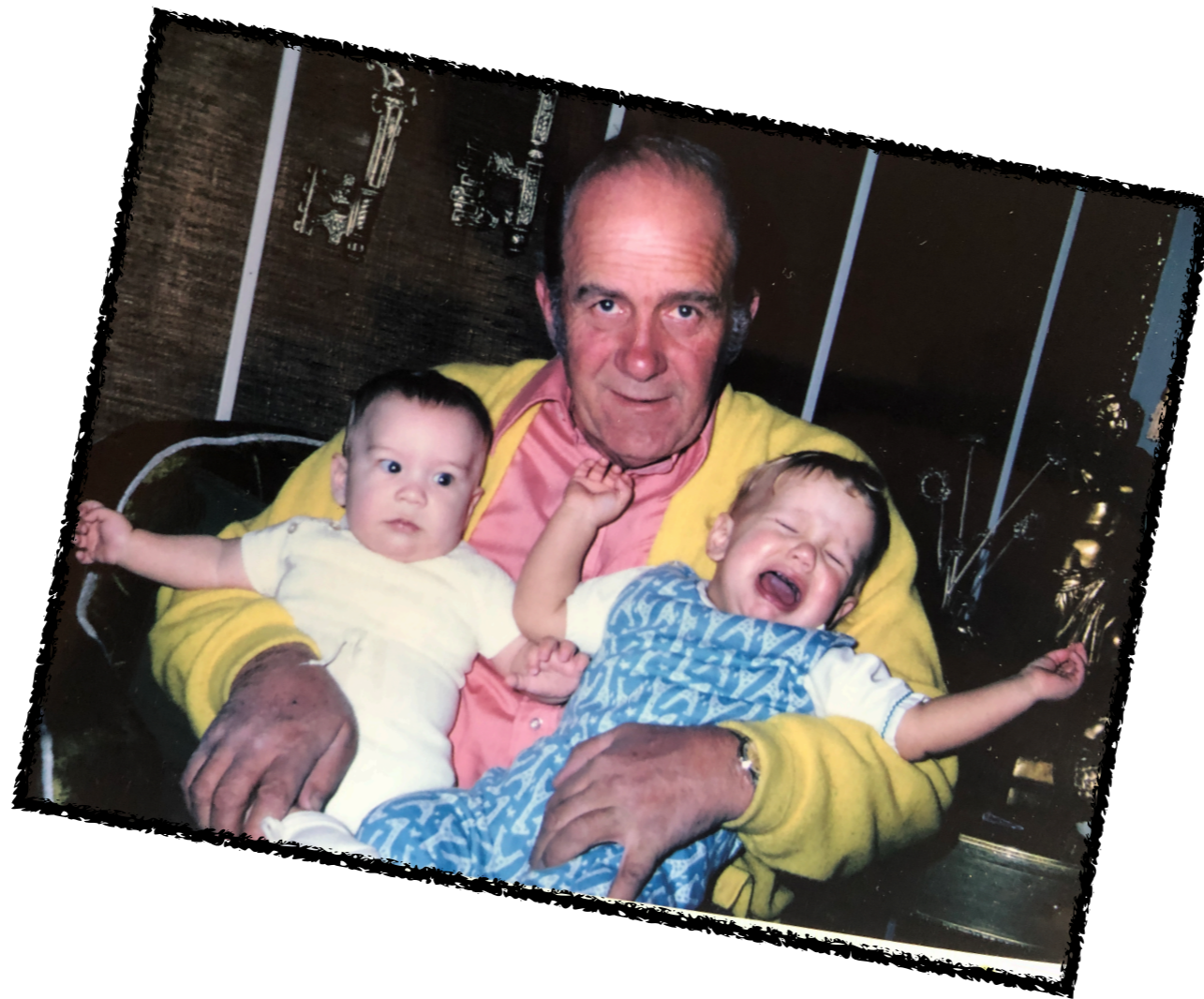
- We are born into someone's arms - in relationship



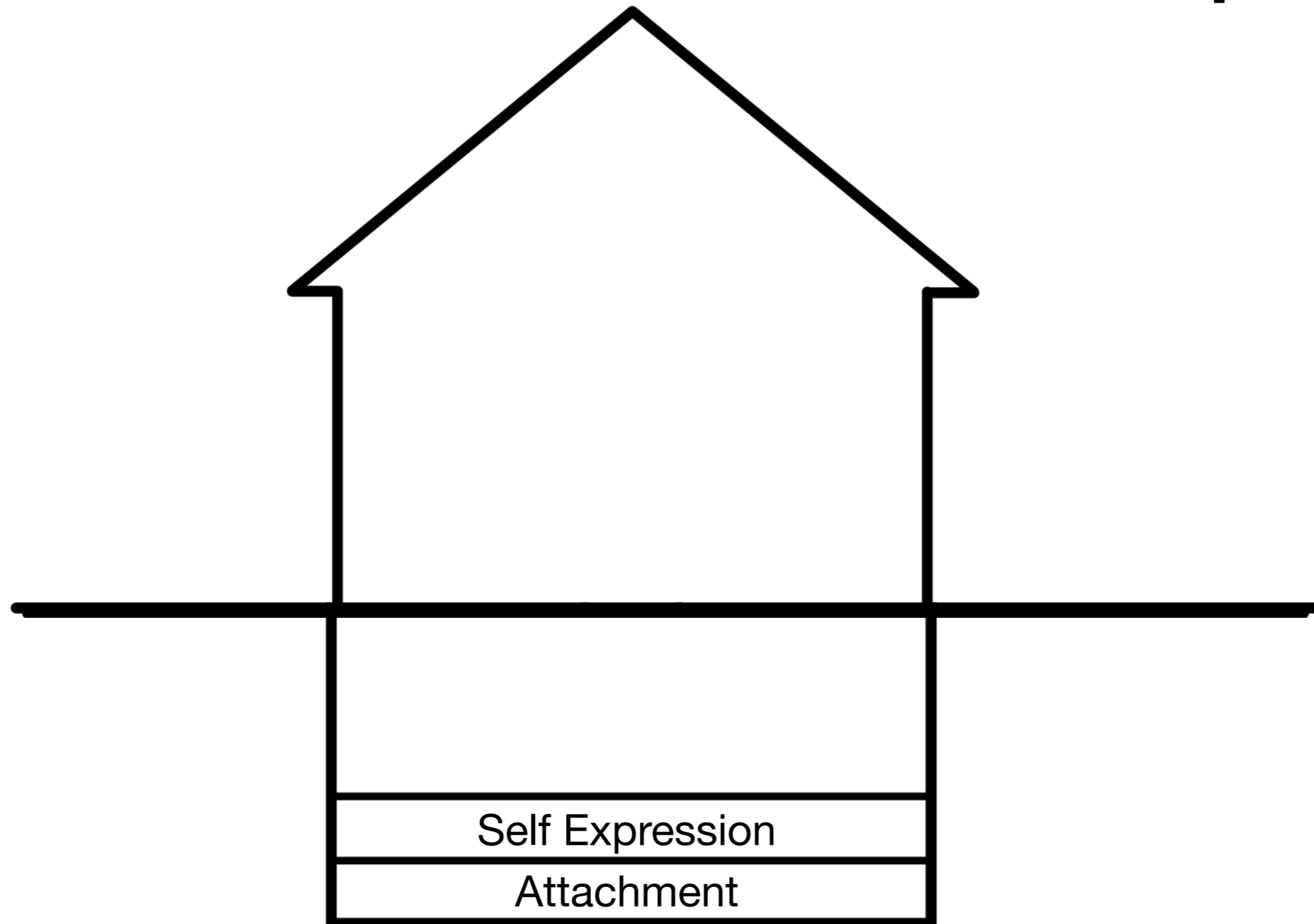
Alex Hockett

- We are 100% dependent on caregivers to survive
- So, the most fundamental need we have is attachment- to maintain relationship with the people caring for us

- How do we maintain that attachment?
- Self expression



2 fundamental needs form the foundation of our relational blueprint



- These are survival needs

How Attachment Develops



What is attachment?

- “Attachment is about safety and security, not love”- Stan Tatkin
- Attachment theory is a psychological model that looks closely at interpersonal relationships, beginning at birth and throughout the lifespan.
- In the late 1950’s and early 1960’s, researchers made the discovery that attachment bonds are fundamental to our survival. We have a psychological and biological need to feel connected to at least one other person.

Attachment Theory

- Developers of Attachment Theory 1950s and 1960s
 - Harry Harlow--rhesus monkey research
 - John Bowlby
 - Mary Ainsworth--Strange Situation
- 2000s
 - Mary Main--Adult Attachment Interview (AAI)
 - Ian Sroufe, University of Minnesota
 - Ed Tronnick, University of Massachusetts

Clinicians who inform our views

- Stan Tatkin, PsyD
- Dan Siegel, MD
- Gabor Mate, MD

How attachment is observed

- Attachment researchers study the interactive system of signal and response between an infant and their caregiver. This interpersonal communication is meant to ensure the survival of the baby by having close proximity and communication with their caregiver.
- Baby signals > care-giver responds > baby perceives outcome
- How this process unfolds results in one of several attachment styles

2 Main Types of Attachment

- The attachment styles as defined by Ainsworth and Bowlby through the compiled research of the Strange Situation experiment, fall into two categories:
 1. Secure
 2. Insecure
- There is also a third form that was identified by Mary Main in the 1980's classified as Disorganized.

Secure Attachment

- A securely attached baby, “...knows that their needs for love, nourishment, and nurturing will be met--the infant’s internal resources are relaxed and primed for growth and development.” Tatkin
- Secure attachments involve attuned communication from the parent to the child, and ongoing re-attunements.
- Attuned communication between the caregiver and the baby is done through face to face, skin to skin, and nervous system to nervous system interaction. The caregiver is sensitive to and responsive to the child’s signals in the form of voice, facial expression, and body language, as well as the timing of verbal and body signals.
- The importance of this attuned communication to create relationship security continues into adulthood.

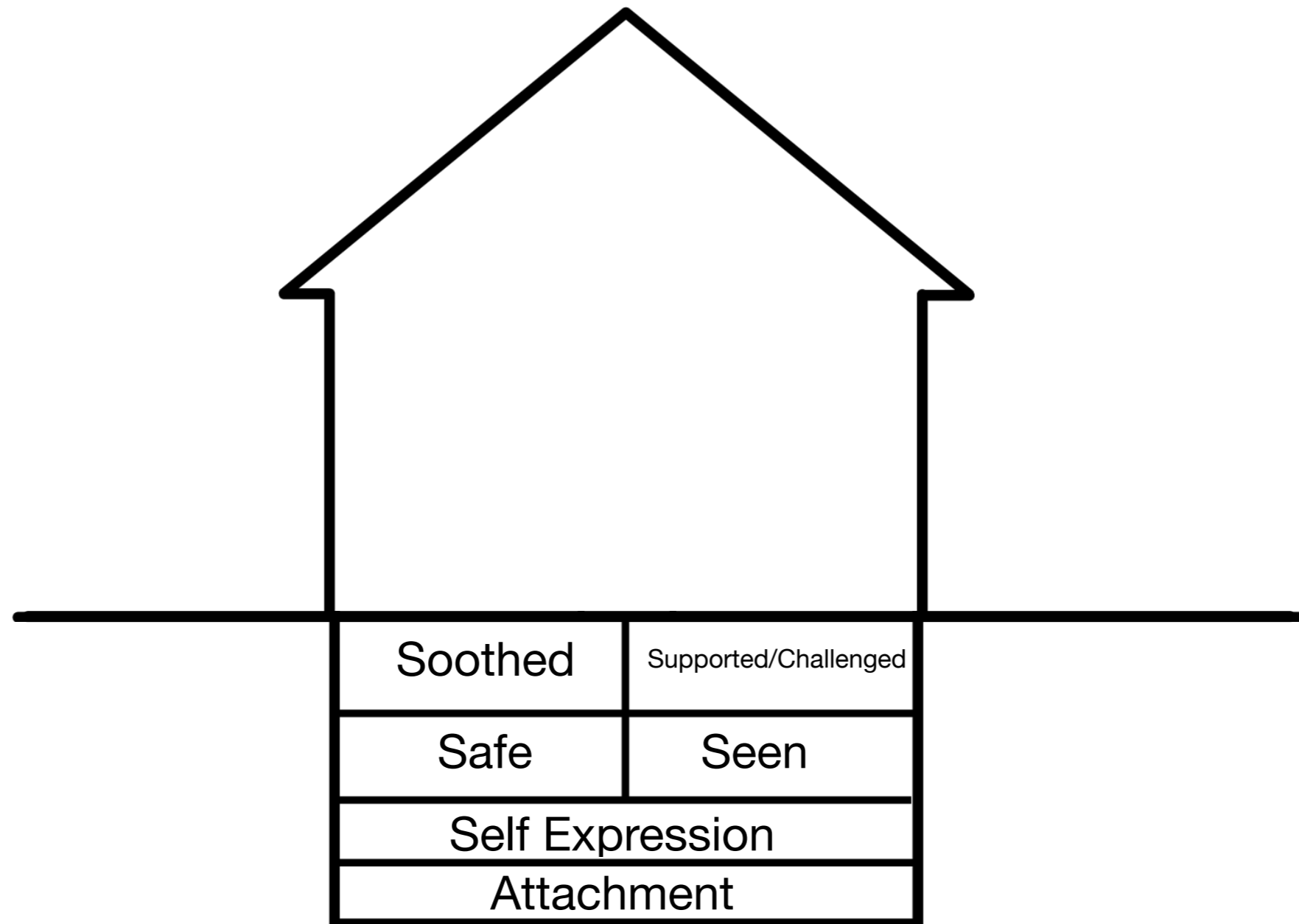
Secure Attachment

- According to Ed Tronnick's research we spend about 30% of the time being attuned, 30% misattuned, and 30% re-attuning in our primary relationships. The most important part from his perspective is the reattunement part, getting back to "good" as he says. We build resilience and trust in our relationships by getting back into attunement, over and over, again.
- The parent of a securely attached child also has the capacity to self reflect and maintain a coherent narrative about their life.
- And as we grow, our need for safety and security expands, where we eventually need our caregivers to provide a more complex understanding and even more precise sensitivity to our internal world. "This need for complexity and sensitivity continues as the child develops and receives multiple neurobiological upgrades on their way to adulthood." Tatkin

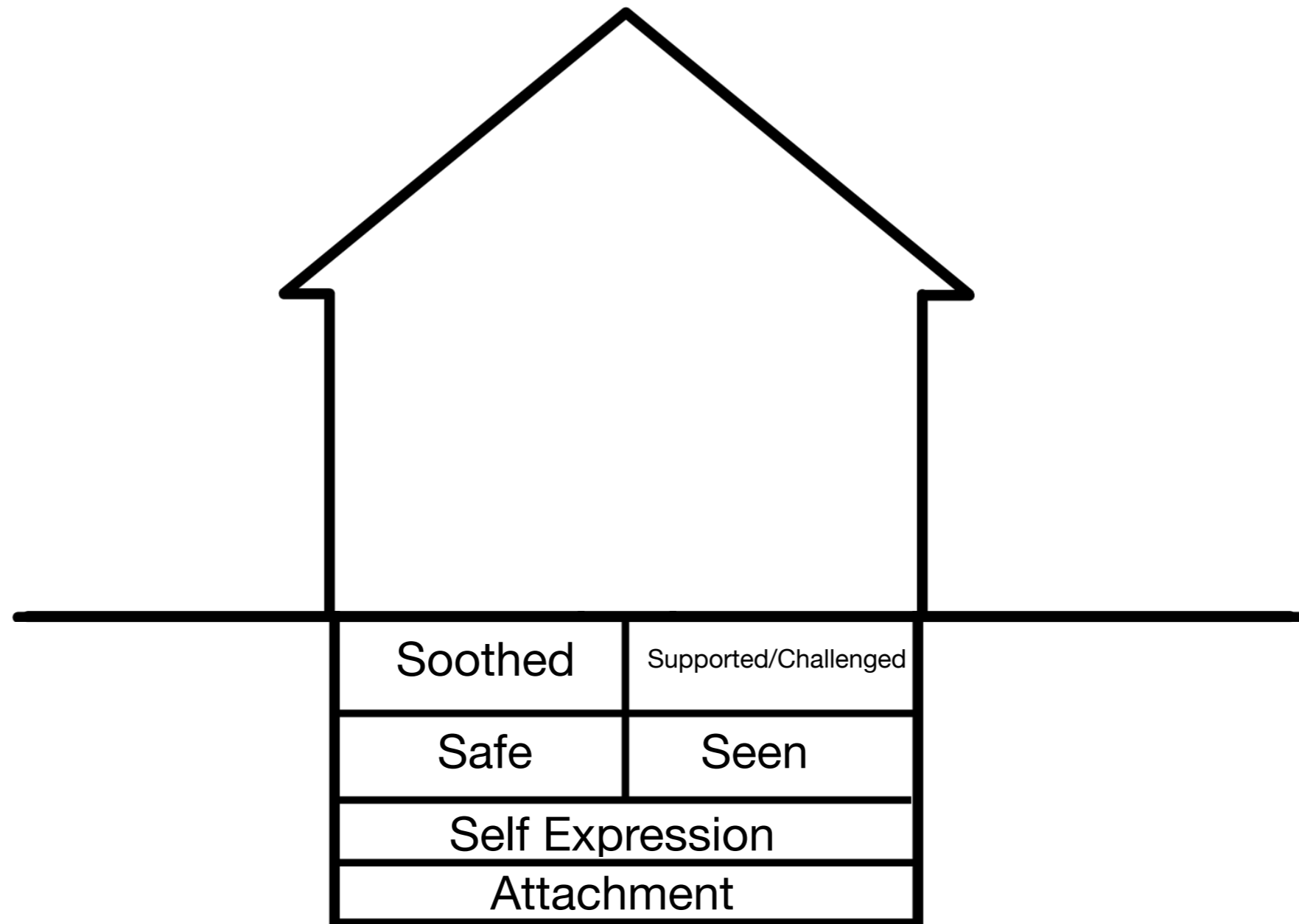
Secure Attachment Style

- Secure attachment has to do with establishing a secure home base. Think of it as Dan Siegel says, it's a safe harbor and it's a launching pad. It's like a HOME.
- Attuned communication from a parent to a child creates secure attachment by the child experiencing...

**In parent-child secure attachment,
the child experiences feeling**



In a secure adult partnership, both partners experience...



Insecure Attachment

- The Insecure style is further broken down into two classifications:
 - Anxious avoidant
 - Anxious ambivalent
- Insecure attachment can be seen as an organized, adaptive process children learned that supported their survival.

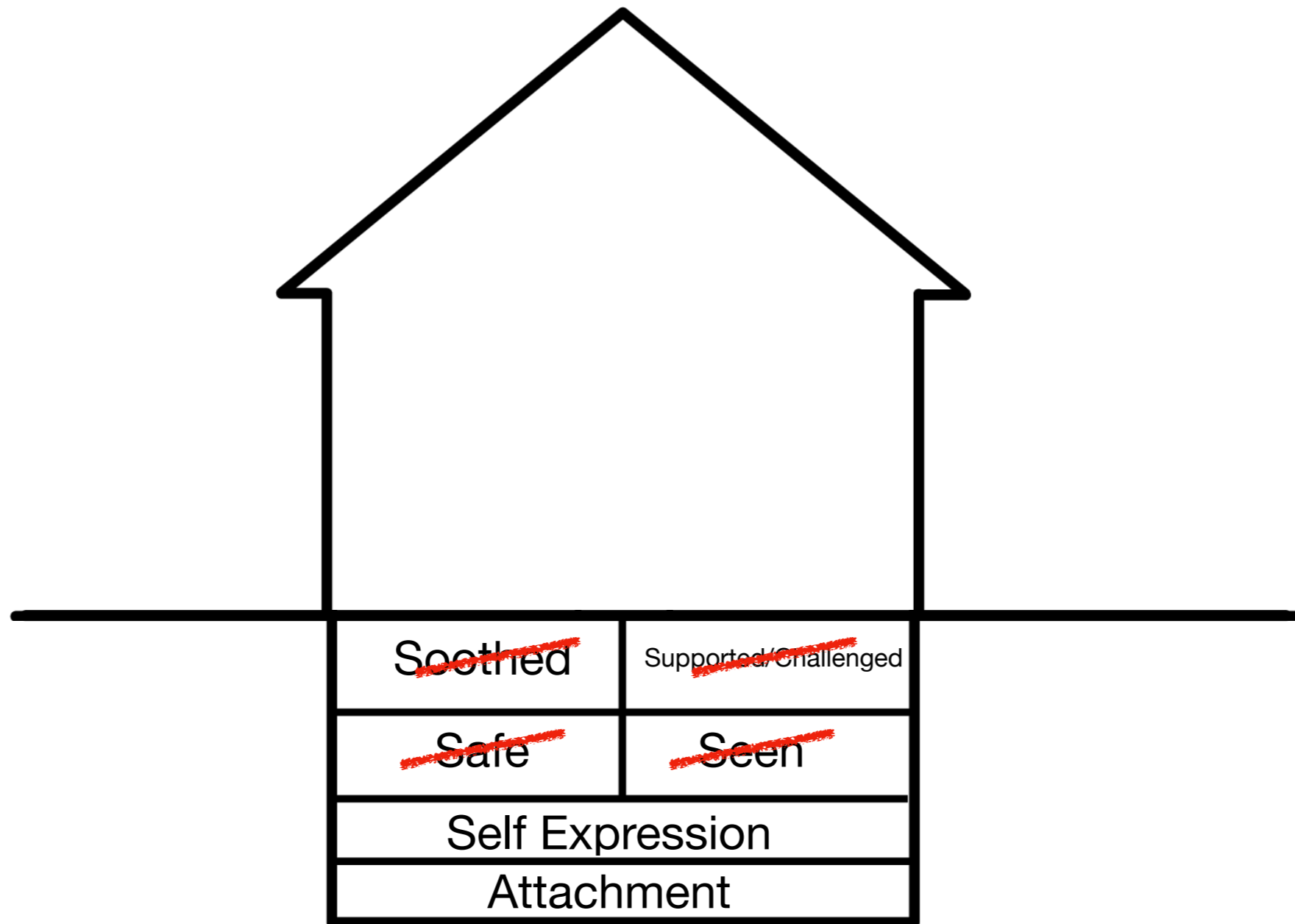
Insecure Attachment

- Insecure, or non-integrated attachment is when there's too much distance or separateness between caregiver and child, or too much connection.
 - Too much distance- Leads the feeling “on their own.” The child adapts to emotional needs being dismissed. Overtime this leads to a more avoidant attachment style.
 - Too much connection (or very inconsistent)- Leads the baby feeling intruded upon and overwhelmed. But what makes this confusing and anxiety provoking is that the connection is sometimes there. This turns into a more anxious ambivalent attachment style.

Insecure Attachment

- This style of attachment is shaped by the baby perceiving that their primary caregiver is either unwilling or unable to be responsive, or that their caregiver will be punitive or inappropriate in response to the child's need for soothing and comfort when experiencing distress. This baby does not feel that their needs are the primary concern of their caregivers. In this experience, the baby's resources begin to be recruited more and more as navigate being uncertain about their caregiver's responses, and they have less resources available for growth and development.

Insecure attachment impacts your blueprint



User Friendly Terms

- **Secure:**
 - Anchor
- **Insecure:**
 - Island- Anxious avoidant
 - Wave - Anxious ambivalent

Securely attached adults

- Relationships come first
- Expects and brings an attitude of mutuality to relationships: this must be good for me AND you
- Enjoys collaboration: accuracy or being “right” is less important than collaboration
- Don’t worry about being engulfed or abandoned by partner
- Adapt well to change
- Have a healthy sense of self entitlement: believe they deserve good things in life (professionally, relationally, personally, health wise) and will work to have them
- Get along with a wide range of personalities and are skilled socially and emotionally

Insecurely attached adults

- Focus on self over relationship
- Expend more energy adapting to life--we use expensive systems in the brain that cause wear and tear and create allostatic load
- Believe they cannot have a secure base AND go out in to the world
- Have a limited view of relationship strength
- Are not good at using attraction with their partner, and rely on threats, guilt, or fear to bring partner into proximity
- Difficulty keeping their partner in mind, putting themselves in the other's shoes
- Put being right above the relationship
- "Im taking care of myself, you take care of yourself" under stress

Island Attachment Style

- For a child with an insecure avoidant style, their parent lacked the ability to conceptualize the inner world of the child. The parent seems relatively insensitive to their child's different states, missing their needs for help, and not effective at meeting those needs once realized. The parenting style associated with this attachment style is dismissive, rejecting, and neglectful, with an expectation of independence sooner than developmentally appropriate. As a child they may seem fine during attachment heightened moments (like a parent coming or going) but physiological research shows a heightened nervous system response as marked by an increase in heart rate.
- As an adult, they will often be experienced as distancing, deny their needs, and avoid their own dependency and the caring and fear that come with it. They fear losing themselves in relationship. They don't understand well how to utilize their close relationships for psychological support and comfort. They tend to need alone time to regulate

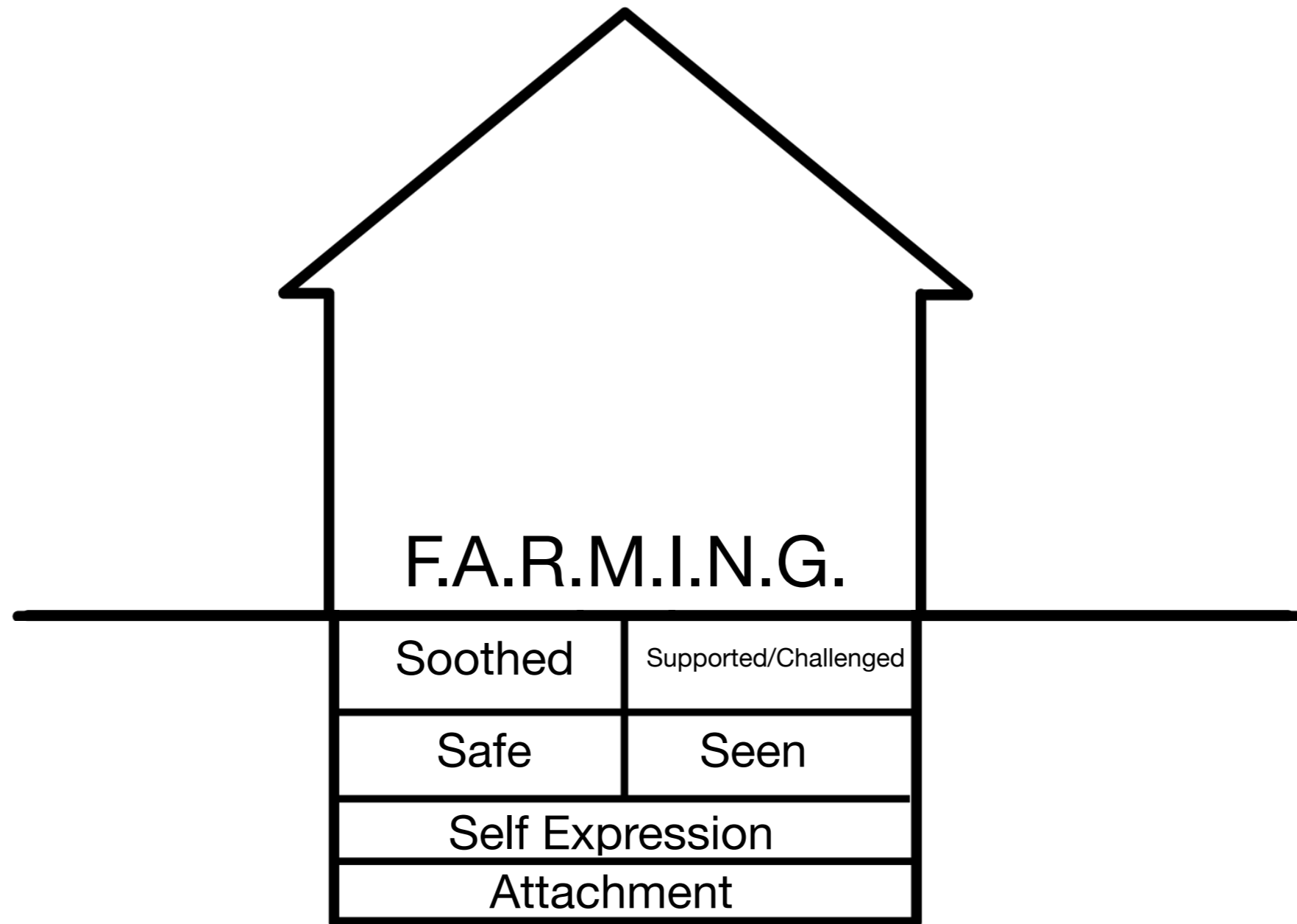
Wave Attachment Style

- For a child with an ambivalent/wave attachment style, their parent's emotions and mental states intruded repeatedly on their own ability to accurately and consistently perceive their child's thoughts and feelings. Affect attunement does occur in this relationship, but it is unpredictable, and at times dominated by the parent's own states intruding on that of the child's. The child often regulated the parent's emotions. So, while the avoidantly attached child learns to be dismissive, an ambivalently attached child becomes more preoccupied with their own distress and focused on the attachment relationship. These children have a more urgent and ongoing need for comfort.
- As adults, they may continue to feel they have to cling to get a sense of security, over focus on their partner, and are very sensitive to any indication of moving away or withdrawal in their partner. They often seek out relationships for psychological support and comfort, but anticipate withdrawal or rejection and thus struggle to utilize them, too.

Now what?

- So if we have the tendency to move into insecure attachment patterns in partnership, and especially under stress, what is going to help us move toward security, growth, and development?

Security Promoting Agreements



F.A.R.M.I.N.G.

- F- Fair & Fun (at times)
- A. Attachment based, attuned
- R. Respectful & Reciprocal
- M. Mutual
- I. Interdependent
- N. Naked (which means transparent)
- G. Growth oriented

Identifying Attachment Styles As A Coach

- **Anchor:** During session one, this person will be easy to follow, collaborative, and be forthcoming with personal information without giving too much or too little. They will have a balanced view of their attachment figures, and understand that all people have “good” and “bad” qualities. They will demonstrate insight, a capacity to self reflect in the moment, and have a coherent narrative about their life. They may have had significant hardships, but have made meaning and have perspective on their difficult life events.
- **Island:** In session one, they will struggle to recall their childhood, minimize their challenges, have an inconsistent or conflicting narrative when compared to their memory, and be overall brief in their responses. Coach will sense a lack of emotional connection between the client and their parent. This client thinks in a more linear, logical manner.
- **Wave:** Their narrative will be excessive and not sufficiently address the questions asked at times, and their narrative may flow between the past and present in a somewhat confusing way. This client thinks in a more emotional and non-linear manner.

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