

# FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER

## Green Flags You Might Be Overlooking

When people talk about relationships, the focus is often on red flags—what to avoid, what to run from, what not to tolerate. We also talk about the dreaded ‘ick’, something random, small, usually unreasonable that can turn off a potential partner based on their personal preference.

While that can be helpful, it can also leave us feeling hypervigilant, guarded, judged or unsure how to recognize what’s actually good and what we feel is acceptable.

Let’s talk about the real green flags that we often miss in others.



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Green flags don't always look exciting or dramatic. In fact, they're often quiet, subtle, and easy to dismiss—especially if you're used to intensity or emotional unpredictability. But these overlooked green flags are often the very things that create emotional safety, trust, and long-term connection. Some of my favourite green flags that may not make for a rom-com moment—but matter deeply in real life are;

## 1. You Feel Calm Around Them, But Not Bored

This one is commonly misunderstood. Calm does not mean disinterested, dull, or passionless. Calm means you're not constantly bracing for impact and you feel totally fine with person.

The green flag is feeling more grounded after spending time together—not emotionally spun up or drained. Conversation flows without pressure. Silence doesn't feel awkward. You don't feel the need to perform, impress, or over-explain. You're just being.

For many people, especially those familiar with emotional highs and lows, calm can feel unfamiliar at first. But safety often feels quieter than chaos.

## 2. They Respond, Even If It's Not Perfect

A powerful green flag is someone *who comes back*—after conflict, misunderstanding, or emotional distance.

They may not always say the perfect thing, but they circle back. They check in. They acknowledge their impact. They're willing to connect and move forward.

This matters far more than flawless communication. Relationships don't thrive because no one ever messes up; they thrive because both people are willing to address things instead of avoiding or escalating them.



### 3. They're Curious About Your Inner World

A meaningful green flag is genuine curiosity—not interrogation or control, but interest. They want to know you.

They ask how you feel, not just what you did. They notice changes in your mood. They remember details because they care, not because they're keeping score. Feeling emotionally seen—without being analyzed or fixed—builds trust over time.



### 4. They Take Responsibility Without Defensiveness

Accountability matters. A subtle but powerful green flag is someone who can say, “I see how that affected you,” without immediately explaining, deflecting, or blaming.

Accountability doesn't require perfection—it requires humility. When someone can own their actions and its impact, it creates room for trust, repair, and growth.

### 5. You're Still Yourself

Perhaps one of the biggest green flags of all: you don't lose yourself in the relationship.

Your friendships, interests, values, and sense of self remain intact. You don't feel pressure to shrink, shape-shift, or abandon parts of who you are to maintain connection. Healthy relationships support expansion, not erasure.



Green flags are often less about grand gestures and more about consistency, emotional presence, and safety over time. If you've ever overlooked something good because it didn't feel intense enough—or questioned a healthy connection because it felt unfamiliar—you're not alone.

Many of us were never taught what calm, secure connection looks like.

Learning to notice green flags isn't about lowering standards. It's about recognizing the kinds of dynamics that allow you to breathe, soften, and show up as yourself. And that's something worth paying attention to.

## When Love Feels Loud: Exploring How We Attach to Others

If you've ever thought "Why do I always end up here?" in your relationships, you're not alone. Many people assume they're simply bad at relationships or haven't met the right person yet. Often, what's actually happening is something much more understandable—and in some cases more flexible.

**Enter:** Attachment Styles.

Attachment theory helps explain how we connect, protect ourselves, and respond when relationships feel emotionally charged. It's about understanding your nervous system and the patterns that show up when closeness matters. Therefore, allowing you to have positive impacts on your relationships.



### What Are Attachment Styles?

Attachment styles are patterns of connection that form early in life based on our experiences with caregivers. As children, we learn whether closeness feels safe, whether our needs will be met, and what to do when connection feels uncertain.

These lessons don't stay in childhood. They follow us into adulthood—especially into romantic relationships, where vulnerability and emotional risk are highest. Attachment styles are adaptive responses, not personality traits. They can shift with awareness, supportive relationships, and intentional work.

Most people fall somewhere along a spectrum of four common styles:

- Secure
- Anxious
- Avoidant
- Fearful-Avoidant

### **Secure Attachment: A Steady Emotional Base**

Secure attachment is the ability to feel comfortable with closeness and independence. People with this attachment type had caregivers who supported them through tough times, loved them, but also let them explore and make their own mistakes. Ultimately these kids had an emotional safety net if they failed.

As an adult this translates to being able to;



- Communicate needs clearly
- Trust the relationship without constant reassurance
- Navigate conflict without shutting down or escalating
- Believe that repair is possible after disagreements

In romantic relationships we see healthy conversations, boundaries, setting reasonable and achievable expectations and a sense of 'we-ness'. Secure attachment doesn't mean never struggling—it means having an internal sense of safety that supports connection and repair.

### **Anxious Attachment: When Connection Feels Urgent**

If you frequently think that because you have done or said something you perceived as wrong your friends or partner might leave you, you may be experiencing anxious attachment.

This attachment style develops when care from your primary caregivers was inconsistent. As a baby you may have been picked up if you cried, but maybe not. If you scraped your knee maybe someone put a bandaid on it or maybe you were told to suck it up. While growing up people who develop anxious attachment never knew what the response was going to be, so they began to prepare for the worst. When you do this the nervous system becomes highly attuned to signs of distance or disconnection.



So, when you feel we that distance was created in a relationship you panic or have high levels of anxious thinking that can become internalized. As a result that you become harsh towards yourself often criticizing, thus increasing your feelings of insecurity. If this is externalized it sounds like over-apologizing, over-explaining your actions, looking for reassurance or clingy-ness.

In relationships, this may show up as:

- Overthinking communication
- Seeking reassurance but struggling to believe it
- Feeling deeply impacted by perceived distance
- Fearing abandonment

At its core, anxious attachment reflects a longing for closeness and safety—not neediness or weakness.

## Avoidant Attachment: When Independence Feels Safer

Avoidant attachment often forms when emotional needs were dismissed or discouraged. As a therapist when I have suspicions that someone has an avoidant attachment style I often ask if their parents used the 'self soothing technique' or the 'cry it out' method when they were babies.

This was very popular in the 80's and 90's and was considered a good way to sleep train a baby. Parents were instructed to let their babies cry until they fell back to sleep without intervening. Eventually the baby would stop crying in the night letting the parents sleep. What this actually did was teach babies that even if they cried nobody was coming to meet their needs so they learned to stop looking for it. We saw this persist into childhood, if you scraped your knee who did you go to? If you learned independence chances are you dealt with it yourself. As a teenager looking for advice and asking for help may have felt hard, therefore making you a very private person who wanted to handle things on your own.

Unfortunalty, in infancy well meaning parents thought they were doing the best thing for their child. It actually resulted in a large population of people with avoidant attachment styles who struggle letting others into their sphere and learned to value their own independence over everything else. This would also happen with people who had inattentive caregivers or absent caregivers.

In adult relationships, this can look like:

- Strong value placed on independence
- Discomfort with emotional intensity
- Difficulty asking for help or support
- Pulling away when things feel too close
- Shutting down during conflict

Avoidant attachment isn't about lack of care—it's about having learned that relying on others may not feel safe.



## Fearful-Avoidant Attachment: The Push–Pull Dynamic

Fearful-avoidant attachment, sometimes called disorganized attachment, often develops in environments where caregivers were both a source of comfort and distress. As a result, the nervous system learns two competing messages at once: I need closeness to feel safe and closeness can hurt me. We frequently see this as a result of abusive relationships or very complex family dynamics.

In relationships, fearful-avoidant attachment may look like:

- Craving deep emotional intimacy but feeling overwhelmed once it's there
- Pulling partners close and then suddenly distancing or shutting down
- Experiencing strong emotional highs followed by sharp withdrawals
- Struggling with trust, even when a partner is consistent
- Feeling confused or frustrated by one's own reactions

This attachment style can feel exhausting. There is often a strong desire for connection paired with an equally strong urge to protect oneself. Small moments of closeness can activate fear, while distance can trigger longing or panic.

A common inner experience might sound like: "I want to feel close to you... but I don't know how to stay while remaining myself and without getting hurt." Because of this inner conflict, relationships may feel intense, unpredictable, or emotionally charged. The nervous system is constantly shifting between seeking safety through connection and seeking safety through distance.

Healing for fearful-avoidant attachment often involves slowing down, building trust gradually through small moments, and learning how to tolerate closeness without overwhelm. With consistent, safe relationships and support, this attachment style can soften into greater emotional stability and security.

## Why Attachment Styles Matter

Attachment styles don't just show up in romantic relationships. They influence how we navigate friendships, family dynamics, work relationships, boundaries, and even how we talk to ourselves during stress or conflict. At their core, attachment styles shape how we respond to connection, uncertainty, and emotional threat. When something feels uncomfortable or unclear, our attachment system often steps in automatically—long before logic has a chance to catch up.

Understanding attachment styles matters because it helps you:

- Make sense of patterns that repeat across different relationships
- Respond with curiosity instead of self-criticism
- Communicate needs with greater clarity and confidence
- Recognize when your nervous system is reacting to the past, not the present



When attachment patterns go unrecognized, people often assume something is “wrong” with them or with others. Your attachment style reflects how you learned to stay safe and connected—it’s not a personal failing or fixed identity.

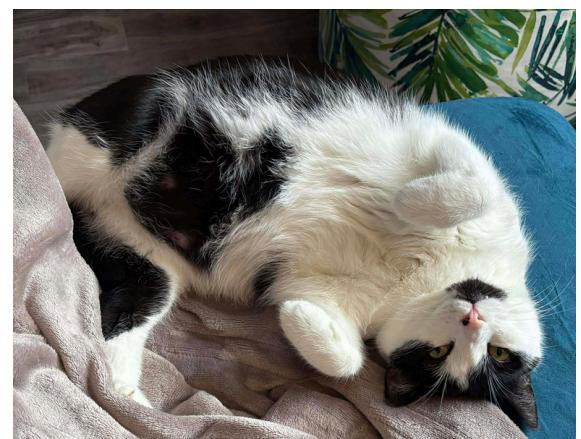
These patterns can shift. With awareness, supportive relationships, and intentional work, many people move toward greater emotional security over time.

Growth doesn’t come from forcing yourself to be different. It comes from understanding your emotional responses well enough to meet yourself with compassion and make room for new ways of relating. Attachment work isn’t about fixing yourself—it’s about creating a stronger sense of safety within yourself and in your relationships.

## Updates, This & That

### Pet of the Month

Eli is our cat of the month! He loves snuggles, long naps and snacking on a lick stick.



### Birthdays

Please wish Massage Therapist Matt a happy birthday on February 20<sup>th</sup>!

### Welcoming Janine!

We have a new massage therapist joining our team! If you see Janine say “Hi!”, or better yet, book an appointment!