

**HARMFUL LOVE STYLES** From the book: *How WE Love* by Milan & Kay Yerkovich ©2006 www.howwelove.com

**AVOIDER**

**Your Parent(s)**

Little to no comfort, nurturing. Parents value tasks, independence, performance. Message: You're fine, hurry up and grow up

**Intimacy** (You as an adult)

Don't want, don't need. Didn't receive enough to know what they are missing. Confused. What do you want from me? Rarely ask for help. Self-sufficient.

**Expectations**

Take care of myself and wish others would do the same. Rarely asks for help. Needs little.

**Goals**

Independence, self sufficiency. Shows love by doing tasks. If you don't want, you cannot be hurt or disappointed.

**Prominent Feeling**

Anxiety if others are emotional or needy. Otherwise flat, even. Anger if pushed to connect or deal with emotions. Most all feelings are underdeveloped.

**Triggers**

Criticism from others. Feelings of inadequacy when confronted with emotions, needs or complaints. Neediness in others is viewed with contempt. Unallowable in themselves so hard to tolerate in others.

**Response:** Detaches, withdraws. Avoids eye contact.

**PLEASER**

**Your Parent (s)**

Fear based nurturing. Parent is overly protective to relieve their own anxiety. Or parent is angry, critical. Child manages parental anger or anxiety by being good.

**Intimacy** (You as an adult)

Want connection to relieve anxiety about disapproval or rejection. May be fearful when alone. Gives and appeases to maintain connection. Burn out and resentment over time.

**Expectations**

Looks for opportunities to give and expects little in return.

**Goals**

Safety, Harmony. If others are happy, I can relax. If I keep others close and happy, I won't be abandoned.

**Prominent Feeling**

Anxious if apart or if others are critical, angry or rejecting. Worry. Anger, is undeveloped.

**Triggers**

Anxiety when others detach, want space, or give silent treatment. Interpret distance as a sign that others are angry or rejecting and efforts at giving or appeasing are not sufficient or successful.

**Response:** Pursues, tries harder, gives more, to calm own anxiety.

**VACILLATOR**

**Your Parent(s)**

Sporadic inconsistent attention based on parents needs and moods. Unpredictable. More about parents needs than child's needs.

**Intimacy** (You as an adult)

Longs for intense connection they can FEEL. Idealizes then devalues. Easily disappointed and feels abandoned and betrayed. More likely to display anger than hurt.

**Expectations**

Highly sensitive, craves attention. Mistakes intensity for intimacy. Devalues when disappointed and intense "good" feelings are gone.

**Goals**

To feel special and exclusive, seen and understood. Avoid criticism as it means, "I'm flawed, unlovable."

**Prominent Feeling**

Anxious if close (they will leave) Anxious if apart (abandoned, not seen). Shows anger. Underneath, confused, disappointed. Sadness, grief underdeveloped.

**Triggers**

When others depart this triggers feelings of abandonment, waiting. Closeness triggers anxiety: may sabotage because accepting means I will get hurt and be made to wait again.

**Response:** Mixed messages: Come here (I need you). Go away (I'm mad).

**CONTROL/ VICTIM**

**Your Parent(s)**

Chaotic, confusing. Parent source of stress rather than reliever of stress. May be dangerous: abuse, neglect, violence, drugs, alcohol.

**Intimacy** (You as an adult)

Adrenalin, chaos "normal." Calm=anxiety...next storm is coming. Move towards controller (anger, rage) or victim (passive). Addictions to numb pain.

**Expectations**

**Controller:** My way, I'm right. Control or be controlled.  
**Victim:** To survive: unworthy, unlovable, cannot survive on my own.

**Goals**

Maintain control or stay "under the radar".

**Prominent Feeling**

**Controller:** Any vulnerable feeling quickly submerged with display of anger. **Victim:** Fear, depression, hopeless, powerless. (May only feel anger with children.) Both styles have never grieved childhood pain.

**Triggers**

**Controller:** Criticism, challenge of authority. **Victim:** Anger in others.

**Responses:** **Controller:** rage, intimidate, bully to regain control.

**Victim:** Dissociate, take abuse, try harder, my fault.