

# **RAISING A SECURE CHILD**

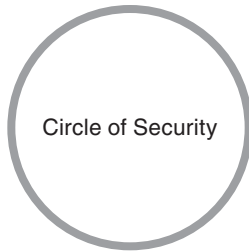
**HOW CIRCLE OF SECURITY PARENTING  
CAN HELP YOU NURTURE YOUR CHILD'S  
ATTACHMENT, EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE,  
AND FREEDOM TO EXPLORE**

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Being-With



For each of the core emotions (**curiosity, joy, sadness, fear, anger, and shame**), draw a circle. Place each circle either inside, outside, or partially in/outside the Circle of Security based upon: **In your experience as a child**, how much your primary caregiver was able to “Be-With” and help organize these six key feelings.

# SHARK MUSIC CHECKLIST

Quickly read through the following items and check off all those that you identify with. Don't agonize over this. If it sounds familiar, check it off. If not, move to the next item.

## ***What Makes Me Feel Particularly Good?***

- ☐ **Sitting next to someone I love who promises to stay close**
- ☐ Being seen at important events
- ☐ *Activities I can do alone*
- ☐ **Pleasing people**
- ☐ Being recognized for doing an excellent job
- ☐ *Having breathing room from others*
- ☐ Associating with successful people
- ☐ **Feeling needed**
- ☐ *Long-distance friendships*
- ☐ **Having someone else take care of a difficult task for me**
- ☐ Winning
- ☐ *Being in the audience*
- ☐ **A cuddly environment**
- ☐ *Being on my own, doing things I like*
- ☐ **Taking care of and being taken care of by my closest friends**
- ☐ Being on top of things
- ☐ **Having all my important family members and friends nearby**
- ☐ *Solo vacations*
- ☐ **Putting other people's needs and feelings ahead of my own**
- ☐ *Being self-sufficient*
- ☐ Feeling highly competent
- ☐ *Being honest, even when it's not popular*
- ☐ Being with a soul mate who really shares the way I think

## ***What Makes Me Feel Uncomfortable?***

- ☐ **Being alone**
- ☐ Coming in second place

*(continued)*

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## SHARK MUSIC CHECKLIST (p. 2 of 4)

- ☐ **The silent treatment**
- ☐ People who seem unmotivated
- ☐ *People wanting to be very close to me*
- ☐ Others thinking I've done something wrong
- ☐ *Feeling obligated to the people I love*
- ☐ Being around people who whine about their problems when all they have to do is get their act together
- ☐ **Being with someone who always acts like he or she wants to leave**
- ☐ Someone who's critical
- ☐ *Being too isolated*
- ☐ **Acting confident when I know I'm not**
- ☐ *Feeling like I'll be too much for people*
- ☐ Criticism
- ☐ *Depending on others*
- ☐ **Being assertive**
- ☐ **Living alone**
- ☐ Being considered average
- ☐ **Saying what I think**
- ☐ *Being the center of attention*
- ☐ *Being controlled or manipulated*
- ☐ Being disappointed by friends
- ☐ *People wanting to know everything about me*
- ☐ *Being hugged*
- ☐ **Being in charge**
- ☐ Making a mistake
- ☐ *People feeling like they're on the same page with me*
- ☐ Failing
- ☐ Not being understood
- ☐ The high expectations of others
- ☐ *People being overly affectionate*

### **What Do Other People Say about Me or Think of Me?**

- ☐ *I tend to go off on my own when I have a problem to solve.*
- ☐ **I need to do more on my own.**

(continued)

## SHARK MUSIC CHECKLIST (p. 3 of 4)

- ☐ *I give mixed messages: when I'm alone I sometimes want to be with others, and when I'm with others I often want to be alone.*
- ☐ **I give in too easily.**
- ☐ *When I'm upset, I withdraw to figure it out myself.*
- ☐ **I rely a lot on other people.**
- ☐ *I "go negative" just to get those closest to me to back away.*
- ☐ **I need a lot of support from others to get things done.**
- ☐ I focus on achievement to the detriment of my personal relationships.
- ☐ *They want more of me than I care to give.*
- ☐ I boast about my accomplishments.
- ☐ *I hurt others' feelings by wanting to do things alone.*
- ☐ *I tend to keep a bit of distance between me and friends.*
- ☐ I'm a perfectionist.
- ☐ **I try to get "too close."**
- ☐ *I show more affection when I miss someone than when the person is right here.*
- ☐ I can be too critical.
- ☐ *I tend to "retreat" when someone getting close to me starts to expect additional closeness.*

### ***I Believe:***

- ☐ It's OK to present yourself in a manner that makes others see you in the best light.
- ☐ **Loving someone means never having him or her feel alone.**
- ☐ *It's very hard to tell someone you love him or her.*
- ☐ **It's much more important to have friends than to be considered successful.**
- ☐ Winning is among the best things in life.
- ☐ **People who need people are the luckiest people in the world.**
- ☐ No one likes losers.
- ☐ **Winning doesn't matter—I just want everyone to get along.**
- ☐ *Being too close to others is unsafe.*
- ☐ **Being placed in isolation is the worst punishment possible.**
- ☐ Even when everyone thinks I'm great, I often think I'm not doing enough.
- ☐ **The best way to show people you love them is to never want to be away from them.**

(continued)

## SHARK MUSIC CHECKLIST (p. 4 of 4)

- ☐ *If I get too connected, I'll be too much for people.*
- ☐ **When someone wants you to do things on your own, it means he or she doesn't care about you.**
- ☐ *People are often trying to control or manipulate me.*
- ☐ **If I argue with someone, I might lose him or her.**
- ☐ *A few friends is plenty.*
- ☐ **My opinions aren't that important.**
- ☐ I try to have amazingly outstanding friends.
- ☐ **It's more important to stay connected to someone than to be right.**
- ☐ I constantly have to prove myself with my work and studies.
- ☐ **Other people know how to do things better than me.**
- ☐ *Other people's needs can leave little room for me the closer they get.*
- ☐ **If I could take care of myself, people wouldn't take care of me.**
- ☐ I have a very special purpose for my life.
- ☐ People can be vicious when you make a mistake.
- ☐ **Independence means nothing if you don't have someone who cares about you.**
- ☐ Even when I do things right, I'm probably an imposter.
- ☐ **It's OK to ask for help even when you can figure it out yourself.**
- ☐ Anything I do that I'm really proud of I worry I won't be able to do again.
- ☐ *It's important to be really good at what I do even if no one knows it.*
- ☐ **Having children means you don't have to feel alone.**
- ☐ When people can see how good I am, everything in life is better.
- ☐ *When people get close, they can emotionally smother you.*
- ☐ Even when I am wrong I have a hard time admitting it.

### Scoring

Now add up the number of items you checked that are **bold**, underlined, and *italic* and enter each number below.

**Bold:** \_\_\_\_\_

Underlined: \_\_\_\_\_

*Italic:* \_\_\_\_\_

## Core Sensitivities within Close Relationships

	Conclusion	Procedural Certainty	Common Procedural Triggers	Others Say	Healthy Goal	Truth Be Told
<b>Separation Sensitive</b>	I do what I can to focus on the needs of those close to me. Otherwise, I'm afraid they will be upset and leave me. Alternatively, I can often get upset because those close to me don't seem to be doing their part to take care of me.	In order to feel close, I must remain needy, good, weak, and, if necessary, incompetent/helpless. Then I will be taken care of and not feel alone.	I am vigilant, scanning for signs that something is wrong in the relationship (thus keeping the relationship center stage, often within a state of upset and difficulty); I fear taking a stand with significant others. I tend to be preoccupied with whether or not I am being loved enough.	"You want too much from me." "It feels like you're clinging to me." "It's like you want me to threaten to leave and then dramatically decide to stay."	To give up my perceptions, opinions, and needs is to deny who I actually am and, thus, to deny a deeper level of intimacy.	"Just below the surface, I think you will leave me." "If I don't focus on you, you'll walk out." "I can get helpless so you'll come near and take care of me."
<b>Esteem Sensitive</b>	Perceptions of me feel all-important. I attempt to be in control of perceptions. I am vigilant about any view of me as having failed or being inadequate. Those around me tend to "walk on eggshells." I am often disappointed in others for not "getting it."	In order to be noticed and responded to, I must perform, accomplish, be perfect, and think like the "all-important other" (anyone I admire for their intelligence, beauty, performing well, and/or power). When I'm performing well and/or with someone I admire, I feel special and not alone.	I scan for others' positive and negative perceptions. I have a hair-trigger reaction to criticism; I need to be right; I need not to be wrong. I desire to "be on the same page" with others close to me.	"It's not always about you." "It's just criticism, not the end of the world." "I'm not an extension of you." "I feel pressured to always be upbeat or only say nice things about you; if I don't you'll feel criticized, angry, or cold."	Recognizing that mistakes are inevitable. Sharing my needs and vulnerability can be fulfilling.	Just below the surface, I'm fairly certain that I'm not really worthy." "I may get angry if you don't fit my ideal." "I may withdraw if your disagreement upsets my fantasy that we always think alike."



<p><b>Safety Sensitive</b></p> <p>The cost of being connected to significant others requires giving up having choices about who I really am and what I really want.</p>	<p>I attempt to be in control of closeness. When I get close to another my sense of safety is at risk.</p>	<p>To be in a relationship is to be intruded upon and controlled. To be in a relationship is to risk being enslaved. The best I can hope for is closeness from a distance.</p>	<p>Scanning for any sign of someone being dominant, manipulative, intrusive, or being "too close" ("too intimate," "too understanding," "too concerned"). Exposure/being seen can feel excruciating.</p>	<p>"I want more from you." "It's like you disappear on me." "Why do you go into hiding whenever I ask about yourself?" "I don't want to control you; I just want to be close."</p>	<p>Within a context of negotiation, closeness doesn't require being intruded upon, invaded, or controlled; intimacy can be safe.</p>	<p>"Once again, I just got frightened because it felt like we were getting too close." "I think I just retreated into my self-sufficient mode, sure that you'd try to control things."</p>
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Based on the original teaching of James Masterson, MD, and Ralph Klein, MD.

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## **Prompt and Response: Core Sensitivities in Everyday Exchanges**

Our core sensitivities can be tapped when we least expect them to rear their heads. Here are examples of common statements another person might make and how you might respond—internally—depending on your core sensitivity.

*Prompt:* “You wouldn’t believe what just happened to me. I just got another promotion, my second in the past six months—I’m now officially the new assistant manager at the bank, and I’m thinking they might be preparing me to be full manager at the branch office opening next year.”

*Internal response—Separation:* “That will never happen to me. Never. I’m such a loser! That’s all anyone thinks of when they think of me. Someone who will never make anything of herself.”

*Internal response—Esteem:* “She’s so full of herself. It’s not like she doesn’t kiss everyone’s butt all the time trying to climb the corporate ladder. Who does she think she is? She’s not so special.”

*Internal response—Safety:* “Her enthusiasm has nothing to do with me. She’s holding me hostage. I can’t leave. But I can’t stay. But I can’t leave. And she just keeps going on and on and on.”

*Prompt:* “Who do you think you are? You have no right to say that to me!”  
(Furious)

*Internal response—Separation:* “She’s right. Who do I think I am? I should never have told her I disagreed. Take it back. Tell her I’m wrong. Tell her it’s all my fault.”

*Internal response—Esteem:* “I have every right to say what I want. This isn’t my first food fight, and it won’t be my last.” Or “She’s my boss. It’s my job in life to keep her thinking she’s awesome and special and the one who knows what’s important. Get back on the same page.”

*Internal response—Safety:* “I’m not willing to step into her movie. I’m not even willing to stay around for her movie. One more time it’s clear I’m not cut out for whatever it is that people seem to need from me.”

*Prompt:* "Why can't you just stay here for a few minutes? Why can't you help me?"

*Internal response—Separation:* "Serves you right. You sure weren't there for me last week when I was falling apart. This time I'm going to make sure you get what it feels like to be left in the dark."

*Internal response—Esteem:* "I thought we had a lot in common, but maybe not. I thought you had it together. Your going all tragic is not working for me. I'm looking for friends who are more like me than you are."


*Internal response—Safety:* "I don't want to stay for 2 seconds. I know we're friends, I know you need help, but I'm not able to do this. Every time you look at me I'm just backing 3 feet farther away."

*Prompt:* (Someone talking with a harsh look of devaluation/rolling of the eyes.)

*Internal response—Separation:* "Don't make her even more upset. She's already mad at you. You pushed too hard. Stop pushing her."

*Internal response—Esteem:* "I am *not* wrong on this one. I did nothing wrong. You always take the high road. You are so arrogant. Get over yourself!" or "She's really mad now. Remind her she's perfect. Tell her she's the best. Make her think she's always right. Perfection solves every problem."

*Internal response—Safety:* "Hmmmm. Whatever she just did I'm not OK with. I think that look on her face just made it clear why I don't stick around."



# YOUR CORE SENSITIVITY IN ADULT RELATIONSHIPS

What do the relationships you've had as an adult tell you about your core sensitivity?

- ☐ Do you tend to worry about your spouse/partner leaving you?
- ☐ *Are you often concerned about what your friends, neighbors, and acquaintances think of you and your partner as a couple?*
- ☐ **Have you been comfortable with long-distance relationships (even if your partner was not)?**
- ☐ Does relying on your partner to take care of things make you feel closer to him or her?
- ☐ *Have you broken up with a partner because the other person kept being critical of "every little thing"?*
- ☐ **Have you had relationships end after you've been accused of being cold, withholding, commitment phobic, or simply not present?**
- ☐ **Do you see your best friends only every few months?**
- ☐ *Is your social life centered on a tight group of friends who all think alike?*
- ☐ Do you count on the advice of your close friends to help you make your decisions?
- ☐ *Has it been important for you to be elected or appointed the captain of your sports teams, the chairman of your volunteer committee, or the leader of your social group?*
- ☐ Do your friends think of you as easygoing because you're OK with going along with whatever they want to do when you get together?
- ☐ **Have you lost friends after being honest even when you knew it would hurt them?**
- ☐ **Are ethics and integrity more important to you on the job than relationships?**
- ☐ *If you're not the top performer at work, do you feel like a failure?*
- ☐ Do your annual reviews usually say you're a good team player but don't take enough initiative?
- ☐ Do you tend to take jobs where you can rely on your boss to mentor you?
- ☐ **Do you prefer work that focuses on the product and doesn't involve a lot of interaction with others?**
- ☐ *Do you believe that even though you're not necessarily the best, this can be remedied by being around those who are?*

## Scoring

Now add up the number of items you checked that are **bold**, underlined, and *italic* and enter each number below.

**Bold:** \_\_\_\_\_ Underlined: \_\_\_\_\_ *Italic:* \_\_\_\_\_

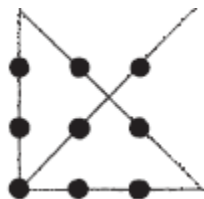
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OK, we mixed it up a bit just to try to get at your less conscious, less analytical answers. In this case, **bold** indicates safety sensitivity, underlining indicates separation sensitivity, and *italic* indicates esteem sensitivity. As before, these “scores” aren’t definitive. The questionnaire is supposed to give you a few ideas of what types of responses we have in our adult relationships, from intimate partnerships to friendships to work. Do your results gibe with your results from the Shark Music Checklist? Looking at your core sensitivities from all these different angles may point you directly to a single conclusion, but they may not. The workings of procedural memory and implicit relational knowing are complicated.

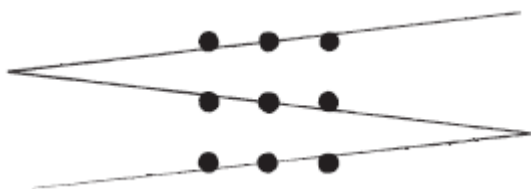
**Figure 1**



**Figure 2**



**Figure 3**



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## **A Quick Quiz: What If Your Teen Withdraws?**

Alex is 14 years old. She's entered the "dark-side-of-the-moon" phase that many teenagers can inhabit for months . . . or years. Talkative and playful only a year ago, her responses to any questioning now mostly consist of shrugs and one- and two-word answers: "Yeah." "Maybe." "Not sure." "I guess." While not being rude, Alex is traveling that fine line between distant and disrespectful.

At the same time, Alex can be needy. Two hours after not wanting to stay at the dinner table 4 seconds after she's finished her meal, she's back in the kitchen wanting to figure out if she's really as ugly as she's sure everyone thinks she is. That's what brought her in to talk just now.

What do you think you would say, depending on your core sensitivity? Jot down your answer before reading our examples.

*Separation Sensitive*

*Esteem Sensitive*

*Safety Sensitive*

*Secure*

Now compare your answers with our examples:

### ***Separation Sensitive***

"Alex, honey, you're really upset, aren't you? It's been so long since you've told me you feel bad. Remember when we used to feel close? You know I'm right here for you. Maybe it's time we become friends again. Let's talk."

### ***Esteem Sensitive***

"Alex, I totally get what you're going through. Trust me, I've been there. When I was your age, I felt exactly the same way. What you need to know is that this will pass. Totally go away. Someone as beautiful as you will get beyond this in no time."

### ***Safety Sensitive***

"I think I know what's going on here. But I don't think it's anything to really worry about. I want you to think this through, because thinking you're ugly isn't really accurate. I think you are quite nice looking. I know your father and I are so glad you are doing well in school. I think this will pass."

### ***Secure***

"Well, this makes sense. Feeling attractive is really important, and feeling you're not sucks. I've sure had my moments. What I hope you know is that there will be times when you feel this way and probably want to talk about it and times you'll feel this way and want to stay far away from even mentioning it. My biggest hope is that when you want to talk you know I do too. If this is one of those times, I'm right here."

