

Welcome to this episode of "How to Become a Successful Coach." And we are here today with the amazing, world-renowned successful coach, and my very dear friend, Remi Pearson. Now, Remi, I want to take a moment and really share who you are with the listeners here. Because we've got listeners all over the world and people who watch this podcast. Remi Pearson herself is one of the originators and I have to say, the founding members who laid the bricks and the foundations of the coaching industry in Australasia. That was a long time ago.

And since then, Remi, you've had seven best-selling books you've written over the last two decades. You've done some incredible philanthropic work over the world, changed so many lives. And of course, you are the founder of one of the world's leading coaching institutions, The Coaching Institute, which has graduated over 15,000 coaches. That's amazing.

And you've been my personal mentor for many, many years until we became wonderful friends. I think that was 12 years ago.

Yeah, I tell people 12 years, so yeah. We are here today to go really deep with this profound body of research and work that you've been developing and working with and sharing with the world for the last number of years, around attachment work.

Yeah. And it originates from attachment theory and the research around it, and now you're helping so many people across relationships, men, women, with their personal, relational, familial challenges that originated because of attachment style that they have.

So today, I'd love to pick your brain as much as we can on, maybe let's start with, what is an attachment style, and how does it play out in someone's life?

So the first, the good news is, an attachment style isn't personality. It isn't who we are. It's not fixed, thank goodness. And I think people get really fixated on the labels. So they think I'm dismissive avoidant or fearful avoidant or anxious preoccupied, and they think that's who they are. It doesn't describe personality. Whereas when the research first began, it was treated like it was who you are. So an attachment style is our preference through how we were conditioned in childhood for how we experience relationships, depending on how intimate or how close we are to the person.

So different aspects of us will become insecure when certain events occur in a relationship. So for example, if we're securely attached and you pull away from me as a friend, I'm securely attached. I will just notice it. I won't take it personally, which someone who's anxious preoccupied would. And they'd think, "What have I done wrong? Doesn't he like me anymore? What do I have to do?" And they'll start doing what's protest behavior, reaching out. If they're more dismissive avoidant and you pull away, it's fine. Space. And it doesn't even really register. Securely attached is just notice the distance, notice when they come back, and it's not taken personally. It's not in any way a reflection on me.

Yeah. So the research says that only 40 to 50 percent of people have an insecure attachment style. Which is either anxious or avoidant or fearful avoidant. I don't teach that. I say it's more

like 90 percent have an insecurity that flares up. We're triggered around certain behaviors in relationships depending on how close we are to the person. Yeah.

And so I think when I do the surveys, the quizzes, and they come out, "You're secure, you're secure, you're secure," I remember a time when I wasn't, and I still came out secure. I'm like, yeah, I think maybe the questions lend themselves for us to feel more favorably about how we are in relationship. Yeah.

But the best way to know how you are in a relationship is how are you in the closest relationships you have. So distant relationships aren't triggering because there's nothing really personally at stake. Yeah. But closer relationships, there's more at stake. I've got a question on that. And we'll get into that.

So that's a really good distinction there that you just made about close relationships. Even in close relationships, I've found, depending on what relationship it is, so let's look at a family dynamic, for example. Yeah. The way our attachment will play out with our life partner compared to how it might play out with a sibling or our child would it be same or different?

Different. It all comes down to, so we need to go right back. In childhood, our caregivers installed in us predictions about how our relationship will go or what. So it becomes almost like predictive text. It's like through what they were behaving like or what they were telling us about the world, how our caregivers treated us when we were under pressure, when we were overwhelmed, when we were anxious or upset, or fearful or hurt or worried or just needed reassurance. How our caregivers behaved taught us how people would behave. Got it. So we created a predictive program. It's literally like an LLM. It's like AI. Yeah. It's predictive.

Wow. And so we grow up with, if we don't do the work and we don't question it, and assume we were not securely attached, where depending on the nature of the relationship, we have a prediction about how they're going to be, and how we're going to be with them, and how the relationship's going to play out. Yeah. So with a sibling, for example, if they have many traits from caregivers who treated you in a way that created anxiety in you, you're going to have prediction around you're going to feel anxious around them. It's almost predicting. Your nervous system is going to be jacked up. I'm feeling anxious just at the thought of the relationship or the thought of the conversation.

Parents, I think it just continues the same. So how they treated us in childhood, parents, particularly my generation of parents and any older, didn't get the therapy, don't do the work, aren't reading about attachment styles, aren't reading about how to heal, so they're still doing the same stuff. So anyone basically in their 60s and above is still playing out the same patterns and not owning it at all.

So if you're listening to this and you've got parents, you're saying, "Well, my parents are still treating me the same way," they're not going to upgrade their software anytime soon. So your relationship with them, it's about you doing the work to change that prediction. They're not going to change. Yeah. They are going to be dismissive of your hurt feelings, for example. They are

going to continue to not take you seriously when you've upgraded who you are, or you're wanting a different experience in life, or choosing a different career. They're still going to mock you if that's their thing. So your prediction's accurate. They're still going to do their thing because after about 50, people aren't tending to do the work that much.

[Content continues with extensive discussion on anxious preoccupied vs dismissive avoidant attachment styles...]

Is that why most courses are teaching how to work with people who are anxious? Because dismissive avoidants deny there's a problem. Because I've never seen a coaching program on how to help a dismissive avoidant. Because they don't enroll in programs because to them, silence means there's no problem. Yeah. Think about that. We still teach the whole thing holistically, and you particularly teach the whole thing, because you still believe, as hard as it is for them to heal, it is possible if they're willing to do the work. I attract people who want to do the work who are DA.

Yeah. It's wonderful. I'm lucky. Yeah. I've never had any issues generally, my programs are 50 percent DA. Wow. I don't have any problem attracting DA people to do the work, but generally they're not doing the work. But anyway, get out of the pool. And if your DA doesn't come to the pool, you have your answer, and now you've got to face grief and the devastation, and the loneliness.

And you reckon you were panicking in the pool? Yeah. You've seen nothing yet. Yeah. The panic you're going to go through getting out of the pool, it is so hard. And that's why I encourage not to do it alone. And I have a whole bunch of things you need to do that we won't have time to go into, but getting out of the pool, and staying out of the pool, and realizing you're the only one who's been in the pool for maybe a decade or more. That's devastating. It's devastating and lonely.

And meantime, your DA partner is still back in the house watching the footy, oblivious that you're out of the pool, thinking, "Oh, finally, some peace and quiet." Let me help you out if you're the DA, and generally it's the man. If they've stopped talking, it's done. The relationship is dead. Or was done. Protest proves there's still a chance. The moment the partner stops protesting, the relationship's there's no one fighting for it anymore. They've given up, they're defeated, they're burnt out.

So AP burnout is a real thing. Yeah. If they stop yelling, you're in trouble. Are you hearing what I'm saying? Yeah. If they stop yelling. Now, a lot of attachment theory is it's really important that as the AP you don't raise your voice. Actually, if you're really hurt, how are you supposed to stay that calm? If you've got a DA partner who just walks away every time you're hurt or crying and goes, "Stop making such a fuss," or, "You're making too much of a big deal about it," you should be upset. That's human.

But if you're upset and you're, I don't mean abusive, but if you're crying out like, "I'm really hurting," and they're nowhere to be found, you're yelling in the wind, and that's really hard to

face, but that's why I give it two days, and if no one shows up at the edge of the pool, you have your answer. And now the real work can begin is how to heal from the abandonment wound you've been denying by yelling in the pool. Yeah. The reason you splashed was so you didn't feel your own loneliness.

As long as you were trying and you had hope, you didn't have to face that devastation that there is no relationship to save. Now, you may be the one in 30 or 40, then when you get out of the pool, your partner goes, "S**t, it got a bit quiet." Yeah. Where you gone? They don't generally. They actually think, and how in 2026 when there's so many messages out there, how they could possibly believe the delusion that silence means peace? It means death. Your relationship literally officially just ended. All that's left to do is for her to pack or to tell you to do so. That's all that's left.

Yeah. So that's why I say they've got the power. Yeah. This is deeply insightful, Remi. Yeah. And whether you're a DA or fearful avoidant or AP, whether you stay in the pool, leave the pool, whether both of them stay or leave, the work has to be done. That's the message I'm taking. Yeah. If we want to have a life where we feel securely attached with people, where we can have healthy relationships with ourselves and with ourselves and the people that we love, and people around us, if we want to have healthy reciprocity and connection and joy within ourselves and share it with other people, this is the work to do. It is.

And I love how deep we've got, and I am sure we could talk for another three or four hours. Yeah. And I want to love on the DAs a little bit. Yeah. Because I gave them a bit of a hard time then. Because I said, well, they really have trouble hearing they've got the power, and I don't want to leave them hanging. Yeah. So if I can just add a little bit of a punchline to that. Yeah. Yes, you've got the power the way I've just described. So whoever can leave the negotiation table ever in history, has the power. Whoever can walk away has the power. Your journey is to realize that that powerlessness is your wound. And until you stay and face the storm, you will never realize you have power.

Yeah. Does that make sense? Yeah, it does. It's like, well, if you realize you have power, then you have responsibility around that power. And then you're okay to stay through a storm which is to stay and heal. You will know you are powerful, I mean, in the most loving way. You're empowered. If you can stay through your wife's storm, true story, if you can stay through three of your wife's storms, she will stop storming.

So all the things you've been worried about, the protest behavior, the criticism, the yelling, if you can stick through three major, and I've got a whole technique for it, if you can stick through at least three of those storms, which is her hoping against all that finally you will stay instead of running from her in her moment of greatest need. If you can stick, she'll start feeling safe. If she starts feeling safe in her nervous system, she'll stop protesting, so you'll feel less need to retreat. If you feel less need to retreat, she'll get even safer, and she'll start learning self-regulation. You will heal. That's the pathway to healing. So good.

But until you stay there's no healing. Yeah. I needed to end on that because I want the DA to realize they have so much choice here and agency to help this. And they can influence the journey together towards a healthy relationship, marriage, whatever it is for them. Yeah.

I have to say, I love your enthusiasm and I love your passion around this work. Around this work. It was fun. And everything you do to share this wonderful message with the world and the tens of thousands, millions of lives that you've impacted over the decades that you've been doing this work. And I want to say thank you for taking out the time. Thanks for having me. And you're welcome, and joining us on this wonderful podcast conversation. Thank you. I'm looking forward to another one. Yes, definitely. Yeah. Yeah. Hugs? Yeah. Hugs. We give good hugs. Which way? Oh. We do hugs this way.