



“Navigating Me” has a lot to do with understanding how you manage three relational tensions: commitment, conflict and attachment. We must learn to navigate the extremes of these relational tensions in order to experience relational wholeness.

Commitment: navigating day-to-day commitments

- *Overcommitters*: People pleasers who can’t say no out of fear of disappointing someone. They get overwhelmed by all the commitments from saying “yes” and end up exhausted and guilty.
- *Underdeliverers*: They make promises they don’t keep. They talk a big talk but fail to deliver and therefore destroy trust.

Conflict: navigating difficult conversations

- *Avoiders*: They “keep the peace” at all costs, neglecting to have the honest and difficult conversations necessary to promote healthy relationships. All of their unresolved issues end up surfacing later in unhealthy ways.
- *Evokers*: People who lack sensitivity and often hurt other people’s feeling with little to no self-awareness. They take unhealthy pride in being straightforward and candid.

Attachment: navigating the emotional energy of our relational world

- *Overattachers*: They fear rejection or isolation, so they quickly open their hearts up to people. They are loyal, invested and generous with their time but fail to put appropriate expectations on others to do their part in a relationship.
- *Detachers*: They need no one. They are connected to several but close to none. They are emotionally removed and aloof while maintaining a sociable exterior. They struggle to be emotionally vulnerable and transparent.

Plot yourself on the spectrums below and discuss with your group why you put yourself where you did.

Overcommitters

Underdeliverers



Conflict Avoider

Conflict Evoker



Overattachers

Detachers



Are you more of an Overcommitter?

- Consider what relational boundaries you need to set. Start tomorrow by eliminating or reducing your involvement.
- What do you need to say “no” to in the next day, week, month or season of life?
- Spend time reflecting and asking the Holy Spirit to show you why you overcommit. Is it fear, insecurity or something else?
- Give a trusted person in your life permission to hold you accountable to saying “no” more often.

Are you more of an Underdeliverer?

- Determine to avoid telling people what you are going to do, and simply do it instead.
- What promise do you need to fulfill over this next week?
- Who needs your apology for a broken promise?
- Spend time in prayer asking God to help you be a person of your word and someone who embodies integrity.

Are you more of a Conflict Avoider?

- Make a list of the conflicts you’re avoiding. Force yourself to face one this week, and see if you can resolve it. Ask for help if needed.
- Spend time reflecting and praying to determine why you avoid conflict. What are the fears that cause you to avoid? Bring those fears into prayer, and ask for help from the Holy Spirit.
- Who do you know that handles conflict well? Invite them out to coffee over this next week, and learn from them.

Are you more of a Conflict Evoker?

- It’s possible you are not aware of how you cause others to feel. Ask two trusted friends this week to tell you what they’re seeing in your behavior that you might not be noticing. Just listen, and avoid defending yourself.
- Spend time this week reading, meditating and praying through these scriptures which inform how we are to approach one another (Ephesians 4:29-32, Romans 12:17-21).
- Consider the underlying reasons conflict is inviting to you. What do you gain? What might you be avoiding?
- The next time you are wanting to voice your thoughts, simply hold onto them and practice silence. While you are being silent, ask the Holy Spirit to help you know if you should speak or remain silent.

Are you more of an Overattacher?

- Do you need to be needed? How quickly and often do you make yourself available to others so you can provide what they need? Reflect on these questions and consider how you might slow down the process of acting so quickly.
- In what ways are you looking to other people to satisfy what only God can provide (safety, security, love, value, affirmation or belonging)? Confess to God, and ask for help in making Him your primary relationship.
- The next time you meet someone, practice self-control when it comes to sharing your heart. Listen more than you talk, and see if you can hold onto some of what you would normally share right away.
- Is there a relationship with which you need to slow down, pull back or simply end? If so, what step will you take this week to do so?

Are you more of a Detacher?

- What people in your life have earned your trust, but you haven’t given it? How can you take a step this week towards trust in that relationship?
- Spend some time reflecting and praying in order to discern the underlying reasons you push people away. If needed, invite a trusted mentor to help you explore.
- Consider reading the book *Changes That Heal* by Henry Cloud. This book will help you understand how your past may be causing you to detach.
- Take risks and be more open and vulnerable the next time you have a conversation with someone. Practice opening up in small ways so you can grow in your ability to be transparent with others.

“Navigating Me” also includes growing in our ability to be self-aware so that we can increase our emotional and spiritual health. Here are some markers of what it means to be self-aware. As you read through the list below, pick one or two markers and commit to working on them this week.

- Understand how you are broken by sinfulness.
 - Romans 3:23 says we are all sinners. Sin leaves scars on our hearts that can affect the way we think or behave. Can you identify some of your scars left behind by your sin or the sins of others? How do those scars affect you today and how you relate to others?
- Can you identify what you are thinking and feeling?
 - How good are you at knowing what you are feeling at any given moment? Can you put a name to it? Sad, frustrated, hurt, ashamed, etc... Throughout the day, stop and consider what you might be feeling and name it.
- Know your God-given personality and spiritual gifts.
 - In 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4, the Apostle Paul explains that God gives spiritual gifts to His children. Do you know yours? How about your personality type? Here are two websites that can help.
 - Spiritual Gifting: www.giftstest.com
 - Personality Type: www.16personalities.com
- Can you self-monitor in the moment?
 - Can you tell if what you are saying or doing is helpful in the moment? If it's not, can you course correct immediately?
 - Are you catching thoughts and adjusting them before they turn into words?
 - Are you accurately interpreting the impact you are having on others? Give others permission to tell you how they feel about the way you interact with them. Just listen and don't judge or get defensive.
- Have accessible strategies ready to course correct ineffective thinking, feeling and behaving.
 - When you are experiencing stress or troubling thoughts, what do you do? Right or wrong, list them. Determine the healthy from the unhealthy strategies, and commit to eliminating the unhealthy ones.
 - What we think often affects the way we feel and behave. What toxic thoughts keep feeding your behaviors? Spend some time in prayer asking God to reveal the root of these toxic thoughts.
- Regularly self-reflect.
 - How often do you think about your own actions over the course of a day? Do you reflect on what you did, said and with whom you interacted? Before you fall asleep, simply set aside three minutes to relive the day and explore how you felt and behaved.
 - Set aside 10-20 minutes to work your way through the questions below. Reflect on them and invite the Holy Spirit to guide your thinking.
 - What inspired gratitude today?
 - What happened that was painful, sad or disappointing?
 - What moment do I now regret and need to confess?
 - What moments of my day were life giving?
 - What moments of my day were life draining?
 - When did I sense God's nearness?
 - When did my hectic pace of life crowd out a sense of God's nearness?
 - When did I give and receive love?
 - When did I feel an absence of love?
 - What did God teach me today?