Day 7: Attachment

In Theory: John Bowlby proposed that human beings are organized around the need for attachment and the search for closeness with a small number of primary figures. The quality of early attachments shapes how a person relates to others and to themselves. Within attachment theory, these early patterns are carried forward and influence expectations of closeness, trust, and separation in later relationships. They also shape how safety is registered in the body and how quickly threat is perceived in connection with others. What once regulated survival continues to organize emotional life long after the original conditions have changed. This internal blueprint means that our adult style of relating is often an ancient strategy for safety, keeping us anchored to old ways of protection.

In Experience: Under stress, one person reaches out, wanting contact, needing proximity. Another withdraws, insisting they are fine. A third seeks closeness and when it arrives, pulls away. Similar patterns appear in relation to ideas or behaviors, where a person clings to routines, or abandons them abruptly when they no longer feel safe. They are strategies, developed early, for managing an unreliable world.

In Thought: How close one can get in a relationship, and how much can be trusted, may have been shaped before the relationship began. Earlier relationships leave traces of expectation into later ones.

In Print: Karen, R. *Becoming Attached* (1998)

In Attention: Notice the impulse toward or away from something when distressed.