

## ABSTRACT

“No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part  
of the main’  
John Donne, 1624

Before I started in personal therapy I would disagree with this reading, I was an ‘island’ isolated and alone. Relationships were something that came easily but felt impossible to hang on to and I could not understand how other people found it natural to rely on another for help and support. Self-sufficiency and independence served me well I would convince myself. When introduced to Attachment Theory especially the avoidant attachment style things started to fall into place. I began to understand how my early childhood experiences had affected my ability to trust in close relationships.

This dissertation uses a case study methodology based on my research into the avoidant attachment style. It is split into three parts the rationale describes how I practice as a humanistic integrative therapist from my newly acquired earned secure attachment (Main & Goldwyn, 1994). The second part is a literature review of Attachment Theory, focused on the avoidant attachment style that demonstrates how the theories and concepts of the field have been formed by empirical research and are now being validated through the science of neurobiology. The third part is a case study showing how I worked with a client with an avoidant attachment and how at times I experienced the difficulties and frustrations that occur when you try and form and maintain a relationship with someone that wants to keep you away so they can remain protected.