MINDTHEORY

Small insights. A kinder you.

Summary Notes: The Intimacy Paradox & Self-Protection

Why people push others away when they actually want closeness.



Connection is always worth it.

Closeness can feel scary and still be safe.

The Core Paradox

- We may want closeness and safety at the same time.
- Past hurt can make intimacy feel risky.
- Distance often protects us from feared rejection.
- Pushing people away can be a defense, not a lack of care.

Protection can hide longing.

A part of you wants to be close. A part of you is afraid. Both can be true.

Common Deactivating Strategies

AVOID
DISTRACT
KEEP DISTANCE

- [ ] Hyper-independence
- [ ] Nitpicking
- [ ] Withdrawal
- [ ] Ghosting

Different strategies. Same goal: less vulnerability.

These strategies reduce vulnerability, but also reduce connection.

Awareness creates choice.

How to Stop Pushing People Away

Progress over perfection.

1 Identify Patterns

Notice when you pull back, shut down, or create distance.

Awareness is the first step towards change.

2 Pause & Name the Fear

Ask: "What feels risky right now?" and identify the fear underneath.

Beneath resistance, there is often a real fear trying to protect you.

3 Use 'I' Statements

Say things like: "I feel overwhelmend" or "I want closeness, but I feel scared."

Honesty builds safety.

Remember

Distance is often a defense mechanism, not a personality flaw.

You deserve connection. You can do this.



You can learn safer ways to stay connected.

If this pattern is persistent or painful, talking to a mental health professional can help.

