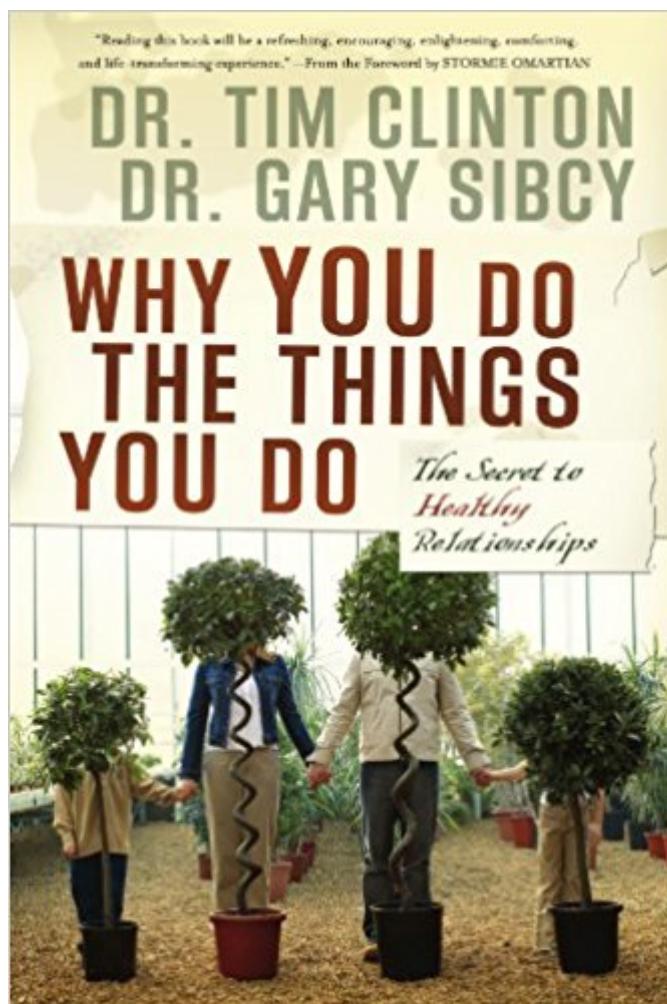


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# Why You Do The Things You Do: The Secret To Healthy Relationships



## **Synopsis**

In this transformational book, the authors have used ground-breaking research to develop four primary patterns of relating to one another that shed light on our actions--and how we can learn to love and be loved even better.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Tim Clinton, Ed.D, LPC, LMFT, is president of the American Association of Christian Counselors. He is professor of Counseling and Pastoral Care at Liberty University and is executive director of the Liberty University Center for Counseling and Family Studies.

This book adapts the well-known concept of "attachment styles" for a broad audience. The authors, clinicians themselves, rename the concept "relationship styles," in order to help readers see more clearly that how they "attached" to others in childhood (primarily parents and caregivers) affects how they "attach," or relate, to spouses, children and friends in adulthood. The four styles of attachment (one secure and three insecure -- pretty bad odds!) are brought to life with examples of people the authors have counseled. The examples of each style are clear and unambiguous, so it's fairly easy to place yourself in a particular style. This ability to see yourself in accepted and well-studied concepts is in a way freeing. I'm not sure that the information does you any good, though, unless it is accompanied by personal therapy with a trained counselor. The book tells you why you do the things you do (hence the title) but it doesn't delve very deeply into what you can do about it.

Perhaps the authors should follow up with a book that is more specific about how to effect change for the better. For example, in terms of the marital relationship, the authors discuss in some detail the good and bad ways to argue, but I didn't gain a lot of insight into how to communicate better with your spouse on a day-to-day basis. They do, however, talk a lot about how to change the way you relate to your children. They make a strong case that reacting well to your children's negative emotions goes a long way toward helping them develop healthy relationships. Their idea of "emotion coaching" is practical and easy to adapt to daily interactions with your children. Perhaps these methods can be applied to adult relationships. I'll have to give it a try. I'm reading this book along with *Boundaries With Kids* and the two together help parents to lovingly create an intentional framework for raising secure and emotionally healthy children. *Parenting With Love And Logic* is a good resource, too.

This is the best book on relationships I have ever read. The first half talks about the 4 relationship styles and how we come to have those styles, providing real life, real people examples that gave me more than one light bulb moment. The second half is a practical guide to how to move toward relating to the people closest to you in a more secure and healthy way. It is truly eye-opening and helpful. I highly recommend it everyone.

Required reading for a counseling course. POWERFUL book. Forced me to deal with some stuff I didn't even know I still had issues with. Nearly threw it across the room and quit school over it (it was that tough). But, thankfully, I kept reading and I'm glad I did. I highly recommend to anyone, but especially in any facet of ministry, counseling, leadership, management, social work, etc. It will give you 1) the chance to grow yourself and 2) a deeper compassion and understanding of the difficult or troubled hearts you have to deal with. (Even dysfunctional family!)

Great read, very helpful if you've never been introduced to attachment styles. I'm using the book as required reading for my deacons to help better understand conflict and history and stability for empathizing with and counseling hurting people.

Everyone should read this book! It explains all different personality types and WHY we are the way we are based on how we were raised and treated as young kids. It also gives great parental advice for babies and young kids. It explains so much of what many of us don't consider which makes you aware of yourself which helps to better yourself. Great book! So insightful!

This book needs a second, third, and fourth reading. It has so much useful and truthful information that I found myself highlighting paragraph after paragraph. Some books have a lot of fat, this book does not. All of the fat has been effectively cut out. It is a constant barrage of staccato truths. Can't wait to read it again!

In Why You Do the Things You Do Drs. Tim Clinton and Gary Sibcy outline what they see as the secret to healthy relationships. Beginning with the premise that humans have been created for relationship, they give an overview of four distinct relationship styles and consider how they play out in the context of important types of relationships. The first style is the type that is desired—the secure relationship style. Individuals who relate this way are both capable and confident; they have a great sense of self-esteem, respect the feelings of others, expect to be respected, and are trusting. This does not mean they will not encounter conflicts; rather, it ensures that the inevitable conflict is handled properly, leading to relationship growth. Secure relationship styles can be fostered through emotion coaching, teaching self-awareness, and cultivating developmental focus. Children are best taught the secure relationship style by seeing it lived out in the lives of their parents. The avoidant style is discussed next. Those who relate this way are not trusting of others in a relationship and hinge their self-worth on personal success. God created man for intimacy, but avoidant people fear getting close to another person. In response to soul wounds of the past, they have built up walls to avoid hurt by avoiding close relationships. They have difficulty showing sensitivity to those they are close to, don't like talking about their past, and are often turned off by physical touch. Generally, they revolve their life around the belief that they are the only person they can rely on to meet their needs and deny the necessity of relationships with others. The ambivalent style is a bit more trusting than the avoidant, but is still characterized by low self-esteem and the belief that others cannot be unconditionally trusted. This style can be cultivated through inconsistent parenting, such as when parents withhold affection or overprotect. These relaters seek out a strong protector to care for them but instead of this being a secure relationship they believe it to be contingent on pleasing the other person. Ambivalent relaters are terrified of showing their emotions for fear that their protector figures will run away. The final relationship style is disorganized. These types of people hold a negative view of themselves and others, and often fluctuate inconsistently between the first three styles. Disorganization of this kind usually results from some sort of childhood abuse and tends to become cyclical, with the individuals raising their own families abusively. Because of how they grew up, they see abuse as familiar and tend to dissociate themselves from their pain. Clinton and Sibcy then turn

to an evaluation of these relationship styles as they play out in the three major relationships in an individual's life--relationship with God, spouse, and children. They explicitly reiterate what was implied in the first half of the book, positing God as a safe haven even when there is no other. One's relationship with God should be primary, and a secure relationship with God will help foster secure relationships with other people even amidst tragedy. This relationship will not come naturally and must be longed for and worked at, but it represents the foundation for all other relationships and must therefore be secure in order to provide support for the others. The key to working towards a secure relationship will come through evaluating one's past and understanding the need for healing. Then, by reframing the story into its proper perspective, healing can begin. When one realizes one's worth as a child of God, it should provide the necessary sense of self-worth to allow the repair of other relationships. To do this requires empathizing with others and seeing the world from their perspective. The secret to healthy relationships ultimately lies in the Biblical advice to love one's neighbor as oneself. Perhaps the seminal work on relationships, Clinton and Sibcy's work is a must read for those trying to understand their relationships with others.

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