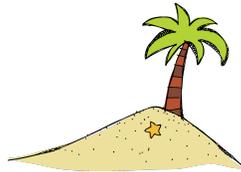


ISLANDS



ISLAND CHARACTERISTICS

Lower feelers, Higher dealers.
Dialed down vocals, facial expression and gesturing.
Go away and handle upset on own. Overwhelmed by emotion. May check out or numb out.
Lack of integration with cognitive and emotional.
Overdependence on cognitive or left brain.
Low verbal regarding self. May seem filtered, guarded or secretive.
Prefer aloneness. Togetherness feels like pressure.
May close their eyes when talking to you.
Are auto-regulators. Wouldn't cross their mind to go to someone else to help them feel better.
May think they can do it better themselves.
Focus on things, not people or relationships.
Hard to discern or know their needs or feelings.
May feel demanded of in close relationships.
Tend towards cold anger – passive aggressive.
Biggest fears -- blame, failure, inadequacy, loss of self.

IN A RELATIONSHIP

Is steady and can be committed.
Tend to over focus on head to head communication (vs. heart to heart). Brings logic to things. Tuning into emotion may be overwhelming.
Have trouble discerning or knowing their needs. May feel like they shouldn't have any. May dismiss them.
May feel unappreciated and demanded of. "My only complaint is that my partner complains."
May be less comfortable with affection.
May often use "I don't know" or "I don't remember" when asked questions.
Remember fewer details and give less information (unless lecturing)
Need to protect self (vs. relationship) so may sound defensive.
May look calm on outside, but has high anxiety underneath that they may not be aware of.

IF YOU ARE MARRIED TO AN ISLAND

Give lots of grace for understanding that their wiring can't handle emotional/relational overload. Help them expand it slowly.

Allow for breaks, pauses, changing the subject, etc. Take 5-10 minute breaks if needed.
When it comes to making contact, approach your partner slowly. The transition from alone to together is hard.
When you make contact, have a friendly smile on your face. They often were only approached when they were in trouble.
Give them the benefit of the doubt in conflict. "I know you meant well and I feel hurt by...because...."
Be patient when they don't know what they think or feel. Give them space and let them know you value them, their feelings, and experience.
Assure them you're not going to leave them and you accept them the way that they are. Assure them they are more important than conflict, thing, etc.

ISLAND STRENGTHS

Able to get the job done.
Able to handle things and push through.
Is able to cognitively reason and respond.
Steady and dependable. Take responsibilities seriously.
Independent.
Not reactive. Able to handle themselves.
Express themselves well with metaphors.
Comfortable with side-by-side activities.

HELPING AN ISLAND GROW

Increase self-awareness, self-reflection and expression of emotion.
Increase attunement ability and reading of partner.
Challenge them to turn toward others, rather than turn to be alone when overwhelmed or upset.
Help them learn to sit with strong emotion and learn to coregulate.
Help them reflect out loud and use their voice (they often have stopped using it).
Encourage them to practice "free time" – free from objects/things (like screens).
Reduce feeling like there's something wrong with them – normalize and let them off the hook – You didn't get this and now you get the gift of receiving it by giving it to your partner.
Practice all building blocks of Connection.

ISLANDS AS A PARENT

Tend to be dismissing/ minimizing as parents. May seem a bit disconnected.

May minimize or ignore child's experience, thoughts and feelings. May require child to "dial down" or may go away in response.

Has a "deal with it" attitude. May have "little adults" as children.

May focus on performance and values achievement over relationship.

Hellos and goodbyes are brief or unattended to.

Unaware of how transitions impact children and how to resource them.

May be less affectionate.

May idealize their childhood and their children's childhood.

HOW TO HELP ISLANDS GROW IN PARENTING

Name and highlight strengths when you see them.

Increase ability to interactively regulate. Reflect, Regulate, Relate.

Coach parent to practice PACE – Playful, Accepting, Curious, Empathetic

Coach parent to cultivate strong hellos and goodbyes, being intentional with them and not just disappearing or sending kids off.

Help parent read emotional cues and bids for attention. Help parent expand tolerance for emotion in others.

Coach parent to attend to children's emotions.

Help them narrate child's experience of something to increase understanding and curb minimizing.

Give them things to do together with kids. Recognize they could do it alone and encourage them to do it together.

Encourage parent to be aware of their attachment style and to make sense of their experience.