Three ways of coping with a life pattern

Giving in, avoiding and fighting back, and how each keeps the pattern going.

When a life pattern is triggered, it hurts. As children we found ways to cope. Those same ways tend to run automatically in adulthood, and each one, in its own way, stops the pattern from changing.

Giving in
Acting as if the pattern were true. Choosing situations and people that confirm it. Feeling the pain directly.

Avoiding
Arranging life so the pattern is never triggered. Staying away from people, challenges or feelings. Numbing with work, drink, food or screens.

Fighting back
Doing the opposite, to prove the pattern wrong. It looks strong from outside and is fragile underneath.

Pattern	Giving in	Avoiding	Fighting back
"I will be abandoned"	Choosing partners who are unavailable	Avoiding close relationships altogether	Clinging, checking, or leaving first
"I am defective"	Putting myself down. Choosing critical people	Hiding the real me. Keeping conversations shallow	Acting superior. Criticising others
"I will fail"	Not trying. Doing things half-heartedly	Putting things off. Avoiding challenges	Driving myself relentlessly
"My needs do not matter"	Doing what everyone else wants	Avoiding situations where I might have to ask	Demanding, or rebelling against every request

Why they keep the pattern going

Each style prevents the corrective experience. If you never let anyone close, you never find out that some people stay. If you never stop driving yourself, you never find out you are acceptable without the achievements.

A fourth option

Noticing the pattern has been triggered, soothing the feeling, and choosing a response that fits the present, not the past. We call this the healthy adult.

The coping style I use most

What it protects me from, and what it costs me

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