

# Avoid Complicating Your Commitments with the Burden of Attachment

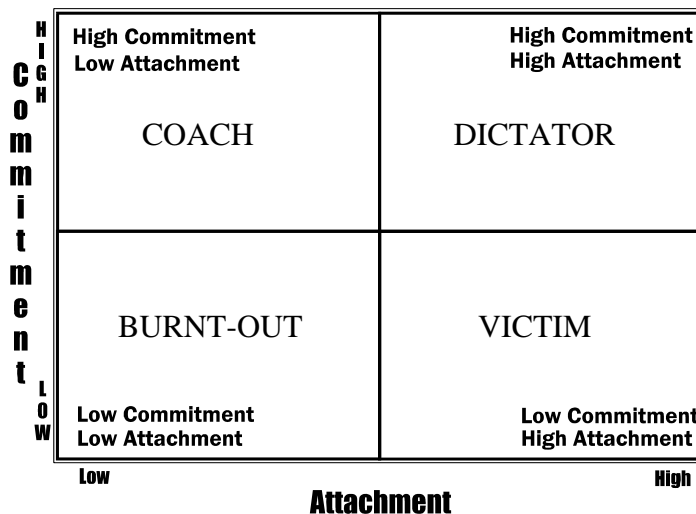
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We all understand the importance of commitment and the power it brings to our business and personal relationships. Commitment is essential to achieving our vision and our goals. Unfortunately, we sometimes allow our commitment to be tainted by the energy of attachment (sometimes referred to as “attachment to outcome” or as “ego attachment”). The greatest deterrent to accomplishment occurs when we get attached to the outcome. Attachment creates a concern that we won’t achieve our intended result, which in turn affects our actions.

It is important to understand the difference between Commitment and Attachment. Commitment lives in action. We can tell what someone is committed to by observing what they are doing. When we take actions that move us in the direction we intend, we are operating out of high commitment. When we are engaged in activities that don’t move us in the direction we say we want to go, we are operating in low commitment to that intention.

Attachment, on the other hand, shows up in the energy we bring to our actions. Attachment is about “being right” and “looking good.” One of the places attachment impacts the most is in our communication. When you get attached to whether someone says “yes” or “no” to you – your body language, tone of voice, and overall energy constrict. In fact, attachment is energy draining and eventually affects our commitment as it begins to feel like too much work to achieve our goals.

The Commitment/Attachment Model makes it easy to identify where we are in relation to our commitments by examining our energy and our behaviors. It also helps us identify the energy of others. The model shows the Domains of the Dictator (high commitment, high attachment), the Victim (low commitment, high attachment), the Burnt-out (low commitment, low attachment), and the Coach (high commitment, low attachment).



### **Domain of the Dictator**

When we act in full commitment with high attachment, we frequently become controlling, demanding, critical, judgmental, obsessive, and stressed. The energy of the Dictator is aggressive. We often play to win without concern about whether others lose. The message of our behavior (if not our language) conveys “My way or the highway.” We may get results, but often at a high cost in terms of relationships, teamwork, and the possibility for even better results. Business owners who operate out of this place often become micromanagers because they believe that they are the only ones who can “do it right.” Unfortunately, the result is that employees move into the Victim or Burnt-out domains because there is no room for their input; they just do their jobs as they are told.

### **Domain of the Victim**

When we act with low commitment but still have the high attachment energy, we feel frustrated, anxious, and powerless. We often engage in passive-aggressive behaviors – complaining, talking behind others’ backs, and sabotaging the efforts of others. We believe that “If only...(they did it my way, they listened to me, the economy was better, my employees cared more, etc.)...then things would be OK.” The Domain of the Victim is a lose/win place where we believe others are winning at our expense.

### **Domain of the Burnt-out**

When we have released the energy of attachment but remain in low commitment, we are in the Domain of the Burnt-out. We are apathetic, believing that nothing we do will make a difference. Our energy is passive. This is a lose/lose place because we are not accomplishing all that we could and those around us suffer from the loss of our contributions. The message is “I don’t care.” In some governmental organizations they refer to this as “Retired in Place” because employees are doing enough to stay around and earn their retirement but have stopped being creative and fully engaged.

### **Domain of the Coach**

When we are in action, fully committed, but without the energy of attachment, we can be creative, flexible, centered, and enthusiastic. This is the Domain of the Coach and is the only place where true teamwork can occur. The energy is assertive, with everyone able to speak up, share their opinion, work toward win/win, and explore possibilities. In fact, the message is “What’s possible?” and we are open to changing course if what we are doing isn’t working. When we lead from high commitment with low attachment, others are more willing to follow and participate fully in achieving shared vision and mutual goals.

Examine your current commitments to determine where you can release attachment in order to achieve better results with a stronger sense of teamwork. Also look at where your employees may be operating with attachment – or signs of being burnt-out. Ask “What is possible?” to enhance the experience of high commitment within your business. Operating in all out commitment, without energy draining attachment, allows us to make our businesses – and our personal lives – more fulfilling and successful.