

Brief Notes on the Five Social Goal Suggestions

Appear Inoffensive

Wear deodorant. Even if your circumstances aren't ideal, you can probably get away with a daily "Italian bath" with a washcloth and a cheap natural deodorant made of baking soda and a natural lotion. The important goal is consistency. If you dislike any approval-seeking or conforming behavior, simply think of it as the golden rule.

Look respectable as defined by your work and social groups. This doesn't mean you have to have manicures, perfect hair, or the latest fashions. It means make sure that as a minimum, you don't habitually have offensive odors, your fingernails are evenly trimmed and clean, and that your clothing is clean or at least doesn't contain images or wording that is offensive to the groups you will be around. Your social group may love dreadlocks, tats, and/or chains, but these three aspects will be still respected and applicable anywhere.

Boundaries

Practice saying no. See <https://emilypost.com/advice/how-to-say-no-graciously/> for ways to decline while showing respect to the other. Boundaries are about self-defense, self-respect, and honesty. If someone won't take no for an answer, distance yourself or seek help from someone who can take a mediator role. Consider that if you did not actually use the word "no" or "never," or your tone of voice was not consistent with your message, you might not have communicated your *no* in a way that the other understood. "Clear is kind," says Brene Brown at <https://brenebrown.com/articles/2018/10/15/clear-is-kind-unclear-is-unkind/>

Clarify what your job is and isn't. Reciprocity is an important part of setting boundaries. If you're giving and not getting in an adult-to-adult relationship, giving needs to stop.

Detaching With Love

from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/family-affair/201506/detaching-love-0>

Control is a central issue in addiction; it's a big deal for addicts and their loved ones. Addicts convince themselves that they can control their use. Loved ones convince themselves that they can control (help or fix) the addict. What a huge amount of energy you are spending on someone else's life. Loving the person doesn't mean you have to fix or rescue them. You can grow in acceptance that changing or controlling another person is impossible. And it's OK. When enabling fails (as it often does), loved ones face difficult choices. Do we continue the craziness, let go completely, or detach with love.

See also <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/assertive-communication/communication/none>

Get help when needed. Within the context of reciprocal relationships, allow others to return a favor when you need one. Some of us have a lot of pride and want to be helpers but never helped. Allow trusted others the opportunity to shine. Allow them show their talents and their valuing of you. Get a therapist's help if needed. If the expense seems unworkable, see if there are community-sponsored licensed clinical social workers available for limited-time crisis counseling.

Regular Check-in

Create a set schedule for a weekly formal meeting for logistics and emotional discussions. Use a set format to keep the conversation positive and on track. It can be as simple of each person answering: "What's working? What would you like to see more of?"

Family Time

Schedule regular meals and events together. Don't make the most important people always come last.

Friend Time

Schedule time together. Even if it's once per year, in-person time lets them know you're committed.

Offer to help with tasks or projects. If it's been a long time since you connected, a helpful way to meet without taking time away from their other priorities is to help with a chore that allows you to chat.