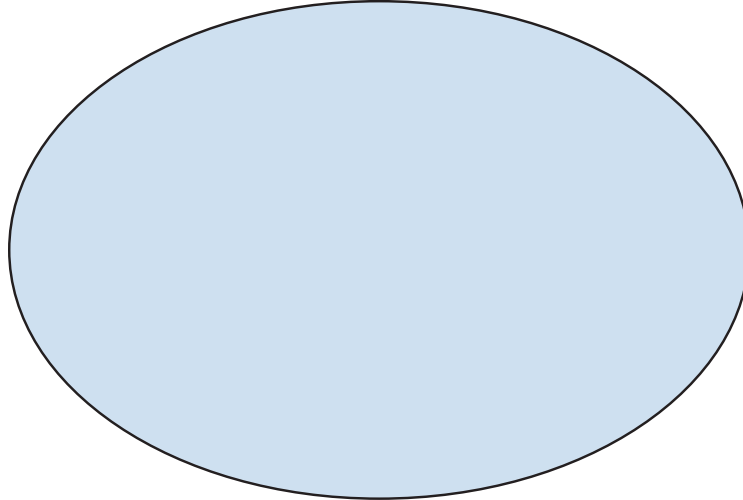


**List the key players in your life.** (i.e. partners, parents, friends, children, family, co-workers, acquaintances)  
Who is consistently in your orbit? List them in the oval below. Rate each of these people and place them in the appropriate column below the oval. See definitions of Very Safe, Somewhat Safe, and Unsafe on page 2.



**Very Safe**

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**Somewhat Safe**

--

**Unsafe**

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**Ground rules for examining relationships:**

1. No assumptions should be made about anyone’s behavior or thinking. We aren’t going to assume that someone wants the best for us or is out to get us. We are just going to look at the experiences we’ve had.
2. Friendship is rarely black and white. Feelings get hurt and forgiveness is needed. Sometimes we fail others and sometimes they fail us.
3. Healing from trauma is hard work (have I said that enough yet?). We need a community around us while we recover.
4. There is nothing that you need to DO with any of this information. If you feel compelled to send a thank you or appreciation note to someone who has been a tremendous blessing, that is always a kind gesture...but it is not something being asked of you. On the other end of the friendship spectrum, it may become apparent to you that someone in your life has not been healthy for you. Confronting this is not the goal right now and is very unlikely to solve anything.

### Safe Relationships

Safe relationships are when there is equal give and take between you. You are able to talk about your struggles and be heard, while also listening when needed. Equal give and take may not be equal during the day to day; you will likely find there are seasons of giving and taking as you both navigate life's ups and downs. Because the give and take is equal over time, these relationships will provide support without any expectation. Our safe people offer us physical, emotional, and mental security. We know they would never physically harm us. We can be ourselves around them without fearing that they will judge or misinterpret us. They know how to keep our secrets and can confront us when our behavior is contributing to our problems. These people are the ones who get to give you advice and the only ones whose opinions need to be considered.

### Somewhat Safe Relationships

Somewhat safe people are the ones who look a little more like acquaintances or casual friends. They are physically safe all of the time, but may hurt your feelings or let you down on occasion. They tend to apologize for or acknowledge those shortcomings, but don't often make an effort to change. Our somewhat safe people may not always be trustworthy or a safe place to share all of our secrets. These can be the people that you notice drifting away or changing the subject when you start to get vulnerable. Somewhat safe people serve a valuable place in our lives; they are great to grab lunch or a movie with and a fun place to vent about life's annoyances. They can be a great distraction from the hard things.

### Unsafe Relationships

An unsafe person is someone who is careless about your feelings or untrustworthy, but not abusive. Unsafe people are those who hurt you physically, mentally, emotionally, sexually, and in any other way. This could be the friend that always gossips about your secrets or will leave you at a party without a ride home. This could be a family member who makes fun of things you are sensitive about and isn't concerned when you are upset. Please note: An abusive person is someone who is sexually, physically or emotionally violent toward you. This can include assault, aggression, and verbal harassment. This is one area where there is no room for grace, and cannot be chocked up to being human or excused because of other good behavior.

It is difficult to know what situations we are walking into with unsafe people or to anticipate how they will react. We tend to walk away feeling drained, ashamed, angry, or anxious. Unsafe people can appear incredibly supportive but that support comes with strings attached.

You can identify an unsafe person by repeated hurtful experiences or broken trust. You will know in your heart that you cannot trust or turn to them for help. You don't have to hate them, and sometimes, you don't even have to cut them out of your life (except, again, if they are abusive). You do not deserve to continually endure abuse. Sometimes with the right boundaries, you can allow an unsafe person a place in your life, which is often necessary when these unsafe people are family members, but you will need to guard your heart. They have not earned trust to hear your secrets, access to your everyday life, or the right to give you advice about your life or situations. They do not get to live rent free in your head or make you feel guilty when you don't agree with them.