

HEALTHY PLATONIC RELATIONSHIPS

A Green Flags, Warning Signs & Personal Standards Reflection Guide

Purpose: Use this guide to reflect on friendships and other non-romantic relationships, notice recurring patterns, clarify what you need from these connections, and identify questions to explore in therapy. It is not a test and should not be used to label someone based on one incident.

How to use this guide

- Think about repeated patterns over time, not only promises, chemistry, or isolated moments.
- Consider both what the person does and how the relationship affects your emotional wellbeing and sense of self.
- Mark what feels relevant, note examples, and bring any areas of uncertainty to your next session.

1. Green flags: qualities that support a healthy relationship

Emotional safety and respect

- You can express feelings, needs, opinions, and boundaries without fear of punishment, ridicule, or retaliation.
- They respect your dignity during disagreement and do not use your vulnerabilities against you.
- You generally feel safe, valued, and able to be yourself.

Communication and conflict repair

- They listen to understand, ask questions, and allow room for your perspective.
- They can disagree without insults, threats, intimidation, silent punishment, or manipulation.
- They take responsibility, apologise sincerely, and follow the apology with changed behaviour.

Character and consistency

- Their words and actions are reasonably consistent over time.
- They are honest, dependable, and willing to have difficult conversations.
- They show kindness and integrity not only toward you, but also toward people from whom they have little to gain.

Boundaries, autonomy, and mutuality

- They respect your friendships, family relationships, work, faith, privacy, time, and personal goals.
- Decisions and responsibilities are discussed rather than imposed by one person.
- They allow healthy independence and do not expect one friendship to meet every emotional or social need.

Care, reciprocity, and growth

- Interest, effort, practical support, and emotional care feel reasonably mutual over time.
- They can celebrate your progress and other relationships without constant rivalry, possessiveness, or comparison.
- They are open to feedback and personal growth without making you responsible for changing them.
- The relationship supports peace, growth, accountability, and a clearer sense of who you are.

2. Yellow flags: signs that deserve attention and conversation

Remember: A yellow flag is not automatically a reason to end a relationship. It is a cue to slow down, ask questions, set boundaries, and observe whether the person responds with honesty and sustained change.

- Important conversations are repeatedly avoided, minimised, or postponed.
- There is inconsistency between what is promised and what is practised.
- Jealousy, defensiveness, emotional withdrawal, or reassurance-seeking frequently disrupts connection.
- One person is doing most of the emotional work, planning, apologising, or repairing.
- Boundaries are questioned, negotiated repeatedly, or treated as rejection.
- They expect immediate closeness, access, loyalty, or disclosure before trust has had time to develop.
- You often rationalise behaviour that leaves you confused, anxious, depleted, or doubtful of yourself.
- There are significant differences in values or future goals that have not been addressed honestly.
- The friendship feels increasingly one-sided, competitive, transactional, or dependent.
- Conflict repeats without meaningful learning, repair, or behavioural change.

3. Red flags: serious patterns that should not be ignored

Safety first: If you feel afraid, controlled, threatened, or unsafe, prioritise support and safety planning. You do not need to confront a potentially dangerous person alone.

- Physical violence, threats of harm, stalking, intimidation, unwanted sexual pressure, or destruction of property.
- Trying to control where you go, whom you speak to, your devices, money, work, or access to other supportive people.
- Persistent lying, deception, infidelity, exploitation, or major hidden behaviour without accountability.
- Humiliation, name-calling, contempt, gaslighting, blame-shifting, or making you doubt your memory and judgement.
- Using secrets, money, gifts, faith, social influence, guilt, or threats of abandonment to control you.
- Repeated violation of clearly stated boundaries or refusal to accept your right to say no.
- Isolating you from trusted people or creating conflict whenever you seek outside support.
- A cycle of harm, apology, promises, and repetition with little evidence of sustained change.
- Refusing all responsibility while insisting that you are the sole cause of every problem.

4. Relationship pattern check

For each statement, circle or highlight the response that best reflects the overall pattern.

Statement	Often	Some-times	Rarely	Unsure
I can be honest without fearing punishment or rejection.	☐	☐	☐	☐
My boundaries are heard and respected.	☐	☐	☐	☐
We communicate directly rather than through assumptions or games.	☐	☐	☐	☐
We can repair conflict and learn from it.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Apologies are supported by changed behaviour.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Statement	Often	Some-times	Rarely	Unsure
I trust the consistency between words and actions.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Effort, care, and responsibility feel reasonably mutual.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I remain connected to my identity, values, and support system.	☐	☐	☐	☐
We can discuss misunderstandings , changing needs, and expectations honestly.	☐	☐	☐	☐
My privacy, time, personal space, and other relationships are respected.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel more secure and grounded than confused or diminished.	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. Clarifying my personal standards

Five qualities I value most in a friend or platonic connection:

Three behaviours that help me feel emotionally safe:

My non-negotiable boundaries are:

Behaviours I may be tempted to excuse, but should take seriously:

Expectations, boundaries, or unresolved issues that need honest discussion:

6. Reflection before our session

1. Which green flags are present consistently? What examples come to mind?

2. Which yellow or red flags stood out to me, and how often do they occur?

3. How do I usually feel before, during, and after spending time with this person?

4. Am I responding to this current relationship, or are past friendship experiences shaping what I expect or tolerate?

5. What do I need more clarity about during our next session?

Closing thought: A healthy platonic relationship is not conflict-free or perfectly equal at every moment. It allows honesty, respect, reciprocity, changing seasons, and repair—without demanding that you sacrifice safety, dignity, identity, or other meaningful connections.