

Level Up to Become Social Again

Excerpt from *Cracking the Social Cipher* by Vanessa Gill

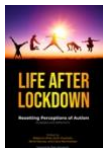
Think about the social “levels” of places in your area. The idea of higher-level places (more stimulating places with more people) like a party or a loud restaurant might sound terrible to you (they definitely do for me). A public park or hiking trail, however? That’s much more manageable. If you or your loved ones are anything like me, it may take some time to work up to feeling comfortable, safe, and not completely depleted of energy in higher-level places. The best way that I’ve found to work up is by gradually “leveling up” the types of places I go to over time (see Social Levels chart below).

Social Levels

- Level 0:** Home, of course!
- Level 1:** A public park or hiking trail, a library, a parent or grandparent’s home.
- Level 2:** A quiet coffee shop patio, a beach, a playground, a close friend or family member’s house.
- Level 3:** This is where things might start to sound a little more difficult—but you’ll get there! A small friends and family gathering, a restaurant patio at lunchtime, book stores, museums.
- Level 4:** Indoors at a restaurant, shopping centers, department stores, larger family and friend gatherings.

The time you spend jumping between levels is completely up to you and your own comfort levels. The jump from a Level 0 to a Level 1 place may be easy, but a Level 2 to a Level 3 place may take a lot more time and feel a lot more difficult. This is completely natural and ok. I try to up my exposure to each level a bit. For me, I started by going to parks weekly, and then attending gatherings or going to busier places every two weeks. Then I challenged myself a bit more by doing some work in a busy coffee shop and then working up to having a small get together with trusted friends and family with an activity besides just conversation (board games, movies, etc.).

Make sure to pace yourself, and don’t get frustrated if you or your child feel overwhelmed with the next step—instead, try heading into the space next time equipped with the tips I’ll lay out in the next paragraphs.



<https://www.amazon.com/Life-After-Lockdown-Resetting-Perceptions/dp/1956110038>