

Online Dating & Friendships, A Guide to Help You Find the Companionship You are Missing

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- Welcome to the brave new world of online dating, friendships and companionships. You have been courageous enough to join this lecture so we will do our very best to make it worth your while.
- You do not need to write down notes...except this one. Where to get the notes and links for this lecture. <http://www.avpals.com/students/>
- We are not promoting online dating. We are volunteers, so we are not gaining any financial benefit from any dating service or company. Always do your own research as we may have missed something. We have taken great care to prepare these notes but take no responsibility for your actions.
- Our aim is to show you how to navigate the online dating world, help you to stay as safe as possible and point out of the pitfalls and traps that could occur along the way.
- It is VITAL you remember this at all times: THE ONLY WAY TO BE COMPLETELY SAFE IS TO STAY ALONE. The fact is that the world of relationships is just the same as it was when you were when you were young, there are now just new ways to connect.

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Here is an outline of this lecture: -

- First, we will address the issue of Technical Protection – what technologies and roadblocks you need to put in place to as safe as possible BEFORE you start.
- Next Julianne will tell you all about some of the dating sites she knows about. There are many, many more.
- After that we will tell you coach you on how to set up a good, positive and honest profile.
- The next subject is the not-so-honest world of scoundrels and scammers.
- Then we will talk about steps to take to put yourself online as safely as possible.
- And finally, we will give you some guidelines about going offline and meeting someone for real.
- We will also try to answer any questions you may have... but before we start, do you know what sort of person you want to attract? A stick figure could help you. There is a sample after the “Useful Links” page of the online notes you will get from this course.

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Technical Protection & Personal Safety

Start with an Open Mind and a Secure Device

- **Set up a new and separate email address to receive messages.** This can be a Gmail, Yahoo, Outlook or any other free email server. Always use that address for communications with

people you don't know. Create a number for them to text and call you at without giving out your real number. Enter: The Google Voice Proxy Phone Number.

- You can obtain a Google Voice phone number for free and then have it route calls and texts to your real mobile phone number. The person on the other end only see's your Google voice number (if you've set things up correctly).
- If you're using a desktop or laptop Windows computer, create a separate guest login on your computer. That way if someone gets into your computer in the background, they are less able to create havoc than if you are in Administrator Mode. It is also useful if someone else uses the computer and you want to keep your activities private.
- If you haven't already done so, install antivirus & Firewall software & learn how to change your home Wi-Fi password. It is simple to do online, but you have to know that password first. Look up "How to change Wi-Fi password" in Google and follow that with the name of your internet provider's name (Telstra, Optus, iiNet etc.) I could not find any specific safety information regarding using tablet device like an iPad, Samsung tablet or smartphone except to turn off Location Services.
- If possible, don't use public Wi-Fi or Internet Cafes because these are unsafe browsing environments due to increased chances of theft or fraud. Use a VPN - Virtual Private Network (See Useful Links page in the notes)
- Arrange a debit card from your bank and just keep a small amount of money in it, and use it for your online bank account. Alternatively set up a PayPal account.

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Technical Protection & Personal Safety (Cont...)

Think with your head and not your heart.

- Never give out your surname, phone number or any other personal details online. Always remember that only the meetings happen online, the personal communications happen in person and that's when you can begin to trust if it feels right to do so.
- If you have any doubts at all ask a trusted friend to take a look. e.g. Lady who asked a friend to look and was saved from a scam that was so convincing – because she was seeing everything she wanted to see, but not seeing the clues that it was not real.
- Beware of scammers and identity theft. Do your homework! Dating sites do background checking to attempt to block scammers, but don't get complaisant. At the first mention of a hard luck story, or any mention of needing money, no matter how attracted you are – CUT OFF COMMUNICATION! Scammers are very clever and know which buttons to press. Write yourself a note to stick somewhere prominent. If it seems too good to be true, it most likely is.

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Online Dating Sites

Julianne's good and bad dating sites, there are many, many more. Type in Dating for over 50's and you will get lots and lots more. You will need to pay, so **read the terms and conditions in full before you sign up**. e.g. Julianne had a terrible experience with Elite Singles where they threatened to take her to court for non-payment because she did not read the terms and conditions. Other people have had great experiences with this site.

- **RSVP – Top Rated Australian site.** Julianne’s dating site of choice. They give you more matches and keep the costs reasonable. You can search by location, age or even by your personal deal-breaker. You can send “kisses” for free and then buy “stamps” to get to know the person better.
- **Elite – Rated 9.4 Australian site.** EliteSingles is aimed at an educated target audience a dating site could offer. They claim to use a “scientific matching system”, which goes further than most other dating sites in asking for specific, advanced criteria to create successful matches. Your information, preferences and lifestyle are gathered in one unique questionnaire.
- **eHarmony – Rated 9.0 Australian site.** Responsible for over 11 thousand marriages, eHarmony Australia claims to be a revolutionary and unique online dating website. Instead of having to search through countless profiles, eHarmony.com evaluates your personality and lifestyle, calculates compatibility and sends you profiles which match who you are and what you really need. The system is grounded in relationship science. It is considered to be a smart dating method, geared towards singles looking for long-term relationships.
- **Older Dating Online Australian site.** Online dating site for mature singles. Members are looking for all kinds of different love and companionship, from platonic friendship to dates and long-term partners.
- **Bumble and Tinder.** These dating sites are mostly used by young people and mostly just to find a complicit partner with whom to engage in sexual activities of all types. You may like to investigate these sites but you may not fine any older people of like mind.

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Setting up your Profile

A picture paints a thousand words

- **Recent pictures only**, at least 5. Give people a chance to really see you at your best by giving them a close-up, 3 full body shots from different angles and an action shot.
- **No selfies**, ask a trusted friend or hire a professional. Not only do selfies look obvious, they look contrived, and they make you look unsociable or lonely.
- Women should wear brightly coloured clothes and men a shirt or suit in a solid colour, not grey. Don’t include family, pets, too much skin, hats, sunglasses or a fussy background.
- Include an action shot of you doing what you love to do for a hobby. If you are an outdoors person, show it. If not, show what interests you that could interest someone you are interested in.

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Setting up your Profile (Cont..)

The No-no’s:

- **No sunglasses.** You can’t see the eyes, and often people will judge their first impressions by looking at your eyes.
- **No hats.** Especially applies to men because if a man is trying to hide his baldness then women looking at his profile have to wonder what else you are hiding. If you are bald, show your baldness ...even if you are a woman.

- **No ex-partners.** Even cutting your ex (or anyone else) off the edge of a picture shows that you have not gone to very much trouble to show yourself as you are now. It could imply that you haven't been alone for very long and if not then the picture of you is likely to be an old – and thus untruthful one.
- **No crowd shots.** How is anyone supposed to figure out which one is you? Not even a picture with grand-children is advisable because it shows you don't have room in your life for anyone new.
- **Not too much skin.** Even if you have the body of a model you should only show a little skin because otherwise you look like you're only after sex and that could be off-putting for your perfect partner.

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Setting up your Profile (Cont...)

Words paint a thousand pictures:

- **Become a good story teller.** Use language you would normally use to describe yourself. Add some humour and tell some general truths about yourself. Try telling a story like you were talking to a friend. Don't make lists of things you like or don't like. Talk about WHY things interest you rather than what interests you.
- **Be proud of who you are.** Never put yourself down in any way. If you have what you consider to be unsightly varicose veins or if you have medical or mental issues, don't mention it here. There will be plenty of time for these things to be discussed if or when you have met in person.
- **Provide mental images beyond the photos.** Talk about how you see yourself, things you like to surround yourself with and quirks that you love about yourself.
- **Talk about your passions.** If you like breeding chickens, say so. If you love gardening but hate weeding, say so. Be your own hero. Tell stories that hint at mysterious possibilities. Ask questions that your ideal man or woman would find fascinating. Speaking of fascinating, if you really want to learn how to capture someone's attention, in person or in print, check out Sally Hogshead's excellent book, Fascinate. [\(Click here to see notes and links\)](#)
- **Get a trusted friend to help you.** The perspective of someone who knows you is a valuable resource, so even if you write your profile yourself, ask your trusted friend(s) to read over it and suggest alterations or revisions.

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Setting up your Profile (Cont...)

Words paint a thousand pictures:

- **Your profile is not a resume.** It's not about what you do or have done for a living, it's about who you are.
- **Be authentic and humorous.** Weave in as many funny and original anecdotes that you can think of. Make people smile and they will want to meet you.
- **Avoid the negative.** Don't say what you DON'T want, or if you do then put it in a way that allows people to still feel good about themselves and move on to someone more suitable. For

examples of this read “Out There, a survival guide for dating in midlife” by Kerry Sackville
[\(Click here to see notes and links\)](#)

- **Avoid clichés.** Avoid saying what everyone else is saying. Things like “fun loving” and “cuddly”. Come up with more descriptive and interesting things to say about yourself and the person you are looking for.

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Scammer 1 example.

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Interval

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Going Online

Some Guidelines:

- **Be proactive but not too eager.** You’ve spent time and effort putting together your profile, and you think it represents you the best way possible. Now is the time to put yourself out there. There is a big difference between being proactive and eager. Proactive means staying in charge while not getting too excited while eager implies that you are trying to please.
- **Proof read – spelling is vital.** Just as you will be judging people by their spelling and grammar, they will be looking closely at yours too so it is essential that you check and double check your interactions with others before you send them
- **Don’t lie.** Just as you don’t want people to lie to you, don’t lie to them about anything. You are who you are and like what you like. Don’t try to be something you are not.
- **Don’t rush – stay on the site.** Don’t allow the person of interest to tempt you off the dating site. This is one of the tricks that scammers use, so don’t allow it to happen to you.
- **Don’t give out your phone number – ask for theirs.** If you’ve been chatting for a while and want to get to the meeting stage, ask for the other person’s phone number first. If they won’t give it but still sound genuine then set up a Google phone number [\(Click here to see notes and links\)](#) and give that number to your potential date.

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- **Going Online**
- *More Guidelines:*
- **Only use your first name.** Nobody needs to know your surname just to chat with you online so don’t give it even if asked. If they ask they are likely to be a scammer.
- **Don’t give out your address. NEVER** give your address as you are laying yourself open to all sorts of difficulties and potential harm.
- **Don’t make excuses.** If you don’t fancy the person making overtures in your direction don’t answer. Never make excuses for not following up or about who you are or what you stand for (or won’t stand for)

- **Don't take it personally.** If the person you are interested in doesn't get back to you it is because they are exercising their right to be themselves and if you take that personally you can cause yourself unnecessary hurt and disheartenment.
- **Talk on the phone first.** Never arrange to meet before you've spoken on the phone. People are much more open on the phone and you can ask some more personal questions that are important to you. You can get much more of a feel for the person before you meet if you've spoken on the phone first.

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Going Off-line

Meeting Your Match.

- **Always meet in a public place.** This could be a crowded café, art gallery or anywhere that people are aware that you are there. Meeting in a park or public garden, for example is not a good idea because even if it is busy, people are not interested in you. If they are serving you, they are interested.
- **Only agree to a coffee first.** A long, three course meal could be much too much to invest in someone you've discovered in the first 10 minutes you don't want to be with.
- **Give meeting details to a friend.** Tell your most trusted friends that you will be meeting with someone, give details of where and when and ask them to stay in range in case you need to get away fast. You can set up a coded message so that they ring you and call you away to an "urgent" event.
- **Don't go if you feel obliged to go.** If, after your telephone conversation you decide not to go, let the person know and don't go. Never go if you are feeling pressured by the other person to meet.
- **Be there on time.** If you do decide to go, then be respectful of other people's time and be there when you say you will be there. That will make you a more authentic and reliable person to your potential partner.
- **Always meet during the day or early evening.** Meeting late means there are less people likely to be looking out for you.
- **Stay sober, alert and careful.** This seems obvious, but your date could ply you with drinks and get you tipsy – then before you know it you have given away all your personal information. Watch out for questions that may make it easier for your date to track you on social media or worse, steal your identity.
- **Always arrange your own transport.** Even if it is the local bus service, know exactly where and when the services are and be there to catch it no matter how good a time you are having.

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Going Offline:

Meeting Your Match (Cont...)

- **Don't make it all about you.** This is a valuable opportunity to find out about the person you've chosen to have coffee with so don't waste it by telling all your stories and anecdotes. Ask questions, listen carefully to the answers.

- **Listen for alarm bells.** Alarm bells include any kind of soft put-down of you (or your gender). For examples of this read the books we have mentioned ([Click here to see notes and links](#))
- **Stay sober, alert and careful.** This seems obvious, but your date could ply you with drinks and get you tipsy – then before you know it you have given away all your personal information. Watch out for questions that may make it easier for your date to track you on social media or worse, steal your identity.
- **Arrange your own transport.** Even if it is the local bus service, know exactly where and when the services are and be there to catch it no matter how good a time you are having.
- **Have an escape plan.** Make sure you know exactly where your car is parked, how to get hold of a trusted friend, when to leave and what the signs of suspicion are.

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Julianne's Scammer story.

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Tricks scammers often use

Be aware of anyone who:

- **Quickly asks you to chat outside the message service** – If you meet someone on a dating site, or Facebook and they quickly ask to email you directly, cut off all contact with them no matter how genuine they appear. They don't want their scam noticed by others.
- **Claims to be Aussie but travelling at the moment** – Pretending to be part of our armed services overseas is a common scam. No matter where the person says they are, if they are not in your local area and you cannot meet them in person without flying somewhere else, don't pursue the relationship.
- **Claims to be recently widowed** – Another very common scammer's trick. A sob story to take you in and make you feel sorry for a complete stranger. Cancer or an accident is the usual story.
- **Talks about "destiny" or "fate"** – If someone uses those words within the first few communications, get away from them as fast as possible. These are powerful words used to attempt you to believe in a possible relationship and give you false hope.
- **Asks for your address to send flowers or a gift** – This is always a big no-no, especially if you have mentioned that you are going away somewhere for a weekend or longer. These scammers are after your personal property and will empty out your house or steal your identity.

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Tricks scammers often use:

Be aware of anyone who:

- **Doesn't answer your questions**– You ask someone you are interested for some details that are important to you and they answer with some flowery language that has nothing to do with what you asked. This is a scammer and should be ditched immediately. If by chance it

turns out not to be a scammer it still means the person is incapable of understanding so you wouldn't want them anyway

- **Sprinkles “breadcrumbs” to avoid meeting** – This person will make every excuse under the sun (all very plausible) to avoid an actual meeting. This is a scammer so just cut off communications.
- **Asks ANY amount of money for ANY reason**– You don't want anything to do with anyone who asks you for money before meeting you. They will have a very plausible, heart rending sob story about it, but don't do it. Report, block and get away from them.
- **Georgina's story** – A real-life story of a woman who was scammed for money and fell for it. There are more examples on the Australian Government Scamwatch website. ([Click here to see notes and links](#))

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Tricks scammers often use:

Be aware of anyone who:

- **Showers you with loving words or even gifts** – These beautiful passages are usually plagiarised from the internet and are a powerful way to hook you in to further communications. The promise, or even the delivery of gifts is a way of getting your address and could lead to bad things happening.
- **Makes lots of grammar or spelling errors** – These are usually overseas scammers who don't know English and should not be encouraged or even acknowledged. Look for them to give yourself practice in spotting the scammer.
- **Sends emails with odd links to websites** – If anyone tries to get you to click on a link to go to a website of any kind, they are 100% trying to scam you and you need to report, block and get away from them.
- **Asks you for money for ANY reason** – No matter how pitiful the story may be; it is ALWAYS a scam when someone asks a stranger they have never met for money. It may pull at your heart strings, but even giving what seems like a small amount will lead to more and more. See the real life true story reported in the Scamwatch.gov.au in the links section of the notes.

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More Dos

Learn from others' experiences:

- **Do an image search** – You can search Google or use a special program ([Click here to see notes and links](#)) to search for pictures of the person you are interested in. If you do happen to find the same image you may see that it has a different name attached, or even the same one. Check out every reference to that person to ascertain if they are genuine.
- **Keep it local** – If the person lives too far away for a relationship to flourish, why pursue it. Not only is there a higher chance of being scammed, but even if it is genuine, it could end up simply being a frustrating relationship due to distance.
- **Ensure what you see is what you get** – Check out the photo on TinEye.com, a free photo checking service to let you know how many times and where else the photo appears on the internet.
- **Watch out for odd language** – wonky grammar may be fun to read, but not on a dating site. If the person can't speak your language, they are most likely not compatible for you in the first place and secondly there is a high possibility that they are trying to scam you.

- **If you are uncomfortable at all, walk out** – If you get to the meeting stage and you don't like what you see, even if it is a genuine person like yourself trying to find love, friendship or simply a connection, you owe it to yourself to leave and not to stay just to be polite. You don't have to be rude, just honest with yourself and the other person.

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More Don'ts

When you first meet in person:

- **Don't get involved too soon** – Unless you are in a hurry and willing to accept anyone for any purpose, be discerning and stick to courting for a while. It's important to get to know the person and that can't happen so suddenly.
- **Don't go out late at night** – If there is going to be trouble, that is the most likely time for it to happen. Also, if you travel late at night, especially on public transport, your options for escape are more limited than during the day or early evening.
- **Don't post a picture that shows your address** – It is quite easy to show where you live in your photos, so make sure you have your online photos taken away from home.
- **Don't be complaisant about the risks of unprotected sex** – I spoke to my own and another GP and both told me that there is rise in the rate of sexually transmitted infection among older people. The likelihood is that older people are not afraid of getting pregnant, so therefore assume sex is safe. It is not necessarily safe, so always use a condom with a new partner.

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Will You or Won't You?

It depends on your attitude.

- **Treat online dating like a game** – If you can get into the right frame of mind and not take the whole online dating scene too seriously, then you are more likely to enjoy the experience. If you are out there looking for someone to love you then you shouldn't be looking on the internet, you should be looking to yourself. Nobody loves you more than you do.
- **Ask yourself if you really need it** – Need and want are two completely different things because needing to find someone to validate your self-esteem is likely to lead to you attracting unwanted attention. If, however, you are happy in your own skin and on your own, and simply want to connect with a bigger group of people, then you should be OK with online dating.
- **Do the right thing by YOU** – Remember, there are plenty others around and if one date doesn't work out, there's bound to be another somewhere. There again there may be nobody who is just right for you, and that should be considered OK too.
- **You can also meet new people in more traditional ways** – Just remember, there are valid places like dance classes, courses of various kinds, friends' parties and a million more scenarios that you can meet someone who you may fall madly in love with. You need to be prepared to put yourself outside your comfort zone and the online option is simply another way of doing that.

JULIANNE'S SCAMMER STORY WITH RED FLAGS!

Name: Steven Jordan. **US Air-force pilot** (Overseas) Courted her online for 6 months saying he was a **widow** (They all say that to elicit sympathy from you) and his mother-in-law was looking after his

children in Belrose, Sydney (conveniently close by yet not in your suburb) and asked if she could look after them overnight before he turned up. She changed her life to fit in with his time zone and circumstances and he asked her to send him a small amount money (they usually start small with a desperate sob-story) to get from Malaysia when he said his pay didn't come in on time, so he needed the fare to Australia. Fortunately, at this point Julianne asked a trusted friend who said it didn't look right and they looked him up on a scamming website and found him there large as life. When we checked this person was still running the same scam using the same photo, so must be getting results.

Please go to the next page or [click here to see notes and links](#)

Useful Links & Reading

- Google Search on how to change your Wi-Fi Password:
<https://www.google.com.au/search?q=how+to+change+wifi+password&oq=how+to+change+wifi+password&aq=chrome.1.69i57j0l5.7717j0j8&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>
- Use this tool to check pictures of people you want: <http://tineye.com/>
- Use a Virtual Private Network on your computer or device <https://www.hotspotshield.com/> or
- To set up a phone number without giving out your actual number, set up [Google Voice](#)
- To find out more about online safety <http://www.acma.gov.au/theACMA/online-dating-staying-safe-online-i-acma> or <http://www.match.com/help/safetytips.aspx>
https://www.accc.gov.au/system/files/927_ICPEN%20Dating%20Industry%20Report_D09.pdf or
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/women-co/online-dating_b_2637939.html or
<https://www.lifewire.com/online-dating-security-tips-2487806> or simply type in “online dating safety tips for seniors”
- To research how to write a good profile, visit <http://seniorplanet.org/11-ways-to-quit-lurking-and-write-your-online-dating-profile/> or <http://www.aarp.org/home-family/dating/info-10-2012/ready-to-try-online-dating-first-write-your-profile.html> or <http://www.datingadvice.com/online-dating/how-to-write-an-online-dating-profile-for-seniors> or <http://sixtyandme.com/how-to-write-an-unstoppable-online-dating-profile-after-50/> or <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2532522/THIS-perfect-online-dating-picture-men-youre-female-THIS-photo-success.html>
- To see what the current scams of all types are go to <https://www.scamwatch.gov.au/>
- Sally Hogshead book “Fascinate” www.howtofascinate.com/
- RSVP Dating - <https://www.rsvp.com.au/>
- Senior Match – <https://www.seniormatch.com/>
- Senior FriendFinder – <http://seniorfriendfinder.com/>
- OurTime – <https://www.ourtime.com/>
- SixtyDating Australia <http://www.sixtydating.com/australia/>
- Over 70 Dating. <http://www.over70dating.org/>
- Senior Dating <http://www.seniordatingau.com/>
- Single 60s Senior Dating <http://www.single60s.com.au/>
- Senior Singles Near Me <http://www.seniorsinglesnear.me/au/>
- Real life scammer story <https://www.scamwatch.gov.au/get-help/real-life-stories/georginas-facebook-fianc%C3%A9-leaves-her-flat-broke>
- How to search for an image online <http://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/relationships/dating/when-it-turns-out-youre-dating-a-stock-image/news-story/2645a8919ef2fdb5febe6f63402da9f6>

Please Note:

- Some of the information in this presentation came from a book called We used quotes from the book “Out There, a survival guide for dating in midlife” by Kerry Sackville
- We also referenced the book “Love @ First Click” by Laurie Davis - Founder of eFlirt Expert. This book is available from Mona Vale Library.

STICK FIGURE GUIDE TO FINDING A SUITABLE PARTNER

Below is a stick figure. We suggest that you draw one for yourself and mark it with all the attributes that your ideal partner could have. Then hand write them all in list form on another page. Finally select the TEN must-have’s, and finally hone it down to the absolute essential FIVE main things important to you. Hand-write those five character traits on the back of a business card and keep it in your wallet or handbag. Look at it every now and then. You can throw away the original stick figure and the other selection process when you have created your business card size list.

