

# RELATIONSHIP REALITY GUIDE: RESETTING RELATIONSHIP EXPECTATIONS

Created by the experts at  
Online Psychologists Australia



# About this guide



With research showing social media is influencing how love, loyalty and commitment are perceived, curated online portrayals often set the standards that real-life relationships struggle to match.

Whether you've been together for years or are still finding your rhythm, the reality is that all relationships have ups and downs. They are built through small, everyday moments of **care, communication and support**.

**This guide is designed to help you:**

- **Check in** with your partner more meaningfully
- Keep communication **open** and **honest**
- **Support** each other through everyday ups and down





# How to use this resource

## **You can use this guide to:**

- **Reflect** on how secure and connected your relationship feels
- **Start** gentle check-ins and conversations with your partner
- **Pick up** small habits that strengthen trust and communication

## **Ways to use this guide:**

- **On your own:** Read through and note what resonates or feels challenging.
- **Together:** Use the prompts to start a conversation.
- **In your own time:** Come back to different pages as things change or new situations arise.

## **A gentle reminder:**

*There's no "right" way to do relationships. Feeling secure is something that **grows over time**, through small moments of honesty, care and effort from both people.*



# What does feeling secure mean in a relationship?

Feeling secure in a relationship doesn't mean never arguing or always feeling confident.

It means knowing you can be yourself, speak honestly, and trust that your partner cares, even during hard moments.

You can build security in your relationship through **consistency, communication and care**.

## Signs of a secure relationship

A **secure relationship** often includes:

- Feeling **safe** to share thoughts and feelings without fear of ridicule
- Knowing disagreements can be talked through **respectfully**
- **Trusting** your partner's intentions, even when you don't fully agree
- Feeling **supported** emotionally and practically
- Being able to spend time apart without **anxiety** or **guilt**



# How does social media affect your relationship?

Social media plays a big role in how we understand relationships today.

While it can inspire connection, it can also quietly fuel **comparison** and **unrealistic expectations**. This can especially affect the way you feel secure with a partner.

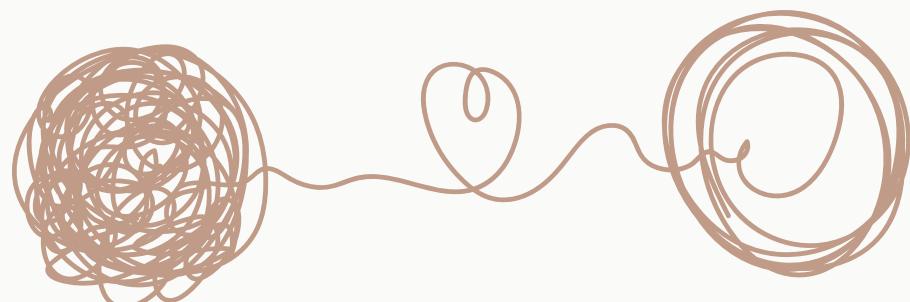
## The impact on attachment styles

### Anxious attachment

- **Overanalyse** messages, tone or response time
- Constantly **scan** for “red flags”
- **Compare** their relationship to others online

### Avoidant attachment

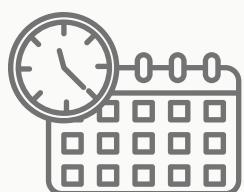
- **Withdraw** when things feel uncertain or effortful
- **Expect** relationships to feel effortless or intense all the time
- **Question** connection when it looks “ordinary”



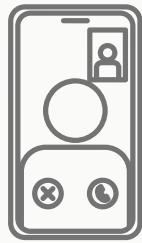


# Long-distance relationships: Expectation vs reality

Long-distance relationships can be challenging, particularly when you feel you're not getting the experience other couples are. Simple actions can keep you feeling connected and fulfilled when you're apart.



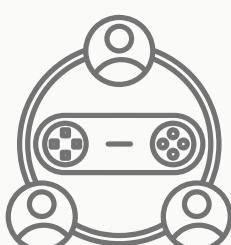
Know each other's schedules for better communication.



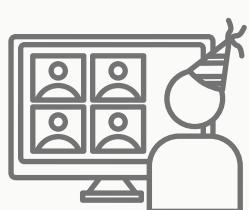
Make video calls as frequently as possible to relieve the missing feeling.



Believe that a long-distance relationship is an opportunity to build trust and a stronger relationship.



Do things together by using advanced technology.



Celebrate important events like birthdays via video calls.



Keep in touch with your couple's family though they are far away.

# Relationship Dos and Don'ts

## Don't

- ✗ Focus on the negative
- ✗ Ignore your partner
- ✗ Give an ultimatum
- ✗ Shame your partner

## Do

- ✓ Be honest
- ✓ Respect each other
- ✓ Communicate
- ✓ Have fun together



# HOW TO CHECK IN WITH YOUR PARTNER

01

## Starting the conversation

Keep it simple and low-pressure.

Try saying:

- "How have you been feeling about us lately?"
- "Is there anything on your mind that we haven't talked about yet?"
- "What's been feeling good between us recently?"
- "Is there anything I could do to support you better right now?"

02

## Focus on:

- Listening without interrupting
- Validating feelings, even if you see things differently
- Staying open and non-defensive
- Being honest about your own needs

03

## If things feel hard

- Take a pause if needed and come back to it
- Focus on how you feel, not who's at fault
- Remember you're on the same team



# Reflection on Fear & Trust Trauma

1. What am I feeling right now?
2. What triggered this feeling?
3. Is there any real evidence supporting my fear?
4. What past experience makes me sensitive to this?
5. What can I do right now to calm myself?
6. A message to myself today





## A note from me to you

*This page is a space to write freely. You don't need perfect words.*

**One thing I appreciate about you is...**

**Something I've been thinking about but haven't said yet is...**

**One way I try to support you is...**

**One way I feel supported by you is...**

**Right now, what I need most in our relationship is...**



# Thanks for using this guide

Every relationship looks different. What matters most is finding ways to communicate and support each other that feel safe and respectful.

Some conversations are easier with support. Speaking with a professional can help create clarity, confidence and connection.

***Online Psychologists Australia is here to help for the difficult conversations.***

If you'd like to talk things through with a trained professional, you can book an appointment via our website at a time that works for you.

Go to [www.onlinepsychologists.com.au](http://www.onlinepsychologists.com.au) to book your appointment.