

love is digital

Setting Healthy Online Boundaries

Is it ok for your boyfriend/girlfriend to tag you in photos online? Do you have to ask your partner if you can follow each other on Twitter? Is sharing your partner's location ok?

It can be hard to know where the line between healthy and unhealthy is once a relationship goes online. What are the rules for Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tumblr, Snapchat? What should your digital relationship look like?

Setting Healthy Boundaries

In any healthy relationship, both people should have a say in setting boundaries for their relationship. Boundaries are guidelines or limits that a person creates so that they can feel safe and comfortable. In a relationship, boundaries should be agreed upon by both people and should be shared openly with one another.

Before you talk to your partner about your online relationship, check in with yourself to see what makes you feel comfortable. Start by considering your digital boundaries:

- Is it okay to tag or check in?
- Do we post our relationship status?
- Is it okay to friend or follow my friends?
- When is it okay to text me and what is the expectation for when we return it?
- Is it okay to use each other's devices?
- Is it okay to post, tweet or comment about our relationship?



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Have the Conversation

Once you know how you feel, you can talk to your partner to create a digital dating agreement between the two of you. Together, you can decide what feels healthy to you and what doesn't.

Having this conversation is about communicating what you want and what you feel comfortable with. It's also about learning where the lines are for your partner.

There may be some negotiating and compromising as you figure out an agreement that works for both of you. But if your partner asks you to do something that just doesn't feel right, or they try to control you in some way, that's when you get to say that this isn't healthy to you.

Listening to your gut is really important here. If something doesn't feel right, there's a good chance it isn't.

This digital dating agreement can be changed as you continue with your relationship. Just because you felt comfortable with something at the beginning of a relationship doesn't mean that you have to stick with that forever. You can communicate with your partner if things change. The reverse is also true—there may be something that you're not ok with at the beginning, but with time and trust, you become comfortable with it. Both you and your partner should feel free to openly talk about your changing needs and wants.

Digital Abuse Can Happen

Learn the signs of digital abuse, which can include your partner telling you who you can/can't be friends with online, stealing your passwords or putting you down using social media.

Check out loveisrespect.org to learn more!

