



Mind: Bad Love
Body: Broken Heart Syndrome
Spirit: Find All The Barriers

Bad Love



Love and romance are important at any age. Our need to love and be loved never leaves and can even grow as we age through later life stages. But what about when it isn't so good? What about when it is hurtful and exploitative?

In this article, we'll reveal the ugly underbelly of the 'Romance Scam.' These scams, unfortunately, target those ready for a new relationship, especially in the boomer and senior demographic. Understanding how they work is key to safeguarding against their pitfalls.

A Cautionary Tale: The Case of "Eleanor"

To illustrate, let's consider the story of "Eleanor" (name changed for privacy). Eleanor, a 72-year-old widow, met "John" on a popular dating site. John was charming, attentive, and seemed to understand her. Their relationship grew quickly, with John soon professing his love for Eleanor and his intention to marry her and take her away from it all! John often shared stories of his business ventures and travels. However, he always had a reason for not being able to meet in person.

Eventually, John mentioned he was in a financial bind. He first asked Eleanor for a small loan, promising to pay her back once his business deal was completed. Trusting him, Eleanor complied. But the requests didn't stop there. John soon convinced Eleanor to invest in cryptocurrency and even use her social media, family and friends to raise funds for his "business."

As Eleanor's savings dwindled, her family became concerned. When they confronted her, she became defensive and angry with her family. John and his buddy even encouraged Eleanor to show her family a knife and threaten to commit suicide if they didn't also contribute money for her to give him. Eleanor's family didn't know what to do and where to turn – they were reluctant to go to the police for fear they would get their mother in legal trouble of aiding and abetting these horrible men.

Eleanor's story is a stark reminder of the lengths to which these scammers will go. It underscores the need for vigilance and the importance of seeking advice from trusted sources when something seems too good to be true.

The Rise of Romance Scams in Later Life

In recent years, there's been a notable increase in romance scams, especially among seniors. The Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre reported losses of over \$18.3 million CAD due to romance scams in 2020 alone, a startling figure that highlights the severity of the issue.

Understanding Vulnerability

Who falls prey to these scams? It's a common misconception that only the naïve or technologically unsavvy are vulnerable. In reality, loneliness, the desire for

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companionship, and sometimes a lack of digital literacy make seniors particularly susceptible. The scammer often creates a profile that seems perfect, building a relationship over weeks or months.

The Mechanics of a Romance Scam

How do these scams unfold? It typically starts with a simple message on a dating site or social media platform. The scammer, often pretending to be a potential romantic partner, invests time in building a relationship, often expressing strong emotions quite early. Once trust is established, they may start asking for money for various emergencies, travel expenses to visit, or other seemingly plausible reasons.

Recognizing the Red Flags -- Be Wary of Someone Who:

- Professes love too quickly.
- Is hesitant to meet in person or video call.
- Requests financial assistance or personal information.
- Has a profile that seems too good to be true.

The Unconventional Tactics of Romance Scammers

Romance scammers have become increasingly sophisticated, employing a variety of unconventional methods to extort money. Beyond the traditional request for wire transfers, they are now turning to modern technology and psychological manipulation, including:

Cryptocurrency: In some cases, victims are asked to send money via Bitcoin or other cryptocurrencies. This method is particularly appealing to scammers because it's harder to trace and recover the funds.

Social Media Fundraising: Scammers may manipulate their victims into using their own social media accounts to solicit money from friends and family, under the guise of a personal crisis or a charitable cause.

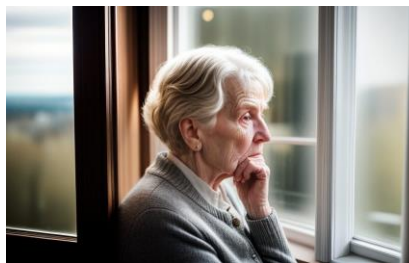
Prevention and Protection

If this happens to you, stop all communication, contact the

authorities, and seek support from a trusted friend or family member. To help safeguard yourself, remember to never send money or personal information to anyone you have not met in person, verify images and profiles, keep personal information private, and trust your instincts.

In closing, remember, awareness is your best defense against these scams. Stay informed, stay vigilant, and let's ensure that love remains a source of joy, not jeopardy, especially in our golden years.

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Body: Broken Heart Syndrome

An 'emotionally' broken heart can have a significant physical impact on the actual heart, a condition known as broken heart syndrome or Takotsubo cardiomyopathy. This condition often occurs following stressful situations and extreme emotions. Symptoms can mimic those of a heart attack, including chest pain and shortness of breath. It is believed to be caused by a surge of stress hormones that temporarily disrupt the heart's normal functioning. While typically temporary, it shows the profound connection between emotional stress and physical heart health (Mayo Clinic).

Spirit:

"Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it."

Rumi