

Far away friends: keeping in touch

With so many opportunities to live and work abroad and the increasing number of flights that will take you there, many people are choosing to move abroad for a few months, a year, perhaps even longer. Where once a gap year seemed an exclusive, slightly indulgent idea, it is now a thriving industry that has spawned all kinds of imitations, including 'gap years' for the mature traveller or 'career-break' professional. The very idea of marrying the girl next door is starting to feel like a quaint anachronism. You might end up marrying someone from any corner of the globe even if you don't choose to travel because you might fall for someone who has travelled to your country.

This global mixing has all kinds of positive ramifications, but the obvious downside is that friends are separated, possibly living in different cities, even living or travelling on different continents. These friends might be from school, or perhaps from university, but they are influential people and you vow to stay in touch, preferably for life. There is nothing quite like friends who knew you at a young, often embarrassing age – people with whom you can remember your (often misspent) youth, instead of talking about mortgages and family commitments.

The Internet revolution has meant that keeping in touch by email or personal networking sites has never been easier, but these can be tricky because once you are surfing the worldwide web, it is hard to get out. You must have done it yourself? Promised to send one long email to your friend, got distracted, sent some short ones, and perhaps nattered on Facebook with someone you've just met. Technology is fantastic, but it does require an unusual degree of restraint to just send one email and then shut the computer. It also requires time, something that busy people don't really have. Emailing on work's time may seem a good idea at the time, but it won't win you any favours from the boss.

The other option, of course, is using the phone; a wonderfully direct way of communicating. Somehow, one phone call does not always necessitate another, as though touching base with one friend is enough to give you pleasant thoughts for the evening. But then again, if you're arranging that big reunion then the more phone calls you make the better! With the communications market so competitive, there are some great deals on [cheap mobile calls](#), cheap international calls and even in some cases, free mobile calls and international calls

This effectively means that wherever you are, you can pick up your mobile and reach a friend, with important news, or just to catch up. It's flexible in a way that computers are not, and phones also won't make you go glassy-eyed after looking at a screen too much. You might look a bit strange giggling in public, but then, no form of communication is perfect!

About the Author

Adam Singleton is an online freelance journalist from Scotland. His hobbies include travelling and hiking.

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