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4 Things Technology Won't Change about Relationships

LAURA SCHAEFER • FEB. 10TH, 2014

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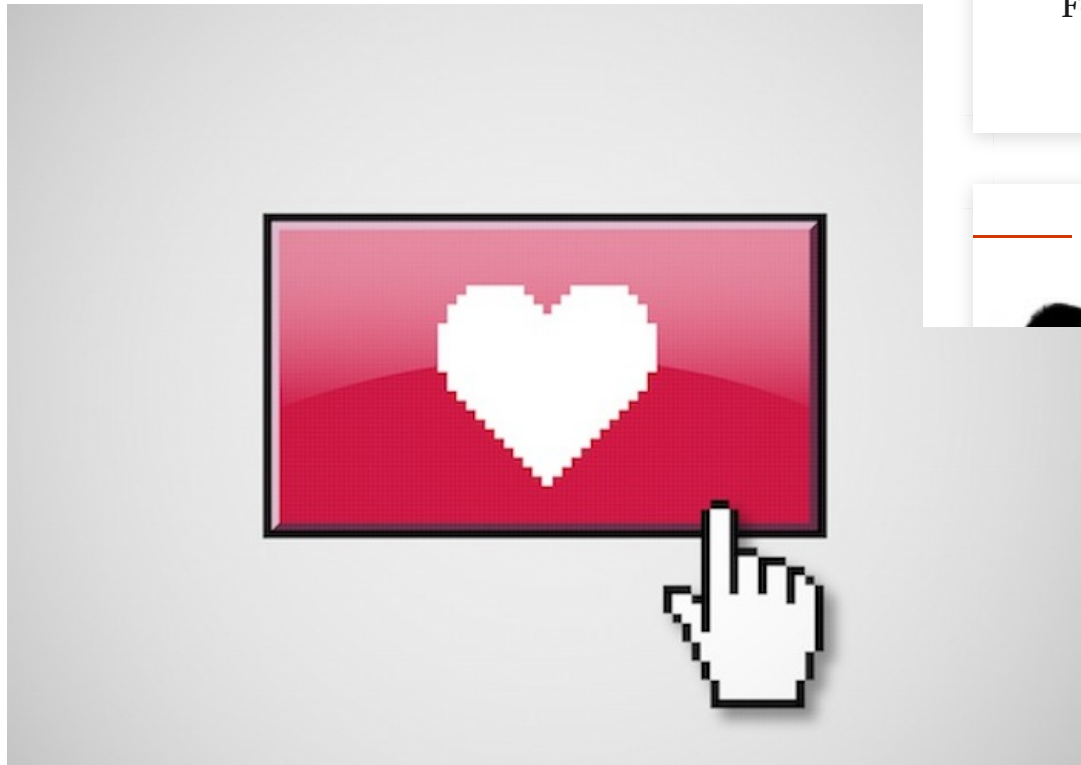
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When you go to a bar and people are paying more attention to their email, Twitter, and latest level of Candy Crush they just unlocked than to the other people around, it can feel like technology is out of control and romance is dead. But don't despair. It might be a smartphone jungle out there, but it is still possible to make real-world connections with other living, breathing people. And once you do, there are still lots of ways in which technology can't, and *won't* take over.

The most amazing line of code in the universe can't fake a good, old-fashioned spark. "Technology will never be able to predict chemistry," says matchmaker [Meghann Novinskie](#). "Meeting a potential suitor in person is the only way to see if sparks fly between the two of you. Spending time and sharing new experiences help relationships bloom." You can't rely on a device to tell you if you'll like the way a person smells or moves. Moments of real understanding—the alignment of two people seeing the world the same way, even for a second—cannot be forced by a website or gadget. The air in the room changes when you have good chemistry. It's too special to be programmable.

No matter if a romance is unfolding in the 1950s or the 2050s, spending lots of time together in real life is important. And wonderful. "There is nothing technology can do to replace that sizzle you feel when you see someone you love; when he she touches you, and when you kiss," says relationship guru [April](#)

Masini. “Long distance relationships may be burgeoning as a result of technology, but they don’t hold a candle to romance that happens when you open the door and your date is standing there, and he or she is totally hot, and you feel like the luckiest person in the world.”

Many of us have had the experience of meeting amazing people with whom, for reasons of timing, we failed to launch a lasting romance. Sure, technology might provide new ways to meet people, but it can’t promise you’ll meet the right one at the right time.

Once we’ve found that chemistry, we realize technology is a poor substitute for touch. Sure, getting a text is nice, but it doesn’t hold a candle to, well, being held. “The one thing that

technology cannot change about relationships is the need for physical contact,” says psychologist and author [Karen Sherman, Ph.D.](#) “Though you might be able to make eye contact through Skype or Face Time, you can’t hold hands and you can’t hug.”

Not to mention more, ahem, *intimate* activities. And we’re not just concerned about sex. Touch is a language that technology can’t yet decode—or replace.

“Touch is the fastest way to communicate information,” says author and relationship coach [Benjamin Ritter](#). “It also is one of the most fundamental ways of building and communicating intimacy.”

If we tried to conduct an entire relationship over smartphone or computer, eventually, it would fail. As the old song goes, it’s in his kiss, that’s where it is – not in his status update.

There is an app for everything, but technology can’t fix bad timing. Many of us have had the experience of meeting amazing people with whom, for reasons of timing, we failed to launch a lasting romance. Your computer can’t do anything about the fact that she just got out of a long term relationship or that he’s planning to move to London in the spring. Sure, technology might provide new ways to meet people, but it

can't promise you'll meet the right one at the right time.

Finally, the best app in the world won't dissolve issues and disagreements when they inevitably arise. "Technology doesn't have the ability to truly sense what you're feeling, or offer insight on relationship issues," says Novinskie. "You can Google, 'Can I forgive my cheating boyfriend?', but talking out this problem...will always be more effective."

Sure, there are couples' apps for things like grocery lists and nights out on the town, but technology can't do the heavy lifting of finding compromises that work. Furthermore, a smartphone cannot force two people to be honest about their intentions.

"Technology can't change the basic ingredients of what's necessary in a healthy relationship," concludes [Dr. Jenev Caddell, PsyD](#), a psychologist and couples therapist based in New York City. "Our basic needs in relationships are to feel seen, understood, valued and appreciated, and technology does not change this. It cannot change the need to feel like a priority for your partner."

Laura Schaefer is the author of [Why We Fall Out of Love](#) and [Notes to Self](#).