



Remote Reminiscence – Getting Elders Online

Theme #5 – Courtship

This activity pack looks at memories of love and courtship.

1

You can use this resource as a stand-alone series of activities or in conjunction with a short film available for free on our YouTube channel.

This can be a big subject and is one that can be challenging for some people, and also very happy for others, so it is good to be sensitive to emotions and responses with this activity.

Also remember that not everyone loves in the same way, or the same kind of people. Be respectful here too.



The link for the accompanying films can be found at the end of this activity.

Remote Reminiscence – Getting Elders Online

2



Figure 1: 'You're breaking my heart' song sheet from 1940s. Copyright free.

This section is all about love, marriage and courtship. Why not have a look through this resource further and pick ideas to support activities with friends, family and in groups too.

- You could think about first love, weddings you have attended and your own marriage.
- You may remember things that made you happy, as well as sadness for lost love.
- Discuss your own family's experiences of courtship and wooing
- There's no reason why you can't discuss divorce and separation too if you feel able to.
- The accompanying short film on our You Tube channel will discuss first love and courtship and will look at how you can use songs and photos to trigger memories.

Icebreaker Activity

- Question: Who was your first teenage crush? Could be real or somebody famous.

Ideas for starters:

3

Think about your first love. You could do this on your own, in a group, or with friends and family:

- I. Where did you go to meet people – perhaps a youth club, cinema, dance or pub?
- II. Did big groups of you used to mingle?
- III. What kinds of venues did you visit?
- IV. What kind of places were acceptable to be seen romancing in?
- V. Perhaps you met at a dance, if so, which kind of dance brought you together?
- VI. What did you wear to go out on a date?
- VII. Were you allowed to go out unchaperoned?
- VIII. Think about the first flush of love, how did it feel?
- IX. How did you meet your current partner or spouse?
- X. What did it feel like?
- XI. How did you spend time together?



Figure 2: Cuthbert and Shirley Williams (MBE), With kind permission of Royal Voluntary Service.

Activity: Songs

4



Figure 3: Photo of Wally and Nancy Kersey when dating in Sussex in the 1940s. With kind permission of Royal Voluntary Service.

- Do you have a song which reminds you of young love?
- There are thousands of songs on the topic of love. Which are your favourites?
- Why don't you share examples of your favourite songs about this subject – '*Love and marriage, goes together like a horse and carriage...*' for example, or a more contemporary tune which makes people remember their feelings and experiences.
- Did you have a particular song with anyone you were courting? 'Our Song'?
- Are there songs that remind you of the one that got away?
- What song was popular when you first started dating; can you remember what was on the radio or charts at the time?
- How do you feel about a sing song? This could be useful at the end of a session or with people and family who find it harder to remember their own experiences.



Remote Reminiscence – Getting Elders Online

Courtship & Marriage

5

**How did you do your romancing?
Chat with a friend about it.**

Can you remember...

- Dates you went on?
- Where you used to go out?
- Where you met your partner?
- Who introduced you?
- Any shared songs?
- Did you have to wait and save to get married?



Vera

I used to have so many boyfriends. I made a list of them to keep track!

Activity: Getting ready for a date

6



Figure 4: Box of Nylastik stockings. Image taken by Summer Dean. Copyright - Strike a Light - Arts & Heritage

- How and where did you get ready to go on a date?
- Did you have any favourite clothes or make up you liked to wear?
- Did you have any particular rituals you used to follow when getting ready?
- What was fashionable to wear when you were of dating age?
- What are your favourite memories of this time?
- Did you wear make up?
- Did you wear brillantine in your hair, or did you wear aftershave?



Remote Reminiscence – Getting Elders Online

Activity: Courting Then & Now

7

- How do you think that courting has changed over the years?
- What different kinds of language or euphemisms did you use?
- What kind of words are used nowadays?
- What is better (or worse) than the way you remember it was?
- Share your thoughts on the way things are now with dating and love.
- Where did you meet your partner?
- Who introduced you?
- How long did you know each other before getting hitched?
- Can you imagine being with your partner for 70 years like Wally and Nancy?



Figure 5: Wally and Nancy Kersey's hands with rings, after 70 years together. With kind permission of Royal Voluntary Service.



Remote Reminiscence – Getting Elders Online

Activity: Wedding photos

- Do you have any wedding or commitment photos? Why don't you get them out and look through them? You can share memories or ask questions about these if they aren't yours.

8

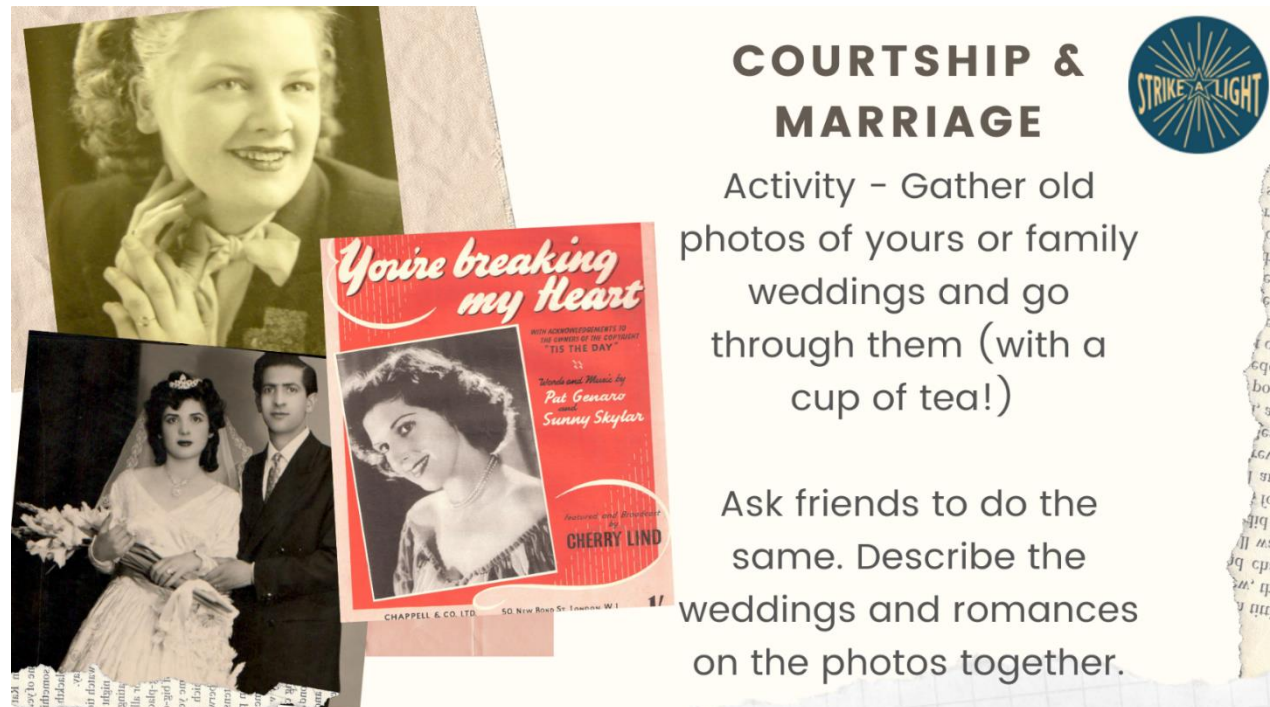


Figure 6: From top clockwise - Nancy Kersey's engagement day, a song sheet, Farah Mohabti's wedding day in Iran. With kind permission of Royal Voluntary Service.

Remote Reminiscence – Getting Elders Online

9



Figure 7: Tom remembers his hey days. With kind permission of Royal Voluntary Service.

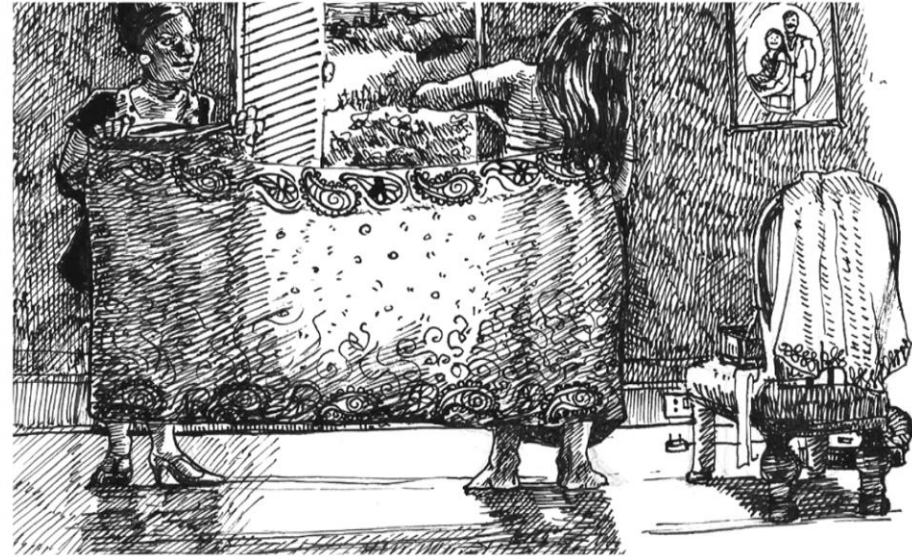


Figure 8: Getting ready for an Indian wedding. With kind permission of Royal Voluntary Service.



Figure 9: Uma's wedding. With kind permission of Royal Voluntary Service.



Remote Reminiscence – Getting Elders Online

10



Remote Reminiscence

Courtship Part 2

<https://strikealight.org/>



All work copyright of Strike a Light – Arts & Heritage
<https://strikealight.org/> contact@strikealight.org

Activity: Draw your wedding outfit

- Have a go at drawing your wedding outfit. If you're not married, you could draw the kind of outfit you would like to wear, or perhaps an outfit that you have worn to someone else's wedding.

11

Courting & Marriage

Draw your wedding outfit

Did you wear a hat?
 What kind of shoes did you wear?
 Did you wear a suit?
 Did you have a flower in the button hole?
 Sketch an outline of what you wore



Your Wedding Day

12

- Can you describe your wedding outfit? Colour, style, brought, made, etc?
- Did you follow any traditions, e.g., old, new, borrowed, blue; keep wedding cake for first child's christening?
- Think about other things like veil, flowers, jewellery, bridesmaids, men's buttonholes, new shoes, wedding cake.
- How did you get to the venue?
- Did you have a reception/wedding breakfast? If yes, who attended?
- Did you attend any war time weddings?



Figure 10: Ena Smith & Christopher Benge on their wedding day - Courtesy of Nicola Benge.



Remote Reminiscence – Getting Elders Online

Activity: Setting up home

13



Setting up Home

- When did you do this?
- Where did you live?
- What did you have?
- How did you merge your possessions?
- Did you have any possessions?
- What do you do when your taste is very different?



Activity: Bits and Bobs

Why don't you find an object that you bought together as a couple? What could it be?

- You could discuss your thoughts and feelings about it. Even whether you like it or not!
- Where did you buy it from?
- Was it a gift?
- Did you have a wedding list?
- What types of wedding presents did you receive?
- Do you still have these items?
- Were there items of religious, cultural or family significance that you received as a result of becoming betrothed?
- You could make a list of all the essentials you remember if you like.



Figure 11: Farah Mohabti on her wedding day in Iran. With kind permission of Royal Voluntary Service.

Activity: Remembering

15

- How long did you know each other before you got married or set up home together?
- When was your first kiss?
- How did your friends / family feel about your union? Were they supportive?
- Did you have to wait and save to get married?
- Did you go on honeymoon?



Figure 12: Wedding photograph. Image taken by Summer Dean. Copyright - Strike a Light - Arts & Heritage



Remote Reminiscence – Getting Elders Online

Activity: Advice to your younger self

- Spend five minutes thinking about what advice you would give to yourself, or to a young couple falling in love and setting up home together. What advice would you give to help them make their relationship a lasting and happy one?

16



Remote Reminiscence – Getting Elders Online

17



Figure 13: Family weddings - Courtesy of Nicola Benge. Image taken by Summer Dean. Copyright - Strike a Light - Arts & Heritage.



Remote Reminiscence – Getting Elders Online

Visual Resources

Watch our short films here for more ideas and support:

Courtship Part 1 - <https://youtu.be/PFZUqGvnzL4>

Courtship Part 2 - <https://youtu.be/c4vvDgaE2m8>



All work copyright of Strike a Light – Arts & Heritage
<https://strikealight.org/> contact@strikealight.org