

Online

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women that followed the dissolution of her 12-year marriage to the father of her son. It was a challenging time.

“There was a huge learning curve,” she said. “On top of getting back into dating generally, there was this whole new world of lesbian dating.”

Friends encouraged her to try the online scene, and, reluctantly, she did.

“I had a lot of insecurity about what people would think,” she said. “I would have felt the same way if I was looking for a man. It was just the idea of going public.”

Scott and Cline connected in the fall of 2013 and were married about two years later — legally, thanks to Maine’s 2012 same-sex marriage referendum — this past Septem-

ber, surrounded by loving friends and family.

**Getting it right through clear communication**

Peter Lindquist, 59, and Sarah Ruef-Lindquist, 53, met 14 years ago in what was then the brave new world of online dating. Both were divorced at the time and living in Portland. They married in 2003 and now live in Camden.

Back then, Ruef-Lindquist recalled, women didn’t have to pay to use Match.com, perhaps in a bid to bring more women into what was largely a man’s world.

“A lot of men misrepresented themselves in terms of who they were and what they wanted,” she said. Others made it clear they were more interested in a sexual encounter than in meeting someone for the kind of serious, long-term relationship she wanted.

For the most part, she said, there was just not much information exchanged before two people agreed to meet.

“It was pretty much like a blind date every time,” Lindquist said. “But Sarah required a lot of emails and communication before we ever went out on a date. I had to express myself in words, and it became an exploration of our common interests and ideas.”

Deliberate, open communication remains a central theme in their relationship, an essential tool for keeping their marriage on track.

“We both really want to get it right this time,” Ruef-Lindquist said.

They enjoy telling friends they met online.

“A lot of people are still hesitant about trying online dating,” Lindquist said. “But if you do it right — honestly, openly and with a little courage — you can meet someone really special.”

Love: a healthy impulse at any age

Dr. Clifford Singer, a geriatric psychiatrist in Bangor, says that as people age the need for companionship, partnership and intimacy often increases rather than decreases. Happily partnered up with a woman he met online, Singer, 61, says the Internet can be a great resource for finding a close new relationship in midlife and beyond.

But older adults may also be at heightened risk for being scammed, he cautioned.

“People with even mild cognitive impairment may lose their financial judgment and sense of discretion,” he said. “And they may become more impulsive if they feel that time is running out, that they don’t have many choices left.”

Dating sites are full of tried and true advice for staying safe, protecting

against financial scams and navigating the emotional shoals of online relationships. Most are just common sense: Take your time getting to know an online contact. Meet the first time in a public place and let a friend know where you’re going. Don’t give out your address, phone number, workplace or other personal information to anyone you’re not sure of. Never give money to an online contact. Pay attention to your intuition. Learn to

break off an online relationship firmly and move forward. Be kind. Be clear. Don’t take rejection personally. Don’t get discouraged.

And do be flexible in your thinking.

“It’s a lot like looking for a job,” Dirk Faegre said. “Don’t turn anything down without considering it, keep your options open and follow as many leads as you can. There is not just one person in the world who’s right for you.”

Curves

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long and lacked confidence to handle them. Anyone who knows me, knows that I am the Queen of Lists. I stopped making lists of the tasks needing doing around the house because it simply

overwhelmed me, and I became immobilized. Now, other than routine tasks like mowing the lawn and cleaning the house, I do the odd jobs as they pop into my mind or my sight. I get more done that way and feel more accomplished.

Adapt. Use your brain. It’s all good.

I always have a Plan B. It’s

good to have a Plan A, but Plan B simply gives me a second pathway to the same or similar end without the stressed panic response when Plan A gets blocked. With my husband’s death, I really needed to find my Plan B — a new path to a fulfilling life. What I’ve learned is that it is not a direct line to an end goal; it is a journey.

As a longtime employee of Bangor Daily News, Julie Harris has served many roles over the years, but now has her dream job as community editor. She lives in Hermon with her four Brittany dogs. Widowed at age 51 when her husband, Jim, died of pancreatic cancer. Follow her blog at [curves.bangordailynews.com](http://curves.bangordailynews.com).



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