

60 years and 1,000 miles



How a word game brought two unlikely people together

What do a young rapper, a retired woman and an online word-game app have in common? Not much, you might think. In fact, they are at the heart of an incredible true story of friendship.

Spencer Sleyon, a New York rapper in his early twenties, and Rosalind Guttman, an elderly woman living a thousand miles away in Florida, are two people who would seem to have very little in common. And yet the pair became good friends. How did their unlikely relationship begin?

The answer is that they got to know each other online, but not through social media, as you might expect. Their friendship began completely by chance when they both started playing a popular word-game app on their mobile phones.

The two played each other almost every day and soon they also began chatting on the app. Rosalind talked about her life in Florida and Spencer spoke of his plans to move to New York and follow a music career. They soon discovered that they were not only perfect gaming partners, but they also got on really well, even though they came from such different backgrounds.

After some time, though, Spencer decided to delete the app. He was looking for a job in New York and his life was getting too busy. He just didn't have time to play any more. But before he stopped, he asked Rosalind if she had any advice for him. 'Shoot for the stars,' she told him. 'Whatever you want out of life, just go grab it!'



After he had been in New York for a few months, Spencer found he did actually have a little free time. He decided to reinstall the app and he and Rosalind started playing again. Then one day Amy Butler, the mother of one of Spencer's friends, overheard a conversation Spencer and his friends were having. He was telling them about his friendship with an 81-year-old woman who lived in a retirement village in Florida. Amy thought it would be a great idea to arrange a meeting between the two. Soon, she and Spencer were flying down to Florida to meet Rosalind. The meeting was a great success. Spencer and Rosalind found that they got on just as well face-to-face as they did online.

They only spent one day together – they had lunch in a restaurant and Rosalind showed Spencer around her neighbourhood. But when Spencer posted photos of their meeting on social media, they quickly went viral and received more than a million likes. Several newspapers even reported the story of how the pair had become friends. Rosalind said she had enjoyed the meeting, but she wasn't sure why it had become such a big story. She felt that it was quite natural that they should have a good relationship and there wasn't anything unusual about it.

And what happened next? Well, Spencer and Rosalind are still playing the word game online, but now they have a new way to keep in touch – they've become friends on Facebook.

