**Ghosted!**

Ghosting is breaking off a relationship by ceasing all communication and contact with the former partner without any apparent warning or justification, as well as ignoring the former partner’s attempts to reach out or communicate. The term originated in 2011. [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghosting_(relationships)) I suppose that means that someone who was the victim of ghosting was ghosted. In my case, there seem to be several different types of ghosting and not just the former partner. I would like to extend the category to several other types.

**Marriage:** Someone I know gets married; I might even be invited to the wedding. I hear the terminal words: “pleased to meet you”. The new partner is now in control of any social relationships and I am ghosted by both of them. In most cases, all previous single friendships are discarded and new friends (mainly other couples) are made. It is more helpful if I know both parties before they get married. Therefore, I can try to maintain both relationships. There has been one notable exception. When Bob and Barbara got married, I first met Barbara in the reception line. Her comment: “Any friend of Bobby’s is a friend of mine!” This was followed by a big hug. She enthusiastically kept her word.

**Relatives:** I never knew my cousin Mike. I talked to him once over the phone. He said, “As you know, I divorced the family years ago”. What had I done? In discussing this with some family members, I found that they had told Mike how to behave in some social situations when he was younger. His reaction was in self-defense; their advice was not acceptable and unwelcome. Other relatives, like several of my cousins, have also included me in the non-contact group just because I was associated with someone that they did not like or even because my parents were deaf. Another common related refrain: “At least, I can choose my friends”. Personally, I like my relatives; I think they are good people.

**Religion:** Most religions have a specific code of behavior. Think of the 10 Commandments, whatever they are or wherever they came from. Generally, there are also days of prayer and mandatory religious activities. There may be specific rules for some religions about who is allowed to perform some activities. Some occupations or assignments may be limited by age, sex, or inherited status. There may be restrictions on what religion a marriage partner can be or how a child should be raised. Some social groups may be limited to practitioners of a specific religion. Non-participants are not welcome.

**Drugs:** This category includes all forms of substances: coffee, stimulants, tobacco, marijuana, alcohol, cocaine, heroin, speed, ecstasy, and any mind-altering items. Many people insist on using drugs even if others are disgusted by these actions. Drug users may also feel uncomfortable being around people who do not participate. Sometimes, just being in the vicinity is automatic participation. I found that in college and on the job, after work gatherings are held in an alcohol drinking environment (oh, and split the tab evenly, by the way). In other cases, people who do not partake in illegal drugs are considered dangerous since they might “snitch” on the participants. For years, some people thought it was acceptable to smoke anywhere they felt like it. Fortunately, for many health-conscious nonparticipants, this behavior is no longer acceptable in many areas. Many streets are still littered with tobacco trash.

Why do I ghost some people? The following categories make having a reasonable discussion impossible.

**Aliens:** Why are there so many movies and media stories that espouse the presence of aliens in daily life. That is fine for entertainment, but believing they actually exist on this planet is more than I can tolerate. I just lose interest and respect for people with such beliefs. Ghosts, resurrection, and the like have no meaning in my scientific world. How do you communicate with people who have such thoughts?

**History:** My favorite quote on this subject is: “Those that forget history are condemned to repeat it”. Alas, history is written by the winners of any conflict. Therefore, there is some bias. However, denying that the moon landings took place is more than I can deal with. There are also several types of denial of basic scientific facts. Maybe, some day there will be faster than speed-of-light travel, but not now.