

# HOW TO REDUCE PHONE FEAR AND RELIEVE ANSWERING ANXIETY

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You care for an elderly parent, relative or sick friend. Perhaps you call, to brighten up their day. Maybe you do much more. Bringing happiness to their life is very rewarding but can sometimes be challenging.

However, you can't be there all the time. Studies show that loneliness and social isolation can impact gravely on quality of life and well-being. There's a significant and lasting effect on blood pressure [1], and links to poor sleep [2], dementia and Alzheimer's [3], depression [4] and higher mortality rates [5]. What can you do?

Konnekt's series of articles helps you improve the quality of life for the elderly or sick you care about. In this **part 4**, we discuss approaches to reducing the fear of the phone and the possibility of unwanted callers, and help relieve the anxiety of answering the telephone.

## Phone Fear

Grandpa Greg lives by himself. His caring daughters Brenda and Emily set up three phones for him, extended the ringing time (see our article part 3), subscribed to Caller Number Display, and put him on a premium plan with unlimited local calls. Despite this, Greg often didn't answer the phone, didn't return calls and rarely called his daughters – causing them **enormous** worry. To make things worse, Emily lives interstate so driving over to check is not an option.

It took Brenda and Emily a long time, and several conversations with friends and social workers, to figure it out:

1. Greg was sometimes scared to answer or even approach his phone. He had received a couple of unwanted telemarketing calls that turned sour. Of course, he would never admit it.
2. Greg worried about the cost of calling interstate, overseas and mobile numbers.
3. Greg worried about answering calls from Emily, in case it would be expensive for her.
4. Brenda works most days. Greg's calls to Brenda often go unanswered or drop to voicemail. He doesn't like leaving messages. He started to feel that she was avoiding him. He started to wonder whether her phones were working or whether he had the right number. He sometimes called all of her numbers – home, office and mobile – twice each.
5. Greg didn't want to be a burden on Brenda. He would suffer in silence for hours before calling her at work.

## Solving the scariness

Here's what Brenda and Emily did (and what you can do, for your "Grandpa Greg"):

- **Custom vibration pattern.** Brenda set up a unique ring tone and – for when the mobile is on silent – a custom vibration pattern that lets her know when her Dad calls her. Now, when she’s in a meeting, she doesn’t need to check her phone rudely “just in case”.
- **Smart ring.** See the previous edition of our series of articles. When Greg’s friends, family and carers ring, his phone plays a friendly melody and his face lights up.
- **Call forward no answer.** Brenda call-forwarded her home phone and her work phone to her mobile so that she would never miss Greg’s calls. This had four side-benefits: Greg never had to call Brenda’s mobile (which he thought was expensive), never had to call Brenda at her work number (which made him worry about interrupting her meetings), never had to remember Brenda’s work schedule (and therefore which number to try first), and never had to go hunting for her on three different numbers.
- **Local number.** Emily, who lives in Queensland, got herself an additional phone number in Greg’s state (Victoria). Now that Emily has an 03 number that rings all three of her phones simultaneously, Greg can call her for the cost of a local call and never has to worry about which of Emily’s numbers to dial. Emily used a Skype number to do this but there are also VoIP services you can use, as well as a service called Localphone.  
This was so successful that Emily set up her Aunt Mable, who lives in China, with Victorian and Queensland numbers... so that Greg, Emily and Mable’s other Australian relatives and friends can call Mable without worrying.
- **Number list.** Brenda printed a list of preferred phone numbers (including the new “local numbers”) and pinned it to the wall above Greg’s phone. If Greg inadvertently erases his phone’s speed-dial buttons, he will still have access to the numbers he needs.
- **Direct debit.** Greg’s phone account is paid automatically, on time. The receipt is sent to Brenda. Greg has stopped worrying about his phone bills.

## KONNEKT VIDEOPHONE REDUCES PHONE FEAR

- Blocks unknown callers: No more telemarketers or fraudsters
- Finds contacts easily: One touch calls multiple devices and backup numbers
- No scary voicemail: We can set it up to magically avoid voicemail
- Save money: Unlimited calls... and saves money for family and friends, too
- Reduce the worry: Auto-answer for trusted children or a nominated carer
- Face-to-face calling: Know who you’re talking to, and re-assure with a smile
- Learn more about the incredibly simple Videophone: [www.konnekt.com.au](http://www.konnekt.com.au)

## Conclusion

In this article, we’ve shown you how to relieve the anxiety of answering the telephone by reducing “phone fear” and the possibility of unwanted callers. In the **next article** of our series, we’ll help you **reduce loneliness and social isolation** and **reduce health risks** with some up-to-date suggestions, helpful products and social services.

Konnekt is an Australian company that has developed an incredibly simple, one-touch Videophone. The elderly and sick can talk **face-to-face** with family and friends, as often as they want, without the travel. To learn about the Konnekt Videophone or to subscribe to receive future Konnekt articles with tips to help improve quality of life, visit Konnekt at [www.konnekt.com.au](http://www.konnekt.com.au).

## Bibliography

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