Hinge’s new feature may help avoid ghosting, but only if your matches are forgetful

People ghost matches on dating apps for a variety of reasons: they’re bored, they’re not ready to date, or maybe they’re just not that into you. And then there are the accidental ghosters, the ones who never message back because they’ve simply forgotten. For this special, mostly harmless brand of non-responders, the dating app Hinge is rolling out a new feature it’s dubbed “Your Turn” to help.

Your Turn, available today, allows users the option to invite a person to start a conversation, as well as mark messages they’ve yet to respond to. Hinge CEO Justin McLeod, speaking to *The Verge*, says that because of how Hinge works — by trying to match you with people you have a shared acquaintance with — ghosting is a minor problem to begin with. But its users did want clarity on who should start a conversation. “What we find is that when we give people reminders that it’s their turn to respond, that it significantly reduces ghosting,” McLeod says.

Has my date died?

Where ghosting traditionally has been shorthand for an abrupt, unexplained exit from a relationship, Hinge’s feature is more for the *Casper*-level ghoster. “When we asked users why, most often they didn’t start a conversation or didn’t keep a conversation going, a lot of times they literally just got busy or forgot,” McLeod says. “It wasn’t an indication that they weren’t interested.” The problem isn’t about ignoring people; it’s more like two awkward crushes at a middle school mixer. “We really help users decide consciously, do you want to start the conversation … rather than put off this until later and leave the other person confused,” McLeod says. The most effective way to get a date is to start a conversation

yourself, but Hinge still wants users to settle this dilemma of any awkward self-doubt.

The feature also adds the ability to hide a match, an effort to reduce clutter and keep you from ghosting someone because of a messy inbox. A new message will make the thread reappear in your matches. Hiding a conversation seems like an out of sight, out of mind way to ghost, but McLeod points to it as an easier way to clear out a conversation you're done with. Maybe you've already traded numbers, or the conversation has died; maybe you want to remove a thread without going so far as to remove or block someone from your matches. The company prides itself on providing the same experience to everyone, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, and tries to angle its features around that idea. "We're just trying to create a really natural way for people to interact and help them connect with people better, without having to like, game it," McLeod says.

There is no surefire way to avoid being ghosted in love, and unanswered texts or calls leave room for many burning questions: Has my date died? Did they drop their phone into a volcano while taking an awesome selfie? How could anyone ignore this amazing picture of a dog I just sent? But apps are the first defense. They offer the chance to weed out a bad match before you ever have to meet. A good place to start may be asking yourself if you want to get involved with someone who needs a reminder that you exist in the first place.

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