Online friends can be anyone who you develop a relationship with online. These friendships can be just as important and feel just as genuine as a friendship developed in real life. Although I feel this way, I do feel that there are certain conditions that are put in place in order to really be considered a “real” friendship even though it developed online. So some questions that may be in place are “what are the conditions of a “real” friendship? Or “how does this work in cyber space?” All these questions are going to be addressed.

Online friends can be just as genuine and “real” as friends in real life. People are often critical towards people who develop strong relationships with people over the internet because they don’t know them. Many argue that they put themselves in “danger” because they share confidential information with strangers. This is true but there are ways to get around this. People often use apps such as Skype, FaceTime, and Oovoo to have video messages with people they have been communicating with online. Communicating with someone online can grow into a beautiful relationship and using video messaging is one of many ways to protect yourself from danger. So in some way, it isn’t ethical or fair to say someone can’t have a “real” relationship with someone they haven’t met. We see this with a mother and a child in her womb. Although she hasn’t met her child, she still loves him or her with all her heart.

With these issues we run into the question of what a “real friendship is anyway. Well, this question could be answered in a number of ways-depending on who they are asking. In my opinion, “a real” friendship is a relationship in which both people are being satisfied emotionally and who “long” for the companionship with the other person. Another key element of friendship is respect. If both people in a relationship genuinely care about the other person’s feelings and respects their wishes, then they will grow even more fond with one another and develop an even stronger bond. A “real” relationship can’t be developed if both parties aren’t happy. Another key element of a “real” friendship is their willingness to truly make one another happy.

So here we run into the inevitable question: how do “real” friendships work and develop in cyber space? Well, many of these relationships people develop online start out as casual conversation but can soon turn into lifelong partnerships. Where do we see this you may ask? Do you remember the last “Christian Mingle” commercial you’ve seen? What about the last “Black People Meet” commercial? On these dating sites, people can interact with one another and go on dates. If they truly enjoy one another, they go on more dates and some even marry. Even though they met online, the relationship they developed was genuine or else they wouldn’t have married or even gone on a date. So you see, relationships developed online, can be “genuine” too.