



## ELDER LAW AND ESTATE PLANNING

Joseph Karp  
Jonathan Karp



# Daughter wonders how to stop Dad from sending money to online girlfriend

**Question:** My father is 72, widowed, and spends hours at his computer on dating sites. He now has a “relationship” with a woman (if in fact she is, who knows?) who claims she needs money. He has already wired her hundreds of dollars. Now, she has asked that he wire her more, supposedly so she can purchase an airline ticket and come to Florida to meet him. My sister and I have tried talking sense to him with no success and we are very frustrated. We are his powers of attorney, and used that document a few weeks ago to cancel his membership on that site. He was furious, restored the service, and now he’s revoked the document. Do we need a guardianship to prevent him from being taken advantage of?

**Answer:** Your concern is understandable. However, guardianship may not be the road you want to travel down at this point. You probably could not get one, anyway. Your father would have to be proven legally incompetent, and you have not mentioned any other behaviors that would fit that criterion. The courts do not readily remove people’s rights to make their own decisions, which is as it should be. Here’s the hard truth: if he is legally competent, it is his constitutional right to make his own decisions and spend his

The Karp Law Firm, P.A.

**Location, phone number:**

- Palm Beach Gardens, 561-625-1100
- Boynton Beach, 561-752-4550
- Port St. Lucie, 772-343-8411

**Website:** KarpLaw.com

**Email:** ask@karplaw.com

money as he wishes, even if you consider his actions unwise or naive.

Notwithstanding, keep talking with your dad. Enlist others to do the same. Perhaps he can be convinced that a little more skepticism is in order. Also, because it’s clear that he is seeking companionship, suggest outlets for socialization beyond the internet.

His revoking the durable power of attorney is worrisome. If in the future he becomes truly incompetent, guardianship may be the only recourse if no one else is authorized to handle his affairs. You should revisit this issue with him, too. Good luck.

*Joseph Karp and Jonathan Karp are Florida Elder Law and Estate Planning Attorneys. The Karp Law Firm is located in Palm Beach and St. Lucie counties. It assists clients with wills, trusts, Medicaid and VA benefits planning, special needs planning, asset preservation, probate/trust administration, estate litigation, and probate and elder law mediation.*