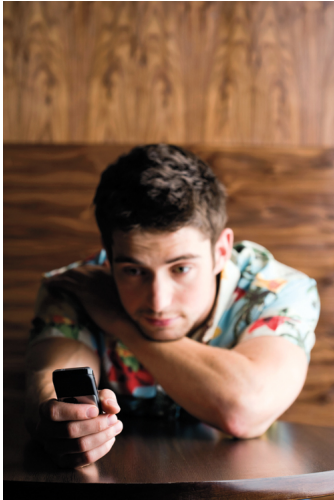


Speak More, Text Less

Written by Michael Yasinski M.D.

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Text messaging is becoming the dominant means of communication in today's society, and thus plays an important role in the dynamics of a romantic relationship. Texting is steadily eliminating traditional forms of communication like the written word or a simple phone call. While its convenience enables busy individuals to develop and maintain their relationships despite hectic lives, it is also lazy and emotionless which is detrimental to finding a lasting romance.

One problem is the absence of rules and guidelines for these interactions, especially in the beginning when even the slightest misinterpretation can wreak havoc. This absence of expectations ends up causing conflict or disappointment within the relationship. There is no established etiquette for acceptable message length, response time or frequency of interaction. Interpreting—or rather misinterpreting—continues to destroy relationships with every forgotten smiley emoticon.

Early in a relationship, benefits of texting include reducing uncertainty and lessening anxiety, allowing two people to be more open and honest. While this can be a good thing, it can also lead to overly honest and direct communication which without an established understanding of the person can be perceived as overly critical or obnoxious. Between the openness and speed of texting, it has become a lightning fast way of getting to know someone. Unfortunately, without knowing somebody's true personality, and without the ability to read body language and facial expression, the information is often overanalyzed and misinterpreted. .

Once a steady relationship is formed, texting does work well to express quick bits of information, arranging plans or simply saying good morning. The key, however, is avoiding emotional conversations as the dehumanizing medium of text can lead to overly aggressive and hurtful attacks which permanently damage a relationship.

Ultimately, it is those couples who invest the time to communicate face-to-face, on a much more personal level,

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who have successful relationships in this modern era of technology. Over-reliance on texting also can jeopardize trust. Trust is the foundation of a successful lasting relationship, but reliance on texting unfortunately often leads to paranoia about your partner's texting behaviors. If you find yourself checking what your partner is texting behind their back, you might as well throw in the towel as that relationship will never last.

Finally, text messages are also not necessarily true reflections of your actual thoughts. Messages are often edited, re-read and even written by other people. These overly scripted thoughts add another layer of impersonal interaction. Ultimately, lasting relationships take time and energy. It is easy to neglect the often-time consuming phone calls and or uncomfortable face-to-face emotional conversations but, without these mediums of discussion, a healthy long-term relationship will elude you.
