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Rule of Thumb: Texting and Dating Essay

Texting is not the reason Moore’s relationship went downhill. Before the inception of smartphones, and their entrance into the mainstream, people would send love letters or notes. They’d wait until the end of their job shifts to see each other after enduring heart pounding anxiety throughout. The moments shared between lovers who couldn’t bear any time apart were treasured before this new age of texting. The advent of the smartphone, or rather, texting, served as a way to alleviate the heart pounding anxiety induced from not being able to see that loved one until the day was over. Rather than having to wait for a 30 minute or 1 hour break, or what have you, to reach out to a loved one; people were now able to communicate whenever they pleased. All through a simple keystroke. Before texting, there was never such a lack of communication between lovers; as seen with Moore’s experience! Needless to say, I’ve been somewhat sarcastic throughout my writing, thus far. People like Moore’s boyfriend have existed for a very long time. All that has changed are the tools being used. Rather than relying on a note or a love letter, or letting thoughts go unsaid until an eruptive argument occurs; there exists a new method: texting. Through a text, Moore’s boyfriend has done what lovers with insecurities have been doing for a long time. Technology is not hurting the dating process, it’s changing it.

Moore’s experience happened in 2007. That was 14 years ago. That said, it’s experiences like these that serve as an example for many people today. Many millennials understand the consequences of overreliance on texting in a relationship. More often than not, people tend to have boundaries for those exhibiting behavior such as Moore’s boyfriend. He clearly had insecurities. With that, someone with such social insecurities is going to find something that can lubricate the communication process whenever it becomes too great of a challenge. Millennials, who grew up with this technology, probably date less often because they’re able to spot these insecurities early on as well as other issues. Anecdotally speaking, my younger sister has learned to move on when speaking to a prospective date with similarities to Moore’s boyfriend. For her, it's a clear sign of insecurity. With that, it’s easy to understand why Moore believed texting ruined the dating process; but, bear in mind that a smartphone is a mere device. Behaviors such as asking one out via text or settling deep disputes via text, rather than having an open discussion; or rather, the preference to discuss thoughts and feelings over a text without the willingness to follow up in person is up to the individual, not the device itself. Nevertheless, there are millennials who are completely happy communicating this way. In circumstances such as this, both ends of the relationship find satisfaction in taking on their disputes through quick keystrokes. Considering the fact that 2007 was a very different time, it’s easy to see why Moore was oblivious to her boyfriend’s insecurity and how it led to him relying on texting as well as her blaming texting overall. Furthermore, when she states ‘He never wanted to talk, but he always wanted to text. To him, the only way to communicate was via thumb.’([1](https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/09/14/AR2007091401972.html)), she seemed to have never seen such behavior before. That statement would be seen as a clear indicator of his overreliance on texting in a relationship occurring today. It’s okay to have deep and meaningful discussions via a smartphone. However, the willingness to have them in person should also be present. At the very least, both ends of the relationship shouldn’t have a problem with texting so long as boundaries for communication are established.

Texting is just a means of relaying information. Like all tools, it’s what people make of it. Regardless, like all tools, it must be used responsibly. Moore’s boyfriend’s inability to communicate or express himself properly is what ultimately led to his behavior. As Moore had pointed out ‘He often seemed unable to articulate what made him mad or uneasy’. For someone having such difficulty articulating his frustration, what better way would there be than the silent and yet powerful influence of a text message? After all, it worked at the beginning of the relationship where everything was great. When Moore said:

‘Initially, texting with him was thrilling. Wherever I was -- on assignment, at the airport, out with friends -- his sweet messages triggered butterflies‘ ([2](https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/09/14/AR2007091401972_2.html)),

This was an indicator of the enjoyment they both had. Both Moore and her boyfriend were in those early phases of being in love. Therefore, everything they communicated via text was a reflection of that. As the relationship hit a dip, that too, reflected in their text messages. Especially the boyfriend’s. With or without texting involved, the relationship may have been bound to go downhill.

Everyone knew the fun of texting, but not the consequences. Like with all brand new technologies, people only see the downfall after experiencing the initial benefits. Back in 2007, nobody could have known the drawbacks of such overreliance:

‘In the United States, we have come fairly late to the texting game. The Chinese, who embraced this technology years before it arrived here, send 300 billion text messages a year, and the number is rising. Half the 13- to 15-year-olds in Australia own cellphones. In Japan, some experts have noted that thumbs are growing physically bigger and people are now using that digit -- and not the index finger -- to point and ring doorbells. Texting is so prevalent that Japanese teenagers are called the "tribe of the thumb." ([2](https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/09/14/AR2007091401972_2.html))

Moore pointed out the new behaviors observed by numerous experts in other countries. From the issue her boyfriend had, all the way to the changes in the use of fingers when ringing a doorbell. Society itself was discovering the changes that came with such a new tool. These discoveries would unravel as time went on.

In 50 years, people will probably move onto other forms of remote communication that go beyond texting. For example, augmented reality is beginning to find a place in the professional workplace. Microsoft’s Mesh Hololens headset enables members of staff to remotely share three-dimensional graphics in a virtual workplace. Graphics such as a 3D diagram of human anatomy or a pipeline of some sort. As the name implies, the device meshes digital space with real space. Such technologies always find mainstream use. What will happen when they begin to influence how people interact with one another? Sure, it will enable people to be closer than ever while simultaneously being distant; but, once all the benefits wear out what will be the drawbacks? Perhaps the innovators behind these emerging technologies have prepared for this? That said, assuming they haven’t, people with different kinds of insecurities may come to over rely on these technologies. In addition, there’s the potential for surveillance that violates the privacy of those engaged in a relationship. People will probably be encouraged to date in cyberspace before they date each other in real space and may even be encouraged to break up via algorithmically managed advertisements when their relationship shows signs of going downhill. With technology like this around the corner, remote communication will no longer be bound to texting or social media posts. Relationships will truly be without borders. As Microsoft states on the landing page for the Mesh device ‘Here can be anywhere’.

Works Cited

# Moore,Natalie Y. Rule of Thumbs: Love in the Age of Texting <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/09/14/AR2007091401972.html>

Microsoft Mesh: <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/mesh?activetab=pivot%3aprimaryr7>