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## Chapter 1

they came in spurts of verbal communication, whether we asked the text-related questions at work or at home, in schools, at the park, at sporting events, at airports, or on flights, in the malls, at religious gatherings, in banks or food establishments, at beauty shops or nail salons, sports bars or gas stations, once even in a public restroom—in short, wherever and whenever people congregated.

Some of the people we asked for their texting beliefs and practices were city folks, others, country folks. Some were born in the US. Others were immigrants from a wide variety of foreign countries, and still others were just brief visitors to our nation or passers-through.

# The Birth of Texting

Did we ever get a clear and astounding look at the texting fiber and fabric of the US and beyond. As mentioned earlier, the opinions voiced to us in regards to texting were as different as day and night. Of course, some were to be expected. Since texting did not exist too many years ago—according to most sources on the Internet, it was born in the early 1990’s—the beginning assumption was that older people would have a less favorable opinion of this practice. Since they had not grown up with texting, they were less inclined to turn to this method of sending a message, it was thought. For them, unfamiliarity did breed contempt. That was in fact true in most cases.

Actually a chart could be drawn in the rise of text likeability and text-user friendliness that could give a very quick prediction as to how likely a person is to participate in texting. Even simpler, a person’s birth date seemed to be a fairly good indicator for his/her text-ile involvement.

To simplify, if we consider 20-odd years to be a generation, we can now determine the following:

- People born in the **1920’s** are generally .....very rare texters
- 1940’s**.....rare texters
- 1960’s**.....texters of medium frequency
- 1980’s**.....high-frequency texters
- 2000’s**.....texting is/will probably be their normal way of life

Recently it was observed that the interest in texting now starts at a very young age.

*One mother noticed her three-year-old daughter rummaging in her little toy purse, pull out a Lego, and quickly touch it all over. “What are you doing?” she asked. “Texting my stuffed animals to come to my tea party.”*



**5. Do examine your text actions if you are a parent of small children. Ask yourself how often your children see you text.**

If children grow up seeing their parents and caretakers text nonstop, they will assume that this is a practice that must be followed. Already texting use has mushroomed among teenagers. If little kids either imitate the behavior or are—by example—encouraged to do it, they may not, unlike in the past, develop the social skills they need for a happy life.

*I now see many kids now avoiding a face-to-face meeting. They hide behind their texting.*

When kids always text their peers, rather than talk to them or call them on the phone, they may lose their ease of verbally interacting socially.

**6. Do make phone calls whenever possible when contacting your family, friends, and associates.**



If kids think texting is the only acceptable form of communication, then they may potentially become shyer and less able to assert themselves, which can hurt them in the real world.

*These days many kids text their friends to ask if they can spend the night.*

So as a parent, it's best to ask yourself: Have you observed your kids imitating your texting behavior? Then take a break from texting whenever you can.

**7. Do set aside a text-free weekend every now and then. Begin with a special breakfast on Saturday morning and then explore your town's many free events. Schedule a visit to the farmer's market, the public library, the park or nature trail—with no phones accompanying you.**



Connecting with your family and friends in person—being with them without any distractions—can bond all of you and fortify you as you face the rushed and hectic weeks ahead. The human voice is a beautiful instrument—use it.

*Texting is an action with a piece of electronic equipment, which takes the human element out of it.*

Human interaction should always be supplemented, not supplanted, by technological interaction. Texting does not call the shots. You do!



## Chapter 1

# Text Nation Text-ercises

1. What do the Thumbs Up and Thumbs Down signs mean in regards to texting?

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2. Describe a world where no one talks and all communication is carried out through texting? What would be the advantages? The disadvantages?

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3. Why are phone calls better in certain situations? Give two examples.

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4. If there were no cell phones how would you share information with your friends?

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