

U R RUDE DUDE!

by Carolann Philips

No one can dispute the popularity of Text messaging using a mobile phone across the world today. Texting, SMSing or messaging as it is commonly called is one of the simplest, cheapest and most convenient means of mobile communication. However, as messaging grows in popularity, the excitement over using this convenient technology clashes head on with common courtesy. Experts say that text messaging has created a generation that is increasingly reliant on non-contact communication resulting in reduced social confidence and etiquette. We have all seen possessed souls sitting next to friends, texting away, not even looking at those beside them.

As with other communication aids, there are a few basic etiquette tips to keep in mind in order to avoid annoying others or embarrassing yourself while texting.

It is not necessarily rude to text while in the presence of others if the objective of the message is to involve the recipient in the physical gathering. If such is not the case, and it is a short, important message to be typed, excuse yourself before doing so. Be discreet by turning down the volume of the phone's alert or put it on silent or vibrate mode. Also, turn down the key tone volume for the key pad so you can text without disturbing others. Communicating extensively via text in social gatherings is rude and will surely annoy the others around. Texting is writing and therefore has a formal and informal approach. If you chose to send an SMS to communicate with a business associate do it formally with the spellings and grammar intact. If you receive a carefully crafted message it is best not to respond in robotic, abbreviated text. Just because text messages encourage shorthand

notation there is no need to show the recipient that you have kindergarten grammar skills! Text messages should be concise; preferably not more than 140 characters long. For long messages, use e-mail or better still make a phone call! Mobile texting should not be used for formal invitations or serious correspondence such as an accident or death. The casualness diminishes the strength and meaning of the message. Typing a text message in capital letters is considered rude as it implies you are yelling. Although, there is no agreed upon maximum number of text messages you can send someone, it is practical to just make a phone call if it takes more than two or three messages to discuss something. Avoid sending messages when you are upset or during a heated argument or misunderstanding as the unpleasantness may linger long after the conflict is resolved. Texting in classes, seminars and presentations is an insult to the presenter. Do not text while watching a movie in a theatre. The glow from the device can be distracting to other viewers. Texting while driving is not only poor etiquette but also an offense. Be conscientious of others' schedules and avoid texting at odd hours. If you have not received a reply, do not send the same text over and over again. Be patient or send a different text if the matter is urgent. In responding, the recipient is free to choose the medium of the response or even whether to respond at all. Companies should ensure that there is an opt-out mechanism for consumers when sending marketing messages via SMS.

Instant messaging etiquette is essential in trying to present a professional and refined image but I am obliged to exempt our Next generation kids who spend too much time texting mangled English whilst faced with the highest academic expectations in history.

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Carolann has had the pleasure of delivering programs to a diverse clientele; from major airlines, leading banks, embassies, and reputed business houses to the modeling & fashion industry and royalty within the GCC. She is also a columnist for the 'Thursday' magazine, a local publication.