

## **dad, wer r u ???**

The xperts say that txtn is vry addictive and can suck out time n r lifes that we can b spending w/ r fam. Ppl get so preoccupied w/ wut evry1 else is doin that they 4get bout ther own family. We need 2 spend mor time w/ r fam and not r txtn buddies. Wut bout this tho..u kno what the rents r doin...Hav u evr seen the dad standin @ a soccer match or sum skl evnt w/ him pacing sidelines or goin outside the gym w/ a cell fone glued 2 his ear 2 “make that important call?” Wut bout HIM txtn when hes supposed 2 b watchn me? Y cant I txt? Its more than I’m gettin out of him neways!

Do you remember the days where there were no cell phones and you used answering machines at your home – if you were lucky? How about church or special events and some cell phone goes blasting off? And now we have special announcements just to “nicely tell folks” to turn off the cell phones. I am like Andy Rooney, “What is this world coming to where we have people walking around in a daze” talking to these electronic devices? More important, what message are we sending our kids as fathers? What a challenge for many of us fathers who have desired to be more “present” with our children.

Teens all around us are so connected to their friends and others through emails and text messages like no other time in history. Nationally more than 75 billion text messages are sent a month, and the really crazy texters are ages 13 – 17 say researchers. Teens with cell phones average 2, 272 text messages a month compared to 203 calls, according to the Nielson Company.

Our kids are not able to tune in at home, they are distracted by this “flitting back and forth” that leads to a kind of mental brownout” say the experts. When we are sitting down for supper or when we are spending time as a family, whether it is driving or just hanging, I am reminded that kids need to turn off their XX!!%%XX phone! I know I am not the only human frustrated by this. The danger is not just in the content but also the overuse of the technology.

In other words, if a person watched four hours of appropriate for family viewing TV it would still be detrimental because he or she is watching too much TV. The excessive use of this cell phone technology is harmful in and of itself. I believe that it needs to be limited by us as parents while we still have the power to do so. What does this texting without boundaries do to our kids?

First, it is harmful in our relationship with our children. It hinders their ability to be “present” at home and to truly listen to their parents and siblings. Texting is something that our kids feel that they can do while they are doing something else, like being with the family or doing their homework. In reality, this quality of family time and of homework is reduced while they are constantly being distracted.

**Second, this is even potentially harmful spiritually as it emphasizes quick, instant communication. I think probably I am no different than most, but God doesn't usually relate to me with instant gratification. He wants us to learn to wait on Him. Texting goes against all of this. It is an instant feedback kind of communication that can come quite addicting.**

**You know, it just sort of makes me worry about us loosing our connection with our kids. I know there are arguments about "knowing where our kids are at, feeling connected, feeling secure" and so forth. I am not sure I can argue that but when you see kids texting one another in the same house, rooms, or on their way to an event and walking up to someone still texting sort of has to make us think something is wrong. The fact of the matter is that it is wrong.**

**We live in a plastic world and a colder world. We can't afford for our kids to simply drift off to a world of phones of texting, emails and constant phone chatter. What this means in my world is that our kids are not as warm, verbal communication is spiraling downward and our intimacy levels have to be plummeting.**

**What this means is that communication with our kids is critical and we need every opportunity with "face time" and we need to set the example to "turn off the phones" and realize the most important thing in our lives is usually sitting next to us "texting on their pretty little phones that we gave them to 'feel better' where they are" while our I-Phones or Blackberry is burning up with our own stuff. Think about it and your priorities and your communication skills with your children. In all things, love, love, and listen, listen NOT text, text.**

**Special help to article:**

**Ashlee Jones**

**Arbor Christian Academy**

**Sophomore, 16 years old**