



People tell me that they are not good at talking on the phone or face to face and so resort to texting. My question is, "What would you have done before cell phones?" Well, they would have developed their communicate skills and overcome their inability.

But that is not the case today. Unfortunately, it's far too easy to become stunted, to not better ourselves, to hide behind a little screen, and to settle for virtual relationships rather than real ones. Many people are losing who they are in the world of social media. This video sums up the state of social media today.

Look Up

Texting does not help you to really know a person, but rather, only 'about' a person. You can know everything about a person but not really know them. Sometimes, they are very different people in person than behind a screen. Remember the days when we used to actually call people on the phone to talk? Now we just send a quick text or 1000. People 14-24 years of age send an average of more than 3,500 texts a month (over 120 a day). Young adults, ages 25-34 average more than 2000 a month! Today, you can ask someone out, break up, break up again, argue for three hours, all via text messages. But, is this a good thing?

We used to have a Walkman, a video camera, a regular camera, a huge flashlight and a computer, but now, they're all in one small cell phone. That's great! With that being said, cell phones can and are stunting many people's social skills, conversational skills, and especially their dating lives. We all have been guilty of relying on cell phones as a security blanket or a friend, but they shouldn't hold us back from developing real relationships. If you don't know someone at a Bible study, a meeting, or a party, it's easy to curl up in a corner and just scroll through Facebook for two hours without going out of your way to meet someone. Instead of breaking into a conversation and making friends, too many choose to stay on the outside and self-medicate on their phones.

There are countless great things cell phones can be used for in daily life. However, when they intrude into relationships or dating in a way that is hurtful, there is a

problem. I'm sure there are many more ideas others can add below, but here are a few suggestions I came up with to help foster relationships rather than stunt them:

1. Have the courage to look someone in the eyes when you ask them out—or break up with them. If asking them out in person isn't possible, at least do it over a phone call or Skype where you can have a real conversation. Don't break up impersonally with someone via text, or worse, by avoiding them and hoping the problem goes away.

2. Never argue or have a deep intense conversation by text . If you find that starting to happen, just call the person and have a real conversation about the problem. Some claim it's quicker just to text, but that's not true; it's usually a cop out. People sit there impersonally arguing with their significant other in groups, at parties, and even church gatherings when one phone call later on would do. They miss out on meeting people and making real friendships. In addition, there are no emotions over a screen. It's too easy to interpret things differently than the person meant it. The point is, if you want to discuss something deep, or if you have an argument happening, do it in person or over the phone. That's what a real relationship looks like, not a virtual one.

3. Make a decision not to check your phone on a date or while out to eat . Unless it's an emergency, keep that time between you and your date special. Show the other person that they are more important than an incoming text, phone call, or Facebook notification.

4. Resist the urge to check your phone. If your date goes to the bathroom, for example, and you have a few minutes by yourself, resist the urge to check Facebook, email, or anything else. Consider praying instead. Think of things to talk about when he or she comes back. Contemplate the other person and how things are going. Think of ways to please him or her. Or, just be content to enjoy a few minutes of silence.

Let's not be slaves to our phones. Let's live more in the real world than the virtual one we create, and we will have better, more lasting relationships.