



# MOUNT HOREB NEWS

PRAYER MINISTRY

## Text Messaging Can it become addictive?



### The "Texting" Phenomenon

Last summer I took my son, son-in-law and grandson on a fishing trip to the Texas Gulf Coast. We had a most amazing day. I wish I could tell you that we all caught our limit, but that did not happen. While waiting for a fish to "take the bait," I noticed a young woman in her early twenties on the boat. She was not fishing nor sun bathing, but "texting." Suddenly I was interrupted by my catch of the day. Unfortunately it was not a keeper. A short time later, while taking a break from my labors of fishing, I noticed the young woman was still "texting." I asked myself the question, "Why doesn't she just call the person and talk with them?" For four hours she "texted." Following our fishing expedition we went to a local eatery for a seafood lunch. I watched in bewilderment as four people seated at the table next to us were all on their phones "texting."

Upon returning to my desk the following Monday, I began to research the syndrome of "texting." Here is what I found. Text messaging, or sending quick notes through cell phones, has been on the rise since it first debuted December 3, 1992. The story goes that an engineer sent a message to a colleague via a mobile phone writing "Merry Christmas." Thus began the phenomenon of "texting." One shocking study reports that in the last three years cell "texting" has increased over 600%.

"Texting" is an international activity which is wide spread in the U.S. as well. A report issued in December 2009 stated that in the United States the 286 million U.S. subscribers sent 152.7 billion text messages per month, for an average of 534 messages per subscriber per month. The Pew Research Center found in May 2010 that 72% of U.S. adult cell phone users send and receive text messages.

The most vivid change surrounding cell phone use has been the rapid increase in text messaging by adolescents. In an 18 month period, the number of teens who text every day rose from 38 percent to 54 percent. Girls typically send and receive 80 texts a day and boys come in at 30. According to the Neilson Ratings Company, "...on average teens send upward of 3,200 texts per month." Over 80% of kids have cell phones.



### Is Texting Addictive?

Charles Landry, assistant professor of psychology at the University of Wisconsin, says "Addictions in general stem from the brain's prefrontal cortex, where decisions are made and rewards are registered. Addictions are created in the brain when a certain activity or product stimulates the release of the hormone dopamine, which then creates a pleasurable chemical rush through the body. The result is the person will do an act over and over without hesitation in order to receive that rush."

Sleep doctor, Michael Seyffert says the instant gratification of "texting" and getting a text back floods the brain's pleasure center with the mood enhancer dopamine. "They have to have it. And they will actually describe these feelings: **when I don't have it I feel bad, I feel anxious or I feel sad.**"

Teens admit their moods can change based on who they're "texting" and how quickly they respond. "If someone responds right away, you're like, 'Yay! They responded.' If someone responds two to three hours later you're like, 'What's going on?'" says one of my clients.

Sound addictive? Well, it could be.

Dr. Michael Rich, a pediatrician who specializes in media and calls himself a "mediatrician," dispenses advice to parents. He says, "If teens have a craving that can only be satisfied by doing it, then that moves into the realm of addictive behaviors – more like a gambling addiction or a sex addiction, something that is behavioral as opposed to a substance addiction in the sense of heroin or alcohol."

Cell phones have shifted more of teen life off the parents' radar. Parents once found it simpler to overhear phone conversations and music, to look on as teens played video games or passed hours at a desktop computer. The cell phone is a much more private way of interacting.





## How to Break Your Texting Obsession

By Jen Goggin

### **Decide to break a non-productive and possibly damaging habit.**

1. Limit your texting to a certain time of day. For example, only reply to texts between the hours of 7-9 pm. If the information that you need to relay is that important, you can actually CALL the person. This will help you to decide whether or not you really want to spend valuable time communicating with someone.

### **Put down your phone and let's actually converse.**

2. Do not initiate any texting conversations. This will free you up to spend time actually having a good old-fashioned FACE-TO-FACE conversation with someone.

### **Be in the moment.**

3. Do not carry your phone on you during social events, such as at dinner with friends, parties, or athletic events. When you're texting, you are there but you are not present and you will miss out on some stuff. Leave your phone in at home or hand it to a trusted friend.

### **Tips & Warnings**

- Reveal your obsession with a trusted friend and ask for their help.
- Replace your texting habit with another, more productive activity.
- Change your phone plan so that you are not allowed unlimited texting.
- Follow these steps for AT LEAST 21 DAYS- the average amount of time that it takes to break a habit.

**I (Dan) would suggest that you not sleep with your phone near your bed.**

## Sexting

What is "Sexting"? "Sexting is slang for the act of sending sexually explicit or suggestive content between mobile devices. Representing a genre of "texting," it contains either text, images, or video that is intended to be sexually arousing." (Wikipedia) In my opinion "Sexting" is just another form of pornography.

A 2008 survey by The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy suggested a trend of "Sexting" and other seductive online content being readily shared between teens. One in ten teen girls surveyed, ages 13-16 years old, say they have electronically sent, or posted online, nude or semi-nude images of themselves. One in three of teen boys and one in fourteen girls say they were shown private nude or semi-nude images. According to the survey, sexually suggestive messages (text, e-mail, and instant messaging) were even more common than images.

According to Amanda Lambert, of the Pew Internet and American Life Project, a recent study points out that nationally 15 percent of teens had received a suggestive or nearly naked image of someone they know by text message

The Pew study comes at a time of rising concern locally about what teens are doing on cell phones. Recently, police launched an investigation at a middle school where a student had allegedly shared - and sold - provocative images of female students sent by text message.

Sexting becomes a legal issue when teens (under 18) are involved because any nude photos they may send of themselves would put the recipients in possession of child pornography.



*Blessings and love to you and your family this Christmas season. Dan & Ann*

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Please send us your e-mail address to receive a monthly up-date.

*Merry Christmas*

