

Technology and dating: Deciphering the mixed message

by Kate Elliott, Divine Intervention

In the age of Blackberrys, iPhones, SmartPhones, touch screens, and mini keyboards attached to three inch key chains, it's no wonder that technology has surpassed the fine art of communication when it comes to dating. When you've officially been asked out on a date through Facebook, you'll understand where I'm coming from; only then, will you reflect on those magical evenings when the initial phone call was accompanied by popcorn, half a bottle of wine, and three hours sleep before work, if that. If the opposite sex is no longer required to make the "first phone call" or can email to ask you out on a second date, where do we go from here? Technology and romance definitely don't sync, no matter how savvy your online personality may be.

I won't pretend that text messaging is the culprit here. It has become a quick and dirty way to reach people, schedule appointments, tell someone you are running late, or save a few cents on a phone call. But the dangers of overuse are widespread and apparent. Using texts as opposed to human conversation threatens the way we interact with one another. When dating, it can give one person the upper hand as opposed to you both enjoying a good laugh about how incredibly awkward dating can be, for both parties.

More and more, men and women are faced with the problematic, and potentially hazardous, decisions of whether or not to continue communication via text. First dates are followed by the fuzzy "I had a great time with you" one-liner that pops up on your phone after the date is over, but continuing the trend by responding only opens you up to future correspondence littered with lols, brbs, and omgs (popular acronyms in techie talk).

You may be asking yourself why? Why is it easier to text than to pick up the phone and ask someone out or the ever-dying trend of (gasp) doing it in person? Because it covers your own ass. Rejection comes in written form; it's easier to erase a message and forget it ever happened, than to see the person's face- that look of exaggerated sympathy- after they've rejected you. Nervousness and careless turn of phrase is potentially avoided through the wonders of spell check, save draft, and delete.

If a man doesn't have enough gusto to ask you out to a movie or coffee, most likely he'll propose on MySpace, or even worse, change his status before even asking you. When someone takes the time to dial digits, walk you to your door, send you flowers: hang on for dear life. Within in the whirlwind of convenience, and everything made easier, one thing remains true - time, energy, and a little thought injected into your love life will bode better for both your personal relationships and the staggering divorce rate. Traditional values and mutual respect are still valued when it comes to courtship!