



Love

Intelligence

**COACHING**

## Text Messages Do's and Don'ts Guide

Sms, text messages, online messages, we all love to use them.

It's convenient. We read it whenever we want. We reply whenever we feel like it. And best of all, we can "connect" with our partner while doing other things simultaneously.

Communication via online messages feels very comfortable because it gives us the illusion of being safe behind our screens, AND it allows us to be fully IN CONTROL of the communication process.

Great, isn't it?

Well, maybe not so much.

You see, in the Era of Hyper Digitalisation and online communication, we tend to forget that most of the communication cues are transmitted through non-verbal communication.

For this reason, communication via text and online messages can be more tricky and more problematic than we think. Indeed, it can trigger misinterpretations, misunderstandings, and even projections.

So, I hope this mini guide will help you avoid being caught in the hidden traps inherent to online and text messages.

## DON'TS:

- ✘ **Avoid using text messages as your primary medium of communication.** When we communicate via text or online messages, the only cue we have to process the information is written language, associated sometimes with smileys. (which, by the way, RARELY translates the actual emotional state of the person who sends it). So, it is very limited. And this, combined with the temporal difference between messages, leaves a lot of room for projections and misinterpretations.
- ✘ **Avoid having an important conversation** via text messages. Meaningful conversations require you to be fully present and process everything properly. Engaging via text messages to solve something significant won't allow you to access effectively all the communication cues, potentially leading to more stress and misinterpretations.
- ✘ **Avoid overusing emojis.** As much as emojis can give a particular tone to messages, their meaning tends to lose its value when they are overused.
- ✘ **Avoid writing long messages.** When we exchange via text messages, we are usually doing other things at the same time. This means that our attention is not 100% focused on the conversation. For this reason, long text messages may not be read correctly.
- ✘ **Avoid hiding behind text messages during conflicts and arguments.** I know what you are going to say. It gives you more time to process what the other person is telling you and what you will reply. BUT remember that every text you send (or receive) may not be interpreted the right way due to an enhanced negative state of mind (without mentioning the temporal difference that will worsen things - i.e., he's not replying may mean to you that he doesn't care, while he DOES care but doesn't know what to say.)

## Do's:

- ✓ **Whenever possible, opt for phone calls or video calls rather than text messages.** This way, your partner will perceive more clearly what you mean via the tone of your voice. This by itself will help to reduce projections and misinterpretations.
- ✓ **Be aware and mindful of the impact of the TEMPORAL DIFFERENCE.** TEMPORAL DIFFERENCE in communication does come with “side effects.” For instance, texting triggers what we call “reward uncertainty,” where the anticipation, hope, and excitement to receive a reply make us feel anxious quite quickly if we don't receive their message fast enough. Being mindful regarding this point and replying in a timely manner will avoid projections and stress on your partner's side.
- ✓ **Clarify the meanings of emojis.** This way, when you and your significant other use them, you will understand correctly what they mean rather than wondering or projecting what their meaning may be.
- ✓ **Be as precise and concise as possible.** The more general you are in your messages, the more room you give to the other to extrapolate on what you just messaged.
- ✓ **Use text/online messages preferably for a quick check or short/unimportant conversations.**