

Texting Tip 3 - When Should You Reply?

The Rules Revisited | 4 May, 2013 | by Andrew

Since I've already explained [how you should reply to a man's texts](#), the obvious follow-up is to explain *when* to reply to a man's texts.

You've probably heard all kinds of suggestions from other girls about how long to wait before [replying to a text](#) from a guy you like. Some claim you should always wait 15 minutes, others insist on only replying to every other text, while others still dismiss "playing games" as ridiculous and advocate replying however you feel like in the moment. Ignore all of this advice. It will either make you come across as needy and too easy, or else cold and too distant.

In order to time your texts so that you convey your best self, you will need to be two things: genuine and realistic. Being genuine will prevent you from seeming uninterested or boring, while being realistic will prevent you from seeming desperate. Furthermore, your authenticity will show a man your [true self](#), while your realism will keep in check your tendency to be too forthcoming. Let me elaborate...

Genuine. If you get a text from a guy that you like, and you genuinely have a free moment to reply, don't play games by artificially prolonging your response. This might be "successful" in the sense that it will occasionally keep a man on the hook for a time, but this is only because he wants to prove that you want him; it doesn't make him enjoy *you* any more. In addition, the whole "hard to get" charade is far too easy to overdo, and you risk making yourself appear uninterested - or worse, cold and boring. So when he texts, answer him [naturally, genuinely, authentically](#). If you find yourself thinking "I don't feel like replying right now," or "I'll get to it later," then don't reply at all, or tell him ([tactfully](#)) that you don't want to pursue a relationship. You probably shouldn't have given him your number in the first place.

Realistic. If you are really excited about the guy who is texting you, or if you are just excited to be getting any attention from a guy, you need to resist your temptation to indulge in communicating with him (anticipating his texts, reading them, replying, and anticipating the next one). This excitement seems like a small thing; but when you are dropping everything immediately upon receiving a text notification, or constantly checking your phone just to make sure you didn't miss the latest message from him, you start to realize how much you are allowing a merely potential relationship to monopolize your priorities. In these cases, you need a healthy dose of realism. Unless you are months into a serious relationship, there is no way that know whether or not things will work out with this guy; so it is ridiculous to interrupt what you are doing every time your phone goes off. When you do this, you are reacting to your imagination and wishful thinking, not to reality.

By embracing these two principles simultaneously, you will achieve the attitude that texting "rules" seek to emulate. Yeah, sure, maybe it will mean that you occasionally seem a little over-excited to get his text (because you happen to be checking your messages when his comes in), or a bit distant (because you were ignoring your phone while studying for ten hours, and his text came in right after you started); but you will only seem so in the short term. No single text you send will represent to him your attitude, so [no single response time will matter completely](#). (Though if it does take you hours to reply, it is worth acknowledging this by giving a quick explanation; though an apology isn't usually warranted - if it had

been urgent he should have called.)

A good way to strike this balance is to text the men you are dating in the same way that you regularly text your acquaintances friends or family. Would you bring your phone into to the gym with you - even though you normally don't - in order to be available for a text that your female coworker might or might not send you? Then why are you doing it for the random (albiet hot) guy who got your number at the bar last night? Would you interrupt your studies for the big exam tomorrow to check a text that you suspect is from your mom, asking how your day was? Then why are you doing it for a guy who (for all you know so far) might be married or have incompatible politics? Would you delay your response for an additional 15 minutes, or occasionally not reply at all in a text conversation with your little brother? Then why do you feel the need to do it with your cute coworker who you really like and suspect might be into you? Treat these men like the [mere friends](#) or acquaintances that they are, until they become something more - at which point text games won't be necessary anyway.

A final note: if a guy seems to be playing games with *you*, artificially delaying his responses or skipping texts (yes, guys do this stuff too sometimes), I still suggest replying authentically and realistically. But after 4 or 5 late and [unexplained](#) texts, feel free to ignore him. He's either a player or not interested enough, and either way you do best to forget about him.

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