



real men



don't text

a new approach
to dating

RUTHIE & MICHAEL DEAN

What People Are Saying about *Real Men Don't Text*

Ruthie and Michael bring a fresh perspective to the confusing world of dating. This book is a game changer.

JASON ROMANO, senior manager of social media, ESPN, and former Major League Baseball player

Did you go out last night? Did a guy notice you and ask for your number? Are you now texting back and forth and analyzing each of his words and emoticons? Historically, has this scenario led to a positive and healthy relationship for you? Probably not. So why do you keep doing it?

Turn the page and start reading. *Real Men Don't Text* will shift your perspective. It will ask you tough questions you may not want to answer but need to if you truly desire freedom from unhealthy interactions with men. Ruthie and Michael's words will not ensure you go on lots of dates; they will do something better: ensure you go on the right date with the right guy.

ANDREA, 26, Nashville, TN

In *Real Men Don't Text*, the Deans provide practical and realistic guidance for young women in this digital age. This book is a must-read for all women who are in a relationship or even thinking about dating. *Real Men Don't Text* will change your perspective on how you approach relationships. Ruthie and Michael show you how to be a "forever kind of girl" and help you understand just how much you are worth in the eyes of your Savior.

NATALIE, 18, Anchorage, AK

I just finished reading *Real Men Don't Text* this morning, and it could not have come at a better time. As a college student who has never had a boyfriend, it's been hard for me to justify having such high standards for relationships when I'm not currently seeing any positive outcomes. It's also been so easy to naively fall into the text-based flirting and attempts at relationships while analyzing

and poring over each “Hey, what’s up?” late-night text from a guy. *Real Men Don’t Text* was incredibly encouraging and reminded me that I’m not alone, that it’s okay to have high standards, and that the idea that God does have a better love story written for me isn’t as outdated and ridiculous as the rest of the world makes it seem.

That being said, *Real Men Don’t Text* offers the kind of advice that I want to share with my friends, sorority sisters, and family. It’s the kind of advice that’s refreshing and doable, especially in a world where dating intentions seem vague and confusing. I finished *Real Men Don’t Text* feeling encouraged and hopeful, equipped with real ways to navigate dating in my twenties.

KAITLYN, 20, Gainesville, FL

In the technological world, it’s easy to receive and understand the wrong messages. *Real Men Don’t Text* gives an accurate picture of the dating world, yet leaves us with practical solutions and *hope*. We all deserve more and don’t have to put up with pathetic excuses for dating. Read it! You will walk away empowered and confident!

MAYRA, 24, Monterrey, Mexico

This book is a must-read for anyone who is wondering what they have been doing wrong in their dating life. Follow Ruthie and Michael’s advice, and you will be sure to weed out the losers and make the changes necessary to find a real man! If dating is getting too messy and confusing for you, look no further than *Real Men Don’t Text*. Ruthie’s and Michael’s stories are relatable, and we have all been in those places where you are wondering what to do next.

JORDAN, 28, Raleigh-Durham, NC

Ruthie and Michael Dean address the difficulties and struggles of people with lost direction in dating. If you have no clue what your dating future holds, this is the book for you! Maybe you have dating all figured out, but if you don’t—read this book! This book helps women end their messy dating lives and start brand-new ones with *hope*. Read and remember.

ZHOU QIU YU, 22, Shanghai, China

Real Men Don't Text is exactly what every woman needs to read to help navigate the current state of the dating world. Ruthie and Michael give a refreshing approach to relationships that empowers us to realize our infinite worth, while speaking truth and grace in a way that any woman can relate. I felt as though I was being counseled by a big sister and brother encouraging me to seek the best for myself in my dating relationships. I believe in Ruthie and Michael's message because their own marriage is a testament that what they are teaching actually works, giving me, and any other woman who reads this book, hope for relationships to come.

KAITLIN, 21, Dallas, TX

Real Men Don't Text is a really great, real book. The pages are full of real stories about real men and women facing the complexities of real relationships in our real world. You'll be wondering how Ruthie and Michael knew exactly what happened between you and your last boyfriend, and the one before that. And the best part—you'll learn about a real God who really knows what love is. The principles in this book really work and will undoubtedly lead you to find a real love. Stop texting and start reading this book! I've already read it three times.

KASSANDRA, 24, Minneapolis, MN

Before I read *Real Men Don't Text*, I thought the men problems I and my sisters have experienced here are just Kenyan men problems, but then I read *Real Men Don't Text* and realized those problems are global. *Real Men Don't Text* is unlike any other dating book I have read because Ruthie and Michael are stating it as it is, making it easy to relate and also embrace the solutions that are offered. Every woman should read this book because this world is not short of men who text to ask you out, or those who feel like they should discuss serious issues like where the relationship is headed via text. It's time for men to go back to being chivalrous, and it's time for ladies to stop encouraging the men problem by texting back. *Real Men Don't Text* is the place to start. It's a game changer!

BOSIBORI, 28, Nairobi, Kenya

A much-needed call to action for single men. Ruthie and Michael do a great job of exposing the problems with passive, meaningless, text-only dating. This book provides clever and relevant encouragement to pursue intentional and healthy, long-lasting relationships.

PETE, 22, Nashville, TN

As a young single doctor who is extremely busy and recently dating, this is the perfect book that reiterates the respect that women deserve and reminds us that *Real Men Don't Text!* I've done a lot of texting, but Ruthie is right: when I like a girl, I will always call. Don't let us guys get away with any more lazy texts.

PAUL, 29, Louisiana

Real Men Don't Text proves “playing it cool” should never take the form of deception or disrespect. Real men date with a purpose and look after the hearts of women who long for a leader to guide them, love them, protect them, and always cherish them.

MARK, 38, Atlanta, GA

We all want to be chosen by someone. This desire can lead us to do some pretty irrational things. *Real Men Don't Text* sends the right message on avoiding these pitfalls and provides guidance for a positive dating life. This is a great book even if you do feel like your dating life is in check. Don't settle—you're worth more than that.

ADAM, 30, Chattanooga, TN

Real Men Don't Text affords women the ability to love yourself enough to not text back. You deserve better! Ladies, do yourself a favor and read this book!

ASHLEY, 31, Nashville, TN

Honest, bold, and to the point, *Real Men Don't Text* is a relevant perspective on dating and underlines the fact that real women shouldn't settle for second best. This is the book for the girls who are in desperate need of hope for their relational baggage and

relational future. I'm now happily married because I set standards for my dating life—all of which are described in the pages of *Real Men Don't Text*. A must-read!

SARAH, 31, Huntsville, AL

Though I'm nearly two years into a dating relationship with a man who rarely texts, I constantly see my girlfriends falling into the texting trap. After reading *Real Men Don't Text*, I feel better equipped to encourage my friends to end the cycle and ultimately help them realize that while exchanging witticisms via text certainly feels self-affirming, it's ultimately a cheap facsimile of the affirmation that is offered, not through a man, but through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

CAROLINE, 21, Nashville, TN

Ruthie and Michael have written a book for anyone in a relationship or for anyone desiring to be in a relationship in today's high-paced, social-media-crazed society. They were willing to share and use their own personal life experiences and stories to relate to their readers. It is a book I will recommend to friends, colleagues, or family members that have a desire for a lasting relationship. Thank you, Ruthie and Michael, for your honesty.

MARY BETH, 32, Nashville, TN

Want more confusing, dead-end, text-based relationships? Don't read this book. But if you want to find real love in the time of texting, run to the nearest bookstore or turn on your computer and buy *Real Men Don't Text*. It's about to become the little black book for our generation.

RACHEL, 25, Istanbul, Turkey

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RUTHIE & MICHAEL DEAN



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Contents

Acknowledgments xiii

- CHAPTER 1 *Real Men Don't Text: A New Approach to Dating* 1
- CHAPTER 2 *Real Women Don't Text Back: From the Man's Perspective* 15
- CHAPTER 3 *Real Women and Great Sex: Purity Now for Intimacy Later* 31
- CHAPTER 4 *Real Men Wait for Sex: More Sex, Better Sex* 53
- CHAPTER 5 *Real Women Embrace Beauty: And Tackle the Deeper Issues* 63
- CHAPTER 6 *Real Men and the Real You: Finding the Assurance You Are Enough* 83
- CHAPTER 7 *Real Red Flags: Run, Baby, Run* 91
- CHAPTER 8 *Real Turnoffs: How Not to Attract the Right Man* 109
- CHAPTER 9 *Real Women Stop Making Excuses: He's Not Your Last Chance* 117
- CHAPTER 10 *Real Men Grow Up: Finding a Man with Direction* 135
- CHAPTER 11 *Real Women Give Nice Guys a Chance: Chemistry vs. Connection* 145
- CHAPTER 12 *Real Connection: Navigating Relationships . . . Online* 165
- CHAPTER 13 *Real Women, Messy Bedrooms, and Hope: When You're Desperate for More* 181
- CHAPTER 14 *Real Love: The Story We Didn't Write* 207

About the Authors 223

CHAPTER 1

Real Men Don't Text

a new approach to dating

“WANNA GRAB A BURRITO TONIGHT?”

The melody of the Atlanta Symphony's instruments flowed through the auditorium as I stared at his message. I'd been nervously clutching my phone for the past ninety-eight hours. Four days and two hours of uttering the words “call me” into the air. I didn't have high expectations for dating at twenty-three, but a last-minute text containing the word *burrito* wasn't exactly what I had in mind. If you're breathing *and* female, you've been there—waiting for a call, a text, an e-mail, even a tweet—some sign he's still alive. And those are always the days when your mom decides to call you five times and your grandma rings you to ask if you're *still* single. Or, if

she's like mine, she calls to *tell* you you're single because you "park with too many fellows."

Mr. Burrito had already taken me on one date, and from my perspective the evening had been perfect—the flowers, the moonlit walk after dinner, the almost kiss at the end of the night . . . the whole shebang. Burritos in an hour didn't quite measure up to that display, but like we all do sometimes, I brushed aside my concern and grasped at any indication he might like me. I wanted to shout, "He loves me!" right in the middle of the symphony, because who doesn't fall in love after experiencing the glory that is a salsa bar? Burritos equaled love in my book.

So there I was, in a swanky black dress and heels, listening to songs from *The Sound of Music*—being summoned by the tap of his thumbs. Did I want to fly out of the symphony and meet him for a burrito? Of course I did. He wouldn't text me if he didn't like me, right? I couldn't remember the last time I'd gone on a date before Daniel, so I needed to take every chance at love that presented itself to me. But did I really want to blow off my family to show up to an establishment where my entrance would be announced by a loud chorus of "Welcome to Moe's!"?

I called my sisters into the lobby right smack in the middle of the rendition of "How Do You Solve a Problem like Maria?" and they graciously—albeit annoyed that my relational drama was keeping them from hearing about the nuns' problem-solving skills—listened to me debate how to respond. The old Ruthie would have texted back and dropped everything to meet him for a burrito. She probably

would have kissed him after the date too. I'd had my share of relationships—a generous term for what was actually happening—in which I fully embraced this new path to love in the digital world. I'd respond to texts, Facebook messages, and late-night calls, but it never ended well. I wasted years sitting by a phone, a computer, waiting for men to show me I was worth loving. If only I had known the truth.

Armed with my share of heartbreak, I knew I wanted to try dating differently . . . but did Daniel have to be my first attempt? If I told him I was busy or if I asked him to call, would I miss my chance to date him? Would I scare him away? Would I ruin the chemistry we had? Was it a big deal to meet him for a burrito? Could it be that he wasn't calling me or asking me out in advance because he was intimidated? We always want to be the exception and make excuses for men, don't we?

I took a risk. I told Daniel I couldn't be there on such short notice, but to call me because "I'd love to see you again." Over the next month or two, he texted me he missed me, he texted me to invite me to a party, he texted the weekly "How are you?" message, but I stood strong in asking him to call. We never did have a burrito.

A New Approach to Dating

I had zero guarantees that my love story would turn out well. I envisioned myself sixty and single overhearing friends at parties chuckling with their husbands about how I dated all wrong.

But despite how hard it was to walk away from potential

relationships that felt good now, I set standards for my dating life—because I didn't want several “fun” relationships or a great time on spring break. I didn't want a few weeks of flirty texts and pseudo-connection. I wanted *one* relationship. I resolved to date differently because I learned the hard way that how you date and especially who you date matters. No exceptions.

The truth is, my low self-esteem made it hard for me to believe I even deserved a good man. Could I start over? I didn't know what the future held, but I did know that it was worth a shot to regain my confidence by setting standards for my dating life. I needed to protect myself from jumping into relationships that might keep me from meeting and marrying the right man. Allowing myself to be treated as an afterthought—or worse, a playtoy—bred insecurity and relationships that were doomed to fail. Accordingly, I set basic rules for myself:

- I would not accept dates made over text or social media.
- I would ignore all the late-night calls or texts and decline all last-minute “hangouts” or “dates.”

I wanted forever with someone, not just tonight. I soon found a way to weed through the guys who weren't interested in more than a hookup: a simple phone call. It took many single years of imagining myself as a cat lady with my mom remaining my emergency contact, but eventually Michael came into my life and never stopped calling.

“Miss You, Baby”

Safely on the other side of marriage, I started blogging about my not-so-glamorous dating mistakes coupled with small lessons and victories I'd learned along the way. I didn't know if anyone would listen, but as it turned out, there were many women who could relate. My in-box became overloaded with e-mails and comments about heartbreak and confusion and terrible, horrible, no good, very bad relationships.

I heard from women who were frustrated with men who seemed unable to plan ahead. Women who wondered if their dating lives were destined to center around text messages and last-minute “dates.” Women enchanted by men who vanished into thin air without a word. A high school student told me her prom date announced his arrival with four letters that popped up on her phone screen: “Here.” One woman wrote in and said, “But we talked all the time and hooked up several times—and then he just . . . stopped. I really thought *we* were going somewhere.” I heard stories of men announcing their undying affection . . . in a tweet.

Another woman wrote saying she caught her live-in boyfriend cheating on her with a coworker and stayed with her cheating boyfriend because “he promised to change.” I heard from women who are in long-term relationships with men who can't seem to muster up the courage to put a ring on their finger. (Eight years—really?) Some of the most heartbreaking e-mails I receive are from women sending boyfriends naked pictures, or sexts, because “it's what everyone does” or “he loves me.” I've heard stories of men ending relationships

over text, saying “I love you” for the first time over text, and reentering the scene after a long period of silence with something lame like “Out tonight?” or, my personal favorite, “Why haven’t I heard from you?” Men are forgoing the former coming-of-age landmarks—mustering up the courage to ask a girl out, walking her to the door, looking in her eyes and engaging her heart—and women are left confused, if not incredibly disappointed.

I don’t know your exact story, but I do know that you most likely picked up this book because you have questions about how to find love in the world of texting, Twitter crushes, and online dating. Maybe you are at a place in your life where you can’t take one more ounce of heartache and are eager for a new dating strategy. Maybe you just went through a breakup and wonder if texting, sexting, and the instant gratification of it all was the demise of your relationship. Maybe you can’t remember the last date you went on and are convinced chivalry is dead. Wherever you are in this confusing dating climate, I want to let you in on the ending of the book before we even get started. Love is not hopeless! In fact, chivalry isn’t dead; you just need to put down that phone and set some standards for your dating life—fully embracing the new rules to find love.

“Out Tonight?”

“We wrote letters for two years, and he phoned me and said he’d met another gal.”

My grandmother shared with me one chilly Sunday afternoon the story of her first love breaking her heart. Her

light-green eyes were surrounded by wrinkles representing years of love—years she'd spent married to my grandfather. She saved the letters from her first beau until she married. Interestingly enough, she and her friends used to sit in parlors discussing a man's intentions based on his *letters*.

For generations men and women have communicated through the written word. Now, we analyze electronic messages. *How long did he take to respond? How many exclamation points did he use? He said he missed you—no way!* “Texting is just how people communicate” is the number one excuse I hear when I challenge women to stop conducting relationships via text. But how's that *normal* communication working out for you? Truth be told, what the culture tells us is “normal” does not *normally* end in a lasting marriage. Advancements in technology have made communication easier, but with this ease comes a shift in relational expectations.

text translation 101

PROFESSOR: MICHAEL DEAN

Him: I MISS YOU!

Her: That's so sweet, LOL.

Him: Why don't I see you out anymore? I miss my girl.

Her: Nothing like a little game of hard to get ;)

Him: Are you busy now? No time like the present, haha.

Her: Haha, umm . . . sure. Where do you want to meet?

Situation: *He made out with you last month (or last year) and texts you late at night or just sporadically (possibly after he's been drinking).*

Translation: *He just wants to make out again. He may like your body, but he isn't interested in knowing you.*

Response: *Ignore his texts, and if you feel like you can't resist texting back, delete him from your phone book. "I'd appreciate if you stopped texting me" is a great way to gain closure.*

Modern communication is not harmful in itself; we just need to be mindful that text messages don't always translate well into relationships.

Have you ever put on your detective hat to read through a string of messages for a friend to determine where the relationship is going? We've all done it. The first "message" Michael sent me was on Facebook. It read: "Hi, Ruthie. It was great to connect with you and hear about all your travels. Keep me updated."

KEEP ME UPDATED?! I read his last sentence at least nine hundred times and copied and pasted his message into an e-mail to ten friends begging them to tell me "WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?"—in all caps, mind you. I remember reviewing over and over that he wrote "Hi, Ruthie" with no exclamation point, which clearly meant he wasn't excited after writing my name—which could only translate that he just wasn't that into me. Or was it that he didn't ever use exclamation points? Or maybe he was trying to downplay his sheer thrill about my *awesomeness*. Trying to figure out men's intentions can make you feel a little nuts.

Let's look at some reasons why you should say no to texting:

- **Texting is easy.** Easy isn't bad; it just means you can't—or shouldn't—start circling dates on your calendar for a summer wedding because he spent three seconds texting you. The thirty-five messages that "blew up your phone" may simply mean he has quick fingers or he likes the attention (more on this from Michael in chapter 2).

- **Texting is not a real connection.** Text-based relationships can bring a false sense of intimacy—the same way following your favorite blogger doesn't mean you actually know him or her. It's easy to feel exhilarated and even connected by rapid-fire, flirty text banter, but text chemistry doesn't hold any weight offscreen. Too many settle for this emotionally addictive buzz in lieu of a real connection.
- **Texting affords both you and him the ability to be someone you're not.** The person on the other end of the message may be completely different than he appears on-screen. You might be wearing text goggles. But just like if you were under the influence of alcohol, you need to take the text goggles off before you imagine he's the one for you. Moreover, lots of men know what women like to hear—"I miss you" or "I wish you were here" messages from a man who is not making intentional dates with you are meaningless. You heard correctly: meaningless.
- **Texting handicaps the communication necessary to build a healthy relationship.** As does social media. Have you ever noticed how people stand around in a class or outside a meeting room and everyone is head down in his or her smartphone? We're losing basic communication skills because we're always plugged in. Had many tough conversations over text or e-mail lately? Yes, it's common to hide hurt feelings and harsh words behind screens. On the other end

of the emotional spectrum, Jay Cutler, the quarterback for the Chicago Bears, recently proposed to his girlfriend over text . . . and mailed her a ring(!). Communication is one of the most important aspects in a relationship that withstands the test of time, and carrying out the majority of your relationship over a screen means you are headed for dangerous waters.

Happily Ever After . . . Eventually

What if there is more to this dating hoopla? What if chivalry isn't dead? What if you change the way you date and who you date now to save yourself a great deal of heartache and prepare for an unbelievable future with one man who will make you believe in love all over again? What if you didn't have to spend one more night crying your eyes out or living with regret over your past relationships? You, dear sister, were made for more than messy hookups and disappointing relationships.

I know it's scary to hold men to standards, even small ones like phone calls and planning in advance, because we think these measures will send a great guy running. Even though relationship books for centuries have told us the opposite, isn't there this idea that if we "play it cool" and don't act like "all the other crazy girls" then a man will see we are different, laid back, and we'll live happily ever after? But this casual approach is just a way for men to get what they want without having to commit or really step up to the plate. It's a trick certain men have conjured up to keep us where they want us—available, nondemanding, and easy. I know how it feels to desperately want a man to like you, but if he's not calling,

the writing is on the wall: he's just not into you. Setting standards will not scare the right man away, I promise, because men respect women with standards. Let him know up front what you expect and see if he's ready for the privilege—yes, you heard me, *privilege*—of dating you.

You really don't need to spend another minute analyzing his messages and waiting around to see what will happen. If you are unclear about his intentions, simply ask him to stop texting. Ask him to meet the standards you have in order to protect yourself—more discussion to come in later chapters—beginning with a phone call. It's a start in wading through the sea of nonpotentials, the men who don't care to get to know you, because most aren't even willing to call. If you don't set standards for yourself now, it will be easier to give in to texting relationships and compromise in other areas. You will regain days, weeks, perhaps years of your life if you begin to require more from a guy than a lazy message that needs the decoding skills of a Communist spy.

Michael and I share a new perspective on love, sex, and relationships to help you prepare for and find that one relationship we all desire. It's hard to wait for Mr. Right—but you deserve more than pathetic attempts at dating. We accept the kind of love we think we deserve, so in later chapters we'll talk about the “why” behind the tendency to date losers or jerks. We'll discuss how to find your worth, even if you've been told for years that you aren't worth anything. At the end of this book, we can't guarantee you'll meet the man of your dreams, but you will know who you're looking for.

Here's a thought to consider: let's say you started dating

at sixteen. You'll date for six, or maybe ten, or maybe fifteen years or more. But you'll be married for four, five, if not six decades. *Decades*. You may date for one decade. You'd like to be married for five or six. It's tough to feel like you're missing out now by dating differently, but you know what I can guarantee? You will never look back and regret taking *every* relationship seriously. You won't find your husband and wish you had kissed more guys or had more "experiences," whatever that may mean for you. I cannot tell you how many men I let grip my heart, and in turn they squeezed it nearly to death. I'm speaking from a deep well of mistakes, but also from a place of answers. It's never worth throwing away the best years of your life, married to a man of your dreams, because you want to be with someone now.

A year or two after the burrito message, I heard Daniel was engaged. I was still single and wondered if dating differently was a huge mistake. Would I be single forever? But then I noticed something. His fiancée was one of those who frequently posted details of their love story on social media, and I couldn't help but notice he seemed different with her. I just had the sense he wasn't texting her at the last minute or going days without communication. I wondered if he would have strung me along for a few years until he met her—because as Michael will share, if a man really likes a woman, nothing will get in his way.

Another year passed without more than a handful of dates, and then I met my guy. Michael Dean was more than I'd hoped and dreamed to find in a man—what if I had settled? As it turned out, burritos don't equal love after all.

Real Men Don't Text

in 140 Characters or Less

#RealMenDontText

How you date & who you date matters. No exceptions.

#RealMenDontText

If you want forever with someone, not just tonight,
it's time to set standards.

#RealMenDontText

We were made for more than messy hookups
and disappointing relationships.

#RealMenDontText

Dating shouldn't require the decoding skills
of a Communist spy. Ask him to call you.

#RealMenDontText Burritos don't equal love.

#RealMenDontText