I love text messaging.

With it you can get a message to someone without causing their phone to ring at an

inopportune time, ask a friend a question and let them respond at their leisure, or just shout out a quick greeting to someone without making a big deal about it. There are, however, a few text-message etiquette tips to keep in mind:

- Text-messaging is not an alternative to using the phone when calling would be considered rude. You would not take a call in the middle of a movie, a performance, or a meeting, and likewise, you should not send text messages.
- Make sure you're texting to the right phone number! It's very easy to dial the wrong number or select the wrong phone book entry.
- Don't text-message anything confidential, private, or potentially embarrassing. You never know when someone might be looking over your significant other's shoulder—or worse yet, when your message might get sent to the wrong person.
- If you text-message someone who doesn't have your phone number, start your message by stating who you are: "Hi—it's Kate (yoga). Chiropractor's number is: 1-802-555-2020. Good luck."
- When you have a chance, respond to a text message with either a text message or a phone call.
- Just as you should not be answering your phone during a conversation, you should not send a text message when you are engaged with someone else. If you are with someone who will not stop text messaging during your conversation, feel free to excuse yourself until they have concluded their messaging.
- You shouldn't use text messaging when informing someone of sad news, business matters, or urgent meetings, unless it's to set up a phone call on the subject.
- If you receive a text message that was sent to you by mistake, reply explaining that you aren't the intended recipient. You don't have to respond to anything else in the message.

- Finally, remember that as with email, you can't know for sure when the recipient is going to read his or her message—so don't freak out if your text message doesn't get an immediate response.