Opinion

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Call your friends more often

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I call Noah just about every day. He's my best friend, so of course I am going to give him a ring whenever I can. He doesn't always pick up, as he's a busy man. But when he does, it's the most glorious hour-long yap session of all time. We talk about our clubs and our classes and when we're done we sit there in silence, basking in each other's presence, until one of us says "love ya man," and we go on until next time. Funny enough, I don't text Noah. Aside from the occasional jab at his Jets, we really only call. Why? Because why simply text, and receive no emotions and only letters, when you could get the real emotion that makes your friend your friend? Texting has made humans complacent in their friendships, and instead of being a quick way to shoot someone a reminder, it has become a primary form of communication that is strangely unhuman.

When I receive a call, and I see the stupid little nickname I plugged into my phone when we were 16 years old, I know for certain I am valued. Better, I know I am loved. As my wise mother used to tell me, "effort equals interest." The gratification I get when I receive a call is far superior to when I receive a text. My smile is far wider. I know that someone is putting in the effort to call and take time from their day to make mine better. I feel authentic over the phone, as of course it more closely resembles the one thing that trumps calling: just talking.

I think there is a sentiment amongst the youth of Generation Z, or at least a stereotype, that we fear the call. Even the simplest call to order takeout gets delayed or argued about by the young adult crowd because it seems overly confrontational. Simply, we would much rather text because we can hide behind a screen and bolster confidence with anonymity. Not only does a lack of calling prove that we are becoming lazier people, but we are growing more awkward and inward-focused. In a time where virtually any venture or experience is possible, the youth seem to be shriveling up.



A person holding a cell phone up to their ear, as if on a call. Phone calls among Generation Z appear to have declined compared to previous generations. PHOTO BY COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

There is certainly a time and a place for texting, do not misunderstand that. It's efficient and quick, but that is not what friendships are. Friendships require effort. There is a reason that we discredit and devalue art and music generated by artificial intelligence. It's simple and boring, but more importantly soulless. No effort was put into it, only a few lines of text that quite literally anyone with a pulse could input. To not put effort into a friendship is to effectively render it torpid and weak. It would be like starting a garden but refusing to water it. It is the effort that makes friendships blossom and that makes it worth it. The effort creates the reward of lifelong memories.

Calling is a simple act of confidence that shouldn't be as dreaded as it is, and although the D.P. Dough delivery driver probably won't notice the difference, I'm pretty sure your peers will. It was only a little bit before my lifetime that every phone call required a charge. With the one-time purchase of the greatest/worst device ever made, my family in the further parts of the country are seconds away. My friend across the pond in Ireland is one WhatsApp dial-up away from a long talk reminiscent of late night porch conversations in July, not too long ago.

Simply, life is too short to be summarized. I assure you, reader, that every person in your life would rather indulge in conversation than get texted a thumbs-up reaction emoji. If you cannot find any time to call, of course text. Tell your loved ones you love them as much as you can in any way possible. But on these upcoming spring days, while walking in the zephyr or literally stopping to smell the flowers (both of which, according to me, are mandatory), give your buddy a ring and tell them about your day.