



## **“Dear Brother, Your Daughter Needs You...”**

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Hey brother... I was lifting weights at my local gym this morning and received a series of text messages in rapid succession. I would have ignored them, and just continued to exercise, but multiple notifications interrupted the music I was listening to through my headphones. I was already slightly sore from shoveling snow all weekend due to the blizzard we had; so, I chose to listen to some hard-core, New York City, hip-hop with “grimy,” bass-heavy production to help power me through my sets.

In any event, I’m sure you are curious why I’m reaching out to you. Well, when I heard the four notifications, I was concerned that my lady was texting me something important. So, after I completed my set, I immediately checked my phone. To my surprise, it wasn’t my lady texting me – it was ***your daughter***.

Now, before you get overly upset, please let me explain. I don’t know ***your daughter***. I had never met her and her number

was not in my contact list. Why would it be?  
I mean, ***I don't even know you...***

But as a man in my thirties, and as a father, after reading the messages ***your daughter*** sent me, I feel obligated to inform you. If you are not sitting down right now, maybe you should take a seat and brace yourself for what I'm about to tell you.

***Your daughter*** sent me the following:

"What's up L\*\*\*? Sooo [*sic*] I ran into J\*\*\* Friday and she said this was ur [*sic*] new number. When did u [*sic*] get back to Philly? Hit me up when u [*sic*] get up. I know things were kinda [*sic*] weird when u [*sic*] left but things have changed. I'm a freshman now at \*\*\*\*. I got a car for my 17 [*sic*] birthday. I'm not a virgin no more. I'm more mature. Just a lot has changed. We need to catch up."

As I was reading the initial string of text messages, they were followed by a "selfie" of your daughter as she lay in bed, smiling with a tank-top, accompanied by the caption, "I miss u [*sic*] punk."

I tried to dismiss the text messages and just continue with my workout. I changed the weights on the bar for my fifth set of bench-press, and pushed out 10 repetitions. But as I sat up on the edge of the bench to rest before my final set of that exercise; in the mirror, through my peripheral vision, I noticed myself shaking my head. Something was bothering me. I took my phone out and paused my music to read the text messages again.

After completing my sixth set, I proceeded to walk to the dumbbell rack and picked up a pair of dumbbells for my next exercise. After completing my first set, I sent ***your daughter*** a text message before resuming my workout:

"Sorry sis... you have the wrong number."

I heard another text notification, as it also interrupted my music, and after completing another set, I checked my phone. **Your daughter** then replied:

“Who is this... do you have his phone?”

To which I concisely responded:

“No sis, this is my phone. Somebody gave you the wrong number.”

Assuming the communication would end with that text, I was surprised to hear two more notifications in rapid succession. I sighed, partially out of frustration, and partially because the third set of alternating hammer curls had fully taxed my biceps! I looked at my phone and read the text messages from **your daughter**.

“Do u [sic] know me, do u [sic] go to my school?”

“R [sic] u [sic] a boy?”

To which I replied:

“No, I don’t know you. I’m a grown man in my thirties. Be careful and be safe sis.”

My phone was barely in my pocket when I received another notification. At this point I became irritated but I checked the phone to see what it said and to officially end this exchange with this teenaged girl.

**Your daughter** had written:

“Oh wow. Oook [sic] soo [sic] now I’m like super embarrassed. Sorry. Can u [sic] erase that first message please, thanks.”

To which my final reply to **your daughter** was the following:

“No problem. Please be careful who you send messages to young sis. It’s dangerous out here. Take care of yourself.”

You're probably wondering why I even replied at all to the text messages I received from **your daughter**. Well, I have a grade-school aged son now, but when I was younger, I thought I had a daughter who I helped raise until she was almost three-years-old, when I discovered I wasn't her father. Her eighteenth birthday was this past November, and although I haven't seen her since she was five years old, I think about her often, especially on her birthday.

I often find myself concerned about the little girl I helped name and raise and wonder how she is doing and hope she is well. I hope she didn't follow in her mother's scandalous footsteps and that she has not and is not being abused or taken advantage of by any boy or man. I was just recently speaking to one of my close friends about how I could walk by her on the street and not even know who she is. I might have inadvertently done so during one of my recent trips to my old stomping grounds in Harlem.

I don't know you, your daughter or your family. It is obvious that to me that your daughter has somebody who cares about her enough to buy her a car for her seventeenth birthday. You may very well be the one that gave her the car for her birthday and I hope that you and your daughter have an excellent relationship. And please, do not take my next statement as being judgmental, but I feel your daughter needs a different kind of attention from you now. In her own words, "I'm more mature... a lot has changed."

So, you see, I'm reaching out to you regarding your daughter out of love and concern. Because, my brother, **your daughter**, could very well have been **my daughter**.