



It's Your Money

Scammers Are Lurking

Unless you are living under a rock you assuredly have heard multiple warnings about scams targeting seniors. Unfortunately, scammers are getting more and more devious and sophisticated in their attempts to steal your property.

If you were to receive a text message one evening from your daughter, you might think you could spot a scam, but in the heat of the moment, maybe not... Imagine this scenario: you are just getting ready for dinner when your phone buzzes with a text from your daughter. *"Mom, I lost my phone! I'm using a friend's phone. I need money for a new one. Please send \$800 right away—I'll explain later!"*

Ideally you would think logically and calmly, but instead you go right to worry mode. Your daughter is away at college and you know how much she relies on her phone to stay connected to work, family, and friends. The thought of your daughter being stranded without a phone makes you anxious, and you instinctively ask "Are you OK? What happened?" Your 'daughter' texts back almost immediately. *"I'm fine, but I can't talk. Borrowing a friend's phone. Can you send the money now to 'Lisa's' [friend's] phone? I need to get a replacement ASAP. I'll call you tonight. Love you!"*

The Council's Financial Advocate is a volunteer who can help with financial matters. If you are in need of assistance, please contact the Council.



You have lots of thoughts racing through your mind, but foremost is concern for your daughter. You pull up your banking app and transfer the \$800 to Lisa's phone number. If you had been thinking clearly you might have asked why the transfer wasn't going straight to your daughter's account, but the sense of urgency in your 'daughter's' texts swayed you. Maybe your 'daughter' couldn't access her account without her phone. At any rate, you just did as your 'daughter' asked.

Later that evening, with a clearer head, you called your daughter's real number, expecting to hear relief in her voice. Instead, your daughter answered normally. *"Hey, Mom! What's up?"*

You asked her if she got the money and replaced her phone. *"What money?"* daughter replies.

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It's Your Money Scammers Are Lurking, continued

Your stomach probably drops when you get that question from your daughter. When you open and re-read the text messages again, reading them with fresh eyes, the urgent tone, the lack of specifics, the insistence on immediate payment—it all suddenly screams scam. A scammer pretended to be your daughter, knowing that a panicked mother wouldn't stop to verify.

Unfortunately, exploiting our emotions works all too well. Every day, cybercriminals manipulate emotions to trick people into making costly mistakes.

Here are five common emotional triggers they exploit:

- **Urgency** – “Act Now, or Lose Something”

- **Fear** – “Something Bad Will Happen”
- **Curiosity** – “You Won't Believe This!”
- **Trust & Authority** – “This is Someone You Know: boss, bank, loved ones”
- **Excitement & Greed** – “You've Won Something Amazing!”

The next time you get an urgent text or phone call or email, stop, think, and verify before taking action. Each of the above emotional triggers are designed to get you to act impulsively, but it is critical that you NOT do so. NEVER click on a link embedded in a text or email, and don't rely on phone numbers provided to you by an unknown source. Don't let emotions be your weakness!