

Name withheld

I knew the counsel—no steady dating in your teens. But I thought we were the exception to the rule.

I am a senior in high school, and I am a recovering steady dater.

When I was finally 16, the guy I'd liked for a long time asked me on my first date. I was excited and couldn't believe he was actually interested in me. One date turned into two, two became three, and before I knew it,

we were a couple. I started liking him more and more, and I wanted to spend all my time with him. It started off so magical, almost like a movie—we got along great, understood each other, and never fought. He treated me like a princess.

As we continued to date only each other, my parents became concerned and tried to limit our dating. "But what do they know?" I would think to myself. After all, we had

set our own rules and promised not

to cross any lines. My parents

started wanting to know

where I was every

second. Eventually

I began to lie about

who I was with or

where I was. "But what

is the harm in that?" I

would think. "After all, I

But We Were in Love



am being a good influence on my boyfriend; I am encouraging him toward a mission. And I've never been happier. If my parents just understood that, then they would allow us to steady date, because we are surely the exception to the rule."

As we entered the fifth month of our relationship, it seemed like true love. I thought we would continue to date until his mission, and then I would wait for him. It was perfect. However, as we began to talk about our future, our views about his mission didn't match up, and we decided to take a short break from the relationship.

As word of our "break" spread, news of his problem with the Word of Wisdom reached me. I felt betrayed and was devastated. How could he have been hiding this from me? When I found out the rumors were true, I did the hardest thing I've ever had to do: I broke off our relationship permanently.

I am still amazed how hurt and distraught I was over that breakup. I had fallen so hard for my boyfriend that I had actually begun to

think I was "in love." I was hurting inside and tried to find distractions to ease the pain.

One day I was thinking about those five months, and it finally all made sense: *"I am not the exception to the rule. No one is the exception to the rule."* Though I had been careful to remain morally clean and had done my best to prepare my boyfriend for a mission, it was still no excuse for my actions. I was still going against what the prophet counsels us to do. No matter how I looked at it from that moment on, I realized I had knowingly gone against the wishes of my parents, teachers, the prophets, and my Heavenly Father. How had I been able to become so distant from my Heavenly Father? How had I allowed myself to tune out the Spirit for so long and become so close to physical temptations?

I began to see every lie that Satan had led me to believe. It terrified me to know that I had let Satan have so much power over me in those five months.

I began to realize other things, including that we are counseled to stay away from steady dating for more than just the purpose of being morally clean. Steady dating brings on emotions, feelings, and pain that our



FOR THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH

“You should not date until you are at least 16 years old. When you begin dating, go with one or more additional couples. Avoid going on frequent dates with the same person. Developing serious relationships too early in life can limit the number of other people you meet and can perhaps lead to immorality. Invite your parents to become acquainted with those you date.”

For the Strength of Youth (2011), 4.





Don't Be Unsteady

Is feeling close to someone a bad thing? For an explanation of the dangers of the emotional side of steady dating as a teen, read "Unsteady Dating" at lds.org/go/51H.

young hearts are not ready to handle. Steady dating can keep us from meeting new people, going on dates with others, and ultimately missing out on bigger opportunities in life. Steady dating can ruin our parents' trust in us. Steady dating can lead to other sins, such as lying, losing the Holy Ghost, and ultimately jeopardizing our worthiness for a mission and the temple.

I also realized that even if our eternal companion may end up being someone we met in high school, as teens we are not yet emotionally or spiritually prepared for that

type of relationship. We are always overestimating our maturity and are in a rush to grow up. But there is really no need to rush when we're teenagers. We will have all eternity to be with our eternal companion!

I've learned that it is dangerous to let yourself believe that you are the exception to any rule. Do not let Satan's enticing lies talk you out of doing what you know is right.

Do not let yourself be blinded by your feelings. Do not lie to your parents or to yourself about your relationship with another person. Steady dating is simply not worth it. **NE**

