



**MY
SECRET
CRUSH**

BY KIMBERLY REID

*What do you do when the feelings are strong but the time isn't right?
Here are some answers.*

Brother Kelly reached into the box of questions our seminary class had written anonymously. "Can I know now who I'll marry?" he read.

I tried to look bored as he answered my question.

"No," he said. "At your age, you cannot know who you'll marry." Then he kindly explained that we might already be acquainted with our future spouse, but now wasn't the time to find out. He encouraged us to develop friendships, not exclusive romantic relationships.

I'd read the same counsel in *For the Strength of Youth*: "Good friendships can and should be developed at every age. . . . When you begin dating, go in groups or on double dates. Avoid going on frequent dates with the same person" ([2001], 24–25). I wanted to obey. But I also wanted something more.

I wished I could feel the sense of belonging I thought having a boyfriend would provide, and I wanted my attraction to one of my guy friends to have a purpose. It was hard to care about him and have nowhere for those feelings to go.

I knew my secret question was a little unrealistic, but other serious questions remained: Would I ever find someone who loved me? What was the point of having these emotions now? And what was I supposed to do with them?

Will I Ever Find Someone?

Besides being drawn to one of my guy friends, I also believed being his girlfriend would prove I was lovable. I should have taken to heart the evidence Heavenly Father had given me that *He* loved me and that I had nothing to fear.

My patriarchal blessing promised I would find someone to marry at "the appropriate

time." Later I found out that my dad had used the same words when I was a baby and he had asked Heavenly Father to bless me with a husband "at the appropriate time."

Though Heavenly Father didn't answer my prayers about whom I might marry, He assured me I would marry, and He even told me when: at the right time. I didn't need a boyfriend to help me feel secure nearly as much as I needed to remember God's promises and His love for me.

What's the Point?

It was hard to always remember the eternal perspective because my worries threatened to crowd out other thoughts. Would the guy I liked ask me out? Should I ask him? Sometimes



I wondered why Heavenly Father hadn't created His children so that attraction wouldn't be an issue until after high school!

Now I understand that my feelings had some divine purposes. Feeling attraction motivated me to form friendships. Whether I was socializing in groups or going on dates, getting to know guys taught me to communicate better and treat men respectfully. I learned what traits were uplifting and what



WHEN TO START DATING

Dating should not even begin until you are 16. And then, ideal dating is on a group basis. Stay in group activities; don't pair off. Avoid steady dating. Steady dating is courtship, and surely the beginning of courtship ought to be delayed until you have emerged from your teens."

President Boyd K. Packer,
President of the Quorum
of the Twelve Apostles,
"You're in the Driver's Seat,"
New Era, June 2004, 8.

kind of person I should marry someday.

Admiring guys also helped me remember to prepare for the temple. Even though high school isn't the time to build serious romantic relationships, thinking about love at a young age is normal. Our spirits long to be with someone because marriage is a part of Heavenly Father's plan. As I reflected on my feelings and imagined what an eternal relationship might be like, I was even more determined to qualify for temple blessings.

What Am I Supposed to Do?

Strong feelings can be hard to cope with. All my instincts told me I'd be happier channeling my energy toward the guy I liked—thinking about him, talking to him, spending time with him. But whenever I made the effort to ponder the eternal picture, my stress melted away and I was happier. I knew I

relationships wasn't easy, but it blessed me. I gained spiritual strength by proving to myself I could make hard decisions, even when part of me felt like doing something else.

The Simple Truth

Although I was disappointed by Brother Kelly's answer, he spoke the truth. Had I spent high school dating only one person, I would have missed out on meeting people who helped prepare me to recognize my husband when I met him years later. No wonder I couldn't know the answer to my secret question. Some of my classmates married old friends, but I didn't. At age 16, I was nine years away from meeting my future spouse!

What could dating only one person in high school have accomplished? Possibly fun times, but also distraction from pursuing other goals, a lack of peace for ignoring Church teachings,



could find real peace by putting Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ first in my thoughts and actions. This meant studying the scriptures, attending church, finding ways to serve, working on Personal Progress, and following the instructions in my patriarchal blessing.

Nurturing my spirit made it easier to enjoy friendship and dating according to the standards outlined in *For the Strength of Youth*. Resisting the urge to pursue exclusive

and heartbreak when the relationship ended.

In the years following high school, I dated a few men seriously until the Holy Ghost confirmed that "the appropriate time" and person had come into my life. I'm grateful I waited for the best time to pursue exclusive relationships and received all I'd hoped for: a sense of belonging in a marriage that could last for eternity, and a confirmation that Heavenly Father was happy with my decision. **NE**