

TEEN TALK (an original column from The Daily Record)

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QUESTIONS! You got 'em—we want 'em! Put "Teentalk" in the subject line and email us: teentalk@the-daily-record.com

YOU: I'm 16 years old and I have a crush on a 25-year-old. His name is Brad and I can't stop thinking of him 24/7. I'm meeting him at my cousin's house this weekend. I don't know what to do. I need some help from someone—please tell me what to do!

TEENTALK: Okay—take a deep breath! First, some practical info: We get tons of mail and our deadline is several days before you see the column in the paper, so there's no way we could have answered you before your date. We wanted to, though, so much that we were tempted to send up smoke signals. The message? *Don't go!* There is a **nine year** age difference here. When he was 16, you were **seven!** In some states, you haven't even reached the age of consent yet, which means he could be arrested if you two became intimate. Now, maybe we're jumping the gun here. Maybe you'd both be smart enough not to get that deeply involved. But the point is, you're playing with fire—and so is he. Ten years from now, a nine-year age difference might not be a big deal. But now, you're at totally different stages of your lives. How happy do you think he'd be to hang out with you and your friends? Go to your senior prom? Listen to your trials and tribulations with SATs? He's done all that—and you deserve to go through it all without feeling like you need to grow up fast so you can catch up. Also, we have to wonder...why is this guy so interested in a girl who's so much younger than he is? Sure, you're totally worthy of the attention, and maybe there's even great chemistry between you. That's *not* the issue at all. But let's face it: Guys who want an equal partner in a relationship—who are mature in the best sense of the word—usually go out with women their own age. Most of the time, a man who wants to date a teenage girl is getting off on seeming older, wiser, and *in control*. At best, that's annoying; at worst, it's downright creepy. Now, we know this is hard—really hard. You can't stop thinking about him, his attentions are incredibly flattering, and the last thing you want to do is walk away. So what are you supposed to do? Get busy, and put your trust in time. You *will* forget about him. Sign up for a class at your local art center, take on an extra credit project for your World History class (hey, it won't hurt your grade!), make lots of plans with your friends. And take another look at the guys your own age—there's got to be one who's just as crush-worthy as Brad. No matter what, please write again and let us know what's happening—we'll be thinking of you!