

Dealing With Crushes When You are Married

By Lola Augustine Brown

Feeling guilty over crushing on a hot co-worker? Don't. "It's completely natural and normal to revel in a minor infatuation when you are married, and largely harmless," says Calgary based registered psychologist [Anu Sharma-Niwa](#), "being in a committed relationship doesn't stop men, or women, from fantasizing about or crushing on someone."

Not only is having a crush completely normal, even if you are perfectly happy with the relationship that you are in, but it can also inject a little excitement into your love life with your spouse. "Because of that mind-body connection, fleeting thoughts that are hot, spicy or even forbidden can arouse you and enhance your sexual responsiveness," says Sharma-Niwa, "so long as you are still in the moment with your spouse and shifting back and forward from those thoughts, that's what is key. However, it isn't going to necessarily be helpful to tell your spouse that you are doing that."

Interestingly, Sharma-Niwa says it is much more common for women to develop crushes on people that they know, as we are driven by relational factors such as an intimacy based on shared ideas or similar recreational interests. Men, on the other hand, are more likely to crush on and fantasize about women that they don't know, and are focused on explicit imagery such as body parts that don't typically involve romantic or contextual factors.

Heading into the danger zone

If you are constantly wondering why your crush hasn't messaged you, or are hiding your phone from your husband, then things have probably gone past the point of being harmless and innocent. Having a crush and acting on one are of course very different things. Should you find yourself getting carried away, you need to stop yourself before you end up on the slippery slope to having an emotional or even a physical affair.

"You must be cautious not to cross that fine line between a crush and an emotional affair, and if you are feeling like your crush is all consuming, or it is syphoning off emotional intimacy from your spouse, then you need to step back," says Sharma-Niwa, "The manner in which you react to a crush can have a strong and direct impact on your marriage if you aren't self-aware about where the boundaries are, then things can get out of hand pretty quickly."

If that's what is happening, you need to create distance between you and your crush, as that will help you fizzle things out. Also, think critically about how you might be over romanticizing your crush, because that in itself can be intoxicating and impede our judgement, warns Sharma-Niwa.

Using a crush to strengthen your marriage

If you do find yourself on that slippery slope, it can be a warning sign of vulnerabilities in your marriage, and can give you an opportunity to look openly and honestly at where things are going wrong. “A crush can be a distraction from feelings of anger and disappointment and taking you away from your problems, but once you recognize that, you can use your reaction to bring you closer to your spouse again,” says Sharma-Niwa.

Reconnecting with your spouse starts by thinking about all his good qualities and what it was that attracted you to him in the first place. Then you need to make an effort to start enjoying your time together. “Getting the fun and affection back into your marriage through date nights, and making an effort to be close to your husband,” says Sharma-Niwa. “Don’t be afraid to bring him in to how you are feeling and say, “I feel like we’ve gotten off track, and want us to get closer again.”

It takes effort to get a marriage back on track, but obviously it is worthwhile and the payout is a good one. “Once you start looking forward to spending time with your spouse, and it becomes rewarding and intimate and fun, then you’ll come through the experience in good shape, and the crush will soon be forgotten,” says Sharma-Niwa.