

HOW TO HEAL **JEALOUSY**



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Jealousy - Love's Destroyer

From heresy, frenzy and jealousy, good Lord deliver me - Ludovico Ariosto

Not only is the feeling of jealousy not conducive for relationship building and effective communication, but it just doesn't feel very good. Are you familiar with that uncomfortable tightness in your stomach? Why do we put ourselves through it? If jealousy impacts humans negatively, then why do we continue to behave this way?

Cultural psychologists tend to believe that humans are inherently jealous, simply because our jobs, relationships and material goods mean a lot to us, and we don't want to lose them. Conventional wisdom holds that jealousy is a necessary emotion because it preserves social bonds, but it more often destroys them. And it can give rise to relationship violence.

More often than not, feelings of jealousy flare with such intensity that they burn a hole in the brain, obliterating rational thought and setting off behaviours that create a self-fulfilling prophecy by pushing away the very person one desires, or needs, the most. Think of astronaut-in-training Lisa Nowak, who in 2007, at the age of 44, drove a thousand miles nonstop from Houston, Texas, to Orlando, Florida, with a diaper on, the quicker to kidnap the new girlfriend of a fellow astronaut with whom she had had an affair. Ironic that an impulse that arises from love can so easily destroy it.

As emotions go, jealousy is neither subtle nor kind, but it is definitely complex. No one can say for sure what jealousy is; attempts to define it are elusive for a reason. As a complex emotion it involves, at a minimum, such distressing feelings as fear, abandonment, loss, sorrow, anger, betrayal, envy, and humiliation. And it recruits a host of cognitive processes gone awry, from doubt to preoccupation with a partner's faithlessness. It may take much of its primal force from activating the attachment system of the brain, a genetically ingrained circuit that is the foundation of our social bonds and that prompts widespread distress when they are threatened.

People have different reasons - in different cultures - for being jealous. But jealousy is a universal emotion. Evolutionary psychologist David Buss (in *The Dangerous Passion*) makes a good case that jealousy has evolved as a mechanism to defend our interests. After all, our ancestors who drove off competitors were more likely to have their genes survive.

Indeed, intruding males (whether among lions or humans) have been known to kill off the infants or children of the displaced male. Jealousy was a way in which vital interests could be defended. In fact, jealousy - in some cases - may reflect high self-esteem: "I won't allow myself to be treated this way".

The Greek goddess Hera, wife to the philandering Zeus, may not have been jealous without cause, but she certainly expressed her displeasure in unflattering ways, choosing to harass her husband's lovers and children, rather than dealing with his infidelity directly.

Of all the emotions humans show, jealousy is one of the most common and unsettling. It tends to bring out the worst in us, even though most of us know better. It's an age-old problem, having been recorded since biblical times, and no doubt experienced even before that. And it's not limited to humans, either. Even wild animals like chimpanzees and elephants exhibit jealous tendencies.

A popular misconception about jealousy is that it is the same as envy. In fact, the feeling of envy refers to wanting something that someone else has, such as a fast car or a beach house. Long-surviving tales of envy include David, the second king of Israel, who until he triumphed against the Philistines and the legendary Goliath, was well liked by King Saul. Following these substantial successes, however, Saul forced him out of the country, due to a ripe case of envy. David had the last laugh, though – he eventually became king of Israel and built quite an empire for himself.

Jealousy, however, is more aptly described as the fear of losing something (a lover, promotion, friend, etc.) to someone else. "Jealousy is an anticipatory emotion. It seeks to prevent loss," said Ralph Hupka. "Jealousy includes fear that causes us to take precautionary measures." Jealousy implies the anticipation that should those precautions fail, we are going to suffer the loss, sadness, humiliation, and aloneness that follows rejection, betrayal, and abandonment.

A Voice of Possessiveness Past

Jealousy is love bed of burning snarl - George Meredith

Before "the green-eyed monster" was a universal cliché, it was a dragon mocking Othello, the original and perhaps ultimate exemplar of jealousy, tormented by the villainous Iago's prediction that Othello's beautiful wife, Desdemona, would cuckold him.

The logic of Othello, and of millions of other jealous men and women, speaks to the dark logic of genes. You don't think in perfect iambic pentameter, but you likely have your own inner Iago: "What's my wife doing talking to that new guy from the neighbourhood? Is she laughing at his jokes? I think she just touched his arm."

When you feel a surge of sexual jealousy, you're responding to the possibility of being abandoned by your partner. But on a deeper level, jealousy is sounding a genetic alarm. Of course, your genes are the last thing on your mind as you watch your beloved flirt with an attractive stranger, but it is our genetic booty that jealousy's urgent stab has evolved to defend.

Our bodies and minds spring from thousands of generations of successful survival and mating ploys, all of which now operate in us. The most basic strategy is mate-guarding, on display during any cocktail party or Sunday stroll through the park: the innocent urge to put your arm around your partner in casual conversation; the not-so-innocent mention of a partner's flaws, as if to say, "Trust me, this person is not the dazzling package she appears to be." These are time-honoured techniques to fend off potential rivals.

Like many emotional adaptations (xenophobia, fear of the dark), jealousy is an imperfect and often overzealous call to arms. That's because the human life span was, until not long ago, perilously short. Evolutionary psychologists and anthropologists believe that our ancestors rarely got a second chance to woo a mate. And the pool of potential dates on Cavematch.com was in the low two digits. It therefore behoved our ancestors to be hyper-vigilant about any real or imagined threats to their relationships.

Our ancestors succeeded in acquiring mates and guarding them long enough to spawn - those who couldn't are ancestors to no one. It makes sense that humans developed jealousy as a built-in infidelity-detection system in this competitive social cauldron.

The desire for certainty and genetic possession of a partner is an ancient commandment, based on maintaining one's status and honour. While status continues to occupy a central psychological role for us, in the past it was a universal and inviolable metric. Today, you can round the corner into a new neighbourhood and invent a new life.

Your emotions, unfortunately, have not caught on to this. That makes most of your experiences of jealousy historically urgent but mismatched to modernity – a perfect setup for Neanderthink.

The main way to defend one's honour in the ancient environment was through sheer force and threat of violence. Even now, men in certain cultures feel they have to defend their name by acting violently against women who have "dishonoured" them.

Evolutionary psychologists argue that violence resulted in enhanced status and power more often in prehistoric times than it does in today's culture of laws. The deterrent effect of penalizing violent men forces some - but not all - to keep their jealous natures in check.

Although jealousy, experts agree, is a survival mechanism, what is most at stake is a matter of debate. The most destructive of passions - it is a leading cause of homicide - and the least studied, it is, like all emotions, born of necessity, with roots deep in our evolutionary past. Its purpose: to help maintain intimate relationships.

Here's the shocker: Jealousy may be losing its utility in contemporary life, more useful to our ancestors than to us, given our penchant for changing partners. As our high divorce rate attests, sometimes, we're just not all that interested in saving our closest relationships. It may also be that jealousy is on a shifting course in our emotional repertoire, moving from coercive social emotion, a socially sanctioned response to infidelity, to a sign of personal pathology.

Nando Pelusi writes that jealousy evolved as a shrill emotional alarm. Today, we can quiet the blaring siren, because we understand its purpose.

A Relic of Neanderthink

Nature is at work. Character and destiny are her handiwork.

She gives us love and hate, jealousy and reverence.

All that is ours is the power to choose which impulse we shall follow.

David Seabury

There are two ways jealousy manifests itself: as an appropriate concern and as a destructive disturbance. Jealousy is either a fine feather duster or a blunt mallet, depending on how we perceive our own value on the mate market.

Someone who thinks he'll never find another partner as good as the current one will obviously go to great lengths to keep the one, he's got.

When jealousy simply alerts us, it is likely to result from a concern for the relationship. But when it is destructive, it is usually triggered by insecurity about our prospects. People with a poor sense of self (that is, those who are desperate to preserve their mating prospects) are more prone to the deep hurt and fury that precede angry outbursts.

Disturbed jealousy demands a guarantee of absolute fidelity. When your odds of living to 40 are bleak and your options for mating bleaker, homicidal rage effectively wards off would-be interlopers and intimidates a potentially unfaithful mate.

Today your odds of longevity and fecundity are much better, but if you feel that you're worthless, then you might as well be living in the Pleistocene, so tenaciously will you try to retain your mate. The trouble is, it won't work.

Because the easily tripped alarm of excessive jealousy stimulates Neanderthink, the consequences of abandonment (the worst-case scenario) are exaggerated. Getting dumped requires an adjustment, and although that adjustment is rarely life or (genetic) death, as it might have been eons ago, we still fear the loss of our partner and crave constant reassurance.

Paradoxically, however, a person who needs reassurance of devotion and fidelity will drive a partner away and into the arms of a rival. Othello instructed us: Harmful jealousy springs from a weak sense of self; Othello is nothing without Desdemona's pure love.

The key to dealing with jealousy properly is to see that guaranteed fidelity is unattainable – no absolute certainty of eternal commitment can be granted. Rational jealousy, which is a passionate concern and respect for the relationship ("Although I prefer your love, I never need a guarantee of it"), can help us attend to our partner's feelings without the rage, self-criticism and despair that characterize Neanderthink jealousy.

On Gay Jealousy

Jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire - Solomon Ibn Gabirol

Jesse Bering says, "We may not be a sexually exclusive species, but we do form deep romantic attachments, and the emotional scaffolding on which these attachments are built is extraordinarily sensitive to our partners' sexual indiscretions. I also say this as a gay man who, according to mainstream evolutionary thinking, shouldn't be terribly concerned about his partner having sex with strangers. After all, it isn't as though he's going to get pregnant and cuckold me into raising another man's offspring. But if you'd explained that to me as I was screaming invectives at one of my partners following my discovery that he was cheating on me, curled up in the foetal position in the corner of my kitchen and rocking myself into self-pitying oblivion, or as I was vomiting my guts out over the toilet for much of the next two weeks, I would have nodded in rational Darwinian ascension while still trembling like a wounded animal."

Weeks of puking aside, Bering argues that while this emotional/psychological response may have originally been related to biological concerns (paternity assurance for men, resource flow for women), its ubiquity among homosexuals shows that the response is now deeply embedded in the human psyche, concluding that, "sexual jealousy in gay men can only be explained by some sort of pseudo heterosexuality mindset simulating straight men's hyper-vigilance to being cuckolded by their female partners."

Christopher Ryan in *Sex at Dawn* disagrees: "I'm not buying that. Where's the proof that sexual jealousy (experienced as heartbreak) is an unavoidable response to a partner's extra-pair sexual activity? If it were a genetically encoded behavioral response, there would be very few, if any exceptions to this pattern. Yet every major city (and plenty of small towns) have sex clubs where couples have sex with extra-pair partners with no discernible emotional consequences at all - at least not negative ones. These clubs exist all over the world - absent only in countries where they are illegal. Most surveys of these so-called "swingers" indicate that they are more satisfied with their marriages than couples in more conventional arrangements. Add to this the large number of men who actually find the notion of being cuckolded very appealing (described by David Ley in his fascinating book, *Insatiable Wives*). Then add the societies we describe in which a party without extra-pair sex is like breakfast without coffee, and the genetic argument starts looking very wobbly indeed.

Let's consider the possibility that much, if not all, of this heartbreak is a learned response.

The separation anxiety Bering describes bears striking similarities to that experienced by a baby who feels abandoned by its mother.

We live in a society that greatly amplifies that innate fear of abandonment by ignoring the baby's need for 24/7 maternal contact in the first few years of life, forcing the infant into psychologically scarring isolation almost immediately. (For decades, doctors convinced of the superiority of sterile isolation inadvertently killed tens of thousands of babies who literally died from the lack of human contact.) The association between motherlove and lover-love is enhanced through a constant media onslaught ("Ooh baby, baby") and a freakishly childish understanding of mature sexual love. Remember, we live in a society where this pathetic drivel is the stuff of which the all-time great love songs is made.

Love hurts. So, in light of all this indoctrination being force-fed into young minds hetero and gay alike, why should we be surprised that jilted lovers often respond with childish outrage and terror?

There are many ways to explain sexual jealousy in gay men without resorting to half-baked evolutionary theories of prehistoric cuckolding. Loss is loss, regardless of sexual orientation. We all fear rejection and abandonment. It's a harsh and lonely world out there, and we're a tender, vulnerable species. So, it's not surprising that gay men cherish their deepest connections and fear losing them just as much as anyone else does. It's not really about sex at all, at the deepest levels. It's about intimacy and love. We just find this fear often expressed in the sexual arena because that's where we've relegated so much of our intimacy in our fractured, conflicted world.

Guardian or Destroyer?

Jealousy is a dog's bark which attracts thieves - Karl Kraus

Jealousy has long been deemed the guardian of love. But, says Hara Estroff Marano, more often it's love's downfall. We typically blame our partner for paying attention to another, but the real issue may be what jealousy teaches us about ourselves.

Amanda is a dark-haired stunner with a zesty disposition, and Elliott took a fast liking to her. Within days of their meeting, bouquets began arriving at the office for her. Amanda relished the surprise deliveries - and the admiring notice of officemates.

Over weeks and then months, Elliott showed up regularly to take Amanda to dinner or out with friends. He called frequently, too - to make sure she got the flowers, to find out who ogled them, or just to hear her voice. If Amanda wasn't at her desk, the calls often bounced to her increasingly annoyed colleagues.

"Elliott had a goofy side that appealed to me, and at first, I thought he was just kind of love-struck. I was charmed and amused," Amanda recalls. But, she realized

gradually, the flowers were a kind of camouflage. "He needed to know where I was every minute, and if he didn't hear what he liked, his voice would crack with rage. That really creeped me out. I woke up one day and thought: Why does this romance feel like it's becoming a prison? In that instant, I knew I had to get out."

The flowers notwithstanding, Elliott exhibited many of the classic signs of jealousy - fear of losing his lover, lack of trust, anger at real or imagined attention to others, the need to control a loved one. Even the flowers were a time-honoured mate-retention strategy of the kind kicked off by jealousy, although we're more inclined to associate jealousy with negative tactics, from vigilance to violence.

Both possessiveness and jealousy are counter-productive behaviours that go hand in hand. They are attempts to keep our partners close in the name of love, but they are, in fact, born from insecurity. We use our partners to get our needs met, as a way of "owning" them in order to enhance or ornament ourselves, says Chuck Spezzano in *If Its Heartbreak, It Can Be Healed*. This can be a complete turnoff, and the more we do it, the more our partners want to get away from us. The more jealous and possessive we become, the more independent our partners become in an attempt to avoid being stifled.

As our possessiveness and jealousy grow and our partners move away from us, there are typically two possibilities that occur: we can become more insecure, threatening, and abusive to our partners, or we can choose to heal ourselves. One leads to disaster and destroyed relationship; the other leads to change.

Infidelity

*What I needed most was to love and to be loved, eager to be caught.
Happily, I wrapped those painful bonds around me; and sure enough,
I would be lashed with the red-hot pokers or jealousy, by suspicions and fear,
by burst of anger and quarrels.*

Saint Augustine

Although the subject of this article is irrational jealousy, sometimes realistic and justifiable jealousy is triggered by actual infidelity. The conventional paradigm has been "If you play by the rules, then you deserve a faithful spouse and a stable relationship, says David Richo. Such a promise engenders a sense of entitlement. Someone who was always faithful will have an especially hard dealing with abandonment or infidelity. Her ego feels affronted, with the possible result of long-lived and frustrating bitterness against the offending partner: "I thought I would be taken care of forever, not cast aside for someone else (younger.)" The deepest pain in infidelity may hit us when we recognize: "He does have the love to give, but he is giving it to someone else. I received it from him and then saw it vanish. I waited for the love to reappear in him, and when it did, he was in someone else's arms."

Infidelity is a state-of-the-union address, forcing us to see the truth about our relationship. Triangles form in the psyche when a dyad is in trouble, when we do not want to let go of the original partner but instead only make the unlovable lovable. The third angle may take the form of an adult lover, friends, a child, an addiction to flirting, pornography, work, or a hobby. Can we confront the dyadic issue without creating another angle?

Infidelity is always a couple's issue, not an individual issue. One partner is not the victim, nor is the other the persecutor. The affair is not the disturbance but a symptom of disturbance. The "other man" does not cause distance but is being used to achieve distance. Infidelity seems to point to what our offending partner lacks but actually may reveal what we are afraid to show – for example, vulnerability, tenderness, playfulness, generosity, free abandon in sex. A frustrated partner finds someone else to colonize the empty space rather than address it or grieve its emptiness directly.

Acquiring a new lover may be the only way to leave a relationship for someone who feels she lacks the strength to leave on her own, or it may be a way of seeking satisfaction in areas of need that seem unfulfillable in the primary relationship. I may seek the gratification of my need for a holding environment with my wife and my needs for excitement in an affair. I may gratify my dependency needs in marriage and my domination needs in an affair. I may find mirroring of a feeling or a potential in a new partner that my present partner does not offer. The new partner may also evoke the positive shadow side of me: a hidden positive potential that may have lain fallow and unacknowledged before.

While infidelity may be a bold and extreme measure to make the relationship tolerable when it seems to have become unendurable and intimacy seems impossible, those avoiding intimacy with the original partner will most likely keep avoiding it with the new partner. What is more, the secrecy and time constraints of an affair make intimacy ultimately impossible in that relationship, too. So ultimately, two lovers are less than one. No one is offering his or her entire self anywhere in the triangle.

Infidelity also brings up abandonment terrors in the cuckolded partner. This explains the sense of powerlessness and pain that may be so excruciating. Powerlessness in this case means the inability to get someone to give us the love we desire and is our clue to unresolved childhood issues and the grief that have pursued us all our life and are now presenting their bill. Infidelity is a metaphor for what happened long ago or has continued to happen - the loss of love. Once we see that our anguish is not literally so much about the loss of this partner and her choice to betray and abandon us, we are on the trial of our long-standing psychological material that has awaited our attention and calls for work on ourselves. Thus, betrayal by a partner can become a springboard to real growth in ourselves.

In an infidelity crisis, when one partner does something big, like having an affair with someone else, the other may react with something equally big, like also taking up with someone else. It is healthier for us when a big deal leads to a big look at ourselves, not to a big reaction or a big reprisal. Retaliation feels good to our ego, but the reflex to retaliate is a sign that the real grief is being put to sleep.

In the style of neediness, I might go from my first partner to a second with the first as backup, then to a third partner with the first and second as backups. In the healthy adult style, I go from one to none, and while alone, I work in therapy, addressing, processing, and resolving issues in myself with a plan to make changes. It is an immensely rich time for personal knowledge and healing. Endings that lead to self-exploration are painful but profitable to one who is committed to personal evolution.

The partner who is being cheated upon may say, "I should be able to go along with him having another lover," even though her body says, "I can't stand it" This is sixties-era training. The "free love" part of the sixties was not in our best interest as self-nurturant adults. Go with your body's information, recalling that a relationship is about honesty and happiness not about enduring pain.

Finally, it's important to point out that fidelity is more than just monogamy. Fidelity also means a commitment to work problems out. This includes not reacting to one infidelity with finality and separation but by exploring the implications of what happened and working it out, with amends given and received. When the affair ends, fidelity can begin again, and partners can go on together with forgiveness and new energy for a better life together.

Simple and Complex Jealousy

Jealousy is never satisfied with anything short of an omniscience that would detect the subtlest fold of the heart - George Eliot

According to Steven Stosny, simple jealousy starts as a feeling of discomfort at the prospect of losing reward or affection to someone else. In complex jealousy, the prospect of loss feels like unjustifiable self-diminishment; you become smaller and less valuable, because someone is manipulating or betraying you.

Simple jealousy motivates reward/affection-seeking behavior - you try to be more cooperative, helpful, or loving, and that usually gets a positive response sufficient to alleviate the discomfort. Complex jealousy motivates attack, either overtly or in your head. It makes you devalue and try to control others, which invariably makes things worse.

Simple jealousy first emerges in toddlerhood, typically when the child witnesses' parents showing affection to each other or to another child. The toddler at first squeezes between the embracing adults and tries to be as cute and lovable as possible. The arrival of a sibling often causes regression to things like bedwetting and less mature speech. Regression is, in part, an attempt to seem more lovable to the distracted parents: "Babies turn you on? I can do that, too."

Simple Jealousy Regulates Distance; Complex Jealousy Expands Distance.

Simple jealousy functions in many adult relationships as a kind of distance-regulator. When the partners drift apart, the pang of jealousy motivates more attention and connecting behaviour. It can occur frequently when the relationship is most insecure, particularly in the early stages of emotional bonding, when the parties feel the most vulnerable to rejection. It goes largely unnoticed at that time, because they follow the natural motivation to be more loving. They reconnect, and the jealousy immediately recedes.

When the parties cannot reconnect, simple jealousy fails to function. Once resentment takes over the relationship and systematically blocks connection, simple jealousy fades into more generalized negative feelings for each other. It's not a good sign when resentment replaces jealousy. Contempt will soon follow.

Simple jealousy can turn complex when children are punished for trying to be cute and lovable in response to the pain of exclusion. They may then interpret the discomfort of exclusion not as an internal motivation to connect but as external attack. Perceiving attack, they feel entitled to retaliate.

More commonly, complex jealousy coincides with the emerging sense of self - a loose construct that includes self-concept, identity, self-efficacy, and self-value. It surfaces full-blown in adolescence and by early adulthood becomes a major problem in close relationships for those afflicted with a rigid or poorly integrated sense of self. It tends to peak in intensity in the mid-twenties, when advanced prefrontal cortical development gives the person more power to regulate emotions. However, it tends to occur more frequently, though less intensely, over time, as it destabilizes even the best of relationships.

Simple Jealousy Expresses Value; Complex Jealousy Drives You Crazy.

Simple jealousy raises the value of the loved one - you want more of him or her.

Complex jealousy devalues the loved one - you want to control, punish, or avoid.

Simple jealousy is good for a relationship. Most people would not want a lover who could care less if they slept with everyone on the men's and women's hockey teams.

But even simple jealousy must be limited to small doses. Think of it as a concentrated acid that needs lots of dilution to be effective without doing harm. Complex jealousy never comes in small doses and eventually eats through the heart of the relationship.

Rising and falling on the ebb and flow of intense feelings-states, complex jealousy has a palpable Jekyll & Hyde quality. When you feel close to your partner, you can't imagine ever feeling jealous - "How could I have thought those ugly things," or, "He is so wonderful, how could I ever imagine he'd betray me!" But once the feelings of closeness ebb, the obsessions return, and you feel and act like a completely different person.

Complex jealousy has an obsessional quality to it - you can't stop thinking about incidents - real or imagined - that invoke it. Obsessions impair reality-testing. If they persist, you can become paranoid, delusional, or hallucinatory.

A Relationship Killer

O! beware, my lord, of jealousy;

It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock

The meat it feeds on.

William Shakespeare, Othello

Robert L. Leahy says that jealousy is a killer. Relationships end because of jealous conflicts and people kill other people because they are jealous. In relationships, this emotion is so pervasive and instantaneous that people fail to take time, step back and evaluate it. It breaks communication, compassion and damages relationships. I know that I have been jealous, and I am intimately aware of the impact it can have on a relationship.

When we are in a state of jealousy, we are operating in a state of instinctual survival mode. We are acting out of scarcity. In this state, we are irrational and the only thing we can think about is ourselves. We fail to consider the feelings and impact of our behaviour on other people. But when we operate from a place of abundance, we unleash the human spirit, think compassionately towards others.

Imagine this. You are at a party and someone is friendly, and you smile. Your partner thinks that you are betraying her. Or your partner tells you a funny story about a former lover and you feel threatened. You feel the anger and the anxiety rising inside you and you don't know what to do.

Susan could identify with this. She would glare at her partner, trying to send him a "message" that she was really annoyed and hurt. She hoped he would get the message.

At times she would withdraw into pouting, hoping to punish him for showing an interest in someone else. But it didn't work. He just felt confused.

At other times Susan would ask him if she still found her attractive. Was he getting bored with her? Was she his type? At first, he would reassure her, but then - with repeated demands for her for more reassurance - he began to wonder why she felt so insecure. Maybe she wasn't the right one for him.

And when things got more difficult for Susan, she would yell at him, "Why don't you go home with her? It's obvious you want to!" These kinds of jealous conflicts can end a relationship.

Through jealous tantrums, we attempt to make others do what we want them to do, which, of course, rarely works. Tantrums can have a deleterious, even devastating effect on our lives. We experience hurt in an obvious way - through tantrums or pouting in order to point out when we are not getting our own way. Yet we continue to pout and stamp our feet in the belief that we will ultimately get our own way when our partners feel guilty enough for how much hurt they have caused us. Every tantrum includes an element of pouting with anger.

A tantrum occurs when we are in such emotional pain that we are blinded and feel "justified" by the emotional and physical abuse we dispense. We feel such a personal sense of torture that we are unaware of the torture we are inflicting on those around us. There is probably no quicker way to lower our stock with our partners than to punish them with our immaturity in a jealous tantrum.

The manipulation inherent in a jealous tantrum is often so clumsy that it leaves our "victim: feeling bad and made into an "object." This is a poor strategy to use because it leads to fights over needs, revenge and withdrawal as it escalates back and forth, until there is war. Manipulations is offensive - it belittles our partners, insults their integrity, and puts them in the position of being always in the wrong.

The main problem with manipulation is the fact that whatever we get, we get through coercion and not through any sense of personal value. We may have won, but we are all too aware that we have used force to get there. Manipulation lowers our self-worth the more we employ it. But until we can heal our jealousy, we will continue to employ it because we can't see another way of meeting the great hunger of our needs.

The path of manipulation effectively leads to heartbreak, because those involved either want to push us away or stop giving to us. Manipulation leads to resentment. We may win the battle, but we will lose the war.

A Course in Miracles analyses the destructiveness of “specialness.” As children we felt the need to be the “special” child, and we wanted our parents to recognize us as such. The trauma we felt when they failed to do so manifests itself in our present relationships, and we demand that our partners recognize our “specialness” and treat us accordingly. When they fail to do so, we punish them emotionally and try to control them in order to ensure that our needs are met.

Our hurts come when our needs are not met, and our upsets come from people not acting in the way we want them to. When our happiness is dependent upon the behaviour of others, it is emotionally devastating to us, and then potentially dangerous to them.

Love, on the other hand, gives, recognizes, and attends, but it takes no prisoners. It holds no one hostage, because love does not punish others for their failing to take care of us. Self-centeredness, or “specialness” is a common illusion that is built into every relationship, so unless we transform it into true love and true giving, it will only be a matter of time before we suffer heartbreak.

Without the goal of dedicating a relationship to something greater than worldly love - in other words, spirit - the relationship is doomed. It is perhaps because we know this to be true that marriage in most cultures is a religious ceremony. Dr Joyce Brothers once stated, “In my experience, single people want to be married and married people want to be dead.” This is a common experience. It is time to change our attitude toward relationships. Rather than seeing them as a trap, we need to value them as an opportunity for us to mature emotionally and evolve - to join with others rather than enslave them to our needs.

A Signal to Look Within

It's amazing the clarity that comes with psychotic jealousy - Rupert Everett

Jealousy is an extremely painful emotion; social exclusion, whether real or imagined, always hurts. It throws the mind into turmoil and is difficult to dislodge. Those in its grip typically blame the discomfort on a partner for bestowing attention on others. But there are huge individual differences in the propensity for jealousy, and there is emerging evidence that elements of personality influence some of them. Those who are most insecure, in fact, may be most unrealistic in perceiving threats and making accusations.

But this same view of jealousy also suggests that the emotion need not be unleashed on a destructive path; it can instead serve a highly constructive purpose - as a valuable signal to look within and repair one's own sense of self. That, in turn, can only improve relationships. Jealousy can be a wakeup call. Let that call be ever changing to your life in a positive manner instead of letting your fears get the best of you. Jealousy, it seems, says more about the bearer than about the deeds or misdeeds of a mate.

I learned that my jealousy was very much driven from my ego's cry for attention. Deep down inside, I was just a little child, arms wrapped around myself, scared and wanting to be loved. As infants, we have all experienced numerous incidences of perceived rejection and abandonment. A human baby's total helplessness to fulfil even her own simplest needs is coupled with her total dependence on others.

Even if your mother tried her damnest best, she could simply not fulfil all your needs all the time. Sometimes she didn't even know what you wanted when you were screaming your little lungs out. We don't remember these incidents, and we have repressed the feelings so that we do not constantly reexperience the agony. Yet the repression of feelings does not stop them - somewhere within us that torture goes on, but we just don't feel it.

Irrational jealousy reflects places where we are sitting on the old pain of our unmet infant needs. These are such painful feelings that if we don't commit to heal them, we continue to pollute our surroundings and destroy our relationships with our anger and our unhealed pain.

Many of our roles are the result of patterns that exist in our families of origin - we were brought up to believe that were not useful, important, or lovable, and so we bury those feelings of low self-worth and compensate by trying to make ourselves special, invaluable, and important to others. The problem is that these feelings and beliefs remain deep inside us, and unless we are willing to open them up, recognize and heal them, we will be unable to receive from others.

In our relationships we set up rules that define how things should be, because we want to hide and protect those places where we suffered before. Rules are meant to protect us from past pain, but they are meant to be broken. Therefore, like all defences, they actually bring about what they are trying to prevent.

When we give ourselves, the ego tells us that we are vulnerable and sets up defences to ensure that this doesn't happen again. Obviously, joining, then doesn't take place. Ultimately, however, our jealous defences bury and hide the guilt, poor self-esteem, and feelings of unworthiness and failure, which not only affect our present relationships, but any relationships we might have in the future.

A couple of years ago I was working with a very jealous and possessive man. We worked to clear out a few layers, just enough for him to feel some relief and to stop acting so belligerently and aggressively toward his wife. The next time I saw him, six months later, he was having an affair, which is something I have often seen happen with jealous and possessive people.

The extent to which someone is jealous is often the extent to which they are fickle, despite protestations to the contrary. Jealousy and possessiveness have very little to do with love, and very much to do with a thwarted sense of specialness, unfulfilled needs, old insecurities, unrealistic demands, and past heartbreaks trying their best to create new ones.

Interestingly, many people claim complete devotion to a partner, but, in fact, any person would have sufficed, as long as their needs were continually met. And when we are jealous, what we see is our own lack of commitment that we have projected on our partners. We confuse urgency and dependency with love.

Milton calls jealousy “the injured lover’s hell.” But we can turn it into something a little better – a purgatory, say - when we work with it as grief, says David Richo in *How to Be An Adult In Relationships*. Jealousy is a combination of three feelings: hurt, anger, and fear. We are hurt and angered by a perceived betrayal. We are scared by the possibility of losing a source of nurturance and never being able thereafter to find another - the paranoid belief that makes jealousy so poignant. Jealousy stands at the threshold of grief, which our ego does not let us cross.

Instead of weeping in sadness and fear, our arrogant, affronted, possessive ego enters the fray and we lash out and blame, engaging in abuse instead of healthy anger as we declare our indignation about the perceived betrayal. Ego-driven jealousy exposes our possessiveness, our dependency, our resentment of another’s freedom, our refusal to be vulnerable. Deep down, we know we are not really democratic, not really free of the style of hierarchical ownership in relationships, not really ready to admit our fear of facing the sometimes-harsh conditions of the relationship: abandonment, engulfment, betrayal, and so on.

Our ego demands that our partner save us: “Stop doing what I do not want to grieve for.” It is a perfectly normal reaction at first. But as we address, process, and resolve our true feelings, we see where our work is. We acknowledge our pain, find someone to mirror it, and stay with it until it is resolved. Our partner will probably not be able to help us with this. But therapy, friends, and support systems can assist us in getting past our ego to face vulnerability, the dearest gift of love.

Jealousy challenges our power to stay open and cantered, without blame or withdrawal, in the midst of rejection. To go through it rather than simply bolster our ego shows us a path to maturity and liberation. After all, experiences like jealousy are the ones that make us learn to let go so we can grow. At first, we may hate the one who make us let go. But as our feelings are resolved, we become thankful that we found out so much about our partner and ourselves.

Jealousy shows us that no matter how indomitable we may imagine ourselves to be, we are still fragile and childlike underneath. Jealousy can thus deflate our ego, a giant spiritual step.

Subconscious Agendas

Jealousy, that dragon which slays love under the pretence of keeping it alive - Henry Ellis

When we are jealous, we worry that our partner might find someone else more appealing and we fear that he or she will reject us. Since we feel threatened that our partner might find someone more attractive, we may activate jealousy as a way to cope with this threat. We may believe that our jealousy may keep us from being surprised, help us defend our rights, and force our partner to give up interests elsewhere.

Similar to worry, jealousy may be a "strategy" that we use so that we can figure out what is going wrong or learn what our partner "really feels". We may also think that our jealousy can motivate us to give up on the relationship - so that we don't get hurt any more. If you are feeling jealous, it's important to ask yourself what you hope to gain by your jealousy. I view jealousy as a - counter-productive and misguided - coping strategy.

Similar to other forms of worry, jealousy leads us to focus only on the negative. We interpret our partner's behaviour as reflecting a loss of interest in us or a growing interest in someone else: "He finds her attractive" or "He is yawning because I am boring". Like other forms of worry, jealousy leads us to take things personally and to mind-read negative emotions in other people: "She's getting dressed up to attract other guys".

Chuck Spezzano writes that competition is one of the root dynamics of jealousy. Subconsciously, we may feel that we need to have more than anyone else does in a certain area, even if it is in a negative way. Our ego encourages us to use comparison to prove we are the best, but competition always leads to pain. Competition is based on a belief in scarcity, and both scarcity and competition are the result of broken bonding, fear, and separation. Once bonding has been lost, we take on an attitude of "every man for himself."

An unhealthy sense of competition is based on the mistaken belief that if we win, by proving our superiority, we also naturally succeed. Competition is at the root of the emotional poverty and the deadness that can occur in relationships.

Chuck Spezzano says that whatever we have in our relationships now is exactly what we want. It is also what we think will make us happy.

This is not on a conscious level, because we do feel genuine pain, outrage and anger. But we do create problems in a relationship for a reason. Below our level of awareness, we set up situations to meet our needs. Every jealousy has elements of denial and self-deception.

Once we are willing to examine our conflicted wishes, which have never worked to make us happy, we can change. We may be able to get everyone we know to agree with us that we are in the right and that our partner is the problem party, but we are only deceiving ourselves. We are disregarding our hidden agendas, hidden selves, shadows, pay-offs, excuses, and all the other subconscious issues that are always present in any relationship problem.

Betrayal and the fear of betrayal is one of the worst and deepest dynamics of jealousy and it pervades all human relationships. The root of betrayal is almost always in childhood. We may believe that we have betrayed a parent, a sibling, or a friend and suffer guilt. Guilt and betrayal go hand in hand, so we set up betrayals for ourselves in our later relationships in order to pay off our guilt. This, however, just reinforces the treachery, and it can cause some nasty heartbreaks in our relationships, our careers and our families.

Like many other things, we betray others when we make our own needs paramount. We have set up situations where we rely on ourselves and focus only on our plans to get our needs met – at whatever cost. All betrayal is indicative of self-betrayal or of an attempt to defeat ourselves. No one could ever succeed in betraying us unless we are betraying ourselves or feeling badly about betraying others.

At a fundamental level, we may begin to betray others because we feel betrayed by God. We then go on to set up situations in which we ourselves are betrayed in order to make ourselves feel better about not fulfilling our promise or giving your gifts. When we are betrayed, we feel betrayed by God and cannot see that it was often us who started the cycle of betrayal and guilt in the first place.

How to Heal Jealousy

Life is one big road with lots of signs. So, when you riding through the ruts, don't complicate your mind. Flee from hate, mischief and jealousy.

Don't bury your thoughts, put your vision to reality. Wake Up and Live!

Bob Marley

Some authors advise that you should talk to your partner about your jealous feelings, provided that you don't accuse, attack, or insult your partner by using "you"-messages, for example, "You don't care for me," or even worse, "You are attracted to that slut," "You are a flirtatious bastard," or "You are a cheating bitch." The idea is to remain respectful and use "I"-messages, such as, "When you dance so close with

Bob, I feel insecure," "I feel afraid that I'm losing you if you look at attractive women," or "I feel threatened when you have coffee with your ex." My advice would be rather not to talk about these feelings, for the following reasons:

- Talking about these feelings just **affirms them and gives them more reality** than they deserve. Moreover, your partner is most likely to defend him or herself, and an argument is likely to be the result, which will only cause you to feel even more disconnected than you're already feeling.
- Even if your partner responds in a positive and caring way to these nicely phrased statements, they **will eventually lose patience** with your constant insecurity, begin to feel **overwhelmed or suffocated** and in some way or another withdraw from you, thus causing the opposite of the reassurance and the closeness you wanted.
- No matter how respectfully you phrase your concerns, there is always an **implied criticism, accusation, or insult to your partner's integrity and good intentions**, and these energies will inevitably erode the fabric of affection and openness in your relationship.
- **The most desirable characteristic in a partner is a person who is whole within him or herself and doesn't need a partner to validate their self-worth.** Most people will pick up on how much you need them and feel pressured. The pressure is lifted when you become passionate about your own life. The number one cause of heartbreak in relationships is an imbalance in dependence / independence.
- **The essence of a romantic relationship is that it is built on a bit of mystery and even a dash of uncertainty.** Think again - why is it that the people you adore don't really want you, while the ones you don't really care for are crazy about you? If you show neediness, insecurity or jealousy, you destroy the very desire that sparks the romantic intrigue and the passionate interest in your lover's attitude toward you.
- **What you resist, will persist - and probably increase. This is a universal law, and it's also formulated as the law of attraction. Whatever you focus on, will increase.** John Assaraf says, "Here's the problem. Most people are thinking about what they don't want, and they're wondering why it shows up over and over again. The only reason why people do not have what they want is because they are focusing on what they don't want. Listen to your thoughts and listen to the words you are saying. The law is absolute and there are no mistakes."

My Advice is to count to 10 before opening your mouth in anger to allow you to collect your thoughts.

Cultivate Wisdom

It is not love that is blind, but jealousy - Lawrence Durrell

One of my most revered and wise teachers has been John F Demartini, who wrote *The Heart of Love*, and *The Breakthrough Experience*. Demartini reminds us that everything has two sides, and you can never have one without the other. People who are prone to jealousy want love to be perfect every moment, and they forget that their idea of what love can and should be is at odds with how reality works. Everything in human experience has its opposite. It's not one side now and the other maybe sometime in the future; they're simultaneous.

Don't wait to get old to finally understand this. Awaken to the wisdom of the ages without the aging process. Anything that you perceive as life-threatening or destroying is also life-giving and creating, if you only have the wisdom to look for it. Find that balance in your world and enter into a freedom that few people ever experience, the liberty of an inspiring and trusting life.

At any moment in your life, you will never be put down without being lifted up, nor lifted up without being put down. Positive and negative, good and bad, connection and separation, support and challenge, peace and war - all come together in pairs. They are simultaneous and perfectly balanced, and that is what makes up the divine order of the entire universe. If you ever see one side without the other, you're living in an illusion. Wisdom is the acknowledgement that both sides occur equally and simultaneously (this is the heart of the *The Breakthrough Experience*).

We all feel pain and pleasure. Anytime you think you're feeling more pleasure than pain, you're living an illusion; you're repressing something, and you don't even know it. Or whenever you think, I'm having more pain than pleasure, I'm suffering right now, that's also an illusion. Both emotions are just illusions, lopsided perceptions. They are the masks of tragedy and comedy that veil our true nature. The moment you balance your mind, your perceptions of pain and pleasure disappear, and you experience balance, love and peace.

The purpose of intimate relationships and of marriage is to teach people how to fully love themselves, their owned and disowned parts. Many people still live with the illusion that the purpose of relationship is happiness. This fantasy began in the 12th century when the troubadours created romantic love. Marriage is not about happiness, unless you redefine the term happiness as fulfilment, which is the synthesis of both positive and negative emotion. Marriage was never intended to be one-sided. In the marriage vows, we pledge to love for richer and poorer, in sickness and health, for better or for worse.

Love is the perfect equilibrium of pain and pleasure, support and challenge, nice and mean, pleasant and unpleasant, connection and disconnection, feeling close and feeling abandoned. In any relationship except in moments of presence and unconditional love, you'll oscillate between feeling loved and feeling unloved as you fluctuate around the centre point of love.

A coin has two sides, heads and tails. You may think of self-worth in terms of how many coins you accumulate in your life. If you allow yourself to embrace only the positive heads side, then the second somebody tries to give you a coin (an experience) that builds your self-worth, you say, "I don't want half of that." When you want only the positive and keep pushing away the negative, you can't get the coin. Most of us spend our lives trying to run from rejection, reprimand, and criticism, instead of embracing both praise and blame in the pursuit of fulfilling our purpose of becoming whole human beings.

Love, like everything else, is made up of two sides: support and challenge. We're required to experience both sides equally and live in this world of duality until we can see the magnificence of their underlying balance. Were you aware that supporting someone can make them weak and dependent, and that challenging them can make them strong and independent?

The universal law of balance also pertains to love, although this is exactly where we would most like to delude ourselves that it is all going to be only moonlight, gondolas and roses. Conventional wisdom believes that love is only the nice, positive, and supportive side of the equation, but the synthesis of the halves is a vastly more powerful thing. Have you noticed that when you are manic and up, your partner will help bring you back to equilibrium by bursting your bubble? If you are down and depressed, your partner will try to lift you up. If you become cocky, your partner will bring you down. If you become deflated, they will help you up. That is how true love works. True love is a balance of opposites.

When you are in the state of true love, you see the balance all around you. The moment you realize this balance within and all around you, you become liberated. To be in the state of love, or enlightenment, you need to equilibrate your perceptions and emotions. This does not mean indifference or apathy - equilibrium refers to the point of inner balance and poise that goes beyond emotional extremes.

Be Inspired

Nothing is more capable of troubling our reason, and consuming our health, than secret notions of jealousy in solitude - Aphra Behn

I have found the poetry of Kahlil Gibran to be source of endless inspiration in those times when I have been tempted to give way to my more primitive impulses. When asked, "What Is Love?" the answer given in The Prophet includes these inspirational words:

*Even as love crowns you so shall he crucify you.
Even as he is for your growth so is, he for your pruning.
Evan as he ascends to your height and caresses
Your tenderest branches that quiver in the sun,
So, shall he descend to your roots and shake
Them in their clinging to the earth.*

*Love gives naught but itself and takes naught but from itself.
Love possesses not nor would it be possessed;
For love is sufficient unto love.
When you love you should not say, "God is in my heart,"
But rather, "I am in the heart of God."
And think not you can direct the course of love,
For love, if it finds you worthy, directs your course.
But if you love and must needs have desires,
Let these be your desires:
To melt and be like a running brook that sings
Its melody to the night.
To know the pain of too much tenderness.
To be wounded by your own understanding of love;
And to bleed willingly and joyfully.
To wake at dawn with a winged heart and give
Thanks for another day of loving;
To rest at the noon hour and meditate love's ecstasy;
To return home at eventide with gratitude;
And then to sleep with a prayer for the beloved
In your heart and a song of praise on your lips.*

On Marriage, Gibran says:

*But let there be spaces in your togetherness.
And let the winds of the heavens dance between you
Love one another, but make not a bond of love:*

*Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls.
Fill each other's cup but drink not from the same cup.
Give one another of your bread but eat not from the same loaf.
Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of you be alone,
Even as the strings of a lute are alone though they quiver with the same music.
Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping.
For only the hand of Life can contain your hearts.
And stand together yet not too near together:
For the pillars of the temple stand apart,
And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadow.*

Evolve Spiritually

Jealousy is the jaundice of the soul - John Dryden

Another one of my favourite spiritual teachers, Marianne Williamson (*A Return to Love*, and *The Gift of Change*), says that at any given moment, it's our focus that determines our emotional reality. There is rarely going to be a moment in your life when everything you see, or think about, is absolutely perfect in your eyes. But perfection is a point of view; what becomes perfect is our ability to scan our environment and focus on it in the most helpful, loving, positive way.

There are always things to be happy about, and there are always things to be sad about. The bridge to a happier life is more an emotional decision than a change in circumstance. Life is like a piece of wet clay, and every thought we think gives it shape. A happy life can have sad days, but when you've mastered the fundamentals of a basically happy worldview, you attract more situations that prove your worldview correct.

And what could be a happier worldview than that love is real and nothing else exists?

The trick, of course, is that it's hard to stay loving in an often-loveless world. And yet, with God, it's possible. When we spend more time working to view life through loving eyes, and less time trying to figure out why we're unhappy to start with, then our lives are transformed. Our capacity to change our minds is the greatest gift God has given us, and it is also the most powerful. He is present within us, in any moment, to help us return our minds to love.

We can always look at a situation and take a moment to focus on how blessed and grateful we are for the parts of it that are good. We can always invite the spirit of God to overshadow our thoughts, to lift them up to divine right order, to deliver us from the grip of the ego, and to turn us into who He would have us be.

Every moment, we can invite Him to enter and purify our thoughts. And having done so, we will begin to see miracles. Some of them will seem small at first, but in time we will notice a basic shift in the tenor of our lives.

Metaphysically our “walk with God” refers to our line of thinking. To pray for a closer walk with God is to pray for help in thinking more spiritual thoughts, not because we want to be a religious goody-goody but because we don’t want to sabotage our lives the way we did in the past. We are asking that our thoughts and actions be guided by God, now and always.

Being distant from God means thinking whatever we’re thinking without any sacred touchstone for our perception. Since we’ve been trained by the thinking of the world, without God’s guidance we are liable to reach instinctively for thoughts that are judgmental, blaming, jealous, or unforgiving. And thus, we remain in the hell of separation from the experience of God’s love.

A closer walk with God means narrowing the gap between our thoughts and God’s thoughts. How many times have we done things that we later regret, for no other reason than that at that particular moment we were not in touch with our higher selves? We were allowing a fear-based impostor self to pose as who we are, while our essential, loving self lay buried and bereft beneath the illusions of our unsatisfied lives.

The thinking of the world is like a computer virus that has invaded our system. The Holy Spirit is like an antivirus program that both protects us from false thinking and dismantles fear-based thoughts once they’ve entered our minds.

Love Yourself

You will never feel loved until you love yourself - Arnaud Desjardins

Jealousy is simply and clearly the fear that you do not have value, says Jennifer James. Jealousy scans for evidence to prove the point - that others will be preferred and rewarded more than you. There is only one alternative - self-value. If you cannot love yourself, you will not believe that you are loved. You will always think it's a mistake or luck. Take your eyes off others and turn the scanner within. Find the seeds of your jealousy, clear the old voices and experiences. Put all the energy into building your personal and emotional security. Then you will be the one others envy, and you can remember the pain and reach out to them.

People who are truly comfortable and secure with themselves, rarely let jealousy get in the way. Look within, spend time with yourself, and get to know the real you. Choose to focus on yourself, instead of the person you are jealous of.

Use your understanding of your desires and your mind to change your perception. Know that you have everything you need to be whole, happy and complete right inside of you.

One of the best remedies for any negativity, comparison, jealousy or envy is just to get creative. Write your next blog. Paint your next picture. Play guitar. Do something that makes you proactive. Get out of the reactivity. Creativity is a powerful place. And it shifts everything.

Become a little more selfish. Spend more of your time and your emotional and intellectual resources on building yourself as an individual rather than perceiving yourself as part of the relationship. Work on your career and your other goals. Take a class in a field that you have an interest in, learn a new language, engage in a form of creative art, take a dance class, and do anything else that you have or might have an interest in, so that there is more to your life than just that relationship, and so that your life does not revolve around any given person and his faithfulness to you. Pursuing other objectives of your life will prevent you from obsessing over your partner and will keep you in a much healthier emotional state, free of jealousy.

Try to improve your sense of self-esteem and belief in yourself, independently of your partner or whoever is at the centre of your jealous fears.

- Spend some time doing some reasonable activities or pastimes that meet your own wishes or needs - what you will enjoy will depend on you. This might be exercise or talking to friends or music or going to a health centre - whatever you would like to do for your own enjoyment.
- Avoid intoxicants such as alcohol or illegal drugs, which may exacerbate mood swings and increase the chances of you acting in an inappropriate way.
- Caffeine can sometimes heighten anxiety for some people so I would also recommend you avoid that if possible.

Are you tired, overwhelmed, or hungry? Being tired or hungry can make you more vulnerable to old patterns. I added the word "overwhelm" to the mix because jealousy can often come up in situations where there's too much going on and you can't find your centre. Any of these kinds of very physical situations can bring on an episode. Take a nap. Get a good night's sleep. Eat when you're hungry. Move away from the overwhelm and get quiet.

Stand or Sit Up Straight. You may have noticed that whenever people feel helpless or dependent, they tend to curl up, arms pressed against their side, bent over slightly,

taking up as little room as possible. Their posture takes the form of a hurt child. Very often a simple adjustment in posture makes you feel more competent and powerful. Stand or sit up straight; take up as much room as possible, and you are more likely to feel visible and empowered.

Smile as Often as You Can. Why should you smile more, even when you don't feel like it? Recent discoveries about neuropeptides - the molecules that carry emotional messages throughout your body - suggest that smiling is a two-way street. When you are happy, your brain sends a message to the muscles around your mouth to smile. But surprisingly, whenever you smile the muscles around your mouth send the same message to the brain. It doesn't have to be a whopping, toothy grin; the slightest of smiles will help you appreciate your worth, beauty and lovability.

Control Your Core Value

Jealousy is the grave of affection - Mary Baker Eddy

Steven Stosny (in *Love Without Hurt*) writes that you must control your core value. What Stosny calls core value is referred to by others as the "life force" the "human spirit," or the "soul." It is your ability to create and experience value. It is the source of all that you value in life, including love and happiness. When you're in touch with your core value, your life is enriched, and you have a greater awareness of being alive. When you are not, your life is painful, empty, or numb. The greatest pain in your relationship is that it can cut you off from the internal source of your value and personal power.

Although it can seem temporarily diminished, your core value is invincible. The world can cause you inconvenience, it can hurt your feelings and even your body, but it can never determine, nor can it harm or diminish your core value. Nothing your lover or anyone else says or does can lower your core value. To help you internalize this vital truth, write the following and then read it out loud, with all the conviction you can muster:

I am worthy of respect, value, and compassion, whether or not I get them from others. If I don't get them from others, it is necessary to feel more worthy, not less. It is necessary to affirm my own deep value as a unique person (a child of God). I respect and value myself. I have compassion for my hurt.

Your negative emotions are signals to value yourself more. Jealousy is one of the best indicators of when you are cut off from your core value. Although your partner stimulates many of your negative emotions, they are not really about him or her; they are about your need to value yourself more.

Your painful emotions are internal alarms; they signal that you are, at that particular moment, disconnected from your core value. They tell you that you are ignoring or violating something important to you.

Remember, anger, resentment, and jealousy work like a sensitive gas gauge, warning you that your core value is running on empty and you need to fill it up. You can experience your core value more frequently as an unconscious motivation to improve, appreciate, and connect. Doing any of these automatically activates your core value. You can fill it up to the high level you deserve in just one week, by following this simple formula. Every day, for the next seven days:

Think about what you can do to feel better. Thanks to the powerful human motivation to improve, you don't necessarily have to fix a problem to feel better. You just have to make it a little better. If you're feeling bad and you just think about what you can do to make it a little better - you don't even have to do it, just think of it - you'll start to feel better. If you're upset at your husband, and you think of how you can make yourself feel a little better - take a leisurely bath, smell a flower, call a girlfriend - you start to feel better.

Appreciate at least one thing about each person you love. Appreciate a new thing of beauty in nature, in art or music, and in your community. We are born with the drive to create and experience value, to make someone or something important and worthy of appreciation, protection, time, energy, effort, and sacrifice. When you experience something you value, like your child's smile or a sunset or the moon rising over the ocean, your sense of self grows and makes you feel more valuable and alive. You can appreciate how loving your friends are, your partner's fine work on the yard, the effort your children made on their homework, the strategy of a game, all of which enhance your sense of self while you appreciate them.

Make at least one communal or spiritual connection. Research shows that people function at their best and report most happiness when they have three levels of emotional connection: intimate, communal, and spiritual. Love relationships tend to fall apart when they are the only source of emotional connection. The expectation that your partner should meet all your emotional needs puts more stress on the relationship than it is designed to support. What you cannot do is put all your connection eggs in one basket.

Much jealousy stems from the expectation that one relationship can fulfil not only every need for intimacy but all three levels of emotional connection. A love relationship that isolates one or both parties from parents, friends, community, and spiritual connection is doomed to failure. Communal connections can form around social causes, special interests, or any group activities.

Spiritual connection is a sense of attachment to something larger than yourself. It can be God, nature, the cosmos, a social cause, or the sea of humanity. A psychological sense of spirituality is a feeling of union and transcendence, motivated by compassion, awe, or joy. If you want to experience spiritual connection, pray to be more compassionate, not to escape your painful emotions. To enhance your sense of connection:

Do at least one compassionate thing for another person.

Do at least one compassionate thing for yourself.

You will soon get into the habit of looking for aspects of value in everyone and everything you see.

With your core value filled up, you can begin to remove the thorns from your heart.

Say Yes to Yourself

Jealousy injures us with the dagger of self-doubt - Terri Guillemets

John Welwood, in *Perfect Love, Imperfect Relationships*, says that self-love is something much more subtle and profound than the pep talk pick-me-ups promoted by self-help gurus who proclaim, "Believe in yourself, you're fantastic, and doggone it, people like you!" Self-love is something much more sacred and mysterious than that. It is an inner glow or atmosphere of warmth that gradually begins to infuse you as you learn to say yes to yourself as you are, in this very moment. This is an essential basis for spiritual growth.

For self-love to truly come alive, it has to be more than just a concept, a belief, or self-talk. It has to involve a new way of inhabiting myself, of feeling and celebrating the living presence that I am, rather than just maintaining some favourable self-image. Self-love involves a yes to myself in whatever I am going through, instead of holding on to some concept of what I am or how I should be.

Saying yes to yourself also means accepting the messy, imperfect human being that you are. "It was easy to love God in all that was beautiful," wrote Saint Francis. Yet he recognized that for love to be the real thing, it must encompass everything, including all of life's darkness and pain. So, he went on to say, "The lessons of deeper knowledge, though, instructed me to embrace God in all things."

How to embrace God in all things within yourself? Not just in the beauty but also in the heart of the beast? You can develop a simple practice of saying yes to yourself each day.

PRACTICE

Stop for a moment, pay attention to whatever's going on inside you, and then acknowledge it in a neutral way: "Yes, this is what's here." "Yes, I'm jealous," lightly meeting or touching the feeling with your awareness. Don't reject anything that you're experiencing. Meet it instead with a brief moment of non-judgmental awareness - touching it and letting it be. This is a simple way of saying yes to yourself, a shorthand form of unconditional love and presence that you can practice at any moment, wherever you are, whatever you're doing.

"Yes, there's suspicion." Touch that and let it be, lightly making contact with the sense of fear in your body. "Yes, I'm acting in a possessive way," and notice how it affects you to be aware of that, without judgment or manipulation. Yes, here does not mean "I like it," "I approve of it," "I think it's good," or "I'm glad it's like this." It simply means, "Yes, this is what's here right now. I can meet this because it's what's happening. And I can stay open to myself even though this is coming up."

If you have a hard time saying yes to something, you can also say yes to that: "Yes, I am struggling with this; I'm having a hard time letting it be." Notice and feel the resistance or refusal and let it be, with awareness. Don't just observe it but feel it and give it room to have its energetic play.

Don't let this be a conceptual exercise. You don't have to verbalize the "yes," though that can often be helpful. What's important is to touch what's there for a moment, let it be, and experience yourself there with it, in openness, allowing yourself to be as you are, even though you may not like what you're feeling. "Yes, I can be there with myself even though anxiety is arising... even though self-doubt is present... even though loneliness is here."

Above all, don't identify with any of the states you pass through, don't make it mean something about you. "I'm jealous... That means I'm a jealous person... I've always been that way... It's just the way I am." When you acknowledge, "I'm afraid, this doesn't mean that fear is who you are. Instead, it's a shorthand way of saying, "I'm aware of fear arising in my body and mind." The "I" that can recognize the fear is not itself afraid. It is the larger being that you are, the awareness that can see and hold whatever's there in you - all the qualities, all the feelings, all the tight spots, all the conditioned patterns.

Saying yes to whatever is there in you is a way of calling forth the larger awareness that can hold all of your experience in a space of warmth and openness. Over time you will see how this lightens and frees you up. Swami Prajnanpad sums up this core principle of self-love: "Say yes to everything. Reject nothing, least of all something in yourself."

Loving yourself as you are may sound like egoism to some. But in truth, it provides the most powerful basis of all for loving others. For, letting yourself be the being that you are helps you to recognize the importance of letting others be who they are as well. One of the most loving things you can do is to let others be different from you and to free them from your demands and expectations. When you kindly understand that others have their own laws and must follow their own way, just as you do, the need to control them or make yourself more important than them starts to fall away.

Dealing with Jealous Feelings

Jealousy in romance is like salt in food. A little can enhance the savour, but too much can spoil the pleasure and, under certain circumstances, can be life-threatening. Maya Angelou

Eckhart Tolle's book *A New Earth* is an excellent read when it comes to working with and through painful emotions and letting go of the story. So is Byron Katie's book *A Thousand Names for Joy*.

The first thing is to own your feelings. Stop blaming other people for what you are feeling. It is not the fault of your partner, the girl who smiled at your man at your friend's party or the friendly barmaid at the local pub. When you feel jealous it is all down to you. No one can make you feel jealous apart from yourself. You can't blame others. You have to be committed to changing yourself.

PRACTICE

Find a place alone where you won't be disturbed. Close your eyes and start to feel the jealousy. Observe where that feeling is coming from? How is it reflecting in your body? Does your throat feel tight? Is it your stomach? Does your heart ache? Become the observer. It's important to fully allow the feeling to surface. Recognize that it isn't you, but your ego's craving for attention in the name of survival.

When you notice that you are feeling jealous, take a moment, breathe slowly, and observe your thoughts and feelings. Recognize that jealous thoughts are not the same thing as a REALITY. You may think that your partner is interested in someone else, but that doesn't mean that he really is. Thinking and reality are different.

The whole idea is to get quiet and centred, relax, let go of resistance, and allow yourself to feel your feelings without trying to do anything about them. Accept and observe your jealous thoughts and feelings. Notice that it is a feeling inside you. But you have a choice of whether you act on it. Notice that it is a feeling inside you. But you have a choice of whether you act on it. You don't have to obey your jealous feelings and thoughts.

Ask yourself if you can allow this feeling. This is one of the steps of the Sedona Method. When you're having a jealousy episode, just ask yourself if you can allow it to be there. This one step alone will ease up on the shame and the discomfort. Even if the answer is "no," then you're at least acknowledging the feeling. Just keep sitting with it and asking, "Can I allow this to be here? What would happen if I just allowed this feeling to exist for a moment?" I've done this. It creates space. It shifts the resistance. It releases the shame. Then the jealous feelings have a chance to move and diffuse.

Fully experience the feeling. By telling yourself not to feel jealous, you will never be able to get out of it. "What we resist persists". But if we bring awareness into the equation and deeply understand the situation, we'll start to eliminate the negative emotions. Allow yourself to fully feel the feeling of jealousy.

Take some time and get in touch with what you are feeling. Stop what you are doing when those jealous feelings come up and just sit and allow them to surface without judging them and without lashing out at someone else. Whether there is any truth to what you are feeling or not, allow your feelings to be there; you might find that underneath is anger and underneath the anger is fear.

You can ask yourself, "What am I really angry about?" or "What am I really fearful will happen?" Just be with the answer that comes to you. Whether there is truth to those feelings or not, just allow them to be.

You may have acquired your jealous feelings through negative past experiences. If you have already been cheated on, this may cause you to be more possessive and controlling because you fear the same will happen again. Despite all the negative things that can be said about jealousy, it seems that this emotion is part of human nature. For hundreds or even thousands of years jealousy and desire for revenge lead to murders, wars, and other smaller-scale conflicts. Perhaps accepting that we are all prone to jealousy to some extent is an important step toward knowing how to handle it and how to not let it negatively affect your personal, professional and romantic life.

Notice that your feeling of anger and anxiety may increase while you stand back and observe these experiences. Accept that you can have an emotion - and allow it to be. You don't have to "get rid of the feeling" - mindfully standing back and observing that a feeling is there can often lead to the feeling weakening on its own. By facing the emotion directly and fully experiencing it, you'll see that the feeling will eventually start to diminish.

Sit still. Be quiet. And just feel the feeling without the story. Feel where the jealousy resides inside of you. Feel the sensation, the energy of the feeling in your body, without the story of the jealousy. If you can sit and breathe long enough, then it will pass. I promise.

Keep observing, and in a few minutes, you'll see that the feeling will slowly disperse. By practicing this, you can move beyond the ego's perspective and see reality from the perspective of a higher consciousness.

Accept that your feelings of insecurity will not go away overnight. They are something you are going to have to work on. See them rather like you would see an addiction to cigarettes – you have to work at stopping.

From Jealousy to Absolute Love, Here and Now

This is a simple yet powerful way to connect directly with the living presence of absolute love that is always available through activating the longing for love that is the essence of the feeling of jealousy. As long as you still hold on to the childhood fixation of not being loved, then no matter how much others love you, it never be enough. The wound will operate like a hole in you; no matter how much love someone pours in, it will always leak out the bottom. And you will continue focusing on the love that's not there rather than the love that is. That is why the practice of tuning in to absolute love is so important. It is a way out of the endless, fruitless attempt to plug the hole of love from outside.

Just as fish do not see the water around them, so we mostly fail to recognize the ocean of love that surrounds and holds us up. Though love is inside and all around, it is so fine and transparent that, like water, it often seems invisible. So, all our lives we have been trying to win love, not realizing that great love is right here, freely available. We have been trying to hold ourselves up, not realizing that love is the ever-present ground supporting our whole existence. We have been trying to prove we are worthy of love, while failing to realize that our very nature is already lovely and lovable.

As soon as you fully acknowledge your thirst, the waters of love find an opening and start flowing toward you. At first it seems as if love is coming to you from somewhere outside. But as you let love's subtle presence enter you, you can no longer say that I am here and love is there, two separate things. There is no separation.

To know that you are loved, then, is to know that you are love. When you let down your defences and allow love to pour into you, you become one with love, like a sheet of ice melting into the river from which it came. Just as ice was never separate from the river, so the freezing of the heart has only created a temporary separation from your nature as love.

Melting into love is what the soul has always wanted. The relief it brings goes much deeper than just outgrowing childhood pain. It heals the universal spiritual wound of separation from love.

This is what we actually seek, whether we know it or not, in our fantasy of the perfect partner – someone in whose arms we could completely let go and relax. What is orgasm, after all, but this? We simply cannot help seeking perfect love, for it is what will help us melt into the warm expanse of openness that is our very nature. “To find the beloved, you must become the beloved” means becoming one with the love that is always loving us.

PRACTICE

I would suggest trying this practice regularly at first, perhaps while lying in bed first thing in the morning or last thing at night. After you have found your way with it, then you can also do the practice very briefly, in a minute or two, and find nourishment and renewal in that. Eventually you will be able to do the practice in moments when feelings of jealousy take hold of you.

1. Settle into Your Body

Take a few moments to sit quietly and settle down. You may prefer to lie down. Start by coming down out of your mind and inhabiting your body. You might take a few deep breaths and feel the sensations of aliveness in different parts of your body.

Sense your vital centre in the belly, three finger-widths below your navel. This is where you can feel your connection to the earth most fully. Breathe into your belly and ground yourself there.

Feel your heart centre, in the middle of your chest. This is where you can feel your connection with your humanness most fully, with its tenderness, warmth, and compassion.

Then sense your crown centre, at the top of your head. This is the heaven centre, where you are oriented toward the infinite.

Sense how these three centres line up in a vertical column of bodily presence.

2. Acknowledge Your Separation from Love

Then turn your attention toward the way in which you feel cut off from the presence of love in your life right now and let yourself acknowledge that. Think of the relationship you are in and the situation that is causing your feelings of fear, grief, and anger. Then take a moment to see how the lack of love feels in your body. Perhaps it appears as an emptiness, a hole, a deadness, a burning, stabbing, or heavy pain. Let yourself feel that directly. This is important because feeling the absence of love helps activate your longing for it. Stay close to the bodily felt experience as much as possible, without letting your mind manufacture a whole story about it.

3. Feel the Energy of Your Longing

Once you sense your separation from love, an impulse to do something to fix it may arise. After all, we have all developed strategies for defending or winning love, to ease this feeling of separation. We may complain, accuse, attack demand, sulk, or withdraw, hoping others will come after us. If any of these impulses arises right now, just notice it and come back to simply feeling the separation from love, without attempting to do anything about it.

While paying attention to the sense of separation, see if you can notice any longing to feel more connected to love. Let yourself acknowledge how much you want to experience pure love, how much you want to be seen, understood, appreciated, and accepted - in short, to be held in love, to be loved as you are. You could try saying one or more phrases gently to yourself while experiencing how they're true for you, such as: "I want to feel loved," "I want to feel held in love," "I want to know that I am loved," "I want to let love in." See how it affects you to state your wish in words while feeling this truth.

Now let yourself open to the pure energy of this wish or longing, without focusing on trying to get anything from anybody in particular. Feel the energy contained in the longing and let your attention rest in this bodily feeling. Sense the natural desire of the heart to abide in great love. This longing is sacred because it is an entry into truth, the truth of your heart as an open channel through which love naturally wants to flow.

4. Open the Heart and Crown Centres

See if you can feel the longing in your heart centre, in the middle of your chest. Let the whole area be filled with the energy of your longing. Let yourself enter deeper and deeper into that feeling. As the energy of the longing stirs, notice any way your heart seems to open or come alive. Also let your crown centre, at the top of your head, become soft and receptive. Feel this receptive openness in both your heart and crown centres.

If you have trouble feeling your heart centre, breathe gently into it. As you breathe and tune into your heart, you may begin to sense it as an open, energized space. You can put your hands over the centre of your chest while thinking of something or someone you deeply appreciate.

If you have trouble feeling your crown centre, sense the space directly above it and the connection between that space and the top of your head.

5. Let Yourself Receive

Notice how there is, contained in your longing, a desire to receive love. Feel and acknowledge that yes to receiving. What that yes is essentially saying, is, "I want to let love enter me."

As you experience that openness to receiving, then look and see: Is there any presence of love at hand right now? Don't think about it or look too hard. Rather, sense this very softly, very subtly: Is the presence of love available right now, is it anywhere at hand? Don't imagine or fabricate anything with your mind. Don't make it up. Simply experience what's there.

If there is some sense of warmth or love at hand, let it enter you. Don't try to make anything happen. Let your body be totally receptive; let your pores drink in the warmth that's there. Feel the cells of your body bathing in the presence of love.

Notice how the presence of love is not something located in only one spot. It is more like a gentle breeze softly holding, surrounding, or permeating you. Let yourself be held in the space of great love and see what that feels like. To whatever extent any sense of openness, warmth, or tenderness is there, see how it feels to let it move through or fill your body.

Give yourself plenty of time to be with whatever you're experiencing. The presence of absolute love might feel like being infused with warmth, or surrounded by a soft plasma, or held in a gentle embrace. It might feel like floating in a pool of warm water or simply like total relaxation and stillness.

You might find that your mind resists, or you become distracted by your thoughts, or you may not trust what is happening. You may think that you're making the whole thing up. Just notice these mental games without struggling with them. Remember that the ego has made a habit of resisting love because it is afraid of melting. It doesn't trust that if it lets down its defences, love could just be there in a reliable way. So, if you encounter any resistance in this process, hold it in a kind and gentle way.

6. Let Yourself Melt and Let Love Hold You

Feeling the presence of love, let yourself relax and melt into it. Instead of having to hold yourself up, let yourself be held by love instead. Soften the boundaries of your body and feel what it feels like to melt into this warmth. Notice the effect it has on your body and stay present to this subtle feeling.

Can you feel love as a gentle presence that holds and enfolds you, allowing you to relax and let go? You don't have to hold yourself up. Let love be your ground.

Dealing with Jealous Thoughts

O jealousy! thou magnifier of trifles - Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller

When you find yourself talking yourself into a jealous rage, stand back, take a deep breath and ask yourself what evidence you have for your thoughts. When you come up with an answer, question it to see whether your evidence is real or simply your distorted perception - for example, "She was looking at him and he looked at her, I'm sure she wants to have a relationship with him and is trying to get him off me." First, you ask yourself what evidence you have to support your thoughts. Then challenge your destructive thoughts with alternatives such as, "Yes, she did look at my boyfriend but then many people do, and I have no evidence to suggest she wants a relationship. This is only my jealousy trying to take control - if I go on this way, I will destroy the relationship we have."

Remember that jealous feelings are different from jealous behaviours. Just as there is a difference between feeling angry and acting in a hostile way, there is a difference between feeling jealous and acting on your jealousy. It's important to realize that your relationship is more likely to be jeopardized by your jealous behaviour - such as continual accusations, reassurance-seeking, pouting, and acting-out. Stop and say to yourself, "I know that I am feeling jealous, but I don't have to act on it."

Have the courage to face whatever is true. If there is truth to what you fear is happening, then create a plan to confront the problem with honesty. If there is no truth to your fears, then commit to yourself to run a different "story" in your mind each time those fears come up. At those times, remind yourself that you are only making up stories that aren't true.

Ask friends not to agree with you. My belief is that the worst thing a friend can do is to meet you at the level of your jealousy. Friends who agree with you don't help you to heal. They keep you stuck at that level. If you need to talk with someone, then first ask that person to listen and not go there. Or better yet, call someone you know won't go there. It can feel really nice to have someone bolster you up and tell you that you're right and deserve better. But it doesn't clear the emotion. You need to be listened to so that you can move beyond the feelings, not so that you can feel vindicated.

In an emergency: If there are others present, look at the other people in the room who are not involved in the situation and not even aware of it and start to wonder what they might be thinking about, as a way of taking your mind off the situation.

Keep a Jealousy Journal

Jealousy is the dragon in paradise; the hell of heaven; and the most bitter of the emotions because associated with the sweetest - A.R. Orage

Try identifying situations when you find yourself feeling jealous and write down for yourself:

1. When the feelings and jealous thoughts arise.
2. What actual thoughts go through your head?
3. (a) What you might say to yourself (b) What you might do in terms of actions - to prevent the jealous thought from taking over and to retain your dignity.

You might for example:

- **Accept** that your jealousy has nothing to do with your partner but everything to do with how you feel about yourself. Your partner stays with you because he loves you and wants to be with you.
- **List** all your good qualities - the harder you find this exercise the harder you need to work at it. Write a list of your positive qualities and achievements and read it through on a daily basis, or when you are feeling insecure, to remind yourself that you do have worth.
- **Remind** yourself of those positive qualities that you do have and that these are not dependent on the approval or interest of the other person.

Remember There Is No Way You Can Prevent Cheating

Jealousy would be far less torturous if we understood that love is a passion entirely unrelated to our merits - Paul Eldridge

Become aware and accept the fact that whether you trust the person you are with or not, whether you question his actions or not, and whether you “spy” on him has no positive effect on his behaviour and faithfulness. If a man or a woman wants to cheat, he / she will find a way to cheat, and there is nothing you can do to prevent it. So, stop it!

Stop assuming the worst about him. Stop wondering where he is and what he is doing at any given moment! Assume the best about your partner and his faithfulness to you until and unless you have real reasons to believe otherwise.

Keep in mind that the only reason, the only thing that keeps your partner around you is his desire to be with you. Nothing else keeps either of you near each other. And his desire to be with you comes NOT from your pressure, your being jealous or your attempts to convince him to be faithful to you, but from your other qualities that make you attractive and desirable.

Your efforts to keep your partner have no positive effect on your relationship. If anything, it might put excess pressure on that person – something that no one enjoys and tolerates for very long. Remember that the best “leash” is the loose one or even better – a total absence thereof.

Remind yourself that by getting rid of jealousy, you will exhibit some of the most attractive qualities in you: your common sense, your confidence in yourself and in your ability to attract the other person and maintain his exclusive romantic interest in you, your value as a wise person, and your confidence in your partner’s feelings. Don’t miss out on such an easy way to demonstrate those great qualities by rising far above jealousy.

Recognize That Uncertainty Is Part of Every Relationship

Trifles light as air. Are to the jealous confirmations strong. As proofs of holy writ - William Shakespeare, Othello

Like many worries, jealousy seeks certainty. “I want to know for sure that he isn’t interested in her”. Or, “I want to know for sure that we won’t break up”. Ironically, some people will even precipitate a crisis in order to get the certainty. “I’ll break off with her before she breaks off with me!”

Remember, there is no insurance policy or collection agency for any relationship and jealousy certainly won’t help make it more stable. Whether you are casually dating someone or are married, whether you have been together for one month or twenty years, it’s possible that your relationship will end at any time for a hundred possible reasons. I do not want to sound negative, but I do want you to be aware of the reality of all relationships. Indeed, uncertainty is a reality of life.

What does this mean to you? This means that you should enjoy and appreciate your relationships as long as they last but at the same time accept and embrace the possibility that any such relationship might be over one day. And if it is, it will be tough, but you will get over it. It will not be the end of the world for you.

Your duty is being the best you can be in a relationship that you want to have. The rest is NOT up to you. The rest depends on your partner and you have no control over it, and whatever you have no control over, should not concern you or be a cause of your anxieties.

Stop trying to figure it out. Trying to “figure out why” can keep you stuck. “Why am I so jealous? Why am I so envious? Why can’t I be more like that guy who’s never jealous?” Those questions don’t serve the situation. Those questions are just your ego. Your ego doesn’t want you to face the actual feeling because it’s so unbearably uncomfortable. So, it creates a smoke screen by asking why. This might make you feel even worse, but at least you’re not having to experience the feeling. Feeling bad is sometimes easier than feeling uncomfortable.

Remember to Focus on Where You Want to Be

Certainly, you should learn from the past and deal with what’s real. Look at how your behaviour has affected past relationships negatively and use that information to help you behave better. You may soon discover that your jealous outbursts are the real cause of your troubled love life. Realize that getting upset for no reason won't help your situation. Focus on what is happening, not what you think is happening, otherwise you may end up having difficulty separating fact from fiction. Don't let your imagination go mad in constructing rivals for your partner’s affections – deal with the reality. Remind yourself of similar situations when you have managed to stay in control and try to do again what you did then.

But, above all, don’t forget the power of intent. Remember that this is not where you want to be. State out loud, even in your jealousy, “I ultimately want to rejoice in the love I give and receive. I want to be clear and happy. I want to celebrate the abundance of everything in my life.” Just knowing that you want this will start you on your way, even if you’re not there yet.

Focus on Mastery. Whatever career path you’re on, you have the choice to become a master. Not necessarily of the career or the craft or the art. But of you. That’s what keeps me going. If you want to reach, inspire, help, encourage, heal in any way, most likely it’s going to require that you face your own demons in that process. If jealousy comes up, then it’s a teacher for you. That’s all. Let it be. That’s where your biggest treasures will be.

Once you free yourself of jealousy, you will come across as a more confident person. Your partner might be used to seeing more jealousy in the opposite sex and might mistake your new non-jealous nature for not caring. If that’s the case, you should remind your partner that the reason you are not jealous is because you do care but you also have trust, and you realize that jealousy will not prevent any problems if they are bound to happen.

As you are successfully fighting jealousy, you will start experiencing tremendous freedom – the freedom to enjoy your love life without the taxing pain of jealousy and insecurity and the pleasure of giving your partner a better, wiser, stronger, and happier you!

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