

Jealousy

Jealousy is a complex emotion that encompasses feelings ranging from suspicion to rage to fear to humiliation. It strikes people of all ages, genders, and sexual orientations, and is most typically aroused when a person perceives a threat to a valued relationship from a third party. The threat may be real or imagined.

Why we feel jealous

Jealousy is often thought of in the context of romantic relationships: a boyfriend who forbids his girlfriend from talking to other men, for instance, or a person who cannot stand to see her old flame post pictures with a new partner on Facebook. Nevertheless, the feeling can occur in almost every type of human relationship—from siblings competing for parental attention to employees trying to impress a respected boss.

Although jealousy is a painful emotional experience, evolutionary psychologists regard it not as an emotion to be suppressed but as one to heed—as a signal or a wake-up call that a valued relationship is in danger and that steps need to be taken to regain the affection of a mate or friend. As a result, jealousy is seen as a necessary emotion, because it preserves social bonds and motivates people to engage in behaviours that maintain important relationships.

How to deal with jealousy

Valuable though it can be, jealousy also has the potential to fuel damaging behaviour. It can compel someone to obsessively monitor another's communication, relationships, and whereabouts; attempt to lower their self-confidence; or even behave violently.

Even though it may feel taboo, simply acknowledging jealousy's presence can both help ward it off in the future and strengthen a relationship in the present. Exploring the emotions that underpin jealousy can inspire self-reflection that may help to develop internal coping skills. Being honest with the other party about jealous feelings can spur productive conversations about what the relationship might be missing and how to repair the bond.

Resources:

Managing Jealousy - Leaflet

What your jealous feelings are telling you and what you should do about it

<https://www.nbcnews.com/better/lifestyle/what-your-jealous-feelings-are-telling-you-what-you-should-ncna1002411>

12 Ways to let go of jealousy

<https://www.healthline.com/health/how-to-not-be-jealous>