



## Jealousy

### **6 Essential Steps to Keep Jealousy from Ruining Your Relationship!**



Jealousy is a powerful and painful emotion. It is one of the most negative emotions and can end almost any relationship. If left untreated it can create a permanent wedge between you and your partner, while negatively affecting future relationships. Jealousy basically arises from insecurity within oneself and not trusting your partner.

Envy and jealousy are similar, but jealousy involves a sense of possessiveness and entitlement. A jealous person holds on tightly to what they already have- usually their romantic partner- to keep others from taking this person away. An envious person covets what another person possesses – their possessions, positions, privileges or who they are as a person (their looks). When envy and jealousy get out of control, it can be highly destructive.

Jealousy in a relationship can be healed. How a couple deals with jealousy and other conflicts is vital to their success.

**Below are six key steps to control your jealous habits:**

#### **Share your feelings**

Openly share your feelings about being insecure or uncertain in your relationship. Speak from your heart, without justifying your actions, but avoid being accusing or confrontational. It is OK to talk about your concerns, your doubts and your desires. View this time of tension as an opportunity for open communication and expansion of understanding for both partners.

#### **Tame your imagination**

It is amazing that something that starts off in our imagination can soon spark out of control and cause such devastating damage. Imagination grows jealousy – like seeds, fertilizer, sun and water grow your garden. Recognize the negative stories and constant self talk. Don't blow things out of proportion by going over them time and again in your mind. Just imagine instead, being able to do all of the things that make you happy instead of having all those negative thoughts and emotions running around inside your head. Imagine not having to obsess and worry over every little thing.

#### **Do a reality check**

Take a good look at those things that trigger your jealousy and ask yourself how realistic the threat is. Carefully think through the circus-like situations you have imagined about your partner and what real evidence you have to validate them. Jealousy knows no rational thinking and it has no rhyme or reason. Do a reality check by assessing your obsessive thoughts with what you actually know or have seen. Cancel thoughts of conspiracy and replace them with real facts.

#### **Work on self improvement**

Insecurity is a major factor why people get jealous of their partner. Sometime even a small disagreement can spark a massive fight just because of jealous. If your own insecurity or low self-image makes you think badly of yourself, you often begin to wonder what your significant other sees in you. That is when you start to question your partner, interrogating every move he or she makes, and causing yourself to be frozen with fear that they

will find someone better. It is imperative to work on improving your self as an individual in order to be a whole and equal partner in your relationship. Choose a stress-reducing lifestyle. Get involved in groups and activities that make you feel good about yourself. Focus on your strengths. And by all means, have more than one friend.

### **Let go of the past**

Constantly going over negative events of the past robs you of the present and makes you feel bad. It is important to trust and have complete faith in your partner to prevent jealous feelings toward them. Letting go of the past is the first step. See your partner and each day as a fresh start and opportunity to grow together, as opposed to rehashing and reliving your past experiences of doubt and despair.

### **Realize jealousy is destructive**

Jealousy is an emotion that can torment the one you care most about and can become somewhat of an addiction. The disregard that you put on that person through your jealous insecurities is as real to them as your feelings of being trapped in your own prison of doubt. Acknowledge that was you most fear – your partner leaving you – is exactly what you are perpetuating with your destructive and possessive patterns. Consider the consequences of your piercing insecurities. Realize jealousy is not only destructive, but a very lonely place to be.

### **How do I handle a jealous partner?**

Having a jealous partner can be exhausting. If you are the “innocent” partner in the relationship, you know there is only so much possessiveness, control and questioning you can take. There are things you can do to encourage a healthier relationship. Here are a few tips:

- Listen to your partner with new ears to hear all of their concerns.
- If you know certain behaviors trigger your partner’s jealousy, change them if you can.
- Point out what you most appreciate about him or her, and offer reassurance you are committed to the relationship.
- Tell your partner what you most want in your relationship. Don’t just say, “I want you to stop being jealous!”

Keep in mind it takes both people to make a great relationship but if your partner isn’t willing to change or get help, you can make changes in yourself that will greatly impact your life for the better. If you feel stuck in a relationship where jealousy rules and reigns, you can get help and support - contact Centerstone at (615) 460-HELP (4357).

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#### **About Centerstone**

Centerstone ([www.centerstone.org](http://www.centerstone.org)), a not-for-profit organization, is the largest behavioral healthcare provider in Tennessee and the ninth largest in the nation. Serving the community for more than fifty years, Centerstone provides a full range of behavioral health and related educational services to individuals of all ages and their families. Centerstone also conducts research that seeks to identify, treat and eliminate mental illness. Centerstone provides services to more than 50,000 individuals annually. Children, adolescents, adults, seniors, and families all receive help from a multitude of different programs in more than 75 facilities and 150 partnership locations throughout the region. Centerstone is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). For more information about Centerstone, please call toll free at (888) 291-4357.

#### **About Susan Gillpatrick, MEd, LPC, CTS**

Susan Gillpatrick, Centerstone Crisis Management Specialist, primarily works in the field with clients in critical incident response situations, and in Centerstone’s wellness trainings and presentations. She is also responsible for planning and implementing marketing and growth strategies for Centerstone’s Crisis Management Strategies.

In recent years, Ms. Gillpatrick worked for the Shelby County Government Victims Assistance Center in Memphis. There, she co-developed a model program for the state of Tennessee entitled, “Homicide Response.” Her work in this area received the 2000 Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties.

Ms. Gillpatrick is a Licensed Professional Counselor, Certified Trauma Specialist, Certified Workplace Conflict Mediator, and Mental Health Service Provider in the state of Tennessee and a National Certified Counselor. She is also a member the American Counseling Association, the Association of Traumatic Stress Specialists, the Tennessee Mental Health Counseling Association, and the Middle Tennessee Employee Assistance Professionals Association. She is a frequent presenter at local and national conferences, and has had numerous articles published. She received her Master of Education degree in Human Development Counseling from Peabody College at Vanderbilt University.