

Romantic jealousy in men and women



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The nature of people is such that they always want to be in a relationship with a partner. However, as people find themselves “ inside” the relationship, many questions arise. In the moment that we see our partner talking and being friendly to a person of the other sex we start to feel uncomfortable. Many questions come to our mind like: “ Who is that person?”, “ What are they talking about?”, “ What is their relationship?” We all have experienced similar situations at some moment in our lives. A portion of jealousy is always within love. The person close to our partner is perceived as a rival and this makes us jealous. However, everyone observe the situation differently and the reactions vary too. Jealousy is a difficult term to be explained. It has its own sources where it comes from and a different behavior from man and woman and by trying to manage it people can avoid destroying their relationships. On the contrary jealousy can encourage partners to be glad about having each other and to strengthen love and emotions.

What jealousy is

As mentioned above it is not easy to give a sharp and single definition for jealousy. Jealousy is so complex and includes a variety of emotions such as anger, sadness, fear, and pain or thoughts such as blame, worry, comparison with the rival. As a result of these feelings and thoughts, diverse behaviors are manifested. Everyone can have a certain definition about jealousy and there could always be arguments about the best one.

According to the writer of the article “ Jealousy and Partner’s Perceived Motives for Attraction to a Rival” Gregory L. White jealousy is defined as:

“ a complex of thoughts, feelings, and actions which follow threats to self-esteem and/or threats to the existence or quality of the relationship, when those threats are generated by the perception of a real or potential attraction between one’s partner and a (perhaps imaginary) rival.”

The self-esteem declines and the appreciation of the self is low. What causes this, is a misperception or not of the situation when a rival comes close to the partner. Anxiety rises and hundreds of thoughts are fighting in peoples’ minds.

In many situations, jealousy is not distinguished from envy. They do have some elements in common but they differ in many others. Both are emotions that make us feel unsecured, angry, anxious and worried with ourselves. When people are feeling envy or jealous, at that moment both seem the same and can be difficultly distinguishable. However there are strong distinctions between them. People feel jealous when they are afraid of losing something valuable and important for them. On the other hand envy is

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created when a person wants to have an item that another person has, or wants the other person not to have a certain thing. An important difference stays in the way of perceiving inferiority. In intimate relationships individuals do not consider inferiority or superiority with the partner. This means that individuals in a relationship do not compare themselves with the partner to find who is better than the other. Envy arises exactly for this reason, by measuring how much and what a person has or has not related to the other person.

“ Envy arises in a mere situation of inequality (not rivalry), and has reference to the affection or favor of a third party, no sense of personal injury, but is simply a feeling of inferiority; while jealousy embodies all these things and involves a situation of real rivalry.” (Arnold L. Gesell, Jealousy, p. 467)

Factors arising jealousy

After discussing about what jealousy and envy are we can continue in the factors creating jealousy. There are many factors that can influence the feeling of jealousy. According to James Park in his article “ Romantic Jealousy: Cause and Prevention” he finds the three factors to be the roots of arising jealousy in romantic relationships “ comparison, competition and the fear of being replaced”.

In my opinion, in the center of every reason and factor stands insecurity. This is the answer to the “ Why everything starts”. However insecurity should come from somewhere. There must exist some situations, real or imagined, to provoke such a feeling. One of the partners must have had a “ doubtful behavior” in the eyes of the other partner. From the first moment

that people understand what intimate relationships are and later have their own they know that anyone can have a relationship with anyone. One's partner could have been a couple with any other person. But there must be a reason if an individual starts to feel insecure for the relationship. This reason can be real or imagined it does not matter. The importance is to exist one and from the moment of creation the "virus" is inside the mind and heart. Then comparison, competition and fear of being replaced are created. This happens only when individuals love and care about their partner, otherwise insecurity and latter jealousy do not exist.

The closer people become with the partners, the more they lose by breaking up. Being aware of their own qualities and confident in their attractiveness, insecurities declines. It is true that the world is full of men and women where everyone can find the other missing part of the heart. However, this does not necessarily mean that individuals should compare themselves with every person walking by their side. In the mind of everyone exist some "perfect models" that should be imitated but everyone should preserve the distinctiveness of his or her personality. Being at the same time the product and the seller of the product (ourselves) where the best qualities should be advertised, people become self-destructors.

The comparison game puts us to another field, the competition game. An individual starts to give the best in the imaginary competition with the real or created rival. After trying really hard to resemble that blonde woman with the slim body or that handsome man with obvious muscles in his body every person feel more comfortable. Because society has created some ideal models which represent what males and females most like and want, by

looking like those people an individual fill in a better competition position than competitors.

“ If we base our “ desirability” on comparison and competition, we will always be threatened by the possibility that a new model will “ turn the head” of someone we have fascinated for a while” (James Park, Romantic Jealousy: Cause and Prevention). To prevent cases like these, people should show their authentic personality to the partner. If a person remains just him or herself and does not have hidden thoughts and feelings the “ roads” of communication could open and the partner would find it easier to see the distinctive behavior and thoughts of the other. Remaining original and trying not to become someone else different from your true self is really important. This makes possible for each partner to construct the position and show the personality in the relationship. The goal to be reached is becoming irreplaceable in a relationship and giving love in the way that only each person knows. Every individual is one of a kind and has unique feelings, thoughts, and ways of expressing love, jealousy, hate and everything.

Man’s and woman’s reactions because of jealousy

Jealousy is expressed differently from men and women. Many surveys and tests have been made these recent years to measure jealousy. From questionnaires made to married couples or not the results were clear. Gender differences had also divergent responses in the situations producing jealousy. Results of a study where couples were asked to say how they feel about 8 certain situations producing jealousy showed that in total women were more jealous than man. According to the study, a reason why this happens was the lower self-esteem which is related with women’s jealousy.

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When men cheat they perceive it as having sexual relations with another person for a moment in search of the variety or just as an instinct and then everything is forgotten. If they think the same to be done from their partner they do not accept it and feel distressed. Women when cheating are more possible to relate emotionally with the other man while men are not.

Females are aware of the fact that males usually cheat and what they do not want to happen is the emotional relation. On the other hand males can not accept the idea that another person " touched their partner". In a study about the gender differences expressing jealousy it was found that: " Men are more likely than women to report that sexual infidelity would be most distressing and women are sometimes more likely than men to report that emotional infidelity would be most distressing."(Jealousy and Infidelity, 2005). However, many relationships after the cheating of one partner come to an end while others become stronger as the unfaithful partner understands what his or her true love is and appreciates the faithful partner and does anything not to lose him or her.

How to manage and avoid jealousy

Jealousy is not a simple phenomenon that exists in the society for centuries. It is a complex of factors arising from many sources that causes many changes to the intimate relationships. A small portion to the ordinary relationships is pretty normal and healthy. But jealousy is easy to transform to something pathological. This happens when an individual cross the limits by the really frequent arguments with the partner, the paranoiac doubts and the of the mind. Such a behavior destroys the person, the partner and the relationship. In order to control and avoid jealousy we should recognize the

signs of it, realize the normal or abnormal feelings and find the roots where it comes from.

The cognitive perspective emphasizes mental processes of perception. It is exactly why jealousy begins. Because of how people perceive the situation, the threat and the rival, jealousy may develop and later pass through the above mentioned stages. But what people generally cannot do is to recognize it. They consider it as something normal and continue the exaggerated behavior. Or even if they recognize it, they continue by denying the problem and not trying to solve it.

“ Instead of treating this healthy symptom-jealousy-with aspirin (by denying our fears of replacement, trying not to notice our pain), we should correct the possessiveness behind our jealousy” (Park. J). Everyone should find oneself, meaning that should know who he or she is and the role having in the relationship. After understanding the importance of their presence in a relationship and trying to rise the self-esteem things are becoming better. The secret behind everything is trying to become the unique and irreplaceable person everyone is. By trying to communicate with the partner and tell how each person feel he or she comes closer and resolve every misunderstanding coming from the insecurities. Love and jealousy coexist. So if people can admit that they love someone and are loved by him or her too, they can concentrate on strengthening the relationship and the love between them.

Conclusion

Jealousy as a complex of thoughts, feelings and actions influences the behavior of people but by trying to control it, jealousy can bring the positive side to the relationships. When jealousy becomes intense and unreasonable it can cause serious damages to the relationship. But after we realize how it is created and where it comes from it is easier to control it and then think of the problem in a different way. Try to think that partners are not granted for each other and some light feelings of jealousy would awake the relationship. It encourages couples to appreciate each other and to make the partner feel valued. Jealousy intensifies emotions, lights and gives variation to love, makes it stronger and the interactions more passionate.