Analytical essay: jealousy

To William Shakespeare, the bard ofAvon, it was a ' green-eyed monster'. To B. C.

Forbes, it is a ' mental cancer'. In either case, jealousy (or its counterpart, envy) is depicted as a horrible, destructive entity. But is jealousy always harmful? Or can there be benefits to the emotion? I would assert that, depending on the character of the individual, jealousy can have the power to either improve or destroy. Jealousy is a complicated emotion. It is similar to envy in many ways, and often is connected with it. Jealousy is experienced when a person sees a threat to what they have, or even what they want to have.

Think of Shakespeare's famous play, " Othello". The title character goes wild with jealousy when he thinks another man has won his wife's attention. He wants her love all to himself and ends up killing her in a jealous rage, seeing betrayal when there was none. Of course, this is an extreme case of jealousy. Not all situations end in death.

But being jealous of a parent's attention can cause sibling rivalry. Being jealous of a co-worker's promotion can lead to petty backstabbing. Jealousy, rooted in both fear and anger, can have dangerous consequences if not held in check. Jealousy can also be a useful emotion if utilized properly. Being jealous of another person's wealth can give a person renewed drive to succeed in their own business ventures.

Overcoming or even just acknowledging jealousy can give someone personal insight and growth. Healthy competition is not wrong, nor is jealousy if it gives a signal for a person to change something in their life. But on the flip

side, however, jealousy can cause control issues, relationship violence, feelings of inadequacy, stress, and self-doubt. It is reported that 1/3 of all married couples in counselling suffer from some level of jealousy. Left unresolved, these feelings can lead to divorce. Through jealousy, people can lose confidence, trust, and self-esteem, which shows why it is necessary to analyze and overcome these strong emotions.

The best way to handle jealousy is to acknowledge it for what it is. Everyone feels jealousy at some point in their life, but it is how it is handled that gives insight into a person's character. Asking the question, " Why am I jealous?" can lead to personal growth. If jealousy is being based on false beliefs – (think back to Shakespeare's Othello) – then those thoughts need to be changed. If jealousy is harming a relationship, they best thing to do is simply apologize and then talk those feelings out.

Explaining what you feel isn't shameful, but rather a sign of strength. Jealousy, like wrath or pride, is a passionate emotion that everyone will have to face at one point in their life. Whether they acknowledge the emotion for what it is – fear and anger – will determine whether they learn and grow from the emotion, or suffer because of it.