

A Jealous Lover Is A Bad Choice

Part of the problem of relationships that don't work is that many people mistake jealousy for love, which is destructive. Find author Bill Allin at <http://billallin.com>

Love is the condition in which the happiness of another person is essential to your own.... Jealousy is a disease, love is a healthy condition. The immature mind often mistakes one for the other, or assumes that the greater the love the greater the jealousy.

- [Robert Heinlein](#), American writer (1907-1988)

The concept of jealousy may be misunderstood as often and the concept of love. Love itself is confusing because we have so many forms of it that it requires one of the longest explanations in most dictionaries.

Love, like jealousy, is an emotion. Both are basic emotions, ones that are powerful enough to take control of a person to the extent that the person's best interests or the best interests of the loved one may be compromised. If not compromised, at least the best interests of the loved one are altered by being loved as much as by being the object of jealousy.

Let's try to define love in a way that everyone can understand and that helps to avoid confusion. Love is what we give. At its best, love is altruistic, it demands nothing in return. If given love is not appreciated by the receiver, we have unrequited love. But the love is still given by one person, whether or not it is returned by the other. Those who love for real don't quit.

Jealousy, on the other hand, is not giving in nature, but taking. Jealousy is selfish. Jealousy measures what is coming in to a person from another. What is incoming may be compared with what is outflowing, but this comparison is not necessarily a part of jealousy.

Jealousy is about "me," about "what I'm getting," about "what belongs to me." Jealousy, therefore, may be about objects as much as about people. A man may be jealous of his car, not wanting others to drive it, to touch it, maybe not to do anything but admire it. The admiration is necessary because that is the part of the concept that is incoming where objects are concerned. The objects themselves can't give back whatever the possessor wants, whereas an admirer can. The jealous lover expects a return directly from the other person.

Another word for love might be generosity. The Christian Bible now often translates the word as used in the King James version as "charity" into "love." Wherever and however these words are used, their contexts have similarities.

Love is about giving. Jealousy is about taking, no matter whether what the jealous person wants to take or receive is deserved or not. Love is outgoing. Jealousy is incoming. A loving person cares more about the person she loves than about herself. A jealous person cares more about what he gets (gender switch noted, though not intended to make a specific point) than about what he gives or about whether or not what he wants is deserved, needed or even necessary.

Now let's put the two together and watch the sparks fly. When two people supposedly love each other, is a little jealousy a healthy thing? That's a little like the hostess taking an extra piece of dessert, the last one on the plate, after everyone has been served, without asking if anyone else would like it after finishing their own piece, because she was the one who made the dessert. In a social context, that's greediness. Jealousy is a form of greediness.

If a person has a jealous lover, that may give some satisfaction to the person, but only because of the attention received because of the jealousy. The jealous person demonstrates selfishness and attention to the other, not love. Someone who gives love to a sufficient degree will not be jealous because he or she will know that the object of the affection has received his or her best.

A person who gives all the love of which he or she is capable and still loses the lover to another had a relationship with the wrong person.

We have nearly seven billion people on our planet today. To believe that "There is only one person for me" is not just naivety, it's self deception. Finding the "love of your life" is a matter of taking a large survey and continuing to look until that person shows up. Along the way, the seeker must give of himself or herself to many people in order to test their response.

My wife claims that she knew that I was the man she wanted to marry after our first meeting. I believe I had a good inkling before I even met her, when I had only read a letter she had written. Was that love at first sight? Or read? No, we had both done enough searching over the years to know that we had found a very special person, one who could and would give without demanding a certain minimum in return.

One of the tests for a potential mate should be a past history of jealousy or of love. A jealous person treats the other like a chattel, one that is not too smart at that. One that is prepared to be "owned." When a jealous person has had a mate for a long period of time, he takes the other for granted so much that he may even leave the relationship or cheat on her because she is so stupid, or so he perceives. It's not so much a matter of growing apart from each other as losing respect for each other, or one (the jealous one) losing respect for the other.

People who are capable of jealousy should come with warning labels. They don't. On the other hand, it would be dishonest and harmful to test the "jealousy gene" of a new lover by giving attention to still another. That's why learning about the past history of the potential new lover is important. In general, people are today what they have been in the past.

If you want to be sure that you are never the jealous one, learn about love. Learn about what love is, how to give it, how to show it, and how to recognize it when it is shown by someone else. Often jealous people don't really know what love is because they may not have experienced it, even within their own families.

A jealous person can change, but it's not an easy task to undertake to teach a jealous lover how to be a real lover. It takes years and more patience than most people can afford.

Why is love, arguably the most important emotion we have, a subject we don't teach in schools? We have so many problems that relate somehow to love, yet we do nothing about teaching it to children. We literally have some children growing up believing that love is a business relationship on a personal level.

Business relationships eventually end. Love doesn't. Anyone who believes that love can end likely does not have a clear idea about what love really is.

Now you know what to look for. Now you know what to give. Learn how.

Bill Allin

Turning It Around: Causes and Cures for Today's Epidemic Social Problems, a guidebook for parents and teachers who want to grow children who know about love, how to recognize it from others and how to give it themselves. Most kids learn this from birth, but many kids get it beaten out of them as they grow, through bad experiences.

Learn more at <http://billallin.com>

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