

Dealing with jealousy in a relationship ^[1]

Dear Alice,

I've been dating the same girl for about two years now, and the only problem we have in our relationship is jealousy, both from her and myself. We both deal with it differently. I actually don't mind when she gets jealous and take it as a type of re-assurance that she still wants to be with me, while she reacts in a much different way and says that I don't trust her or something similar to that, so how do I fix this? I've tried keeping any jealous thoughts I had to myself, but found the "feeling" that yielded seemed worse than having one of our arguments and in the end I found myself unable to keep my mouth shut. Any advice is appreciated :D

— A frustrated Boyfriend...

Answer

Dear A frustrated Boyfriend... ,

Ahhh, jealousy. This question has affected humankind for eons. Jealousy is a universal emotion in humans and has been observed in babies as young as five to six months and in every culture around the world. Even though this emotion is so common, many people find it difficult to deal with and fully resolve.

It sounds like you are able to handle your girlfriend's jealousy quite well, almost regarding it as flattery since it shows her desire to be with you. Since she doesn't react the same way, you may need to change your expectations of the relationship when it comes to her expressions of jealousy. You might start by closely examining the situations where you feel jealous. Is it usually due to the way she is acting, or is it affected by the actions of the other person? How does the interaction make you feel about yourself — insecure, threatened, or weak? Does your girlfriend feel jealous under the same types of situations or different situations? What would be the ideal way for her to react to your jealousy? When you feel jealous, are you looking for her to reassure you that she's only got eyes for you? Or are you honestly concerned about her interest in others?

Communication style can also determine whether a discussion turns into an argument. Think about how and when you express your jealous thoughts — immediately, or after you've cooled down? In front of others or behind closed doors? Do you really listen to each other when either of

you is speaking or are you each busy thinking of the next way to refute the argument? Clear and honest communication from both partners is essential in establishing and maintaining a healthy relationship. After both of you have had time to think things over, you two can discuss these points and create strategies of dealing with the green-eyed jealousy monster in a healthy and effective way the next time it shows up. Expressing your feelings is important, however, both partners need to make an effort to communicate their feelings in a way that is respectful and fair. If things still don't improve after that, you may consider meeting with a relationship counselor who may assist both of you to work through the issue.

Chances are that jealousy will always be present at some point in a relationship, but it does not always have to result in problems. Together the two of you can work, patiently and progressively, to find the best mutual solution.

Good luck,

Alice!

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