

GREEN EYES INTO THE SOUL

Look inside your envy and jealousy to uncover what's important to you



EVERY MONDAY NIGHT YOU go to the gym and see the same guy. He's got the kind of physique that graces magazine covers like this one. You're envious because you lack what he has, and you may either wish you had that physique or wish he didn't. Now, Mr. Cover Model is talking to your girl. No longer are you merely envious; you're jealous because this guy has become your rival for your partner's affection, making you fear that she might leave you for him.

"Envy and jealousy are most likely to be felt when comparisons are made in domains that are especially important to how we define ourselves," says W. Gerrod Parrott, PhD, in *The Psychology of Jealousy and Envy*. The two feelings can be experienced differently, and each lends insight to what's important to you.

GREEN-EYED ALTER EGOS

Social comparison influences how we evaluate our position in life. When we compare ourselves to others and feel we don't measure up, it heightens our awareness of our own shortcomings and envy can result. Typically this is felt as inferiority, longing or ill-will toward the envied person.

While envy focuses on a rival's possessions and characteristics, with you performing the social comparison, jealousy involves a rival's relationship with

Envious or Jealous?

Use these points to determine what you're really feeling.

» YOU'RE FEELING ENVIOUS IF...

- You feel inferior
- You're privately ashamed of yourself
- You feel that life is treating you unfairly
- You're frustrated or bitter
- You want what another has and are embarrassed to admit it
- You denied to yourself these feelings at first.

Bottom Line: Use these feelings as motivation to improve yourself.

» YOU'RE FEELING JEALOUS IF...

- You're afraid of losing something important to you
- You feel rejected
- You're feeling suspicious or betrayed
- You doubt yourself
- You're uncertain about the situation
- You're feeling degraded and insecure
- You're self-conscious.

Bottom Line: The above feelings are intense and consume you.

Adapted from Parrott, W.G. "The Emotional Experiences of Envy and Jealousy" in *The Psychology of Jealousy & Envy*. New York and London: Guilford Press, 1991.

See references on page 243.

someone important to you, with you presuming that person is making the comparison. During jealous episodes you may wonder what your partner sees in your rival. But during an envious episode you know what's superior about the rival.

TINTED INSIGHT

Being able to recognize these emotions could help you determine what you really care about. One thing is for certain: The higher the relevance to important areas

in your life, the more likely you are to experience these emotions.

Using our gym scenario, the fact that you're envious of Mr. Cover Model's physique means that looking great is important to you. As for him hitting on your girl, you may not have realized how much you really care for her. So make this a win-win situation — renew your commitment to not only build a better body but also build a better relationship with your partner. **M&F**

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