



WHEN ENVY GETS YOU DOWN



Whenever a friend succeeds, a little something inside me dies - Gore Vidal

by PIERRETTE DESROSIERS, M. Ps.,
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"Why does my brother act like this? Why does he make fun of me in public? Why does he lie to my father about me and put me down in front of him? Why can't he acknowledge any of my accomplishments? Do you think that he envies me?" Sylvain asks. "Yes, it is very likely that your brother is envious..."

Whether you are after money, status, power, recognition or success, the mere fact of wanting something really bad can bring out unpleasant feelings such as anger, frustration, self-pity, spite or vindictiveness. Nobody wants to admit to envy; instead we speak ill of others, seek vengeance, put others down, idealize them or want to get ahead of them.

Envy can however bring something positive. It can help us accomplish things while at the same time reminding us of our limits, our abilities and our resources.

Envy is an emotion to be ashamed of, but that we all feel at some point or another, and it is an emotion difficult to identify. Me? Envious? No way! Even as far back as biblical times they said: "Thou shall not covet that which belongs to your neighbour, your neighbour's wife nor his home, his land, his servant, his cow nor his donkey." And we could add his tractor, his quota and his purebred stock. Envy of the neighbours have can cost some farmers a lot. It leads to excess and some of them end up paying the price.

Why do we envy others? We envy them for having what we perceive as being necessary to our happiness. Paradoxically, the more we crave our neighbour's possessions, the unhappier we are. Because we envy others so much, we no longer see all that we have. We can no longer see life in a positive light. Our ability to be aware of and to appreciate what we have is a determining factor in our happiness. Like a deadly poison, the more we envy, the more it intoxicates us because there will always be someone somewhere who is better looking, richer, smarter, more popular, more successful than we are or who owns a more profitable company.

If we want to be happy, we have to stop wanting unrealistic things or things that are too expensive for us. We have to bring our ideal down to a level that is accessible and, above all, we must remember that the neighbour is not necessarily happier because he owns more than we do. He probably envies someone just as much as we envy him...



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To those who may be a source of envy because of their success as a couple, a family or in business or even just because they seem to be happy, remember that life is a lot like *Oka* cheese: it can be a real delicacy for some but turn others' stomachs. So are you the kind of person who enjoys the taste of their own cheese or noses around the neighbour's?

Comments or suggestions? Please contact Pierrette Desrosiers.

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