

relationships

Jealousy as a Path to Selfhood

by Yehuda Tagar

We must be equipped for this, we must be inwardly equipped for what it takes to do the journey of our lives. The equipment must be there like the blessed oxygen is in the air, even if we have to get almost choked at first, to find it.

— Anonymous

I always knew jealousy to be one of the toughest of emotions: the most sticky, stubborn, obnoxious of all of them. The one that kills.

All the way back to my early teens – this has always been the one too hard to crack. And it has not changed much over the years. Whenever the alarm bells of jealousy approached my alert ears – the heavy oak doors slammed, the bridge-gates fell, my inner castle cutting off from the outer world, retreating into total disengagement. This used to be my way of not-dealing with it: avoidance. Not better or worse than other ways of not-dealing with it: violence, destruction of love, blaming, resentment. Not dealing with emotions means inevitably letting them run the inner show. For either we own our emotions, or they own us. Especially jealousy.

It did not go away, of course. Only its manifestations in me kept changing. In time I stopped avoiding it and started to listen to what it had to tell me. It was to be a long road to transformation. It kept appearing, becoming increasingly familiar. At times unbearable, or debilitating, or like a cold inner knife stab. At times I could even bitterly feel a perverse sort of appreciation of its raw, primitive inner power, although I did not understand it. It became a part of me – I sort of learned to live with it, to survive. But I had not cracked it yet, let alone transformed it, and I knew I hadn't. It was human, pretty normal, and it was



Photo: Patrick Horton

sort of OK – until I became a professional counsellor.

Then it was no longer OK to come to the end of my wits and skill when jealousy was tackled with my encouragement within the safe space of a private session. It was not OK to reach the limit of my ability to help a desperate client, when I had to acknowledge, after all was tried and was exhausted – that we have not fathomed it,

cracked it, let alone transformed it. It was an honest, humbling recognition. And it was not OK, professionally or personally. It was the end of what I could do with it at the time.

All this had taken place a while ago, and I knew even then – the limit was in me, not in the method. It had, at the time, reached the limit of my inner development, which is, beyond all knowledge and

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technique, the limit of any professional development as a counsellor.

It is hard to put the finger on the exact moment of change in my inner development which made it eventually possible for me to deal with Jealousy. It had not necessarily taken place through dealing with it directly. I rather tend to think, in retrospect, that what made the change was the gradual taking hold of my inner being, taking possession of my inner potential professionally, artistically, personally, and manifesting it in my active life – which enabled me to address the inner being of my clients on another level, to encourage them to own their own inner being, to feel whole within themselves. For now I know that not feeling whole within oneself is the core issue in the phenomenon of jealousy.

At the right moment the challenge came again to give a hand to a person in dealing with destructive jealousy. My client, (her permission is given for the use of these details here) a woman in her late 20's, intelligent, expressive, assertive and attractive – was at a loss regarding her inability to tackle her jealousy. She ran out of perspective, concepts, skills and wisdom regarding its uncontrollable outbursts in her life. She knew all about it intellectually, she could write a book of rationales explaining it away, analysing it away, only it would not go away. It was there to stay, running more of the show than she could afford at that point in her life, threatening to destroy yet another loving relationship, for no real reason at all. She came to me to ask for help, trusting. I felt honoured, challenged and completely mobilised. I sensed we might be facing a threshold: transforming jealousy.

What followed did become a breakthrough in my work with Jealousy, and, indeed, with a whole range of inter-personal dependencies. I knew for a long time that courageously confronting the experiences of any inner need becomes a pathway leading to one's inner resources. Only this particular pathway required a further confrontation with the self.

Knowing it was a new threshold, I was looking for a new angle, a fresh starting point, a guidance. I suggested to her to take

a pause for a while, and to recall together, the essence of the experience of jealousy, to bring it back to mind, to heart, to the body. The body, the unfailing wisest of all oracles, as in all Philophonetics-Counselling sessions, was to give us our essential clues, the actual inner map for this journey.

I used this pause to see, with the special inner clarity which that moment allowed, how at the heart of a particular moment of jealousy – a part of my inner being was

She entered every corner of that experience: every aspect was remembered in the mind, in the body, the feeling, the sensuality, the imagery; every aspect was visualised, sensed, moved, gestured, dramatised, acted out, observed. We came to know the experience in detail: the contraction felt in body and in mind, the image of the force which created it in her, its character, gesture and sound; we played and re-played the various aspects of that inner drama,



Photo: Simon Bronson

being torn away from me, threatening to leave me empty of myself. This realisation gave me the angle I was looking for, it 'warmed me up' Then I could put my experience to one side, and listen to hers. Had I not been able to 'clear the slate' of my attention from my own content – it would get in the way of being relevant to my client. Having cleared it – I was then tuned for the 'beholding' of her unique content.

On the basis of a common picture of her inner experience which we created and held together following a deep conversational exploration of her story, and freshly aware of the cost of that pattern in her life, she was readily able to define her purpose in working further with it, to form what we term in philophonetics 'the wish'. Her wish was to get rid of jealousy in her life, not to be governed by it any more. She agreed to begin by making a close study of that which she wished to overcome. Then we got started on the philophonetics action phase.

She brought back to life a moment when the experience of jealousy was felt acutely.

and we reversed the roles in it. We used the procedures of Philophonetics Empowerment Sequences, attempting to transform this obnoxious pattern by confrontation. We were inching our way into a broader perspective of the experience of jealousy, and we could see a long road ahead of us, if that was to be the way to continue until the blessed letting go would, one day become possible.

It was a good day's work, and we were about to finish on that point. But there was a sense of disappointment in the air between us, as if we both knew that nothing *really new* had taken place, that something else must have been possible, even there and then, to take the process further.

That wish was eventually expressed, and we decided to give it yet another try, as though in preparation for the practice she could do at home, before the next session. She entered the experience of another, more recent moment of jealousy, and re-lived it, as she had done the one before. Then came the turning point.

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What happened?

She just sat there, beholding the image of her 'worst-scenario' fantasy which was suggesting itself in her mind at that moment, as if it were actually taking place: that the man she loves goes away with another woman, never to come back. She allowed that picture to work on her, encouraged not to turn away from it, not to harden her heart to it, not to close down. She just stayed there, allowing the pain of it to burrow its way into her heart, passed the fear of pain. She allowed the pain of it, maybe for the first time, to accomplish itself within her. She sat there, looking empty of herself and quiet, desolate, at the bottom of her inner well.

There, in that empty, dark, cold, dry inner place – she came to know, more closely than ever before, the *inner quality which she was missing all those years in the depth of her soul, while Jealousy expressed itself as its symptom on the surface.* It was not the lover, nor his love, nor the security of his faithfulness that was missing. *What was missing was the fullness of her own heart, her inner life, her inner light, her inner warmth.* Not as a concept, theory or intention, but as a concrete 'Beholding' of an inner

experience, sensed in the body, resounding in the feeling, magnified in her direct visualisation – she made a conscious connection to the inner quality which before she used to project into the approval from another person. For the first time she could sense that quality within herself, independent of any other. So strong was this imagination, that she could invoke it inside herself, transforming the yearning for it into its own fulfilment. *It was her inner being she was missing: it was her inner being she could therefore call forth.*

That inner being was now filling her with warmth which was visibly glowing through her. She expressed it in movements of life, joy and lightness which took her into a spontaneous dance. She found the sounds which could embody the experience and she spoke them, increasing and spreading the experience to the space around her. Her whole body was speaking. It became an experience of liberation and of becoming for her. For now watching her – it was a profound experience of beauty, of life unfolding in front of me.

For a long moment she celebrated her sense of self, newly found beneath the depth of losing everything. She had collected herself from the compulsory pattern of having her inside invested in the being of another, of having her core being in the possession of someone else. No one after that could ever take her away from her, because *she owned herself within herself.* The fear was gone.

Then she relaxed, fulfilled and content within her own warm, safe space. When she looked at each other and we knew the corner has been turned, the threshold crossed, transformation was taking place. *Jealousy, the experience of the self being torn from oneself, became: jealousy, a path to selfhood.*

When people step open-eyed in the dream-nature of experience, to bring to the light of consciousness without dissecting it with intellectual analysis, they discover a new range of inner choices in the process. Acting upon these new choices – the nature of the original experience changes and transforms. We leave interpretations to the owner of the experience since the dreamer is the only authorised interpreter of his/her own dream. Having shared my experience with you in this form – you must have by now your own experience of it. Make your best of it, make your sense of it, and trust what it means to you.

The transformation of the experience of jealousy into a renewed sense of self became yet another substantiation of one of the fundamental claims of philophonetics:

"Everyone is potentially as rich as the qualities one truly needs". **W**

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