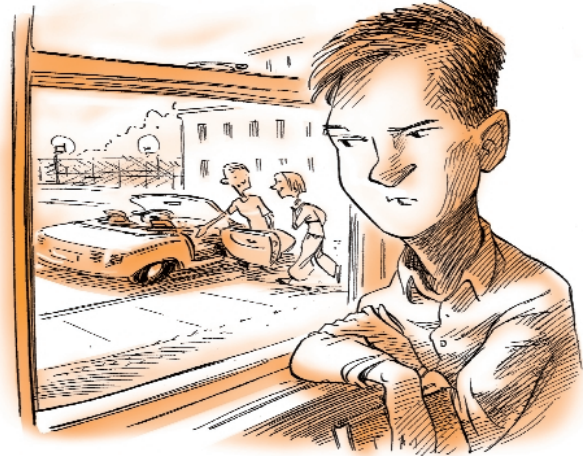




# Envy: Is it hurting or helping you?

- 1 “Sometimes I’m so envious of my friends, I hate them,” says Kimberly. “I was at dinner a month ago, celebrating a friend’s engagement, and I blurted out that 50 percent of marriages end in divorce. I was frustrated about not being in a serious relationship myself. My envy took over, and I became a different person.”
- 2 Kimberly was experiencing envy — the desire for what someone else has and resentment of that person for having it. However, this doesn’t mean she is a bad person. “Everyone experiences envy — it’s a normal human emotion,” explains psychologist Karen Peterson.
- 3 Envy doesn’t have to make us feel powerless and bad about ourselves. Here are some ways to deal with envy and turn the bad into the good.
- 4 Kimberly’s envy at her friend’s engagement caused her to make the unkind remark about divorce. When you feel you want to express your envy in a negative way, stop it. Instead, think about what it is you’re envious of. “When she announced her engagement, it made me feel lonely and insecure,” admits Kimberly. Once you figure out why you’re envious, it’s much easier to eventually grow from the experience. “Envy can be an excellent educator,” states Peterson, “as long as you are open to learning its lessons.”
- 5 Lucy and her friend were both trying to get a better position at their company. Lucy thought she would get the promotion, but things didn’t work out that way. Instead, her friend got the promotion, and Lucy became upset and jealous. Full of envy, she started saying hurtful things about her friend. “That wasn’t like me, but I couldn’t think straight,” she explains. She said mean things about her



friend because not getting the job made her feel bad about herself, explains Peterson. Her reaction didn’t make her feel better, though; it just strengthened her negative feelings. Peterson says it would be better to try to understand why your friend got the promotion and learn from that instead of having negative feelings.

- 6 If you feel that getting what you want — marriage or lots of money — is impossible, remember that every big goal is made up of thousands of tiny steps. “Think of one or two small things you could do each week to help you come closer to your ultimate goal, then do them,” advises author Doreen Virtue. After Kimberly left her friend’s party feeling guilty about her nasty comment, she decided to make some changes in her social life. Making that decision was the first step in getting rid of envy.

## READING TIP

Understanding punctuation can help you understand the meaning of a text. Dashes (—) can be used to give definitions and explanations. Some examples are “. . . envy — the desire for what someone else has” and “. . . what you want — marriage or lots of money — is . . .”