

6 Self-Conscious Emotions

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A question that students often ask when they take a class on the topic of human emotion is, “Is it bad to be jealous?” A partner may have accused them of being too jealous. Or worse—their relationship failed because of their jealousy. In Chapter 2, we spent some time describing the so-called basic emotions. In this chapter we examine more complex emotions that may be of even greater interest to some individuals. These emotions include jealousy, shame, guilt, envy, embarrassment, pride, and hubris—all of which have important interpersonal implications and social and moral functions (Fischer & Manstead, 2008; Niedenthal & Brauer, 2012; Tangney et al., 2007). In fact, the emotions discussed in this chapter—**self-conscious emotions**—occupy a role in motivating and regulating many thoughts, feelings, and behaviors

(Tracy, Robins & Tangney, 2007; Sznycer, 2019). People spend a great deal of time avoiding social disapproval and rejection, which are the circumstances that can cause shame, guilt, or embarrassment to arise. People also manage their social relationships to minimize the extent to which they must control feelings of jealousy or envy.

Defining Self-Conscious Emotions

Compared to the six or so emotions that we have thus far called “basic” emotions, self-conscious emotions 1) emerge later in development because they rely on cognitive abilities that do not develop until after about two years of age, 2) may not have corresponding facial expressions, although some may have universally recognizable gestures that involve the face and body, and 3) most likely evolved for the management of social relationships (see Table 6.1 for a summary). Navigating social relationships, for humans and many animals, includes the tasks of creating and nurturing social bonds (“getting along”) and acquiring social status (“getting ahead”) (Fischer & Manstead, 2008; Tracy & Robins, 2004a). Because the distinctions between the six “basic” emotions and the self-conscious emotions are not focused on nature versus nurture, we sometimes call these emotions “primary” versus “secondary” to refer to the ordering of their emergence over developmental

What are the cognitive achievements required for the experience of self-conscious emotions? These emotions require, first, that a child be capable of distinguishing themselves as physically distinct from others (e.g., as separate from their caretaker; Figure 6.1). A **self-concept**, or having an individual identity, develops in toddlerhood, beginning at about the age of two (Garcia, Hart & Johnson-Ray, 2013). Evidence of a self-concept is indicated by a child’s performance on an experimental task called the rouge test. In the rouge test, a small red dot is covertly put on the child’s nose. The child then is brought to look in a mirror. If the child touches the red dot on themselves or tries to wipe it off, the child is said to have developed a self-concept (Lewis & Brooks-Gunn, 1979). Without some recognition that the person in the mirror is itself, the child would make no effort to remove the dot. Following the development of a self-concept, typically developing children then begin to use pronouns such as “I,” “me,” and “mine” (Courage, Edison, & Howe, 2004). Psychological constructionists take it a step further and argue self-conscious emotions, like other emotions, might never develop if the child isn’t exposed to the concepts of jealousy, shame, guilt, envy, embarrassment, pride, and hubris.

The role of a self-concept in self-conscious emotions is further emphasized by research demonstrating that primates, such as orangutans and chimpanzees, that engage in behaviors indicating that they have some self-recognition reliably display self-conscious emotions such as embarrassment and pride (Hart & Karmel, 1996; Russon & Galdikas, 1993). In contrast, animals (and pets) that lack self-recognition do not appear to experience such emotions (even if their owners might claim that they do).

Table 6.1 A comparison of basic and self-conscious emotions, according to basic emotion theories.

<i>Type of Emotion</i>	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Secondary</i>
Development	During first 9 months	After 18 months
Function	Individual survival	Group living
Cognitive achievement	Perception, categorization	Self-reflection, self-evaluation, social comparison
Universal display	Facial expression	Complex displays for some



Figure 6.1 After the age of two years, children start to have a sense of self that allows them to differentiate themselves from other people. Photo by Migs Reyes.

Two other cognitive achievements arise once a child develops a self-concept: self-evaluation and social comparison. In **self-evaluation**, children begin to internalize standards and norms taught by caretakers and reinforced by society (Lewis, 2000a). They can then judge the extent to which they are conforming to such standards and norms and evaluate themselves and their behavior as either good or bad. In **social comparison**, which emerges more slowly, children evaluate how attractive, shy, intelligent, or athletic they are by contrast to the appearance, personality, intelligence, or athletic prowess of other people. Social comparison is a process that almost all people use to figure out how they feel about themselves, their abilities, and their outcomes (Ruble & Frey, 1991).

In the first section of this chapter, we examine the **self-evaluation** emotions. These emotions, which include guilt, shame, embarrassment, pride, and hubris, are related to evaluations of the self and are based on comparisons to personal standards, as well as moral values (what is right and wrong). In the second section of the chapter, we examine **social comparison** emotions. These emotions, notably envy and jealousy, involve comparisons of the self to qualities, possessions, and outcomes of other individuals. Along the way, we will view these emotions through the lens of functional theories by considering their social consequences, appraisal theories by considering the thoughts that gives rise to them, and basic emotion theories by considering their adaptive value over evolutionary time.

Self-Evaluation Emotions

Self-evaluation emotions emerge from the ability to make good/bad judgments about the self. The emotions of shame, guilt, or embarrassment arise when the self or something about the self is evaluated negatively; pride or hubris arise when the self or something about the self is evaluated positively (Webster, Duvall, Gaines & Smith, 2003).

Guilt and shame

Guilt and shame play an important role in regulating moral behavior (Tangney & Tracy, 2012). From childhood to adulthood, a standard socialization practice consists of inducing feelings of guilt or shame in an individual who has transgressed a norm or behaved inappropriately (Scheff, 1988, 1990). Ultimately, these two emotions are central to complex social transactions that involve acts of forgiveness, attempts to save face, exclusion of group members, and even killing in the name of honor (Tangney & Tracy, 2012). Still, when compared, guilt and shame are very different.

The feeling of guilt is a negative state that occurs when a person realizes that they have violated a personal or moral standard and that the violation has harmed others. Such violations may include lying, cheating, stealing, or infidelity (Lewis, 1971; Taylor, 1985). The action tendencies associated with guilt are largely prosocial. When feeling guilt, people often experience a need to make things right, to reaffirm their beliefs about moral systems, and to seek forgiveness in some way for their hurtful actions (Amodio, Devine, & Harmon-Jones, 2007; Cryder, Springer & Morewedge, 2012; de Hooge, Zeelenberg, & Breugelmans, 2007). In one study, for example, Cryder, Springer, and Morewedge (2012) showed that guilt makes people more generous to those they have wronged. In the study, participants were exposed to some “background information” relevant to what they were about to do in the laboratory. However, none of the participants read the information because it was intentionally written to be needlessly wordy, in a tiny font. Participants then had the opportunity to taste either red apple-flavored or vomit-flavored jellybeans. Which would you choose? Almost everyone chose the red apple-flavored jellybeans. At this point, half of the participants were told that the “background information” (which they had not read carefully or even read at all) had specified that another participant, their partner for the remainder of the study, would have to taste whichever type of jellybean they had rejected. In reality, the partner was a confederate working for the experimenter and did not have to taste any candy (control participants did not receive information about the partner having to taste the rejected candy). Later, all participants played a game in which they got to decide how much money to give to their partner. Those who believed they had relegated vomit-flavored jellybeans to their partner earlier in the session gave the partner significantly more money during the game. In other words, the participants who were feeling guilt for their actions tried to repair the relationship.

Further research also indicates that guilt is associated with heightened empathy (Joireman, 2004; Silfver et al., 2008). And, even when simply anticipating guilt, people tend to engage in more upstanding behaviors, including self-constraint (Giner-Sorolla, 2001) and the avoidance of self-indulgent behavior (Zemack-Rugar, Bettman, & Fitzsimons, 2007).

Shame may also arise when a person recognizes that they have violated a social norm. But these violations are more likely to be ones in which the person’s social status or social acceptance are threatened (Kemeny, Gruenewald, & Dickerson, 2004). The situations may involve public failure or defeat, social rejection (including sexual rebuffs and contempt from others), and exposure or invasion of personal privacy (Menesini & Camodeca, 2008). The action tendencies associated with shame are less prosocial than those associated with guilt: shame typically motivates the impulse to run and hide or to become smaller and disappear from the situation (de Hooge, Zeelenberg, & Breugelmans, 2007). These action tendencies are associated with a distinct bodily expression (i.e., one not associated with guilt). When feeling shame, people hang their heads and shoulders, drop their arms to their sides, and gaze downward. The display is shown by the congenitally blind (Tracy & Matsumoto, 2008), and is recognized as related to shame in other cultures (Tracy & Robins, 2008), suggesting that it is universal. By becoming smaller or even fleeing, the shamed individual is no longer putting herself “out there” to be further threatened.

When a shamed person is exposed and cannot hide, however, their feelings may motivate the blaming of others, aggression, and even rage (Elison et al., 2014; Thomaes et al., 2011). Research by Tangney and colleagues, for example, showed that **shame-proneness**—a general propensity of an individual to experience shame—is related to destructive anger responses, including hostile intentions, as well as different forms of direct and indirect aggression (Tangney et al., 1996). In contrast to guilt, shame is also linked to less empathy and perspective-taking than usual (Yang, Yang, & Chiou, 2010). A lack of empathy might be expected from a person who feels like hiding their worthless self. Not surprisingly, then, there is also a strong link between the experience of shame and a broad range of criminal behaviors (Robinson et al., 2007).

Distinguishing guilt and shame

No situation always or inevitably causes feelings of guilt versus shame. Moral transgressions can sometimes cause guilt, and failures sometimes cause shame (Tracy & Robins, 2006). Because guilt and shame can arise in similar situations, we can ask: what makes one person react to a situation with guilt and another person react to the same situation with shame? Thinking from an appraisal theory perspective gives us an answer. Lewis (1971) proposed that guilt versus shame is a matter of the individual's attribution of the cause of the negative outcome. Guilt arises when people think that their unacceptable but changeable behavior caused the outcome. Shame arises when people think the outcome is due to unworthy and unchangeable aspects of themselves. Both are negative evaluations, but the object of evaluation varies: "I feel guilty about my behavior" versus "I feel ashamed of myself." To understand this difference in causal attribution (to behavior or self), imagine the following:

Your good friend, who rarely dates, invites you to attend a party with them and their date, Chris. It is your friend's first date with Chris. You go along and discover that Chris is not only very attractive but is also flirting with you. You flirt back. Although you are not seriously interested in them, at the end of the night you give Chris your phone number. The next day, your good friend raves to you about how much they liked Chris.

(adapted from Niedenthal, Tangney, & Gavanski, 1994)

Let's face it. If you did this to your friend, you would probably feel pretty bad. But would you feel guilt, or would you feel shame? According to Lewis (1971), if you blamed your flirting and giving out your phone number as causing the situation, you would feel guilt. But if you blamed yourself and thought, "I'm such a bad friend," that would be shame.

Niedenthal, Tangney, and Gavanski (1994) found confirmation of Lewis's distinction in their study of **counterfactual thinking**. Counterfactual thinking is the process of mentally "undoing" an outcome that has already happened (Roese & Olson, 1995). Such thinking often takes this form: "If only something had been different, then this situation would not have occurred." For instance, if a person's car broke down on vacation, they might think, "If only I had taken the car in to be serviced before leaving town, my vacation would not be delayed."

Importantly, the thing that people spontaneously mentally undo when trying to reverse a past event, is the very thing that they think caused the situation. Thus, in the delayed vacation situation, the person is implying that their negligent behavior (i.e., not getting the car serviced) was the cause of the outcome (i.e., the delayed departure). Alternatively, the person might think, "If only my spouse had had the car serviced, we could have left on time," reflecting the fact that they think their partner was the cause, or they could think, "If only Kias were not such unreliable cars, we would be on the road right now," implicating the car company as the root of the problem. The way people counterfactually reason about an event can tell us how they appraised it.

Niedenthal and colleagues examined individuals' counterfactual thinking about experiences that could provoke guilt or shame. In one study, they examined counterfactual thoughts about past experiences that caused people to feel guilt and shame. In a second study, they presented participants with hypothetical situations that were likely to cause feelings of guilt and situations likely to cause shame. In both studies, the participants wrote down three counterfactuals that would undo the outcomes of the situations. The content of those thoughts constituted the data of interest.

Coding of the counterfactual thoughts showed that, after recalling or reading about situations that would cause guilt, individuals mentally altered their behavior. They wrote, "If only I had not [done a bad thing], then this would not have happened." In contrast, after recalling or reading about situations that would cause shame, individuals mentally altered themselves. In these cases, they wrote, "If only I weren't [a bad person], then this would not have happened." These findings, and many others, support Lewis's distinction between the attribution of causality to behavior in guilt and to the self in shame (Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Tracy & Robins, 2006).

Evolved functions of guilt and shame

While attributional theories of shame and guilt focus on how one appraises the cause of an undesirable outcome that they are responsible for (i.e., a changeable behavior versus a stable aspect of themselves), basic emotion theorists have developed an account of the ancient adaptive function of the two emotions, and how they may have been selected for over evolution (Landers, Sznycer, & Durkee, 2024).

Recall we suggested earlier that guilt is associated with a tendency to repair damage and shame is associated with a tendency to hide when possible. Why would this be? The evolutionary theory of guilt and shame tries to account for behaviors associated with guilt and shame in a formal way. The account starts with the assumptions that people are motivated to maintain and protect their relationships with people whom they value, and that value is determined by how important the relationship is for their survival. In other words, the value of someone to you is determined by how costly it would be to lose the relationship. For example, it is costly to compromise a relationship with your boss, but less costly to compromise a relationship with a recently hired co-worker. Furthermore, according to the theory, valuable relationships can be threatened by at least two things: harming the other person or losing their respect. In both cases, the valued person could walk away from the relationship. Guilt and shame have evolved to respond to these respective social threats (Sznycer, 2019). If a person causes harm to a valued other person, guilt triggers feelings and behaviors that correct or minimize the error in attempts to re-establish the relationship. If a person does something that harms their reputation in the eyes of a valued other, shame triggers feelings and behaviors that conceal oneself or the damaging information. Aggression could also result if reputation-damaging information is not contained, and the social cost of the aggression is not too high. Thus, in general, guilt increases in intensity as the harm to a valued other person increases, and shame increases in intensity as the fear of devaluation by a valued other increases.

Evidence that greater fear of devaluation is associated with more intense shame was demonstrated in a study in which participants read descriptions of undesirable qualities or behaviors, such as having poor table manners or not being generous to others (Sznycer et al., 2016). Half of the participants rated how much they would devalue someone who possessed those qualities or performed the behaviors, and the other half rated how ashamed they would feel if they possessed the qualities or performed the behaviors. The ratings were highly correlated: the more a quality or behavior was devalued by one group of participants, the more intensely the other group of participants indicated they would feel ashamed. Furthermore,

the researchers collected data from three different countries: the United States, Israel, and India. The ratings of devaluation of the qualities or behaviors in one country were strongly correlated with the shame rated by participants in the other two countries. That is, if people in Israel rated poor table manners as something they moderately devalued, people in the United States indicated that they would feel moderate shame about having poor table manners. The cross-cultural findings support the evolutionary account because they suggest that damage to one's reputation and the implied social threat follow a similar logic of social valuation in most humans.

In sum, guilt and shame are both unpleasant emotions that arise in the context of interpersonal relationships and involve negative evaluations of the self. Guilt arises when a person blames their own behavior for harm they have done. Shame arises when people blame stable aspects of themselves for unseemly behavior. The behaviors that guilt and shame motivate are considered adaptive as they correct harm and minimize damage to one's reputation, respectively.

Embarrassment

Think of a time that you felt embarrassed. What happened? Maybe you farted in class, or the bottom of your swimming suit slid down when you dove into a pool. You felt something unpleasant, marked by negative self-exposure. The feeling of embarrassment involves fluster, self-focus, and perhaps mortification, characterized by a sense of foolishness more than a sense of being worthless, as is experienced in shame (e.g., Miller & Tangney, 1994).

Keltner (1995) documented a universal gesture of embarrassment. He found that embarrassment is expressed by a sequence of behaviors that involves, first, *gaze aversion*, then contraction of muscles around the face aimed at *inhibiting smiling*, followed by a *non-Duchenne smile* involving only the upturning of the lips and resembling a sheepish grin, then another attempt to *inhibit smiling*, then a downturn of the head, completed by a tendency to engage in *face touching* usually used to hide the mouth or eyes (Figure 6.2). Keltner and Buswell (1997), moreover, demonstrated that this sequence does not accompany experiences of shame or amusement. They concluded that embarrassment is an evolved emotion.

Embarrassment also has a unique physiological feature: the blush. Blushing, or the visible reddening of the cheeks and neck frequently accompanies embarrassment (Miller, 2004; De Jong & Dijk, 2013). The blush caused by embarrassment is distinguishable from the blush that is the result of exercise, sexual arousal, or intoxication (Leary et al., 1992). Individuals cannot control the extent to which they blush when embarrassed (Drummond, 2001). But they can control what they do most often when they are embarrassed: apologize for their mistake and try to repair it. Unlike guilt, in which the repair involves undoing the harm done to others, in embarrassment, the repair involves redressing harm done to the **presented self**, which refers to the person they are in public.

From an appraisal standpoint, embarrassment arises in situations in which, compared to shame, much more trivial failures have occurred (Miller & Tangney, 1994). Parrott, Sabini, and Silver (1988) proposed that embarrassment specifically results from disruptions in the performance of socially prescribed roles, or scripts. The valedictorian of a high school graduating class is not following the script—which involves being particularly capable—when they trip on the way to the lectern, for instance. Embarrassment also seems to occur only in public, when there is a potential or real loss of esteem (Lewis, 1995). When a person discovers that others are watching while they inadvertently drag toilet paper from the heel of their shoe, for example, they perceive a loss of esteem from others (Miller, 1996). A final characteristic of the circumstances that cause embarrassment is the element of surprise. Situations that cause embarrassment are usually more sudden and unexpected in their onset than are situations that cause other self-conscious emotions (Sabini et al., 2000).

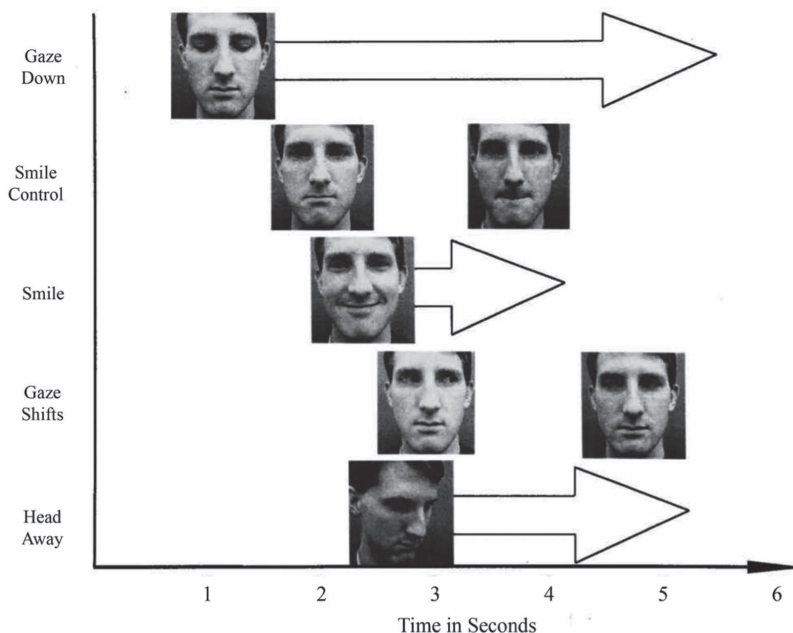


Figure 6.2 Representation of a prototypical embarrassment response. The mean duration of each action is equal to the interval beginning with the leftmost edge of the photograph and ending with the end of the arrow. From Keltner (1995).

There is a social function of embarrassment. Specifically, when people express embarrassment, they effectively communicate a desire to be forgiven and to be reintegrated into the group or relationship. Indeed, when asked about others' embarrassment, people say that they feel like helping the embarrassed person, most often by communicating acceptance of them despite the mistake or public exposure. When they see a display of embarrassment, people also like to share stories of similar embarrassing circumstances.

Developmental Detail

Embarrassment Emerges in Toddlerhood

Though we may think of young kids as being less self-conscious than adolescents, they are certainly not immune from embarrassment. Psychologist Michael Lewis charted the developmental emergence of embarrassment (Lewis, 1995; Lewis et al., 1989). He found two important things. First, there are two types of embarrassment, which he terms "exposure" embarrassment and "evaluation" embarrassment. Exposure embarrassment arises from accidentally being the center of attention, such as when you sneeze loudly and everyone turns to look at you. Evaluation embarrassment arises from doing something poorly, such as not completing a task well or in the time allotted. Second, Lewis demonstrated that exposure embarrassment

emerges by the end of the second year of life. At that age, toddlers have just learned who they are, and they know that everyone is looking at them! After learning more about distinguishing between what is good and bad and right and wrong, at least a year later, the child starts to show signs of evaluation embarrassment.

To further investigate the underlying feelings of exposure and evaluation embarrassment, Lewis and Ramsay (2002) arranged for four-year-old children to fail on a task in order to elicit evaluation embarrassment. Children were then put into situations of being the center of attention, such as dancing with the experimenter to “Old MacDonald Had a Farm,” which tended to elicit exposure embarrassment. The child’s cortisol (i.e., stress hormone) levels were also measured. Results showed that higher cortisol responses were related to evaluation embarrassment and lower cortisol responses were related to exposure embarrassment. This means that negative self-evaluative reactions are even more stressful than being the object of attention.

The help offered to people who are embarrassed may be caused by the fact that observers actually like individuals who express embarrassment after making a blunder—even more than they like those who do not express their embarrassment. In a laboratory demonstration of this, participants watched a video of a man who accidentally toppled over a tall pile of toilet paper rolls in a grocery store (Semin and Manstead, 1982). In one version of the video, the man expressed his embarrassment and in another he did not. Participants liked the actor more if he expressed embarrassment than if he did not.

Blushing has a similar effect of eliciting positive reactions. De Jong (1999) had participants read scenarios in which a shopper caused damage in a grocery store and then either blushed or did not blush. The shopper who blushed was evaluated more positively than the one who did not blush. The positive effect of blushing was also demonstrated in a series of studies in which participants saw pairs of faces, one that was blushing and one that was not. The facial expression on the two faces was that of embarrassment (based on Keltner’s description), neutral emotion, or anger. Participants indicated which face in each pair showed more embarrassment, was more apologetic, or was more forgivable. In all cases, the blushing face was chosen as more embarrassed, more apologetic, and more forgivable (Thorstenon, Pazda, & Lichtenfeld, 2020).

Taken together, it appears that bodily displays of embarrassment, including blushing, can serve to repair social relationships following an accidental violation of social expectations (Feinberg et al., 2012).

Pride and hubris

Pride is an emotion that arises from a positive evaluation of the self (Lewis, 2000b). It is a state that involves satisfaction with meeting one’s personal standards and goals, including internalized beliefs about right and wrong (Tangney, 2002; Tracy & Robins, 2004b). Of course, if pride is so pleasant sounding, one might ask, why do Judeo-Christian and other religious writings teach that “pride goeth before a fall”? Why does pride also have a negative connotation as a deadly sin, a feeling to be avoided and the expression of which should be inhibited?

There appears to be two types of pride, sometimes called **authentic pride** and **hubristic pride** (Tracy et al., 2014). Here we refer to them as “pride” and “hubris,” respectively. Pride and hubris can be distinguished in a manner similar to that between guilt and shame; pride involves pleasure in a particular behavior, such as acing an exam, whereas hubris involves smug satisfaction with the self in general (Tracy & Robins, 2014). When feeling pride, a person might say, “I studied hard for this test and as a result, I nailed it.” In contrast, when experiencing hubris, a person might say, “I am such a smart person, so I nailed it.” The second thought typifies the self-satisfied arrogance that we associate with hubris (Tracy et al., 2011).

Pride and hubris are associated with different behaviors. For instance, pride is linked to positive outcomes in the area that the person is proud of, such as a better performance playing ultimate frisbee or doing well on a physics exam, as well as to the development of higher self-esteem (Herrald & Tomaka, 2002). In a study of possible benefits of pride, Verbeke, Belschak, and Bagozzi (2004) examined the role of pride among salespersons. Feelings of pride were associated with a heightened motivation to use effective sales strategies and to work hard with a “can-do” attitude. Pride was also associated with more prosocial behaviors, such as helping others and promoting the company. Indeed, it appears that pride can have the positive benefits of enhancing creativity, productivity, and altruism (Tracy & Robins, 2007; Weidman, Tracy, & Elliot, 2016).

In contrast, hubris is associated with more negative outcomes, including a tendency toward aggression and hostility (Tracy et al., 2014). These reactions are likely to be due to the righteous indignation that results from narcissistic injuries, which are so frequently encountered when one thinks of themselves as especially great (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998). Consistent with this idea, hubris is not associated with high self-esteem, but rather with highly variable self-esteem that seems tied to momentary social feedback (e.g., Rhodewalt, Madrian, & Cheney, 1998). Furthermore, the arrogance and egoism communicated by hubris can be socially destructive; other individuals usually try to avoid, shun, or otherwise reject the hubristic person. Consequently, excessive feelings of hubris can cause conflict in and even terminate close relationships.

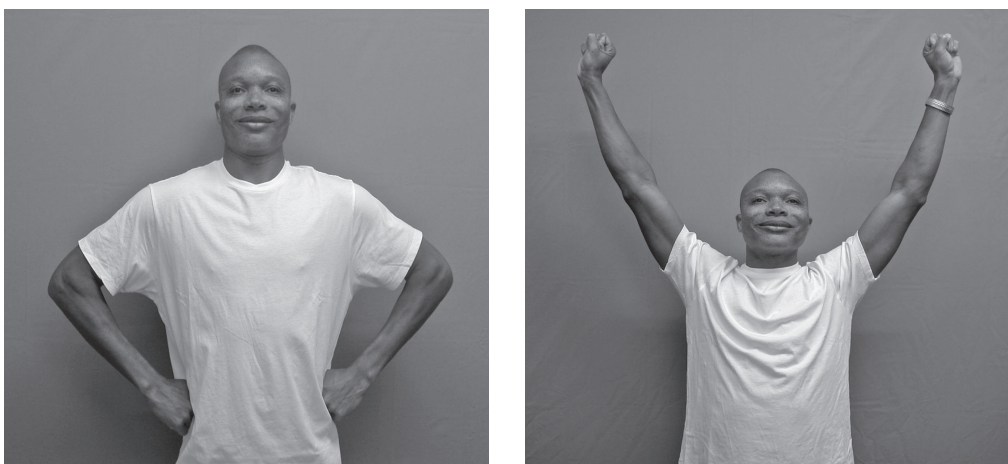


Figure 6.3 Pride expression: expansive posture, raised chin, and arms on hip or raised in victory. From Tracy, Robins, and Schriber (2009).

There is a bodily expression of pride, according to basic emotion researchers. It involves a smile, a backward tilt of the head causing a lifting of the chin, and arms resting on hips or raised above the head to show confidence or victory (see Figure 6.3). The gesture of pride is displayed spontaneously by children as young as three years old when they experience success or other situations that elicit reports of pride. It is also displayed by sighted, blind, and congenitally blind adults from many cultures in similar circumstances (Belsky, Domitrovich, & Crnic, 1997; Lewis, Alessandri, & Sullivan, 1992; Stipek et al., 1992; Tracy & Matsumoto, 2008). Literate individuals in Italy and the United States can recognize the gesture of pride with greater-than-chance accuracy (Tracy & Robins, 2004b) and distinguish it from happiness or surprise. So can members of an African tribe who have had little to no exposure to Western culture (Tracy & Robins, 2004a), as well as Fijians (Tracy et al., 2013). The gesture of pride therefore seems to be universal. For what purpose has pride evolved?

Evolved functions of pride

From an evolutionary perspective, pride functions in a manner complementary to shame. Recall that shame may have evolved to detect threats to one's reputation. Once the threat is detected, feelings of shame motivate behaviors, such as hiding or aggressing, designed to minimize or correct the threat. Pride seems, in contrast, to have evolved to highlight or advertise actions or qualities that are socially valuable. Promoting one's valued actions or qualities would result in improvements in one's reputation. If pride functions to advertise actions or qualities that enhance one's reputation, then people should be more likely to feel pride if their actions or qualities are valued in their society. Evidence that greater social value is associated with more intense pride was demonstrated in a study in which participants read descriptions of desirable qualities or behaviors, such as having many skills or being generous to others (Sznycer et al., 2018). Half of the participants rated how much they would value someone who possessed those qualities or performed the behaviors, and the other half rated how proud they would feel if they possessed the qualities or performed the behaviors. The ratings were highly correlated: the more a quality or behavior was valued by one group of participants, the more intensely the other group of participants indicated they would feel pride. These findings were the same across 16 Western industrialized countries as well as small-scale societies in Central and South America, Africa, and Asia. In addition, judgments of value in one society predicted anticipated pride in another. The cross-cultural findings support the evolutionary account because they suggest that advertising one's positive characteristics follows a similar logic of social valuation in most humans.

Behavioral studies also document the reputation-enhancing function of pride. Bodily expressions of pride signal success, thereby ensuring the person's status within a group, as well as their access to resources controlled by the group. In a study of this idea, some participants were given positive feedback that caused them to feel pride before working on a group task. Compared to those who were not feeling particularly proud, participants who were feeling proud were perceived by group members and other observers as behaving in ways that indicated higher status. And they were also viewed as more likable (Williams & DeSteno, 2009). Pride also facilitates status attainment because it motivates the development of competence and self-confidence. Although hubris may also have evolved to facilitate the attainment of status, it may do so in a different, perhaps more socially costly, way. Hubris seems to facilitate the attainment of status via dominance and aggression, rather than through competence. In other words, pride promotes *prestige* and hubris promotes *dominance*, two very different ways of commanding a high-status position (Cheng, Tracy, & Henrich, 2010).

Social Comparison Emotions

Social comparison emotions emerge from the ability to be aware of and think about oneself, as well as the ability to compare oneself to others. Envy and jealousy both have these characteristics (Parrott, 1991; Salovey & Rothman, 1991). That is, in most instances of these two emotions, a person's relationships, appearance, abilities, or other qualities are compared to those of another person, and the resulting comparison, within specific social contexts, is an important precondition for either envy or jealousy.

Envy

Envy is an unsettling emotion that arises when a person believes that another person has something that they want but do not yet, or ever will, have. Counterfactual thinking reveals the appraisals underlying envy, similarly to shame and guilt. Research suggests that the more a person thinks "it could have been me," when they compare themselves with another person who is better off than they are, the more envy they feel (Van de Ven & Zeelenberg, 2015).

Thus, the situation in which envy is experienced involves two people: the envious person and the envied person. But there are conditions on whom we envy. Usually, we envy those who are similar to us in ways other than the possession of the coveted object or circumstance, as shown by Schaubroeck and Lam (2004). In a study conducted in a bank, the researchers asked employees of the bank to rate the similarity between themselves and their co-workers. Several months later, some employees had been promoted and others had not. The previous ratings of similarity predicted how much envy was felt. The more similar the employee perceived their promoted co-worker, the more envy they felt toward the promoted person. Another study showed that envy occurs when we are faced with comparisons that reveal our own shortcomings in areas of personal relevance (Salovey & Rodin, 1984). Participants in the study received feedback on a career aptitude test that suggested that their career prospects in their preferred field were either very bad or very good. They were then told about the performance of another participant who had done better or worse on the aptitude test for the same career or a different (less self-relevant) career. Envy arose only when participants learned that they had done poorly, and another participant had done better on the test in the self-relevant career domain.

Like hubris, envy counts among the seven deadly sins. Also, like pride, there seems to be two different types of envy. In some theories, **benign envy** is different from the envy of hatred and revenge, often called **malicious envy** (Lange & Crusius, 2015a; Van de Ven, 2016). This distinction highlights the fact that envy can involve longing, disappointment with the self, and a desire to emulate the envied other person, on the one hand (benign envy); or bitterness, ill will, and the desire to engage in destructive behaviors, on the other (malicious envy; Parrott, 1991). Malicious envy is, of course, the feeling considered one of the seven deadly sins in Judeo-Christian tradition.

What is it about the feeling of envy that leads to feelings of hostility? When does envy become malicious? Feelings of hostility are due to the appraisal that the envied person had an unfair advantage in life (Smith et al., 1994). Smith and colleagues based their study, in part, on Fritz Heider's analysis of envy. Central to Heider's "balance theory" is the idea that similar people should have similar, or *balanced*, outcomes (Heider, 1958). If two similar people have very different outcomes, then the less well-off one might perceive the well-off one as unfairly advantaged. Notice the word *perceive*. It does not matter if the envied person objectively deserved her good fortune. If it is perceived as an unfair advantage, then the less well-off person will experience ill will and hatred (Van de Ven, Zeelenberg, & Pieters, 2012).

Considering the distinction between benign and malicious envy, you might imagine that one is a more useful emotion than the other, and some research suggests that this is so. For example, in one study, long-distance runners who felt benign envy toward other runners set higher goals for themselves and ran a faster race (Lange & Crusius, 2015b).

Van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters (2009) asked Dutch participants about their envy experiences and found that when thinking about a person whom they envied in a benign way, the participants liked and admired that individual more. Although they reported frustration, they also felt motivated to improve and become more like the envied person. Malicious envy was associated with frustration too, but also with a belief that an injustice had been done and a desire to degrade or even hurt the envied person. This suggests that benign envy motivates self-improvement and the acquisition of new skills, but that malicious envy may not do so. Indeed, laboratory experiments have shown that benign envy, caused by upward social comparison, does generate greater motivation and improved performance (Van de Ven, Zeelenberg, & Pieters, 2011). That is, other people's fortunes can sometimes be inspiring and used as cause for greater effort toward improvement (Smith & Kim, 2007).

Jealousy

Jealousy arises when an individual believes that an important relationship is threatened by another individual. So, jealousy involves three entities: the jealous person, the person with whom the jealous person has a relationship, and the rival who threatens that relationship. We often associate jealousy with romance, but siblings and co-workers may also feel jealous of another sibling or co-worker who threatens their relationship with a parent or boss, respectively (DeSteno, Valdesolo, & Bartlett, 2006; Harris, 2003). Although jealousy sounds very different from envy, these words are sometimes used interchangeably by laypeople. For this reason, we first empirically distinguish the two emotions. We then discuss two theories of jealousy: the evolutionary account of jealousy (Buss, 1995), and the self-evaluation maintenance model of jealousy (DeSteno & Salovey, 1996b).

Distinguishing jealousy from envy

As we saw earlier, a situation that could give rise to envy is this: You have curly hair that gets completely out of control when the humidity is high (this is extremely hypothetical and not at all the lifelong experience of two of the authors . . .). Your friend has beautiful hair that seems to be perfect whether she is in a rain shower, hiking in the desert, or at a formal party. You want her hair, but you cannot have it. Do you say to yourself and others that you are "envious" of your friend? Or do you say you are "jealous" of her?

Now we can probably agree that you are envious of your friend because you want hair like hers and believe that will never be possible. Still, you might have said that you were "jealous." There are several ways to look at the apparent confusion in the uses of the words jealousy and envy. In one study, experimental participants described examples of times in their lives when they were jealous and when they were envious (Smith, Kim, & Parrott, 1988). Judges then coded these descriptions in terms of whether the situations conformed, or not, to the scientific definitions of the two terms. The findings showed that individuals used envy precisely and specifically as referring to situations in which they felt that someone had something that they did not have but wanted. When recalling situations of jealousy, they tended to describe both classic situations in which they believed that a significant relationship was threatened by a rival (jealousy) but *also* situations in which another individual had something they wanted but did not have (envy).

Table 6.2 Research by Smith, Kim, and Parrott (1988) showed that participants associated specific feeling states with jealousy and others with envy

<i>Jealousy</i>	<i>Envy</i>
Suspicion	Motivation to improve
Rejection	Wishful
Hostility	Longing
Anger at other(s)	Inferior
Fear of loss	Self-aware
Hurt	Self-critical
Cheated	Dissatisfied
Desire to get even	Frustration
Resentment	
Spite	
Malice	
Intensity	

Do such findings mean that envy and jealousy are the same? Not according to other results of the same study. Analyses of the ratings of the feelings that characterize the two states suggested that jealousy and envy are quite distinct (cf. Salovey & Rodin, 1986). Table 6.2 shows the feelings that Smith and colleagues' participants said characterize jealousy and envy. By and large, laypeople report a difference between the two states, with envy being characterized by a sense of longing, feelings of inferiority, and a motivation to improve, whereas jealousy involves more rejection, suspicion, and anger. Thus, although individuals seem to use jealousy more generally (and perhaps incorrectly) than the term envy, even laypeople report that the states feel distinct (Parrott & Smith, 1993).

One reason the word jealousy is used in situations that involve envy is that people do not like the moral connotations of the word envy (Schoeck, 1969). There may be a strong aversion in many countries and cultures to using the word *envy* to denote a feeling because it has historically been considered a sin (Sabini & Silver, 1982).

Evolutionary theory of jealousy

As we learned previously, evolutionary theories of psychological functioning (such as basic emotion theories) begin with the following question: what are the ancient adaptive problems faced by members of this species? The next question is this: how has the species evolved to solve these problems? What is important for the study of jealousy is the fact that human males face specific problems, due to their biology, which are different from those faced by females. As far as jealousy is concerned, an important difference is that because females experience internal fertilization and gestation, they do not ever face uncertainty in their maternity. They know who their offspring are with 100% certainty. Males do not. In the absence of DNA testing, males always experience some degree of uncertainty in their paternity. Thus, males can face the possibility of being **cuckolded**, or unknowingly raising children to whom they are not genetically related. A cuckolded human male risks investing time, energy, and other resources into offspring that do not assure the survival of his gene pool. This problem then should have led to the evolution of anti-cuckoldry mechanisms. Such mechanisms have been identified in mammals, including lions (Bertram, 1975) and nonhuman primates (Hrdy, 1979), and they should be especially evolved in human males because humans make a greater investment in offspring after birth than any other mammal (Daly, Wilson, & Weghorst, 1982; Symons, 1979). **Sexual jealousy** would be an efficient anti-cuckoldry device.

As noted, females know who their offspring are (barring inadvertent switching of babies in the maternity ward, which we're pretty sure didn't happen to any of the textbook authors). They do, however, face a different adaptive challenge regarding parental investment. The problem is that of maintaining the time, resources, and commitment of the father of their children. The two situations in which females risk losing a father's investment in the offspring are 1) he has an affair and divides resources between the two relationships, or 2) he leaves the spouse and her offspring altogether to invest in a new relationship. This second situation is most likely to happen when a deep emotional attachment has developed with another partner. The development of jealousy of emotional attachments, **emotional jealousy**, would be a good mechanism for avoiding loss of paternal investment.

The evolutionary theory of jealousy is based on the preceding analysis. The theory says that jealousy has evolved to monitor and motivate behavior to maintain a relationship that entails parental investment. The theory makes at least two testable hypotheses about sex differences in jealousy that have been subject to intense empirical study: one that differentiates sexual and emotional infidelity, and one that focuses on the mate value of potential partners.

Sexual versus emotional infidelity hypothesis

The first hypothesis generated by the evolutionary theory of jealousy is that threats to a relationship involving sexual promiscuity should be of particular concern to men, whereas threats to relationships involving emotional attachment should be of particular concern to women. In a study of this hypothesis, researchers asked undergraduates if they would be more upset if their romantic partner had sex with or formed an emotional attachment with a rival to the relationship (Buss et al., 1992). More men reported that they would be most upset by sexual infidelity, and more women reported that they would be most upset if their partner formed an emotional bond. This finding was replicated among the Himba of Northwest Namibia (Scelza, 2014). In that study, 96% of men vs. 66% of women reported they would be more upset by sexual than emotional infidelity.

In another investigation of male and female jealousy, participants were instructed to visualize three different scenarios: walking to class feeling neutral, their partner having sex with a rival, and their partner falling in love with a rival. Measures of electrodermal activity, pulse rate, and electromyographic activity in the muscle over the brow were taken to assess how aroused they were while imagining each scene. On all but one measure, men showed more physiological reactivity when imagining their partner having sex with a rival, whereas females showed more reactivity when imagining their partner being emotionally attached. This is further evidence that males are more threatened by sexual rivals and that females are more threatened by rivals to their emotional attachment (Buss et al., 1992).

These sensational findings are not without critics. DeSteno and Salovey proposed a “double-shot” hypothesis to explain why the sex difference in jealousy-provoking situations was most often seen in studies using forced-choice questionnaires (i.e., what would bother you more, sexual *or* emotional infidelity?). DeSteno and Salovey (1996a) showed that most women believe that emotional infidelity by their male partner implies sexual infidelity as well, but that sexual infidelity does not necessarily mean emotional involvement. Men do not hold such a belief about women. They believe women can have an emotional attachment without sex. But they do believe that if a woman has sex with a rival, it implies that they already have an emotional involvement. Thus, the term double shot. The researchers further demonstrated that these divergent beliefs, as opposed to something fundamental to biological sex, accounted for the gender difference in jealousy. Although women reported that both types of infidelity would cause them distress, they selected emotional infidelity as most distressing because it implied, in their minds, a double shot of cheating, and vice versa for men (DeSteno & Salovey, 1996a). These findings and interpretations of them have led to a lively debate with some evidence for both sides (e.g., Bendixen, Kennair, & Buss, 2015; DeSteno et al., 2002; Harris & Christenfeld, 1996).

A larger study, with more than 63,000 participants, extended the analysis of jealousy among not only heterosexual males and females, but also gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals (Frederick & Fales, 2016). The researchers controlled for the influence of the double-shot interpretations of the previous findings by directing their participants to imagine a partner “having sex with someone else (but not falling in love with them)” or “falling in love with someone else (but not having sex with them).” Heterosexual men were still more likely than heterosexual women to be more upset by sexual infidelity than emotional infidelity. Interestingly, the difference appeared regardless of the participant’s age, income level, history of being cheated on, history of being unfaithful, relationship type, or length of relationship. In contrast, no such differences were observed in the gay, lesbian, or bisexual samples, whose responses resembled those of heterosexual females more than heterosexual males.

It is not clear why gay and bisexual males report experiences of jealousy in ways that differ from heterosexual males. Perhaps gay and bisexual men accept sexual non-exclusivity more readily than heterosexual men (LaSala, 2004), which leaves them more sensitive to emotional infidelity. Gay and bisexual men may also be less motivated by concerns about reproductive costs than heterosexual men. Gay men do not experience paternal uncertainty, which may mean that jealousy as an anti-cuckoldry device does not develop to the same degree.

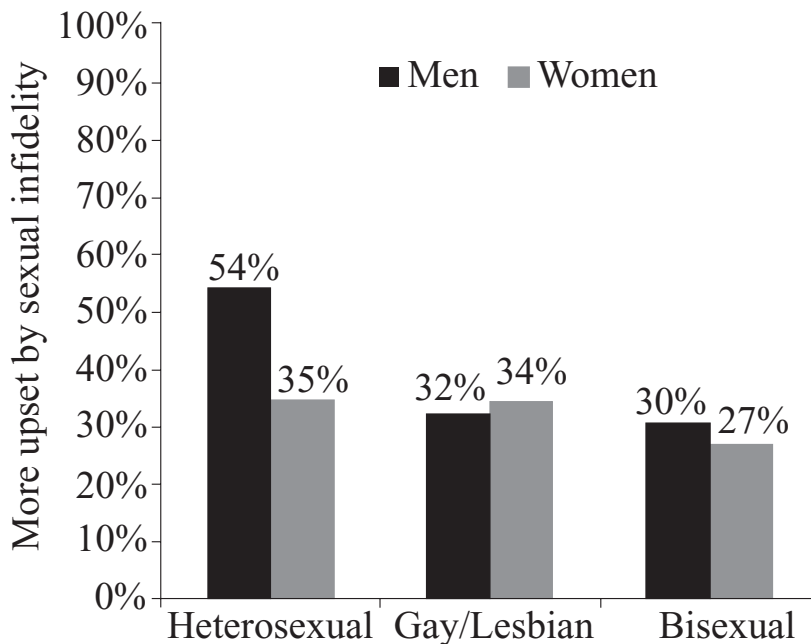


Figure 6.4 More men than women were most upset by sexual infidelity, but only among heterosexual participants in a large-scale study by Frederick and Fales (2016).

Characteristics of rivals

We can also ask, what is it about a rival to a relationship that would make males and females most jealous? According to evolutionary theory, males who provide resources and protection to a partner and their offspring are particularly attractive to females. Males with these characteristics are said to have high **mate value**. Females, by way of contrast, have high mate value when they are fertile and can produce many healthy offspring. A focus on mate value suggests that males should be most jealous of rivals who possess physical strength and the ability to attain resources (as represented in

status and financial prospects, for instance). Meanwhile, females should be most jealous of other females characterized by signs of fertility such as youth and beauty (Buss, 1989; Buss et al., 2000).

This hypothesis was supported in a study by Dijkstra and Buunk (2002). In the study, participants rated 56 characteristics that had been mentioned by participants in a previous study as possibly inducing jealousy; participants were asked how jealous they would be if their partner were to be seen flirting with an individual who possessed each characteristic. Males reported being more jealous when a rival was high in social dominance, physical dominance, and social status. In contrast, females were more jealous when the rival was high in physical attractiveness.

Similar findings have been obtained across settings (Buunk, Aan't Goor, & Solano, 2010), cultures (Buss et al., 2000) and even for aspects of body build that are specifically related to high male versus female mate value (Dijkstra & Buunk, 2001). For example, in men, a high shoulder-to-hip ratio (wide shoulders and narrow hips) is associated with physical success. In women, a low waist-to-hip ratio (a narrow waist and wide hips) is associated with fertility. As would be expected by a consideration of mate value, studies show that women are more jealous of rivals with low (compared to high) waist-to-hip ratios and men are more jealous of rivals with high (compared to low) shoulder-to-hip ratios (see Figure 6.5).

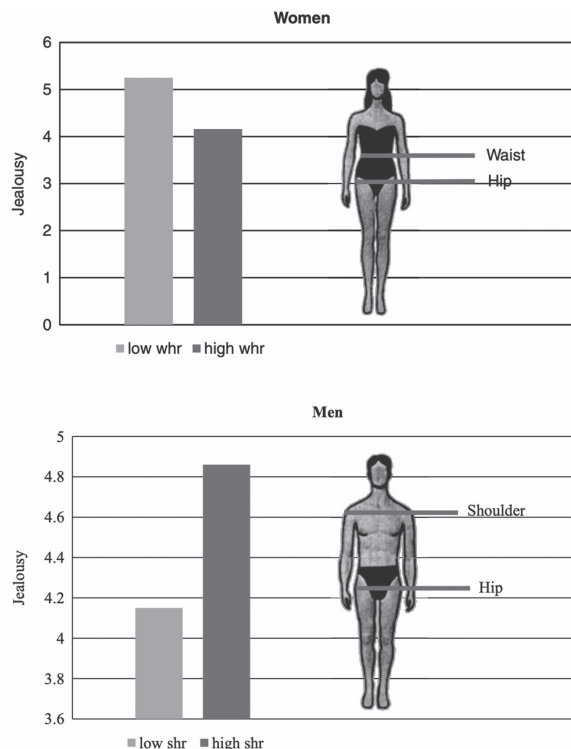


Figure 6.5 Jealousy as a function of a rival's waist-to-hip ratio (WHR) in women and shoulder-to-hip ratio (SHR) in men. The standard errors were virtually the same for all ratings and varied between 0.26 and 0.29. Adapted from Dijkstra and Buunk (2001).

Self-evaluation maintenance model of jealousy

Another theory of jealousy, the self-evaluation maintenance model of jealousy, also tries to understand how the characteristics of a rival can provoke jealousy. The theory proposes that an individual will feel threatened most acutely by, and therefore be most jealous of, rivals who excel in domains

that are most important to their self-definition (Salovey, 1991; Salovey & Rothman, 1991). So, jealousy is determined as much, or more, by how the rival compares to the jealous individual rather than objective features of the rival (or even the partner's expressed interest in the rival).

To understand the self-evaluation maintenance model of jealousy, we must first examine its basis. Tesser (1988) proposed a general self-evaluation maintenance model (**SEM model**) to explain how people seek and maintain a positive evaluation of the self. The theory assumes that people's self-evaluations are mostly affected by comparisons with other people who are generally similar to themselves. That is, people tend not to compare themselves to individuals from entirely foreign cultures, distant generations, or of unusual social status (e.g., dead presidents and foreign royalty have very little bearing on their self-evaluation).

SEM emphasizes people's cognitions about the self and another, so we can think of it as most compatible with appraisal theories. The two types of social interaction that are critical in SEM are **reflective processes** and **comparison processes**. Both happen (most importantly for jealousy) when people are exposed to someone who is superior to them. Reflection occurs (as in something is "reflected off" someone on to another person) when someone you are close to is superior to you in a way that is not threatening to your self-concept. Here, you get to "bask in the reflected glory" of that person's achievements or qualities and feel great about yourself (Cialdini et al., 1976). There are also situations, however, in which the superior achievements and qualities of close others are in domains that matter very much to your self-concept. In these situations, you might engage mostly in comparison processes and feel bad about yourself. For example, perhaps your older brother or sister made excellent grades in school and, because academic achievement is important to you, your worse grades made you feel inadequate. No reflection occurs at all, only an unflattering comparison that leads to a failure to hold onto a good feeling about the self.

The SEM model can be used to explain any number of behaviors. But for our purposes, an understanding of self-evaluative maintenance can help us better understand jealousy. One of the first observations is that jealousy is not an either/or state. That is, people feel jealous to different degrees, and the intensity is due to the degree of threat that they perceive. An individual will feel threatened most acutely by, and therefore be most jealous of, rivals who excel in domains that are of the utmost importance to their self-definition (Salovey, 1991; Salovey & Rothman, 1991). So, jealousy is determined as much, or more, by the comparison between the jealous individual and the rival rather than objective features of the rival (or even the partner's expressed interest in the rival).

To test the hypothesis that stronger jealousy is experienced when the rival excels in domains of importance to the self-definition of the jealous person, DeSteno and Salovey (1996a) assessed the degree to which intelligence, athleticism, and popularity were important to the self-concepts of their experimental participants. Next, participants read scenarios in which their partner flirted with another individual of the opposite sex (this study was of heterosexual jealousy). In each scenario the rival was described as excelling in one of the three domains of interest. Participants then rated how jealous they would be if their partner had flirted with that rival.

Individuals were more jealous if the rival excelled in an area of specific importance to their own self-concept. Interestingly, in a second study, DeSteno and Salovey also asked about the extent to which participants would like each rival, based on the provided description, if the jealousy-provoking situation had not occurred. Without the flirting situation, participants preferred the rivals who excelled in the domain of importance to their self-concept. This is probably not surprising because similarity often predicts liking (e.g., Stroebe et al., 1971).

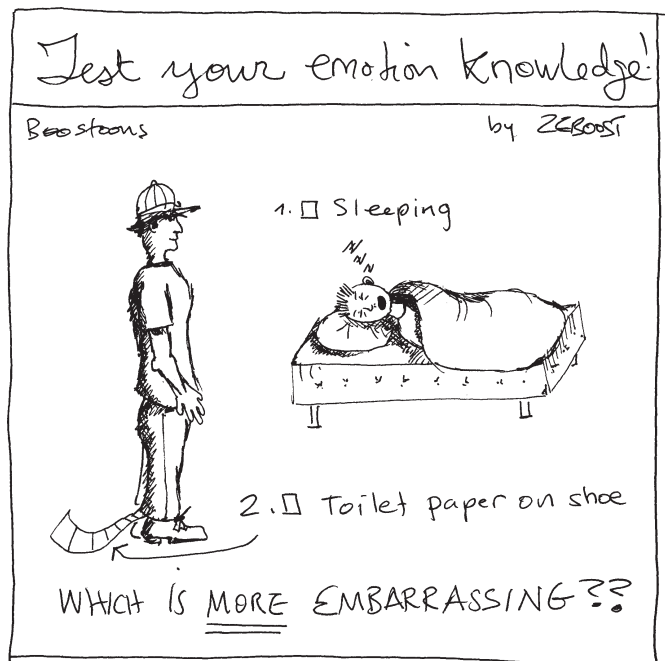
Evolved functions of jealousy

When people are jealous, they may engage in reactive behaviors including showing suspicion, making accusations, stalking, or even violence (e.g., Marazziti et al., 2003). Acts of jealousy can even harm the very relationship the person wants to protect (Buss & Duntley, 2011). Although sometimes

destructive and even counterproductive, many behaviors motivated by jealousy do serve a purpose. A general view of the function of jealousy is that the feelings of jealousy serve to highlight the importance of a relationship and motivate behavior aimed at maintaining or repairing it.

In evolutionary theory, behaviors intended to correct threats to a relationship are called **mate retention** behaviors. Consistent with the view that jealousy motivates these behaviors, mate retention intensity varies as a function of the desirability of one's partner to potential rivals. Because, as we have seen, males tend to value females with physical signs of fertility, the intensity of their mate retention behaviors, but not the intensity of female's behaviors, is predicted by their partner's age and physical attractiveness (Buss, 2013; Haselton & Gangestad, 2006). Jealousy increases with decreasing age and increasing attractiveness. In contrast, females' mate retention behaviors, but not males', are predicted by their partner's wealth and success (Buss & Shackelford, 1997). Here, jealousy increases with increasing wealth and success.

In sum, the social comparison emotions of envy and jealousy are often painful because the feelings highlight ways in which a person comes out short or lacking in a characteristic or ability. Although unpleasant, the two emotions can motivate improvements to oneself and one's relationships by pointing out how things might be made better and by setting new, higher standards of fulfillment.



Summary

- Self-conscious emotions rely on the cognitive abilities involved in having a sense of self and on self-reflection and evaluation. Some of those emotions require the ability to make comparisons between standards, morals, and ideals on the one hand, and on the other, actual behaviors and experiences in which the self is involved.
- Negative self-evaluations that result from an individual's perception of their behavior as unacceptable are experienced as guilt, whereas negative self-evaluations that result from an individual deeming themselves bad or unworthy are experienced as shame.

- Embarrassment is distinct from shame in that it involves a focus on the self as presented to an audience rather than the entire self, and as such is experienced as a sense of fluster and mortification arising from social awkwardness and a perceived loss of esteem in the eyes of others.
- Pride and hubris result from a positive self-evaluation, with pride involving an experience of having done something well, and hubris resulting from an overall self-satisfaction that can be seen as narcissistic arrogance.
- Social comparison emotions emerge from an ability to compare the attributes of the self to those of another person. The resulting emotions, depending on situational factors, are envy or jealousy. Envy involves just two persons, and jealousy involves three.
- Social comparison emotions have some positive functions. Jealousy may signal that work on a significant relationship is needed, and guilt may lead people to make amends in a particular situation and avoid moral failures in the future. Benign envy may motivate emulation or the attempt to better oneself.

Learning Links

1. Do animals feel embarrassment? Watch this short clip to find out: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QfgG7RFi9_I
2. Learn about jealousy in monkeys: <https://cnprc.ucdavis.edu/scientists-map-monogamy-jealousy-in-the-monkey-mind/>
3. Listen to this podcast with Dr. June Tangney on the difference between shame and guilt: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=itsnF2_7W9g&t=25s

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