



What to say when you feel jealous in a relationship

Cut out the card along the dashed line (6 by about 4 inches). Say one line, then stop and listen. Use your own words when they come.

When you feel jealous

1. Name the sting as yours: "I felt jealous when..."
2. Separate what you know from the story you're telling.
3. Ask for what helps: "Could you tell me you're glad we're together?"
4. Don't check, track or interrogate.
5. Say thank you, then let it rest.
6. If it keeps coming back, talk to a therapist.

All the lines, and when to use them

I felt a pang of jealousy when you and Alex were laughing together tonight. I know it's mostly mine to work through, but I didn't want to hide it. (After a specific moment, once you are home and calm. Owning it as your feeling keeps it from becoming an accusation.)

I'm feeling insecure today. Could you tell me you're glad we're together? That would help more than anything. (When the feeling is about your own worry more than anything your partner did. Asking for reassurance directly beats fishing for it.)

I noticed I wanted to look at your phone. I didn't, and I don't want to be that person. Can we talk about what's making me anxious? (When you catch the urge to check. Naming it out loud takes away some of its pull and invites your partner in instead of shutting them out.)

When you text your ex late at night, I get uneasy. Can we talk about what feels okay to both of us? (A recurring situation that genuinely bothers you. It names one behavior and asks for a shared agreement, not a rule you impose.)

Can we agree that we both just mention it when plans change? I fill the gaps with stories when I don't know. (When uncertainty is what feeds your jealousy. It asks for something mutual and ordinary, not tracking.)

I was short with you last night because I was jealous, and that wasn't fair. I'm sorry. (After you acted on the feeling with coldness or snark. Repairing quickly keeps it from becoming a pattern.)

Thank you, that helped. The rest is mine to work on. (After your partner reassures you. It closes the loop so the conversation does not turn into a nightly interview.)

I've noticed this keeps coming back, even when nothing has happened. I'm going to talk to someone about it. (When jealousy is frequent and out of proportion. It tells your partner you are taking responsibility rather than asking them to manage it.)

Phrases to avoid

"Who were you texting?": It is an interrogation, not a feeling. It invites defensiveness and leaves your actual worry unsaid.

"If you loved me, you wouldn't talk to her.": Making love conditional turns a feeling into a demand, and it starts to police who your partner can see.

"Give me your phone.": In survey research, watching a partner's activity was tied to more rumination and lower satisfaction . It also damages trust whatever you find.

"I'm not jealous, I just think it's weird that...": Disguising jealousy as an observation makes it harder for your partner to respond to what you actually feel.

"Fine, go have fun with your friends.": Sarcastic permission says the feeling without owning it, and leaves your partner guessing what you want.

If you are afraid of your partner, scripts are not the answer: call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 or text START to 88788. In danger, call 911.