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MARIA LEGERSTEE, professor of psychology, Infancy Centre for Research, York University, Toronto

"Jealousy is adaptive to a point, because it helps orient people to one another and protect their relationship from outside interlopers. But it's a problem if the alarm is going off too much. You have to be able to argue against the feeling by considering alternative interpretations of what's happening. Are you sounding the alarm pre-emptively because you're trying to prevent something that could happen down the line? That doesn't work, because the more you sound that alarm, the more tension it causes in your relationship. It's a feedback loop. Solidify the relationship rather than defend it."

CARL HINDY, clinical psychologist, co-author, If This Is Love, Why Do I Feel So Insecure?, Nashua, New Hampshire

"Jealousy has several evolved functions, including sensitizing us to signals of infidelity or defection, prompting action to curtail interactions with potential rivals, motivating actions such as threats or violence to fend off mate poachers, increasing our efforts to fulfill a partner's desires and preventing defection from a relationship. Too much jealousy can be destructive, and is the leading cause of spousal violence and murder. The one function that might be less relevant today is increasing a man's certainty in paternity. Nonetheless, studies of genetic cuckoldry using DNA fingerprinting show a rate of about 12 per cent."

DAVID BUSS, professor of evolutionary psychology, University of Texas, Austin, author of The Dangerous Passion

"Sometimes a threat is real, and sometimes it's our own insecurities and we sabotage the relationship. We actualize our biggest fear because we lack self-empowerment and don't know what we uniquely bring to the table. We let our imagination move toward the sinister and become 'mind-readers,' imagining that we know what everyone is thinking. I would worry not about the relationship that is being sabotaged, but about my relationship with myself. When you develop a positive, witty, compassionate demeanour, people want to be with you and you don't feel like you have to hold on so tightly to everything."

DEBBIE MANDEL, stress management specialist, author, Addicted To Stress, Lawrence, New York

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