

Advice from the Trenches: Jealousy!

Dear C;



I am not sure if this is a problem, but it does worry me a lot. My boyfriend never gets jealous over me. Not even the tiniest bit. I have never cheated on him but other men sometimes flirt with me, right in front of him, and a couple times I flirted back to see if it would get a rise out of him. Nada. I finally asked him about it and he said he believes in free will. He said he would be sad if I left him or if I cheated but that it is my choice and I am free to go if that is what I want. I don't know why, but this drives me a bit nuts. Maybe because it is so damn unromantic? How can he possibly love me if he feels this way?

Perplexed

Dear Perplexed;

If you ran this question past a therapist, they would probably tell you that you need to cultivate your own sense of self-esteem and that your boyfriend has a more mature attitude. Some would even argue that possessiveness is the sign of a control freak and the forerunner to an abusive relationship. However, your boyfriend's "free will" attitude seems to be taking maturity to the other side of the spectrum. I understand your concern.

I have had many boyfriends over my lifetime and nearly all have been a bit jealous. You could argue that they saw me as property they owned, but I'm not so sure. Yeah, if they started following me around and went through my cell phone behind my back, I'd say they were taking it too far. But everyone, both men and women, feels a sense of protectiveness about the people who matter to them.

This is not PC, but I'm gonna say it anyway — men are hunters by nature, and a lot of them are predators. Every guy knows this, just the same as every woman knows that single heterosexual women can be ruthless and conniving when it comes to the pursuit of men, even those who are already taken. Sorry, but that's really what goes on in our primitive brains. Because of this, most men are going to

have their shackles go up if another male starts moving in on their mate. A man who yawns and goes back to reading the paper is sending a pretty indifferent message.

Let me tell you a story about a man in my past who wasn't jealous. He had an attitude EXACTLY like your boyfriend's, and I saw him as amazingly evolved. I really thought it was a sign of emotional maturity. Ha! This guy turned out to be more neurotic and messed up than all of the jealous men combined. He actually liked the idea that other guys were turned on by me and saw it as elevating his status. Of course, he didn't let me know that. He fed me his "I want you to be free" rap so he could get away with stuff behind my back, without me asking too many questions. The punch line? Turns out he was a closet gay! He wasn't possessive largely because I had no value to him other than as a cover for his double life. I found out later he was jealous as hell over his boyfriends.

Listen, any red blooded male worth his salt is not going to like men ogling the woman he loves. It's not because the man suffers from insecurity. It's because he knows exactly what cads other men are. Sure — rampant, needy jealousy is probably a sign of psychosis. But some jealousy is a healthy sign that a man values his partner and wants to protect her.

In my opinion? Any man who pukes up the bland crap that your boyfriend is spewing is not enlightened or mature. He just doesn't give a shit.