

# Mind Over Success

## When Envy Gets You Down

To achieve happiness, we need to stop wanting unrealistic things and bring our ideal down to a level that is accessible

BY PIERRETTE DESROSIER, M.P.S.

**W**hy does my brother act that way? Why does he make fun of me in front of others? Why does he lie about me and put me down to my father? How is it he can never admit even one of my accomplishments? Do you think maybe he envies me?" Steve asks. Yup, the chances are good that your brother envies you.

People may crave money, status, power, recognition or success. This uncomfortable feeling brings out many different emotions such as anger, frustration, self-pity or malice. These feelings may lead people to react by seeking vengeance, putting others down, speaking ill of them, idealizing them or wanting to surpass them.

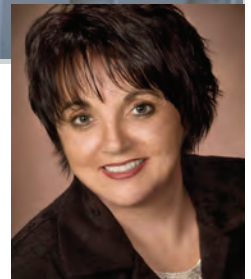
Envy can, however, have a positive effect. It can stimulate our desire to accomplish and make us aware of the limits of our abilities and resources.

Envy is not an emotion to be ashamed of but one that we all feel at some time. It is an emotion that is difficult to identify. You might say to yourself: Me? Envious? No way! Even as far back as biblical times it was said: "Thou shalt not covet that which belongs to your neighbour, your neighbour's wife nor his home, his land, his servant, his cow nor his donkey." And we could add his tractor, his quota and his



**GRASS ISN'T ALWAYS GREENER**

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purebreds. Envy of what their neighbours have can cost certain farmers a lot. It leads to excess and they may pay the price.

Why do we envy? We envy others for having what we perceive as being necessary to our happiness. Paradoxically, the more we crave our neighbour's possessions, the unhappier we are. Because we envy others so much, we no longer see all that we have. We can no longer see life in a favourable way. Our ability to be aware of and to appreciate what we have is a determining factor in our happiness. Like a deadly poison, the more we envy, the more it intoxicates us because there will always be someone somewhere who is better looking, richer, more intelligent, more popular, more successful than we are, or who owns a company that is more profitable.

If we want to be happy, we have to stop wanting unrealistic things or things that are too expensive for us. We have to bring our ideal down to a level that

is accessible and, above all, we must remember that the neighbour is not necessarily happier because he owns more than we do. He probably envies someone just as often as we envy him.

To those who may be a source of envy because of their success as a couple, a family or in business, or even just because they seem to be happy, remember that the way we live our lives is a lot like Oka cheese: it can be a real delicacy for some but turn others' stomachs. So are you the kind of person who enjoys the taste of their cheese or noses around the neighbour's? ■

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