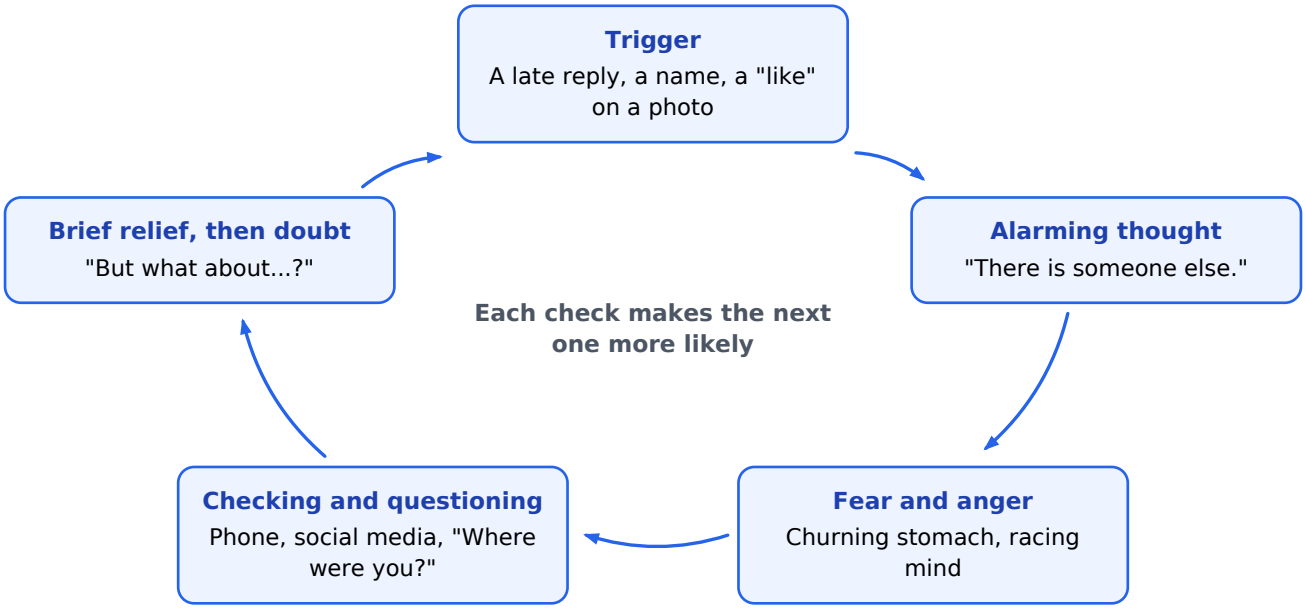
Understanding jealousy

What jealousy is, what feeds it and what helps.

Jealousy is the fear of losing someone important to a rival, real or imagined. Almost everyone feels it at times. A flicker of jealousy is not a problem. It becomes one when it takes up hours of your day, drives you to check and question, and starts to damage the relationship you are trying to protect.

Envy is different. Envy is wanting what someone else has. Jealousy is fearing that someone will take what you have.

How it keeps itself going



Checking gives a few minutes of relief, then the doubt comes back with a new question. Meanwhile the other person feels accused and pulls back, which looks like more evidence.

What helps

1. **Name it.** "This is jealousy" is different from "this is a fact".
2. **Separate what you know from what you fear.** A late reply is a late reply.
3. **Cut back the checking.** Delay it first, then drop it. The urge rises, peaks and passes, like any urge.
4. **Say the fear, not the accusation.** "I felt insecure when..." is better than "Who were you with?"
5. **Look after your own life.** Friends and interests of your own make you less dependent on one person for your sense of worth.
6. **Ask where it comes from.** Being cheated on or left before, or doubting your own worth, can set the alarm too sensitive.

> **When it is more than jealousy**
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> Sometimes distrust is a response to real lies or broken agreements. That is something to talk about openly, not a habit to treat. And if a partner uses jealousy to control where you go, who you see or what is on your phone, that is control, not love. Women's Aid: freephone 1800 341 900, any time. Men's Aid: 01 554 3811, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

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