

# Sometimes When I'm Jealous

Deborah Serani, Psy.D.

illustrated by Kyra Teis



# Sometimes When I'm Jealous

Deborah Serani, Psy.D.  
illustrated by Kyra Teis

free spirit  
PUBLISHING®



Text copyright © 2024 by Deborah Serani, Psy.D.

Illustrations copyright © 2024 by Kyra Teis

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. Unless otherwise noted, no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without express written permission of the publisher, except for brief quotations or critical reviews. For more information, go to [freespirit.com/permissions](https://freespirit.com/permissions).

Free Spirit, Free Spirit Publishing, and associated logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Teacher Created Materials. A complete listing of our logos and trademarks is available at [freespirit.com](https://freespirit.com)

#### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Serani, Deborah, 1961- author. | Teis, Kyra, illustrator.

Title: Sometimes when I'm jealous / Deborah Serani, Psy.D. ; illustrated by Kyra Teis.

Other titles: Sometimes when I am jealous

Description: Minneapolis, MN : Free Spirit Publishing, an imprint of Teacher Created Materials, [2024] | Audience: Ages 4–8.

Identifiers: LCCN 2023050576 (print) | LCCN 2023050577 (ebook) | ISBN 9798885540919 (hardcover) | ISBN 9798885540926 (ebook) | ISBN 9798885540933 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Jealousy—Juvenile literature. | Jealousy in children—Juvenile literature.

Classification: LCC BF575.J4 S47 2024 (print) | LCC BF575.J4 (ebook) | DDC 155.4/1248—dc23/eng/20240205

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023050576>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023050577>

Free Spirit Publishing does not have control over or assume responsibility for author or third-party websites and their content. At the time of this book's publication, all facts and figures cited within are the most current available. All website URLs are accurate and active; all publications, organizations, websites, and other resources exist as described in this book; and all have been verified as of May 2024. If you find an error or believe that a resource listed here is not as described, please contact Free Spirit Publishing. Parents, teachers, and other adults: We strongly urge you to monitor children's use of the internet.

Edited by Alison Behnke

Cover and interior design by Colleen Pidel

#### Free Spirit Publishing

An imprint of Teacher Created Materials

9850 51st Avenue North, Suite 100

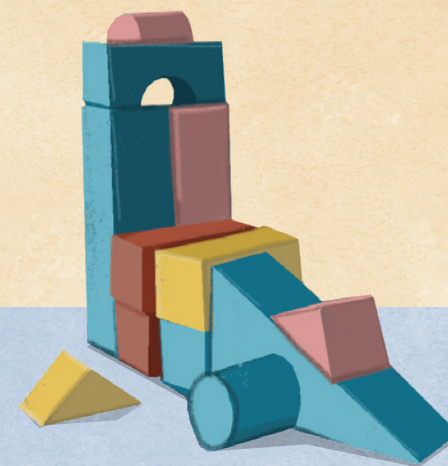
Minneapolis, MN 55442

(612) 338-2068

[help4kids@freespirit.com](mailto:help4kids@freespirit.com)

[freespirit.com](https://freespirit.com)

# For Michael Anthony



Sometimes when I'm jealous,  
everything bothers me.



I don't like it when Mommy  
is on the phone.



Or when Daddy is taking  
care of the baby.



Or when my  
sister is doing  
homework.



**3. Avoid comparisons:** Be mindful of statements—whether intentional or unintentional—that highlight comparisons. Noting aloud that you, children, or others are not measuring up creates a negative mindset of feeling inadequate. Research shows that while we're genetically wired to evaluate ourselves and others in society, relying too heavily on social comparisons instills a poor sense of self and can worsen jealousy in children.

**4. Practice gratitude:** Help children express thankfulness for who they are and what they have. Gratitude, defined as reflecting on and appreciating what one has in life, significantly reduces envy and jealousy. When children find happiness in their own backyard, they are less likely to feel the need to chase the greener grass on the other side.

**5. Reinforce positive behaviors:** Learning how to manage and negotiate jealousy is not a quick process. It takes time for children to identify the emotion, adjust their response, and find prosocial ways to offset jealous and envious feelings. Take notice of children's growing awareness, behavioral changes, and attempts—and praise, cheer, and compliment every step of the way.



## WHEN TO SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP

As mentioned earlier, jealous feelings are part of the range of expected emotional experiences in childhood. Jealousy can be a challenge as a child matures, and the goal for caregivers is to turn such moments into self-discovery. However, if jealousy isn't evolving into something prosocial, and is controlling a good portion of a child's life, professional help may be needed.

Chronic jealousy has been shown to overload a child's stress response, keeping them stuck in a fight-or-flight mode. This can lead to overwhelming anxiety, worries about perceived rivals, or a fixation on wishing for what they don't possess. As a result, a child will suffer physically, with aches and pains, a weakened immune system, and increased heart rate and blood pressure as possible effects, along with interference with cognition and learning. Intense jealousy can also cause depression, poor self-esteem, and suicidal thinking. Studies about unmanaged jealousy as children move into adolescence show an escalation of aggression and hostility, with bullying, abuse, violence, and criminal behaviors being risk factors. So if you notice a child's jealousy increasing instead of reducing over time, it's critical to seek a mental health professional. Specialists can recommend and teach specific interventions to minimize jealousy and cultivate adaptive ways to embrace well-being.



## RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

**American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry**

[aacap.org](http://aacap.org)

**American Academy of Pediatrics**

[aap.org](http://aap.org)

**Association for Children's Mental Health**

[www.acmh-mi.org](http://www.acmh-mi.org)

**Child Mind Institute**

[childmind.org](http://childmind.org)

**Children's Mental Health Network**

[cmhnetwork.org](http://cmhnetwork.org)

**National Parenting Education Network**

[npen.org](http://npen.org)

**National PTA**

[pta.org](http://pta.org)

**Zero to Three**

[zerotothree.org](http://zerotothree.org)