



Ego



“ Ever since I entered puberty, I’ve had issues with my body. It doesn’t have enough body hair, my dick is too small and I don’t have enough muscles. Not only does my body have to be manly - I have to be manly. This includes things like getting laid a lot, being a pro at cars, computers and construction - and being tough, emotionless and invulnerable.

I quickly learned that if I found “faults” in others I could easily get away myself. If I shouted that someone else was unmanly or a sissy I didn’t have to be the target of other people’s looks or judgement. Instead, my status grew and I became a part of “the group”. Even when I didn’t attack others I always compared myself to them, and I still do.

I thought that this behaviour was necessary to survive primary school. Unfortunately I’ve noticed that I carry the same kind of behaviour into my friendships and relationships. I’ve become very jealous when my partners have talked about the sex lives they had before me. I’ve shut down and acted cold. I’ve counted how many sex partners I’ve had and compared the number to my partners, just to see if I can relax or if I should feel threatened. This has also led to me trying to control my partners by keeping track of them and who they are with.”

– anonymous participant

This story shows you how you can open up and speak from the heart in the following conversation. The topic is about suspiciousness, jealousy, status and looks.

Warm up statements - answer YES/NO

- I’ve gotten jealous when someone I love has spent time with others
- I have high self-esteem
- I’ve mistreated someone to gain status
- I think it’s hard to admit I’m wrong
- I find it difficult to trust other men

Questions

- **How does it feel when you get jealous? Give examples.**
Possible follow-up question: How have you previously acted on it? How would you like to act in the future?
- **Do you see parts of your appearance as manly/unmanly? In what way?**
Possible follow-up question: Are you satisfied with how you look? Why/why not?
- **Are there certain attributes or things that a man “should do”, that you feel like you don’t live up to?**
Possible follow-up question: How does that feel? What does it do to your self-esteem?
- **How does it feel when someone questions you in front of others? For example on social media.**
Possible follow-up question: Do you end up being defensive or can you change your opinion if you realize that you’re wrong? Do you let it show that you’re doubting?
- **Do you find it difficult to apologize?**
Possible follow-up question: If you do, what do you do instead of apologizing?
- **When have you felt that you don’t live up to the expectations of how a man should act?**
Possible follow-up question: What have you done to combat that feeling?
- **Do you compare yourself to other men? How?**
Possible follow-up question: Do you get suspicious or jealous of other men? Why do you think that is?
- **How do you feel if someone close to you tries to drag you down in order to gain status? Give examples.**
Possible follow-up question: Have you done this yourself? What happened?

Questions for further self-examination

- **How does it feel to fail or lose in front of other men?**
Possible follow-up question: How would you like it to feel?
- **How do you react when your partner talks about sexual experiences they’ve had before you?**
Possible follow-up question: Why do you think you react like that?
- **How can you handle your jealousy in a good way?**
- **Do you hide parts of yourself from others? Like attributes, behaviours or parts of your appearance?**
Possible follow-up question: Do you hide parts of yourself considered “unmanly”?
- **Do you think that you make other men feel insecure about themselves? How?**
Possible follow-up question: Are there situations when you do this on purpose?