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English 1121

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Envy by definition is a feeling of discontented or resentful longing aroused by someone else's possessions, qualities, or luck. We as people see the fortune of others and wish that upon ourselves, but what would you sacrifice for that fortune? Envy in this day and age is as prevalent a virus as COVID-19, with the surge of social media it seems like the internet is proving to be a contest of who can show off the most. Envy is a powerful word and had and continues to have a strong hold on us as humans.

Envy creates a problem, especially for me, when I looked at my phone and saw others do better than me I wanted what they had. I saw others my age doing better than me, seemingly having their lives figured out already, and this disheartened me, instead of wanting to work toward getting those things I shut myself down. What I didn't know was that working towards being like them is just as wrong an answer as not doing anything. Is it realistic to be 19 and a millionaire? Is it realistic to be 20 and have your own house and car? It isn't realistic for you to be fresh outta high school with your autonomy. So why am I wasting my time envying these people, wasting my time trying to be like an outlier? What's wrong with normality? This is the question that bounced around in my head, it was when I started seeing my friends do better than I understood my personal growth. When I see my close friends winning, people who're just like me, not rich Instagram influencers, rather relatable inner-city Bronx kids winning, there's no envy. When I see my brothers going up I feel happiness and a different feeling is manifested, a feeling of hope. I've tried to put aside this outdated idea of envy and created hope and admiration

instead. Even though I found a specific instance in which I'm not envious it was still a struggle for me to curve the word. I tried to not strive for the grandiose but for attainable and simple goals, don't shoot for the skies, try to get to the first floor first. While this information may seem odd, or it may contrast what you've heard in the past, these ideas helped me overcome this word. What happens when you get to 20 and aren't a millionaire, what are you gonna do now? Setting these unrealistic goals are simple pipe dreams, I had to try and focus on trying to break the hold this word "Envy" had on me.

Envy became way too regular for me, this led me to go out and look for the origin of this word. What I learned is that Envy is as old as us as species, humans are burdened with conscious thoughts. Unlike animals who have the luxury of only needing to satisfy their physical needs to maintain balance, we as humans have psychological needs that need to be met to maintain balance along with those physical needs. I found one specific example of envy that caught my attention is how Envy plays a part in piety. Religion has always been a constant in my life, and the life of my family but even there where Envy is stated as a sin it's still prevalent. In our development of religion over time our ancestors tried to appease their god's jealousy by giving them offerings and sacrifices. Even in modern religions like christianity, this idea of appeasement hasn't disappeared, but what caught my eye is how dangerous Envy can be in religion. My favorite example of the potential danger of Envy in mythology is the Trojan War. The Trojan War is a mythological battle that is a very real depiction of how Envy can lead to strife. In the story the goddesses Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite got into a quarrel after the goddesses Eris gave them a golden apple, which is meant for the fairest. Eris as a goddess uses this apple to bring out envy in people, and she is the goddess of discord and strife. This shows that not even gods are immune to their ego and envy, all three of these goddesses are masters in their respective crafts.

Hera is the queen and personal consort of the king of gods Zeus, Aphrodite is the goddess of love and is believed to be the most beautiful woman, Athena is only matched by the god of war Ares in her prowess in battle, she's described as insurmountable with her affinity for strategy. Even though all three of these goddesses are so powerful individually and are beloved by their worshippers, they still end up starting a war for something as trivial as a golden fruit. At our cores, as people envy could corrupt our abilities to think objectively and we can succumb to this desire. The Trojan War shows reality through fiction and was a very apt description of what I believed that envy was. This demonstrates the power of the word envy, and how it isn't a "new" thing, rather it is an age-old tale. In my community I've noticed that the lines have been blurred when it comes to what is considered jealousy, this isn't any different than how the gods handled jealousy. They believed it was a simple competition, but it quickly became a deadly war. This shows how us humans aren't any different from gods, we as people may see a simple comparison to another as a harmless thought. These thoughts can devolve into something more sinister. We have to be way more conscious of our envy, it may be an undeniable truth of life but the way we react to it can be controlled. A lot of people don't understand that while envy is a just word it's also a deeply seeded emotion. The best way to avoid this is being aware that you control your emotions not the other way around.

All things considered, envy may be inevitable; it is most likely a product of our underlying thoughts and subconscious desires. The most important thing I took away from learning about the word envy is that if I recognize its presence it becomes an easier struggle to deal with. It's hard to come to terms with the unavoidable aspects of the human psyche but what mitigates the struggle is to recognize when it happens. One coping mechanism I use is to look at what the person I envy doesn't have, we're all unique in our way. When you consider this you'll

find more merit in yourself rather than feel bad for not being like others. My second and final coping mechanism is making those small steps to attain the thing I envy. When you take steps to satisfy your desire for something it makes you feel better at the end of the day. Especially when that thing you desire benefits you, the power of envy is overwhelming but I learned that the word can be positive. Envy is a powerful word and had and continues to have a strong hold on us as humans.