Jealousy in Dance: Workbook

Turning envy into fuel for your dancing

Name: _____ Date: _____

BEFORE WE START

Every dancer has felt it. A classmate gets the role you wanted. Someone picks up the combination faster. A friend places higher in a competition. Feeling jealous does not make you a bad dancer or a bad person. It is a normal human feeling. What matters is what you do with it.

UNDERSTANDING JEALOUSY

What is jealousy? Envy, or jealousy, is feeling bitter when someone else "has it better". It shows up when someone has a quality, achievement, or opportunity that you want. It is an uncomfortable emotion that grabs your attention. In sports and dance, one person's gain often feels like another person's loss.

Two kinds of envy: Researchers separate envy into two types.

- **Malicious envy** is the kind we usually think of. It stings and it wants to pull the other person down. It is often destructive and unproductive.
- **Benign envy** looks more like admiration. It also stings, but it involves fewer negative thoughts about the other person. This type of envy can help you to work harder, change things for the better, and become more excellent yourself.

Big idea: Envy is normal. The kind of envy you act on is more important!

What is underneath jealousy:

- Admiration and respect.
- Feeling bad about yourself. People often feel jealous because they are feeling down about themselves.
- A goal you set for yourself that other people seem to be achieving.

Normal, but costly when it runs the show: It is unrealistic to say you should never feel jealous. The feeling is normal. It turns harmful when you become driven by it instead of focusing on doing your best to improve.

Three signs jealousy has taken over:

1. You cannot celebrate other people's wins.
2. You want to tear others down instead of improving yourself.
3. You define success as winning or losing. You are the best or nothing special at all. We call this black and white thinking!

Two ways to define success:

- **Ego orientation** defines success as being better than someone else: beating them for a part in a show, or in a competition, or a shout-out in class.
- **Task orientation** defines success as self-improvement. Dancers who are task-oriented can look to other dancers to learn, be happy for others when they do well, and use it as a chance to grow.

Comparison can be a tool: Comparing yourself to others is a natural human tendency. Used well, it is about respect and admiration. It lets you be inspired by other people and see them as proof of what people, including you, are capable of.

What helps: Feel it, talk about it, use it.

1. **Feel it.** There is no reason to be ashamed. It is better to acknowledge the feeling than to ignore it, because bottled-up emotions can be harmful. Writing down how you feel can show you what is underneath. It is fine to take some time to be mad, then get back to work.
2. **Talk about it.** Choose someone who will listen and help you understand the feeling, like a parent, teacher, or close friend, not someone who will feed the jealousy. If the person you usually talk to is the one you are jealous of, be honest. Try: "I am happy for you, but I'm also really disappointed in myself right now."
3. **Use it.** Focus on yourself instead of the people around you. If someone is doing something well and you think about how you might adopt some of it, that is motivating. If you are so focused on them that you lose sight of yourself, that is counterproductive. Get specific: is this something you can fix? You may not be able to change how you are built or what a choreographer is looking for, but you can improve your strength, flexibility, stamina, and work ethic.

Key terms

- **Envy / jealousy:** feeling bitter or hurt when someone else has something you want.
- **Malicious envy:** envy that wants to pull others down.
- **Benign envy:** envy that looks like admiration and pushes you to level up.
- **Ego orientation:** defining success as being better than others.
- **Task orientation:** defining success as your own improvement.
- **Reframe:** changing how you think about a situation so it helps you instead of hurting

you.

ACTIVITY 1: NAME IT

Goal: Notice where jealousy shows up for you. Circle every example that feels familiar. Then star your top two:

- Casting and role announcements
- Teacher praise for someone else
- Social media highlights
- Auditions
- Solos and featured parts
- Competition results and trophies
- Friends improving faster than me
- Natural flexibility or extension
- Turns and jumps
- Early bloomers
- Other: ___.

Rate it: How strong does the feeling usually get? 1 (a tiny pinch) 2 3 4 5 (it takes over my whole day).

Notice it in your body: Where do you feel jealousy? (tight shoulders, clenched jaw, hot face, stomach drop) ___

ACTIVITY 2: MALICIOUS OR BENIGN?

Goal: Tell the difference between envy that pulls down and envy that levels up. Read each situation. Write M (malicious: pull down) or B (benign: level up). Then rewrite any M so it becomes a B.

1. Your classmate nails the turn sequence. You think, "She only got it because the teacher likes her." ___ Rewrite: _____
2. Your friend gets the solo. You think, "I want that too. What can I work on so I'm ready next time?" ___ Rewrite: _____
3. Someone posts a performance clip. You scroll past it and say nothing to anyone, but you feel worse all night. ___ Rewrite: _____
4. A dancer in your class gets praised. You decide to leave her out of the group chat. ___ Rewrite: _____
5. A dancer jumps higher than you. You think, "I'm going to ask her how she warms up." ___ Rewrite: _____

Talk it over with a partner: Which one do you catch yourself doing most? What helps you switch?

ACTIVITY 3: FEELING DETECTIVE

Goal: Find out what is underneath the jealousy. Jealousy is often a signal. Sometimes it sits on top of admiration. Sometimes there is something else underneath, like feeling hurt, angry, embarrassed, left out, or worried you are falling behind.

Think of a recent time you felt jealous.

What happened: _____

The jealousy was about: _____

Underneath it, I was also feeling (circle any):

- admiration,
- hurt,
- anger,
- embarrassment,
- worry,
- left out,
- tired,
- other: _____

What I actually want is: _____

Say it a new way: "I feel jealous because I want ___." That sentence is useful. It points to a goal you can work toward.

ACTIVITY 4: GET SPECIFIC

Goal: Turn "I wish" into "I will." Pick three things you have felt jealous about. For each, ask: Can I work on this? Some things are not changeable, like how your body is built or what a choreographer is looking for. Others are, like strength, flexibility, stamina, technique, and work ethic.

I envy: _____

Can I work on it? Yes / Partly / No. One action I can take this week:

_____

I envy: _____

Can I work on it? Yes / Partly / No. One action I can take this week:

_____

I envy: _____

Can I work on it? Yes / Partly / No. One action I can take this week:

_____

If you answered No, that is okay. Write what you will do instead:

_____

ACTIVITY 5: THREE THINGS I'M GOOD AT

Goal: Remember your own strengths. Jealousy shrinks our view of ourselves. Write three things you are good at as a dancer or a person. Be specific. Then put this page where you will see it, like on your mirror or inside your dance bag.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

One thing a teacher or friend has told me I do well:

_____

ACTIVITY 6: MY FUEL PLAN (5 minutes)

Goal: Decide what you will do next time jealousy shows up.

Next time I feel jealous, I will:

- Pause: I will notice it and name it by saying:

  "_____"
- Check: I will ask, "Is this helping me or getting in my way?"
- Feel it: If I need to, I will take a day to be frustrated, then get back to work.
- Talk: The person I can talk to who builds me up is:

_____

- Use it: One skill I will work on is:

_____

QUICK REFERENCE

Situation	What to try
Someone gets your role	Feel it, then ask what you can work on for next time.
A classmate is praised	Notice what they are doing well and try one idea.
You scroll and feel behind	Remember it is a highlight reel. Put the phone down for a bit.
You want to say something mean	Pause. Ask if this helps or hurts. Talk to someone who builds you up.
A friend wins	Cheer first. Feel the rest later.