



**Sue and Jeff Allen**

# How competition destroys relationships

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## **We're better together**

We help you connect to other people, learn about yourself and develop honest and mutually fulfilling relationships.



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# How competition destroys relationships

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One of the most destructive forces in our relationships is our level of competition. The most destructive thing about it is that most of us are not even aware of how competitive we are. We compete in conversations to tell the best or the worst story, we secretly harbour comparisons about who is the best dressed / most intelligent / richest or poorest / most morally superior – the list is endless. We compete in every area of our lives; it is encouraged in many of our workplaces, and to the extent we are competing at work we then go home and compete with our partners and even with our children. Many of us have competed most of our lives with our brothers and sisters, and in our experience the ones that compete the most are those that appear not to compete at all.

We can begin to recognize how much competition we have in our lives when someone in a significant relationship with us starts to fail in any area, be it work, health, abundance, friendships, or anything else. What is going on is that we have stopped giving and loving and supporting them and we have begun to compete with them.

Our competition always sets up a world of winners and losers. In competing we set out to win and win even over the people closest to us. While this may not be our conscious intention, it is the pattern that has been set up for us since our early childhood, as all competition is built on a belief that there is not enough to go around so you better compete with your brother and sister, compete with your mother and father, in order to win your 'fair share'.

All competition therefore is built on this belief in scarcity – 'there is not enough to go around'. It appears that the dynamic underneath this competition and scarcity is the belief that we are special or the wish to do things just for ourselves. Just to give us an idea of how insidious it all is, this level of doing things just for ourselves becomes one of the core building blocks of our ego. It is reflected in our outside world as a world full of winners and losers, and isn't that how our world is now, with half the people winning and half the people losing? It is well known that there is enough food in the world to feed everyone, but this imbalance in our minds results in people starving in our world of plenty.

Recently both Jeff and I, after all these years of healing, have been revisiting our levels of competition and once again have been surprised at how much of this underlying competition there is in our relationship. Things have got better and we both enjoy a level of success, and we consciously support each other. Interestingly, both of us come from a family of four siblings, both of us have one sister and two brothers, both called Peter and John. The sibling rivalry in Jeff's family has been legendary: to the mirth of many of Jeff's friends when he meets his older brother, John will physically punch Jeff a number of times. This is such a reflection of the level of competition going on in their childhoods because it seems it was one continuous fistfight. My old competition with my sister is reflected for me in the way I compare myself to the women in the training team I am now a part of, and for Jeff it is still difficult to join a queue as the thought of standing at the back brings up that feeling of loss that every competitive person hates to feel, and therefore inflicts on others.

It is time well-spent to look at any levels of competition going on in your life. Who around you is failing or has failed? Which one of your brothers or sisters is not doing so well at the moment? (If you are the one losing, recognize that you are also competing and you compete by losing in one area so that you can win in some other way – e.g. 'pious poor')

In your eyes, is your partner growing and becoming more gifted, or is your partner shrinking and displaying more faults? If they are becoming more gifted, it is because you are being a good partner and giving to them and supporting them, because as we give to and support our partners, they will change and grow. If we don't do that, they begin to fail and we start complaining about them, which only compounds the failure and hides the place where we are not giving.

In the very core of us, we need to change the belief that we live in a world of scarcity, and that there is any need for us to be special. The truth is, there is enough for everyone, there is enough food, nourishment, space, and love.

So today, who could you give to, who could you support? Even if you begin to change the direction of your attitude towards giving rather than taking or expecting, your life and the lives of those around you will begin to improve. What really lies under competition is our fear of the next step forward in our relationships and/or our lives.

**If you want to explore your situation in more depth, then book a coaching session with Sue or Jeff Allen or sign up for one of our events.**