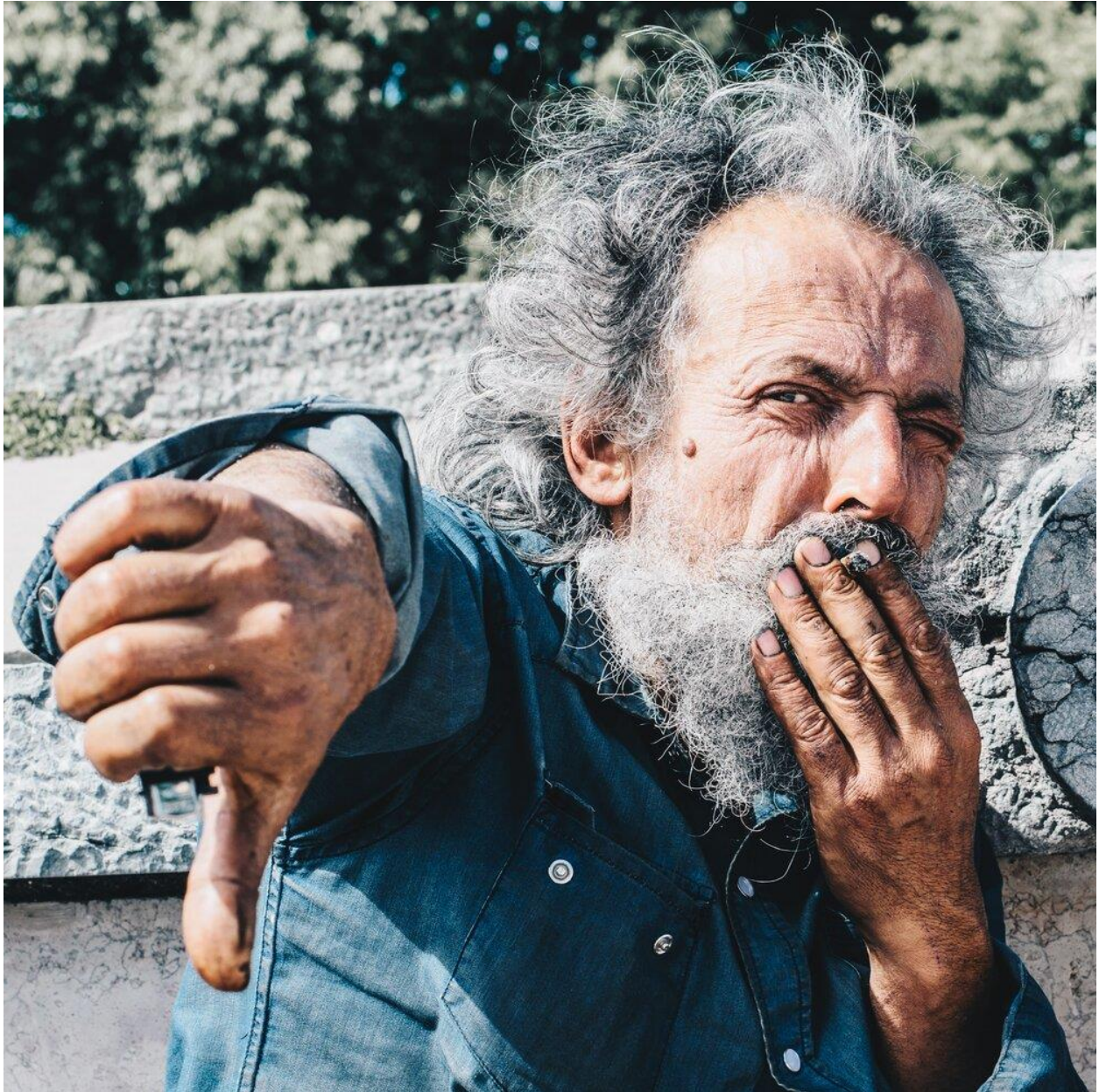




Treating Narcissism



Swing between shame and grandiosity.



Expert Strategies for Treating Narcissism, August 2023

For Paid Access: <https://www.nicabm.com/>

"The only way through our narcissism
is to feel the mortal wound."¹

— Thomas Moore, p.63

Introduction

- This is a thorough journey into the indicators and treatment of narcissism.
- To inquire into the subtle dynamics of narcissism take this course offered by the National Institute for the Clinical Application of Behavioral Medicine.

Course Description

1. How to Recognize Narcissism (Even When It's Subtle)
2. How to Help Clients Navigate Between Shame and Grandiosity
3. The Critical Link Between Trauma, Attachment, and Narcissism (and How to Work with It)-Part 1
4. The Critical Link Between Trauma, Attachment, and Narcissism (and How to Work with It)-Part 2
5. Working with Narcissism at the Level of the Nervous System
6. How to Recognize and Work with Narcissistic Abuse
7. Working with Families to Halt Multi-Generational Patterns of Narcissism
8. Working with Narcissism's Impact on a Client's Relationship
9. Strategies to Manage Countertransference When Working with Narcissism

¹ Moore, Thomas. (1992). *Care of the soul: A guide for cultivating depth and sacredness in everyday life*. New York: HarperCollins.



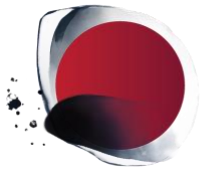
10. Common Mistakes When Working with Narcissism (and How to Avoid Them)

A Few Notes and Comments About Narcissism

- Notice the theme of self-evaluation, explicit comparisons to how you are doing or implicit, how I am doing compared to some internalized view of myself.
- Swing between shame and grandiosity connected by the client's self-esteem.
- Grandiosity blunts your perception of negative consequences.
- A defense against feeling helpless.
- Look to see what is the pain of it, the loneliness of it?
- Embrace grandiosity and gently pull yourself down. With shame reach down and gently scoop yourself up.
- Shame is still about me; remorse is about you.
- Turn your attention outward.
- A natural response to their past wounds.
- Hey, I want to be good at stuff. What kind of impact do you want to have in their lives. Shifts from being dominate and on top to how can I be powerfully present for people in my life. Achievement motivations.
- Harnessing the motivational access.
- My agenda was to be truthful to him. What is real and what is not. Reflects authentically how he is being perceived. Slow revelation of discrepancies.
- Growing skill of self-observation and awareness.

Can you be a good guest?

Can you be a good host?



Narcissism in Business

Narcissism in business takes many forms. We can look at the individual power figure, the department, or in fact the entire company. One example, a friend worked for IBM and was hired to provide a unique solution to a specific problem. The tension between the individual and the department became so great that he left and later became a major competitor and worked to compete against this department. Why? It is possible that the department itself had all the features of a narcissistic personality.

Quotes

"A narcissistic partner would never start therapy by saying this in an initial interview:

"I wish I could give even when it isn't convenient for me. However, I hate to admit I'm wrong and I have a very thin skin, so I frequently make demands or attack my partner. I wish I could make a sustained effort to give and respond in an empathic way. But I am rarely giving or nurturing unless I feel like it."

The narcissist will never say this because they do not give when it is inconvenient, and they have minimal capacity to be psychologically separate from another person. By being separate we mean having clear enough boundaries that they can understand and accept another person having different emotional responses and different vulnerabilities than they themselves have.

Our favorite definition of empathy comes from Judith Jordan (1984) at The Stone Center. She defines empathy as, "A cognitive and emotional activity in which one person is able to experience the feelings and thoughts of another while simultaneously knowing his/her own thoughts and feelings."

Another aspect of empathy is the ability to understand verbal or



nonverbal communication of the cognitive and affective experience of what is being communicated to you while simultaneously knowing your own thoughts and feelings.”²

“Narcissists feel suffocated by intimacy, or by the constant reminders of the REAL, nitty-gritty world out there. It reduces them, makes them realize the Grandiosity Gap between their fantasies and reality. It is a threat to the precarious balance of their personality structures ("false" and invented) and treated by them as a menace.

Narcissists forever shift the blame, pass the buck, and engage in cognitive dissonance. They "pathologize" the other, foster feelings of guilt and shame in her, demean, debase, and humiliate to preserve their sense of superiority.

Narcissists are pathological liars. They think nothing of it because their very self is false, their own confabulation.

The Narcissistic Boss:

- Never disagree with the narcissist or contradict him.
- Never offer him any intimacy.
- Look awed by whatever attribute matters to him (for instance: by his professional achievements or by his good looks, or by his success with women and so on).
- Never remind him of life out there and if you do, connect it somehow to his sense of grandiosity. You can aggrandize even your office supplies, the most mundane thing conceivable by saying: "These are the BEST art materials ANY workplace is going to have", "We get them EXCLUSIVELY", etc.;

² From: Practice Development Dispatch
Sent: Sunday, August 15, 2004 4:17 PM
Subject: Empathy in the Narcissistic Partner

Practice Development Dispatch
by Elyn Bader, Ph.D. & Peter Pearson, Ph.D.
The Couples Institute



- Do not make any comment, which might directly or indirectly impinge on the narcissist's self-image, omnipotence, superior judgment, omniscience, skills, capabilities, professional record, or even omnipresence. Bad sentences start with: "I think you overlooked ... made a mistake here ... you don't know ... do you know ... you were not here yesterday so ... you cannot ... you should ... (interpreted as rude imposition, narcissists react very badly to perceived restrictions placed on their freedom) ... I (never mention the fact that you are a separate, independent entity, narcissists regard others as extensions of their selves)..." You

The Narcissistic Co-worker:

Notice patterns in his bullying. Is he more aggressive on Monday mornings - and more open to suggestions on Friday afternoon? Is he amenable to flattery? Can you modify his conduct by appealing to his morality, superior knowledge, good manners, cosmopolitanism, or upbringing? Manipulating the narcissist is the only way to survive in such a tainted workplace.

Can the narcissist be harnessed? Can his energies be channeled productively? This would be a deeply flawed – and even dangerous – "advice". Various management gurus purport to teach us how to harness this force of nature known as malignant or pathological narcissism. Narcissists are driven, visionary, ambitious, exciting, and productive, says Michael Maccoby, for instance. To ignore such a resource is a criminal waste. All we need to do is learn how to "handle" them.

Yet, this prescription is either naive or disingenuous. Narcissists cannot be "handled", or "managed", or "contained", or "channeled". They are, by definition, incapable of teamwork. They lack empathy, are exploitative, envious, haughty and feel entitled, even if such a feeling is commensurate only with their grandiose fantasies and when their accomplishments are meager.

Narcissists dissemble, conspire, destroy, and self-destruct. Their drive is compulsive, their vision rarely grounded, their human relations a calamity. In the long run, there is no enduring benefit to dancing with narcissists – only ephemeral and, often, fallacious, "achievements".



The Narcissistic Company

Can a Productive Narcissist manage as the CEO or President of a company? He does not mention a key feature of that personality disorder, denial. Even the “sidekick” who may have the proper diagnosis for his or her partner and the support to counter point or compensate for his swing between rage and envy will fall victim to the insidious characteristics of denial. Like a random pervasive fog, denial will imbibe the daily processes with distortion and confusion. Narcissists maintain their control by disallowing the existence of the other person. A Narcissist “acts-as-if” she or he is listening, empathic and attuned but rarely is affected to any depth by external events.

Reference

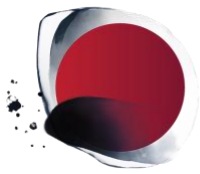
Pathological Narcissism: A Dysfunction or a Blessing?
<https://samvak.tripod.com/journal48.html>

NARCISSISTIC PERSONALITY³

Functional Attributes

- a. **Behaviorally Arrogant** (e.g., flouts conventional rules of shared social living, viewing them as naïve or inapplicable to self; reveals a careless disregard for personal integrity and an indifference to the rights of others).
- b. **Interpersonally Exploitive** (e.g., feels entitled, is unemphatic and expects special favors without assuming reciprocal responsibilities; shamelessly takes others for granted and uses them to enhance self and indulge desires).
- c. **Cognitively Expansive** (e.g., has an undisciplined imagination and exhibits a preoccupation with immature fantasies of success, beauty, or love; is minimally

³Source unknown. Not the original material of this author.



constrained by objective reality, takes liberties with facts, and often lies to redeem self-illusions).

- d. **Rationalization Mechanism** (e.g., is self-deceptive and facile in devising plausible reasons to justify self-centered and socially inconsiderate behaviors; offers alibis to place oneself in the best possible light, despite evident shortcomings or failures).

Structural Attributes

- a. **Temperamentally Insouciant** (e.g., manifests a general air of nonchalance and imperturbability; appears coolly unimpressionable or buoyantly optimistic, except when narcissistic confidence is shaken, at which time either rage, shame, or emptiness is briefly displayed).
- b. **Admirable Self-Image** (e.g., confidently exhibits self, acting in a self-assured manner and displaying achievements; has a sense of high self-worth, despite being seen by others as egotistic, inconsiderate, and arrogant).
- c. **Contrived Internalizations** (e.g., inner representations are composed far more than usual of illusory ideas and memories, synthetic drives and conflicts, and pretentious, if not simulated, percepts and attitudes, all of which are readily refashioned as the need arises).
- d. **Spurious Intrapsychic Organization** (e.g., coping and defensive strategies tend to be flimsy and transparent, appear more substantial and dynamically orchestrated than they are, regulation impulses only marginally, channeling needs with minimal restraint, and creating an inner world in which conflicts are dismissed, failures are quickly redeemed, and self-pride is effortlessly reasserted).

Image Courtesy of: <https://unsplash.com/@dpascoa>



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The Tim Dukes Method provides an opportunity for self-reflective individuals to cultivate the capacity to receive into consciousness hidden aspects of the self, claiming your unique gifts – ensuring that today’s brilliance successfully transitions into tomorrow’s wisdom. The Tim Dukes Method is designed and implemented by Dr. Timothy Dukes for determined creatives to ensure long-term viability — as a continuing investment in the well-being of yourself, family, organizations, culture, society, and the Earth itself.