

Some Characteristics of Narcissism

- Grandiosity.
- Selfishness, though often well-concealed under a façade of consideration.
- Feelings of nervousness, emptiness, or irritation when not at the center of attention.
- Expects constant “mirroring” from others, especially relationship partners; enraged, sarcastic and blaming when it isn’t forthcoming.
- Envious, especially toward the very people who offer desperately-needed narcissistic supplies like admiration, praise, or affection.
- Aggressiveness.
- Uneven perfectionism: must have total order in some areas of life while others are chaotic.
- Prone to narcissistic wounding (ego injury); intolerant of certain kinds of criticism.
- Retaliatory tendencies; signs of narcissistic rage, whether suppressed or acted out.
- Abundant rational-seeming justifications for abusing those perceived to inflict such an injury.
- Largely or entirely guiltless about the harm done to others in revenge for such injuries.
- Alternates between passivity and domination.
- Under a fragile and inflated ego, disavowed emptiness, depression, sadness, and insignificance.
- Resorts to manic counterphobic defenses against “negative” emotions (e.g., excessive busyness, escapism, “positive thinking” with a compulsive edge to it).
- Feels entitled to special considerations, whether actually earned or not.
- Paranoia, blaming, victim-thinking.
- Tends to sexualize the need for narcissistic supplies; excessively seductive; shallow relationships.
- Lack of empathy, though skilled at pretending to empathize and understand.
- Cold-eyed charm.
- Fantasies of unlimited power, beauty, intelligence, wealth, fame, etc.
- Arrogance, whether overt or covert; tends to be harshly judgmental of others.
- Extremely manipulative; usually highly skilled at “pushing buttons” or redirecting criticism.
- Controlling; lack of boundaries between self and others; often jealous and invasive.
- Overly concerned with surface indicators of social importance (e.g., appearance, job title, possessions, status symbols), whether such indicators are flagrantly displayed or rebelled against.
- Either unwilling to enter therapy (for fear of ego puncture) or prone to turn psychological insights into rationalizations, intellectualizations, or more narcissistic fuel.
- Unable to be objective or feel empathy when angry; has trouble separating thoughts from feelings.
- Splitting (the early defense of either loving or hating others with little or no in-between feelings), especially when “fed” or injured.
- Expects automatic compliance with his or her expectations.
- Unlimited and unrealistic sense of specialness.
- Often responds to perceived hurts by defensive regression to a state of hostile, archaic grandiosity accompanied by an elaborate show of strength, toughness, or independence.

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