

Scientific Healing and Recovery from Narcissistic Abuse: Evidence-based Practices (clinical and self-help)

Trilingual Edition

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Warning and Disclaimer

The contents of this book are not meant to substitute for professional help and counselling. The readers are discouraged from using it for diagnostic or therapeutic ends. The diagnosis and treatment of Narcissistic Personality Disorder can only be done by professionals specifically trained and qualified to do so – which the author is not. The author is NOT a mental health professional.

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**Scientific Healing and Recovery from
Narcissistic Abuse:
Evidence-based Practices (clinical and self-help)**

Seminar with:

Prof. [Sam Vaknin](#)

We wish to thank

[South Eastern European University \(SEEU\)](#)

for the kind use of its venue.

Our Gratitude to the [Commonwealth Institute for Advanced Professional Studies \(CIAPS\), Cambridge, UK](#) for its sponsorship.

Narcissistic Abuse Healing and Recovery Playlist

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLsh_y_ett4o1_RZDY0EJMBzuWfDOHrgoA

Watch Narcissistic Abuse Checklist: 100 Tips for Survival and Healing <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGa0NySYbxo>

Thursday, May 22, 2025

17:00 Launch of the [Vaknin-Rangelovska Foundation](#)

18:00 Introductory Lecture: Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) and Narcissistic Abuse Overview

50% of all narcissists are **women**. The psychopathology is the same, but it is **expressed differently** owing to cultural-societal constraints.

Distinctions should be made between the hereditary and universal **trait of narcissism** (as measured by the Narcissistic Personality Inventory or NPI), **dark personalities** (dark triad and dark tetrad, where the narcissism is subclinical), **narcissistic style, and Narcissistic Personality Disorder** (NPD, with a prevalence of 1.7% of the population).

Victims of narcissistic abuse are often disbelieved. This **epistemic injustice causes epistemic injury**.

According to the **Alternative DSM V-TR Model for Personality Disorders** (2022, p.881), the following criteria must be met to diagnose Narcissistic Personality Disorder (in parentheses my comments):

Moderate or greater impairment in personality functioning, manifested by characteristic difficulties in two or more of the following areas:

[Empathy](#)

Impaired ability to recognize or identify with the feelings and needs of others; excessively attuned to reactions of others, but only if perceived as relevant to self; over- or underestimation of own effects on others.

The narcissist finds it difficult to identify with the emotions and needs of others, but is very attuned to their reactions when they are relevant to himself ([cold empathy](#).) Consequently, he [overestimates the effect he has on others or underestimates it](#) (the classic narcissist never underestimates the effect he has on others - but the inverted narcissist does.)

[Intimacy](#)

Relationships largely superficial and exist to serve self-esteem regulation; mutuality constrained by little genuine interest in others' experiences and predominance of a need for personal gain.

The narcissist's relationships are self-serving and, therefore shallow and superficial. They are centred around and geared at the regulation of his self-esteem (obtaining narcissistic supply for the regulation of his labile sense of self-worth.)

The narcissist is not "genuinely" interested in his intimate partner's experiences (implying that he does fake such interest convincingly.) The narcissist emphasizes his need for personal gain (by using the word "need", the DSM V acknowledges the [compulsive](#) and [addictive](#) nature of narcissistic supply). These twin fixtures of the narcissist's relationships render them one-sided: no mutuality or reciprocity ([no intimacy](#)).

In the **ICD-11** (2022), pathological narcissism emerges naturally by combining the domain-specific traits of dissociality, anankastia, and negative affectivity.

Agency Model

Narcissists (1) focus on agency rather than community (2) inflated self-concept/views (3) self-enhancement and self-regulation focused on gaining and maintaining self-esteem (4) entitlement (5) approach orientation.

Disrupted formation of a Self in Pathological Narcissism

In pathological narcissism there is an inability to tell the differences between **reality and fantasy** and to distinguish **external from internal objects** (pseudopsychotic hyperreflexivity). It involves **Intrapsychic strategies, interpersonal skills, interpersonal strategies**.

Pathological narcissism is a **system**: mutual reinforcement of clinical features.

Narcissistic elation, narcissistic esteem: haughtiness and competitive social dominance.

Envy

Alloplastic defenses (tending to blame others for mistakes and failures).

In a partner or a friend, the narcissist is looking to secure 2 of 4 Ss: sex, supply (narcissistic and sadistic), services, safety/stability/security (object constancy, secure base)

Relationships with narcissists appear to be shallow, transitory, noncommitted. Mind games, power plays, triangulation, monkey branching, flying monkeys, focused on narcissist and his needs, emotionless, no intimacy

Contextual Reinforcement Model

Preference for novel, unstable, short-term contexts

Narcissist's partner (Chocolate Cake Model): negative impressions reframed by the victim leading to self-deception (positive impressions

conjured up to resolve cognitive dissonance and meet needs). The victim acquires autoplasmic defenses (I am to blame, I should have given it a second chance, had I only behaved differently, things would have turned out for the better).

Main complaints of partners of narcissists: their narcissistic partners are self-centered, materialistic, deceptive, controlling, exploitative, played games with them, not committed, unfaithful.

Main emotions of partners of the narcissists in aftermath of a narcissistically abusive relationship: anger, glad it's over, regret.

Most partners terminated relationships with non-narcissists because they wanted to move on to a more **exciting** partners. Campbell, 2002: some people who date narcissists are often **narcissists as well**, though the majority are not.

Cerebral vs. somatic narcissists

The narcissist is **autoerotic**, another form of rejection, negation, and objectification. He objectifies and degrades his sexual partner (either consensually or coercively) via kink and his **betrayal fantasy**.

Narcissistic men (not women) have **unrestricted sociosexuality**. They are **ludic** (players). This applies mostly to somatic (sexual) narcissists.

Overt, grandiose narcissists and their partners are **less likely to cheat** on each other. Covert narcissist females are **most likely to cheat** and covert narcissist men? It depends.

Infidelity and ambiently coercive sex are fantasies, not actual behaviors. **Actual coercive sex is rare among men, more common among women.**

Narcissists need to feel irresistible and coercion spoils this self-enhancing delusion.

Narcissist rejects and abandons you by preferring to you a **counterfactual version: idealized or devalued**. He interacts with **internal object, not with you**. He penalizes you for diverging from it.

Your role as the narcissist's **external regulator** requires absorbing the narcissist's dysregulation (like shock absorber).

Shared fantasy: the narcissist's inexorable machinery that baits you, sucks you in, then spits you out, transformed.

Narcissistic abuse differs from all other types of abuse in its range, sophistication, duration, versatility, and express and premeditated intention to negate and vitiate the victim's personal autonomy, agency, self-efficacy, and wellbeing.

Narcissist **reenacts with you his early childhood** and superimposes on you all his/her deficiencies: no separation, fantasy, no self, no ability to tell internal from external, introjection, dissociation, "dead mother" (projective identification), cognitive distortions, impaired reality testing ("gaslighting").

The **victims of narcissistic abuse** appeared to present a clinical picture substantially different to victims of other, more pinpointed and goal-oriented types of abuse.

They were more depressed and anxious, disoriented, aggressive (defiant reactance), dissociative, and trapped or hopeless owing to learned (intermittently reinforced or operant conditioned) helplessness.

In short: they were in the throes of **trauma bonding (Stockholm syndrome)**, a kind of **cultish shared psychosis (folies a deux)**.

Repeated abuse has **long lasting pernicious and traumatic effects** such as panic attacks, hypervigilance, sleep disturbances, flashbacks (intrusive memories), suicidal ideation, and psychosomatic symptoms.

The **victims experience** shame, depression, dissociation, anxiety, embarrassment, guilt, humiliation, abandonment, enhanced sense of vulnerability, affective dysregulation, even brief psychotic episodes.

CPTSD (Complex PTSD or complex trauma) has been proposed as a mental health diagnosis by Dr. Judith Herman of Harvard University to account for the impact of extended periods of trauma and abuse.

Every experience in life and every encounter with others changes us. We are never the same person again. Narcissistic abuse is no exception. But **you can fully recover and heal from it, albeit a changed, wiser person.**

Crisis: a break in the order of things. Leads to disorientation, confusion.
Crisis theory, maturational crisis

Narcissistic abuse challenges assumptions about the world, people (theory of mind), and relationships (internal working model, IWM). It impairs your reality testing. In the wake of narcissistic abuse, you come to believe that:

1. People are irrational and self-interested, most people are exploitative or even evil.
2. Justice, order, and structure are rare in the universe. Chaos, uncertainty, indeterminacy reign. Reality and people in it are untrustworthy.
3. The world is hostile. At best, it is indifferent.
4. No good deed goes unpunished. Even if you try hard and are sincere, things rarely work out. You need contacts and luck. It is all pretty random.
5. You gain no credit with people when you behave well. Even when you do, this credit is forgotten, ignored. People hate to feel indebted.

6. Reality is not a shared experience (no intersubjective space). People are each to his or her own.
7. Being alone is often way better and safer than being together.
8. No one deserves love and few people, of any, are loveable.
9. You can't trust yourself: your judgment, reality testing, self-love.
10. There is always a way to commit wrong and evil deeds because such actions are goal-oriented. Regret, remorse, guilt, shame, empathy, and conscience are contemptible weaknesses and vulnerabilities.

Betrayal trauma and betrayal trauma blindness (Jennifer Freyd et al.) in BTT (Betrayal Trauma Theory) When you cannot or are not allowed to express your experience of trauma and abuse, breach of trust, negative emotions, and profound betrayal by someone you depend on in any crucial way. Such **denial and repression lead to dissociation** and a host of long-term mental health disorders.

Victims encounter these common pitfalls when they attempt to make sense of their experiences:

Morality play: angelic victim vs. demonic narcissist

Self-importance: the victim as a warrior in a cosmic battle

Shunning responsibility: who can overcome and resist Evil itself?

Chosen by narcissist because perfectly benign, caring, loving, empathic, and immaculate ("empath") and thus the reification of Goodness.

Regressive infantilization: as pure as baby.

Truth: you, as the narcissist's prey, have made suboptimal choices, spurred on by your vulnerabilities. You were a mere service provider, utterly fungible, dispensable, and interchangeable.

Friday, May 23, 2025

10:00 Trapped in the Narcissist's Shared Fantasy

Stages of shared fantasy:

Spotting

Role of PNS (pathological narcissistic space) in spotting.

In the spotting phase, narcissist stares, glares, scans, and analyzes you.

Shy away. Avoid eye contact. Walk away. Surround yourself with others.

After initial contact, in the auditioning phase, the narcissist subjects you to 3 tests

Three Tests of Auditioning

A. Are you capable of being idealized? You must be possessed of minimal traits, assets, and behaviors.

B. Are you able to provide the narcissist with 2 of the 4 Ss? Sex: find him irresistible, enthusiastic, consensual-submissive, prone to sexual fantasies, unboundaried-kinky, self-trashing, promiscuous. Services (that he needs and lacks). Supply (narcissistic or sadistic): adoring, uncritical, submissive, masochistic, self-loathing. Safety: addictive personality, maternal bonding, loyal, inertial.

C. Are you vulnerable to the shared fantasy? Damaged-broken, daydreamer, abhor reality, romantic (even as a friend), grandiose, self-love deficit.

Baiting with “inner child”

Initially, the narcissist presents a façade of endearing, charming, somewhat immature and infantile features, characteristics and dimensions of personality, triggering maternal and protective reflexes (mass psychogenic illness or mass psychosis).

Resonance of archaic wounds.

Infantilization: language, tone of voice.

Regresses you as well: two orphans in the dark woods (Hansel and Gretel Effect).

Fight for the relationship (like not divorcing because of the kids).

The narcissist's true self never emerges, it is all a mere bait into the shared fantasy, a lure.

No Inner child. The narcissist is a child (arrested development, developmental delay, disorder).

Developmental age (DA), developmental amnesia, maturational crisis.

3. Co-Idealization Introjection/Snapshotting (lovebombing, introject and narcissist all good because he owns object)

Psychopaths groom, narcissists lovebomb and then idealize, borderlines idealize

Grooming and lovebombing are conscious, idealization is unconscious. Grooming is about fostering bonding. Lovebombing is goal-oriented: to prepare the ground for idealization, to create an internal object, to audition potentials, and to establish a shared fantasy

Idealization is about object acquisition (in the shared fantasy via the dual motherhood, in borderlines via narcissistic supply and control from the bottom)

Idealizing transference

Hall of mirrors (self-infatuation via the narcissist's idealizing gaze)

Entrainment: the narcissist installs an introject in your mind that forms a cluster with similar introjects (malware backdoor).

4. Dual motherhood in a shared fantasy (recreation of childhood via regression to symbiotic phase, infantilization). The narcissist uses **narcissistic abuse to test you** for unconditional love and object constancy

5. The narcissist's need to reenact separation leads to **mental discard** which results in narcissistic injury (narcissist not omniscient, his judgment was wrong)

6. Devaluation of external object to restore grandiosity (make ego-congruent sense of the discard of an hitherto idealized object). This is when "monkey-branching" sets in: looking for the next target and the next shared fantasy.

7. Devaluation of introject via splitting defense (introject now all-bad, narcissist grandiosely all-good)

8. Real life discard: projection of introject onto you in an attempt to integrate it with the external object (you). Projection-integration fails owing to abandonment anxiety triggered by introject inconstancy and your refusal to own split, all-bad introject. Devalued, split, all-bad introject remains as internal object, in narcissist's mind. This creates anxiety and dissonance (bad object internalization-introjection)

9. Hoovering: the only way to reintegrate this internal object and reduce anxiety is by re-idealizing the external object and the corresponding introject. This is impossible if the narcissist has been mortified. He then

departs from his previous version and reinvents himself which allows for self-idealization (grandiosity restored).

11:30 Coping Strategies within the Shared Fantasy

Couples therapy and communal activation

Regression to womb-matrix, infancy: narcissist's **snapshotting** installs Trojan Horse (your mother introject) in the narcissist's mind.

Your powers as the narcissist's newfound "mother": to define narcissist's identity, force him to split, redirect negative affects, control and discipline, provide reality testing, remold the fantasy.

Define goals and then use repetition and entraining (hypnoid state/trance).

You could "gaslight" the gullible narcissist via these methods:

Grandiosity challenging

Ideational misattribution (make him think it was his idea, initiative)

Feigned helplessness (savior/rescuer): control from the bottom

Mass psychogenic illness (cult): both of you against the world

Ego syntonic narrative with survival (positive) adaptation

(motivation to introject you and assimilate your narrative): anxiolytic (separation insecurity (abandonment anxiety)); triumphant-antagonistic (e.g., justice restored, omnipotence affirmed); grandiosity-enhancing and grandiosity-congruent.

Your flying monkeys:

Leverage the narcissist's peer dynamics and hive mind, the in group or cult personality (outsourcing of cognitive processes and acquiring a social identity): belonging and acceptance (surrogate family), self-worth, modeling, peer pressure, operant conditioning, normative regulation, negative identity, social referents.

His flying monkeys (smear campaigns):

Only correct response to smear campaign is no response.

Damage to reputation non-existent among true friends and just workplaces, great among fake friends and toxic workplaces. So, a smear campaign is a useful filter or membrane to declutter your life.

Turning an agent into an asset (double agent) in counterintelligence.

Appear collaborative and compliant, thank the flying monkey, act as if you are scared in order to elicit additional info and lower the guard of the conspirators.

Feed the narcissist with wrong info, disinformation (with nuggets of truth).

Spy on the narcissist and anticipate his/her next moves.

Identify others involved in the conspiracy of the campaign.

Expose the narcissist's often criminal conspiracy to law enforcement, media, or online.

Alternatively, keep the evidence against the narcissist and his flying monkeys for future use in case of extortion.

TACTICS

1. No contact

There are many ways to circumvent and sabotage the rules of no contact with your abuser:

Frivolous litigation

Rebuttal: privately and in public

Stalking, intelligence gathering, and messaging: direct and indirect (via third parties and go-betweens, including common children, on social media)

Signaling and encoded messages

Reframing and inner dialog with introject

Smear campaigning

2. Gray rock

3. Deflection

4. Mirroring

5. Shared psychosis

6. Provide calibrated, reasonable, high-grade narcissistic supply

7. Withholding/intermittent reinforcement

8. Background noise

Act as “background noise”: ask no questions, never criticize or disagree, when addressed confine your response to the issues broached and do not introduce new topics into the conversation. In short: never initiate or be proactive – always react meekly, compliantly, and subserviently.

Do not attempt to negotiate, compromise, or reform the narcissist: they don’t learn and it triggers aggression.

Be hypervigilant, even paranoid: keep secrets, act in the last minute, deny access to your devices, burn bridges. This is not betrayal, it is survival.

13:00 Lunch break

14:00 Nine Fold Path to Healing

Your body

Sleep disorders and somatic symptoms

Somatization, somatization disorder

Somatic symptom disorder (formerly: somatoform disorder)

Conversion disorder

Motor conversion symptoms

Sensory conversion symptoms

Functional neurological symptom disorder (FNsD)

Dissociative neurological symptom disorder (DNSD)

Bodily distress disorder

Shun Victimhood

Tendency for Interpersonal Victimhood (TIV), the Personality Construct and its Consequences, was authored by Rahav Gabbai, Boaz Hameiri and others in 2020.

Ongoing feeling that the self is a victim, which is generalized across many kinds of relationships.

Competitive victimhood and victimhood (virtue) signaling involve splitting and entitlement.

You had been VICTIMIZED, you are not A VICTIM. Trust your intuition, it will never guide you astray. Work on your issues. Get the abuser out of your mind, not only out of your life.

But when victimhood becomes an ideology, a career, a profession, or an identity (like identity politics), it is manipulative and pernicious. Such victims turn into abusers, obsessed with power, celebrity, and money.

The only way out of victimhood is to assume full personal responsibility – to own – one's life, choices, and the consequences of such choices.

Victims of prolonged abuse often introject (internalize and identify with) their abusers (the aggressor – Ferenczi) and convert them into permanent persecutory objects. Henceforth, they trauma bond with this inner tormenting voice even when the original bully is long out of their lives.

Victimhood becomes a cozy comfort zone and the victims is emotionally invested (cathected) in maintaining it pristine and operational. It becomes a determinant of the victim's identity and helps her to regulate her emotions and ameliorate her anxiety and mood lability.

Professional Victims tend to blame their childhood experiences for being eternal victims. Again, they are victims: this time, of their parents.

We must begin to accept that a victimhood stance is narcissistic: grandiose, entitled, and replete with alloplastic defenses.

Perpetual victimhood serves four indispensable psychological needs:

1. It restores a sense of agency and self-efficacy and reverts the locus of control from external to internal. Many victims garner attention and make money from their newly found "profession";
2. It makes sense of the victim's personal history and of the world around her thereby rendering them meaningful: structure, order, and even a sense of "karmic" justice are restored;
3. It legitimizes avoidant behaviors. The world out there is challenging and painful: shunning it guarantees tranquility and an inert peace of mind;
4. Victimhood allows the victim to indulge her grandiosity and sense of moral superiority: it paints her as immaculate, angelic, empathic, supportive, loving, caring, compassionate, and, in short, perfect, blemishless, and blameless. It is a morality play or a crusade and she is the warrior angel fighting off the demonic narcissists.

Victimhood affords the victim membership in tight-knit communities of like-minded people and a sense of belonging and being finally understood, vindicated, and elevated. It is an intoxicating mix and victims become aggressive if and when you try to take it away from them by alerting them to their own imperfections and contributions to their sad state of affairs.

Some people adopt the role of a professional victim. In doing so, they become self-centred, devoid of empathy, abusive, and exploitative. In other words, they become narcissists.

The role of "professional victims" - people whose existence and very identity rests solely and entirely on their victimhood - is well researched in victimology. It doesn't make for a nice reading.

These victim "pros" are often more cruel, vengeful, vitriolic, lacking in compassion and violent than their abusers. They make a career of it. They identify with this role to the exclusion of all else. It is a danger to be avoided. And this is precisely what I call "Narcissistic Contagion" or "Narcissism by Proxy".

Abuse, Trauma, Recovery, Healing are states of mind: from submissiveness and abrogating self-control to humility and assuming responsibility

Nine Fold Path to Healing

BODY

Attention (self-empathy, alliance, compassionate and companionate intimacy)

Regulation (control, imagery, mastery, parenthood, signals)

Protection (friendship, custodianship, nurturance, mind over body)

MIND

Authenticity (rediscover who you are, who you should be)

Authentic voice is self-loving. Actively shut off all others.

Positivity (seek out the positive while acknowledging the negative, act positive, not self-sacrificial)

Mindfulness (no past or future orientation, grounding in here and now)

FUNCTIONS

Vigilant Observer (prepared, not paranoid, investigate, explore)

Shielding Censor (filter out harmful inputs, censor)

Reality Sentinel (maintain reality testing)

At the commencement of the relationship, the Narcissist is a dream-come-true. He is often intelligent, witty, charming, good looking, an achiever, empathetic, in need of love, loving, caring, attentive and much more. He is, in other words, ideal. **At first, the narcissist is too good to be true. Then, he is too true to be good.**

It is difficult to let go of this idealized figure. Relationships with narcissists inevitably and invariably end with the dawn of a **double realisation**. The first is that one has been (ab)used by the narcissist and the second is that one was regarded by the narcissist as a disposable, dispensable and interchangeable instrument (object).

The **assimilation of this new gained knowledge** is an excruciating process, often unsuccessfully completed. People get fixated at different stages. They fail to come to terms with their rejection as human beings – the most total form of rejection there is.

We all react to loss. **Loss** makes us feel helpless and objectified. When our loved ones die – we feel that Nature or God or Life treated us as playthings. When we divorce (especially if we did not initiate the break-up), we often feel that we have been exploited and abused in the relationship, that we are being "dumped", that our needs and emotions are ignored. In short, we again feel objectified.

Losing the narcissist is no different to any other major loss in life. It provokes a **cycle of bereavement and grief** (as well as some kind of mild post traumatic stress syndrome in cases of severe abuse). This cycle has **four phases**: denial, rage, sadness and acceptance.

Denial can assume many forms. Some go on pretending that the narcissist is still a part of their life, even going to the extreme of "interacting" with the narcissist by pretending to "communicate" with him or to "meet" him (through others, for instance).

Others develop persecutory delusions, thus incorporating the imaginary narcissist into their lives as an ominous and dark presence. This ensures "his" continued "interest" in them – however malevolent and threatening that "interest" is perceived to be. These are radical denial mechanisms, which border on the psychotic and often dissolve into brief psychotic micro-episodes.

More benign and transient forms of denial include the development of ideas of reference. The narcissist's every move or utterance is interpreted to be directed at the suffering person, his ex, and to carry a hidden message which can be "decoded" only by the recipient.

Others deny the very narcissistic nature of the narcissist. They attribute his abusive conduct to ignorance, mischief, lack of self-control (due to childhood abuse or trauma), or benign intentions. This denial mechanism leads them to believe that the narcissist is really not a narcissist but someone who is not aware of his "true" being, or someone who merely and innocently enjoys mind games and toying with people's lives, or an unwitting part of a dark conspiracy to defraud and abuse gullible victims.

Often the narcissist is depicted as obsessed or possessed – imprisoned by his "invented" condition and, really, deep inside, a nice and gentle and lovable person. At the healthier end of the spectrum of denial reactions we find the classical denial of loss – the disbelief, the hope that the narcissist may return, the suspension and repression of all information to the contrary.

Denial in mentally healthy people quickly evolves into **rage**.

There are a few types of rage. Rage can be focussed and directed at the narcissist, at other facilitators of the loss, such as the narcissist's lover, or at specific circumstances. It can be directed at oneself – which often

leads to depression, suicidal ideation, self-mutilation and, in some cases, suicide.

Rage gives place to **sadness**. It is the sadness of the trapped animal, an existential angst mixed with acute depression. It involves dysphoria (inability to rejoice, to be optimistic, or expectant) and anhedonia (inability to experience pleasure or to find meaning in life). It is a paralysing sensation, which slows one down and enshrouds everything in the grey veil of randomness. It all looks meaningless and empty.

This, in turn, gives place to gradual **acceptance**, renewed energy, and bouts of activity. The narcissist is gone both physically and mentally. The void left in his wake still hurts and pangs of regret and hope still exist. But, on the whole, the narcissist is transformed into a narrative, a symbol, another life experience, or a (tedious) cliché. He is no longer omni-present and his former victim entertains no delusions as to the one-sided and abusive nature of the relationship or as to the possibility and desirability of its renewal.

Severely traumatized victims of abuse (with PTSD and CPTSD) often become **avoidant**. But they also display psychopathic and narcissistic traits and behaviors. These are reactive and transient: they vanish without a trace once the victims are nurtured back to health in a holding and loving environment and go full-fledged no contact with their abuser

The **psychopathic and narcissistic overlays** (these acquired responsive learned traits and behaviors) do not amount to personality styles and disorders. They just serve to counter the abuse or contain it and restore eroded self-efficacy and a sense of agency in the traumatic space. In this sense, they are actually healthy and indicative of resilience.

The victim becomes self-centred, dysempathic, defiant, goal-oriented, reckless, lying, or aggressive just in order to survive in the pathological environment and the multifarious assaults on her identity and individuality.

Theodore Millon wrote this in his seminal "Personality Disorders in Modern Life": **"Many readers will be surprised that some of their best qualities express characteristics associated with the antisocial personality ... a capacity for self-sufficiency, ambition, competitiveness, and a constructive pursuit of individuality and self-determination"**

Scholars like Oldham, Morris, Maccoby, and Dutton uphold this view that a **modicum of psychopathy is actually healthy** and a prerequisite for survival and success in certain situations, environments, and professions.

15:30 Managing Grief

Prolonged Grief Disorder/Syndrome

No closure or hope

Betrayal

Sadness: for him, for you, for your common history, for what could have been

Persistent introject

Denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance (Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross) and hope (1992, Dr. Kenneth Doka)

You grieve over:

Unrealized potential (what could have been), wishes, dreams, plans, and fantasies

Discrepancy between fantasy (idealization) or perception (e.g., being conned) and reality

Catastrophizing (threat perception)

Irretrievable losses (deceased, time)

A loss of self, identity, goals, ego ideal (vision of future)

Multiple mourning:

over your discarded, delusional idealized self,

over the narcissist as your mother,

over the narcissist as your child,

over the narcissist as the perfect lover,

over the betrayal,

over the loss of innocence,

inability to love/trust again over the fantasy/dream of the future.

My **Dual Mothership** concept:

The narcissist becomes your idealizing mother and offers you unconditional love.

You become the narcissist's idealizing mother and offer him unconditional love.

This is the core of your shared fantasy with the narcissist.

When you break up, there is triple mourning: over your idealized self, over the narcissist as your mother, and over the narcissist as your child.

According to the dual motherhood principle, when you break up with the narcissist or are discarded by him, you are orphaned.

You need to parent yourself. Here's how:

See yourself: document yourself, revisit yourself, be your friend and mentor, get to know yourself. **Restore your self-esteem, self-confidence, sense of self-worth.**

Frustrate yourself, push yourself away (give yourself space), allow yourself to separate, individuate, and form proper boundaries, reality testing, get rid of magical thinking.

At the same time, **be your own secure base:** empathic, attuned, caring, loving, accepting, **self-compassion.**

Invest in and prepare yourself for physical reality, social reality (socialization), hegemonic culture (acculturation), and skills acquisition: research, skills acquisition, education, training.

Love yourself.

From Victim to Survivor:

Abandon the narcissist

Move on: accept reality

Learn and evolve

Allow yourself to grieve

Trust again, forgive the forgivable, never forget the unforgettable

Unfriend the narcissist

Saturday, May 24, 2025

10:00 Preconditions for Healing and Therapy

Acts of self-love and healing are always painful.

Getting rid of toxic but addictive people in your life;

Imposing discipline, goals, and structure on a dissolute and carefree life;

Saying “no” to temptations and seductions;

Gaining insights into your shortcomings, self-inflicted wounds, and failures;

Confronting trauma and abuse;

Investing hard work in introspection and therapy.

Four steps to take before seeking therapy:

- 1) stop considering oneself a victim
- 2) recognize one's contribution to the abuse
- 3) identify and separate authentic and inauthentic internal voices
- 4) silence the inauthentic voices

Narcissist's **introject** muted, yours active and vociferous.

Narcissist theatre play: he scripts and directs, you act and prop (external locus of control). Reverse the roles: you script and direct, he acts and is a prop, whether he is physically present or not (introject).

Own the narcissist by appropriating his roles and then constellate/integrate the parts.

Separation-individuation:

Dissociation and objectification are at the core of separation-individuation around the ages of 18-24 months.

Prior to the separation phase, the child is in a symbiotic state. He regards his mother as a part of himself. To separate from her, he needs to cut off this part and objectify it (render it an external object). He also develops transient grandiosity to be able to take on the world, all by its little self.

Narcissism is a failure of separation-individuation owing to a lack of boundaries between the child and his mother.

So, when the narcissist comes across a mother substitute (an “intimate partner”), he tries to recreate the ancient dynamic by forcing her to merge with him (absorbing her in order to eliminate her object status, her individuality).

He aggressively and grandiosely converts his partner into a self-object or an object representation thus eliminating her ability to separate from him - at least in his mind. He violates all her boundaries to negate her agentic autonomy.

Narcissist: Abuser-savior, death-life, punitive-mother **duality**

Separation: silencing narcissist’s voice in your mind

Individuation

Once narcissist’s voice silenced, both abuser and savior, mother and child are gone. Authentic voice is disembodied.

Embodying.

Individuation requires **mind-body work**: owning your voice also by connecting it to your body.

Reconstituting **three lost functions**: self-mothering (self-love), self-saving (agency), choosing and affirming life (negating depression, anxiety, catastrophizing, and ANTS)

The right therapist

Victims of abuse in all its forms -- verbal, emotional, financial, physical, and sexual -- are often disorientated. They require not only therapy to heal their emotional wounds, but also practical guidance and topical education. At first, the victim is, naturally, distrustful and even hostile. The therapist or case worker must establish confidence and rapport painstakingly and patiently.

The therapeutic alliance requires constant reassurance that the environment and treatment modalities chosen are safe and supportive. This is not easy to do, partly because of objective factors such as the fact that the records and notes of the therapist are not confidential. The offender can force their disclosure in a court of law simply by filing a civil lawsuit against the survivor!

The first task is to legitimise and validate the victim's fears. This is done by making clear to her that she is not responsible for her abuse or guilty for what happened. Victimisation is the abuser's fault -- it is not the victim's choice. Victims do not seek abuse -- although, admittedly some of them keep finding abusive partners and forming relationships of co-dependence. Facing, reconstructing, and reframing the traumatic experiences is a crucial and indispensable first phase.

The therapist should present the victim with her own ambivalence and the ambiguity of her messages -- but this ought to be done gently, non-judgementally, and without condemnation. The more willing and able

the abuse survivor is to confront the reality of her mistreatment (and the offender), the stronger she would feel and the less guilty.

Wrong therapist

Victims of abuse are saddled with emotional baggage which often provokes even in the most experienced therapists reactions of helplessness, rage, fear and guilt. Countertransference is common: therapists of both genders identify with the victim and resent her for making them feel impotent and inadequate (for instance, in their role as "social protectors"). Reportedly, to fend off anxiety and a sense of vulnerability ("it could have been me, sitting there!"), female therapists involuntarily blame the "spineless" victim and her poor judgement for causing the abuse. Some female therapists concentrate on the victim's childhood (rather than her harrowing present) or accuse her of overreacting.

11:30 Developing Self-love and Authenticity (Identity)

1. Regain Agency:

Get rid of external locus of control and alloplastic defenses

Assume responsibility for your decisions, choices, actions, and contributions

Emphasize personal autonomy, agency, independence but renounce defiance, contumaciousness, acting out, manipulateness (Machiavellianism) and recklessness

2. Regain Authenticity

Separate

Individuate

Silence hostile introject of abuser

3. **Regain Mindfulness**

Be present

Honor your body

4. **Regain Personhood**

Shun dependency

Undo the trauma bond

Be humble, patient, open-minded

Love your real, not your idealized self

There are **4 conditions** to any self-transformation and personal growth: self-awareness, empathy, emotions, motivation. Self-love is a healthy self-regard and the pursuit of one's happiness and favorable outcomes.

It rests on four pillars:

1. **Self-awareness**: an intimate, detailed and compassionate knowledge of oneself, a SWOT analysis: strengths, weaknesses, others's roles, and threats

2. **Self-acceptance**: the unconditional embrace of one's core identity, personality, character, temperament, relationships, experiences, and life circumstances.

3. **Self-trust**: the conviction that one has one's best interests in mind, is watching one's back, and has agency and autonomy: one is not controlled by or dependent upon others in a compromising fashion

4. **Self-efficacy**: the belief, gleaned from and honed by experience, that one is capable of setting rational, realistic, and beneficial goals and possesses the wherewithal to realize outcomes commensurate with one's aims.

13:00 Lunch Break

14:00 Reclaiming Life's 10 truths (IWM)

Narcissistic abuse challenges assumptions about the world, people (theory of mind), and relationships (internal working model, IWM):

1. People are rational and self-interested, but most people are good.
2. Justice, order, and structure are fundamental to the universe. Reality and people in it are trustworthy.
3. The world is not hostile. At worst, it is indifferent.
4. One good deed deserves another (vs. no good deed goes unpunished). If you try hard enough and are sincere, things will work out.
5. You gain credit with people when you behave well. This credit is not forgotten, nor ignored.
6. Reality is a shared experience (intersubjectivity). People are very much the same.
7. Being alone is worse than being together.
8. You deserve love.
9. You can trust yourself: your judgment, reality testing, self-love.

10. There is always a way to undo wrong and evil because they are rarely intentional. Regret, remorse, guilt, shame, and conscience are common to all people.

15:30 7 Resolutions for a Narcissist-free Life

Abuse Victim's New Year Resolutions

Your mental - and too often physical - health depend on strictly observing the following promises to yourself:

1. I will treat myself with dignity and demand respect from others. I will not allow anyone to disrespect me.
2. I will set clear boundaries and make known to others what I regard as permissible and acceptable behavior and what is out of bounds.
3. I will not tolerate abuse and aggression in any form or guise. I will seek to terminate such misconduct instantly and unequivocally.
4. I will be assertive and unambiguous about my needs, wishes, and expectations from others. I will not be arrogant - but I will be confident. I will not be selfish and narcissistic - but I will love and care for myself.
5. I will get to know myself better.
6. I will treat others as I want them to treat me. I will try to lead by way of self-example.
7. If I am habitually disrespected, abused, or if my boundaries are ignored and breached I will terminate the relationship with the abuser

forthwith. Zero tolerance and no second chance will be my maxims of self-preservation.

Sunday, May 25, 2025

10:00 Will You Ever Be the Same?

Signs of Healing

No disparaging introjects traceable back to him (incl. flying monkeys)

No ego dystony or hesitancy in decision-making

Ability to trust restored

No doubting your judgment

Independent reality testing restored (no cognitive distortions)

Sense of agency and self-efficacy restored

Autonomous motivation

No catastrophizing (imminent doom)

No anticipatory anxiety

No addictive cravings or sentimental nostalgia coupled with separation insecurity (abandonment anxiety)

No seeking of same type partner (from narcissistic to anaclitic mate selection)

No maternal or parental impulses (no narcissistic transferences)

No “us”, only “you” (no merger or fusion in a shared fantasy as well as intact boundaries, no enmeshment or engulfment)

No “us” vs. “them” (no cult mind)

No attempts to mindread

No self-sacrificial, people pleasing impulses (no emotional blackmail)

No infantile defenses

No self-idealization or self-devaluation, just realistic introspection and self-awareness

Restored functioning: social, workplace, as a parent, empathy

No emoting by proxy (crying in a movie)

No trust aversion or dread of intimacy

No victimhood stance – assuming personal responsibility

11:30 Questions and Answers

13:00 Lunch Break

14:00 Aftermath: Revenge, Justice, Contact, Co-parenting

Closure is necessary for victims of abuse to heal their traumatic wounds.

There are **three forms of effective closure**: conceptual, retributive, and dissociative.

Conceptual closure involves a frank discussion of the abusive relationship, while **retributive closure** involves restorative justice and a restored balance.

Dissociative closure occurs when victims repress their painful memories, leading to dissociative identity disorder. Victims pay a hefty price for avoiding and evading their predicament.

Traditional victimhood is when the victim accepts that this is the way of the world.

Identity victimhood is a form of identity politics. It's when victimhood becomes a determinant of who you are. It captures your essence and quiddity as a victim.

Victimhood serves to organize your life around a central purpose or goal afforded with direction, imbue it with meaning, and make sense of it.

Vigilante victimhood is when victims, and especially self-styled victims use victimhood signaling and competitive victimhood to manipulate other people. They're actually dark personalities or narcissists and psychopaths.

Vigilante victimhood is when these people actually break the law, ignore social norms, and bypass institutions in order to accomplish three goals.

Refuse All Contact

Be sure to maintain as much contact with your abuser as the courts, counsellors, mediators, guardians, or law enforcement officials mandate.

Do NOT contravene the decisions of the system. Work from the inside to change judgments, evaluations, or rulings -- but NEVER rebel against them or ignore them. You will only turn the system against you and your interests.

But with the exception of the minimum mandated by the courts -- decline any and all gratuitous contact with the narcissist.

Do not respond to his pleading, romantic, nostalgic, flattering, or threatening e-mail messages.

Return all gifts he sends you.

Refuse him entry to your premises. Do not even respond to the intercom.

Do not talk to him on the phone. Hang up the minute you hear his voice while making clear to him, in a single, polite but firm, sentence, that you are determined not to talk to him.

Do not answer his letters.

Do not visit him on special occasions, or in emergencies.

Do not respond to questions, requests, or pleas forwarded to you through third parties.

Disconnect from third parties whom you know are spying on you at his behest.

Do not discuss him with your children.

Do not gossip about him.

Do not ask him for anything, even if you are in dire need.

When you are forced to meet him, do not discuss your personal affairs -- or his.

Relegate any inevitable contact with him -- when and where possible -- to professionals: your lawyer, or your accountant.

Insist on Your Boundaries -- Resist Abuse

- Refuse to accept abusive behavior. Demand reasonably predictable and rational actions and reactions. Insist on respect for your boundaries, predilections, preferences, and priorities.

- Demand a just and proportional treatment. Reject or ignore unjust and capricious behavior.
- If you are up to the inevitable confrontation, react in kind. Let him taste some of his own medicine.
- Never show your abuser that you are afraid of him. Do not negotiate with bullies. They are insatiable. Do not succumb to blackmail.
- If things get rough- disengage, involve law enforcement officers, friends and colleagues, or threaten him (legally).
- Do not keep your abuse a secret. Secrecy is the abuser's weapon.
- Never give him a second chance. React with your full arsenal to the first transgression.
- Be guarded. Don't be too forthcoming in a first or casual meeting. Gather intelligence.
- Be yourself. Don't misrepresent your wishes, boundaries, preferences, priorities, and red lines.
- Do not behave inconsistently. Do not go back on your word. Be firm and resolute.
- Stay away from such quagmires. Scrutinize every offer and suggestion, no matter how innocuous.
- Prepare backup plans. Keep others informed of your whereabouts and apprised of your situation.
- Be vigilant and doubting. Do not be gullible and suggestible. Better safe than sorry.
- Often the abuser's proxies are unaware of their role. Expose him. Inform them. Demonstrate to them how they are being abused, misused, and plain used by the abuser.

- Trap your abuser. Treat him as he treats you. Involve others. Bring it into the open. Nothing like sunshine to disinfect abuse.

Co-parenting

Modeling: use your personal example to show the child that not all adults are narcissists. Provide your child with an alternative to his father's venomous and exploitative existence. Trust your son to choose life over death, love over narcissism, human relations over narcissistic supply.

BP Skinner: **operant conditioning** (positive and negative reinforcements).

John Dollard's **frustration-aggression hypothesis** modified by Leonard Berlowitz (environmental cues required for aggression to take place).

Albert Bandura: aggression=operant conditioning+identification (mentally rehearsing then imitating others, models).

Attention, retention, reproduction, motivation/reward (reinforcement).

Reciprocal determinism: person and environment affect each other (IPAM).

Personality=environment+behavior+psychological processes (language, image retention, etc.)

Social learning theory and social-cognitive theory.

Modeling, modeling effect, modeling theory, observational learning, behavioral modeling.

Children have a right to know the overall state of affairs between their parents. They have a right not to be cheated and deluded into thinking that "everything is basically OK" -- or that the separation is reversible.

Both parents are under a moral obligation to tell their offspring the truth: the relationship is over for good.

A responsible parent should teach the child how to resist inappropriate and hurtful actions.

The child should be brought up to insist on being respected by the other parent, on having him or her observe the child's boundaries and accept the child's needs and emotions, choices, and preferences.

The child should learn to say "no" and to walk away from potentially compromising situations with the abusive parent.

The child should be brought up not to feel guilty for protecting himself or herself and for demanding his or her rights.

The only thing you can do to prevent your son from emulating his father - is to present to him another role model of a NON-narcissist – YOU (modelling in social cognitive learning). Hopefully, when he grows up, he will prefer your model to his father's.

But there is only that much you can do. You cannot control the developmental path of your son. Exerting unlimited control over your son is what narcissism is all about - and is exactly what you should avoid at all costs, however worried you might be.

Roles of good enough mother:

1. Expose the child to risks (hygiene hypothesis);
2. Push the child away;
3. Mediate reality (organize and interpret it).

When is a mother a good (enough) mother? According to Winnicott, when she gradually and increasingly frustrates her child. These cumulative denials of the child's wishes and negations of his delusional

and fantastic magical thinking are crucial to his emerging perception of an external world and his unimpaired reality test.

The good mother encourages the child's separation from her and its individuation via the formation of inviolable and respected personal boundaries. She does not sacrifice her autonomy and identity and does not fuse or merge with her child or treat it as her extension.

The good mother acknowledges her own moments of exasperation and depression. She does neither idealize nor devalue herself or the child. She harbors realistic expectations of the budding relationship and reacts proportionately. She has no mood swings and is not labile.

She is stable, firm but not harsh, just and predictable but never dull. She encourages her offspring's curiosity even as she indulges her own.

15:30 Questions and Answers

17:00 Saying our goodbyes