

FRIENDS FROM HELL

**Protect Yourself from Narcistic Abuse, Heal and Live a
Fulfilling Life**

GATHONI NDUN'GU

COPYRIGHT.

FRIENDS FROM HELL.

**Protect yourself from Narcistic Abuse, Heal and Live a
Fulfilling Life.**

Copyright © 2024 by Gathoni Ndungu.

ISBN: 978 – 9914 – 9750 – 6 – 2

EMAIL: gathonindu@gmail.com

TEL: +254(0)722 959 518

Web : <https://mentorcounsellingcentre.com>

Printed and published in Nairobi – Kenya by:

Wondrous Publishing

www.wondrouspublishing.com

wondrouspublishing@gmail.com

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or any means, electronic or mechanical – including photocopying or by any information storage retrieval system – without permission from the author.

TABLE OF CONTENT

TABLE OF CONTENT.....	iii
DEDICATION.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
ENDORSEMENTS.....	vi
INTRODUCTION	x
WHAT IS NARCISSISTIC PERSONALITY DISORDER?	1
SUSCEPTIBILITY.....	17
SCARS OF NARCISSISTIC ABUSE	27
CAUSES OF NARCISSISTIC PERSONALITY DISORDER.	35
NARCISSISTIC MANIPULATION TACTICS AND METHODS.....	57
BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON NARCISSISM.	89
PROTECTING ONESELF FROM NARCISSISTIC ABUSE	119
HOW TO HEAL FROM NARCISSISTIC ABUSE.	127
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON NARCISSISTIC PERSONALITY DISORDER.....	147
EPILOGUE	165
REFERENCES	Error! Bookmark not defined.

DEDICATION

This book has been written for anyone who has had narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) directly, but most importantly indirectly, victims and survivors who have fallen prey to narcissists. I hope they will find the text full of answers of many unanswered questions in their life and comforting. It is also written for everyone who desires a deeper understanding of this subject to make better choices and relate better with those close to them. For those in the dating season, this copy is especially recommended, as it will save them from the unseen traps of dysfunctional relationships through the telltale signs that can prevent any further contact with a narcissist. Finally, this copy can be used in academia for its principles and applications on NPD and the Dark Triad. It will broaden one's view on narcissism, its subtypes and stages, its effects, and practical solutions for everyone.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to acknowledge my team of colleagues and friends who helped in shaping the book ideas, including but not limited to Alice Gathiru Sight Savers, Dr Stella United States International University - Africa, Dr Philomena Ndambuki, retired lecturer Kenyatta University, Dean David Mureithi Moi University and JP Odero, My mentor Dr Alice Munene Daystar University for her professionalism and dedication and time spent on training me on NPD using the American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic Statistical Manual, the center stage of mental health diagnosis, and other assessment psychometric tools. The late Prof Emeritus Samson Munywoki, United States International University - Africa, a guru in Personality Psychology, provided insight into narcissistic abuse.

I also wish to recognize my family members, mothers, Annah Wanjiku Kamori, Sisters Lucy Wangui and Gladys Wangari, brother Simon Kang'ara and my children, Bryan, Kerry, and Amani, for their moral support.

Special thanks to Gabriel Mungai and Dr. Joyce Wangari for their guidance, review, and editing, which have made this project successful.

-Gathoni Ndungu

ENDORSEMENTS.

It has been my pleasure to know Gathoni; our friendship has evolved from church to mentoring youth in sports. When she sent me this copy, I felt privileged to contribute. This book will satisfy. It is intended for a general audience and provides insight into narcissistic personality disorder in an easily understandable way. The illustrative stories are exciting and bring the point home to day-to-day reality. This book creates awareness of the rampant 21st-century pandemic in our society today.

-Luke Arrum is a psychologist and retired pilot.

Rotarian Gathoni has been instrumental as a volunteer in mental health programs under Rotary. She has been giving free, productive mental health and wellness talks for over five years. I recommend this book to anyone seeking knowledge and remedies for mental health or as a thoughtful gift for someone needing mental re-awakening.

**-Lyma Mwangi, Past President, Rotary District 9212
(2022-2023)**

The author of this book has skillfully delved into the world of identifying narcissistic tendencies. She connects with readers through stories, making it easier for them to understand complex concepts and take action. By doing this, she helps readers understand how to protect themselves and promote empathy. What makes the book even more appealing is that she answers readers' questions.

I am planning to gift this book to anyone interested in learning how to manage narcissistic tendencies. 'FRIENDS FROM HELL' is packed with insights that enhance the reader's understanding of narcissism. It equips readers with the skills to deal with toxic relationships within their families and society. This book is a must-read, and I highly recommend it."

-Elsie Kagimbi, Founder, 'Glowing Generation Africa'

The book provides a clear description and well-presented case scenarios for the readers' comfort.

As a child/adolescent psychiatrist, I have had the advantage of interacting with narcissistic parents. Unfortunately, narcissism breeds narcissism. The children become victims, who eventually victimize others. Parents and individuals who are aware and have self-knowledge can reasonably guard themselves from perpetuating narcissism.

The author of the book was once my student in mental health. She had a passion for understanding human behavior and personalities. This book succinctly describes toxic personalities that mask themselves in excessive goodness (double personalities).

Some of those interacting with this book will discover themselves in it.

**-Dr. Josephine Omondi, Child & Adolescent
Psychiatrist"**

The book is educational and aims to help readers understand human behavior. I have interacted with the author, and I admire her spirit of inspiring society, especially the youth, and her dedication to counseling.

The book is a compelling read that can help transform individuals. I highly recommend it to anyone looking to add value to their lives.

**-Ann Nyaga
Coordinator, Optiven Foundation**

INTRODUCTION

Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) is one of the mental conditions that affect people who are close to or relate to the person with the challenge. The person with NPD can be a sibling, spouse, colleague, leader, pastor, people from different walks of life, social and economic status, and so on.

This condition and its effects are like octopus tentacles, or a propagating plant that grows, meandering on walls, ground-breaking, and growing through anything on its path. Narcissists, by their nature, tend to be emotionally, physically, and financially abusive. The victims of narcissist abuse end up suffering for a long time, even after the abuse, if help is not found.

It is pretty essential to know about narcissism because the prevalence is high, and the chances of encountering it in one's lifetime are high in family, relationships, workplaces, politics, worship places, and more. One may have ever experienced an encounter, whether they are a current victim, a survivor, or they have been diagnosed with NPD. It is also possible that the affected people don't seek professional help. This book, **FRIENDS FROM HELL Gathoni Ndung'u** will help equip the reader with appropriate terms, detailed symptoms, techniques used and treatments available, and ways to protect oneself.

Chapter One

WHAT IS NARCISSISTIC PERSONALITY DISORDER?



Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) is a mental disorder that can have adverse effects on both individuals suffering from it and their victims. Throughout history, individuals with NPD have been responsible for causing harm to entire civilizations, communities, and humanity. Narcissism is quite common, making it challenging to avoid interactions with narcissistic individuals, also known as "narcs." Narcissism is part of the Dark Triad, comprising egotistical attention-seekers, strategic manipulators (Machiavellianism), and impulsive thrill-seekers (subclinical psychopathy). Narcissism (entitled self-importance), Machiavellianism (strategic exploitation and deceit), and subclinical psychopathy (callousness and cynicism) often occur together and share malevolent traits.

Traits of the Dark Triad are illustrated in Figure 1.

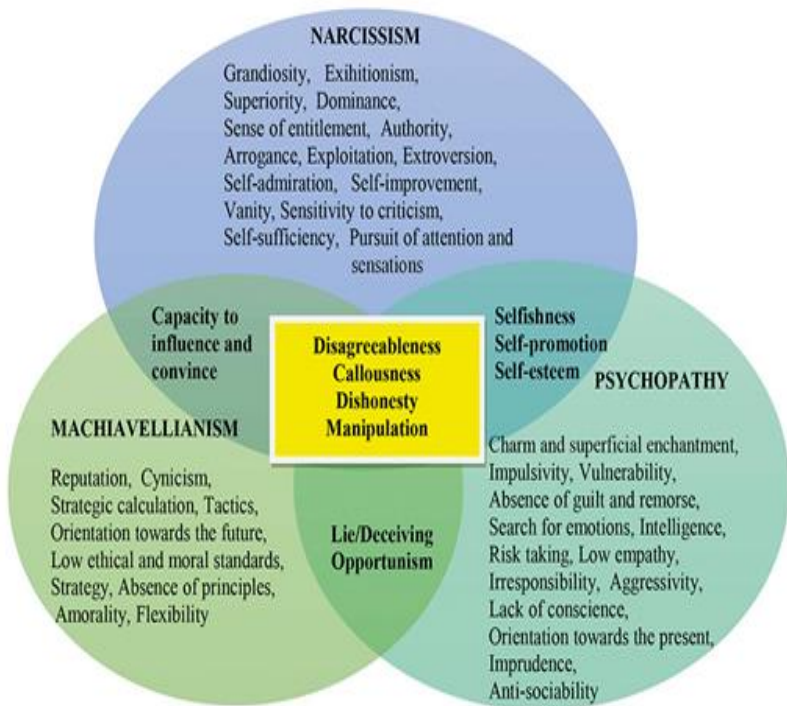


Figure 1: Traits of the Dark Triad, <https://images.app.goo.gl/Y64WbPWfMHjGxvZm8>

The author of this book has over ten years of experience in mental health. During this time, she has been involved in counseling cases across many counties in Kenya, working in various sectors, including education, social protection, refugee support, children's welfare, business, and family affairs. Through her work, she has encountered and treated a wide variety of mental health challenges.

One of the most significant positive impacts she has observed is the effect of self-awareness, mainly when guided by a qualified mental health professional.

Self-awareness helps individuals understand their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats at a personal and societal level. It also enables them to recognize their personality traits, reduce unnecessary conflicts, and redirect their energies toward self-improvement.

Knowing one's personality helps individuals enhance beneficial areas and minimize negative traits that may hinder them from achieving life goals. The author has chosen to discuss a personality disorder that has a far-reaching effect beyond the sufferer; this disorder extends suffering to other people in society. She appreciates the knowledge gained from the late Professor Munywoki, Dr. Owiti, and Dr. Philomena on personality disorders and the challenges posed by narcissistic personality disorder. This forms the bulk of the discussion in this book. Aiming to raise awareness about personality challenges, especially those that impact people, families, employees, neighbors, and vulnerable people.

Narcissism can be prevented through empathetic parenting and reduced conflict at the family and societal levels. Otherwise, it poses many challenges due to abuse, manipulation, and a lack of empathy. These traits are further influenced by industrialism, materialism, and a

capitalistic economy that produces egocentric and individualistic individuals. It is essential to identify the triggers that exacerbate mental health issues in order to reduce their prevalence and build a healthy society.

World history is rife with events that manifest these dark traits, such as oppressive dictators and notable tyrants, including Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, and Saddam Hussein (Glad, 2002). Also included are lesser-known malevolent leaders like the founder of the American Nazi Party, George Lincoln Rockwell (Miliora, 1995), and cult leader Jim Jones (Zee, 1980). Historical figures such as Alexander Hamilton (Chernow, 2004) and the infamous Conjugal Dictators, President Ferdinand and his wife Imelda of the Philippines (Mijares, 2017) are cited. Amin Dada of Uganda (Stulman & Silver, 2021), Bokassa of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and most colonial rulers (Cynthia Kros) also exhibit these traits.

The Bible clearly narrates characters like Jezebel and Nebuchadnezzar, and warnings about these dark personalities and their dangers are prevalent in most African traditional folklore.

The Naive, Beautiful Girl Lured to Marry the Ogre



The story was about a village chief and his beautiful daughter, who is of marriageable age. All of her peers were already married, except for her. This caused a lot of anxiety to her father, the villagers, and their families, as she declined all marriage proposals from young men in the village.

One day, the girl set her eyes on a tall, dark, well-built, handsome young man who claimed to be the son of a chief from a distant land. He captured the interest of the chief's daughter, who decided to marry him and threatened to commit suicide if she was denied the opportunity.

He told her many stories, which impressed her. She was captivated by his tales of his lineage as a chief's son, wealth, and strong family ties. The father and villagers warned her to be cautious of this handsome stranger showing off his strong, muscular physique for all to see. However, their pleas went unnoticed, leaving the father with no choice but to reluctantly consent to her marriage.

After marrying the stranger, he began to exhibit unusual behavior and physical features. One time, a young boy who had accompanied him to tend to the farm noticed that the man had a big mouth and one eye at the back of his head, covered by his long hair. Sometimes, some villagers could spot him swallowing chickens, goats, and cows through his hidden elastic mouth. They would caution the chief's daughter every time, but she would vehemently deny such happenings.

In short, the handsome man swallowed the entire village, including the livestock, cats, and dogs. He would deceive his wife by showing great affection and convincing her that the rumors about him were lies motivated by jealousy. The truth was that he was an ogre with an insatiable appetite. Taking advantage of her love for him sadly, the ogre swallowed her.

However, the boy who had always been wary of him, managed to save the villagers by cutting open the ogre's stomach while he was asleep, allowing everyone to escape.

The villagers later found out that the supposed husband was actually a commoner, a con artist, and a notorious chicken thief who had been expelled from his village and got exiled in a foreign country to become an ogre.

The lesson learned from this folklore is that narcissists are ordinary people living among us, and they are hard to distinguish because they have learned and adopted many subtle camouflage habits. Some behaviors are common with narcissists. They spot their victim and then, cunningly, move swiftly and pounce on them like predators. The prey here is the chief's daughter and the village occupants.

In a calculated manner, they isolate their victims through lies and manipulation without empathy. They have an air of self-importance and a superb way of portraying themselves, just like the ogre. An experience with a narcissist can seem beautiful, perfect, and full of glitters, but after some time, one comes to realize that all that glitters is not gold.

Entering into a romantic relationship with a narcissist can jeopardize the lives of loved ones and oneself. It is wise to take time to learn people's character before committing to a serious relationship.

Therefore, it is essential to be familiar with the traits of NPD so that one can protect oneself and loved ones and seek professional help if need be.

NPD is a mental health condition that affects how one views themselves and relates to others.

NPD is diagnostically defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association Fifth Edition, commonly abbreviated as DSM-5, as a pervasive pattern of grandiosity, need for admiration, and lack of empathy, with interpersonal entitlement, exploitativeness, arrogance, and envy as a chronic pattern of craving for admiration, and jealousy. Five out of nine of these criteria need to be present to meet the diagnosis of NPD.

Below are the nine criteria:

1. **A grandiose sense of self-importance** (e.g., exaggerating achievements and talents, expecting to be recognized as superior without commensurate achievements).
2. **Fantasies** of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love.
3. A strong belief in being "**special**" and unique and that one can only be understood by or should be associated with other special or high-status people (or institutions).
4. Constantly requiring excessive **admiration**.
5. A sense of **entitlement**, that is, unreasonable expectations of especially favorable treatment or automatic compliance with their expectations.

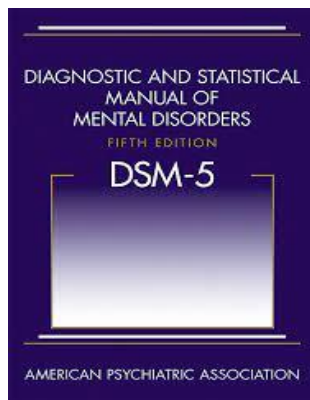
6. **Interpersonal exploitativeness**, that is, taking advantage of others to achieve their ends.

7. **Lacking empathy**, which is an unwillingness to recognize or identify with the feelings and needs of others.

8. **Envious** of others or believes that others are envious of them.

9. **Arrogant**, haughty behaviors or attitudes.

"As indicated in the story, individuals with narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) are marked by arrogance and greed. They constantly seek admiration, tend to exploit others, and have a strong desire to be the center of attention. They are insatiable in their quest for possessions and attention, displaying a never-ending hunger akin to an unseeable, pitch-black hole. This intense drive, combined with harmful behaviors, has a negative impact on those around them."



Source-Wikipedia

Types of narcissism (How to deal with narcissism,

According to the DSM-5, a person with NPD needs to demonstrate at least five of nine qualities in a wide range of situations. During the evaluation process, the mental health provider assesses and differentiates the criteria to ensure the diagnosis is accurate.

DISCLAIMER: Etiquette terminology and why one shouldn't call people 'narcissists.'

There are two reasons why labeling somebody a "narcissist" is wrong:

1. Unless one knows they've been diagnosed with the condition, one will be making a big assumption. Having narcissistic tendencies isn't the same thing as having NPD.
2. The word "narcissist" stigmatizes people who actually have NPD. And the stigma around mental health is bad enough already.

When people feel the urge to call somebody a narcissist, what are they really trying to say? Chances are, it's not a compliment. The word has become a kind of cultural catch-all. Narcissists are "bad people," the script goes. And people should avoid them.

"Because narcissistic personality disorder is part of that cluster B category of personality disorders, it's normal to experience difficulties in relationships with folks with this

diagnosis," Dr. Markley says. "But no one ever deserves to be demonized for their mental health struggles. People with NPD deserve compassion and empathy, even if they struggle to show it themselves because of their diagnosis."

Dr. Markley reminds us that people living with NPD tend to be vulnerable to criticism because their self-esteem is already fragile. So, let's lose the unnecessary shaming language and think seriously about navigating relationships with people who have narcissistic tendencies.

So just calling someone a narcissist is ego-syntonic, and we need very sophisticated assessments from trained people to evaluate for the symptoms; the full criteria of the disorder. However, the perpetrators never go for an evaluation, and therefore the public is often dealing with the Narcissist unawares.

The history of the origin of the word narcissism

Narcissism is derived from the story of Narcissus, a skilled hunter from Greek mythology. According to the myth, Narcissus was so enamored with his beauty that he couldn't stop gazing at his reflection in a pool of water. He rejected all potential lovers, including a woman named Echo, which angered the gods. As punishment, he was made to fall in love with his reflection and spent all his time obsessing over it. When he realized that his reflection could not love him back, he became lonely and sad, eventually leading to his

demise. This myth illustrates how narcissists can become self-destructive due to their intense self-obsession.



Facade and Fakeness in A Narcissist Who Wears Masks

The term "narcissist" can be likened to plastic vegetables or fruits that look real but are actually fake and offer no real value. Most narcissists invest a lot in their appearance and seek validation from others to cover up their true selves or compensate for low self-esteem. They are consumed with thoughts of their greatness and may struggle with empathy. Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) can vary in severity, and it's believed that childhood experiences can contribute to its development. NPD can affect various aspects of a person's life, such as relationships and work, and those with the disorder may struggle to understand and care for others' feelings.

It's estimated that 6.2% of the US population suffers from pathological narcissism, with a higher prevalence in men (7.7%) than in women (4.8%). The prevalence is high in men compared to women.



Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=950456>

"Narcissism can be diagnosed in early adulthood. Some children and teenagers may exhibit traits of narcissism, but this is often typical for their age and doesn't necessarily mean they will develop narcissistic personality disorder (NPD).

It is important to increase self-awareness and understand family dynamics, as NPD can be passed down through multiple generations, as referenced in this biblical injunction:

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me; seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children." Hosea 4:6 KJV



Dealing with narcissism is not easy. It requires a lot of knowledge, especially professional expertise, to protect oneself and loved ones. Whether someone is married, has a boss or colleague, or is in an ongoing relationship with a narcissist, it's important to be empowered with the knowledge of how to live with or handle them.



Source: aoa.org/news/clinical-eye-care/health-and-wellness/secondhand-smoke

The irony of NDP also equated to secondhand smoking.

Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) is a mental disorder that causes significant pain and distress for those who are involved with the narcissist. The victim of the narcissist often suffers more than the narcissist who has been diagnosed with or exhibits the disorder. Narcissism is not well understood, as those affected by the disorder may appear to carry on with their lives as usual. Conversely, the victims and individuals close to these narcissists often suffer the most, experiencing lives filled with agony and risk. This is mainly due to the fact that narcissists exhibit high levels of self-deception and dishonesty.

Individuals with this condition are generally able to function and continue to pursue their life goals, often at the expense of those around them. This personality trait can be likened to passive smoking, where those close to the active smoker end up getting ill, including developing cancer, despite not being smokers themselves.

Narcissists are capable of making a victim consider self-harm, even if they do not have the disorder. They may manipulate a person's world to the extent that the person might contemplate actions such as harming their children or even committing suicide. The narcissist may then disregard their victims and continue with their lives as if the victim never existed.

Narcissism is particularly perplexing because those seeking help are typically individuals who are living and working

with, or are in a relationship with, a narcissist. In contrast, the narcissist may continue with their life as if nothing has happened, while the victims continue to suffer even after the narcissist has departed.

Chapter Two

SUSCEPTIBILITY

(Traits That Make a Person Vulnerable to Narcissistic Abuse.)



Almasi

Almasi was adored by her family, neighbors, and everyone who knew her, as they described her as a kind-hearted lady. She had chosen to remain unmarried at the behest of her family to care for her aging, ailing parents. She always prioritized other people's needs over her own. Almasi was known for her generosity, volunteered at a children's home for the elderly, and served as a Sunday school teacher at her church. She enjoyed gardening and rescuing abandoned and stray animals in her spare time due to her love for animals and plants.

During one of her gardening sessions, she stumbled upon some unhatched eggs of an unknown animal. She cared for the eggs because of her helpful nature until they hatched. After a long wait, the eggs finally hatched, and to her surprise, they turned out to be cobra snakes.

She shared the good news with her family and friends. They were all astonished and advised her not to keep the baby snakes. They recommended that she hand them over to the Wildlife Service. After considering how helpless and adorable they were, she decided to keep them anyway, in her wisdom. She trained herself on how to rear them through the internet.

The research indicated that the snakes are trainable and can be kept as pets; however, they were required to remove the poison from their ducts to avoid poisoning the handler. She aggressively researched the topic, and she came across information from a group of animal activists who were against poison duct removal, terming it animal mutilation. Almasi opted to avoid cruelty against animals and took care of her adorable snakes.

One day, Almasi disappeared without a trace. The village's rescuers, firefighters, and all able individuals started a rescue mission to look for her. They set out in the fields, forests, and abandoned structures. After searching for a week, they finally discovered a shed in the forest. As they approached, they saw Almasi's dead body, swollen from the snake venom, and her lovely snakes surrounding her, unsure of what had happened to her. They realized they were cobra snakes.



It's important to remember that certain traits can make individuals vulnerable to narcissistic abuse or exploitation, just like Almasi's story illustrates. While virtues like trust, generosity, and responsibility are generally positive, excessive levels of these traits can be harmful. Traits such as excessive generosity, unreasonably high virtues, and naivety can make individuals susceptible to narcissistic abuse. For example, Individuals who are excessively generous or who don't expect reciprocation; may become people-pleasers and risk feeling demoralized, depleted, or even unwell. Narcissistic individuals often take without giving much in return. Almasi's story exemplifies how over-investing in a relationship without expecting much in return can lead to being hurt by a narcissist's actions. Many people have good intentions and are generous and caring, but only a few people share these values.

Some individuals only seek to give, often considering themselves saviors who can solve all problems and change people. but it's important to acknowledge that there should be a limit to our actions. Almasi's sacrificial actions for the snakes serve as an example of reckless martyrdom. It's vital to establish boundaries and allow proper authorities to handle potentially dangerous situations, such as keeping wild animals as pets. Similarly, dealing with narcissists requires specialized skills and knowledge to prevent harm, as they can be symbolic snakes that require careful handling.

Codependency

This is a psychological situation in which individuals base their happiness on serving others and can only be happy if others are happy. While this may sound positive, it has its downsides. Unbeknownst to them, these individuals unconsciously believe their purpose is to help the most troubled and aggressive individuals, hoping to emerge unharmed.

This provides the narcissistic supply that makes narcissists prey on them. They mistakenly believe that they have unique problem-solving abilities capable of bringing happiness to everyone. They have a hero mentality about rescuing the whole world, often at their own expense, including neglecting their family, health, and resources.

These people serve the narcissist well because the narcissist seeks individuals they can exploit for an extended period. The codependent individuals are considered perfect suppliers or enablers. The narcissist plus a codependent equals the ideal match for a narcissistic relationship.

Almasi sacrificed her life and resources for the snakes, but when they were healthy and robust, they attacked her to death.

Excessively trusting people;

This type of trust, often seen in people seeking romantic partners, can be excessive and make individuals vulnerable. It can attract narcissists who prey on people using online dating sites. When someone is love-bombed, they may not realize they are being manipulated and fail to take a step back. The narcissist also continues to pursue other potential partners. Those who see the good in everyone and assume everyone is honest and decent may only assess people's character after letting them into their lives. Trusting others without proper discernment about their true intentions can make one vulnerable to narcissistic abuse.

This issue can be compared to the Kenya Crisis 2024 femicide pandemic. According to the Coalition Against Sexual Violence (CASV, 2024), at least ten women were killed in the first month of 2024, highlighting an ongoing

and troubling trend. Femicide Count Kenya has recorded 504 women murdered between 2019 and 2024."

APRIL - JUNE 2023
855 WOMEN KILLED
12,000 WOMEN ATTACKED
9,500 WOMEN RAPED



Several young ladies were brutally murdered by individuals with narcissistic tendencies who were preying on them. The killers took time to lure them with promises like a good relationship and an easy life of luxury, manipulating them, knowing very well they had intended to kill them. The girls often did no due diligence before commitment, and the few who survived death in Air B and B rooms also said they were desperate for cash, love, and good sex.

Excessively responsible individuals are plentiful prey for Narcissists.

It's essential never to take responsibility for people who refuse to take responsibility for themselves. A healthy relationship involves a 50/50 sharing of responsibility. If someone is willing to do all the heavy lifting in their relationship,

they risk being in relationships with people who are unaccountable for their actions. In such cases, one party may burden the other with everything mundane and challenging, creating roles of persecutor and helpless victim.

Almasi was overly responsible and seemed to lack a sense of boundaries. While caring for people and her parents was a great sacrifice, caring for snakes without the necessary skills was excessive. It's important to use judgment when deciding what to engage in. After all, snakes have no sense of responsibility; they are wild animals. Similarly, individuals with narcissistic traits need help, preferably from professionals or individuals with specialized skills.

Adverse childhood experiences and unhealed emotional wounds:

A relationship with a narcissistic person begins with the concept of "Cinderella fantasies and the fallacy of a good life after that." Most people live with a lot of pain from

neglect, abuse, lack, and emotional pain from their past or childhood, and they are looking for a shortcut to fill the void. They think another person will save them from attending to their unhealed emotional wounds, just like in the fictional fairy tale story. Yet, no one can rescue such an individual. Narcissistic people prey on weak spots in others and eventually attack when they are vulnerable, thereby causing them more pain. The same is articulated in Almasi's story about snakes.

Narcissists are wounded people wearing masks who are also struggling to heal from their past trauma –mostly childhood trauma, The only problem is that they have maladaptive coping skills, which involve a pathological way of exploiting others.

Weak personal boundaries



Individuals with weak boundaries are at risk of attracting selfish people who do not respect boundaries. They may guilt trip others into disregarding their boundaries and

violating them through criticism, ridicule, rejection, abandonment, or punishment for setting healthy boundaries.

Narcissists may distance themselves for years and then return, expecting praise. In some cases, people abandon their families for 10, 30, or more years. This explains how narcissists can leave and come back demanding attention as if nothing happened, seemingly unaware of the pain they caused.

Needy people are an excellent supply to narcissists looking for easy targets:

These people have low self-esteem, lack adequate self-love, and look for love in all the wrong places. Often, this may stem from inadequate parental love during childhood or emotional injury that is unaddressed and not yet healed.

The key to attracting and maintaining healthy relationships is healing the broken self and restoring self-love. Healing may sound easy, but one may need professional help.

Individuals who constantly and desperately need approval do not have a solid sense of self-esteem. They waste time trying to prove to the person criticizing them that they are not as bad.

It is critical to know and affirm one's goodness to themselves and only connect with people who appreciate

the good person that they are. As in Almasi's story, some people aim to change others and the world, even if this is impossible. When individuals lack self-love, they may attempt to improve others, hoping for reciprocal love.

However, sorting out one's inner life and pursuing one's life purpose need to be the primary priorities. It is not one's responsibility to change everyone. The medicine of actual change is always to turn within to heal oneself first.

Perfectly put by Muḥammad Rūmī, or simply Rumi, a 13th-century poet and Islamic scholar, famous quote.

"Yesterday I was clever so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise so I am changing myself."

"The hardest thing in life to do is to change yourself "

Therefore, stop changing others. Change yourself first.

Chapter Three

SCARS OF NARCISSISTIC ABUSE

*(How to Tell If Someone Has Been a Victim of
Narcissism)*



Narcissistic abuse is a form of emotional abuse in which the abuser prioritizes their own needs and may use words and actions to manipulate their partner or victim's behaviour, thoughts, and emotional well-being. The severity of narcissistic abuse depends on the closeness and duration of the relationship. Its effects can range from moderate to severe, with some survivors recovering while others experiencing lasting harm. The intensity of narcissistic abuse is determined by the proximity and duration of the individual's involvement in such relationships. The effects can vary from moderate to severe, with some survivors overcoming the abuse while others suffer long-term consequences. Here's how narcissistic abuse can impact individuals' lives:

Anxiety

Survivors of abusive relationships may experience extreme fear or anxiety in new relationships. Those who leave abusive relationships may also experience separation anxiety, causing them to feel panicked and disoriented when they are not with their abusers. Symptoms may include panic attacks or hypervigilance. However, these symptoms tend to ease over time, especially if professional assistance is sought.

Stockholm Syndrome

This is a condition where a person in an abusive relationship develops a strong bond with their abuser, sometimes even defending them. It occurs when individuals form a psychological connection with their captors or abusers, leading them to sympathize with the people who are harming them. Originally associated with kidnapping situations, Stockholm syndrome now encompasses other forms of trauma where there is a pathological bond between the abuser and the person being abused.

Depression

Survivors often find themselves grappling with feelings of worthlessness and depression after enduring prolonged periods of hearing how useless and stupid they are. Narcissistic abuse can act as a trigger for depression.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

The brain's constant state of high alertness, constantly scanning for danger, can lead to post-traumatic stress disorder. This can trigger a fight-or-flight response within oneself. Anything related to those memories can trigger an anxiety attack. After experiencing narcissistic abuse, one may feel the need to be on guard 24/7. One may struggle to relax because of chronic hypervigilance and the expectation that the abuser may be around.

One may also avoid situations, people, places, or things that remind one of the abuses.

These individuals find it challenging to focus on their goals and dreams as they are preoccupied with thoughts about their past experiences. Their self-worth is damaged, and they may feel that positive things are no longer attainable in their lives.

Loss of Sense of Self and Self-Worth

Narcissistic abuse is a form of brainwashing that undermines an individual's sense of self-worth. In many cases, victims will struggle to recognize themselves in the mirror as they no longer see their true reflection. They may also develop trust issues and constantly question themselves. This can lead to feelings of shame and embarrassment, which may prevent survivors from seeking help. Victims may also experience difficulty making decisions, finding themselves confused by simple choices or feeling unable to make any decision at all. Narcissists often seek to control their victim's goals and plans, including their personality and all activities that define them as a person.

Inability to Forgive Oneself

Victims of abuse often struggle with feelings of unworthiness, which leads them to believe that they deserve the mistreatment they receive.

They usually feel that there is something inherently wrong with them and battle with low self-esteem, thinking that if they had acted differently, the abuser would have treated them better.

Cognitive Problems

Victims of narcissistic abuse often struggle with focusing on everyday tasks, such as completing work or watching TV. Memories of traumatic events can interfere with concentration and focus. They may experience memory loss, especially in the short term. This is due to the brain releasing a surge of stress hormones, including cortisol, which affects the hippocampus region implicated in memory.

Emotional Instability

Narcissistic abuse can lead to mood swings, irritability, feeling emotionless and robotic, and depersonalization, where the individual feels detached from reality. Victims' feelings of hatred towards their abusers worsen stress, anxiety, and turmoil, perpetuating mental health problems.

Effects on Children

Children who have witnessed narcissistic abuse may be at risk of developing mental health issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety disorders, or depression. They could become fearful in situations that remind them of their traumatic experiences.

These children might harbor resentment towards the abusive parent and feel disconnected from the world, resulting in low self-esteem and confidence issues

Loss of Self-Worth

After enduring narcissistic abuse, a person can become disconnected from their true self and may start to doubt their value. They might begin to feel inadequate or blame themselves for the abuse. This can lead to feelings of shame and embarrassment, which could prevent them from seeking help. Additionally, they may struggle with decision-making due to a diminished sense of self-worth, leading to confusion or indecision.

Stuck in a Rhythm

After experiencing narcissistic abuse, many people find themselves caught in a cycle where their abuser continues to contact them after the relationship has ended.

Narcissists may act friendly in an attempt to win their victims back by giving gifts, using sweet talk, or asking for forgiveness to reconcile with them or make them feel sorry for the narcissist. This is a form of reverse psychology where the victim ends up feeling sorry for the abuser and decides to stay in the relationship. They may also use other manipulation tactics, such as blackmail and threats, to achieve the same end. Narcissists use this tactic to trap their victims in a cycle of abuse. This emotional manipulation technique is known as hoovering.

Trust Issues

Experiencing narcissistic abuse can decrease an individual's trust levels, making it harder to form healthy relationships in the future. This can lead to issues such as social anxiety, avoidance, and generalized anxiety, as the person is constantly unsure if others are being truthful or manipulating their emotions. Individuals become sensitive and hyper-vigilant to criticism, fearing that others will betray them again. Trust issues can affect all areas of life, including personal relationships, friendships, work interactions, and family contact. This can result in insecure attachment, where individuals constantly fear abandonment or betrayal.

People Pleaser

The victims of narcissism may become people-pleasers, trying to make others like them. They might become overly accommodating in an attempt to gain approval after having felt like they had to walk on eggshells for a long time. One might struggle with expressing their emotions and thoughts because of the fear of being judged by the abuser. In order to avoid confrontation, they may bottle up their feelings. In these kinds of relationships, children may develop coping mechanisms such as using humour to suppress their anxiety, or they may establish avoidant traits to protect themselves from being hurt.

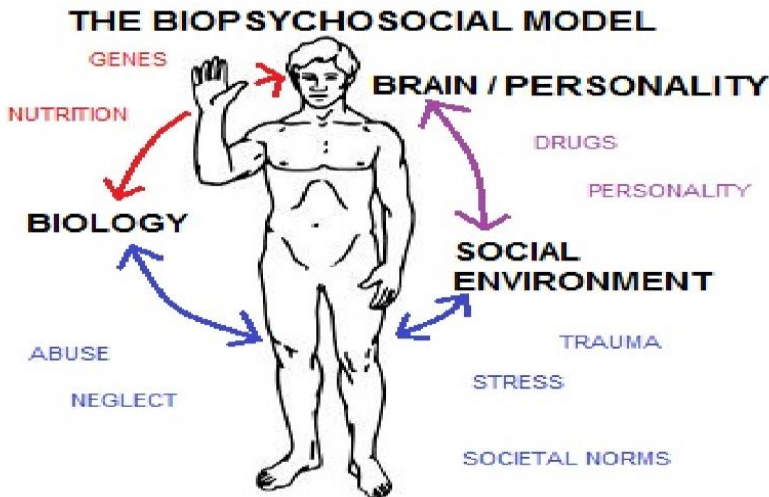
Self-Destructive Habits

Individuals who have been in relationships with narcissists often feel the need to punish themselves because they may believe they were responsible for their partner's mistreatment to them. This can lead to issues with addiction, including alcohol, smoking, overeating, or overspending. These addictions may serve as a way to cope with emotional pain.

Chapter Four

CAUSES OF NARCISSISTIC PERSONALITY DISORDER.

"NPD is a mental health condition, specifically a personality disorder, and experts are not exactly sure why it occurs. People with NPD often have slight differences in brain structure, but it is uncertain whether this is what causes NPD. The main contributing factors to NPD are genetics, socialization, parenting styles, trauma, and adverse childhood experiences."



Genetics or hereditary causes

The 2012 study by Torgersen et al. compared identical and fraternal twins with the general population and found that people with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) are more likely to have parents or close relatives with the same condition. The study established that NPD has the highest heritability level among Cluster B personality disorders, with a heritability level of 79% for narcissistic personality, 78% for obsessive-compulsive disorder, and 69% for borderline personality disorder.

Another study by Yu et al. in 2014 found a genetic influence on two traits of NPD: entitlement and feelings of grandiosity. The study, which included 304 pairs of twins from Beijing, China, revealed that both grandiosity (23%) and entitlement (35%) showed moderate heritability.

Zhonghua et al.'s study in 2006, which involved 324 twin pairs in China, demonstrated that personality disorders are heritable, with 59.00% heritability for cluster A, 64.99% for cluster B, and 63.66% for cluster C. The study also found significant genetic effects for narcissism at 52.89%.

A large study in Norway in 2008 involving over 3,000 sets of twins indicated that approximately 33% of narcissism disorders have a genetic basis, with the rest attributed to environmental influences.

In 2007, a study in the United States and Canada examined the genetic component of the "Dark Triad," which includes narcissism, Machiavellianism, and sub-clinical psychopathy, in 139 pairs of twins. The study determined that 59% of narcissism can be attributed to genetic factors.

These studies suggest a genetic component to NPD. While genetic testing for NPD is impossible, a family genogram and a detailed clinical intake describing the personality characteristics of each family member up to the fourth generation of ancestors may help determine the likelihood of inheriting NPD traits.

Social learning and parenting style

If parents overindulge and are overprotective, known as "helicopter" parenting, it may cause children to develop expectations and demands for similar treatment.

Certain parenting styles can also hinder a child's ability to learn how to manage their emotions, potentially leading to difficulties in controlling their feelings when faced with challenges.

The student calls his teacher Hyena.



A student was facing disciplinary action due to his disrespectful behavior towards teachers and fellow students and his frequent involvement in fights. During the disciplinary meeting, the student had insulted his teacher a "hyena". The student reported before the disciplinary committee accompanied by his two parents. When the committee read the student's conduct to the parents, the father became agitated and started physically attacking the boy. The mother tried to intervene, but she also received a slap.

Security guards were called in to separate the father from the boy, restoring calm. As the disciplinary process continued, the guards questioned the boy about his behavior.

He responded by alleging that his father had been abusive towards him, his siblings, and their mother. This revelation led the board to deliberate on whether to discipline the father or the child.

It was observed that the behavior in question was learned, indicating a pattern seen from one generation to another. This is evident in the saying, "like father, like son." The board recommended family therapy and individual therapy for the student.

During counseling, it was revealed that the student's mother came from a lineage of abused women. Also that there were many instances of violent behavior towards his peers, which shed light on the child's aggressive verbal behavior.

This serves as an example of how parents can unintentionally influence a child's behavior. It shows a multi-generational transmission from ancestors to grandparents to the current nuclear family.

2. Negative childhood experiences

There may be a connection between adverse childhood experiences and narcissistic personality disorder (NPD). Trauma, physical abuse, emotional abuse, rejection, neglect, and lack of support during childhood can all contribute to the development of narcissistic traits.



When children experience significant trauma, they may learn not to love anybody. They may grow up to be an adult narcissist who only loves themselves. This could be because, at an earlier stage in life, they learned that it's too dangerous to love anybody, and the best option seemed to love only themselves.

a) Conditional vs. unconditional love in childhood

Everyone naturally seeks a realistic perception and unconditional love through feedback from friends, family, and intimate partners.

If children believe their parents only value them because they are unique, this can contribute to an underlying insecurity. No one wins all the time and is better than everyone else in every way. Children a parent idealizes can

begin to believe they are only lovable when they are perfect and worthy of idealization.

b) The perception of flaws and shame

When parents idealize their children, they may feel ashamed when they notice flaws in themselves. This may push them to pursue perfection to prove they are flawless and worthy of idealization. The origins of excessive self-shame, lack of self-acceptance, self-criticism, or self-blame.

c) Stunted development of the authentic self

During this process, children may lose touch with their authentic selves, likes, and dislikes. Instead of exploring who they are and where their true interests and talents lie, they can get off track and spend their time only doing things they are already good at and think will earn their parents' approval.

Dysfunctional families often perpetuate unspoken rules of "don't talk, don't trust, and don't feel." These rules affect not only childhood development but also adulthood.

Growing up in families with unspoken rules of "don't feel" and "don't tell" means that victims have not connected to their authentic inner voice.

This results in too much parental idealization, which may lead to an unbalanced view of the self. When this occurs, the child views flaws as unacceptable and aspires to

achieve 100 percent perfection. From this, the child quickly progresses to full-blown narcissism.

Occasionally, these children resist their role as "The Golden Child," do not become narcissistic, and are embarrassed by the excessive praise that they receive. Their role in the family burdens them.

One mother told the author, "My son is the light of the family who will lead us all to greatness." But when she spoke to her son, he told her, "I just want to get off this endless treadmill, and live my own life without having to meet my parents' wild expectations."

d) The Exhibitionist's Admirer

Some children grow up in a narcissistic household with an exhibitionist-narcissist parent who rewards them with praise and attention as long as they admire and stay subservient to the parent. Teachers instill narcissistic values in these children but discourage them from showcasing themselves for admiration.

Instead, their role in the family is to uncritically worship the greatness of their narcissistic parent without attempting to equal or surpass that parent's achievements.

This upbringing can lead to the development of covert narcissists. The children learn that they will be given attention and praise for not openly competing with the

narcissistic parent and that these rewards will be withheld, and they will be devalued if they openly try to be acknowledged as unique. All of their value in the family comes from supporting the exhibitionist parent's ego.

In adulthood, these children may feel uncomfortable in the spotlight, and their narcissism and self-esteem issues may be less evident to those who do not know them well. Some adapt to this role very well and lead productive lives in a job that involves supporting a high-achieving exhibitionist narcissist whom they admire.

Great man syndrome

The following story revolves around a family genogram and how it can uncover potential behavioral patterns within an extended family.

The story of the perfect parents unfolds with a family consisting of a mother, a father, and five daughters. All five daughters were exceptional professionals and devoted Christian philanthropists, greatly idolizing and admiring their father.

Each of them aspired to marry a man similar to their father and was shielded from any potential harm by him.

He was apprehensive of the people in their neighborhood and never allowed other children, including his relatives, to visit his daughters. As the girls grew up, their father consistently emphasized the necessity of marrying someone as accomplished

and handsome as himself. Consequently, as time passed, they remained unmarried—single, beautiful, and unattached to anyone—at ages 35, 38, 40, 42, and 46. The eldest sisters sought for help and consulted a therapist, who tasked her with finding out and drawing out her family genogram.

A genogram served as a tool for individuals to comprehend their family's heritage and the dynamics within their extended family. It includes grandparents, aunts, uncles, and the family's overall social, psychological, physical wellness and spiritual inclinations. It provides insight into marital patterns such as monogamy, polygamy, divorces, and the number of children. Additionally, it helps identify patterns of psychological and physical health within the family, including mental well-being, depression, diabetes, heart diseases, and common infectious and lifestyle-related illnesses. Furthermore, it sheds light on family members' mortality and its causes, which can reveal behavioral patterns and the family's spiritual belief system. Notably, genograms also reveal any outstanding social patterns among family members. Through genograms, individuals can recognize their susceptibilities concerning behavior, health,

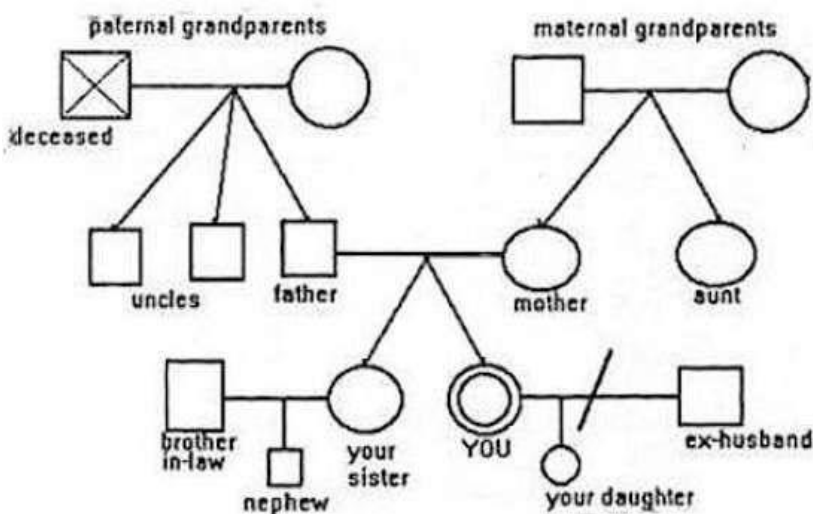
and worldview based on ancestral connections, which often exhibit multi-generational dynamics.

After consulting the therapist, she approached her parents, who initially hesitated to share details about their relatives but eventually relented. They introduced all the girls to their extended family, where they discovered disorganized emotional attachment styles, a scarcity of married family members, and a

high rate of divorce. Only the girls' parents and grandparents maintained enduring marriages, while the rest of the family experienced chaotic emotional dynamics. It was revealed that the girl's parents had been involved in multiple marriages before and had several stepchildren from their previous relationships. Tragically, these stepchildren had been neglected and deprived of proper care, education, and opportunities. This revelation prompted the girls to realize that their parents' ideals were not as they seemed; their pursuit of finding life partners resembling their parents was disingenuous and misleading.



Family genogram.



Most people find it hard to accept reality, so they create a fictitious world where they live in secrecy. Both parents faked their personas, portraying themselves as perfect Christians who had not been married before. They lied about being academic achievements during their school days and about their commitment to Christianity by serving on the church altar and choir. In reality, they were just ordinary village children, average in school and mischievous, receiving discipline from their parents like any other child.

A trained professional revealed the family's dynamics and true self-awareness, helping the daughter wake up from a narcissistic fairy tale by unveiling the family's historical veil.

Multiple factors contribute to Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD), some of which are byproducts of specific childhood family environments and parenting. Different parenting styles may suggest narcissism.

Perfectionist narcissistic parents are competitive and only reward children for high achievements.

Exhibitionist-narcissist parents identify with children only when they achieve visible success. Their love is conditional, based on the child's accomplishments.

Narcissistic parents are highly authoritative and put down their children. They praise one child and devalue the others, creating an insecure environment for the family.

This kind of upbringing can lead children to react in different ways.

The Defeated Child may spiral into self-hatred and shame-based depression and engage in impulsive, addictive behaviors.

The rebellious child spends their lives trying to prove to themselves and the world that they are unique and capable, seeking achievement in every possible way.

The Angry Child: These children grow up feeling angry at the parent who belittled them. They often direct their anger towards anyone who somehow reminds them of their parents. In some cases, they may become toxic or malignant

narcissists themselves, striving not only to achieve but also to destroy. This is a classic example of victims of narcissistic parents becoming narcissists themselves.

The Golden Child: These parents are usually closet narcissists who do not like being the center of attention. Instead, they boast about their exceptionally talented child. While the child may be genuinely gifted and deserving of praise, these parents sometimes take it to extremes. Overly idealizing a child as perfect and memorable can lead to the child developing narcissistic traits later in life.

Culture and Environment

Research suggests that the culture in which a person grows up can influence their likelihood of developing Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD). Cultures that promote individualism and personal independence have a higher risk of NPD. On the other hand, people who grow up in cultures that encourage community and collective action are less likely to develop NPD. In some hyper-capitalistic societies in the Global South, such as Kenya, there is an increasing prevalence of narcissistic collective cultures influenced by social media from Global North cultures, particularly affecting the Alpha and Gen Z generations.

Furthermore, a child growing up in an insecure environment characterized by regular physical, sexual, or emotional abuse is more likely to develop NPD. Narcissistic personalities often stem from childhood emotional trauma

caused by deep shame, loss, or hardship. Such individuals are deprived of the secure environment and unconditional affection they needed as children for emotional development. The adverse effects of such environments are typically observed in critical brain regions, such as the hippocampus and amygdala, which may affect the child's psychology and behavior.

Additionally, adverse experiences like neglect, a lack of basic needs, and absent or distressed caregivers due to war, famine, and political upheavals can contribute to the development of NPD. In cases of economic hardship, individuals who experience a significant improvement in their financial situation may develop NPD as a result of past dissatisfaction and feelings of meaninglessness in life, leading to aggression, interpersonal difficulties, and antisocial behavior.

Politics and economics

In a capitalist system, individualism is promoted, leading to a prevalent condition where people prioritize their success, regardless of how they achieve it. They adopt pragmatic ideologies that state, "The end justifies the means". This mentality justifies unethical actions in the pursuit of wealth. For example, individuals can steal from government funds, hospitals, schools, or vulnerable people and still be celebrated as hard-working businessmen, generous givers, or philanthropists.

A self-centered society often disregards unethical behavior; religious leaders may even encourage it through prayers for material blessings. This culture of prioritizing wealth and success can contribute to the development of narcissistic personality disorder tendencies.



Unfortunately, many young people from Generation Alpha and Gen Z admire getting rich at any cost. This reflects a rise in collective narcissism in society and a decrease in empathy and compassion on a large scale. However, there's a deception in the fact that narcissists have desirable qualities like attractiveness, charm, conscientiousness, and a focus on achievement. Despite these initially attractive qualities, the appeal of narcissists tends to fade over time. People who spend time with narcissists often end up liking

them less as they discover the darker aspects of their personalities.

The Social Media Community

The global culture of social media is reinforcing narcissistic personality disorder (NPD). This is because people may not truly represent themselves for who they are truly and may lead a fake and embellished life to garner likes from their online followers. Additionally, by posting seductive and provocative pictures, many people can gain unearned status, attention, and even financial rewards, creating a harmful cycle of maintaining status.

Even mild levels of narcissism lead to increased social media use; conversely, social media use leads to positive self-views, and individuals seeking to boost their self-esteem often turn to social media.

It is less clear whether social media directly causes narcissism, at least in the short term. However, those high in narcissism have a disproportionate influence on social media platforms, with narcissists having more friends and posting more frequently. Unbeknownst to most victims, this is precisely how narcissists prefer it.

Young adults' social media narcissism

Because young adults are in a stage of life where they establish their identities and figure out who they are in relation to others, they may be considered selfish. Additionally, online communities may promote self-centeredness in interpersonal relationships. For example, there is a growing demand for online chatting, even during in-person interactions with people nearby. Brailovskaia et al. (2020) demonstrate that narcissism is increasing among young people due to the influence of social media, which is creating a self-obsessed generation. Research shows that today's young adults are more narcissistic than ever before, with more than 10 percent of people in their 20s believed to suffer from subclinical narcissism. Social media, particularly platforms like Facebook and Instagram, focuses on sharing (and sometimes oversharing) one's image and opinions. Young adults who use these platforms are often prone to narcissism. Research indicates that higher amounts of social media use predict higher levels of grandiose narcissism, including time spent on social media, frequency of posts or tweets, number of friends or followers, and how often participants post pictures of themselves on social media.



In a 2018 study, Reed et al. tracked 74 participants aged 18–34 over four months and used the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) to measure their narcissistic traits. The study found that individuals who frequently posted photos and 'selfies' on social media showed a 25% increase in narcissism. Specifically, those who used image-focused platforms such as Facebook displayed a higher increase in narcissistic traits compared to those who primarily used platforms focused on text rather than images. The research suggests that social media use may contribute to the development of pathological Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD), with participants exhibiting significant increases in narcissism qualifying for an NPD diagnosis. These findings imply that excessive use of social media,

particularly image-focused platforms, may exacerbate narcissistic personality traits.

Is narcissism on the rise among young adults?

Research has confirmed that young adults are becoming more narcissistic, and social media isn't helping. A study published in the *Journal of Personality* analyzed data from 85 samples of American college students who completed the 40-question Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI). According to the findings, between 1982 and 2006, college students' NPI scores significantly increased by about two narcissistic answers.

"Receiving a like on social media triggers our reward cycle, producing a physiological high," the study reported. This good feeling is due to a dopamine rush in the brain's reward center.

A follow-up study added 22 new studies to the meta-analysis and found further increases in narcissism in young adults through 2008. The researchers proposed two reasons for this increase: a greater focus in recent years on building self-esteem in young people and the internet and social media, encouraging young people to focus obsessively on themselves and their public image.

The Role of Anxiety in Social Media Narcissism

Narcissism is typically categorized into two types: grandiose narcissism, characterized by feelings of superiority and entitlement, and vulnerable narcissism, characterized by hypersensitivity to criticism and a constant need for reassurance.

According to Brailovskaia et al. (2020), a study conducted in 2020 found that both types of narcissists are at a higher risk of developing an addiction to Facebook as a coping mechanism for anxiety. Vulnerable narcissists are particularly likely to become addicted because they tend to seek positive feedback online, where they can more easily control how they appear than in person. Despite their self-confident online personalities, grandiose narcissists also experience anxiety and insecurity.

Chapter Five

NARCISSISTIC MANIPULATION TACTICS AND METHODS.



A person with narcissistic traits often uses manipulation tactics to control and influence others. Due to their exploitative nature and lack of empathy, narcissists usually believe they are superior to others and that they deserve everything at the expense of other people. This is exemplified in the African folktale titled "WOTE."

The 'Wote' Syndrome.



Everyone received an invitation to a grand banquet in the clouds. The problem was that some of the invited animals did not have wings. To solve this, the invited birds agreed to donate wings to the lacking guests. They planned to bind the feathers together with glue. Excited for the event, cats, dogs, crocodiles, snakes, pigs, lions, pumas, tigers, lizards, and birds happily flew to the banquet.

Upon arrival, the host welcomed them warmly and assigned a butler to attend to their needs and provide food. A table in the middle of the dining hall served the first course of buttered buns and mushroom soup brought by the butler and his team.

Out of courtesy, the guests inquired whose food it was for, and the butler said, "It is for Wote." Tortoise, who went by the name 'Wote,' was excited that the guests and the host's team recognized him by his name. He began eating his meal, instructing the other guests to wait until their names were called to be served.

The main course, dessert, pudding, and wine followed the same pattern. Wote ate and drank everything that was served. Impatient, the guests approached the butler to inquire about the timing of their food service. The butler informed them that he had served all of Wote's food. Confused, they told him they hadn't eaten. The butler explained that the food was for all the guests because, in Swahili, the term "Wote" meant all or everybody. He further explained to them that there was no more food left.

Disappointed, the guests decided to take revenge by teaching Wote a lesson. They decided to remove their feathers from Wote, the tortoise. But before they left, the tortoise had one request - to instruct Wote's wife to put soft items like sponges, mattresses, and hay so that he wouldn't get hurt when he jumped from the heavens down to the hard ground.

Indeed, they conveyed to Wote's wife that she should lay all sharp objects in front of her house and that her husband was coming with buyers who needed them.

The tortoise plummeted from the sky, splintering into pieces. The event saddened his tearful wife, who collected the scattered pieces of her husband's body in a sack and took them to a medicine man, who glued them together.

This explains why the tortoise has a rough shell. He strolls slowly because he has never completely healed from the traumatic ordeal.



This story illustrates how some people, given a small opportunity, become unapologetically entitled, greedy, and selfish, keeping everything to themselves. This behavior is evident in many countries, where elected political leaders are focused on retaining power, prioritizing their gain instead of serving the voters.

The root cause of this behavior may be associated with NPD or narcissistic personality disorder.

This pattern also occurs in corporate settings, where top executives and managers allocate large salaries and benefits to themselves while neglecting the well-being of other organizational members.

The 'Wote' syndrome is prevalent across various aspects of life, including homes, churches, and relationships.

It's essential to protect oneself from manipulation tactics. If someone is experiencing these behaviors in their relationships or friendships, there are healthy ways to address them or seek professional treatment options for healing.

Individuals with narcissistic traits may use various tactics to manipulate others to fulfill their desires or boost their ego. These tactics can include emotional abuse and gaslighting, which may be subtle or overt. Below are explanations of the most common narcissistic tactics.

Isolation

After identifying their victim, the narcissist proceeds to isolate the person. They do this by keeping away person's long-time friends, colleagues and family. This can happen in an intimate, religious, casual or acquaintance relationship even at place of work.

They start isolating a person from the world through badmouthing, intimidation, brainwashing, coercion, gifts and smear campaign. That is why narcissistic relationship is termed as toxic relationship because of the intention of one party is to control the other party. Eventually the relationship is unhealthy.

Gaslighting

A person with narcissistic traits typically feels that they can't do anything wrong. When confronted about mistakes, they will be defensive and might deny the reality or recollection of events. Phrases such as "It wasn't that bad," "You must be losing your mind," and "It didn't happen like that" are used to make one deny their truth.

At first, a person might argue back and stand their ground against narcissistic gaslighting. However, covering someone's perception of reality makes them more likely to drop or move on from an argument over time.

Those with narcissistic traits frequently engage in this form of manipulation when they feel a loss of control in a relationship. In turn, this can sometimes lead to narcissistic abuse syndrome.

Love Bombing

Love bombing is a manipulative tactic used by narcissists in the early stages of a relationship. This can involve extravagant gifts, excessive affection, and constant attention, making the recipient feel special.



However, this attention often fades as the narcissist's true nature is revealed. Love bombing isn't limited to romantic relationships and can occur in other situations like work,

friendships, family, and even politics. It's especially effective on individuals who have experienced abuse or trauma in the past, as they may excuse or ignore the manipulative behavior.

Triangulation

Narcissistic triangulation occurs when a person tries to involve a third party in a conflict to benefit themselves or make the other party look like the aggressor. This manipulation can occur in various relationships, including friendships and family dynamics, such as with narcissistic parents. For example, a manipulative parent can try to turn their children against the other parent, leaving the alienated parent with little recourse, such as lacking the funds to pursue legal action to address issues like child custody, visitation, and parental alienation, which is a form of abuse. This behavior is also expected in workplace and political situations, where a superior, colleague, or voter may bring in a third person to influence them to take their "side" or divert attention away from their actions in a conflict.



Campaigning by unfairly rallying innocent bystanders to take sides is common in many African country's politics. For instance, politicians who lose political support may falsely claim that the government or their party is sidelining their tribe members. Politicians make these statements, knowing they are untrue, and continue their lives without facing the consequences.

Projection

Projection occurs when someone cannot deal with their negative feelings instead attributes them to someone else. The person usually accuses the other of the same actions they are engaged in.

Projection is a common but poorly understood tactic, often leaving the victim feeling conflicted about being accused of

being the victimizer. This confusion resembles the Biblical story of the two women and King Solomon. In these cases, the victim's innocence is tested by the aggressor's loud accusations or unfair behavior.

For example, a narcissist projecting their feelings may believe that someone else is angry when, in reality, they are the ones feeling angry but unable to accept it. In romantic relationships, projection can manifest when one partner accuses the other of cheating while they are the ones being unfaithful.

Playing the victim

A narcissist often presents themselves as the victim after engaging in harmful or vengeful behaviors, redirecting sympathy and attention to themselves. They may justify their actions by claiming that they were the ones who suffered harm or manipulation instead of the actual victims. Due to their persuasive nature and adept use of defense mechanisms such as projection and displacement, as first described by Sigmund Freud, the father of psychology, narcissists can be convincing and leave others confused about the truth.

Father summoned to the Children's Rights Office.



The school accountant summoned a 65-year-old man, a government employee, to discuss about how he would pay off the school fees arrears for his six-year-old daughter.

The man went on to explain that he was in a polygamous marriage with three wives. His first wife had five adult children, and the second wife had four children, who the first wife's children raised. He then married a third wife, the same age as the second wife's youngest daughter. He boasted about his appeal to women and their admiration for his generosity and physical attributes.

The man revealed to the accountant that he had older children, aged 25–45, from his first and second marriages.

He explained that they were wealthy but disrespectful; they were married and had good jobs. He then explained that his grandchildren were attending private schools, yet his wealthy children were not helping him support and educate his children and his third, 25-year-old wife. This puzzled and intrigued the accountant.

He complained bitterly that his sons and daughters from his first and second marriages were no longer fully supporting him in caring for his third wife and her children, seething with anger and lamenting that while his children were living a good life, he was struggling with poverty along with his third wife and her children. He even considered cursing them for their lack of support.

Speechless, the accountant at looked him in the eye and sincerely expressed understanding of his frustration. Then, cynically, she joked, "I hope you're not thinking of getting a fourth wife." They both chuckled, but the man felt a bitter taste in his mouth, knowing that his scheme was over.

We have learned that anyone, including family members such as mothers or fathers, can exhibit narcissistic tendencies. A narcissistic parent always believes they are correct while considering the children and other family members to be wrong. They assume that even family members are there to serve them. For narcissists, everyone in the family is an extension of themselves, and they believe their interests should come first.

The older man was playing the victim, but he took advantage of his children for his own benefit.

Smear Campaign

Narcissistic defamation occurs when a narcissist spread lies or exaggerations to discredit and isolate someone. They often do this secretly, sharing the lies with anyone who listens. For instance, if someone ends a friendship or relationship, the narcissist may spread rumors about them within their social circles. As a result, the victim may notice their supporters distancing themselves and reducing contact.



The cruel consequence is that often, the victim is gradually isolated as people believe the lies spread against them.

People treat them with suspicion, as if they are causing the problems.

The father summoned to the Government children's office

A man with two expensive iPhones arrived in a shiny Nissan Patrol. He was well-dressed in a custom-tailored suit and designer shoes, exuding an air of sophistication. The guard saluted him and escorted him to the reception area. The staff assumed he was a guest of the director based on his appearance. When he reached the reception, he asked to be directed to the mediator's office. A gloomy lady with six children was waiting in the office, looking malnourished with faded, tattered clothes and teary, expressionless eyes.

Upon entering the mediator's office, the man introduced himself as the husband and father of the children. It turned out that the children's office had summoned him regarding his children's well-being. During the mediation session, the man dominated the conversation, expressing urgency and irritation about being summoned, even mentioning his busy government job as appointed by the cabinet secretary. He belittled his wife for reporting him to the children's office, accusing her of laziness and neglect. He reprimanded her and insisted she send him the budget for the fee structure and children's needs.

Eventually, he wrote a significant cheque to cater to the children's needs, promising them the world and assuring them they would never lack. He warned his wife to stop spoiling his good name as he left. However, it was later revealed that the cheque bounced, and the man never visited or provided for the children. Surprisingly, he appeared on television advocating for women's and children's rights, having received an offer from the government to manage the Department of Gender, Youth, and Family Affairs. He portrayed himself as a family man, emphasizing his care for his beautiful children and virtuous wife despite his prior neglect and mistreatment.



This story illustrates how narcissists cause confusion and make people question their reality. They treat others without empathy, belittle them, and manipulate children as if they were pawns in a game. This behavior leads their victims and others close to them to question their sanity.

The narcissists' actions and their personal lives do not align. They use money as a tool to manipulate close relationships and only seem to be interested in causing suffering to those under their care.

Revenge Seeking

When people with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) are offended, they often seek revenge. This can manifest as a smear campaign or other retaliatory actions. For example, a narcissist may seek revenge in the workplace if they are denied a promotion or openly criticized in a meeting. They may intentionally delay project submissions or neglect essential tasks to make the other person's job harder.

Guilt Tripping

The narcissist uses a tactic that makes the victim feel as if they are in the wrong. This behavior can be challenging to recognize, especially if one does not know the person well or has not been exposed to this form of manipulation before. However, a narcissist will often use this tactic to control the victim and make them feel ashamed, which in turn keeps the victim loyal to the abuser.

A clear example is the case of a man in a polygamous, also known as a serial monogamous, family. He would guilt-trip his older children when they didn't take up the responsibility of caring for his young wife and her children;

he would even manipulate them using the promise of a curse. The man summoned by the children's officer was guilt-tripping the wife by blaming her for all their family problems, claiming she was responsible for malnourished children, and even accusing her of driving him out of their home.

Hoovering.

Hoovering occurs when a narcissist tries to "win" a person back, similar to the love bombing stage. The narcissist may use tactics like giving gifts and praise to regain the person's favor after a breakup or conflict. In these situations, they feel they are losing control over the person or want to regain their loyalty. Examples of hoovering include:

- Sending sporadic texts or messages
- Liking social media posts
- Sending random gifts to the person

As a result, the individual may find themselves drawn back into the previous relationship. Narcissists use temptations, desires, and needs to manipulate their victims, which is why victims, on average, return to their abuser at least eight times in their lifetime.

THE ABUSE CYCLE DIAGRAM



The gullible single mom.

A single mother met a man at a friend's party. Upon looking into each other's eyes, they automatically knew from their hearts that they were meant for each other. They exchanged contacts, started meeting, and within two weeks, they were dating. Being a born-again Christian, the lady poured her heart out, telling the man about her life and her failed first relationship.

She cried as she recounted how her child's father, her first boyfriend, impregnated her when she was in her last year of secondary education. He had promised to marry her but vanished after realizing she was pregnant.

She revealed her preference for a church wedding over an 'ungodly union.'

The man was romantic. He would listen closely as the lady talked about her dreams and future. She even told him that she was not stupid. She had many investments and insurance cover for a better future.

One day, the man proposed, and she emotionally said 'Yes' , he promised to marry her in six months. But three months later, the lady asked the man what his plan was because he needed to make arrangements for the wedding; like meeting the in-laws, and plans leading to the wedding, like shopping for gowns or looking for a venue.

The man shed some tears, explaining to her that a Ponzi scheme swindled his money, and that was why he did not have money. Seeing the man's vulnerability and sincerity, the lady decided to finance her bride's price. The man's family visited her parents and extended family, as is traditionally the case. He said that the only thing missing was that his parents would be absent. According to him, they had traveled outside the country to see their grandchild. His 'uncle and aunt' —represented his parents, were in their place. The ceremony was beautiful and went well.

After this, they started arranging for the wedding. The lady realized that the people helping her were her friends and family members and asked him, but he promised to help pay for the venue and honeymoon in Mombasa.

During the wedding, the man's parents were absent but represented by different set of aunt and uncle at the bride-price ceremony. This is culturally considered a great indication of a red flag, and the wedding guests murmured that there was a need for the blessing of one's parents.

The bride noticed the discrepancies but was excited that she was getting married to a man she loved.

After the church ceremony, they headed to the reception venue. But to her shock, there was no reservation. She learned that no room had been booked in the hotel, or any payments for booking a room.

The man became dramatic, swearing by his ancestors and blaming the management for being unprofessional and not making reservations. He even regretted considering the hotel despite it not being the best option. The man pleaded with the lady to arrange another venue; she used her mobile money, MPESA, to pay. The guests felt inconvenienced, but the function was fun, after opting for another hotel.

The couple skipped the honeymoon because the man complained that it was a waste of money.

They settled well and started discussing their way forward, after a while and the man asked the new wife if she would lend him money to start a business. He claimed that he would get a consignment of goods from America.

His purported that his parents were settling in the USA to start a family business. The lady hesitated, but the man expressed anger, so she gave in and gave him the money. One month later on one fateful evening he did not come back home and never again from that day on.

Troubled and trying to find out his whereabouts, she learned from Instagram and Facebook that the man was married and had two children. On social media, she saw the man celebrating his tenth marriage anniversary, surrounded by his real wife, children, friends, and extended family. The family looked beautiful.



It's important to remember how narcissists collect information to use against a person in the future. While ordinary people listen, learn, and form strong friendships, narcissists exploit the information they gather to torment and harm others.

In a specific example, a man manipulated a vulnerable woman by exploiting her resources and her desire to get married. He used the opportunity to sexually and financially exploit her.

The woman later discovered that their union, blessed by the church, was not legally registered, and therefore, the marriage was null and void, pure hoax.

In another example, the story of Samson and Delila from the Bible illustrates how sharing personal information with the wrong a person can have dire consequences. Samson, a Jewish soldier, underestimated the danger of sharing his secret with Delila, a Philistine woman who was actually a spy. She used her attractiveness and cunningness to manipulate Samson into revealing his source of strength. Ultimately, she betrayed him to the Philippines, leading to his murder.

This highlights the importance of being cautious about whom we share our secrets with, as narcissists and manipulative individuals can exploit our strengths and weaknesses for their gain.

Narcissists use 'Flying Monkeys.'

The term "flying monkeys" is a metaphor for individuals who are eager to please others. They often do not want to disappoint a narcissist, especially if they are friends or family. The narcissist may have manipulated or coerced

these individuals, or they may fear the narcissist and choose to submit to them in order to avoid becoming targets themselves.

According to Dr. Kerwin, these individuals lack emotional intelligence or empathy, which prevents them from understanding the harm they are contributing to. Many flying monkeys may fulfill their role without realizing it, genuinely believing that the narcissist is on the right based on their perspective.

In some cases, individuals with certain conditions or disorders may be more susceptible to becoming flying monkeys. For instance, someone with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) may exhibit behaviors similar to those of a flying monkey. A narcissist may submit to another if it benefits them in some way, such as gaining money, power, or the hope of overtaking the other person in the future.

The power and confidence projected by the narcissist may appeal to individuals with anxiety. On the other hand, those with codependent tendencies may choose to serve a narcissist as a way of finding purpose and satisfaction in their lives. The following story illustrates this concept.

Family betrayal and injustice to their daughter

Online video footage showed a man walking on the streets, smiling, and carrying a severed head of his 17-year-old wife. The deceased, married at 14, was the mother of a 3-year-old boy at the time of her death. The man was physically and verbally abusive.

According to her family of origin, neighbours, and in-laws, this abuse had gone on since they moved in together, but no one dared intervene. They feared the attacker. Despite being cruel to his wife, the community adored him because of his generosity.

To save herself from the pain of constant abuse, the wife had ran away to a different country, where she sought refuge in another man's arms. The man understood her suffering and agreed to live with her; she seemed happy.

The family only learned about her when she started posting her life on social media, and it was easy to locate her. The father and uncle sought immigration clearance, located her, they convinced her to return home. The lady refused, citing how the husband was abusive. However, both men were able to persuade and assure her of her safety upon her return home, and they vowed to protect her from her abusive husband. Upon returning home, they returned her to her matrimonial home. The husband quickly enlisted his brother's assistance in murdering her. This they did to remove shame through honor killing.

The government took the case seriously due to social media posts and widespread demonstrations.

The court sentenced the man to seven and a half years in prison for murder and eight months for intentional assault. The husband's brother received a 45-month prison sentence for conspiring to commit deliberate homicide. The lady's family forgave the murderer and declined to demand retribution.

Many blamed the legal system, as well as the country's patriarchal culture and traditions, for fostering an environment that allows for "honor" killings.



Narcissism thrives due to a complex network of emotional narcissistic supply and individuals who enable the behaviour. These enablers are often referred to as "flying monkeys." A flying monkey is someone who acts on behalf of or as an accomplice to the narcissist. Typically, there are two main types of flying monkeys in the selfish person's circle: benevolent and malevolent enablers.

The benevolent enabler

The murderer's brother is depicted as a flying monkey. He has a sociotropic nature, which made him an easy target for manipulators. Sociotropic individuals suffer from the so-called "disease to please" due to their powerful longing for external validation.

Benevolent flying monkeys don't mean to cause harm intentionally. The narcissist may gaslight the benevolent enabler by saying things like:

"Are you just going to stand by while the woman dishonors me, our family, and God? If you're a man, you take action!"

The narcissist may use manipulative tactics to influence how events and people are perceived, often causing well-intentioned individuals to see the victim as the one at fault.

For example, they would inform the benevolent enabler.

"This woman deserves to die. She is a criminal. She has terrorized our family for a long time."

The malevolent enabler

They are bad-faith actors who deliberately engage in narcissistic abuse by inflicting harm on others. These acts give them a sense of power. In this case, the father and the uncle married off the girl when she was hardly a mature woman and manipulated her into returning to the country,

knowing they would not protect her. And when she dies, they are quick to forgive perpetrators.

Since an evil flying monkey is morally bankrupt, it doesn't matter who is right or wrong. They are usually fully aware that an injustice is taking place. In this case they are collective narcissist subtype, these individuals take pleasure in denying dignity and justice to those whom they perceive as different from themselves based on factors such as gender, race, status, politics, and profession.

Malevolent flying monkeys act as gatekeepers and often serve as enforcers of broader systems of oppression like sexism, racism and manipulative political campaigns. They engage in conflicts solely to uphold an unjust hierarchy that benefits them. This explains why the support of the community that sided with the murderer was significant.

Crimes of passion, including murder, are common among narcissists, and their supporters quickly mobilize in harmful ways, as evidenced by the murderer's brother who aided in the crime. The victim's parents showed no concern for their daughter's suffering. Even after the murder, the authorities did not take action until societal pressure forced them to do so.

How do narcissists attract flying monkeys?

Narcissists attract flying monkeys by appealing to their narcissism, which is a trait all humans possess to varying degrees.



The narcissists often recruit their flying monkeys from among the community and other family members, such as siblings, spouses, or children. Close friends or coworkers can also become flying monkeys. This includes bosses or political leaders who would only be able to function with a band of helpers prepared to get their hands dirty.

In the case of murder, it is clear that the community, extended family, cousins, and in-laws knew, but no one had the guts to help the victim.

This was due to their fear of isolation and the perpetrator's refusal to assist. Everyone in this community supported the narcissistic murder.

The legal system facilitates femicide by disqualifying 'honor killing' as murder, resulting in lenient sentences ranging from 7 to 10 years. However, if the victim is a man, the murderer receives a life sentence. For girls and women, the legal system and society as a whole are traps because of their blindness to the unfair power dynamics in heterosexual relationships.

Several factors contribute to people becoming flying monkeys:

1. Self-preservation and protection.

The younger brother assisted his elder brother in killing his wife to maintain his position according to religious beliefs. Similarly, the flying monkeys, who do the bidding of a narcissist, act out of self-preservation without considering the impact of their actions. Their priority is to preserve their image and honour rather than protect others. People often take on this role by aligning themselves with the most important person in a family, society or organization. They may spread rumours and misinformation and use gas-lighting, techniques to maintain their position and gain favours from the narcissist, ensuring job security, favours and avoiding the narcissist's wrath.

2. Rescuing the narcissistic "victim".

Those who tend to take on a rescuing role feel the need to defend the narcissist who blames others for their problems. Standing up for the narcissist fulfils the rescuers' need to feel valued and needed.

3. Loss of sense of self.

Flying monkeys may have experienced years of emotional abuse at the hands of the narcissist, losing a sense of self and independent decision-making along the way.

4. Love for drama.

This is common in political discourses and extreme competitions in family group decision-making, such as land feuds filled with sibling rivalry or blended family hostilities. This may very well explain why most extended family meetings are not effective in resolving prolonged, long-standing abuse because of the subjectivity of family members who may take sides.

5. Being a flying monkey is often associated with having solid narcissistic traits such as a desire for attention, a lack of empathy, and a tendency to bully and manipulate others.

Flying monkeys may be in a family, work, or other situation where they align themselves with a more powerful

narcissist to fulfil their selfish desires. If a flying monkey decides they've had enough, the narcissist in their life is unlikely to be happy about it and may not want anything to do with them once they are no longer useful. When a narcissist uses someone to handle the less desirable parts of their business, that person will always find themselves in a compromised, stressful environment. Therefore, it's important to have proper support in place when deciding to change their role.

How can one tell if someone is a flying monkey?

According to Lauren Kerwin, PhD, a licensed clinical psychologist, it can be challenging to identify a flying monkey. Kerwin explains that flying monkeys may appear to be ordinary individuals taking sides in a disagreement or conflict.

Signs Someone is a Flying Monkey

They consistently take the side of the narcissist, regardless of the situation or evidence presented to them.

They spread gossip or rumours about an individual.

They manipulate or gaslight people.

They dismiss or minimize others' feelings.

They divulge victims' information to aid the narcissist in harassing them.

Flying monkeys could be the narcissist's friends or associates, one's friends or associates, or individuals one might view as authorities."

Why do people submit to narcissists?

There's no easy answer here, as there could be any number of reasons. Often, narcissists will start "grooming" their flying monkeys from the beginning, testing the relationship between an individual and them. They can deceive others, leading them to perceive themselves as the victims of abuse instead of the abusers.

Dealing with flying monkeys isn't always going to be easy. In many cases, they'll be friends or family members of the narcissist or both. Deal with them the same way one would with a narcissist and seek professional help.

Chapter Six

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON NARCISSISM.



Narcissistic pastors and the chaos they create in the church.



A good, Naive church girl

The girl was a wounded soul. She witnessed the father physically abuse anyone and anything in his way, including her mom, her siblings, and all the domestic animals: cats, dogs, and chickens.

She was traumatized by her mother being abused by her father, who later abandoned the family and started a second family. They grew up struggling to get basic needs and with a deep emptiness in her. She prayed for a relationship to fill the loneliness; she craved a father's love.

Her prayers were answered when a male pastor joined her church. Within a year he had proposed. Shortly after, the two wedded at the Attorney General's Office and finally at a church wedding. The church Elders were concerned about the hurry in which the marriage was conducted, but the two lovebirds were least concerned.

The pastor expressed his love for her and never spared anything to make her happy. He pampered her with flights for vacations, a luxurious car, designer clothes, bags, and shoes. They settled in the leafy suburbs. Everything was top-notch, shiny, and glittering.

In her eighth month of pregnancy, the battering started; she would be thrown out of the house in the wee hours of the night and, at times, threatened to be thrown through the window.

It was a difficult pregnancy that left her "disfigured, her face, and body as a whole.

He was mean, telling her that she looked terrible, fat like a swine, ugly, and lazy. He sunk her into consumer loans that would be deducted from her salary, she became the breadwinner. Anytime she asked for his support, he would religiously quote Proverbs Chapter 31 NIV.

'Who can find a virtuous woman? Her price is far above rubies. Her husband's heart trusts in her safety so that he does not need to be spoiled. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. She seeks wool and flax and works willingly with her hands.'

At church, the congregation started witnessing peculiar preachings from this new pastor. He had brought a new doctrine that he was purporting to have been anointed by God.

Eventually, it caused confusion and division in the church when he asked the congregants to submit their workplace pay slips; those in business were supposed to submit their profit and loss statements, which were attached with bank statements, for him to calculate tithe. He would threaten those who tried to challenge him.

When she tried to intervene in her capacity as the pastor's wife regarding his new teachings, he would remind her of;

" Ephesians:22-24 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. As the church submits to Christ, wives should also be to their husbands in everything. "

One foggy and chilly morning, auctioneers raided their home and took away their vehicles and household items, and they were evicted from the home due to unpaid debts; unfortunately, at the same time, she went into labor and was rushed to maternity by congregants to deliver, the man was nowhere to be seen.

She gave birth to a bouncing, healthy baby boy. As if this was not enough, she was presented with an envelope from her employer. She was excited and opened it. she to found out it was a termination letter; her world had crumbled on her, broken and bruised, without anywhere to go.

Upon discharge from the hospital, the church offered her a guesthouse. Later, the church elders learned that the pastor had looted church bank accounts and left. He had also used the church title to secure more loans, but the bank was cautious, and the loan sixteen-year loan never materialized. On top of it all, the man had impregnated the senior pastor's daughter. After a week, they saw the man had posted on his Facebook that he had arrived in the United States to join his family, a wife and three children who had traveled to the USA after winning their Green Card, but he had remained behind because he had problems with his documents and funds.

Alone in Kenya with no money and with an egomaniac mind, he looked for an easy target to hang on to as he organized his papers to be processed. He desperately looked for a church to pastor, and he surely got one. He looked for an easy target to marry—an easy way of getting money from the church. In addition, he got a bonus by taking advantage of the senior pastor's daughter as a girlfriend.



Caution: When a person is in the dating stage and is naive, they risk jeopardizing their lives. This especially applies to people who have unresolved childhood wounds and are susceptible to manipulation. It's important to identify risky and manipulative individuals who aim to exploit others, such as the pastor in this specific case. Manipulative people can be found in various places, including places of worship such as churches and mosques.

It was clear how the man identified the vulnerabilities of the lady, the church, the pastor's daughter, and the congregants. They were all seeking a quick path to happiness and heaven. He quickly engaged and married her, masking his true nature with displays of affection when, in reality, he was an abusive, exploitative, and manipulative person. He showered her with gifts, only to devalue her quickly and fell out of love. The church's naivety led to them entrusting him with church assets, property deeds, and bank access and allowing him to interact closely with their children, resulting in the pastor's daughter being impregnated.

The lesson learned here is that toxic and manipulative people can be found anywhere, even in places like the church. Rushing into situations hoping for a fairy tale life is not advisable for individuals who have not fully healed their past wounds.

(Romans 16:17-19) *17 I beseech you, brethren, to mark them that cause divisions and offences contrary to your learned doctrine and avoid them. 18 For they that serve, not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their belly, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. 19 For your obedience is to come abroad unto all men. Therefore, I am glad on your behalf, but I would have you wise unto what is good and simple concerning evil.*



An individual needs to have knowledge in order to improve their mental health. Understanding one's personality, distinguishing between toxic and healthy relationships, developing self-awareness, and addressing developmental issues can greatly help. Spiritual knowledge can also serve as a defense against toxic individuals.

Laban and Jacob's Narcissist Relationship Genesis, chapters 25–50.

Any survivor of a narcissistic relationship should be able to identify with Genesis 31. This story reveals a surprising array of narcissistic and abusive techniques. Jacob, the deceiver, meets his match in Laban,

an opportunistic father-in-law who takes advantage of Jacob's every weakness. Listed below are several elements of Laban's narcissistic abuse tactics.

When an individual makes it out of a relationship with someone like Laban, they will remember what it felt like to be in this situation. In this Bible chapter, a person will also see how God saw what Jacob had endured and helped him escape it.

Even though Jacob hadn't been perfect in his choices, God helped him find a new life post-trauma. This is encouraging, as the Bible shows how a victim who has lived a broken life can overcome it. God is in the business of redemption, leading people out of emotional chaos

Gaslighting occurs when an abuser attempts to control a situation by challenging the victim's perceptions. They use rhetorical force to reorient one's understanding by superimposing their views on the victim's memories. Over and over, a gaslighter will contradict one's complaints with, "It didn't actually happen like this. Here is the real situation." Over time, this erodes an individual's trust in their observations.



"Then Laban answered and said to Jacob, 'The daughters are my daughters, the children are my children, the flocks are my flocks, and all that you see is mine.'" (**Genesis 31:43**).

Laban tried to confuse Jacob by skewing the facts. Laban's daughters were Jacob's wives. The children he talked about were Jacob's, and the flocks were mixed, belonging to Laban and Jacob. Jacob worked for them. Laban could create confusion by stating only half of the truth and leaving out any facts favoring Jacob.

Projection occurs when an abuser is unwilling to admit his failures, instead projecting all blame on his victim. For example, when a sexual abuser claims that a woman seduced him instead of owning his choices, he is projecting or blame-shifting.

Now Jacob heard that Laban's sons were saying, "Jacob has taken all that was our father's, and from what was our father's, he has gained all this wealth." Jacob realized that Laban and his sons were not treating him with the same favor as before.

Though Jacob has been upright, helping grow Laban's business, he is still blamed for taking advantage of Laban's wealth.

Casting one's strengths as weaknesses: Because one's gifts are a natural threat to a narcissist, he attempts to recast them in a negative light, causing one to feel shame and hesitation.

"For the past twenty years, I have been with you. Your ewes and female goats have not miscarried, and I have not eaten the rams from your flocks. What was torn by wild beasts, I did not bring to you. I bore the loss for myself. You needed it from my hand, whether it was stolen by day or by night. There I was: by day, the heat consumed me, and by night, the cold consumed me, and my sleep fled from my eyes. For the past twenty years, I have lived in your house. I served you fourteen years for your two daughters and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times." (Genesis 31:38-41)

Laban accused Jacob of being damaging and selfish instead of helpful, despite his faithfulness and productivity as a partner.

Moving the Goalposts: Demanding more and more from someone after the person has met their initial target.

"You know that I have served your father with all my strength, yet he has cheated me and changed my wages ten times." "But God did not permit him to harm me." (Genesis 31:6,7)

Laban not only switched Leah for Rachel, but he also repeatedly utilized his position of power to change his expectations of Jacob. It is impossible to satisfy someone like that. It becomes a game in which the victim can never emerge victorious.

Threats may be subtle or overt assertions that an abuser could cause harm if they chose to.

"It is in my power to do you harm." But the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, 'Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.'" (Genesis 31:29)

Laban felt **the need to show off before** Jacob. "I could hurt you if I wanted to," trying to belittle Jacob.

False Generosity and Hoovering: Pretending to be benevolent and promising to change after the abuser has left.

"Why did you flee secretly and trick me, and did not tell me, so that I might have sent you away with mirth and songs, with tambourine and lyre?" (Genesis 31:27)

"The daughters are my daughters, the children are my children, the flocks are my flocks, and everything you see is mine." *But what can I do this day for these daughters or the children they have borne?* (Genesis 31:43)

Laban was **pretending to be what he was not**—a kind and loving father-in-law. This attempted to create shame and guilt in Jacob.

In the New Testament, we see Christ as the embodiment of truth. Jesus is the living standard of integrity and the personification of facts. Because of this, he is able to judge us and those who oppress us fairly. He can see us and heal us. It's important to turn to him when manipulators try to control our lives because he can see through the confusion and distinguish between right and wrong. Notice how God sees through Laban's deceit? He says,

"I've seen all that Laban is doing to you. *I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me. Now arise, go out of this land, and return to the land of your kindred.*" (Genesis 31:12–13)

He's prepared to rescue Jacob from this predicament and relocate him to a place where he can thrive. This same voice can also lead an individual back home.

Pharisees and Narcissism

When discussing narcissism, it's important to note that it can apply to individuals from various backgrounds and specifically refers to the Pharisees as an official position in Jewish culture rather than as a characteristic of a specific person. Therefore, not every Pharisee was considered a narcissist. This was Jesus's view of some of the Pharisees.

In Matthew 23: 1-4

Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and His disciples, saying: *"The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; therefore, all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and do not do them."* 4 *They tie heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but they are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger.*

The narcissist is King (*numero uno*). They set rules for others, which they need to follow.



Matthew 23:5-6: They perform all their actions to attract attention from others, as they enlarge their phylacteries and elongate the tassels of their garments. 6 They love the place of honour at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues, seven and respectful greetings in the marketplaces, and being called Rabbi by men.

The sole objective of a narcissist is to receive honour and glory from others.

So, to get there, they must look good in the eyes of others and have that rewarded by receiving the honour due to them.

(Matthew 23: 13-14) *"But Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. 14 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense, you make long prayers; therefore, you will receive greater condemnation.*

Narcissists put on a performance. The Pharisees' lengthy prayers were all about performance; they had no connection with communicating with God.

Matthew 23 15: *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves."*

Matthew 23:23: *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You tithe mint, dill, and cumin and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice, mercy, and faithfulness. These are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.*

"Narcissists lack a sense of proportion.

For example, they will work through the night rather than do something more useful. Their focus on small details is a way to avoid obligations and escape responsibility for more significant moral requirements.

(Mathew 23:23–25) *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but the inside is full of robbery and self-indulgence. 26 You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and the dish so that the outside may also become clean. So, you, too, appear righteous to men outwardly, but inwardly, you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. So, while you may look upright to others, you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.*

Narcissists are often seen as moral leaders, but their true nature eventually reveals itself through their contradictions.

"The mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart." (Matt 12:34)

3. Biblical narcissistic personalities

Dysfunctional and Narcissistic Family of David

Life is filled with conflict, which is expected at individual, workplace, or family levels. However, excessive conflict may indicate an underlying mental disorder.

This is true of David's family. David allowed conflict among some of his sons to plunge his family into tragedy. His oldest son, Amnon, raped and then shamed his half-sister, Tamar. Absalom, Tamar's full brother, hated Amnon for that crime but never spoke to him about it. David knew of the matter but ignored the situation, indicating unfairness and permissive parenting.

For two years, everything seemed fine, but unresolved conflicts of this magnitude never faded away. When Amnon and Absalom took a trip into the country together, Absalom piled his half-brother with wine and then had his servants murder him.

Absalom (2 Samuel)

One of King David's sons, Absalom, is a biblical figure known for his exceptional beauty and charm. He was the third and favourite son of David.



David had challenges with parenting skills, leading to a dysfunctional family. He was permissive with his sons, Amnon and Absalom,

who were pampered and indulged in numerous transgressions. The treatment of family members in David and Jacob's polygamous marriages was also unfair.

Absalom was deceitful and charismatic. He had a charmingly deceptive tongue and an artful way of manipulating people's emotions and thoughts. He used his cunning to orchestrate the murder of his older brother, who was a potential rival for the throne. Absalom also attempted to overthrow his father, King David.

Solomon, born to Uriah's wife, became king because David had promised, despite having older brothers. The moral of this story is that children are gifts from God, but parents have a responsibility to teach their children discipline. Parents should mitigate their children's carelessness and reinforce thoughtfulness. If Absalom and his siblings had been raised with these principles, they would have been kind to each other.

Jezebel (Chapter 1 to 2 Kings Old Testament)

Jezebel manipulated people intentionally, hurt them, and even murdered many of them with her husband, King Ahab, who was equally evil and bloodthirsty. A man named Naboth owned a vineyard right next to Ahab and Jezebel's palace. He was kind, and Ahab offered to buy Naboth's vineyard, but Naboth declined; guided by Jewish law, which corresponded to God's commands to keep the family vineyard within the family line.

Ahab and Jezebel were not happy about that. Since Naboth would not sell Ahab the vineyard, Ahab went home moody and teary from sadness. Jezebel reprimanded Ahab for his whining, and then she secretly organized the death of Naboth and took over his vineyard.

Ahab and Jezebel manipulated and used other people to get what they wanted. This teaches us that manipulating other only leads to destructive, evil endings.



Nebuchadnezzar Daniel 4:25-35

Nebuchadnezzar was the King of Babylon, a selfish individual who thought he was better than everyone else. He viewed himself as superior to God.

He was adamant about not admitting the true God and depicted himself as the ultimate leader. God cursed Nebuchadnezzar to resemble a wild animal due to his arrogance and narcissism until he accepted God as the Most High. Nebuchadnezzar is a clear illustration of a narcissist who lost everything because of his narcissism. The moral of this is to avoid making the same mistakes and cultivate humility.

Satan

Satan has been around for a long time, tempting people to sin and fall. He was the serpent in Eden's Garden who enticed Eve to eat the fruit. Evilness, immorality, and wickedness are the main characteristics of Satan. He is an eccentric, self-loving being.

People can learn much from Satan and his egotistical traits. People should refrain from such behaviors since they only harm themselves, others, and the plan of God in their lives. Satan will use, manipulate, and abuse people to achieve his goals. Christians must be equipped with knowledge and able to spot and protect themselves against his strategies, free of dishonesty and deception. This is done by avoiding his selfish way of life and embracing the importance of following God for a quality, meaningful life.

Narcissistic pastors and the chaos they create in church.

Throughout history, churches led by narcissistic pastors have experienced internal conflicts and ultimately disintegrated due to the toxic behavior of their leaders. These pastors, coming from the same economic and cultural background as the general population, may exhibit narcissistic behavior, similar to some of their congregation.

A narcissistic preacher's greatest fear is being perceived as a failure or a fraud, leading to intense shame. To cope with this fear, they often create grandiose fantasies about their achievements and seek association only with high-status individuals both within and outside their churches. This behavior serves as a sophisticated coping mechanism to deal with their fear and shame.

Many covertly narcissistic pastors see themselves as victims when things go wrong in their churches. They feel unappreciated by their members and tend to blame their junior pastors and staff for any issues. Some even create chaos deliberately and enjoy watching their staff and members struggle to restore order.

Many of these unscrupulous pastors do not forgive others as the Bible instructs. Instead, they constantly plot ways to seek revenge against those who have wronged them. In public, they may pretend to offer empathy, compassion, and understanding to their congregants because they must maintain that façade.

However, behind closed doors, they often exert control over their wives and children, subjecting them to emotional abuse, deception, and even sexual violence. Over time, their true nature becomes evident."

These pastors thrive in churches where admiration of the lead pastors or reverends is a crucial part of the worship process. They seek constant reassurance to boost their low self-esteem.

They willingly offer advice to their members on how to navigate the world and attend intimate dinners and banquets, where they listen to their members' darkest fears and secrets, only to later use them to take advantage."

When such pastors don't receive the constant recognition they expect from their congregants, they may feel personally rejected. In response, they may do irrational things that make things worse in the church. They rarely share their doubts and questions of faith because it makes them feel vulnerable, and they avoid appearing vulnerable as they associate it with weakness.

When a church gets a new pastor who is narcissistic, they will set out to reshape that church in their image as soon as they arrive. The entire church community easily adopts their toxic traits. Many churchgoers, especially those who are less fortunate, are drawn to larger churches because they find them appealing.

They attend these churches to align themselves with success, which helps boost their self-esteem. A charismatic, narcissistic pastor will prophesy unlimited success for their members. Because these members are in great need of associating themselves with something greater, they are easily swayed and unquestioningly accept their pastor's prophecies, even if they seem strange and unrealistic.

Given the self-destructive nature of the narcissistic pastor, their unrealistic fears can spread throughout the entire church, causing disintegration and leading to the formation of warring factions. One group may rebel against the pastor, while the other may fight to support and show loyalty to him.

Shakahola Massacre

These troubling events have been observed in churches across the country and have been widely covered by the national media, such as the unfortunate Shakaloha incident. According to the Kenyan Red Cross report from April 30, 2023, 410 individuals, including 227 minors, were reported missing. By August 2, 2023, the total number of reported deaths had reached 427, and 613 people were still missing. As of May 24, 2023, 91 people had been rescued.

ABC News (Australia). (April 27, 2023) reported that the majority of deaths were of children, with women being the next largest group, according to Interior Minister Kithure Kindiki. Mersie, Ayenat (April 28, 2023). Professor Kindiki additionally

stated that not all deaths were by starvation, saying that "there were other methods used, including hurting them, just by physical and preliminary observations." Autopsies conducted on more than 100 bodies showed that the victims died of starvation, strangulation, suffocation, and blunt trauma



Location of massacre

Exhumed graves



Bodies retrieved from Graves Source CBS NEWS



Emaciated cult members (source: Youtube)

Kenya Commission on Human Rights (22, 2024) Between April 25, 2023, and October 25, 2023, the Government conducted a search and rescue operation while simultaneously exhuming bodies from various mass graves. At the end of the exercise, 429 bodies were exhumed, and 67 adults and 25 children were rescued, according to Citizen Digital (2024).

The gruesome discovery of hundreds of bodies of victims of a doomsday starvation cult in a case that provoked horror across the world.

Here are some details about what has been dubbed the "Shakahola forest Massacre," one of the world's worst cult-related tragedies in recent times.

Self-proclaimed pastor Paul Nthenge Mackenzie was alleged to have incited his acolytes to starve to death to "meet Jesus." An "enforcer gang" ensured that no one broke their fast or left the forest hideout alive. Autopsies have revealed the majority of the victims died of hunger. But others, including children, appear to have been strangled, beaten, or suffocated. -Source CNN

Paul Mackenzie, a former taxi driver turned preacher, established Good News International Church in 2003 and expanded it to have branches in Nairobi and along Kenya's coast. In 2017, he started a YouTube channel where he shared videos warning followers against "demonic" practices such as wearing wigs and using mobile money. Due to legal issues related to his preaching, he closed his church in 2019 and relocated to Shakahola, inland from the Indian Ocean town of Malindi. Additionally, court documents revealed that he was a father of seven and was the co-director of a media house used to deliver apocalyptic or end-time sermons, the subject of **investigations**.



Courtesy of CNN.

Suppose you suspect that your pastor may be a narcissist. In that case, it is essential to consider how narcissistic behavior can contradict the teachings of the gospel and the example set by Jesus. In a church setting, a narcissistic leader can be disruptive, as they often seek to establish themselves as the unquestioned authority and may view anyone who disagrees with them as going against God.

First to address this issue, it's essential to work towards fostering a culture of kindness and rejecting any forms of narcissism. It's crucial to be able to recognize and address the harmful effects of narcissism within the church community.

If a church has a pastor with narcissistic traits, it may indicate a broader cultural issue that needs to be addressed.

While it may not have been wise to appoint such a pastor, the community must now find a way to address the situation.

The narcissistic pastor (what an irony!) craves attention and praise all the time. For that type of preacher, boasting about the church. The conceited pastor enjoys taking pride in his church and bragging about it since it gives him pleasure to receive attention. That is the "jam" of the narcissist.

Examine the Bible's account of Jesus' crucifixion (Mark 10:35–45). Seek guidance from knowledgeable leaders who exhibit kindness and grace guided by the Spirit.

Secondly, refrain from elevating the pastor to hero status, refrain from boasting about the pastor, and oppose those who do so. If everyone in the congregation is boasting about the pastor, it's probably because the pastor enjoys being the center of attention. It is necessary to recognize and oppose the narcissistic pastor's desire for glory.

Thirdly, the larger the church, the more ego is needed to manage, control, lead, and guide the organization. Control is in quotes because narcissistic pastors are more likely to use it. Although not all pastors of mega-churches are narcissists, power is what draws narcissists, and it is found in both large and small churches.

Fourth narcissism creates a culture that focuses more individuals by amplifying their contribution.

Fifth, narcissism over emphasize the stories of needy individuals and how the church can help. Remember that narcissists lack genuine empathy, and the empathy they display is often meant to showcase their own supposed empathy. Do not let the pastor take credit for the services church members focus on elsewhere. Share stories of people helping one another. Contribute to the creation of other-oriented cultures.

Sixth, groups within the culture should be created to reconcile differences. Since narcissists often have strained relationships, the culture should focus on building new connections based on bible teachings.

Seventh, identify members of the "board" (elders, deacons, leadership council, etc.) who dare to promote a positive culture and to recognize and reject traits of a narcissistic culture. Understand that the church belongs to the members, not to any individual; they should not be publicly shamed, belittled, or humiliated. The elders often feel powerless in the ongoing struggle against narcissistic pastors. They should continue to resist and work towards a positive culture in every way, with Christian grace.

Eighth, aim for accountability. It seems that both large and small churches with narcissistic leaders tend to choose non-

denominational or unaccountable church systems where they answer to no one. They prefer it that way.

Chapter Seven

PROTECTING ONESELF FROM NARCISSISTIC ABUSE



The following African folk story highlights the need to acquire life skills that people will leverage in the future. The skills help them handle life challenges at their level of knowledge, implying that knowledge helps people navigate challenging life situations.

Animals Go to school to learn life skills.

A long time ago, when all animals lived in the forest, a chief had a lot of wisdom. He valued the good life and endeavored to ensure all animals acquired knowledge and could live with human beings. Moving from the forest and living with humans guaranteed human care and escaped the harsh environment in the wild.

He decided to train all animals on life skills from Monday to Friday and sent notices to all animals to attend lessons from Monday through Friday. On Monday, all the animals participated in the training except this hyena, who had spent his weekend partying and eating with friends.

The hyena was absent on Monday, but the donkey, cow, dog, and cat were present. They had learned the social skills of coexisting with humans, having moved from the forest into human society. They were happy, and they all went about their lives.

The following Tuesday, the lesson was "Minding your own business.". All the animals attended the meeting, which was very successful. They were taught to have clear boundaries and understand the duties one must execute on a particular day. The Chief prioritised and avoided constantly meddling with other people's issues. The Chief emphasized and demonstrated the importance of setting clear boundaries in life.

Unfortunately, the donkey was not present. He never learned about this vital skill. He spent his Tuesday excitedly, picking up everything he found on his way and carrying it on his back. In the evening, he was exhausted after carrying loads of burdens that did not belong to him. Anybody who would put in any luggage was happy to help. This explains why the donkey is still on the streets and the roads are burdened. Hence the name Beast of Burden.

On Wednesday, the training was on how to guard humans. On this day, I forgot to go for training, and the cow remained in the field, eating grass. The more she eats, the more she asks for more. That is why, even today, the cow is seen eating grass and asking for more and more. The Chief left the cow in the field to graze.

The dog and cat who attended the class were taught about favour and attention. They were trained on the benefits of being close to humans and learned how to receive instructions and commands. The teacher told them to stay in front of the house and wait for more instructions. The following day, the dog was absent because he spent the whole night barking at any moving creature that was walking, crawling, or flying. He was too tired to attend Thursday's class. The teacher confirmed that no one else participated in the class except the cat.

The teacher took time to train the cat on communication skills, how to walk softly, how to be hygienic, and how to walk elegantly without causing disturbance. After attending all the classes, the teacher awarded the cat a proficiency certificate. On Friday, they informed him that he could confidently enter a human's home and receive excellent care. This is how the cat started living with human beings.





Lesson learned: similarly, individuals who want to protect themselves from narcissistic abuse need to develop protective skills over time. People generally consider dogs and cats as the most beloved animals, but cats receive more attention due to their social, clean, and well-mannered qualities.

It's logical to assume that the fewer life skills a person has, the more vulnerable they are. It's rare to find people advocating for the rights of hyenas and donkeys due to their nature and characteristics. Hyenas are seen as greedy, cows as gluttons, dogs as nuisances, and donkeys as beasts of burden. Therefore, if someone puts themselves in a position of neediness, similar to a donkey, they may be taken advantage of. Impoverished people are always

willing to take on any burden. Lacking personal boundaries and self-respect makes a person the perfect target for a narcissist. Victims are likened to overworked and burdened donkeys, with no one seeming to care.

Strategies for Dealing with Narcissists

1. Set firm boundaries.
2. Avoid confrontation to prevent unnecessary drama.
3. Seek support from trusted friends, family, or a mental health professional.
4. Document any instances of abuse or harassment for potential future use.
5. Limit contact as much as possible.

Following these steps can be difficult, especially when leaving a relationship with a narcissist or cutting them off your life. It's common for the narcissist to send others to pressure you into returning to the abusive relationship.

Additionally, completely cutting off contact may not be feasible, especially if you are still dependent on the narcissist. However, it's crucial to stand firm in setting boundaries and to prioritize avoiding confrontation.

It's advisable to plan and list reasons for leaving the relationship before cutting the narcissist out of your life.

This can help combat the distortions of reality perpetuated by the narcissist and their associates. Seeking help from a mental health professional can be beneficial in dealing with the narcissist or their associates, as they can provide personalized advice and support. It's important to keep in mind that narcissistic abuse can have long-term effects on mental health, even after ending the relationship, due to the traumatic experiences endured during the relationship.

Cunning Girl

A beautiful young girl was married when she was 18 years old. Four children came in quick succession, and the family was complete. To show gratitude and plan for a prosperous future, he decided to invest in his wife. The husband sponsored her to college for professional training, and upon graduation, a multinational organization successfully employed her. At her workplace, she started a double life. Eventually, after hard work, she was promoted and transferred to a distant town. She could visit her family frequently, but after a while, the visits stopped. The husband visited the wife and witnessed that she had moved on and was cohabiting with her boss.

After several meetings with elders to resolve their marital conflicts, they finally agreed to part ways. The man assumed the responsibility to care for his children. Years passed, and the children's mother has yet to contact them. They went through education and settled for marriage in different countries where they acquired different citizenship. Later on, they come to learn of

their mother's plight. They knew that she never bore any more children; her husband had passed on, she had lost her job, and she was destitute.

Her children from previous marriages came together and agreed to assist her. They built her a house and hired a caregiver to look after her. Unfortunately, no one was in the country to care for her; her adult children had to continue with their busy schedules in their countries of naturalization.



The lady would always call her children to come and visit her, but since they did not have a healthy attachment to her, they never visited her but would continue providing for her. She never lacked physically, but she was languishing in loneliness.

The lesson learnt is that as they pursue their insatiable emotional hunger for attention, many narcissists often compromise in their old age. They end up having no close quality relationships with friends and family.

Chapter Eight

HOW TO HEAL FROM NARCISSISTIC ABUSE.



Suppose you find yourself in a situation where you have to maintain a relationship with a narcissist, whether a family member, colleague, boss, customer, religious figure, or neighbour. In that case, it's essential to know how to protect yourself. In this chapter, we will discuss eight crucial strategies for dealing with and surviving a relationship with a narcissist.

1. Understanding narcissistic behaviour is crucial.

Under the facade of grandiosity, narcissists harbour a deep well of unresolved shame that is very difficult for them to confront. The more extreme the narcissism, the stronger the inner shame and self-hatred. Their grandiose self-image is a shield for their intense inner shame.

Narcissism often stems from Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) such as abuse, mistreatment, bullying, or emotional trauma during early development. These experiences can lead to a profound sense of inadequacy. As a result, narcissists have fragile egos and perceive any disagreement as a threat to their self-worth, whether it's real or imagined. They may feel superior and entitled to better treatment, but paradoxically, this can lead them to treat others poorly.

Given their sense of entitlement, many narcissists are resistant to changing their toxic behaviours, making relationships with them very challenging.

2. Recognizing Manipulation Techniques

Narcissists are skilled manipulators who use various tactics to manipulate others to serve their agenda. To protect oneself against manipulation, it's important to identify these techniques. Some common manipulation tactics include:

- 1. Gaslighting:** This manipulative technique makes people question their memory and sanity by distorting reality.
- 2. Shaming:** Narcissists use cynicism, sarcasm, or dry humour to attack individuals' self-esteem.
- 3. Guilt-Tripping:** The narcissist distorts facts to make others feel like they have wronged them, eliciting feelings of guilt and pity.
- 4. Projecting:** Narcissists deflect their unwanted feelings onto others. For example, they might accuse someone else of harbouring hostile thoughts when they feel that way.
- 5. Love Bombing:** This involves overwhelming the victim with excessive love and praise to trap them in a relationship.
- 6. Minimization:** This tactic downplays the significance of a feeling, event, or trauma through logical distortion.
- 7. Narcissistic Rage:** Narcissists often react with anger or hostility when their perceived superiority is questioned,

ranging from passive-aggressive behaviours to physical violence.

8. Coercion: Narcissists use anger and threats to force their victims to comply with their demands.

3. Cultivate Healthy Relationships

Survivors of narcissistic relationships need to have a healthy support system, whether it's family, friends, or a therapist. This support is crucial for their well-being and safety. It's essential to reach out to someone when feeling unsafe or compromised. It's worth noting that narcissists may try to isolate their victims from their support system to maintain control over them.

4. Manage Expectations

When dealing with a narcissist, it's important to manage expectations. Accepting that narcissists are different from others is a crucial protective measure.

It's unrealistic to expect a healthy and caring relationship from a narcissist, as they are resistant to change and often believe they are not the problem. People should realize that handling a relationship with a narcissist can be tough. Antagonizing, punishing the narcissist for their behaviour may only lead to further complications. Individuals should understand that they may need to cope without relying on the narcissist for happiness or validation. Hoping for a

narcissist to change can be unrealistic, so freeing oneself from that expectation can reduce emotional investment in an unreciprocated relationship.

5: Understanding Their Limitations

Understanding a narcissist's motivations can provide insight into why they behave the way they do and help avoid taking their actions personally. If one believes the relationship is worth preserving, it can be beneficial to acknowledge their limitations and work within those boundaries. However, this may make it challenging for them to form genuine connections and maintain intimacy in a healthy relationship.

To effectively deal with a narcissist, individuals must take responsibility for their happiness and expect nothing in return. They must develop inner strength to handle any situation. A narcissist only cares about themselves and uses others without considering their feelings.

Recognize that outbursts of rage, manipulation, and attention-seeking behaviour are common. Narcissists constantly seek validation and look for new ways to boost their importance. They might belittle others to enhance their ego or feel envious of someone else's accomplishments and try to undermine them for their benefit. Narcissists do this to protect their sense of worth and will continue to employ these tactics. The more people

understand this self-centered behaviour, the easier it becomes for them to step back and detach themselves from the drama.

Understand that one's needs are unlikely to be met in a narcissistic relationship, as these relationships are often transactional, with the narcissist taking far more than they give. They expect unwavering support from those around them and have no regard for maintaining a balanced give-and-take dynamic. They are often unaware of the pain they cause others, displaying no remorse. It means that one cannot rely on a narcissist for emotional support. Having friends who make one feel good about yourself can be a valuable asset in coping with life's challenges."

6: Set Clear Boundaries

Narcissists do not respect boundaries. They are often so self-absorbed in their need for admiration that they cannot empathize.

Therefore, they almost always cross boundaries that most people automatically respect. This means you will have to be particular about setting and enforcing boundaries. Boundaries help create a healthier relationship between two people by helping each person understand the other's limits and expectations.

For instance, you might say the following to establish boundaries for the treatment you will tolerate:

"I can see that you are angry right now, and I understand that. When you talk to me like that, it makes me feel hurt. When you are calmer, we can have a discussion about this matter; until then, if you want to express yourself positively, please come back later."

Be prepared for pushback—name-calling, minimizing your feelings, playing the victim, or claiming you are oversensitive. Exploding in anger is an example of how narcissists may try to shatter your resistance after you have set clear boundaries. Being firm on your boundaries makes it clear that the limits are not debatable.

7: Choose individual battles right

Dealing with a narcissist can be challenging because it's hard to know which battles are worth fighting and which are not. Narcissists can drag people into arguments, making it difficult to avoid conflict with them.

It's best to steer clear of arguments with a narcissist entirely. Trying to explain yourself or justify your actions usually does not affect a narcissist, as they are not interested in understanding your perspective. When you are in an argument, you must de-escalate the situation by walking away or changing the subject. Instead of getting caught up in conflicts with a narcissist, it's better to focus on personal growth and improvement.

8. Self-awareness is crucial

Individuals need to understand themselves and be aware of their past childhood experiences and trauma. These experiences can lead to insecurities and self-doubt, making them vulnerable to narcissistic abuse. Therefore, individuals must practice self-care to improve their self-esteem and no longer tolerate mistreatment.

When a narcissist constantly demeans and devalues a person, they are essentially communicating that the person is not worthy. This mistreatment can lead to a cycle of self-doubt. Insecurity is a harmful outcome of narcissistic abuse. It's important to note that self-worth and self-value act as a defence against narcissistic manipulation and dehumanizing abuse. Restoring self-love and self-trust can transform victims into survivors.

Here is a story that illustrates how a narcissist creates confusion, guilt trips, and projects their issues onto their victims.

A family kept going from one hospital to another for a diagnosis. The husband believed that both his wife and daughter were suffering from incurable viral infections despite doctors' repeated assurances that they were healthy. He would insist that one of them was sick and pressured them to seek treatment, even going as far as to accuse his wife of infidelity. This led to extensive medical tests and referrals to higher-level medical facilities, but no illness was found.

After years of this ordeal, it was discovered that the husband's behaviour stemmed from his fear of having contracted an incurable virus from a past encounter. He projected this fear onto his family and refused to believe otherwise, causing them emotional distress and financial strain. Eventually, the wife and child were found to be healthy, and the family sought therapy to address the husband's narcissistic tendencies and improve their communication.

The lesson is that a narcissist typically finds it difficult to acknowledge their weakness, wrongdoing, and fault. They can go to great lengths to make other people look bad, imposing diseases on them and projecting and guilt-tripping their victims into accepting the fallacy. Instead of telling the truth that he suspected he was ill, the man subjected his family to a five-year ordeal of visiting hospitals.

It is essential to have a qualified mental health practitioner diagnose narcissism. Sometimes, it's not a straightforward case. Other mental challenges may mimic narcissism, such as health anxiety disorder, antisocial personality disorder, and borderline personality disorder. Using a professionally trained evaluator will help make accurate determinations

How to Heal from Narcissistic Abuse

Narcissistic abuse has the potential to damage the foundation of most people's lives irreparably. Healing from betrayal, heartbreak, gas-lighting, and financial losses

caused by the abuser takes time and effort. It can also lead to self-isolation and loss of friends and family members. Below are some suggestions for healing from narcissistic abuse:

1. Recognize and accept one's feelings.

Individuals must acknowledge and accept their range of emotions, such as grief, depression, anger, and anxiety. It's important to understand that these feelings are valid and to avoid suppressing or criticizing oneself for experiencing them. This can help with self-doubt, confidence, and guilt.

2. Educate oneself

Learn about the characteristics of a narcissist and the elements of narcissistic abuse. Individuals need to learn about their emotions and behavior that is attracting the narcissist.

3. Join a support group.

There are many online and in-person communities for people with similar experiences. Interacting with others who understand and can offer tips and coping mechanisms can be therapeutic.

4. Reach out to a therapist or counsellor.

A therapist can provide tools to cope with and heal from narcissistic abuse in a safe, nonjudgmental space.

5. Practice self-care.

Taking care of oneself is essential. Get enough sleep, eat healthy food, and engage in enjoyable activities. In many cases narcissist work hard to sabotage a person towards achieving these goals.

6. Avoid unnecessary communication.

Try to avoid contact with the narcissist if possible. If contact is necessary, keep communication brief and essential.

7. Choose one's battles.

Pick and choose what to react to. Address the abuser if their actions pose a threat, but disregard unnecessary criticism.

8. Cut ties when possible. Cutting off contact may be necessary for safety reasons and can reduce the chances of manipulation and abuse.

Disclaimer: Some people may need professional help before cutting ties. Cut-off may be detrimental to the person.

9. Practice self-compassion.

Self-acceptance is crucial in learning to love oneself and providing support after experiencing a difficult situation.

When to Move On

Some people with narcissistic personalities can be verbally or emotionally abusive. Signs of an abusive relationship include name-calling, insults, public humiliation, threats, jealousy, and accusations. Other red flags include:

Blaming the victim.

Monitoring movements.

Attempting to isolate the victim.

Telling the victim how they should feel.

Projecting shortcomings onto the victim.

Denying obvious things.

Trivializing one's opinions and needs.

A man in search of a better relationship

A man was always taking his only child and wife to the hospital, and every time, despite the doctor's diagnosis that they were well, he insisted that they both had incurable viral infections. At one point, the man would purport that the daughter was sick. Another time, it was the wife or both. The doctors would take a medical history and make laboratory requests, but the test would always turn negative.

Under the man's pressure, the wife would accompany her husband to seek treatment for the daughter. The couple would

insist that she is not well. They even disclosed to family, neighbours, and friends that the doctors at the dispensaries in their locality were incompetent in handling their child's case. The doctor would refer the child to the next-level medical facility for further investigation.

The cycle would start again as the he insisted that either the wife or the child had an infection. They subjected both the wife and the child to more intrusive procedures in an attempt to determine their illnesses. Eventually, they referred both the wife and child to the highest-level referral medical facility in the country. Finally, the case was assessed, and they were sent to the mental health department for further diagnosis.

Following their consultation, the doctors concluded that they suspected the man of the house was fearful of thinking that he had contracted an incurable viral infection from an unprotected encounter with the ladies of the night, which had happened even before the son was born. To determine his health status, he started subjecting his wife and daughter to medical treatments and many laboratory investigations. He would accuse the wife of being unfaithful.

Despite the suspicion, he lacked any evidence or a basis. The extended family had tried reconciling the couple, but the man was adamant. He stood his ground, saying that his wife was unfaithful, and not only that, she and his daughter were sick. After a lengthy assessment and more laboratory investigations, the lady and the child were determined to be healthy.

Ultimately, the therapist determined that the man was using his child and wife as guinea pigs and indicators of a viral infection. The therapist recommended a comprehensive test for all of them, but the man declined. Counselling the man eventually led to his agreement. All of them underwent testing, and the results were negative. The man looked excited and relieved. This was not because the wife and child were well, but rather because he had come to know his deep hidden secret, that he had not contracted HIV and the wife and the child were well too



After a long five-year journey of visiting several health facilities and depleting their resources, the child's absenteeism from school results in poor academic performance, while his wife needs more gainful employment. Despite the torturous journey, they all realized that they were all well.

While the wife and child were treated for post-traumatic stress, therapists made the man aware of his pseudo-personality as he

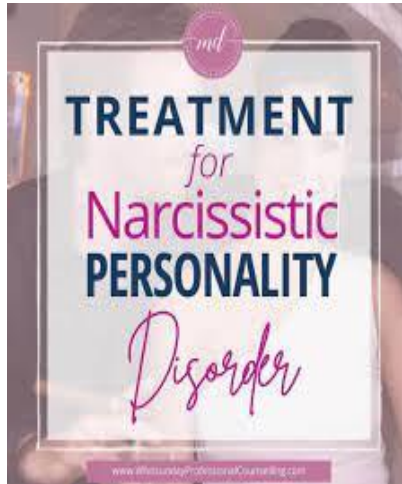
struggled to accept his grandiose obsession with himself. The therapy equipped them with good communication skills and made them aware of the dangers of narcissism.

The lesson is that a narcissist typically finds it difficult to acknowledge their weakness, wrongdoing and fault. They can go to a lot of lengths to make other people look bad, imposing diseases on them and projecting and guilt-tripping their victims into giving fallacy. The man subjected his family to a wild journey of visiting hospitals for five years instead of just telling the truth that he suspected he was ailing.

This is why it is essential to determine the diagnosis of narcissism by a qualified mental practitioner. Sometimes it's not a straightforward case. Other mental challenges may mimic narcissism, like health illness anxiety disorder, anti-personality disorder and borderline. Using a professionally trained evaluator will help make precise determinations.

Mental Health Interventions for Narcissistic Abuse and Narcissism

There are many evidence-based therapeutic techniques that experts use to treat NPD. These include, but are not limited to:



Psychodynamic and Psychoanalytic Therapy:

These therapies help to understand adverse childhood experiences (A.C.E.s) and their role in causing trauma, as well as the ways to address past issues that contribute to present narcissistic episodes, such as projection and other unconscious ego defense mechanisms. They include:

Psychodynamic Psychotherapy

Transference-focused psychotherapy for NPD

mentalization-based treatment

Clarification-oriented psychotherapy

Intensive psychoanalytic psychotherapy

Psychoanalysis

Emotionally focused therapy:

This therapy explores the relationship between emotions and decision-making.

Attachment-based therapy:

This therapy focuses on understanding attachments and identifying triggers for anxiety or avoidance in relationships. It can help reveal reasons for fear of leaving or ending a harmful relationship.

Cognitive behavioral therapy (C.B.T.):

C.B.T. helps in understanding how thoughts influence behaviors and addressing negative or self-limiting thoughts in relationships. It includes:

Schema-Focused Therapy

Metacognitive Interpersonal Therapy

Cognitive Behavior Therapy

Dialectical Behavior Therapy

Mindfulness techniques such as S.T.O.P. (Stop, take a step back, Observe, and proceed mindfully)

Distress tolerance

Emotional regulation

Interpersonal effectiveness

Couples Therapy:

Specifically designed for individuals with narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) and their partners, this therapy helps couples make decisions about staying in, suspending, leaving, or improving their relationship.

General Psychiatric Management for NPD (GPM-N):

This type of therapy uses medications to treat co-occurring disorders such as bipolar disorder, major depression, or anxiety disorder in individuals with NPD. It also involves relationship management, psychoeducation, and negotiation of goals. Notably, no specific medication has been proven effective for treating pathological narcissism and NPD.

Online therapy:

This type of therapy can be beneficial for individuals with high insight but busy schedules or limited access to mental health support. However, it may lead to defensiveness due to the anonymity of voice-only communication.

Group therapy:

Group therapy can be helpful for individuals who have experienced relationship trauma, as they can receive support and advice from others who have gone through similar experiences.

Somatic therapy investigates the connection between past traumas and the body's storage and experience of these traumas. This method can be helpful in healing following trauma.

Interpersonal Therapy

Justice System Intervention:

Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) borders on criminality due to aggression, violence, lawlessness, lack of remorse, and non-compliance with the law. It may require probation, parole, community service, or prison.

Psychoeducation and Self-Care Tips for Caregivers:

Narcissists often use manipulation tactics to gain power and control, leaving individuals feeling confused and scared. Seeking validation and support after a manipulative relationship is crucial for healing.

Ways to deal with manipulative individuals:

- One can reduce negativity through self-awareness to know what attracts you and what attract narcissists to a person.
- Impulse regulation and management training to reduce emotions and behaviour that causes one to be narcissistic and be attracted to narcissistic relationship traits.

- Assertiveness skills training helps setting clarity against negative influence from individuals who are narcissistic.

Grey rock technique:

This involves employing the "grey rock" method, which means limited or no contact for the survivor's safety. This can be applied online and in person by unfollowing or using other methods to avoid contact.

Taking some time to listen to their concerns, counsel them about their behavior, and coach them on their actions can be beneficial.

Stand your ground, confront the bully, and hold them accountable. Coping with it is possible if the individual recognizes it.

Caregivers need to be aware and try to avoid contact whenever possible. Inform people in contact with these individuals about the potential harm they may cause to relationships.

Because there are many therapy methods, it's best to consult a mental health provider who can educate you about the different types and recommend a type that fits your needs. They can answer any questions about how these approaches work.

Chapter Nine

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON NARCISSISTIC PERSONALITY DISORDER.



How can one help a family member decide to leave a narcissist.?

It is tough to see a family member who is under a narcissistic spell. It is usually excruciating. Narcissists bring their victims to a compromised and vulnerable position with tactics like love bombing, grooming, and manipulation that make a person suffer from low self-esteem. The victim is usually a shadow of their earlier self, the one they used to know before they got involved with the narcissist. This person may have been confident before, but because of what they went through, even when one advises them to leave the narcissist it becomes almost impossible because they have been brainwashed and have become objects of the narcissist.

When preparing to help a victim exit a narcissistic relationship, one must be cautious and slow and not let the narcissists troupe of flying monkeys and sympathizers know that someone is trying to help the victim. Pooling out the victim from that environment may not be a solution until the victim buys into the idea, otherwise they might eventually return to the abuser. This is because narcissistic victims are more likely to suffer from Stockholm syndrome --a behaviour where, after a long period of abuse, the victim starts identifying with the abuser--. It is for this reason that professional help is paramount. The narcissist needs professional help, and the victim also needs professional health care. But remember, the idea is to help the victims take care of themselves first and forget about narcissists.

The Drowning Friends

Once upon a time, two young, adventurous men were swimming when they suddenly realized they had underestimated the river's depth and waves and were drowning. They held onto each other for comfort, but after gulping a mouthful of dirty water, they realized it was better to save themselves first, or else they were going to drown together.

They swam and splashed the water as best they could, using freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, and butterfly strokes to rescue themselves. Finally, one reached the shore while the other struggled in the spinning, turbulent waters.

The one who emerged from the water went to seek help. Rescuers came and helped the drowning young man out of the water. The pair were happy and thankful for the rescue. They hurriedly walked towards their village as they recounted how lucky they were. They even joked that it is good to save oneself first when somebody is in danger, then save another person when they are safe and thinking clearly. They chuckled as they neared their village, just as the sun began setting and darkness drew near. They waved goodbye to each other as they parted ways for their respective homes, wiser and safer.



Moral of the story: Even in a narcissistic relationship, some people think they can save the narcissist. This is a flawed and naive belief. This thought is idealistic; hence, it is not achievable. The best solution is to save oneself first, then seek professional or experienced assistance for the narcissist.

Precaution: It is expected to hear about an inexperienced rescuer drowning while attempting to save a drowning

victim. The golden rule is to seek help or aid the family member to get out of the river they are drowning in before thinking about the narcissist. This should be the priority. Otherwise, both of them might end up drowning, and it could result in tragic consequences.

How does one safely leave a narcissistic relationship?

One needs to seek professional help without unnecessarily provoking or alerting the narcissists. In the Global North, there are adequate safe houses for such victims where they can go and get away from this person, but this is not the case in other parts of the world. Therefore, the best path for professionals is to help through psychological first aid, including linkage to family and friends who can shelter them. It is important to remember that by the time a person goes to the doctor, they are limping and suffering emotionally, spiritually, and sometime physically. People often overlook the damage and struggle with self-doubt and low self-esteem, even when they appear to be laughing. Seeking help from a psychologist, psychiatrist, or counsellor will empower the victim to understand their situation and assist them in acquiring much-needed life skills to cushion them and aid them in navigating a turbulent world of narcissism. Progressive healing is necessary to enable the client to find their way forward.

What can a person do if the narcissist is a close family member or a boss?

Every situation differs from one to the next. For instance, if the narcissist is a mother, father, sibling, boss, or pastor, what would one do? They will have to reduce the number of times and duration they spend with the purported abuser, reducing the type of effects on their lives.

Lay people may lack caution when diagnosing their perceived abuser as being narcissistic. Sometimes, ill-informed people may keep cutting ties until they find themselves in premature self-isolation. Then, they run back to the abuser. In such instances, professional aid is fundamental.

In other situations, one may be temporarily cut off from the narcissist, but before one is cut off, one must be well-informed and prepared for safety purposes. Cutting off the provider, for example, can cause other unforeseen difficulties. Mental health practitioners are equipped to empower a victim on how to go about it gradually.

It is common practice for victims to run away from these narcissistic relationships. When they suffer for lack of help or support from the narcissist, they go back running.

Narcissists are not toys to play with. When they learn that the victim is trying to run away from them, narcissists can lose their cool and go into narcissistic rage.

During this period, they become enraged and irrational, and they subject the victim to insults, cynicism, blaming, beatings, or even murder.

Handling narcissists needs extreme caution. It is important not to annoy a narcissist unnecessarily. One has to leave with a lot of wisdom. If a person knows they are going, they should not keep on telling narcissists they are leaving. This is because they may not leave after all; the narcissist may do crazy things to them. They can go as far as getting a person killed and then present themselves to the police and even go to jail as if that were the coolest thing in the world to do.

What are the types of narcissistic personality disorder?

We can identify two types of narcissists, each with its distinct habits. The first type is the classic narcissist, which is the most common type and has been covered in most of the previous chapters. The second type is the covert narcissist. Covert narcissists may appear silent, calm, and well-composed on the outside, but they can be very toxic and make life miserable for those close to them. They often use tactics that make others feel like they are the ones with the problem, and they are skilled in reverse psychology.

When it comes to prevalence, most men tend to exhibit classical narcissistic traits, while women tend to display covert narcissistic behavior.

Covert narcissists employ subtle tactics to manipulate and exploit their victims, often resorting to harmful gossip, malicious communication, and even catfishing using fake social media accounts with stolen images. They may go to extremes, such as denying their victims basic needs like food or a salary, all without it being visible to the outside world.

Dealing with a narcissist can be complex, and professional help is often necessary due to the complexity of the diagnosis. Additionally, it's important to note that other disorders, such as sociopathy, psychopathy, anti-personality disorders, and borderline disorders, can be mistaken for narcissism. Therefore, the diagnosis of narcissism should only be made by consulting a professional.

A covert narcissist is unmasked below in the following story.

High School Catfishing

During high school, Anita, a 17-year-old senior, was part of the basketball team. She got a friend request on Facebook from a guy who looked really attractive in his profile picture. Anita accepted the request, and they began chatting every day. Excited, she shared the news with Caro, her best friend on the team. To Anita's surprise, Caro revealed that she knew the guy from another town. Anita was thrilled, thinking Caro could help her meet him. However, the guy suddenly stopped responding to Anita's

messages, leaving her feeling desperate. She confided in other girls at school, only to discover they were all talking to the same guy. As the truth unfolded, they realized that Caro had been catfishing them on Facebook. She had created false account, impersonating as a young handsome man.

They decided to report Caro to the school administration. Eventually, Caro confessed and apologized, expressing remorse for causing them pain. The principal made her delete the fake profile and suspended her from school for a week as punishment. This experience taught them that sometimes people can be in a relationship with someone who has hidden narcissistic traits. Seeking professional help is the best solution in such situations.



Do narcissists know that they are manipulating people, or is this unconscious to them because they are sick?

Narcissists often lack awareness of their Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD), as it is unconscious to them, contributing to its characterization as a disorder. These traits typically develop during childhood and persist into adulthood, shaping their behavior. By the time they reach adulthood, these traits have become deeply ingrained, becoming their default way of behaving.

With age, education, and exposure to various perspectives, some narcissists may realize that their behavior is causing others to distance themselves from them. This awareness can prompt a gradual decision to change as they become more self-aware.

The foundation of counseling psychology rests on self-awareness, which enables individuals to navigate complex self-understandings and gain deeper insights, ultimately facilitating a greater understanding of others.

What happens if the narcissist does not get the attention they want?

Narcissists employ a range of manipulative tactics to dominate and control others, while seeking validation for themselves. These tactics may include utilizing anger, manipulation, smear campaigns, and even physical or verbal abuse.

Furthermore, when faced with rejection, narcissists may embark on a vindictive mission to retaliate against those who dare to deny them. This behavior can have severe and lasting consequences for their victims.

A narcissist impersonates an ex-partner.

After a turbulent romantic relationship, a young couple breaks up, and the woman moves on with her life. One day, she is accused of threatening her ex-boyfriend with a machete and is summoned by the police. However, no evidence was found after the investigation. The woman thought the false accusation is over, but she soon realizes it is just the beginning.

Later, her suppliers accuse her of writing of abusive messages to them. Soon, she starts receiving calls and texts from various people, including her landlord, relatives, friends, church pastors, and congregants, accusing her of sending explicit photos of herself and using abusive language on social media. She denied it and asked for the messages to be forwarded to her and handed to the police.

Upon investigation, the police discovered that the language used in the messages did not match the woman's English proficiency, indicating that she did not write them. It was revealed that someone with a similar email address to the woman was impersonating her through social media and had obtained an unregistered mobile phone line to send messages and pictures. The perpetrator is emerged to be the woman's ex-partner.

The man was apprehended by the police and charged with impersonation, spreading false information, causing emotional distress, and perjury. The case is ongoing.



Lesson learned: Narcissists have a habit of trying to reconnect with their victims. They go to great lengths to interfere with their lives, often causing misery. The best way to deal with them is to limit interaction rather than engage, confront, or explain. In some cases, seeking help from law enforcement may be necessary.

For example, a narcissistic husband might question a wife who goes out to take out the trash and accuse her of speaking to someone else upon her return. He may continue to fabricate stories and try to create conflict by making false accusations and spreading rumors, even if there is no truth to them. This behavior may be relentless and can involve attempts to turn others, such as the victim's parents, against them by spreading false information.

In situations like these, the narcissist's behavior can be relentless and manipulative, causing significant distress for the victim.

Do we many of selfish politicians and religious leaders?

It is challenging to point fingers at individuals in any profession, mainly because people with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) are often unlikely to undergo testing. However, it is a fact that certain occupations have a higher prevalence of personality disorders due to a lack of solid ethics within those professions. In the USA, it is estimated that around 50% of corporate, political, and religious leaders exhibit narcissistic traits. While the numbers for countries like Kenya and other Global South countries are not yet determined, it appears that narcissism is on the rise in increasingly capitalistic societies.

Furthermore, the same pathological traits associated with the Dark Triad may also be viewed as characteristics of success in corporate settings, especially when individuals or groups are successful in competitive environments like democratic elections. This can make them appear morally upright, even though not all legally sanctioned actions are ethical. It's important to remember that democracy can lead to the tyranny of the majority, and not all legal decisions align with moral principles.

"Moderate traits of the Dark Triad are related to maximizing personal gains and profit for the company through manipulation, callousness, and dishonesty.

Differentiating characteristics that enhance successful and integrative leadership are far from the more accentuated and opportunistic attitudes related to solid traits. These practices involve dishonest actions for personal gain:

- ✓ The vision and charisma of narcissistic individuals
- ✓ The strategy and tactics of Machiavellian individuals
- ✓ The creativity and sound strategic thinking of psychopathic individuals

For example, a politician can do anything and get away with it; as a result, they tend to rise to very high levels in their professions.

Some narcissists are not interested in changing their behaviour because it is beneficial to them. At the same time, an average person cannot continue living in that condition.

In some organizations, when narcissists get into the organization, they may dismiss people without valid reasons, claiming they are downsizing, rationalizing, being environmentally friendly or improving the organization. Even while causing suffering, a narcissist is often praised for being a good leader.

The capitalist system, cults, and the prosperity gospel in churches create reasonable grounds for NPD to thrive.

According to Godkin and Allcorn (2011), "dysfunctional individual narcissistic spiritual leader behaviours are translated into organizational or group beliefs and behaviours through contagion," meaning transmitting a dangerous condition through close contact. To understand how this works, one must first consider what makes a church vulnerable to narcissistic seduction. Churches want someone who can lead them into a brighter future, precisely what the narcissist pastor may promise them. They want their pastor to be charismatic, even spellbinding.

People often recognize overt narcissists for their charisma. But Their fear of negative evaluation may fuel the drive to self-aggrandizement (Ronningstam & Sommers, 2013). A charismatic narcissist may claim to have unlimited success in the future. Followers, wanting to believe in and be part of something greater than themselves, choose to accept what the leaders claims, even if it contradicts their past experiences, reasons, or the advice of others. The leader's charisma entices the church members to prioritize his version of truth, even if it is perceived as strange (Dawson, 2006).

"How do you deal with a narcissistic boss?"

When dealing with a narcissistic boss, minimizing unnecessary social interactions such as birthday house visits, wedding, celebrations or personal conversations is

essential. Keeping interactions professional is the best way to protect oneself. Many employers establish a professional code of ethics to protect employees from exploitation and abuse by their superiors. Good communication skills are also vital in this situation. Maintaining formal communication is essential to avoid misinterpretations and documenting information if necessary.

One may also request a transfer to another department or a different work location to distance oneself from the narcissistic boss. It's difficult to satisfy or handle selfish individuals, and as you become more successful, they may resent and punish you. They might even dismiss a team member without a valid reason.

Seeking new opportunities can be another way to address this situation. Leaving for a better job can support personal growth, professional development, and improved communication and emotional intelligence. This allows individuals to escape a toxic work environment and pursue new career prospects or self-employment.

How to deal with a narcissistic team member who performs very well as a boss?

Managing narcissistic employees can be challenging for a boss, especially if they are valuable assets to the organization. One approach is assigning them to a

department with less significant impact individuals. It's also advisable to refrain from giving them leadership positions and allow them to work without interfering with others.

As a manager, it's essential to manage these individuals while ensuring the productivity and well-being of other employees. This situation is delicate because some selfish individuals are exceptional workers, performers, and innovators. In some cases, they may contribute to significant company achievements and breakthroughs.

In these circumstances, the staff must focus on developing emotional intelligence, improving communication skills, and working on conflict resolution and mediation within the human resources department. This approach can help maintain a harmonious working environment and retain mentally strong and healthy workforce.

How do you handle co-parenting with a narcissistic person?

Raising children with narcissists is very challenging. Therefore, many people opt to raise their kids on their own. There are counsellors and social workers who understand narcissists and can help one come up with a plan on how to raise children, but if somebody tries to do things that will provoke the narcissist, it will be messy.

Narcissists view other people like objects. They also treat their children as objects. Children are treated as pawns in the game of chess.

They do not empathize with their children. The law courts mirror the situation in the children's department. Narcissists sometimes seem to agree cunningly about caring for their children. However, they do not honour the agreement once out of court.

It is usual for a narcissist's children to lack their rightful parental affection and basic needs like food, shelter, and education. This is often not because the parent cannot provide but rather because narcissistic love is transactional and manipulative. They can occupy big jobs and political positions but still neglect their children, and they can go to any length to avoid supporting their children.



The narcissist is charming, which is why they have many relationships. They charm their way into people's lives and leave them high and dry.

Dealing with such a relationship requires resilience for gradual personal growth in all aspects of life. This includes maintaining physical, intellectual, social, and spiritual well-being and academic, professional, financial, and mental health.

Seek professional assistance!.

EPILOGUE



If one believes they are in a relationship with a narcissist or feels overwhelmed by it, it is time to talk to a therapist. This might be the most essential thing they can do to help themselves!

A good therapist can help one validate their feelings and be a safe place to talk about the dynamics of the relationship. To survive a narcissist, one needs to be intentional about self-care.

Additionally, therapist can also help one learn coping skills, help them deal with the aftermath of relationships with narcissists, or give them some insight into the victim's part in allowing the narcissist to have control over their lives.

Do not be afraid to ask for help!

REFERENCES

1. American Psychiatric Association, DSM-5 Task Force. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders: DSM-5™ (5th ed.)*. American Psychiatric Publishing, Inc.
<https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596>
2. Block, D. (2023, July 14). What the term ‘Flying Monkeys’ means when we talk about narcissism. *Verywell Mind*. Retrieved from
<https://www.verywellmind.com/narcissists-and-flying-monkeys->
3. Brailovskaia, J., Rohmann, E., Bierhoff, H., & Margraf, J. (2020). The anxious addictive narcissist: The relationship between grandiose and vulnerable narcissism, anxiety symptoms, and Facebook addiction. *PLOS ONE, 11*(1), 163.
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0241632>
4. Chernow, R. (2004, July 11). Alexander Hamilton’s last stand. *The New York Times*.
5. Coalition Against Sexual Violence. (n.d.). Coalition against sexual violence calls on government of Kenya to act to end femicide and violence against women in Kenya. Retrieved from
<https://www.coalitionagainstsexualviolence.org>

6. Duke Health. (n.d.). Narcissism vs NPD. Retrieved from <https://www.dukehealth.org>
7. Glad, B. (2002). Why tyrants go too far: Malignant narcissism and absolute power. *Political Psychology, 23*(1), 1–37.
8. Healthline. (n.d.). How to deal with a narcissist. Retrieved from <https://www.healthline.com>
9. Kros, C. (2004). Ethnic narcissism and big brother: Culture, identity, and the state in the new curriculum. *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines, 38*(3), 587–602. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org>
10. McLean Hospital. (n.d.). Dialectical behavior therapy (DBT). Retrieved from <https://www.mcleanhospital.org>
11. Mijares, P. (2017). Preface. In *The conjugal dictatorship of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos* (pp. i–xii). Bughaw/Ateneo Press. ISBN 978-971-550-781-3
12. Miliora, M. T. (1995). The dialectics of historical fantasy: The ideology of George Lincoln Rockwell. *The Psychohistory Review, 23*(3), 259–281.

13. New Beginning Church. (n.d.). Don't be an Absalom. Retrieved from <https://www.newbeginningchurch.org>
14. Newport Institute. (n.d.). The young adult brain and narcissism. Retrieved from <https://www.newportinstitute.com>
15. Ronningstam, E., & Baskin-Sommers, A. (2013). Fear and decision-making in narcissistic personality disorder. *Dialogues in Clinical Neuroscience, 15*(2), 191–201.
16. Stulman, L., & Silver, E. (Eds.). (2021). *The Oxford handbook of Jeremiah* (p. 572). Retrieved from <https://books.google.com>
17. The Seeking Mind. (n.d.). The teachings and wisdom of Rumi. Retrieved from <https://www.theseekingmind.com>
18. Torgersen, S., Myers, J., Reichborn-Kjennerud, T., Røysamb, E., Kubarych, T. S., & Kendler, K. S. (2014). The heritability of cluster B personality disorders assessed both by personal interview and questionnaire. *Journal of Personality Disorders, 26*(6), 848–866. <https://doi.org/10.1521/pedi.2012.26.6.848>

19. Trzesniewski, K. H., Donnellan, M. B., & Robins, R. W. (2008). Is “Generation Me” really more narcissistic than previous generations? *Journal of Personality*, 76*(4), 903–918. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.2008.00509.x>
20. Verywell Mind. (n.d.-a). Coping with an insecure attachment style. Retrieved from <https://www.verywellmind.com>
21. Verywell Mind. (n.d.-b). How narcissistic abuse can cause C-PTSD. Retrieved from <https://www.verywellmind.com>
22. Verywell Mind. (n.d.-c). Hypervigilance. Retrieved from <https://www.verywellmind.com>
23. Verywell Mind. (n.d.-d). Identifying and coping with emotional abuse. Retrieved from <https://www.verywellmind.com>
24. Verywell Mind. (n.d.-e). Mood swings: Causes, risk factors, and coping strategies. Retrieved from <https://www.verywellmind.com>
25. Verywell Mind. (n.d.-f). Narcissists and flying monkeys. Retrieved from <https://www.verywellmind.com>

26. Verywell Mind. (n.d.-g). Separation anxiety. Retrieved from <https://www.verywellmind.com>
27. Verywell Mind. (n.d.-h). Taming the fight-or-flight response. Retrieved from <https://www.verywellmind.com>
28. Zee, H. J. (1980). The Guyana incident: Some psychoanalytic considerations. *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic, 44*(2), 345–363.
29. Zhonghua liu xing bing xue za zhi = Zhonghua liuxingbingxue zazhi. (2006). A twin study of personality disorder heritability, *27*(2), 137–141. Retrieved from <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>

AUTHOR’S RESOURCES MULTIMEDIA LINKS

Email:	gathonindu@gmail.com mentorcentre2020.ke@gmail.com
Telephone:	+254(0)722 959 518
Whatsapp:	+254(0)780 959 518
Website :	https://mentorcounsellingcentre.com
YouTube:	mentor counselling centre
Facebook:	Mentor Counselling Centre

