

It Is Good To Know the Differences among Narcissists and Ordinary Citizens

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Abstract: *The goal of this rather unusual article is for citizens to be able to clearly tell the differences between confident citizens and individuals who suffer from narcissistic personality disorder. Keywords: narcissistic personality disorder, marriages, politics.*

Students in Professor Reid's course on the science of abnormal behavior (better said: problematic behavior) concluded that both scholars and the general public should be able to differentiate between narcissists and confident citizens because, history indicates, narcissists can induce great harm and misery. Notable narcissists infamously include Hitler, Stalin, and Putin.

Unfortunately, narcissistic personality disorder is a chronic disease without a known cure.

Narcissists can appear normal upon first impression, often appearing to be talented. However, narcissists, be they men or women, are selfish, vain, and care little, if any, for others. Given the extensive harm narcissistic behaviors can create, our goal is to help you to easily spot the differences between narcissists and confident individuals who take pride in their talents and do care for others. In particular, it would be good to know the differences between narcissists and ordinary persons seeking powerful positions because narcissists will use their activities to benefit themselves rather than helping others.

In Marriages

The narcissist is not a good spouse and has tendencies to be malicious without reason and seemingly enjoying making their spouse to feel inferior. Narcissists feel they are superior, hence believe they deserve to be treated as a very superior person. Note, narcissists often are not effective in their jobs or other adult roles.

It has been said "You have to be a masochist to live with a narcissist" (an overstatement with some truth in it). If you conclude the partner you are living with is narcissistic, you should reach out to your support-system and plan to leave the situation. Such will reduce a lot of misery. If, however, you cannot leave a marriage due to, for example, having children to support, there are things you can do to minimize being criticized constantly. For example, just ignore all unpleasant comments and do not argue with a narcissist because a narcissist will always believe what they say and do is righteous.

If you are contemplating marrying, you should not marry a narcissist because they just are not capable of executing a loving relationship supported by mutual respect. To learn more on how to know if your potential partner has marked narcissistic tendencies please read on.

In Other Relationships

When in person-to-person conversations, narcissists like to talk about themselves and their circumstances. However, when the listener wishes to talk about themselves, the narcissist will not be interested. If the listener begins talking, the narcissist might abruptly interrupt and say things like "you not interesting" and return to

talking about themselves. And yes, as they talk about themselves, they tend to lie about former “great achievements” and their wealth (rich or not, they claim to have wealth) and the many good causes they have participated in. It may be true that they have joined many projects for helping the unfortunate, but typically they fail to do their share of the good work.

Again, narcissists are not particularly good at their jobs or interactions with other workers. Narcissists are not very good at resolving complex issues because they feel like they know more than the others who are helping to solve the issue. Since the narcissist cannot appreciate the advice and expertise of others, complex issues are often not resolved satisfactorily.

A usual citizen having dealt with a narcissist uses one of the following adjectives to describe a narcissist: vain, selfish, self-centered, arrogant, haughty, conceited, materialistic, boastful, pompous, egotistical, lacks empathy, elitist, often contemptuous of others, tends to exploit others for the narcissist’s benefit, sense of entitlement, delusions of grandeur, exaggerates their importance, cares little for others. Those comments are not markedly different from mental-health-professionals’ characterizations of the mental health of narcissists.

Narcissists believe they are superior and hence strive to associate with very successful citizens. They might falsely relate that they are friends of the successful and famous or have had relationships with them. Narcissists might actually believe that they have had these relationships and feel comfortable bragging about it. They feed their own ego by exaggerating their real or imaged relationships with famous people.

When talking to a group of people, narcissists stress their “great” talents and seek an audience’s approval and gratitude. Narcissists encourage applause and people who say yes to what the narcissist is saying. Narcissists will often hire people to applaud them.

When a narcissist lies about having done good deeds, and someone checks on the truth-value of a narcissist’s achievements and finds faults, the narcissist demeans the fact-checker. From a narcissist’s perspectives, a person who does not agree with a narcissist is an enemy. Hence narcissists have many “enemies”. Most of them merely shun the narcissist.

Narcissists do not wait in a line but go to the front, and when it goes unmentioned, their sense of importance strengthens their asocial behavior. Those who might question their claims of privilege are verbally attacked, and called evil, harmful, crazy, ugly, and a whole slew of other unsavory adjectives. They tend to demean any unusual feature of a questioner.

From a narcissist’s perspective, they do nothing bad and when circumstances turn bad, they readily blame others for their misdeeds.

When narcissists have some wealth, they use it to flatter themselves and demean those without wealth as being lazy or not as good as they should be. They will seldom, if ever, help those in need by sharing some of their wealth. They might announce a gift to charity, but not actually fulfill the announcement. In brief, narcissists are extremely selfish.

When narcissists do not get special consideration, they get angry and demanding. Their intense emotion may be taken as enough reason to justify their anger, hence strengthening their public façade and their ego.

Those with a diagnosis of *narcissistic personality disorder* may project a sense of power, attracting some who are looking for a leader in their lives. Hence, setting a condition for building a cult admiring a narcissist’s seemingly powerful personality whose lies, and apparent successfulness appear truthful and reasonable. Once a few citizens are admiring them, narcissists can praise members of the group and belittle others. Such strengthens the idea that the leader of the cult has some power worthy of loyalty.

It is difficult to discern how a narcissist can attract a loyal following because they generally are not nice to even their most loyal companions. One way of cultivating a loyal following is to proclaim that a group, differing from their own, is a threat to them and many others (need not be true).

In comparison to ordinary citizens, narcissists tend to lie often about themselves and their accomplishments. However, narcissists do not seem to have a sense of knowing they are lying whereas an ordinary citizen is usually fully aware of being untruthful. Given the narcissists full belief in themselves, they just cannot fathom that anything they say could be faulty. A consequence of that failing seems to generate many, many lies while not feeling any guilt.

One of the ways a citizen may be able to distinguish between a narcissist and a mature citizen is the prevalence of “telling lies”. During D J Trump’s quest to be a worthy president of the US, the Washington Post tabulated literally 30,573 statements as verifiable lies. Narcissists generally lie more than the average person (surely an understatement). Lies of those with some power and influence are just plain harmful because distorted truths have poor consequences. And, of course, from a narcissist’s point of view any bad consequence of lying is the fault of others and surely not that of the narcissist.

An older narcissist probably has a history of small to large failures in business or jobs, which they do not see as their fault (even if they are culpable). To distinguish between a narcissist and a successful citizen, consider the narcissist's prior successes, or lack thereof, before appointing the narcissist to a significant position in a business or government.

Wealthy narcissists cheat to become richer and often amass money to foster their vainness.

There is the question of how narcissists manage to have many thinking well of them. Maybe they attract others similar to them. Narcissists seem to always have a group that they can label as an enemy, similar to Hitler hating Jews or Putin labeling Ukrainians as a serious threat to Russia. One way an ordinary citizen might be different from a narcissist is ordinary citizens can have a general acceptance of minorities. Because a narcissist is generally disliked, the narcissist might assume that groups critical of the narcissist’s behavior are enemies needing to be debased (or even killed as did happen).

Narcissists do not belittle weak people, but rather attack and demean those who are successful, hence making themselves seem greater and superior.

Another difference between successful citizens and narcissists is that narcissists enjoy being bullies whereas ordinary citizens just wish to live in peace.

Ordinary citizens can have very stubborn opinions and beliefs based on their experiences and their trusted sources of information which, in turn, guide selected behaviors. However, ordinary, healthy citizens’ most stubborn opinions can be changed via new experiences and new information which often leads to modifying their former opinions and actions. It is not the same for narcissists. Once narcissists have stated an opinion, it must be the gospel truth; that is, it must be true because they deem themselves the smartest and most knowledgeable of people. However, if the narcissist should state an opinion contradicting a previous opinion, that must also be the gospel truth. It is likely that narcissists have little awareness of the contradictions; again, due to their thinking that anything they believe, state and act-on must be worthy. The lack of awareness may be due to faulty memory combined with the inability to question their behavior. Of course, if they manage to become a leader of an enterprise (or a “boss” of a family), they will likely eventually fail to be a good leader, because leaders must be purposeful and give directions concordant with a known good cause.

Narcissists often demean and hurt others without guilt or remorse. Hence are dangerous if they are in a position of power.

Modern psychology can effectively treat a number of diseases, for example, chronic insomnia, a serious disease. Chronic insomnia can be cured by way of cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia which involves advice and attempts to reorder patient's thinking about sleep through something like discussions. Note the patient is usually highly involved in the therapy and has a willingness to do what is advised. Also note, narcissists will not profit from cognitive behavioral therapy due to an inability to take advice and to concede to a point of view other than their own. Given narcissists abnormal self-centeredness, which seems to be a chronic state of affairs, the conclusion is that narcissists are mentally ill. Again, we have no well-tested therapy for narcissistic personality disorder.

Although one should have empathy for a mentally ill person, it is difficult to empathize with an individual with no empathy. The best approach to avoid having a narcissist become the source of problems is to recognize that they are mentally ill, and, hence, have serious limitations. As of now, the best outcome is for ordinary citizens to know about the disease of *narcissistic personality disorder* and not be fooled by their constant lies and bragging.

We have stated, as all others studying narcissism, that narcissists are egotists with little empathy for others. A list of adjectives characterizing their limitations is of value only in helping ordinary citizens to get a better understanding of their mental illness. Telling a narcissist of their limitations merely induces anger and often hateful actions, hence of little social or therapeutic value. *Our goal is to warn the public that narcissists have a mental illness preventing them from being consistently friendly and congenial.* Ordinary citizens can lie and cheat but at the same time usually understands that they are taking a risk of being ostracized or facing criminal charges, hence they attempt to be secretive and cautious about their asocial behavior. Narcissists do attempt to hide their risky, asocial behaviors (they do have some understanding of differences between what *others* think is right and wrong) but have an inability to do that successfully due to the fact that they believe anything they do is righteous, even *their* risky, asocial behaviors.

Recognition that narcissism is a problematic psychological disorder and a chronic disease, fosters the idea that there should be more research into what makes a narcissist and what sustains their narcissistic behavior. Again, there is no well-tested therapy for narcissistic personality disorder. There are successful treatments by psychologists for individuals leaving a marriage to a narcissist which likely involves teaching an abused partner that their bad marriage was not their fault and how to not feel guilty about that part of their lives. Also, some children of narcissists could probably benefit by some psychological therapies helping them to adjust to feelings of having been abused and degraded. Also, some employees working for a narcissistic boss could also probably benefit from some professional counseling. Yes, it would benefit society to find efficient, friendly ways to help a narcissist to *not* be so narcissistic.

When On a Public Stage

In today's world of many ways of attracting attention (e.g., mass TV & social media), it is possible to achieve some popularity. If one has considerable wealth and some popularity, or the backing of someone with great wealth, one can opt to run for a political office with the goal of promoting themselves or certain vested interests. Ordinary citizens clearly prefer those in powerful public offices to be working for the common good. Given the previous text of this article, it seems that a narcissistic person does not have the ability to work for the common good, i.e., does not have the mental abilities to work for all citizens of a nation.

The lack of narcissists ability to care for others, whether they are associates or citizens of other nations can create misery in a family or miseries on the scale of war.

When you discern that a person seeking a governmental job has narcissistic traits you should never approve of them or vote for them, because narcissistic traits almost surely end in failures to serve people.