

NPD Narcissistic Personality Disorder- Myths and Facts. Susan Loane Counselling Gold Coast. Clinical Mental Health Psychotherapist.

I hear so often in my couples counselling sessions, that their partner is a Narcissist because they treat them with disrespect and act selfishly toward them. "he/she can be so selfish at times, and other times can be so kind and loving and giving."

Selfishness alone and not showing respect are not signs of a healthy relationship, however a true Narcissist is not easy to miss, from my perspective.

The discrepancy is substantiated when closely followed with ... "Oh, but I know he/she loves me, because he/she can be so kind and loving and giving at times".

Albeit, a person who does have a correct diagnosis of NPD will have traits of arrogance and coldness, BUT a true NPD will have distinctive traits that go far beyond the self-centeredness of even a person diagnosed with Histrionic Personality Disorder HPD.

So let's look at the myths and facts of a Narcissistic Personality Disorder.

Behaviourally: those with a true NPD have impossibly high standards of perfectionism, and failures to meet them are intolerable and met with flights of rage if criticised. Their own success and a lust for power leads them into a mindset of superiority allowing and showing a continual zero level compassion for the suffering of others.

In fact, others are seen as inferior if they do not equal their wealth, power, and importance as a way to support their own superior *image*. The only connection or interest if another possesses these qualities, is by fierce competition, which becomes anything but healthy.

Affectively: people with a true NPD are often labile; but watch for *the turn*, if criticised. The result of attempting to discuss their poor behaviours towards others, is met not only with rage, but bouts of anxiety and panic and short periods of depression.

When their needs are not met, they mask their rage and shame with a cool indifference.

The needs of others is not something they can EVER see as a priority and is hence then met instead with indifference.

Socially: people with a true NPD have disturbed relationships. They expect favourable treatment and exploit others to achieve personal goals.

Friendships are made on the basis of how they can profit from the other person.

Romantic partners are used as object to bolster self-esteem. They are incapable of developing a relationship based on mutuality.

Cognitively: people with true NPD are egotistical to the point of expecting to be treated and noticed as special whether they have achieved anything at all. Paradoxically if these needs are not met, their feelings of specialness may alternate with feelings of special unworthiness.

They are preoccupied with fantasies, of unlimited power, brilliance, beauty, and ideal love. Deep within and peeling back the layers of this masking, is very low self-esteem.

The intense fear of humiliation and fear of blame are the enmeshment of black and white thinking and the grassroots from very harsh beginnings. Nothing to do necessarily with poverty, but more so to do with receiving ongoing unreasonably high expectations from significant others, and accompanied without acknowledgement of their achievements, but replaced instead with criticism of any efforts made to achieve.

Is Narcissistic Personality Disorder therefore treatable, ironically, yes, but a very bumpy and at times noisy ride for even a skilled and very experienced mental health therapist, with over twenty-five years of experience, such as myself.

SO, be mindful of the many differences the next time you feel you are married to a true Narcissist. He or she maybe selfish at times, and doesn't always put you first, but a true NPD, will never put your needs first.

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