

Some Characteristics of Narcissism:

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

People who suffer from these indicators, symptoms, and strategies do not need to occupy leadership positions that will amplify their narcissism. They need understanding and help and healing.