

Signs You Are Dealing With a Narcissist

(An unscientific list of warning signs)

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Disclaimer:

I'm not a doctor, therapist, psychologist, or a professional in anything related to the subject of this zine.

I am someone who took way too long to figure out that my spouse was a narcissist. (He still is, he's just not my husband any more.) If I can help anyone spot the signs and escape the hell sooner than they would otherwise, that would be awesome.

Not everything in this zine may apply, but if a bunch of these signs seem painfully familiar, do your best to get out of the situation you are in. It could be a significant other, family member, or co-worker. Talk to people you trust. Find a for-real therapist. I promise you are worth the effort.



- Zera Faro

Useful Youtube channels:

Surviving Narcissism - <https://www.youtube.com/@SurvivingNarcissism>

Dr. Ramani - <https://www.youtube.com/@DoctorRamani>

Online Therapy:

Better Help - <https://www.betterhelp.com/>

Talkspace - <https://www.talkspace.com/>

I really do recommend having a professional to talk with to work your way through all the crap you've experienced. You are not responsible for managing anyone's emotions for anyone else. You are worthy on your own. Build up your healthy boundaries.

1.



Do they love pushing all your buttons?

The good and the bad? Are you normally (that is, with everyone else) a calm person, but you find yourself yelling at them on a regular basis? And do they seem ... entertained by it? Like it is a game they play so that you are the one who seems out-of-control?



2.

Do they never apologize unless you back them into a corner?

Do they seem to have no idea that they should be apologizing? Or what they should be apologizing for? If you have to explain it to them, it's a good sign that any apology they give you is just for show. Does it happen again and again and again for the same problem?

3. Does their behavior improve if you take them to task, only to revert when you've stopped paying attention?

When you finally get across to them that some behavior (like draining your bank account) is not acceptable, they may show you that they get it. They stop doing whatever it is. Once you are lulled into not being vigilant about it, do they swing right back and do it again? This isn't about learning a lesson, it's about manipulating you into a false sense of security. It's about making you think they are really trying and are making progress. If you have to repeat this multiple times for the same issue, it isn't real progress.



4. Do they mutter or talk under their breath?

Do they mutter or mumble under their breath, and then when you ask them to repeat it or say it louder, they say something completely different? Maybe they act like you are losing your hearing. Or you know you heard X and you call them on it when they tell you they said Y, then they feed you some bullshit about what they really said or meant. This is one where it is useful if a third party is around, so you can get confirmation. Because it really isn't you.



5. Do they say condescending or mean shit and pass it off as a joke?

This often is a follow-up to muttering. They will say something dismissive, putting down you, your friends, your interests, your favorite music, whatever. And it can be really mean. When you call them on it, say that was

rude/mean/nasty/etc., it is your fault that you took offense. Your fault that you don't think it's funny. It wasn't. It isn't. Even if the person isn't a narcissist, they are still an asshole. Don't let them gaslight you.



6.

Do they not handle it well if they aren't the center of attention?

Do they try to hog the conversation, usually with stuff that no one else cares about or has heard a hundred times? If hogging the conversation doesn't work, do they act like a child having a tantrum? Do they interrupt conversations that don't involve them and not take a hint when it isn't appreciated? As far as they think, it is all about them.

7. Do they rarely ask about your day?

Are they disinterested in your life? Or for that matter, in the lives of anyone other than themselves? This can show on the personal level – not caring about their “friends” or family – but also on a bigger scale. For example, during the pandemic, did they actually care about the safety of others or only about protecting themselves?



8.

Do they give you little tests, designed to prove that they are better or smarter than you?

Do they absolutely need to show you/everyone that they are superior in some way? It could be a little test to see if you are smart enough (usually about some rather trivial piece of information). Or they could insist on showing off their detailed knowledge on something that you have expressed no interest in. They need to show that they are better in some way that matters only to them. Along with this, they may act, or even say, that everyone else is stupid.



9.

Do they get upset over little things that they take personally?

Do they take some circumstance that most people would think was minor or not be concerned about it at all, and act like there was a conspiracy against them? Something as simple as buying them a generic food brand (when that was what was available) is seen as purposely buying them inferior goods. This goes along with “only the best” whether or not they can afford it. Do they not let go of an offense? Long after whatever bothered them, do they still bring it up as a way to show that you have mistreated them? You haven’t.



10. Is everything either the best or worst thing that ever happened?

Are they missing the middle ground where most of life actually happens? Little things are dramatic, well beyond what is called for. Along with that, are they either being mean to the waiter or giving a huge tip? And to everyone around them, is it like they have a reverse-empathy mutant power? If they feel great, everyone around them feels great. If they feel bad, they make sure everyone else is miserable.



11.

Do they act like you don't know how to do anything right?

Along with those stupid tests, do they act like they are the expert and you know nothing? Even/especially when it is something they don't really know and you actually have more experience than they do? Again, everyone but them is stupid. They can be walking examples of predatory self-esteem. They think the only way to feel better about themselves is to put other people down. It doesn't work, but it doesn't stop them from trying.

12.



Do they have no clue about boundaries?

Do they appear to have no understanding that there are such things as healthy boundaries? For example, if you have an argument and you say “I need some space to breathe and calm down” and you walk away, do they follow you? Do you feel like you can’t breathe and inhabit your own space without them invading? Do they use other people’s things without asking, but have a fit if someone else does the same with theirs? Be aware that enforcing your own boundaries is one of the best things you can do for yourself and one of the things that will confuse and frustrate the narcissist the most. That means they will probably react badly. Be prepared.

“Reasonable Human Being Fallacy”

Narcissists pretend they are reasonable human beings - and everyone expects that they are - but they aren't. Their goals and intentions aren't what you might expect from a RHB and that will trip you up. Anything you say that might have an affect on a RHB will not work on a narcissist. This is different from your run-of-the-mill jerk, who you can occasionally get through to. Your instinct to treat a narcissist like a RHB. Stop thinking they will think or react like you expect them to.