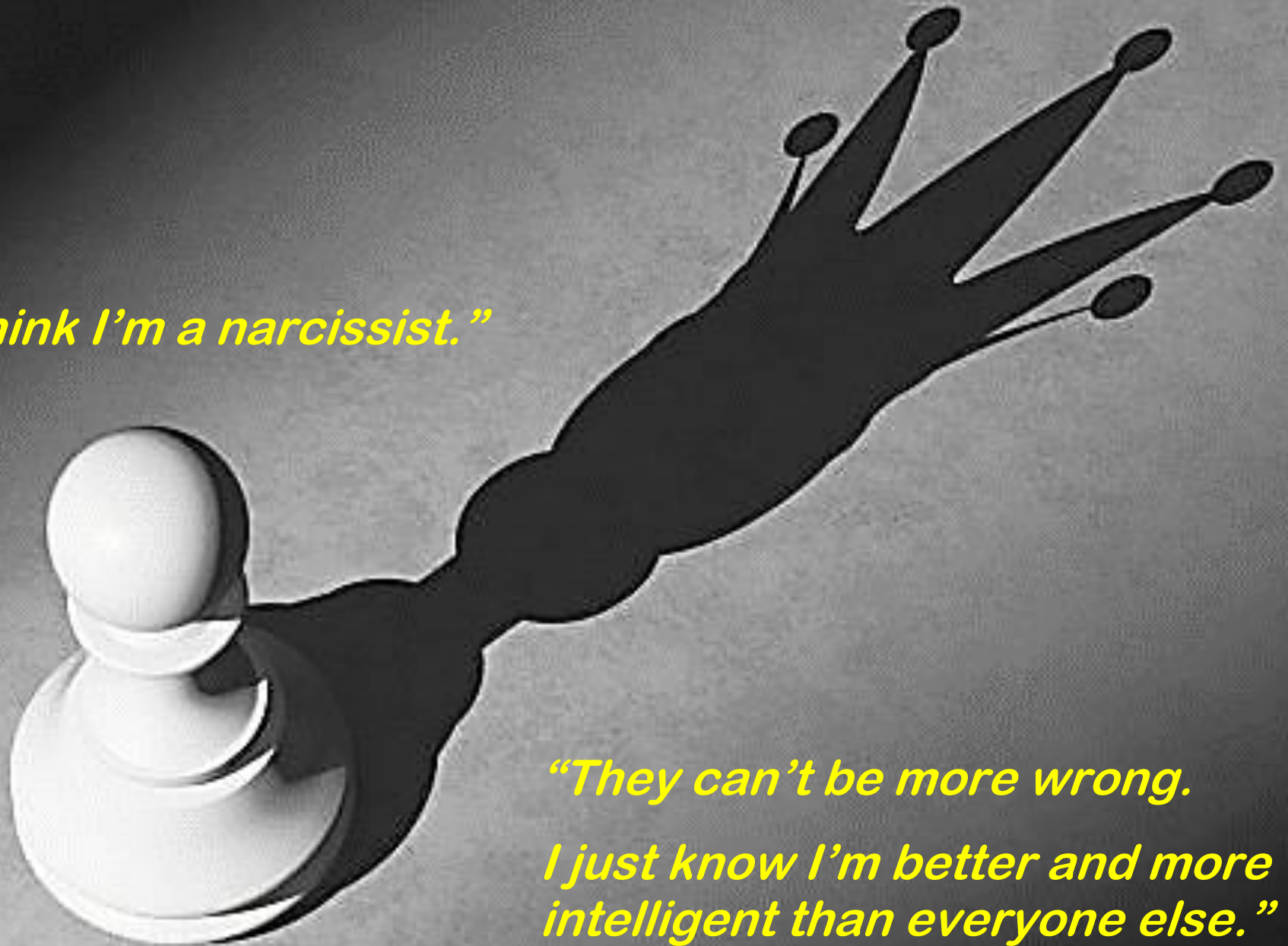


Narcissistic Personality Disorder

“People think I’m a narcissist.”



“They can’t be more wrong.

I just know I’m better and more intelligent than everyone else.”

Narcissistic Personality Disorder

The DSM-5 defines narcissistic personality disorder as a pervasive pattern of grandiosity in fantasy or behavior, a need for admiration, and a lack of empathy, beginning in early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by five (or more) of the following behavioral patterns:

1. Has a grandiose sense of self-importance
 - ↳ exaggerates achievements and talents
 - ↳ expects to be recognized as superior without commensurate achievements, etc
2. Is preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love.
3. Believes that he or she is “special” and unique and can only be understood by, or should associate with, other special or high-status people (or institutions).
4. Requires excessive admiration.
5. Has a sense of entitlement
 - ↳ unreasonable expectations of especially favorable treatment or automatic compliance with their expectations
6. Is interpersonally exploitative
 - ↳ takes advantage of others to achieve his or her own ends
7. Lacks empathy: is unwilling to recognize the feelings and needs of others.
8. Is often envious of others or believes that others are envious of him or her.
9. Shows arrogant, haughty behaviors or attitudes.

Additional common traits of a narcissist

- Love tends to be conditional or transactional
- Very sensitive to criticism.
- They can be kind, so long as they are not asked for more than they are willing to give.
- Narcissists do not recognize or respect peoples' boundaries.
- Narcissists require loyalty (in relationships, business, friends)
- Exaggerate their successes and achievements and diminish the value of achievements of those around them.
- Tend to play the victim, can be overly jealous and competitive, superficial and overbearing.
- As parents, a narcissist is possessive and controlling (which dis-empowers the child; the parent sees the youth as an extension of themselves). The youth strive to meet the parents needs and loses their own sense of identity.

Two different types of narcissists

Both types of narcissists may cause real harm to the people around them in the form of narcissistic abuse

1. 'Vulnerable narcissists'

➤ Have low self-esteem, attachment anxiety, and are highly sensitive to criticism

↳ *"For a long time, it was unclear why narcissists engage in unpleasant behaviors, such as self-congratulation, as it actually makes others think less of them. Our work reveals that these narcissists are not grandiose, but rather insecure,"* said clinical psychologist Pascal Wallisch from New York University. *"More specifically, the results suggest that narcissism is better understood as a compensatory adaptation to overcome and cover up low self-worth,"* added clinical psychologist Mary Kowalchuk, also from NYU.

↳ Study: brain scans of vulnerable narcissist's revealed patterns suggesting emotional distress and conflict when they were shown a photo of themselves.

2. 'Grandiose narcissists'

➤ Have high self-esteem and demonstrate self-aggrandizement. They genuinely believe in their own self-importance and do not display signs of insecurity.

“Flexing” behavior

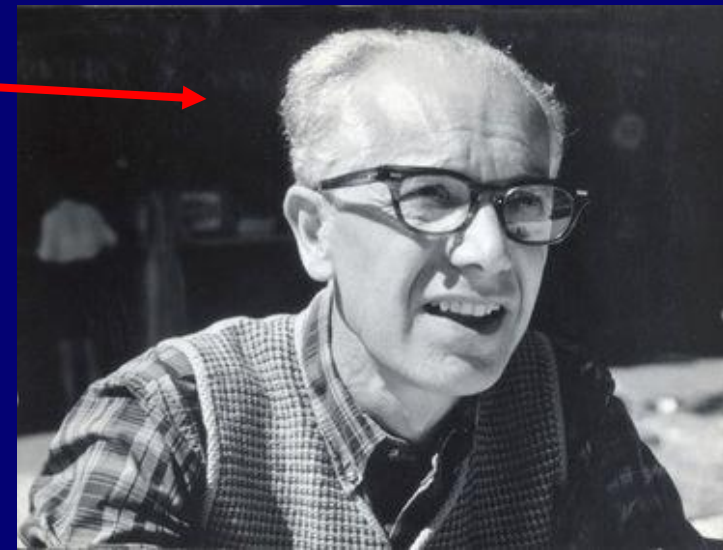
Off-putting behaviors in a narcissist – like expressions of entitlement, superiority, and self-congratulating – are known as 'flexing'.

↳ Flexing behavior is strongly associated with individuals who also have high insecurities and sense of guilt. (Those exhibiting psychopathy showed relatively low levels of guilt.)

↳ "Narcissists are insecure, and they cope with these insecurities by flexing. This makes others like them less in the long run, thus further aggravating their insecurities, which then leads to a vicious cycle of flex”

The term Narcissist” was proposed by Heinz Kohut

↳ The condition was named after Narcissus, a mythological Greek youth who became infatuated with his own reflection in a lake



Nature or nurture?

Both! But more nurture than nature . . .

- Nature – a genetic inheritance is suspected
- Nurture – Parents who were overprotective, neglectful, offered inadequate warmth, minimal approval, and excessive idealization. In short, where parents did not see or accept the child as they are.
 - ↳ A study with twins shows some traits were seen in both. Grandiosity was 23% heritable, entitlement was 35% heritable.
 - ❖ Research: Narcissism in Western countries is higher today than in the 1960s. Why? Cultural transformation towards more individualistic values in Western societies has been blamed for the rise in narcissism.

Demographics

- The development of narcissism **begins at around the ages of 7 or 8** (This is the time when children begin to evaluate themselves according to how they perceive others).
- **Signs of the disorder usually appear in late-teens or early-adulthood.**
- **Up to 5% of the population may have narcissistic traits, but just over 1% had the disorder.**
- **Men tend to be more narcissistic than women**

How to treat narcissism?

- Narcissistic tendencies can improve with support from a compassionate, trained therapist.
- If you choose to remain in a relationship someone dealing with these issues, it's essential to work with your own therapist to establish healthy boundaries and develop resilience
- Therapy can help. The goal is to build up the person's poor self-esteem and have more realistic expectations of others.
- encourage empathy.
 - ❖ The best way to shut down a narcissist is to not engage with them

Famous Narcissists



Gaston, Beauty and the Beast

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30PVdigjBFY> (3 min, animated)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MOjqzGpu0Q> (4 min, live)



Elon Musk



Mariah Carey



Donald Trump

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6nhoGIvOKJU>