

How to STOP!

Dealing With Narcissists Made Easy

Emergency Toolkit: 5 Tools to Help You Deal With Narcissists

Here is a list of strategies you can utilize to make dealing with narcissists easier. Of course, the first, last and constant suggestion is to go no contact with them, and with their enablers. If you cannot do that for whatever reason, here are some things you can do.

1. Stop taking it personally.

It's true that narcissists are cruel, abusive, spiteful and manipulative, but it's also true that they don't actually want to destroy you. They don't even see you as a person. They are simply taking the feelings they feel for themselves and projecting them on to you. It is literally all about them. You are not even on the radar, no matter how it feels. You're getting caught in the crossfire of a battle they are fighting with themselves. So don't take it personally, because it isn't. This is a person who is drowning in self-hatred and shame for who they are. It has nothing to do with you. This can be hard to understand, so if you need more information, here are a few podcasts that explain it in more detail: [Yes, The Narcissist Hates You](#) and [The Narcissist's True Motivation](#).

2. Stop reacting.

Narcissists abuse others because they are miserable, disordered people. Their emotions overwhelm them and they don't know what to do about that so they need a release. Other people are used like punching bags at these times. Another big reason narcissists abuse is because the self-hatred they feel is so strong that they cannot handle it. They need to pretend it's coming from somebody else so they can deny it or defend against it. They need to be able to say, "I don't hate me, *you* hate me! I didn't do anything wrong, *you* did something wrong!" The person they are trying to do it to happens to be you. They need to upset you so that you will fight them back or deny what they are saying about you. This is the only way they can then try to force you to take ownership of - and responsibility for - their feelings.

If you don't get upset, if you don't get angry, if you refuse to react emotionally at all, if you don't seem to *care*, in other words, they can't do that. This causes them a huge amount of stress and discomfort. This often results in the curious phenomenon of the narcissist shrieking that you don't care about them because you refuse to let them abuse and blame you. They feel that way because you're forcing them to deal with and confront their own feelings about themselves and it's scary and painful. But it's their problem. Their emotions are their problem and their responsibility, your emotions are your problem and your responsibility. Once you realize it isn't personal, it makes it a lot easier to stop reacting. Simply respond that they are entitled to their opinions and let it go. The podcasts entitled [How to Stop Reacting](#) and [How to Shut The Narcissist Down: Responding vs Reacting](#) explain in detail how to do this. It can be tough but it really does work.

3. Stop explaining.

Narcissists generally misinterpret, misunderstand and mis-perceive things. This often results in them accusing people of things the person did not do, did not say or does not feel. Some of this is just spite and lying or gaslighting, but some of it is because they really do believe you feel that way. Narcissists

believe feelings are facts. They believe their feelings are actual *facts* that are not subject to interpretation. In fact, they interpret reality to match their feelings. "I feel this way, therefore it is so." Because of the power of emotion, they cannot be swayed - even by tangible proof. Their feelings would not lie to them, therefore *you* are lying to them. There is no use arguing with this. It is completely illogical and totally unreasonable. So don't. Stop explaining your side and stop defending yourself against things that didn't happen. As stated above, simply respond that they are entitled to their opinions and move on. This keeps them from derailing the conversation and stops arguments. They aren't listening to your explanations anyway, and they don't want to believe you. It's very important to them that their feelings be correct in these situations. We will go into this in more detail later, but if you need this explained, the podcast entitled [Narcissists Believe Feelings Are Facts](#) explains it in depth.

4. Stop expecting the narcissist to be like everybody else.

This can be a tough one. It's hard to let go of normal expectations. But with narcissists, it's only going to frustrate and upset you because the narcissist is not going to meet these expectations. They are not like you. They are not going to become like you, no matter how many times you point it out. They cannot think or reason the way that you do. They do not perceive things the way that you do. They cannot be somebody else any more than you can. You might as well ask them to be a foot taller. Your expectations are reasonable and normal, but the narcissist is not reasonable or normal. This approach frustrates you and it frustrates them. They are what they are and you are what you are. No one could ever make you believe $2+2=5$, right? Because you know that's wrong. To the narcissist, this is what it feels like you are trying to do, convince them that $2+2=5$. What you are saying makes no sense to them. It isn't their fault and it isn't your fault. It's just the way it is.

You cannot communicate with this person on any real level. They just don't get it. You can describe a beautiful rainbow to a blind man all day, but if he can't see it, then he can't see it. If he has been blind all his life, the words "blue, green, red, yellow" mean nothing to him and the conversation is a failure from the jump. The way you are experiencing things and describing them mean nothing to him, because he has no frame of reference and no experience to understand it with. This is the same with narcissists. Your experience is not their experience. Your understanding is not their understanding. You're describing a rainbow and they have been blind all their lives.

5. Hold on to your boundaries.

Even though narcissists are not like everybody else, that doesn't mean they get a pass for abuse or disrespect. They understand right from wrong, and they know what consequences are. So hold on to your boundaries and enforce them when they are crossed. If you have set a boundary that you will not continue the conversation if you are being disrespected, then this is what needs to happen. We teach other people how to treat us, and if we allow disrespect, abuse or other harmful things to happen, then this is what will happen. Boundaries are very important, but remember that boundaries are not about changing the narcissist's behavior. They are about changing yours and refusing to put up with abuse any longer. The narcissist may or may not change their behavior, but you won't be putting up with it anymore either way if you stick to your boundaries. The ebook *Self-Care & Healing From Abusive Relationships* available at littleshaman.org explains boundaries in detail.

So there you have it. Five things you can do to make dealing with narcissists easier. As always, if the narcissist escalates to the point of violence or you are afraid, leave the situation and/or call the police. Also as always, No contact is the best and most permanent solution to the endless drama and abuse from narcissists, but in the event that it is not feasible, If you do these things you will find that you don't get upset, you don't get stressed out and you don't get trapped into hours' long arguments.

Remember, a narcissist is going to be a narcissist. Nothing can change that. But you *can* change your role in the situation, and once you do that, you find that things are a lot easier.

STOP Explaining to The Narcissist

Possibly one of the hardest things for a narcissist's loved ones to learn is how to stop explaining. It's a natural response, but it's also the exact wrong response with a narcissist. Here we will detail why that is, and what to do instead.

Narcissists look at things differently than the rest of us do. They are guided by emotion. Not logic, not reason and not intelligence. Emotion. This often causes their perception of things to be very, very different from other people's. They view everything through the lens of feeling, and their feelings are generally negative, out of control and even frightening to them. This causes their perceptions and experiences to be negative and frightening to them as well. They believe feelings are facts. That's not just a saying or a metaphor. They actually believe their feelings are facts. If they feel it, it must be true - regardless of whether it makes any sense or if they have proof or anything else.

Most people realize that feelings are not reliable. They sometimes make no sense, they're sometimes irrational and they are certainly not facts. Most of us realize that high emotion can alter perception, and that events viewed through the lens of emotion are often not viewed correctly.

Narcissists do not understand this. They experience things exactly the opposite way. Events viewed through the lens of emotion are altered in order to fit the emotion. If they are angry at you, everything you do will be perceived negatively, no matter what it is. If you're smiling, you must be laughing at them. If you brought them a sandwich or offered to share your food, there must be something wrong with it. Even things you did in the past that were OK at the time are now viewed through this lens and found to be evil. Yesterday, you were washing dishes together and laughing, having fun. No unkind words were said, there were no problems at all. Today, they see it as they were only helping you wash dishes yesterday because you forced them to do it so you can laugh at how much of a slave they are.

In reality, the narcissist's "truth" changes with their emotions. When they are angry, you are bad and they hate you. You also hate them and are horribly cruel and evil. When they are happy, you are good and they love you. You also love them (or at least don't hate them) and are not mean to them. It has nothing to do with actual reality, or anything you are actually doing. It is all based on unreasonable, irrational and faulty perceptions. Instead of being seen as an individual human being with your own feelings, you are simply seen as a walking mirror of the narcissist's feelings about themselves.

Because of this hugely divergent way of seeing things, people who are dealing with a narcissist often find themselves looking for a way to bridge the gap. They find themselves constantly explaining to the narcissist that the narcissist's perception is incorrect or faulty, that the narcissist is adding the wrong things together or coming to ludicrous conclusions based on things that aren't real, weren't said or didn't happen. This is understandable. Rational adults speaking to other adults are going to use reason and logic to try to get their point across. What else is there to do? This usually works in most people's lives. Compromises are reached, points are made, life goes on.

The trouble comes when you find yourself dealing with a seemingly-normal, cognizant person who, five minutes ago was speaking with you like a reasonable, intelligent adult and who now cannot understand even a basic point you are trying to make or simple words you are saying. Worse, they seem to have misunderstood you terribly and are now angry, upset and offended. So what do you do? As a rational, reasonable person, you try to explain. In most situations, this would be the right thing to do. With narcissists, it is the exact wrong thing.

In actuality, there's been no misunderstanding. At least, not one of the kind most people believe. The misunderstanding is not from you to the narcissist. It is within the narcissist themselves. They did not hear you wrong. They did not misunderstand what you said. What happened was that they reacted to their own emotions and blamed it on you. It really has nothing to do with you at all. When you brought them that sandwich, your motive was simply to do something nice and give them a sandwich. They didn't misunderstand that because they did not consider that. They don't care what your motive is. Not really. It's all about what is happening on their internal landscape. And all they are hearing inside is, "You're stupid, you're ugly, you're garbage, you're worthless, no one loves you, they are all laughing at you, they don't care about you..." You just got caught in the crossfire.

You can try to explain that your motives are not negative, that you don't hate the narcissist, you don't think they're garbage, or whatever else but the narcissist has been listening to this internal dialogue their entire life and they are completely, utterly convinced of it. They're never going to believe you. They're not even going to hear you. Ever notice that it seems like they are listening - and responding - to someone else when you're talking? Someone who is saying completely different things than what you are saying? That's because they are.

Narcissists expect to be treated badly because of this very thing. They therefore look for evidence of it in every single thing other people do. And of course, they find it, mostly because they push and provoke and harass and refuse to accept anything else.

For instance, a wife is speaking with her narcissistic husband. It's the classic narcissistic argument, where no matter what she says or how she says it, everything that comes out of her mouth is hurtful, hateful and wrong. The wife is attempting to explain to the narcissist reasonably and logically that his accusations are senseless and untrue. As she is talking, she calls him "honey." The narcissist replies, "Don't call me honey" in a disgusted tone of voice. The wife loses her cool and replies, "Fine, [expletive]. I won't." The narcissist then says, "That's more like it."

Now, this was no doubt intended to be a knock against the wife, to imply that the wife using terms of endearment is fake or insincere because she is so horrible and abusive. But it really says more about the narcissist than anything, doesn't it? They cannot accept being treated respectfully. It jams their radar, so to speak, and makes them very uneasy. Since they expect to be treated badly, they are constantly on edge, waiting for it to happen. They will often cause an argument or accuse someone of treating them badly for no reason simply to fulfill this expectation and ease their internal tension. Sometimes you can actually see the relief on their faces.

Explaining in these situations is useless. You will not get anywhere. Not only are they not listening, they don't want to believe you. They want to believe you are evil. It makes them victims. It makes them the center of attention, and most of all, it makes them right. If they have to accept that you are not evil, then who is to blame for all these problems? There's only one person left. In the narcissist's cartoon, comic book view of the world, there always has to be a villain - and a hero, by the way. If the villain isn't you, it will have to be them and if that's true, then it means that everything that voice says to them is right. Don't forget, narcissism is nothing but a defense mechanism against that little voice. That little

voice says they are evil, horrible, disgusting vomit on the ground, so in self-defense, the narcissist creates a false self that is the total opposite of that.

A hero, in other words.

However, *someone* has to be evil, because all that hurt and bile and anger and bitterness has to go somewhere. So it has to be you. You were once the hero, when the narcissist first met you and you were perfect, and you were going to save everyone and make everything great. But you revealed yourself as a lowly human with no special powers and worse, you revealed that they were a lowly human with no special powers, either. So you're now the villain in this story and you can never be anything else.

Beyond that, they like that you keep trying to make them understand that you love them. They like the futility, the sincerity, the fact that you keep trying and keep jumping through those hoops for them. They don't believe you and they never will, but they love to hear it just the same. They like frustrating you and upsetting you and sucking your life force out one pointless argument at a time. Explaining is really only feeding their egotistical need for attention in the end because they aren't going to believe you. They don't want to and even if they did, the voice of that brutal superego that piles them on with internal abuse 24 hours a day would never let them.

Their disorder is set up so perfectly that exactly the things they need to hear and understand in order to change are exactly the things they are programmed to deny and block out the most. It's really sad, when you think about it. Because of that blind spot, they simply self-destruct over and over and over again. They are some of the most miserable people alive, and they walk around their entire lives never realizing they are doing it all to themselves. There are none so blind as those who refuse to see.

It's very easy, then, to get caught in the trap of explaining. When a problem is so easy for us to see, of course we will try to make the other person understand. "Hey, you can fix this! All you have to do is stop doing this!" As a rational adult person, that's what most of us do. We attempt to communicate. If the communication is getting fouled up along the way somewhere, we try to fix that so that we are heard and things can be resolved.

The problem is that in this situation, the lines are crossed in a place where you can't reach or affect them. It doesn't matter how you say it, or how many times you say it. They are not going to hear it. They can't and they don't even want to anyway. There is too much at stake for them to believe you, and because of that, they never will. There are many people right now suffering in relationships with narcissists and holding onto hope that things will change. Holding onto hope that if they can just somehow explain it right, the narcissist will *finally* understand. But their brain does not work like yours does. The reality is, the chances are 1000 to 1, because these people have a vested interest in things staying exactly the same way they are right now.

When the narcissist accuses you of something that isn't true, or when they have their patented "misunderstandings," simply tell them that they are entitled to their opinion and leave it at that. You can say, "I'm sorry that you feel that way, but you're entitled to your opinion," or "I disagree with that, but you are entitled to your feelings." There is no reason to get bogged down in semantics about what was actually said and how it was said, or the ulterior motives that you don't really have or any of that, because it is a waste of time. It goes nowhere and it never ends.

If you say the things suggested here, it asserts that you disagree with their interpretation but it does not feed into their need to create chaos in order to get attention. It does not reward the behavior, in other words. If you've read the ebook *Surviving The Narcissist Epidemic*, then you know that narcissists often don't know how to respond to this kind of non-reaction at first. A lot of times they will push harder and

provoke more, trying to get a reaction out of you - which is all they really wanted in the first place. Hold your ground and don't give in. Some people have difficulty doing this. They don't like "letting the narcissist get away with" the things they are saying. That's understandable, but it's counterproductive. A fair response to that feeling is, if you roll around in the mud with a pig, all that will happen is you'll get dirty too. Do yourself a favor: stay clean.

STOP Defending Yourself to The Narcissist

Constant accusations. Crazy accusations. Delusional thinking. Where does it stop with the narcissist? It doesn't, but now there is a way you can stop the insanity.

This is something that's easy to talk about but hard to do. You have to stop defending yourself to the narcissist. Stop defending yourself against things that did not happen. It's hard to do because it's a natural reaction. When someone accuses you of something you didn't do or didn't say, or don't feel, as a rational person, you want to correct that. You want to say "Hey, that's not me. I'm not like that. I didn't do that." If it's something particularly nasty - and with narcissists, it usually is - you are offended and hurt that someone would think that's the kind of person you are. So you become defensive, or even angry. This feels very unfair, and to be perfectly honest, it IS unfair. So you want to right that injustice. Obviously, it must be a misunderstanding, because your behavior shows the complete opposite. You want to line up proof and show it to them. You want to correct their perception of you, and their apparent misunderstanding of your actions and your character. This is all normal, reasonable and logical.

The problem is that you are dealing with someone who is not normal, reasonable and logical. If they were, they'd never have "misunderstood" so badly in the first place. Because of that, even though your response is totally natural and justified, it's exactly the wrong thing to do. Why is it the wrong thing to do? Because it's a total waste of time. They're not listening to you. Your denials just make them more sure they're right. After all, if you weren't evil and abusive, you would not be denying it. You would admit you have these feelings, or these motivations, and you'd apologize. Because you keep denying it, it's obvious you are dastardly indeed.

As we discussed in the previous chapter, the truth is they're not misunderstanding you at all. They *know* you didn't say or do the things they're accusing you of. They're accusing you because either

- a. They are trying to take heat off of themselves for something by switching the focus to you, and/or
- b. Because these things can occur together and often do, they believe that while you may not have actually said or done those things, your *motive* is actually bad. Your *feelings* for them are bad, which therefore makes everything you do and say bad, regardless of whether it actually is or not.

The narcissist may accuse you of calling them names when you didn't, of insulting them when you didn't, of using derogatory phrases or mannerisms that you did not use... the list is really endless. When you really press them on why they are saying these things, it always come down to the same thing: they know you actually didn't but are sure you want to, or would if you could. They are assigning motivations and feelings to you and your actions that do not exist anywhere except inside their own head. As was discussed at length in the previous chapter, this happens because those are their own feelings about themselves. They are unable to endure these feelings and so they project them on to other people.

If these feelings, insults and criticisms are coming from inside themselves, they have no defense

against that. It very quickly gets to the point that they cannot bear it. If they cannot take the pressure off, they often even become suicidal or engage in self-harming behaviors. However... if these feelings, insults and criticisms are coming from *you*, that's a different story, isn't it? They *can* defend against that. And they do. Instead of being angry and hateful at themselves, they are now angry and hateful at you. *You* are the problem. It's *your* behavior and emotions that are wrong, hurtful and evil. "I don't think I'm garbage. *You* think I'm garbage!" It's a form of affect displacement, an immature scapegoating technique the narcissist uses to protect their mind against the unbearable feelings that overwhelm them all the time.

Those feelings have nothing to do with you. They have to do with how the narcissist feels about themselves, and they existed since before you ever even knew this person. That's the main reason it's a waste of time to defend yourself against their accusations: it's very, very important to the narcissist that these things be true. In fact, in a way you could say their lives depend on it.

This is why the more you deny it, the more sure they are that they're right. Remember: narcissists believe feelings are facts. This is not a metaphor and it is not hyperbole. They believe their feelings are actual data that can be relied upon and used as factual proof: "You hate me because I feel that you do. You're jealous of me because I feel that you are." That's all the proof they have, and make no mistake: to them, it *is* proof. It's more proof than any factual reality you could ever show them. Because they see everything through this lens of their own distorted and negative emotional perception, everything you say and do is given this connotation, and they do believe it.

For instance, the narcissist who thinks you are jealous of them will see envy and jealousy in all of your actions, no matter how innocuous or innocent. A co-worker that smiles at them in passing is imagined to be seething with bitterness and hatred because they're so jealous. The narcissist may interpret the smile as a smirk, or read ludicrous meaning into how fast the co-worker walks by. The truth is that the narcissist is jealous of the co-worker. That is where the delusion comes from. It's all projection. "I don't feel this way. You do."

Any feelings that are threatening to them are projected on to other people in an attempt to lighten the stress and load the narcissist is carrying. In a very real way, they need other people for this because their internal landscape, their inner dialogue is so toxic and abusive that they simply cannot carry the burden themselves. They are not equipped to deal with it. They have immature displacement, childish denial, and play-pretend games where they imagine they are somebody else. That's it. That's all they've got. They did not mature enough emotionally to be able to deal with all of these negative, destructive feelings and they don't know what to do about them except try to run away from them. And that's what they do.

"I hate me," which is perceived by the narcissist as an indefensible, unbearably painful, toxic and frightening thing, becomes "*You* hate me" which is perceived by the narcissist as an unfair and painful but manageable thing, which they then nullify even further by telling themselves that you hate them for no reason because you are simply abusive, unfair and evil, and certainly *not* because of anything to do with them. If these emotions had to be recognized as coming from inside themselves, they could not spin it that way. So they project. "I'm jealous of you," which is perceived by the narcissist as an indefensible, obvious sign of failure and weakness, becomes "*You* are jealous of *me*," which is perceived by the narcissist as a sign of strength and success. It's them trying all the time to translate these horrible feelings into something they can handle. That's why it so often happens when *they've* done something wrong. Most people would not dream of attacking someone else because they themselves did something wrong, but narcissists are wired differently. The self-hatred that rises up

inside them during these moments is so overwhelming, they cannot do anything but try to escape it. They only know one way to do that.

As you can see, narcissists are very invested on a deep, personal level into the seemingly-crazy and off the wall accusations they make, or beliefs they hold. These things are an integral part of the defense mechanism, and they are not going away. Narcissism as a phenomenon is nothing but a network of defense mechanisms. In it's base form, it is no more and no less. It is a malfunctioning primitive defense mechanism that the brain grew into instead of out of which causes them to take any criticism, real or imagined, and amplify it, overreact to it and run from it. If this seems pathetic or childish to you, it should. It is literally an adult version of, "I know you are, but what am I?"

This is what you are dealing with. This is why it's a waste of time to defend yourself against these accusations. It's too important that the narcissist believes these things. If they can't believe you are the bad guy, then they are going to have to believe it's themselves. And they cannot take that.

You might say, "Why does there have to be a bad guy at all?" and the answer is, because that's just the way it is. It's how they are wired. Somebody *has* to be the bad guy. It's either going to be you or it's going to be them, and since when it's them, that can lead to suicide... it's going to be you. That's why they argue so hard and seem to believe these delusional things so absolutely. Their life is depending on it. Their supposed cleverness at spinning things is really just desperation. However far they have to reach and twist and turn things so that it is not their fault, that's what they will do.

Now that you know all that, what do you need to do? Stop defending yourself. Do not try to defend yourself, excuse yourself, reason or rationalize with this behavior. It won't work. You must do what you do with a child that is having a temper tantrum. You must ignore it. It isn't easy but it gets easier once you get the hang of it.

The narcissist's goal is to get the focus off of themselves at any cost. To that end, they will try to get your goat, provoke you, upset you and do whatever they can so that you become emotional and lose sight of the conversation. Side tracking the conversation like this makes them feel less vulnerable and again, it makes you the focus of all of their bad feelings. It also puts you on the defensive, which means they are in the driver's seat and they can steer the conversation away from all of the things they find threatening that they don't want to talk about. So don't let them.

The best thing you can do with these crazy accusations is ignore them. Again, stop defending yourself against things that did not happen. Stop trying to prove you are a good person worthy of respect and decency to a person who does not know what these things are. If you respond to their accusations, you are giving the accusations power. You are validating the accusations by responding at all, thereby ensuring that it will be brought up again and again because the narcissist can see it clearly got to you. All you are doing is giving the narcissist more ammunition with which to attack you with every explanation, defense and denial, so just stop doing it. It's only words. If the narcissist chooses to believe you are some terrible person doing terrible things, that's their problem. It's not true, so who cares what a person thinks that can't see the truth when it's staring them in the face? God knows that nine times out of 10 when the switch flips and they're the nice personality again, they'll be singing a different tune anyway. This is all based on irrational emotions that have nothing to do with you, and there's nothing you can do about it. You have to just let it go.

There is no way you can defend yourself to the narcissist so that they will believe you. Have you ever been able to? No. That's because they don't *want* to believe you. It isn't about you. It's about themselves. In order to believe *you*, they'd have to sacrifice themselves and they aren't going to do that. They can't. All you are is a scapegoat. You're a container for the feelings they cannot carry. You as a

person don't matter. They don't care how it affects you, how you feel or who you really are. It really, truly does not matter to them at all.

You can continue to defend yourself if you like, but why waste your time doing something when the results are absolutely no different than if you'd never done it in the first place? If you ran 10 miles a day for a year to get healthy, but saw no health benefits at all and didn't lose even 1 pound, would you keep running 10 miles a day anyway? Of course not. Why waste all that time and expend all that energy for nothing? That's what you're doing with the narcissist: running 10 miles a day for nothing, except this situation is worse because in this situation, *you're* running 10 miles a day and the narcissist is the one getting the benefit. Stop killing yourself so someone else can live happy. It's not your responsibility. Their feelings are their problem and their responsibility. You don't have to defend yourself and it's pointless anyway. Simply don't react to the accusations at all. The correct response is no response.

For example, you need to talk to the narcissist about who will pick up the children from t-ball practice or ballet. The conversation may go something like this:

YOU: Are you going to pick up the kids or should I?

NARCISSIST: Maybe you should do it. After all, we all know what an embarrassment you think I am.

This would ordinarily be followed by denials and defensive statements, such as "I never said that" or "I don't feel that way." These will be countered by the narcissist insisting you do feel this way, followed by more crazy mis-perceptions and half-baked emotions that are supposed to be "proof" of these things and here comes another 4 hour argument. Over nothing. Instead of defending yourself or exploding with rage, try this:

YOU: Are you going to pick up the kids or should I?

NARCISSIST: Maybe you should do it. After all, we all know what an embarrassment you think I am.

YOU: I really need to know if you're going to do it, because I have an appointment at 6:00.

The response of course may vary but the point is that there was absolutely no acknowledgment of the crazy emotional accusation. It may be repeated, or it may not. If it is, continue to ignore it. Be polite, be pleasant and ignore every attempt to put you on the defensive. Some of you might say that the narcissist in your life will respond badly to this type of non-reaction. Well, they all do. It takes away one of their most potent weapons and worse, it forces them to hold those terrifying feelings alone. If they can't create a situation where they are "defending themselves" from your "abuse," they have to face these feelings for what they actually are.

Their bad reaction is not a reason to keep feeding into this cycle. They're going to react abusively and maliciously no matter what you do, regardless. If you fear for your safety, leave or call the police. But stop defending yourself against things that you didn't do, words you didn't say and feelings you don't have. It's a losing battle that you will never win and every time you do it, you sell another piece of yourself out to a person who does not care enough about you to even listen. If the narcissist chooses to have these feelings and opinions about you despite reality proving otherwise, there's nothing you can do about it anyway.

STOP Trying to Control The Narcissist

We often hear people saying things like, "How can I get this person to stop doing this" or "How can I convince this person of X-Y-Z?" The truth is, you can't. Whether someone is a narcissist or not, you can't control other people or make them do anything they don't want to do. It makes dealing with all people easier when you remember that you can't control them. If they don't want to do something, they won't. If they don't want to believe something, they won't. Understanding and really internalizing this is the key to helping you to stop focusing on the other person and focus more on your own behavior and your own actions, because these are the things you *can* control. Healing begins when we stop focusing on the abuser and start focusing on ourselves.

In our culture, there is a lot of focus on the other guy. For most people, it's easier to look at somebody else and see what they are doing wrong. And yes, absolutely, abusers are wrong. They are doing bad things and they *should* change. However, many of them do not and people can waste years of their life trying to force this person to become what they want them to be instead of accepting who they actually are. The fact is, people are who they are, and the faster we accept who they are, the sooner we can decide whether or not this is something we want to be involved in. If it isn't, then we have to decide what we're going to do, because people don't have to change - for us or anybody else. This can be sad and it seems unfair, but it's just the way it is. People are going to do what they want to do, and sometimes they want to do things that are not good for those around them, or themselves.

Sometimes a person may not understand the impact of their actions on others, but sometimes they just don't care. This is what we usually find with narcissists. Loved ones may spend years trying to get through to their narcissistic loved ones because they are laboring under the misconception that narcissists don't understand what they are doing to others. They believe, as any decent person would, that if the narcissist could simply understand what they are doing to others, they would stop. It is people's own intrinsic humanity that prevents them from understanding that this person doesn't have a problem understanding; they just don't care. People spend years explaining and pleading and proving and demanding, trying to hit on that magic formula that will somehow get through to the narcissist when the truth is staring them in the face the whole time: this person does not care. They basically *can't* care, and no amount of explaining is going to change that.

Not only are narcissists destructive to others, they are self-destructive. This is one of the reasons many people find it so difficult to go no contact with narcissists. It can be very difficult to watch someone you care about do things that are hurting themselves or ruining their own life. They may spend money recklessly and be constantly on the brink of financial disaster or homelessness, self-medicate or drink too much, have sex with people they don't know very well or put themselves in dangerous situations, engage in criminal activities, mess up good jobs and many other things that are hard to witness. However, unless these things directly impact you, there is very little you can do about it. Even if it does directly impact you, often the most you can do is simply leave the situation so that it doesn't anymore. Regardless of how much someone maybe should change, they won't if they don't want to. This can be very hard to accept, but the truth is that it is dangerous and unhealthy to want something for someone

else more than they want it for themselves. If we accept that other people are individuals, then we also have to accept that they have the right to make their own choices - even bad ones. We don't have to participate in it though, and we don't have to stick around to watch it.

This is how many interventions with addicts work. Everyone that loves the person gathers together to say how much they love the person and that they want the person to get help. If the person does not agree, the family and friends often say they will no longer be a part of their life. This can be difficult and it may seem harsh, but unfortunately, it is what happens when people truly accept that they cannot control others or force them to change, even if they are hurting themselves and others. Just remember that you have every right to walk away from toxic or abusive people, no matter who they are. Maybe this will help them see that there is a problem, but even if it doesn't, it stops the toxicity and abuse from affecting *you*.

It's ultimately up to each individual what they will and will not agree to have in their lives. For example, some people may choose to continue to live with an alcoholic spouse or an addicted parent and simply try to have a life anyway despite this person's constantly problematic behavior, while others may decide they don't want this amount of toxicity in their life and leave the relationship. Either way, no matter what you decide, it is important to remember that you can only control your own behavior and you can only change yourself. No amount of love can make someone stop drinking or using drugs, for instance. No amount of love can stop someone from being abusive or manipulative. There is nothing wrong with caring about others or worrying about them, but again: it is dangerous and unhealthy to want something for someone else more than they want it for themselves. It's also extremely unrealistic.

Until that person recognizes *for themselves* that there is a problem, that the problem is with them and that they have the power to change things, nothing is going to change. You will simply spin your wheels having the same conversations and arguments and problems every day for the rest of your life until you decide it's enough and leave the situation. You cannot control another person, you cannot change them and you cannot make them care - about anything, including themselves. Whether or not you want to stay in the situation and wait for them to realize something they may never realize is up to you. Just remember that you do not need to sacrifice yourself to make someone else happy, nor should you. Their happiness is not more important than yours. It's supposed to be equal.

STOP Focusing on The Narcissist

Though we talk a lot about narcissists, the narcissist should not be the focus of healing. Understanding them is very important, and there is nothing worse than not knowing what is wrong with your loved one. Understanding helps us figure out what is going wrong so that we can let go and move on. However, to make it clear: the narcissist should not be the focus. Your own healing and wellness should be.

It's often easier to focus on what someone else did than it is to confront our own pain, or our own part in a situation, but healing can't begin until that happens. Part of healing - truly healing - is learning and forgiving yourself. If you cannot confront your own pain, you can't do either one of those things. This is why we sometimes see people simply going from one narcissistic relationship to another. When the focus is on the other person, the internal issues that are creating a vulnerability to that type of relationship are not being addressed. If they're not being addressed, they cannot be healed. Then the whole thing just starts all over again.

There are many articles by this author regarding how to break the sticky bonds with abusive and toxic people, so we will not revisit all of that here. Those articles can help you understand why you keep becoming entangled in these types of relationships and how to stop that from happening. Or maybe you already have an idea, but you can't seem to put it into action. Either way, it's important to remember that understanding the narcissist is only half the problem. Once you've made your peace with why they did what they did, it's time to figure out why you did what you did. Otherwise, people find themselves in the same relationship over and over again without ever understanding why.

People often ask, "Why do I keep attracting narcissists?" but that to me is not the question. The question to me is not, "Why do I keep attracting narcissists?" but "Why do I keep being attracted to narcissists in the first place?" The way this question is posed demonstrates that the focus is on the wrong person. Because it wouldn't matter why they were attracted to you if you were not attracted to them anyway because you would not enter into a relationship with them, or you would end the relationship when they revealed themselves - which as you know, they always do. There is often a sense of helplessness surrounding the whole situation, as though things are just happening and people have no control over them. This is not the case! You're not helpless. You do have strength. You do have power. All you have to do is decide to use it and it will be there.

All relationships are a two way street. Yes, narcissists misrepresent themselves and of course abuse is always wrong, but don't forget: it isn't just that narcissists are attracted to you or in a relationship with you. You have power here also. You are in a relationship with them as well. You are obviously attracted to them, too. Regardless of the type of relationship, whether the narcissist is your parent or your spouse or your sibling... when the relationship finally revealed itself as toxic and abusive, you stayed in it.

There is a reason you have not ended this relationship. But what is it? When you can look at that honestly and figure out why you are willing to accept less than you deserve, you can stop it from happening. Then you don't have to worry about figuring out who is a narcissist and who isn't, because it

won't matter. Anyone who reveals themselves as toxic will not be appealing to you anymore. You will know you deserve better and you will not be afraid to act on that. It takes work to get there and it can be pretty uncomfortable, but rest assured, it is far less uncomfortable than dealing with an abusive person who does not care about you or your feelings at all. That is a hell on earth that nobody deserves. And it doesn't have to be your reality anymore.

These things can be hard for many people to hear, but it is so important to understand that they are the absolute truth. The narcissist has taken enough from you already. They've been the main focus for so long. Isn't it time to start focusing on the person who has been ignored so long – yourself?

If You Really Want to Help, STOP Doing This

We often hear from people who care about the narcissist in their lives. They want to help them. Even though the most common recommendation is to separate from the narcissist, in your lives, regardless of what anyone says, some people are just not going to do that. So if you care about a narcissist and are not planning to end the relationship, there is something that you need to understand. This goes for *any* type of relationship.

We could go all into how the narcissist does not care about you, and you don't even really exist to them on a real level, but you probably already know that. If you don't, it's not going to be revisited here, but it is strongly suggested you check out the episodes of The Little Shaman Healing podcast entitled [Yes, The Narcissist Hates You](#), [Narcissists Believe Feelings are Facts](#), and [The Narcissist's True Motivation](#). We could go into how miserable your relationship will be, but you probably already know that, too. If you need more info on that, you can check out the episodes of the show called [4 Reasons Narcissists are Abusive](#) and [Loving a Narcissist: Is it Worth It?](#)

The problem with the idea of trying to help narcissists is that the only way the narcissist will allow you to "help" is by enabling them. Anything else you try to do will be called abuse. If you try to teach them about responsibility and accountability, they will call it blame and say you are abusive. If you try to teach them about respect, they will say you want them to grovel at your feet and call you abusive. If you try to teach them about consideration for others, they will say you have no consideration of them and call you abusive. If you try to teach them about manners, they will say you are controlling them and call you abusive. If you try to teach them to think before they speak or act, they will say you are trying to manipulate and brainwash them - and again, call you abusive. There is no winning here. They don't understand the basic things you need to know to get along in this world or have relationships and their disorder is set up in such a way that everything they hear sounds like blame, accusations and insults. You cannot teach someone like that anything.

The *only* thing they will allow you to do is what you have been doing the entire time: carrying their emotional burdens for them like an emotional baggage cart. They will allow you to be their punching bag, their whipping boy, their emotional pack mule. That's it. That's all they want you for. Many times, they try to force people into this position using guilt, manipulation and other underhanded tactics but other times, people do it willingly in the misguided belief that they are helping the narcissist. They feel sorry for this overwhelmed person who staggers under the weight of all this pain and confusion. That's understandable and it's even true but it's wrong.

It isn't helping them. It's hurting them, and you. You are *enabling* their abusive behavior by doing this, and you are enabling their disorder by letting them rely on you instead of forcing them to deal with and process their own feelings. This is the whole basis of the disorder. It's a defense mechanism characterized by affect displacement. They project their own feelings about themselves on to other people to make these feelings easier to deal with.

Everything they do, everything they think, everything their disorder is, was created by their mind to

protect themselves from experiencing feelings that they find threatening, scary or overwhelming. Now they are an adult and the defense mechanism has grown into pathological patterns and behaviors. Allowing them to shift those feelings to you just continues the pattern and reinforces the disorder. They will never learn that they *can* deal with these emotions if they are not *forced* to deal with them. Stop being their emotional baggage cart. Stop being their punching bag. Stop being their whipping boy. It inadvertently makes the problem worse, not better. If you really want to help, stop helping.

The truth is, the best thing you can do for the narcissist is leave their feelings to them. They will either learn to deal with them or they will not. Some eventually do as they get older. Their feelings are not your responsibility, and more than that, just as they have no right to *force* you to carry them, you have no right to volunteer. Stop explaining, denying, excusing and most of all, stop reacting. Don't let them cause a problem with *you* to distract from the problems within themselves. These feelings are not going away and it's time they faced them. This might seem cruel, but sometimes you have to be cruel to be kind and it is far crueler to enable the very thing that is crippling them. You cannot fix them, but you don't have to be part of the problem, either.

STOP Hating The Narcissist & Move on

It's hard not to hate narcissists. It's hard to feel anything but anger and hatred and disgust toward someone who works *so hard* to destroy your peace and ruin your life. Let's not split hairs. They intentionally and purposefully try to ruin any happiness you might find. They will destroy your family, turn your children against you, get you fired, steal your money, physically abuse you, try to intentionally drive you crazy and laugh in your face while they do it. If you call them on it, they will rage and cry that something is wrong with *you*. They've been compared to demons and to devils. They are considered to be some of the most evil people alive. There are those who don't even feel they are human. So why *wouldn't* you hate narcissists? Why *wouldn't* everybody?

Well, you would. You probably do, if you are reading this. But hating the narcissist doesn't solve anything. It certainly doesn't make any difference to them. They already hate themselves, and believe everyone else hates them too, so you're making no impact on them at all. The best you'll get from the narcissist is a laugh, or maybe "I always knew you hated me!" Then they'll talk about what a fake you always were and how you tricked them and lied and played them. Of course, the fact that they *turned* you against them because of the way they treated you will never be mentioned, and if you do mention it, they'll just say it's a lie. It's a pointless battle. These people don't get it. You're arguing with pure emotion. It's irrational.

Hating narcissists does nothing to them. They already believe that no one loves them and that will never change. However, it *does* do something to *you*. It's a normal healthy response to be angry at the narcissist, even very angry. Anger at being abused and treated unfairly is normal. However, allowing it to fester into bitterness and hatred is not good for you. It poisons your thoughts, casts shadows over future relationships and prevents people from moving on. You don't have to keep living in the narcissist's shadow. You can let go of the hatred and move on.

The best way to stop hating the narcissist is to see them for what they really are. This is a weak, pitiful, pathetic shell of a person. No identity, no self-control, no ability to soothe themselves or attend to their own even basic needs. What they are is a tragic shame. They're nothing but a screaming empty hole, unable to give or receive love. A being incapable of happiness who will never know even a moment's peace. How can you not pity that? They're not worth hating. They're not even worth having as an enemy, because they're not a worthy opponent on any level. All they have is childish tantrums and schoolyard tactics like making up lies and trying to get people in trouble or make others not like them. We call it evil but more than anything, it's childish.

When you look at a narcissist, you are looking at a child in an adult's body. A baby who can only scream to get their needs met because they have no other way to communicate. Once you understand this truth, you will notice that the way you see the narcissist in your life changes. You recognize the childishness, the absurdity of the way they behave. It no longer inspires hate. It inspires pity and disdain. Not sympathy, but pity. You realize that this is a wreck of a person, someone who will never understand what they've done to their family and their own life. Someone who will do nothing but continue to engage in the same self-destructive behavior for the rest of their lives because they cannot

see they are causing all the problems themselves. And instead of getting angry, instead of trying to help, you will simply shake your head and walk away. You will let go of the hate and move on.

How to STOP Attracting Narcissists

Many people want to know why they keep attracting narcissists, and how to stop this from happening. This is actually a two-pronged question. The first is why are narcissists attracted to you, and the other is why are you attracted to them.

Narcissists are attracted to people that have something they want. That can be many things. It can be physical, it can be emotional, it can be mental, it can be material... it depends on what the narcissist is looking for at that given time, and the type of narcissist they are. An overt narcissist may be more drawn to people who make a good trophy they can sport around: someone with money, or someone with exceptionally good looks, someone who has achieved success in some way. A covert narcissist may be more drawn to someone who feels sorry for them, as sympathy is what they are looking for. In all cases, the narcissist is looking for that fabled "perfect partner," and whatever that means to them.

In a very real way, narcissists believe in fairy tales. They are prone to magical thinking, and their ideas and standards regarding relationships and love are very unrealistic. Because of this, their relationships are essentially doomed to failure. They have a script in their mind of how it's supposed to go, and when it does not follow that script because the script is not realistic or reasonable, they very quickly become disillusioned and disappointed with their partner. Their partner is supposed to be the ultimate in love, in beauty, in understanding, in support, in self-sacrifice... in everything. Their partner is supposed to always let the narcissist shine, always compliment them, always love them, never have a bad day, or needs, or feelings or any interests that don't involve the narcissist. Any deviation from this is perceived as very disappointing and hurtful to the narcissist. They feel let down and even betrayed that their partner is not perfect.

This is not unlike the love a very young child has for their mother or father. Children see parents as perfect, as incorruptible, very nearly God-like until they get older and are able to actually see them as people. Many times, this first 'fall from grace' for a parent is very traumatic to a child, especially if it happens too early. Narcissists react much the same way to the realization that their partner is not perfect: with anger, hurt and betrayal. To that end, narcissists gravitate toward people they believe can provide them with that perfect love, that perfect relationship.

Partners of narcissists are usually very - even overly - compassionate, empathic and sensitive people who are generally bright, talented, or gifted in some way. The narcissist is very envious of these qualities, as they secretly believe themselves to be boring, stupid, ugly, worthless, untalented... whatever the opposite of these qualities might be. By securing a partner who embodies every quality they themselves lack, narcissists endeavor to absorb or acquire these qualities themselves, either by association or through a kind of emotional osmosis. They are chameleons, and they will attempt to imitate that which they admire. The problem is that this is not real and they know it, so over time they become angry at their partner for not "sharing" these things with them. The narcissist tries to 'fake it until they make it,' but they never do make it. Over time, enraged by their inability to absorb these qualities from their partner, their deep envy turns to pathological jealousy and the narcissist seeks to

destroy these qualities in the partner, so that now *nobody* has them.

It's reminiscent of a child who sees that another child has a toy they want to play with. If the second child refuses to share this coveted toy, the envious child may destroy or otherwise scorn the toy out of frustrated jealousy. The fact that this upsets the other child doesn't really matter. The object that was causing the stress has been eliminated. Narcissists behave the same way.

"People pretend to like your piano playing, but they're just being nice."

The narcissist is trying to convince themselves that those qualities aren't really that great anyway because they don't have them. The narcissist's ideal partner would be one who played the piano beautifully but told everyone else the narcissist plays better. One that recorded their beautiful works and released them under the narcissist's name. One who stayed in the background working tirelessly to elevate the narcissist's self-esteem and enrich the narcissist's public image.

We often hear that narcissists target people, and while this can certainly be true, it's also true that they run their game on a lot of different people, but it doesn't work on everybody. Long term, it works on almost nobody. This leads us to the second part of the question: why are *you* attracted to *them*?

The initial answer is that narcissists present themselves very well at first. Their facade is perfect. But again, though they run their game on many people, it only works on a few. So why is that? I often hear people saying things like, "How could I be so stupid?" or "Wow, I'm so dumb..." It has nothing to do with intelligence. Most people - including those that stay with them - see through the narcissist relatively quickly. The issue is that while most people head for the door as soon as they figure out that this person is abusive and manipulative, not everybody does.

The reasons for that are varied. It's true that narcissists are abusive and they work at breaking someone down but - and this may not be a popular thing to say, but it's the truth - in order for it to get to that point, there *has* to be another reason the person has stayed, because most have identified the narcissist as abusive, and/or abnormal before that ever happens. It may be that you had a dysfunctional family growing up, maybe a narcissistic parent or those that were otherwise emotionally unavailable. If that's the case, you may not even realize that this is not how relationships are supposed to go because this is how it's always been. Maybe you were abused and treated badly, so a partner who is rude, disrespectful or cruel would not be something unfamiliar to you. Even if not, maybe your feelings and needs have never been appreciated or validated by your family so a partner who acts the same way would not be considered abnormal. People will gravitate and accept what is familiar to them.

Codependents often find themselves in relationships with narcissists for similar reasons. The narcissist needs a partner that will constantly put their own needs aside for the narcissist's benefit in order to feel validated and codependents need to be needed in order to feel validated. This can sometimes result in a "martyr" type of complex or mindset for the codependent, with the idea being that the more they suffer, the more it shows they care. Dysfunctionally-speaking, it's a perfect relationship, with everyone's dysfunction feeding off of each other.

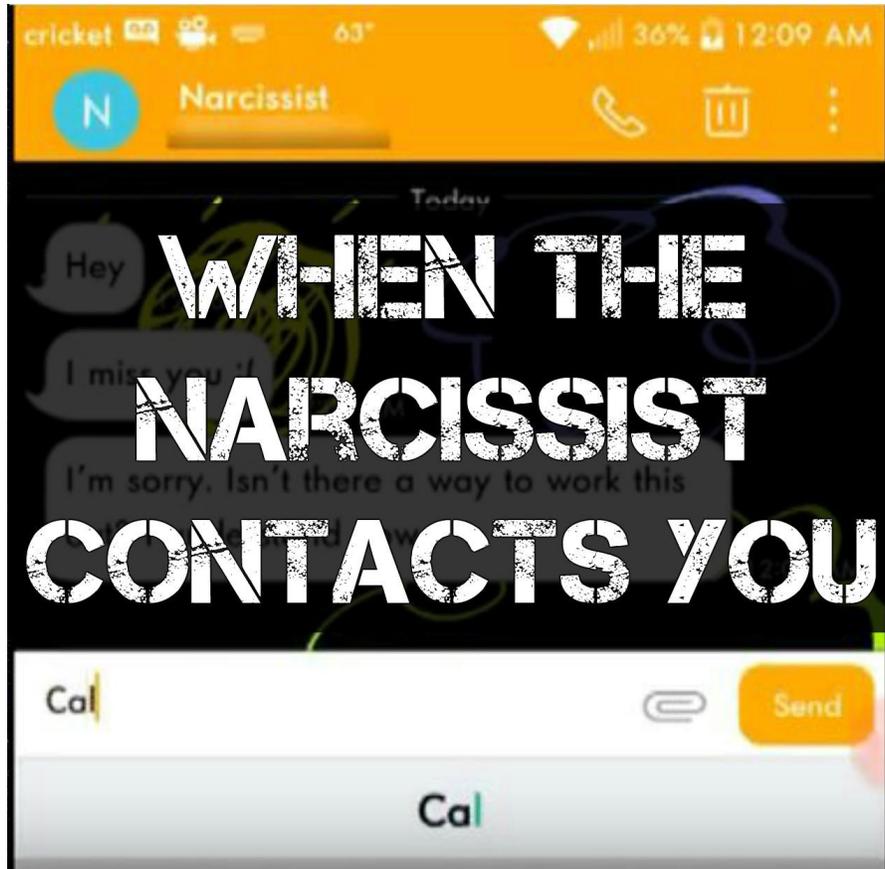
Empaths often find themselves in relationships with narcissists, but not for the same reasons as codependents. Empaths see behind the narcissist's abuse to the truth of what the narcissist is and want to help. The empath becomes trapped by their own empathy and desire to help, either not recognizing or stubbornly refusing to accept that the narcissist is beyond help. Co-dependents, victims of abuse, empaths, fixers... Regardless of intelligence, talent or anything else, nearly all partners of narcissists are people who - for whatever reason - either don't believe their needs are important or don't believe they deserve to be treated any better. If they did, they would be taking strides to get away from the

relationship. This can become a vicious cycle, because being around a narcissist is certainly not going to help anyone feel better about anything. The worse the narcissist's abuse gets, the more it reinforces this idea.

So love yourself. The important thing to remember is that, while narcissists can cause terrible damage to people, the initial problem with your self-worth existed before you ever met the narcissist. That's what made you vulnerable to them in the first place. That's why you put up with the abuse and the disrespect and the manipulation. Still, you are not a victim. A victim is somebody who cannot move on from things that have happened to them. It *defines* them. This is why the narcissist is a victim and you are not. You are a *survivor*. Other people can only affect you emotionally or mentally if you allow it. You don't have to listen to them. You don't have to believe them. You don't have to sell yourself out. Work on your self-worth and you'll find that, while you may or may not stop attracting narcissists, you'll stop being attracted to them.

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