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YOU CAN HEAL

This month's newsletter focusses on how to recover from being in a relationship with someone who has Narcissistic Personality Disorder. They're damaging, they erode your sense of self, and they can leave you feeling 'stuck' in life. But you can heal ... you can become you.

Click [here](#) to read last month's newsletter, where we focussed on the damage of being in a relationship with someone who has Narcissistic Personality Disorder, and to access all our previous articles.

Healing The Narcissistic Wounds

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Have you been 'narcissised' (been in a relationship with someone who has Narcissistic Personality Disorder)? If you have, you're probably still trying to deal with the fall out. Know that being in a relationship with a Narcissist is damaging, truly damaging, and it takes A LOT to recover from. And also that leaving a Narcissistic Relationship is not like leaving a 'normal' relationship. Why? Read on to find out.

Firstly, let's recap what Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) is. Or for a more in-depth look at NPD, head to last month's article on our website.

If you're interested in our previous articles, please click [here](#)

If you've got a suggestion for an article, or there's something more you would like to hear about, please send us an email - click [here](#)

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What Is Narcissistic Personality Disorder?

Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) is a mental disorder affecting approximately 1% of the population, with a greater prevalence in men than women. NPD is defined as an inflated sense of self-importance, a lack of empathy for others, and a great need for admiration. If you are living with, or have lived with, friends with, or have been friends with, working for, or working with, someone who has this disorder, you may have noticed them to be preoccupied with power, prestige, vanity, and they may think they deserve special treatment and fame.

However, don't confuse NPD with high self-confidence and self-esteem. Those with high self-esteem are still humble.

And there are different types of Narcissists :

Overt – a grandiose sense of entitlement and self-importance, in need of constant admiration, exaggerates achievements and talents, envious of others, talks and thinks about themselves all the time, takes advantage of others, arrogant, unemotional, unempathetic, easily hurt and offended, and feels superior

Covert/Vulnerable/Introverted – shares the same traits as Overt Narcissists, but hides their traits, displaying a quiet superiority hinting at condescension and disapproval of others, they're poor listeners, quick to judge, highly sensitive, and are often passive-aggressive

Malignant – are outright dangerous as their mood and behaviour are dependent on external factors, require constant positive feedback, but display anger, stress and shame if they don't get what they want, a grandiose sense of self-importance, lie and change their reality, have no empathy, and have a desperate need for total control. They destroy people, families, friendships, and work environments. Yet they are oh so charming!

What Damage Can An NPD Do?

Sadly, lots! A person with NPD will always be looking for their Narcissistic Supply (NS) – think of this like oxygen. A true Narcissist needs NS to survive, in the same way that we all need oxygen to survive. NS is interacting with others to get their own needs met (to feel better about themselves, to build up their self-esteem, to feel

superior). NS may come in the forms of high achievement, flirting, 'doing good', professing undying love, love bombing, or anything similar. *But be wary : they do it not because it's what they genuinely feel (although they may try to convince themselves, and you, that they do).*

More specifically a person with NPD will :

- **test you early** : they will test you to see what level of their bad behaviour you will accept, if you take the blame then they'll keep walking all over you
- **control** : they need total control of everyone and everything around them so that they will always feel superior
- **manipulation** : they will lie, cheat, and do anything to get their NS
- **you will be blamed** : it will always be your fault, somehow, because they are always right
- **you will never do enough** : whatever you do will always fall short, because you will never meet their demanding needs
- **you will never be enough** : who you are will never meet the standards of a person with NPD, because you can never, ever, be better than them
- **you will always be put down** : whether this is obvious, or by a slight that leaves you questioning what they've just said, because you can never, ever be better than them
- **your feelings will never be validated** : they don't care how you feel, they only care how they feel
- **there will always be double standards** : the rules they set for you never apply to them, because they will always do what they want to get what they want
- **you will have no boundaries** : whatever you want will never be respected, they continually violate boundaries, because it's always about getting their NS

Is Change Possible?

Absolutely, but there are a few things to know. Firstly, the damage often takes a long time to work through. Don't be fooled, this is not like leaving a 'normal' relationship – it takes much longer to work through, it causes much more hurt, and in most cases, it completely destroys an individual's sense of self.

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Secondly, understand that a person with NPD will never change as we would change. If (and this is in really rare cases) their behaviour appears to change, it is only to continue to get what they want – to be in favour, to look like a good person, to have their own needs met.

Thirdly, although you might want to spend your time and energy trying to 'out' the Narcissist (and why not, *everyone* should know how dangerous they are, and *no-one else* should be hurt by them), it's futile. Those who understand and can recognise Narcissists will know (keep these people in your inner circle), those who don't understand Narcissism will always be fooled by the Narcissists 'charm' (distance yourself from these people).

So, channel all your energies on focusing on you, you are the only person you can change, you will need as much time and attention as you can give yourself, and you deserve to heal.

How to Heal You

You need to focus on getting your mind and your heart to communicate with each other. Is this familiar? Your mind says "It's over. They abused me. I'm never going back." And your heart says "But I love this person". What's actually happening is your mind is saying "This is the reality. This is who they are. They will never change". And your heart is saying "But it felt so good when it was good". So what to do? Use the following exercises to get your mind and heart to align.

Challenge Your False Beliefs

Write down all your beliefs about your relationship with the Narcissist that interfere with you moving on.

Note : this is 'heart based' – the emotional side of you that longs for what you once experienced, the side of you that thinks you were to blame, the side of you that thinks 'it could work' if only you could be better.

Who In Your Childhood Encouraged You To Take All The Blame?

Take some time to think of who in your childhood blamed you for things that weren't your fault, conditioned you to be a people pleaser, or asked you to be the 'perfect' child. Most people will have a significant figure in

their life that blamed them inappropriately, taught them that pleasing others before themselves was expected, or taught them that being perfect is the only way to be.

What Do You Get Out Of Protecting Your Abusive Narcissist And Blaming Yourself Instead?

We not only blame ourselves out of habit and because of our history, but also because it serves some hidden psychological purpose. In order to move on, it helps to recognise what you are getting out of protecting the Narcissist and putting all the blame on yourself.

Write Down A True Statement Next To Each False Belief You Wrote Down

Make sure it is what your mind tells you is true (even though your heart may not believe it). *Note* : this is 'mind based' – the factual and logical side of you that knows so much from your experience and from your research. Whenever you find yourself missing the Narcissist or blaming yourself, reread these true statements over again.

Use These Self-Care Practices Daily

1. Set Boundaries

No contact, no contact, no contact (if possible). Block them on your phone, email, social media, etc. If this isn't an option, in your interactions, remain emotionally and mentally disengaged – give them nothing to feed on. And practice saying "No" – this will build your self-respect and true confidence.

2. Get The Toxicity Out Of Your System

Journal about what happened, talk to a trusted friend who 'gets it', speak with a Clinical Psychologist, join a support group, practice diaphragmatic breathing, do yoga, get a massage. This externalising will help chaotic and confused thoughts to gain a semblance of order.

3. Realise That Part Of You Knew

You knew, but you disregarded it. Maybe you got a feeling in your gut, maybe some things didn't add up. Look at these things and ask why you disregarded your intuition. The more you listen to your intuition, the stronger it will get.

4. Acknowledge The Truth, Forgive Yourself

You must accept the truth : this person was highly toxic, consciously hurt you, and won't

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change. You've been tricked, manipulated and abused. And your best traits were used against you : empathy, openness, trust and patience. It was not your fault!

5. **Inquire Into You and Your Self Talk**

Maybe your childhood left you needing security, nurturing, attention, or acknowledgement. Know that you can turn these feelings of 'less than' around by your inner talk (constantly give yourself positive and/or realistic acknowledgement).

6. **Heal Your Inner Child**

This creates a sense of inner cohesion, eliminates much unresolved pain, and restores a deeper connection to self-trust. The little one inside you needs help, and you are the only one that can help them.

7. **Shift Your Focus**

It is absolutely necessary to continue understanding and processing your emotions, but instead of letting the past be present, set aside dedicated time to do this. And practice staying mindfully present, as well as thinking about the future you would like to create.

8. **Practice Listening**

The inner quiet voice is your best friend. And even in the midst of chaos and pain it can help navigate you out of suffering. Practice listening by asking "How do I feel now?". If you are faced with a choice, always go with your inner feeling.

9. **Activate Your Vagus Nerve**

Abuse leaves you in a state of hyper-vigilance, even if you're not aware of it. All this over-stimulates your nervous system, leaving it flooded with chemicals. Activating your parasympathetic nervous system by using your Vagus Nerve is the key to reversing this state. You can do this by deep breathing, practicing yoga, taking cold showers, singing, humming, chanting, meditating, getting a massage, laughing, or exercising.

10. **Be Patient**

Please be kind to yourself. This healing requires deep reflective and embodied work, and this type of work takes time.

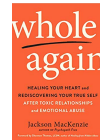
The Take Away

It can be very hard to heal from narcissistic abuse because we tend to only focus on the good parts. We tell ourselves that we could have

done something differently and we imagine that the Narcissist will be giving someone new the perfect, everlasting love that we crave. It takes repeated cold doses of reality to counteract our fantasy that we lost something fantastic and irreplaceable (even if it was false).

And finally, know that no matter how long it will take you, with persistence and commitment to yourself, you will heal yourself. Healing from narcissistic abuse will make you a more integrated, whole, aware, and self-loving person.

Books



Whole Again by Jason MacKenzie

Jason guides readers on what to do next – how to fully heal from abuse in order to find love and acceptance for the self and others.



Will I Ever Be Free Of You by Dr Karyl McBride

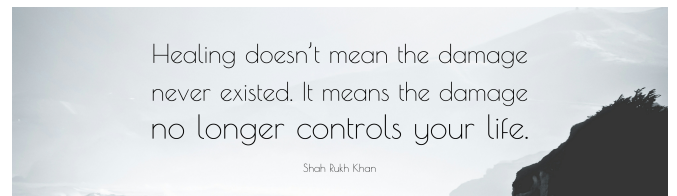
Karyl draws on her expertise in treating adults and children damaged by narcissists in this practical guide to divorce and its aftermath.

Website

Kim Saeed : <https://kimsaeed.com/>

A resource for narcissistic abuse recovery that's practical, proven, and reliable.

As always, if you would like some help, please feel free to contact us on 0488 954 195, admin@awakenpsychology.com.au or [click here](#)



If at any stage, you find you need urgent assistance – go to your closest **Emergency Department**, call the **Mental Health Emergency Line** on 13 14 65, or call **Lifeline** on 13 11 14.

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