

Covert narcissistic abuse – red flags and signs

What a person with narcissistic personality disorder looks for in their victim

Desirable Positive Traits

- + intelligent
- + dependable
- + trustworthy
- + honest
- + sensitive
- + nurturing
- + caring
- + trusting
- + kind
- + loving
- + helpful
- + thoughtful
- + empaths
- + sexual magnetism

Desirable negative traits

- those with low self-esteem
- lonely
- divorced
- a recently ended relationship
- co-dependant
- Poor boundary-setting skills
- history of trauma or abuse

How the narcissistic predator will appear to everyone around them

Hint: the more of these you can tick, the more suspicious you need to be!

- They may seem 'larger than life' or 'too good to be true'.
- Charismatic and charming.
- Easy to talk to and open up to.
- Air of confidence.
- Well-liked. Popular.
- Possibly a 'pillar of the community' and highly recommended by their group of friends.
- The partner you have dreamed of your whole life / your soul mate / knight in shining armour.
- Attractive, well dressed and well groomed.
- The most considerate sexual partner imaginable.
- Hard working.
- Loves animals and / or children. May actively demonstrate what a wonderful uncle / godmother / father they are, either to someone else's children or your own.
- An most uncanny and very similar profile to the latest victim, in terms of morals, plans for the future, interests, goals and life experience.

Red flags 1 – early warning signs.

Watch and listen carefully.

- Saying words that don't match actions. These are often glossed over and easily missed.
- If you ever speak to an ex-partner, it will seem like you are talking about the same person, but different personalities.
- A particular stare, known to victims as a predatory stare.
- This will be a whirlwind relationship with everything happening far quicker than a healthy relationship should. Feeling 'swept off your feet'.
- Possibly, early discussions about future plans such as living together, travelling and getting married.
- Mirroring - reflecting back your own positive traits. Again, seeming too good to be true. Ask yourself, can someone really have this much in common with you?
- Sharing similar life experiences to you. Can you really have this much in common?
- Persuading you to willingly share secrets you may never have shared with anyone else before.
- Making you feel like you are the best thing that has ever come into their life.
- Oversharing to make themselves seem vulnerable and therefore more endearing.
- Telling you sad stories about their past. Things that make you feel sorry for them. Horrible bosses, family difficulties, tragedies, abuse and so on.
- Love bombing. Being the romantic valentine you've always wanted. Showering you with gifts and praise. This can also happen to your child in order to get to you.
- Being your knight in shining armour, just when you need them to.
- Firing a lot of information at you in a short time. Glossing over things you question.
- Taking no responsibility for the actions of others. Or pretending to take responsibility for something, in order to win 'bonus points'.
- Bragging about extremely high morals. Trust, loyalty and honesty and so on.

Tune into your inner voice and do not ignore it. If in doubt seek professional advice.

Signs of the mask slipping:

- Sideways glances.
- Out of character outbursts.
- Other people may notice small signs of out of character behaviour when the abuser thinks no one is looking.
- Do you try to convince yourself that you are imagining these signs?
- Saying words that don't match actions. These are often glossed over and easily missed.

Drama and chaos may creep into the abuser's life:

- Past relationships dramas. The crazy ex perhaps chasing them for money.
- Family dramas. Family not quite as perfect as previously thought.
- Friendship dramas - always the other person's fault of course.
- Tragic events. Accidents, further information about past traumas. So much drama for one person.
- Work drama. Unreasonable pay disputes or working conditions. Disagreements with bosses and colleagues.
- Financial difficulties become apparent.
- Seeming 'hard done by' or as having an unfair amount of bad luck.

Red flags 3 – notice how your abuser is now isolating you

- Gradually luring you away from family, friends, social circles and even work. You will always feel in control and have the sense that you are doing something to help them or the relationship.
- Refusing your financial help but eventually giving in.
- Manipulating you into making decisions you shouldn't be making, such as moving away from your home and social circles, giving up work or 'investing' in something that seems to be beneficial to the relationship.
- Gaslighting techniques. Making you believe that your perception of reality is wrong. That you are mistaken or at fault, when in fact you are not. Making you believe things that aren't true.
- Trivialising your opinions, beliefs, thoughts, intuition and feelings.
- Diversion tactics, to divert your attention away from any suspicions or concerns that you may have.
- Judging and blaming you when things go wrong in the relationship. Making you believe their word to be fact.

Red flags 4 – notice how you've been isolated and trapped

- Gaslighting continues. Control and coercion are stepped up.
- Seeming out of character much more. The mask is no longer necessary.
- A lack of kindness or care when you are ill.
- You may feel neglected in some way, but unable to articulate why.
- Lying, despite claiming to never lie. Or omitting information. You may notice gaps in their stories.
- Cheating. The victim will often be blamed.
- Judging and blaming you when things go wrong in the relationship. Making you believe their word to be fact. And that you are responsible for *their* anger, insecurities or failings.
- Invading your privacy. But it won't necessarily feel like that.
- Coercion. Making you cross your own boundaries whilst at the same time making it seem like it is your own choice to do so. Important boundaries involving finances, sex, drugs, social or personal life.
- Verbal abuse disguised as humour which digs at your weaknesses or personality as well as your abilities and beliefs.
- Cleverly controlling parts of your life, for example withholding food or hiding keys. Even restricting utilities such as heating and electricity use, transport or social engagements and visits from your family or friends. But these things will always seem like a complete accident.
- Bullying tactics - physical and verbal. Anger outbursts which are designed to make the victim feel responsible for the abusers own insecurities, fears or anger. Jeekyll and Hyde character. (See also Narcissistic rage.)
- Embarrassing you and humiliating you in public. Deliberately and secretly triggering your insecurities and trauma points in public, yet profusely apologetic and regretful once back at home. They will repeat this tactic and each time you will react stronger than the first.
- Actual threats - to your security, your safety or your family, depending on what they think they can get away with.
- You will be feeling like a shell of your former self. Your life will have somehow changed dramatically but you may have no idea how or why.