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Communication Success

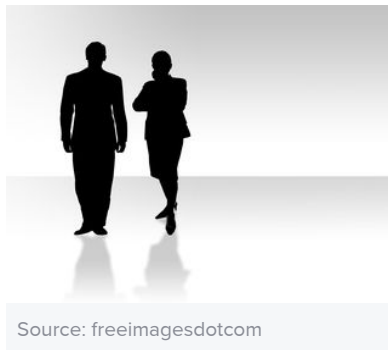
NARCISSISM

10 Signs Your Co-Worker or Colleague is a Narcissist

Narcissism in the workplace.

Posted April 26, 2015

Reviewed by Kaja Perina



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"It's not easy being superior to everyone I know!"

— Anonymous narcissist

The Mayo Clinic research group defines narcissistic personality disorder as “a mental disorder in which

people have an inflated sense of their own importance and a deep need for admiration. Those with narcissistic personality disorder believe that they're superior to others and have little regard for other people's feelings. But behind this mask of ultra-confidence lies a fragile self-esteem, vulnerable to the slightest criticism.”

At the workplace, a pathologically narcissistic co-worker can be annoying and frustrating at best, and a serious threat to your career at worst. Below are ten signs that your colleague might be a narcissist, with excerpts from my books (click on titles): “[How to Successfully Handle Narcissists](#)” and “[A Practical Guide for Narcissists to Change Towards the](#)

positive situations, a pathological narcissist tends to perpetually dwell in several of the following personas, even when the work environment is relatively calm and cordial.

1. Conversation Hoarder and Interrupter

“That’s enough of me talking about myself - let’s hear you talk about me!”

— Anonymous narcissist

Most narcissists are highly conceited and enjoy talking about his or her projects, accomplishments, or personal life incessantly, as if what they do is the most interesting thing in the world. They show little interest and empathy in you. When you do talk about you own opinions and endeavors, the narcissist may quickly change the focus back to himself. Many narcissists enjoy hearing themselves speak.

2. Name and Status Dropper

In addition to taking over conversations, some narcissists also have the habit of name and status dropping. They like to remind people of the important degree they possess, prestigious school they went to, exclusive groups they’re a part of, VIPs they mingle with, high-profile projects they’re working on, and glowing praise they received from someone. They want to constantly appear important, with a blown-up and exaggerated sense of themselves.

3. Spotlight Hogger

Many narcissists love to be the center of attention, and do so by dominating meetings, presentations, phone conferences, and email discussions. At these proceedings, they often like to remind people of their accomplishments, and why their ideas and proposals deserve special consideration. Some narcissists will also take these opportunities to be disruptive and put others down (more on this below). They like to make themselves as powerful and influential as possible.

4. Steal or Take Disproportional Credit

Some narcissists are notorious for pilfering their colleagues' ideas and hard work, and either claim disproportional credit, or steal the recognition outright. A common complaint I hear from my private coaching clients is: "I spent months working on this project, but my colleague grabbed a chance to present my ideas to upper management. Now everyone thinks he's the project leader." In team situations, a narcissist often does not work as hard as others, or is not a key participant, but fights to have her name appear on top of the contributors list.

5. Charming and Persuasive, but No Follow Through

Many narcissists are charismatic salespeople, even if they don't work in sales. They have the ability to charm and create favorable impressions (at least initially), persuade others to believe in their ideas, and manipulate people to get what they want. However, many narcissists lack true substance. More often than not their grandiose ideas become broken promises, unmet expectations, missed deadlines, overspent budgets, and disappointing failures. Some clever narcissists will profess to have learned valuable lessons, in order to con and manipulate you to support his next unrealistic scheme

THE BASICS

What Is Narcissism?

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and thus beyond precept. They're prone to taking short cuts and taking large or small advantages of people and the system. This can range from stealing office supplies and falsifying reports, to concocting unethical business schemes and committing egregious white collar crimes. Many narcissists think that they are above the law, and should be exceptions to the rules.

7. Sensitive to Criticism. Blame Others for Failings

Classic to the character style, a pathological narcissist is highly adverse to criticism. Negative feedback, even when reasonable and justified, threatens the narcissist's fragile sense of an idealized self, and risks triggering his or her narcissistic injury. Common responses to criticism include anger, pretend indifference, and excuses. In addition, many narcissists are highly adept at blaming others for their own shortcomings. It's always someone else's fault.

NARCISSISM ESSENTIAL READS



[How to Spot a Narcissist](#)



[4 Ways to Deal with Narcissists in the Workplace](#)

"It's your fault that I forgot - because you didn't remind me!"

— Anonymous narcissist

8. Passive-Aggressive Tendencies

Narcissistic passive-aggressive traits at the workplace may include negative gossip, sarcasm, veiled hostile joking (often followed by "just kidding"), professional and social exclusion, backstabbing, two faced, procrastination, stonewalling, forgetting, denying personal responsibility, victimhood, and deliberate weakness to elicit sympathy and favor. These passive-aggressive behaviors are often intended to prop oneself up, put others down, and "get away" with as much as possible.

9. Superior/Inferior Orientation

Many narcissists are unable to relate to individuals as equals. They either take an inferior position and defer to you, or a superior position and presume that they're in some ways better than you. For them, both the superior and inferior postures are calculated to sway you to give them what they want – such is the purpose of relationships to them. They lack the empathy and humanity to treat people simply as equitable human beings.

10. Negative and Toxic Emotions

Many narcissists enjoy spreading and arousing negative emotions to gain attention, feel powerful, and keep you insecure and off-balance. They are easily upset at any real or perceived slights or inattentiveness. They may throw a tantrum if you disagree with their views, or fail to meet their expectations. Narcissists are often quick to judge, criticize, and ridicule. Some narcissists are emotionally abusive. By making you feel inferior, they boost their fragile ego, and feel better about themselves.

“Some people try to be tall by cutting off the heads of others.”

— Paramhansa Yogananda

For tips on how to effectively handle narcissists, see my books (click on titles) [“How to Successfully Handle Narcissists”](#) and [“A Practical Guide for Narcissists to Change Towards the Higher Self”](#).