

THE PROBLEM BEHAVIOUR POCKETBOOK

By Angelena Boden

Drawings by Phil Hailstone

“Good management is not about getting your own way so much as getting the best out of your team. So, understanding what makes everyone tick - and recognising the signs when things start to go wrong - is vital. This little handbook is full of practical hints and early warning signs to help everyone on the team spot problems sooner rather than later.”

Paul Field, Managing Director, UK Research Partnership Ltd

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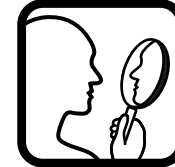
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THE NARCISSIST

ORIGINS



A doting parent is usually behind narcissistic behaviour. Sons, especially first born, who are put on a pedestal, worshipped and protected, are in danger of developing these self-centred characteristics.

When narcissists reach the school of hard knocks, and it is pointed out that they are not as perfect as they had imagined, fragile egos are easily shattered. This often results in **narcissistic rage** (more about that later on).



THE NARCISSIST

BEHAVIOURAL SIGNS

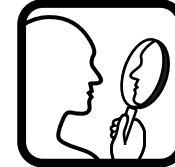


- Quick to become angry over trivialities
- Refusal to listen to a viewpoint other than own
- Stubbornness to 'N'th' degree
- Total rigidity - can be very suspicious
- Contradictory and contrary
- Blames others for what goes wrong but is quick to claim praise
- Able to twist facts and sound convincing
- Almost impossible to reason with at times
- Will sulk and brood all day - maybe for weeks if things don't go his or her way
- Contemptuous of other people's ideas - uses ridicule as a put down
- Little ability to empathise or experience compassion
- Totally self-focused
- Uses others unashamedly for own ends
- Spends time preening in front of mirrors; always looking for approval

Remember, behind the superior façade is a frightened little person who can't really cope with life unless he or she is the centre of attention.

THE NARCISSIST

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO



Narcissists make excellent dictators. Give them a job, therefore, where the workforce will touch their forelocks on entering the office.

When they are given a bit of power they often do very well as this feeds their ego. If you've got debts to be collected, send your own Narcissus on the road - he'll terrify (or bore) people into paying up.

More seriously though ...

THE NARCISSIST



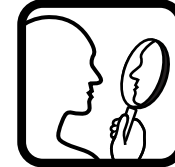
WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

HOW TO COMMUNICATE

- Keep it to a minimum. Language should be free of emotion and opinion. Stick to facts and keep repeating them until they sink in.
- Say 'no' as often as you need to.
- When they are wrong tell them so.
- Don't mirror their communication techniques - no scorn, ridicule, sarcasm, ranting or raving.
- Don't flatter or pay undue attention. Narcissists feed on compliments and like to play to an audience. Remain detached and nonchalant.
- Watch your body language - tell-tale signs of anger, aggression and frustration will be picked up. Maintain an inscrutable facial expression.

THE NARCISSIST

AVOIDING MANIPULATION & MIND GAMES



Narcissists love to play mind games. They twist facts, project blame and produce the most bizarre rationalisations, expressed with so much confidence!

- State your case and walk away.
- Pull down your mental guard (you are not going crazy - they want you to think that!).
- Don't allow yourself to be blackmailed or threatened. If they want to go to the CEO, then say 'That's fine'.
- Use all formal structures when necessary but be prepared for them to kick against the system.
- Imagine your narcissist in a giant nappy. It might not help the situation but it will stop you from gouging out the person's eyes!

THE NARCISSIST

NARCISSISM IN PRACTICE

EXAMPLE ONE



Example 1

You've arranged a staff lunch to celebrate Susie's forthcoming wedding. 'Narcissus' walks in late (on purpose), throws challenging looks at everyone, flicks a comb through his carefully coiffeured hair, straightens his tie and waits for everyone to stand up and say, 'We were really worried about you'.

Don't. Point to a chair, carry on with your conversation.

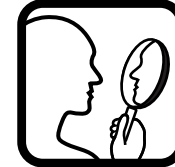
'Narcissus' will try to steal the show with a sarcastic comment. Ignore this. If the hint is not taken, then tell the person to grow up.

There is no polite or tactful way to deal with this behaviour. Narcissists are so pig headed, they only hear their own voice.

THE NARCISSIST

NARCISSISM IN PRACTICE

EXAMPLE TWO



Example 2

You are parking your faithful old car when 'Narcissus' arrives in an open-topped Porsche and parks in the spot marked 'Disabled'. Music is blaring out which the driver only turns down in order to answer the car phone.

You have two disabled visitors arriving shortly. The Porsche is in the way. What do you do?

Answer: report 'Narcissus' to security and pass no comment.

About the Author

Angelena Boden BA, M.Soc.Sc., PGCE

Angelena is a freelance trainer in customer service, language and culture, and people behaviour. This is her third Pocketbook and one she feels is very much needed in business today.

Angelena writes from first-hand experience and is well aware of the damage that difficult behaviour (she prefers to separate people from their behaviour) can do to self-esteem, confidence and morale.

She runs a range of one day seminar programmes - how to deal with difficult people; coping in a crisis; advanced communication for difficult situations - and a range of tailor-made courses for industry.

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