

List of Narcissistic Traits: A Comprehensive Guide

Introduction

Narcissistic traits are patterns of behavior and thinking associated with an inflated sense of self-importance, a need for admiration, and a lack of empathy for others. While not every individual with these traits has Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD)—which requires a formal diagnosis by a mental health professional—these behaviors can still create challenges in relationships and personal well-being. This 4-page worksheet provides an in-depth list of narcissistic traits, grouped into categories, along with examples, reflection prompts, and tools to help you identify, understand, and navigate these dynamics. Use this resource personally, with a therapist, or as part of a support network to prioritize your mental health and safety. If you're experiencing harm or feel unsafe, seek immediate support from a crisis hotline or professional (see resources at the end).

Section 1: Understanding Narcissistic Traits

What Are Narcissistic Traits?

Narcissistic traits refer to a range of behaviors and attitudes characterized by grandiosity, entitlement, a need for attention, and a lack of empathy. These traits can vary in intensity and may not always indicate NPD, but they can still lead to manipulative, harmful, or exploitative relationships. Recognizing these traits is the first step toward protecting your well-being and setting boundaries.

- **Key Characteristics:**
 - Exaggerated self-importance and superiority.
 - Craving constant admiration and validation.
 - Difficulty empathizing with others' feelings or needs.
 - Manipulative or exploitative interpersonal behavior.
- **Why It Matters:** These traits can cause emotional pain, confusion, and dependency in relationships, often leading to narcissistic abuse. Understanding them helps you identify unhealthy patterns, seek support, and reclaim your autonomy.

Tool: Use a trait journal to track behaviors you observe in yourself, a partner, family member, or friend, noting frequency, impact, and context. This can clarify patterns and guide your next steps.

Section 2: Categorizing Narcissistic Traits

Review the following categories of narcissistic traits and consider whether they're present in your relationships or experiences. For each trait, rate how often you've observed it (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always) and provide a specific example if applicable. Use the reflection prompts to explore further.

Grandiosity & Entitlement

These traits reflect an inflated sense of self-worth and an expectation of special treatment.

1. Exaggerated sense of self-importance and talent.

- Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
- **Reflection Prompt:** Have you noticed them boasting about achievements or skills excessively? How does this affect your perception of them or your relationship?
- **Example:** "They claimed to be the best at their job, even though I know others outperform them."

2. Believe they are superior, unique, and deserving of special treatment.

- Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
- **Reflection Prompt:** Do they expect preferential treatment (e.g., cutting lines, demanding attention)? How does this make you feel (e.g., inferior, frustrated)?
- **Example:** "They insisted on being served first at a restaurant, acting like rules don't apply to them."

3. Expect constant praise and admiration.

- Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
- **Reflection Prompt:** What specific behaviors show this need (e.g., fishing for compliments)? Does it feel exhausting or manipulative?
- **Example:** "They constantly ask, 'Don't you think I did amazing?' even for minor tasks."

4. Demand compliance with their wishes.

- Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
- **Reflection Prompt:** How do they react when you disagree (e.g., anger, sulking)? Does this feel controlling or coercive?
- **Example:** "They demanded I cancel my plans to stay home and praise their new project, getting upset when I refused."

5. Feel entitled to exploit others for their own benefit.

- Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
- **Reflection Prompt:** Have they used you or others for personal gain (e.g., money, time)? How does this impact your trust or boundaries?
- **Example:** "They borrowed money from me and never repaid it, saying, 'You owe me for being in my life.'"

Tool: Use a grandiosity tracker to log instances of these traits, noting their frequency and your emotional response. Highlight 2-3 patterns for deeper reflection.

Need for Attention and Validation

These traits reflect a deep reliance on external affirmation to maintain self-esteem.

1. Crave the spotlight and feel uncomfortable if not the center of attention.

- Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
 - **Reflection Prompt:** How do they seek attention (e.g., interrupting, dominating conversations)? Does this leave you feeling ignored or sidelined?
 - **Example:** “At a party, they interrupted everyone to tell long stories about themselves, ignoring others.”
2. **Excessive need for external validation to prop up their self-esteem.**
- Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
 - **Reflection Prompt:** What specific validations do they seek (e.g., praise, reassurance)? How does this affect your interactions?
 - **Example:** “They ask me daily, ‘Am I the best partner you’ve ever had?’ and get upset if I don’t agree.”
3. **Monopolize conversations, often interrupting or talking over others.**
- Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
 - **Reflection Prompt:** How does this behavior make you feel (e.g., unheard, frustrated)? Does it prevent mutual communication?
 - **Example:** “They cut me off mid-sentence to talk about their day, leaving me feeling invisible.”
4. **Fish for compliments or become sullen if not praised.**
- Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
 - **Reflection Prompt:** What specific actions show this (e.g., hinting, pouting)? How does it influence your behavior toward them?
 - **Example:** “They hinted, ‘This outfit looks good, right?’ and sulked when I didn’t gush over it.”
5. **React negatively to any perceived slights or criticism.**
- Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
 - **Reflection Prompt:** How do they respond to feedback (e.g., anger, defensiveness)? Does this make you avoid honesty?
 - **Example:** “When I suggested they be on time, they called me ‘ungrateful’ and didn’t speak to me for days.”

Tool: Use an attention/validation log to track these behaviors, noting their impact on your relationship and your emotional state. Consider sharing with a therapist for insight.

Lack of Empathy & Interpersonal Exploitation

These traits show a difficulty understanding others’ feelings and a tendency to use people for personal gain.

1. **Difficulty understanding or genuinely caring about the feelings of others.**
 - Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
 - **Reflection Prompt:** Can you recall times they ignored or dismissed your emotions? How does this affect your connection?
 - **Example:** “When I cried about losing my job, they said, ‘Get over it—you’ll find another,’ without comforting me.”
2. **See people as tools to serve their needs.**
 - Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always

- **Reflection Prompt:** Have they used you or others for tasks, status, or benefits? How does this make you feel (e.g., used, undervalued)?
 - **Example:** “They asked me to host their event to impress their boss, then ignored me afterward.”
3. **Manipulative and exploitative to get what they want.**
- Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
 - **Reflection Prompt:** What tactics do they use (e.g., guilt, flattery)? How does this impact your trust or boundaries?
 - **Example:** “They flattered me into lending them money, then avoided repaying it, saying, ‘You wouldn’t want me to struggle.’”
4. **May feign empathy to gain sympathy or control.**
- Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
 - **Reflection Prompt:** Have you noticed insincere concern (e.g., crocodile tears)? How does this confuse or manipulate you?
 - **Example:** “They cried about their stress to get me to do their chores, but later admitted they were fine.”
5. **Blame others for their own mistakes and misfortunes.**
- Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
 - **Reflection Prompt:** What do they blame you for (e.g., their failures, moods)? How does this affect your sense of responsibility or guilt?
 - **Example:** “After missing a deadline, they blamed me for ‘distracting’ them, even though I was busy too.”

Tool: Use an empathy/exploitation checklist to document these behaviors, noting their frequency and your emotional response. Highlight patterns for discussion with a professional.

Arrogance & Disregard for Others

These traits reflect a condescending attitude and unwillingness to consider others’ perspectives.

1. **Dismissive and condescending towards those they perceive as inferior.**
 - Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
 - **Reflection Prompt:** How do they treat you or others (e.g., sarcasm, eye-rolling)? Does this make you feel diminished or disrespected?
 - **Example:** “They rolled their eyes at my ideas in a meeting, calling them ‘basic’ in front of everyone.”
2. **Prone to angry outbursts or sulking if their ego is bruised.**
 - Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
 - **Reflection Prompt:** What triggers their reactions (e.g., criticism, competition)? How does this affect your interactions?
 - **Example:** “When I won an award, they sulked for days, saying, ‘You don’t deserve it more than me.’”
3. **Belittle others to inflate their own sense of importance.**
 - Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always

- **Reflection Prompt:** Who do they target (e.g., you, coworkers)? How does this impact your confidence or the group dynamic?
 - **Example:** “They mocked my cooking skills to their friends, making me feel inadequate to impress them.”
4. **Unwilling to consider alternative viewpoints or admit wrongdoing.**
- Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
 - **Reflection Prompt:** Do they dismiss your opinions or refuse to apologize? How does this affect communication or trust?
 - **Example:** “When I pointed out their mistake, they insisted they were right, refusing to apologize.”
5. **Seem incapable of apologizing sincerely.**
- Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
 - **Reflection Prompt:** Have their apologies felt insincere (e.g., “Sorry, but...”)? How does this impact your relationship?
 - **Example:** “They said, ‘Sorry if I upset you,’ but then blamed me for being too sensitive.”

Tool: Use an arrogance/disregard tracker to log these behaviors, noting their impact on your self-esteem and relationship. Consider discussing with a therapist to explore boundaries or safety.

Section 3: Identity Disturbances

These traits reveal an unstable self-image that depends on external validation and masks deeper insecurities.

1. **Fragile self-esteem dependent on external validation.**
 - Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
 - **Reflection Prompt:** How do they seek validation (e.g., praise, status)? How does this affect your role in the relationship?
 - **Example:** “They need constant reassurance from me about their looks, but lash out if I don’t comply.”
2. **Experience intense shame but mask it with arrogance.**
 - Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
 - **Reflection Prompt:** Have you seen moments of vulnerability masked by boasting? How does this confuse or manipulate you?
 - **Example:** “After failing a test, they bragged about being smarter than everyone to hide their embarrassment.”
3. **Can switch between self-aggrandizement and feeling worthless.**
 - Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
 - **Reflection Prompt:** How do these shifts manifest (e.g., boasting, self-pity)? How do they affect your emotional labor?
 - **Example:** “One day they’re the ‘best partner ever,’ and the next they’re sulking, saying they’re ‘useless.’”
4. **Often harbor deep-seated envy of others.**
 - Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always

- **Reflection Prompt:** Who do they envy (e.g., coworkers, friends)? How does this affect their behavior toward you or others?
- **Example:** “They criticized my promotion, saying, ‘They only gave it to you because I’m too threatening.’”

5. **May define themselves primarily through status or achievements.**

- Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
- **Reflection Prompt:** What achievements or status symbols matter most to them (e.g., job title, appearance)? How does this impact your relationship?
- **Example:** “They’re obsessed with their LinkedIn profile and expect me to boost their online image constantly.”

Tool: Use an identity disturbance log to track these shifts, noting their frequency and your emotional response. Reflect on how these patterns affect your connection or safety.

Section 4: Emotional Manipulation

These traits involve using tactics to control or exploit others emotionally.

1. **Gaslighting: Distorting reality to make the victim doubt their own memory.**

- Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
- **Reflection Prompt:** What specific incidents make you doubt yourself (e.g., “That never happened”)? How does this impact your confidence or reality?
- **Example:** “They denied yelling at me, even though I remember it clearly, leaving me confused.”

2. **Triangulation: Bringing third parties into conflict to gain control.**

- Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
- **Reflection Prompt:** How do they involve others (e.g., pitting you against a friend)? How does this affect your trust or relationships?
- **Example:** “They told my friend I was ‘overreacting,’ turning them against me during an argument.”

3. **Guilt-tripping or playing the victim to elicit sympathy.**

- Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
- **Reflection Prompt:** What specific guilt-inducing statements do they make (e.g., “You’d help if you cared”)? How does this influence your behavior?
- **Example:** “They said, ‘I’ll be so lonely if you don’t stay,’ making me feel responsible for their happiness.”

4. **Raging or withdrawing affection to punish or control.**

- Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
- **Reflection Prompt:** How do their outbursts or withdrawals affect you (e.g., fear, anxiety)? Do they use this to manipulate your actions?
- **Example:** “After I disagreed, they screamed, then ignored me for days until I apologized.”

5. **Projecting their own flaws onto others.**

- Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
- **Reflection Prompt:** What flaws do they accuse you of that they exhibit (e.g., laziness, dishonesty)? How does this confuse or frustrate you?

- **Example:** “They called me selfish for not helping, but they’re the one who never considers my needs.”

Tool: Use a manipulation tracker to document these tactics, noting their frequency, your emotional response, and any safety concerns. Share with a therapist or advocate for support.

Section 5: Additional Traits & Considerations

These traits highlight broader patterns and long-term impacts of narcissism.

1. **Hypersensitivity to criticism, prone to lashing out.**

- Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
- **Reflection Prompt:** How do they react to feedback (e.g., anger, defensiveness)? Does this make you avoid honesty?
- **Example:** “When I suggested they be more punctual, they accused me of attacking them.”

2. **Perfectionism and a harsh inner critic.**

- Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
- **Reflection Prompt:** Do they demand perfection from themselves or others? How does this affect your relationship or their behavior?
- **Example:** “They criticize every detail of my work, then berate themselves for not being ‘perfect enough.’”

3. **Difficulty maintaining healthy relationships.**

- Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
- **Reflection Prompt:** Have they had frequent conflicts or breakups? How does this impact your trust or expectations?
- **Example:** “They’ve lost multiple friends due to arguments, and I worry I’ll be next.”

4. **May cycle through idealization and devaluation of partners.**

- Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
- **Reflection Prompt:** What does this cycle look like (e.g., praise, then criticism)? How does it confuse or hurt you?
- **Example:** “At first, they called me ‘amazing,’ but now they say I’m ‘not good enough.’”

5. **History of broken promises and unreliable behavior.**

- Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
- **Reflection Prompt:** What promises have they broken (e.g., fidelity, support)? How does this affect your trust or reliability?
- **Example:** “They promised to stop drinking, but they’ve relapsed multiple times, leaving me disappointed.”

6. **Difficulty coping with aging, loss, or failure.**

- Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
- **Reflection Prompt:** How do they react to setbacks (e.g., denial, anger)? How does this affect your relationship or their behavior?
- **Example:** “When they lost their job, they blamed everyone and became unbearable to live with.”

7. **May become increasingly isolated or bitter with age.**

- Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always

- **Reflection Prompt:** Have you noticed them withdrawing or becoming more resentful? How does this impact your connection or their well-being?
- **Example:** “As they’ve aged, they’ve cut off old friends and grown bitter, making our relationship strained.”

Tool: Use an additional traits tracker to log these behaviors, noting their long-term impact on your relationship and safety. Reflect on whether these patterns suggest a need for boundaries or support.

Section 6: Reflecting and Taking Action

After assessing these traits, reflect on their impact and decide on next steps. This section provides tools and strategies to address concerns and prioritize your well-being.

Reflection Questions

- **After reviewing these traits, are there any patterns of concern in your relationship or interactions with someone?**
 - **Example:** “I noticed they crave attention, manipulate me with guilt, and dismiss my feelings, which feels exhausting and unsafe.”
- **How do these behaviors affect your emotional, mental, or physical health?**
 - **Example:** “I feel anxious, depressed, and isolated, which impacts my sleep and work.”
- **Are there specific behaviors or patterns you’d like to address or change in your relationship or interactions?**
 - **Example:** “I want to set boundaries around their demands for praise and seek support to understand if this is narcissistic abuse.”

Tool: Use a reflection journal to answer these questions weekly, tracking changes in your feelings and relationship dynamics. Set a goal (e.g., “Talk to a therapist about these patterns by next week”).

Action Steps

Based on your reflections, take proactive steps to address narcissistic traits and protect your well-being.

1. **Set Boundaries:** Identify 2-3 boundaries you’d like to establish (e.g., “No gaslighting or interruptions”) and practice assertive communication (e.g., “I need you to respect my perspective—it’s important for my trust in us”).
 - **Tool:** Use a boundary-setting worksheet (available on [psychologytoday.com](https://www.psychologytoday.com)) to outline your needs, consequences, and communication plan. Refer to the “Healthy Boundaries” worksheet for scripts.
2. **Seek Support:** Reach out to a trusted friend, family member, therapist, or domestic violence hotline to discuss your concerns and gain perspective.
 - **Tool:** Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-799-7233) or, in Canada, the Canadian Women’s Foundation (1-866-863-0511) for confidential guidance. Check

local shelters or crisis centers (e.g., ShelterSafe.ca for Canada) for region-specific help.

3. **Document Patterns:** Keep a journal or digital log of incidents, including dates, behaviors, and your feelings. This can clarify patterns and, if needed, provide evidence for legal or therapeutic support.
 - **Tool:** Use a secure app like Day One or a password-protected document to store notes safely.
4. **Assess Safety:** If you feel physically or emotionally unsafe (e.g., threats, rage), create or update a safety plan immediately (see “Creating Your Safety Plan” worksheet for guidance).
 - **Tool:** Work with a domestic violence advocate to develop a tailored escape plan, including safe places and emergency contacts.
5. **Educate Yourself:** Learn more about narcissistic traits, NPD, and healthy relationships to contextualize your experience and build confidence in your decisions.
 - **Tool:** Read books, articles, or join online forums (e.g., Loveisrespect.org) for education and support.

Brainstorm: Write down 3-5 specific actions you’ll take based on your assessment, including timelines (e.g., “Call a therapist within two weeks” or “Set one boundary next time they demand praise”).

Section 7: Important Notes and Considerations

- **Formal Diagnosis Required:** Only a mental health professional (e.g., psychologist, psychiatrist) can diagnose NPD. These traits may indicate narcissism but don’t confirm a disorder—focus on their impact on your well-being.
- **Charming Facade:** Narcissists often present as charismatic, confident, or charming, making their manipulative behavior more insidious and harder to recognize initially.
- **Narcissistic Abuse Effects:** Exposure to these traits can lead to lasting emotional and psychological effects, such as anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, or PTSD. Seek support if you feel harmed.
- **You Are Not Alone:** Many people experience relationships with narcissistic individuals, and help is available through hotlines, therapists, and support groups.
- **Prioritize Safety:** If you feel unsafe or experience threats, rage, or physical harm, seek help immediately—call 911, a crisis hotline, or a local shelter.

Further Resources

- **National Hotlines:**
 - U.S.: National Domestic Violence Hotline – 1-800-799-7233, <https://www.thehotline.org/>
 - Canada: Canadian Women’s Foundation – 1-866-863-0511, <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/stop-family-violence/services.html>
- **Local Support:** Contact your local domestic violence shelter or crisis center (e.g., ShelterSafe.ca for Canada) for region-specific help.
- **Books:**

- *Why Does He Do That?* by Lundy Bancroft – Insights on narcissistic and abusive behaviors in relationships.
- *The Human Magnet Syndrome* by Ross Rosenberg – Understanding narcissism, codependency, and toxic dynamics.
- **Online:**
 - Psychology Today (<https://www.psychologytoday.com/>) – Find therapists near you for NPD or relationship counseling.
 - Out of the Fog (<https://outofthefog.website/>) – Resources and support for navigating narcissistic abuse.
- **Apps:**
 - *Bright Sky* – A safety app for domestic abuse survivors with resources and tracking.
 - *7 Cups* – Free online therapy and peer support for relationship concerns.

Final Thoughts

Recognizing narcissistic traits is a powerful step toward protecting your well-being and building healthier relationships. This worksheet helps you identify, assess, and address these patterns, offering tools to set boundaries, seek support, and prioritize safety. Whether you're navigating a personal, romantic, or professional relationship, you deserve respect, empathy, and trust. Start by completing this assessment, reaching out to a resource, or journaling your thoughts—your journey to empowerment begins here. If you're in danger, seek help immediately—your safety is the priority.