

## 5 HEALTHY WAYS TO DEAL WITH A NARCISSIST

**We often throw around the word ‘narcissist’** and have probably met people with narcissistic tendencies but, actually being in a relationship with one (whatever capacity) can be very abusive.

According to the BBC, the charity ‘The National Domestic Abuse Helpline’ has seen an increase in calls by 25% since the lockdown. Part of domestic abuse can be narcissistic abuse and I found myself on the end of that recently.

I was in a romantic relationship with a narcissistic / sociopath a few years back and thought I would never find myself in that situation again – but abusers come in all shapes, sizes and relationships.

A few weeks ago I was in a pretty low place in my life. I was broke, exhausted, living out of a suitcase, working 3 jobs on minimum wage but applying for better paid jobs. On the horizon was a silver lining and I had 2 second interviews, but then the virus struck.

My 3 jobs dried up overnight, I was living in a mould infested room in a house which was dirty and stank of drugs, dreading the thought of isolating or getting ill in this place. One day, I picked up the phone to an offer I could not refuse – a better paid job and beautiful accommodation in a rural setting with the use of a car. I bought a ticket out of London and off I set with a heart full of gratitude, a body full of excitement and all my luggage, the big escape had begun.

### **Within 24 hours I knew something was wrong.**

I was reminded almost immediately that she could get rid of me at any moment and I had nothing else. That I should be grateful for this opportunity. It was done in quite a sinister manner with the intention to make sure I knew she was in control. She also was trashing everyone from family, other staff members to friends. Everything that was wrong in her life, the stress she was under was because of everyone else and she had no accountability.

I could never do anything right and if I did, I could almost see the clogs in her head turning and twisting to find something wrong. There would be the long pause.....then BINGO! The criticism and yes it was criticism. Bashing any task I completed, then cue the Hollywood exit. I also had to do the dirtiest work that was never in the agreed job description and was told I was ‘cheap labour’. This was constant, along with the snide comments about what a loser I am, I drink too much, I do not exercise enough, I have no friends and I am a failure. I found myself getting torn down and beaten up – turning it onto myself by thinking I was crap, I was useless, I should work for free as my work is no good, it was soul destroying.

Not only was it verbal abuse, it was financial and emotional, the more she felt out of control the nastier she got. She actually fired and evicted me in this time when we are in a lockdown. Getting rid of me when she realised she could not control me. She did not care that it was against the law to evict me and she made my life pretty impossible. That was very stressful, finding emergency accommodation but it was also my saving grace and I managed to get out.

The definition of a narcissist is:

‘a person who is overly self-involved, and often vain and selfish’.

Some of the traits are –

They know everything and it is their way or the highway (they will never admit when they are wrong)

They need to control everything and will manipulate and lie to get it e.g. to be liked, money and power. They are so tightly knotted needing to control they are like a weed suffocating a flower to steal their beauty and sunlight.

They are very highly strung and can be set off anytime

They get rid of people who do not agree with them

You cannot argue with them as you do not know what you are talking about. Even experts are wrong

It is everyone else's problems and fault, never their own

They lack empathy

They think they are going to swoop in and save everyone and everything – their self-importance is as big as a baboon's arse.

We are in a lockdown and it is impossible to just get up and walk away, so here are 5 tools to help you deal with the situation.

1. Remember it is not you – it is them. It is a mental illness and it is not personal to you. Keep your value – do not believe what they tell you.
2. Get as much support as you can – do not be afraid to ask for help or reach out to anyone. They will try to isolate you so they can control you as much as possible
3. Do not argue with them but if they ask your opinion reflect it back to them. Develop survival tactics, you can look like you are agreeing with them but try not to feed their ego.
4. Set strong boundaries and do not be afraid to implement them. You will get push-back but they will empower you.
5. If you can – support yourself by journaling, being creative, going for your daily exercise alone, reading, having time alone. Please do not go into blaming yourself – self-care is imperative.

If you are reading this and agreeing to any of it – I am sorry you are going through it. **You are a beautiful soul** and please do not blame yourself for ending up in a narcissistic relationship. I deserve better and so do you. You are ENOUGH. You are BRAVE.

Although forced out, I am free and I am lucky and if I can help anyone else then it is worth it.