

Covert Narcissist & People Pleaser

Structures of an evolving co-dependency pattern

by

Harald Kautz

1. Introduction

The good thing about clinical psychology is that it sits on vast amounts of data. Data can be structured. Repetitive elements can be filtered out and described as essential. These essential elements can be named and put into causal relationships. In this way, clinical psychology has mapped personality disorders and decided where to place its terminology in order to define the "pure forms" of what is actually a nebulous reality, only to soften the concepts again by assuming that there are spectra between the states with intermediate levels of the defined pure forms. In terms of predictability, this system works well. With a given diagnosis, it is easy to predict what else is going wrong in these desperate characters and the ways in which other people are drawn into their misery. The well-known archetypes apply very precisely here, and nothing has changed since C.G. Jung discovered them.

In this essay we will take a look at the co-dependency between covert narcissists and people pleasers to see if structural analysis and some anecdotal subjective perceptions of individually achieved healing processes can enrich the models used in clinical psychology.

At present, narcissistic personality disorder is considered incurable. Particularly in the last part of this study, I want to show that this may be wrong, that there is reason to hope.

But this essay is not only addressed to therapists, or to patients who want to understand their own clinical condition. Narcissism and the actions of co-dependents who serve this personality-form is a systemic problem. The relationships between boss and subordinate, politician and citizen, officer and soldier often display characteristic features that can be described and understood using the purely clinical model of co-dependency of narcissist and people pleaser. The archetypal blueprint of this form of relationship is at least as dominantly effective among people as the myth of romantic love is among pubescent teenagers.

Seen from this perspective, one could say: if we succeed in healing the most extreme form, the co-dependency between narcissist and people pleaser described in clinical practice, then all the less severe forms attached to this blueprint can also go into healing. This hope follows the principle of the "hundredth monkey"¹, which states that when 100 individuals of a species have acquired a new skill, it becomes available to the whole collective as an instinctive behaviour without direct exchange of experience. Even if this myth has been debunked in parts, and there is neither evidence for the number 100, nor for an instant non-local spreading of new behaviour in the original papers, the inspirational power of archetypes cannot be denied.

So, if you feel that you are affected in your life by the complex described below, whether on the side of the narcissist, or on the side of the people pleaser, I would like to invite you wholeheartedly to become one of these first 100 monkeys.

¹ Emma: The 100th Monkey Effect. Isn't about an Individual. Online at <https://empsy.medium.com/the-100th-monkey-effect-b669d504e347> March 7th 2021. Elaine Myers: The Hundredth Monkey Revisited. Going back to the original sources puts a new light on this popular story. Online at <https://www.context.org/iclib/ic09/myers/> March 7th 2021.

2. The perspective of clinical psychology

In clinical psychology there are two completely different perspectives on narcissism:

1. the simple understanding of the narcissistic condition describes it as a pattern of toxic behaviour, while people who suffer from this behaviour are told to just stay safe from it. Victims are not included in either the diagnosis or the treatment.
2. in a more holistic understanding, psychologists recognise that victims of narcissists also exhibit archetypal behaviour. Whereas other people who do not exhibit this type of archetypal behaviour would never fall victim to a narcissist.

In this paper I will refer exclusively to the advanced understanding of the disorder, taking the typical "victim" into self-responsibility and viewing these relationships as voluntary co-dependencies.

To illustrate the findings of clinical psychology, I will invent a case designed to show most of the archetypes and behaviour patterns described in the clinical approach.

The archetypal attributes of the narcissist will be bold, the archetypal attributes of the co-dependent people-pleaser will be italicised, random details will not be highlighted. Let me invite you into the world of John and Cynthia.

John is a **highly gifted, underrated** scientist who goes to **a hell of a lot of trouble** to get his scientific papers published. **He is a perfectionist.** His research looks quite promising. The problems he has faced during his career are that he was bullied at university because his professors were afraid of being marginalised by his qualities; students with whom he could theoretically have cooperated also felt inferior next to him and therefore did not like to share projects. Perhaps things would have been different if there were practical applications of his research, but **it is rather self-referential in its theoretical approach**, coherent in itself, but not so much related to the work of others. He simply sees it as revolutionary.

Cynthia works in a publishing house. *She lives for her work, and often for the work of others*, which she volunteers to do when shifts get longer and colleagues have to go home to look after their families. As she is *overloaded with all the problems of all these people, there is neither much energy nor enough time to take care of herself and her home*, which regularly descends into chaos. But the chaos around her doesn't really matter, because even when she is at home, *she is busy - in her mind - helping others. She works twice as much* as her colleagues, but when it comes to her promotion, the company prefers to keep her in the worker role, which is fine with her, because deep down *she doesn't want to be exposed as the one in charge of making decisions*. Never will she direct others and could be held responsible for their failures.

Something clicks with John and Cynthia. They find mutual understanding in the "drama of the gifted child" as both are highly gifted but not recognised accordingly. Cynthia is fascinated by the sharpness of John's mind and **his self-discipline** at work, John is fascinated by the strong position and influence Cynthia has in her company, even without holding a higher management position, just by the fact that *the quality of her work and her spirit shine*. They click from day one, spending the entire first night on his balcony discussing the world. It gets too late for her to go home, so she accepts the sofa for the first night, the left side of his bed the second, and when on the third night he says he thinks it would do them both good to have sex. *She is attracted to him*, as **he has showered her with compliments in the days before.**

Their sex is quite acrobatic, sexually satisfying. *It takes some time for Cynthia to realise that something is wrong, that the act lacks intimacy.* **But he overwhelms her with his compliments, the flowers and more sex, satisfying her own hypersexual needs.**

Besides the *fast developing relationship*, and the fact that he moves in next door after 3 weeks, they begin to plot how Cynthia could boost his scientific career by launching his work in the publishing house she works for.

After the two flats are connected by a new door, **most of life takes place on his side.** However, it is not her and his life mixing, **he invites her into an exact copy of the flat he had lived in before.**

John and Cynthia are *quite happy for about a year.* She adopts to his needs, habits and routines. His work turns out to be a bestseller, published by the publishing house she works for.

Then things slowly start to turn toxic.

John gets upset that Cynthia... is a Catholic. He says he would never have dated her if he had known earlier.

John starts to dislike Cynthia's colleagues because they are all fixated on business and money and can't really appreciate the content of his book. When they come to visit, he is grumpy; when she pays them a visit, **he tells her not to waste her time with these nutters.**

John says that he never wanted to be with someone who has a career in a corporate structure, and that they would never have become a couple if he had known earlier what that job meant to her.

Cynthia identifies very much with her colleagues and the devaluation expressed by John hurts as if it were directed against herself. *The only way out is to distance herself from her colleagues,* as he has asked. Just as she stopped watching Sunday Mass broadcast from the Vatican and became estranged from her parents. *When it's "him or them?" the decision is easy, because of course you side with your love.* But at the same time, *her sense of this missing aspect of intimacy in their relationship grows stronger,* and she realises that randomly bumping into the apprentice at the photocopier feels more intimate than having sex with John. Just intimate. Not sexual. Like there's a field, a tension between their bodies that isn't there with John. She keeps this to herself because she doesn't want to hurt his feelings.

But one day John starts making comments questioning her self-confidence in bed, why she keeps moving and talking like she's the hottest girl in town, and that he's had better sex in his life. And that he might satisfy her orally if she shaved, but not with her hair between his teeth. She eats these pejoratives inside a few times, but she can't help it, *she is hurt and anger builds.* One day she tells John about her encounter with the apprentice at the photocopier, angrily explaining that she feels more intimacy with a random co-worker than with him.

That's the day things change. "Then do it with your fucking apprentice", John yells. In response, **John withdraws from sex,** acting as if she has cheated on him. First, he just doesn't feel like having sex, then he freaks out because she rolls over in her sleep and wakes him up, then it's the panties she forgets to put in the dirty laundry, the dishes that don't get washed properly after breakfast, the smears of grease that cloud the light reflection on the cooker surface after cleaning. **Her imperfection drives him crazy, her inattention, that her mind is always somewhere else.** Then he asks her to move back into her own flat because she needs her mess around her as a mirror to understand how sick she is. "It doesn't help if you try to keep my order", he says, "you have to find your own".

She tries to do everything right to avoid his tantrums. And, of course, because **there is always something to what he says.** But *she does not manage to meet his demands.* Her flat is still a mess, and he never spends any time in it, doesn't feel comfortable there. She tries to compensate with elaborate cooking in the evening, but she's often late, and if dinner isn't ready before 8pm, he just eats something for himself in peace, so as "not to suffer a sleepless night from eating too late", as he says. Cooking feels like the last remaining attainable expression of their love.

John's anger usually discharges in the morning hours, *the very hours when Cynthia is emotionally open and most vulnerable.* If there's nothing sensible to complain about, it's either something from the past being rehashed or something he expected her to have done but she didn't deliver.

The only thing that seems to be working is the collaboration regarding his books. Her position in the company now depends entirely on him being the best-selling author, his success depends on her getting the company to publish his latest work in the best quality possible. And the world needs to know about his equations! One day, humanity's most serious problems will be solved with these equations, and there is no - absolutely no way to risk destroying what they have built together. ***This bubble of shared action becomes like a beloved child around whom everything revolves.***

John and Cynthia isolate themselves. When she tries to meet colleagues privately, **he becomes jealous.** He is completely preoccupied with his research and never goes out. **He** throws tantrums in the morning, **devalues her for the very qualities he loved so much in the first year, and tells her how messy and sick she is.** He tells her that the publishing company is exploiting her bipolar disorder to squeeze the last bit of life force out of this never-ending manic phase she calls her life. This is taking its toll on her. She feels miserable indeed, she needs help, she needs healing. At work she now seems depressed, no longer the bubbly source of strength she used to be.

People at work begin to suspect that her relationship is toxic. But this message does not get through to her. She has long since separated herself from her colleagues, their thoughts no longer have any value, unlike the mission she has in promoting John's work. There is now a name for her problem, it is her bipolar disorder, and there is now no other way but to solve this problem. **Whenever it almost becomes too much for her, John offers her a straw.** Like this: "If you manage to cure yourself of your bipolar disorder, I will welcome you back into my bed". And he is indeed good at helping her with her condition. Dedicated, professional. She is getting better. He was so amazing in helping her heal herself. She is winning the war against her clinical condition, managed to balance her strength. The day her psychologist, who has been monitoring her progress, closes her treatment, she sneaks into the bathroom and shaves her pubic hair as a surprise for John. It itches, but she wears her nakedness like a gift. "Why did you shave, I don't care," was his reply when she opened her bathrobe, and "yes, you seem less bipolar, but as for the sex thing, my heart still says no." The next time things get critical, he doubles up and brings up the subject of marriage. She orders rings, only to find out later that he cancelled the order behind her back because he would never marry her in her current state, and buying rings for free would be a waste of money that neither of them could afford at the time, since she is employed in a lower position and does not make that much money.

One day, Cynthia can no longer explain things away. She has gotten caught up in a toxic relationship and has to face it. It is time to confront John about his behaviour. **Whenever she tries to explain how she feels, he explodes into a word salad so complex and cross-topic that she just can't follow, only to be confronted at the end with a question that demands an answer from her that is either admitting defeat or lying.** Other days, she thinks she has made her point, because he finally lowered his voice towards the end of their discussions, only to find out that the things he accuses her of in a low voice sound exactly like what he should actually recognise and say to himself.

She stops desiring him, and relates this to her daily struggle trying to handle her own unsatisfied hypersexuality finally being successful.

It gets worse. **He provokes her with pejoratives for days until she snaps, flips out, only to have him accuse her of attacking him the next moment, dragging out his accusations and claims that she is a persecutor and he is the victim for days.** Or he tells her she'll be fired after he withdraws his books, and he'll be forced to do so because

she - really - doesn't value his work. *And even then, she still manages to blame herself, because there was some truth to that*, she was totally focused on publicising his work, forgetting to value it in their private daily conversations.

Cynthia starts thinking about a separation. When she mentions it, the situation escalates. **John pushes her physically, again and again, shouting "hit me, hit me, you hate me anyway!" She pulls away, speechless. Shortly afterwards he tells her how much he loves her, whether she really wants to give it all up, and how important their mission is to the world. When she does not react, he withdraws, offended and insecure.** Silence follows for days, then a renewed rapprochement. The thoughts of separation seem to have changed something. They talk to each other familiarly. John asks her to spend the night with him, but just saying this excites him so much that he "wants her right away". Cynthia manages to trust him, for her it is the end of a three-year dry spell. They spend two days in a love frenzy, it's sore down there, he asks for some time to heal, which means she only comes over once more in the evening to say goodnight. For no apparent reason, the conversation turns into biting criticism on his part. John says the people at the publishing house lean on him, and that can only be because Cynthia talks badly about him. Cynthia remembers the exact opposite, that she has always defended him and assured her colleagues that their domestic problems that indeed left some visible grief in her face were on the way to being cured. He cuts her off, and when she gets louder, he tries to shut her up with his hand on her mouth. This time it's over with self-control, the otherwise well-controlled anger breaks through and she intercepts his hand, claws his wrist and energetically brings him to a physical distance.

"Look, see the bruises on my arm?" he asks her, hurt. That evening they part in a quarrel.

The next morning she is greeted with silence and distant looks by her colleagues. They have received emails from John in which he discloses that he is being physically abused by his wife, and has attached pictures of the bruises on his arm as proof. Anyone else would long have separated from her, he writes. To underline what has been said and shown, he also mentions her previous relationships: All her ex-partners would hate her to this day and it would be important for her to acknowledge the abuser within her and bring him into healing.

This is about the point where the relationship breaks. The narcissist usually finds a new "victim" quite quickly, the people pleaser usually takes longer to recover and muster the courage to start a new adventure. Professional sources say it takes an average of three years. But eventually, most couples simply enter another cycle of the same nightmare with new partners.

The way I have told the story, there seems to be no solution, no cure, no hope.

2.1 The diagnostic approach in clinical psychology

Most papers say that narcissism is actually not curable. All they do is catalogue typical behaviour².

1. A high sensitivity to criticism
Covert narcissists' entire personalities are constructed around their incredibly high sense of self. They are incredibly sensitive to anyone questioning or crumbling that construction, and can react in a volatile way to criticism or any form of feedback.
2. Feelings of inadequacy

² Uno Dabiero: Watch Your Back, 15 Signs You're Working With a Covert Narcissist. Online at <https://fairygodboss.com/articles/covert-narcissist> online March 7th 2021.

Covert narcissists tend to swing back and forth between delusions of grandeur and concerns that they don't match the image of themselves they have in their head. They are obsessed with their success and incredibly touchy about making sure they are always the best and most beautiful versions of themselves. This can make them hypercritical of themselves and foster extreme feelings of inadequacy.

3. A tendency to put themselves down

As a result of the insecurity described above, covert narcissists can put themselves down pretty regularly. They are particularly apt to do so when they are around a hospitable audience who will reconfirm their high feelings of themselves.

4. A tendency to hold grudges

Narcissists are the center of their own self-important worlds. As a result, they tend to take perceived transgressions incredibly personally and hold on to negative feelings. They may act on these grudges with passive aggression to make the other "pay" for what they've done.

5. Passive aggression

Speaking of passive aggression, covert narcissists often aren't outright about their desire to control and dominate others. Instead of being traditionally aggressive like those who demonstrate psychopathic behavior, they tend to be passive aggressive — biting comments, gossip and small slights "behind-the-scenes" tend to be common.

6. Envy

Narcissists must be the best in all spheres of life. If they're not, they're incredibly uncomfortable. Their envy is deep-rooted and can sometimes result in outward behavior, like searing comments or passive aggressive behavior.

7. Self-serving 'empathy' or attempts to connect

Narcissists struggle with empathy — unless that empathy serves their end goals. They may make lame attempts to come across as the supportive teammate or shoulder to cry on when it is politically savvy to do so, or use their surface-level charisma to appeal to others in order to build influence and get ahead.

8. Self-serving 'humility'

Narcissists are the kind to humble-brag. They may be self-effacing to get compliments or to secure opportunities for themselves — it's all a part of their schtick of being likable and relatable to get an edge on the competition.

9. Shyness or withdrawn behavior

Unlike traditional narcissists, covert narcissists tend to be withdrawn or a bit shy. They have a fragile sense of self that they are concerned about presenting or potentially fracturing in the public sphere, so they may keep a distance, shirk social events and keep interactions curt and surface level.

10. Grandiose thoughts

Narcissists feel that they are special and at a level above the general member of the population. They are the type of people to say they know they're "born for greatness" or that they "achieve their goals by whatever means necessary." They may express feelings that they are "special" and "can't relate" to others.

11. Procrastination or lack of regard

Narcissists are so sure of their abilities and talents that they may procrastinate or lack regard for tasks, thinking they will be able to effortlessly check that box at a time that suits them — no matter how short the deadline. A covert narcissist may be good at coming up with excuses for their lack of attention or tendency to complete things five minutes before they're due, but be warned: They think many tasks aren't worthy of their abilities.

12. Passive self-importance

Covert narcissists may make subtle comments about their extreme importance to your task, team or company. They may believe a task could never be completed without their

experience or that they're holding a team on their back. They may say it jokingly or with intense seriousness but either way, it is an expression of their narcissistic sense of self.

13. Exaggeration about their abilities or impact
Narcissists have delusions of grandeur. They may occasionally exaggerate about their own talents, skills or impacts in a way that doesn't align with the reality of a situation. This is truly how they feel: On another plane from reality.
14. Gaslighting or manipulative behaviour
Narcissists need to feel superior to the people around them and need to feel they're successful. As a result, they have no struggle manipulating friends, family and coworkers to achieve their ends. Narcissists are the type to lie or gaslight (convince them they are ill and need help) others for a laugh, to manipulate others with some of the tactics listed above, or to throw even well-established relationships under the bus to get their way.
15. Difficulty being flexible or going off-script
Just as narcissists have a perfect vision of themselves in their head, they also have strict visions of situations and their expected outcomes. They are perfectionists who are sure everything will happen as thought because they themselves, the actors, are *perfect*. As a result, narcissists struggle to improvise or to adjust to changing situations. They tend to be rigid and get anxious when plans change — from something as small as a conversation going in the wrong direction to travel plans changing.

From other sources I would like to add:

16. Entitlement³
Covert narcissists are simply too good for jobs for which they feel overqualified. In everything that is below their level, they allow themselves to be served by those around them with a complete naturalness.

And in terms of typical rhetorical tricks and behavioural patterns

17. Future Faking⁴
When a covert narcissist feels he is losing control of a communication situation, he likes to borrow from the future. He makes a promise or gives hope that is to be fulfilled in the future, to have something to throw into the emotional balance of his counterpart. When the time has come to keep promises made, he simply changes the frame of reference and exchanges the old hope for a new one.
18. Love Bombing⁵
In the early stages of relationships, covert narcissists tend to shower their counterparts with compliments, gifts and declarations of love, extolling their qualities above the masses. In a way, this reflects their own need for recognition: they show what their relationship is all about. It's like an investment in a future where they want to see the same quality reflected back.
19. Crazy-making⁶
When the covert narcissist feels they are losing control of a communication situation, they may say things that are designed solely to upset their counterpart, to play them off against

³ Dr. Ramani Durvasula: Understanding the narcissist's entitlement (30 DAYS OF NARCISSISM) online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L3TT2tXS_qo&t=297s at March 7th 2021.

⁴ Dr. Ramani Durvasula: What is "future faking"? (Glossary of Narcissistic Relationships) online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BBMaZLBKNko> March 7th 2021.

⁵ Dr. Ramani Durvasula: What is "love-bombing"? (Glossary of Narcissistic Relationships) online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WhILcuoVhgE> March 7th 2021.

⁶ Richard Grannon: Covert Narcissists SECRET CrazyMaking Communication Weapon They Use To ABUSE online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6vlnfdo5ji> March 7th 2021.

themselves mentally, or simply to confuse them. The highest level of this tactic is called a "word salad"⁷.

20. Blame shifting⁸

Especially when it is about calling a narcissist out on something they did wrong, or that was hurtful for others, they will not easily take that. They will always find a way to reshape the narrative in a way, that their victim is the one to blame, and if this is not possible, they will introduce a secondary topic where this does work out in their favour.

In fact, there is a clinical approach to curing covert narcissism at its root. The one promising approach comes from Richard Grannon⁹. He claims that the reason for covert narcissistic behaviour is the total destruction of the ego during the narcissist's childhood, putting him in a state of being identified with a daydream. If the environment is too toxic and there is no sensible pattern of rewards and punishments with a space that allows free choices to form a functioning ego, the abused child gets stuck in a total identification with his superego, while the ego itself does not develop at all. With these children there is no inner dialogue, no negotiation between what they want to do and what they should do. There is only the one thing to do, what is right, whatever that is. This identification with the superego is what makes them so critical, what drives them to live this perfect life, sustained by total self-discipline. This is why everything is about control, not creativity. This structure is identified by Grannon¹⁰ as a form of PTSD and treated accordingly. However, this is only a hypothetical success, because first the narcissist has to recognise that something is wrong, which almost never happens. Therefore, the majority of clinical approaches focus on helping the co-dependent deal with the narcissist, either within an ongoing relationship or on the way out.

They recommend¹¹:

1. Determine which type you're dealing with. Vulnerable narcissists don't feel particularly good about themselves at heart. In contrast to grandiose narcissists, they're less "out there" with their emotions, and so you might not realize when they're undercutting you or getting in your way. If you're trying to put people in your family or on your work team to best use, the grandiose narcissist might be your best ally—as long as you can get that person on board with your overall group's goals.
2. Acknowledge your annoyance. As noted above, narcissists can be antagonistic and get under your skin. If you're trying to get something done, and one person is always interrupting or trying to shine the spotlight on himself or herself, recognizing where your frustration is coming from can help give you the strength you need to put a stop to it.
3. Appreciate where the behaviour comes from. Vulnerable narcissists need to make themselves feel better about themselves, which is why they can become sneaky and undercutting. They may question your authority just to create mischief. Once you recognize that they are coming from a place of insecurity, you can provide them with just enough reassurance to get them to settle down and focus on what needs to be done. Too much

⁷ Richard Grannon: "Covert Salad" - how covert narcissists use word salad as a tactic online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0LROcmWWsG4> March 2021.

⁸ Dr. Rhoberta Shaleron: Blame Shifting: Counteracting This Crazy-Making Way Narcissists Try To Win. Online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zp5cxd_CGXA March 7th 2021.

⁹ Richard Grannon: Codependent as mirror image of narcissist. Online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=prpyYrQuszo&t=61s> March 7th 2021.

¹⁰ Richard Grannon: The CURE for Narcissism? My (Possible) Method; 5 Points (Healing A Narcissist). Online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cGJblcKsBPg&t=1698s> March 7th 2021.

¹¹ Susan Krauss Whitbourne Ph.D.: 8 Ways to Handle a Narcissist. How to keep your own emotions in check when dealing with difficult people. Online at <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/fulfillment-any-age/201408/8-ways-handle-narcissist> March 7th 2021.

reassurance and you'll fan their egocentric flames, but the right amount will allow them to calm down and get to the task at hand.

4. Evaluate the context. Narcissism is not an all-or-nothing personality trait. Some situations may elicit a person's insecurities more than others. Let's say a woman was turned down for a promotion she wanted very much, and now must continue to work with the person who got the job. Her insecurity will only worsen with time, leading her to become defensively narcissistic, vindictive, and spiteful. If you know a person like this, it's important to remember that the *situation* helped create the monster with whom you must now interact.
5. Maintain a positive outlook. If you are dealing with narcissists who derive pleasure from watching others suffer, then seeing the pain they cause will only egg them on to more aggressive counter-behavior. Don't look ruffled, even if you're feeling annoyed, and eventually that behaviour will diminish in frequency. Furthermore, by keeping the previous tips in mind, you may be able to help ease the situation so things actually improve.
6. Don't let yourself get derailed. It's easy to lose your own sense of purpose or goals when a narcissist tries to take center stage. You don't need to attend to everything this person says or does, no matter how much he or she clamors for your attention. Find the balance between moving ahead in the direction you want to pursue and alleviating the vulnerable narcissist's anxieties and insecurities. If it's a grandiose type of narcissist, you may want to acknowledge his or her feelings but then move on anyhow.
7. Keep your sense of humour. Calling a narcissist's bluff may mean that you ignore the person, but it might also mean that you meet that bluff with a laugh at least once in a while. Without being cruel about it, you can point to the inappropriateness of the person's egocentric behaviour with a smile or joke. This would be particularly appropriate for the grandiose type of narcissist, who will probably find it entertaining and possibly instructive.
8. Recognize that the person may need help. Because some narcissists truly have low self-esteem and profound feelings of inadequacy, it's important to recognize when they can benefit from professional intervention. Despite the belief that personality is immutable, psychotherapy research shows that people can change even long-standing behaviors. Bolstering the individual's self-esteem may not be something you can tackle on your own, but it is something you can work on with outside help.

When it comes to classifying the typical co-dependent, clinical psychology would place Cynthia somewhere on the lower end of the autism spectrum, just high enough to get lost in conceptual worlds disconnected from now-reality and mainstream, but not too far up that spectrum because she is still able to cope with social interaction. She would definitely be diagnosed as bipolar, with her hypersexuality being part of that condition. A chronically low serotonin level could be cited as the reason for her condition, explaining both the position in the autism spectrum and the bipolar disorder including her hypersexuality.

In the meantime, the term "people pleaser" has become established as a personality disorder in its own right, with its own checklist of symptoms¹²:

1. You pretend to agree with everyone, even if you disagree with them.
Generally, listening politely to others' opinions, even if you disagree with them, is simply good social etiquette. However, when that polite listening veers into pretending to agree with someone's opinion even when you actually disagree with them, that's a sign that you're engaging in people-pleasing behaviour that causes you to put your own thoughts and feelings aside, to your personal detriment.
2. You feel responsible for others' happiness.

¹² Loreley Yang: 10 Signs You're a People Pleaser — And What to Do About It. Online at <https://fairygodboss.com/career-topics/people-pleaser> March 7th 2021.

While it's important to recognize that your own behaviour affects others' happiness, believing that you personally have the power to make someone else happy is problematic. People-pleasers often struggle to recognize this fact and therefore act out of the misguided belief that they can make others happy through their own actions.

3. You're always apologizing.
Obviously, you should apologize when you genuinely need to do so for making a mistake, hurting another's feelings, or when it's otherwise warranted. However, if you find yourself apologizing excessively when it isn't warranted, your frequent apologies may indicate that you're a people pleaser.
4. Saying no is a rare, and extremely difficult, exercise.
Being helpful — whether in your personal or professional life — is valuable and appreciated. However, taking it too far by saying yes to anything and everything that others ask for runs the risk of overburdening yourself (and compromising your ability to follow through) and is a clear sign that you're a people pleaser.
5. You morph to reflect the people around you.
While the old adage that we're the average of the five people we spend the most time with may be true, finding yourself constantly morphing to match others' behaviors, personalities and expectations may be a sign that you're a people pleaser. For example, a 2012 study at Case Western Reserve University found that people pleasers will eat more if they think it'll make other people happy.
6. Your self-worth is tied to others' praise.
While it's only natural to bask in praise, people pleasers take it a step further and depend on external validation to feel good about themselves. If you find yourself relying on others' validation to feel good about yourself, you may be a people pleaser.
7. You're excessively conflict-avoidant.
Thankfully, few people actively seek to start fights just for the sake of it. However, people pleasers take it a step farther by going to extreme lengths to avoid conflict at all costs. This can compromise their ability to stand up for the things, issues and people that matter to them. If you exhibit this behavior, you're likely a people pleaser.
8. You have trouble giving yourself the credit you deserve.
While humility is a virtue, going too far by refusing to take credit that you deserve for your own hard work is a problem. If you suffer from this, you're likely a people pleaser.
9. You struggle to value yourself as much as you do others.
While a healthy regard for others' well-being is important, it's also important to value yourself. This means taking the time you need to reset and recharge, pursue your own interests, tend to your own needs and generally see to your own well-being. If doing these things is a constant struggle for you, you may be a people pleaser.
10. You become emotionally dependent and/or co-dependent in relationships and friendships.
While it's natural and healthy to rely on our friends and romantic partners for support, taking it a step too far and becoming dependent on others to take care of your emotional needs is unhealthy. Engaging in this type of behaviour is yet another sign that you may be a people pleaser.

2.2 Structural analysis within the terminology of clinical psychology

A pattern can be read from the given data. This applies to both the covert narcissist and the people pleaser. In constructing the following schema, we will ask as a "checksum" whether the two personality disorders mesh smoothly as co-dependency patterns.

First, let us consider the nurture of the narcissist. According to Grannon, the pressure of devaluation in the parental home is so great that no healthy ego can develop. Instead, the superego

takes over the function of the ego. What we also know about personality development is that every person, as a primary personality, internalises the behavioural pattern that he or she adapted in childhood as a survival strategy and, as a secondary personality, can adopt copies of the behavioural patterns of his or her caregivers. The primary learned role of the narcissist is a people pleaser, for the abused child has no choice but to meet the needs of his tormentors as best he can. He will also carry the potential for a persecutor within him that he has learned from his caregivers through observation. In the malignant Narcissist this structure is consciously applied. Covert narcissists have often made the decision never to become like their parents, and they are therefore unable to recognise malignant impulses as their own; these impulses cannot be reconciled with the high standards they set for themselves. This leads to a very clear personality structure:

Covert Narcissist = People Pleaser + vulnerable child + ~~Perpetrator~~ + superego + ego.

This structure has a limited capacity for internal dialogue. There is no balancing between the questions "what do I want?" and "what is right?" If there is an internal dialogue, it is self-doubt inflamed by the contrast between the superego and the repressed persecutor, which can only be satisfied when the people pleaser springs into action and does something good, or the persecutor ventilates himself as a revolutionary against a malevolent authority on the outside.

In encounters with strangers, distance prevails at first; the learned people pleaser plays a servant role in the early stages of relationships. These phases are described as love bombing.

In the absence of an inner dialogue, the superego is in a position of absolute control. If this control relates to one's own life, we see a high degree of self-discipline, but externally the superego shows itself in the urge to judge and condemn, and if others do not do "the right thing", it shows itself in the narcissist wanting to control them for their own protection or a higher good. The others take on the role of the missing ego here.

The latter leads to an internal contradiction. Exercising control is on the same wavelength as the persecutor experienced in childhood. If this control happens consensually with a "victim", this is not a problem, which can mature into valuable leadership qualities or into sadomasochistic practices. However, in order to maintain total control, people must be subconsciously manipulated where they do not submit voluntarily. This structure - between conscious leadership and subconscious manipulation - finds expression in a form in which one can clearly distinguish between a content core, and a structural framework. The content core will always meet the demands and high values of the superego. The structural framework, on the other hand, only serves the goal of keeping interpersonal relationships in a controllable state, and since this manipulation implies persecution, and this can only be forged in the subconscious, it may be that the methods with which the narcissist controls his relationships are diametrically opposed to his own moral demands, without him being able to recognise this himself. If he switches between People Pleaser and persecutor the superego splits into conscious and unconscious levels, we might be dealing with a personality split deep enough to handle both apparent inner contradictions and a partial memory loss of things done from the perspective of the different personalities.

The schema of the co-dependent people pleaser, on the other hand, looks like this:

People Pleaser = People Pleaser/vulnerable child + ~~Perpetrator~~ + superego + ego.

Often the only difference between the biographies is that the people pleaser had a place to escape to in childhood to form an ego, this can be a real place or a human frame of reference, perhaps with the grandparents, or an inner place such as is available to people on the autism spectrum when they withdraw into their inner worlds.

In the juxtaposition we see that the only difference is the formed or not formed ego.

Covert Narcissist = People Pleaser/vulnerable child + ~~Perpetrator~~ + superego + ego
People Pleaser = People Pleaser/vulnerable child + ~~Perpetrator~~ + superego + ego

From this structure the narcissist draws his moral superiority, his claim to control. In a relationship with a people pleaser he can be free of fear because he does not have to fear any persecutor, at the same time he can project his own repressed persecutor onto the People Pleaser because the latter carries a repressed persecutor within himself. If necessary, this persecutor can be proactively triggered, which strengthens the feeling of moral superiority, confirms one's own victim role and restores the moral legitimacy for control.

Let us first look at the first phase of the relationship, which clinical psychology calls the "love-bombing" phase.

If we take a more holistic approach, the first thing we notice is that John and Cynthia mirror each other. Except for the lack of ego in narcissists, they have the same structural make-up, a similar toxic socialisation, the same lack of self-love, self-worth and self-confidence

Cynthia only feels valuable when she is needed. A normal shift is not enough for her to feel fulfilled, it has to be a double shift. When there is an opportunity to identify with something even greater, like John's work, she gains self-worth from that too, it gives her life an extra meaning. This process of identifying with someone else's concept also frees her from responsibility and there is no risk of personal failure, which suits her lack of self-confidence. If she is nevertheless devalued, she is not surprised because she has suffered devaluations before and has learned to deal with them. When she is given the choice to fight, flee, freeze or fawn, her reaction is to fawn, to identify with the persecutor, to meet his demands in order to stop being his target.

John feels worthy when he is alone with his work, but he does not dare to present it in a way that allows for final, external, independent judgement. He is not confident enough to expose himself to that test. That's why he loves working with Cynthia. She confirms his qualities internally, just as he confirmed hers in the early love-bombing phase, to show her what their relationship is about: mutual recognition. Later, she presents his ideas to the world, takes the risk of failing, takes the hits when she meets resistance. These are the taker qualities of an ego. Okay, there is one small problem, she will also take the credit if he is successful, but that can be sorted out later. He wants validation, but definitely not to be the centre of attention.

John takes responsibility for the content. Cynthia takes responsibility for the presentation.

Initially there is a balanced exchange of mutual validation, and as a couple they are much more effective than as two separate individuals, but in the long run the two experience a lack of validation on both sides of their internal exchange. Therefore, both lose their self-esteem, and previously exchanged compliments wither or turn into devaluation. This feeling is mutual, with only John expressing this negativity, which for him is nothing more than the projection of the dialogue between superego and ego. Cynthia keeps these thoughts to herself, because her superego keeps the ego from expressing itself in a derogatory and hurtful way. This builds up a reservoir of suppressed anger. When two people encounter this kind of emotional lack, many things fail: gratitude, affection, everything that has to do with giving.

Looking at sexuality, one might think that Cynthia is simply suffering from a serotonin deficiency stemming from her medical condition. Viewed holistically, this can at the same time be seen as an expression of the deficiency which has developed emotionally.

When love-bombing, John initially employs a version of fawning that is very difficult to see through. Deep down, he still suffers so much from childhood abuse that all aspects of intimacy are handled by a personality that springs from his sexual traumatisation and displays the very acquired

patterns of behaviour that have proved correct because they allowed him to survive his childhood. When he makes love to Cynthia, he just does everything right, as he is expected to do, with his innate perfectionism. The memory of the disgust he experienced in his childhood when he was abused remains subconscious. In the subconscious, the self-abuse of the people pleaser-aspect of the narcissist accumulates even more disgust, which finally wants to be expressed somehow. When Cynthia reflects this devaluation back openly and honestly by admitting that she lacks intimacy, the barrier to the subconscious breaks down wholesale and the relationship enters its second phase.

As we see, what is perceived on the surface as an outbreak of ugliness is in fact a healing process. To secure this process, the *modus vivendi* that holds the relationship together shifts from love-bombing to trauma-bonding.

The subconscious abuser in John must hold the relationship together against his own disgust with closeness, and this can only be done through trauma bonding. Cynthia has to feel unworthy so that she blames herself, so he can reject her, but at the same time maintain the belief that this is done out of love. Angry outbursts, devaluation, gaslighting are the means to this end. All this happens subconsciously, John's superego consists of high moral standards, and baseness is not in its repertoire.

2.3 Self-observation and anecdotal experience of the nature of the superego

Clinical psychology sees itself as an empirical science, and as such excludes subjective experience as a source of knowledge. Sometimes, however, it seems useful to break with this scientific paradigm, not because subjective experience is probative in a scientific sense, but solely as an inspiration to encourage empirical research to ask questions and collect data that ultimately lead to constructively expanding the models of science. This carries the risk of circular reasoning. One should be aware of this. In social sciences such an approach is known as hermeneutic.

Before sharing my subjective experience, I would therefore like to briefly define my horizon of experience. I myself emerged on the autistic spectrum in my childhood as Asperger's, and in my early 20s as bipolar. Regarding Asperger's Syndrome, in my 30s I learned to distinguish my own feelings from empathically-experienced feelings of others, which now enables me to read people subjectively. With regard to the people pleaser, I have been able to relativize the subconscious predominance of fawning as a conflict resolution pattern in non-conflict situations, i.e. I have learned to consciously choose other conflict resolution patterns, I have healed and integrated the wounded child in me, dissolved a destructive personality that stabilised co-dependencies out of fear and with baseness, dissolved the self-esteem issue, whereby the healing process manifested itself physically through a spleen inflammation with a subsequent rupture, and integrated the blocked persecutor with his anger reservoir into consciousness. When I now share my perception of the psychic dynamics, it is in my estimation from the perspective of a healed co-dependency.

To me, the superego seems like the register of a library of blueprints of behavioural patterns. These blueprints are archetypal in their structure, but completely value-free. Instead of being afflicted with evaluations, they merely regulate the capacity for sensation out of themselves, and thus also the capacity for empathy, i.e. if I make use of a blueprint in which I inflict pain on others, then this blueprint simultaneously blocks my sensation of pain and my empathy for pain. That is why cats can torture mice to learn to hunt and cannibals can barbecue humans alive. In the course of childhood, the original library of blueprints is indexed by experiencing the living environment. I recognise the blueprints lived by my caregivers, giving them a predominant role. And I evaluate blueprints. This evaluation can have different causes: from within the ego, I can positively index

those blueprints that correspond to my creative expression, or prevent the repetition of negative experiences. This can also work across borders: if I want to prevent experiencing suffering via empathy, my reasons are altruistic. Thus, in my childhood, I conquer a repertoire of active personalities by breathing my life into blueprints that are lifeless by themselves. But I can also, out of survival instinct, positively index and animate those blueprints that simply guarantee my survival, with which I get by regardless of whether they are destructive to others. As a human being, I actually experience myself here as a creator being who takes a dead blueprint and brings it to life. Once this has happened, I have transformed a blueprint into a personality, and my personality henceforth has a life of its own, self-awareness and also an independent instinct for self-preservation. Self-preservation also means that if it is not utilized for a while, it is drained from life force, and will feel the desperate need to manipulate the environment into actions that will re-activate and re-energize it.

The superego itself, however, remains a lifeless, merely information-bearing register of an inanimate library, to which I have assigned an evaluation system on the basis of my experience, according to which I can act; then I behave morally. But I can also disregard the superego, in which case I behave egotistically.

Stressful situations, on the other hand, demand reflexive behaviour, and all the reflexive behaviour that is controlled in the reptilian brain is based on accessing personalities. The decision on which personalities to access has a fixed hierarchy. In shock, for me, all my life - until recently - the order has been fawn, freeze, flight, fight, and the accessing of personalities is fixed to this order.

I am not quite sure, but I feel that besides these things there is a true self that was fully present in the original infant, as the divine spark within us, so to speak. This True Self has left an imprint in me that could be called my character. However, the true self then temporarily faded into the background due to the traumas I had experienced, but I was later able to uncover it again through meditation, self-awareness and self-healing. After this was successful, I was able to dissolve acquired personalities through perception and decision-making.

2.4 The subjective perception of the role of initiation

During childhood, the child's ego develops in play, that is, in a kind of dream world. In this unreal state, the life of adults is simulated, and as a compromise between environment and character, a repertoire of personalities is created from the available blueprints, which ultimately guide the child's actions. It is only in initiation that the ego is released, becomes the decision-making core of daily consciousness. This initiation is something that is still part of the tradition in all tribal cultures and rudimentarily in the world religions. Initiation is initialised by a shocking feeling of being left alone, of being at the mercy of others or by experiencing the fear of death. In modern industrial society, since the abolition of compulsory military service, there is no longer such a ritual. For women, initiation takes place naturally at the latest with the birth of their first child.

Initiation is like the birth of the ego, which emerges from the world of play, from a space that is structurally related to the conceptual quality of the superego, and after this birth anchors itself in the solar plexus in order to merge there with will and anger as an aggressive potential, which enables the adult to shape his life freely and autonomously and, if necessary, to aggressively conquer the space he needs for creative expression of his self.

I can say for myself personally that my childhood initiation failed. I feel that this was partly due to my autistic traits that kept me in a perception where there could be no real separation. I moved out of home age 17, didn't even contact my parents by phone for almost a year, but always had them

inside me, their voices in my head. My initiation happened only recently after I was confronted with an extremely traumatic experience of "being cast out" in an encounter with a client on the empathic level. This experience via empathy has led to an inflammation of my spleen, and during the healing phase of the spleen, the conversion of my consciousness into the initiated state has taken place. This statement comes from my self-perception.

In my subjective perception of covert narcissists, the ego is missing. Something seems to have gone wrong with the initiation here too. I have the feeling that in the case of the narcissist, initiation took place at a time when a viable ego had not yet formed. Thus, a stillbirth occurs, i.e. the consciousness cannot identify with the born ego because it does not appear to be viable. In such a situation, the human biology seems to activate an emergency programme, and activates the narcissistic blueprint. This blueprint takes over the main identification point of the day consciousness, and aims to substitute the lost ego, which is done by trying to find it again in the mirror of the world. The whole of life appears enraptured, dream-like, a game, or else in a permanent state of shock, which ensures that the narcissist, himself a personality blueprint, breathes his life into the other positively indexed blueprints as a permanent or fluktuating loan. In remote viewing, this picture appears as if the unconscious narcissistic personality core carries the other positively indexed personalities like an armour. This structure is self-contained, as it does not allow for internal dialogue and thus no re-discernment. This does not mean that healing is not possible. The inner healer is one of the blueprints available in the collective that can be positively indexed and activated, and this enables the covert narcissist to work through his traumatic childhood, to release emotional blocks, to re-evaluate destructive blueprints in the sense of behavioral therapy and to exclude them from his behavioral repertoire. What I have not been able to observe in the sense of a reproducible process, however, is the revision of the basic structure, and thus the reanimation, reintegration or re-creation of the destroyed ego, which is probably due to the fact that personality structures are always also equipped with self-preservation instincts, and can only be dissolved from the perspective of the True Self.

My subjective experience with "soul losses" is that soul aspects, splits and losses can never be destroyed, but can be found by decision of the True Self, and can also be reintegrated by decision into the structure of daily consciousness.

The dreamlike nature of narcissistic consciousness brings with it a few more peculiarities. Consciousness is divided into two levels, the perceptual level, which takes place in the now, and the conceptual level, which is more timeless. Through identification with the superego, life takes place more on the conceptual level, which may well unlock extraordinary abilities, such as perceiving blueprints as real, living structures, which means that these people can function spiritually on the conceptual and collective levels, and have a much clearer perception of beingness on this conceptual level than people who have gone through a healthy initiation. This interpretation dignifies "craziness" as a special programme of nature that serves to bring about a course correction of the collective when this correction cannot be accomplished from the instinctual.

When the relationship ends and the narcissist is thrown back into a mirrorless space, the fear from his childhood resurfaces and he has a unique chance to overcome it, let it go and find his lost ego again. We will look into a first draft of a healing protocol in the last chapter. This seems feasible if the vulnerable child has been healed along the way. And it has been found to be helpful if the narcissist has worked systematically on healing his self-worth, self-confidence and self-love. It is not surprising that "mirror work" has proven to be a therapeutic method here.

2.5 The emergence of a Janus-faced personality

An analysis of the behavioral patterns of the early childhood attachment figures of people who exhibit personality disorders showed that narcissism is associated with attachment figures who are very polar in behavior, such as a loving mother and a violent father, while borderline personalities usually come from a background where all attachment figures are unpredictable in their behavior, loving one moment, punitive the next. Therefore, narcissists can have two different acquired personalities, each coherent in itself but absolutely contradictory when juxtaposed. The borderline personality lacks this partial coherence, they are able to say "love me" and push their partner away in the same moment.

Life that is experienced as a reverberation between a supportive and non-supportive caregiver gives the understanding of two external role models: the persecutor and the rescuer. These two observed personalities offer an alternative to the dominant victim role the child is pushed into due to the domestic violence and/or emotional abuse experienced. At the same time these acquired personalities are closely associated with the superego, because in the attempt to flee from the victimization they offer the answers to the question "what should I do?", i.e. adopt their behaviour from the observed persecutor and rescuer personalities. This happens subconsciously – consciously the ego self-identifies as the victim. This victim self-identification is a natural consequence of the realisation of the habitual unpleasant non-voluntary interaction they have suffered.

This perception is subjective, coming from the sum of my personal experience. I am not sure how far this idea can be generalized. But the redefinition of the Freudian model of ...

ego = primary personality
superego = adopted personalities

... can be given a second thought, mainly because it integrates better with the basic understanding of drama-interaction following the main victim-, persecutor-, rescuer-archetypes¹³.

When going into details in single cases, you will find that this model is also very open to the integration of individual circumstances, that naturally varie from client to client, because it becomes possible to integrate the personal childhood experience into the formation of drama-triangle-related personalities, understand their archetype based basic function as well as individual features, locate their traumatic origins and start the healing with addressing the original traumatic events.

The vulnerable self, i.e. the original pre-narcissistic day-consciousness, can slide back and forth between two polarities:

- one in which life is understood as a fluctuation between primary and acquired personalities (i.e. ego and superego), and
- one in which life is understood as a struggle between a supportive and a non-supportive caregiver as two opposing role models.

When the victim role continuously appears to be a position that will not survive the day, identification slides into a state of oscillation between a supportive and a non-supportive caregiver only, and the vulnerable self/ego is excluded from that day-consciousness. As a result of this total

¹³ Lynne Forrest: The Three Faces of Victim – An Overview of the Victim Triangle. Online at <https://www.lynneforrest.com/articles/2008/06/the-faces-of-victim/> March 14th 2021.

annihilation of the ego, we find both the malignant and the grandiose narcissist. If the vulnerable self is still accessible, we see a covert or vulnerable narcissist.

Since the role models from childhood, that are integrated as the dominant personalities handled by the superego, are contradictive, they can only split themselves up into conscious and subconscious layers. This visual is where the association to the Janus-myth came from.

This is the moment when the narcissist can get completely lost in himself. The inner struggle between rescuer and persecutor role is projected onto the world and mistaken as life. There might be no or very little access to the ego left, and the internal conflict between the caregiver role models can only be processed by projecting the subconscious part of the Janus-head onto the people in the environment. The last option given is shifting back and forth between the two caregiver roles, in the case of the vulnerable narcissist between devaluation and love-bombing, with the opposite side of the Janus-Face hiding in the subconscious, being perceived in the projection only, as long as the active part shows his head. The ego and the original emotional memory of victimization is blanked out by the obsession with the perception of the self by the others. In covert narcissism we see the full blow annihilation of the ego only if conflict situations activate reflexive behaviour, that then is handled by the available personalities. In between, we actually do see glimpses of the vulnerable self.

This perspective is utilizing a little different definition of the term personality than found in psychological mainstream literature. Here, especially toxic personality is defined as an internalized reflexive behavioural pattern evolving from an initial trauma, that gained self-consciousness. This makes us think it is part of the self. This is why the idea to remove personalities was not considered yet by many. Most therapists will rather go for personality-control applying behavioural therapies. However, after tens of successful personality-removals within myself, and as many observed within others in cooperation with those clients, I can state from experience that when a personality is removed, the only things that really disappear are:

- the initial trauma, when dealt with;
- the reflexive character of behaviour.

Neither memories nor abilities are removed from the client's consciousness, all that is changed when a personality is removed is that the client gains the possibility to make a conscious decision on how to react to a given trigger, instead of reacting in an uncontrollable reflex.

2.6 Implications of reviewing the co-dependency against the background of game theory

We have indicated that some of the behavioural patterns in the people pleaser might origin from an unsuccessful initiation, i.e. clients might be caught in a perception of the world that is similar to the perception a child has when it mimics reality while playing a game. With the narcissist, we might have an initiation, but a stillborn one. In both cases, the idea can be sustained, that adults lacking a successful initiation will easily be drawn into gaming addiction during their adult life. This might happen simply because anything that looks like a game, is giving them a false sense of security, while everything that looks like real life is frightening.

Real life is lived in self-responsibility. A space in reality is claimed or conquered for the purpose of creative expression of the self.

Opposed to this...

...to play a game is to engage in activity directed toward bringing about a specific state of affairs, using only means permitted by specific rules, where the means permitted by the rules are more limited in scope than they would be in the absence of the rules, and where the sole reason for accepting such limitation is to make possible such activity¹⁴.

This is how children avoid facing consequences of their actions while enjoying their learning experience, choosing their personalities according to their preference and character.

Looking into modern society, we see two structures that fulfil the definition of a game, and actually cover a scary part of our daily lives. It is money and hierarchy.

Money offers a false sense of security and control, while as a game, it deprives us from both security and control. The money game is highly addictive. Just try taking the drug away from the addicts. Security is offered with the promise to be able to buy anything we might need for money, while the monetary systems at the same time creates more and more scarcity simply by monetizing more and more aspects of life. Control is offered by the promise to be able to buy anything we need from anyone for cash, while we lose control over our lives when being forced to earn the money we need for exactly this purpose. Subsequently, money strips us from self-responsibility.

Hierarchy offers a false sense of security and control, while as a game, it deprives us from both security and control. Security is offered with the promise to be supported as long as you sacrifice your self-responsibility by becoming part of a hierarchy. Control is offered to be applied to the ones below in the corporate or military leaders, while you have to obey the ones above. Subsequently it completely strips us from self-responsibility, because all control lies in the capstone of the hierarchical pyramid. And as for security, ask the millions who ended up unemployed or dead in the field.

The two games are interlinked, and run by the same masters. These masters happen to be quite narcissistic in character. And us slaves run to please them.

This now is nothing that can be scientifically proven, either it is felt, or it is not felt: anyone who is initiated into adulthood, will feel limited in his natural creative expression when serving the needs of the monetary system, and he will never volunteer participating in a hierarchy, simply because the total loss of control is nothing an adult will desire. I am aware that there are many people with good intentions out there, who try to do the right thing within the hierarchies, or try to change things to a better by initiating blue or green or whatever coloured economies. I do not intend to devaluate their efforts, I just intend to point out the limitation of their scope. Maybe it is time to put this in a positive affirmation: completely healing this complex will change the planet to a place where children can grow up and play in security hatched by adults who are all creative sources of productivity, who freely share with the world what their creative spirits have to offer.

3. Experimental healing protocols

It is ways to early to publish healing protocols that come with the promise to be reliable. The anecdotal experience I gathered till now comes from a tradition of guided self-healing, so there is no way around the client to be the one who wants to change. Also, the clients need to be able to make what I call “whole-heartedly decisions”, decisions that do not come from the mental

¹⁴ Bernard Suits: What Is a Game? The University of Chicago Press, online at: <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/288138March> 14th 2021.

processing, but come from a place where thought and emotion are integrated in a way that is coherent in the perception of the heart chakra. This involves some spiritual practice.

Within this framework, I would like to share what worked so far, and what did not. Especially with the narcissist as we try to recover their vulnerable self, we will face an extreme degree of vulnerability. This does not mix well with the projection that their inner tormenter caused pain, enforced control, and manipulated the ones that they believed they love.

Before we get to this tricky part, let look at the people-pleaser: The core archetype of the people pleaser is an active victim – and this victim needs a wake-up call.

I will keep this in the form of a checklist. There are numerous techniques that can be applied, like EFT, NLP, hypnosis, psychodrama or even past life regressions that – no-matter if real or not – are a highly effective form of psychodrama.

- Realize you are in a toxic relationship that will not get better ever, no matter how much you fawn and appease.
- Realize: “I experience what I experience because I am who I am”. Take full responsibility for the condition your life is in.
- Realize that you have grown a false-self inside of you and have become it, that you stopped being authentic not because you were forced to, but because you decided to.
- Realize you are obsessed with the wellbeing of others. You are obsessed with the other, because you do not feel good-enough being just yourself. This is where the mirror-relation to the narcissist is tangible. He is also obsessed with the other, just that he focusses on the picture the other has of him. None of the two obsessions is better or worse than the other. They are both totally sick and really deserve each other.
- Realize you lack self-worth, self-confidence, self-love, and that you have avoided healing this condition and becoming self-responsible by fawning and sub-ordinating yourself under others.
- Realize fawning is as active as beating, scratching, screaming, and that you are not a victim here. It is applied self-destruction. There is no love in that, only fear and self-persecution.
- Affirm/decide: I dissolve my false self. This needs an accurate self-perception of the original trauma, of the bioenergetic pathway that is activated from the physical position of the trauma in the lower chakras to the reptilian brain, and an understanding and awareness of the cognitive pattern the personalities triggered apply. Personalities exit the body through one or more access bars, and take over the mental body. It needs an understanding of the hidden profit this personality-pattern gains, and a realisation that the personality just perpetuates the misery to regain access to life force. With this understanding, it can be dissolved by decision. In our practice we trigger it, release the trauma, and pull it out of the access bar it used with our hands, hold it in front of us and burn it in a visualized violet flame. The trauma relief is needed to be able to completely pull the bioenergetic strand between the physical seat of the trauma and the reptilian brain. This comes from the shamanic tradition, it is only one possible way to do it. The decisive factor is the whole-hearted decision itself. Remember, we are creator beings, and we can un-create what we created at the first place.
- Affirm/decide: I reintegrate my vulnerable self. This normally comes with shockwaves of traumatic memories. It might be intense, need crying or screaming to integrate. If such an emotional process is successful, the last emotional expression is laughter. If laughter does not appear, something has been not seen, and the process needs to be redone. The laughter is the step that re-adjusts the muscle tensions in the intestines, it feels and sounds like a

displaced joint being forced back into position. If this happens, the process of healing is not reversible.

- One of these traumatic memories might be in the context of a highly empathic relationship to an over-protective mother. Realize that the decision taking over and balancing her subconscious or conscious feelings was your decision. That all that fear and anger and feeling of devaluation you carried for her is hers, not yours. You did that out of love. But it does not serve you today. It never served her.
- There might be a secondary personality that is based on a persecutor archetype, that has no other function then to guard and maintain the co-dependency patterns to maintain the non-responsible state. It needs to be pulled and dissolved. You can look at that possibility by affirming: I feel my persecutor-based personalities. They will show up if given.
- Rebuilding self-worth, self-love and self-esteem can be done in many ways, like EFT, NLP, mirror work.
- Realize you are not yet initiated as an adult. Feel the game-bubble you float in, that separates you from reality. You look at reality like a pair of eyes that looks out of a pair of eyes. Feel that pain of separation, the longing to feel and be felt in the real.
- Decide/affirm: I initiate myself, I pop that bubble, I abandon myself into adulthood, I fuse my eyes and the eyes-in-the-eyes into one, whatever works best as a visual or verbal representation of your feeling. Focus on the spleen when affirming. It should trigger a pain in the spleen. Decide/affirm: I go through that pain of initiation. It is a process that can take days, it just needs to get started. It might cause an inflammation or even a rupture of the spleen that can end lethal due to internal bleeding. Internal bleeding can be self-diagnosed by observing the heart rate. If the heart rate goes up for no reason, get to an hospital immediately, this needs surgery. There are no data about the severity and likelihood of spleen complications yet. We just know that this is where the psychological complex ties into organ function, and get more and more anecdotal data that support the theory.
- During these processes, it is a good thing to be in a relationship with the narcissist. Observe what triggers you. Wherever you get triggered, you will find more childhood trauma to be resolved.

With the covert narcissist, we need a totally different protocol.

- Realize: “there is a repetitive pattern in my life: no matter how hard I try, I always end up as the scape-goat, get guilty and shamed. Because it is repetitive, it must be something in me causing this”. Affirm: “I experience what I experience because I am who I am”.
- Never try to introduce a narcissist into the narrative of the clinical condition as handled by clinical psychology. This narrative is written from the victim-perspective of the co-dependant. It serves the needs of the co-dependent, it does not serve the needs of a narcissist.
- A narcissist entered the stage of his life in a victim role, and this is how the vulnerable-self, the one that needs to be recovered and healed, identifies. We need this identification to happen for any further steps. Inducing guilt and shame does not help.
- A covert narcissist will be able to admit that he lacks self-worth, self-confidence, self-love, and with the self-discipline inherent to his character, he might work on healing this aspect with quite some success.
- The narcissist will be able to relate to the experience being a scape-goat, being controlled and manipulated. In his childhood, this experience was real. He was victimized, and this needs to be acknowledged in compassion. As to the now, in the co-dependent state with active Janus-head personalities, he will not be able to identify with any form of persecutor, because the ugly aspects always hide in the subconscious plane, or are projected onto the co-dependent. Any comment or claim he does behave like a persecutor will be absorbed by the scapegoat-experience dominant in his vulnerable self.

- Anecdotally, it worked well to locate the persecutor aspect in a past life-time experience, and to achieve a full understanding of the emotional complex as a karmic mirror of that past-life-persecutor and the this-life-time-victim. When these two sides of the medal become tangible in a balanced form, the client might get access to the bioenergetic form of the condition within his spleen. He can relate to the “pain of being the scapegoat” physically sitting in the spleen, acknowledge the karmic balance achieved in this lifetime, which means taking full responsibility for his experience, and then remove the pain from the spleen with his “energetic hand”, which again involves some spiritual practice coming from shamanism. This pain-body, when ritually removed, seen in the karmic context and floated with love, eventually morphs into something that can be best described with the word “integrity”, which can be reintroduced into the body. However, integrity belongs into the heart, not into the spleen.
- If this is accomplished, the narcissist will still carry the personality patterns he developed. But he will be able to sense the effect of his actions on the empathic level, and immediately pull back from those types of actions, because it is not in his intention to cause pain.

It might be irritating that the persecutor earns so much compassion, while the victim receives a harsh call to self-responsibility. Our culture will demand the opposite, it will call for the punishment of the persecutor, and run to the rescue of the victim. Please regard that this common response solely represents drama-interaction, and by this perpetuates the misery. Healing functions inverse.

This chapter will definitely need updating, because things have not evolved beyond this point yet. And because this is anecdotal only in any case, and more data, more diverse experience will need to be collected.

I would like to invite you to become part of this experience. The path takes shape by the steps we take.