

The water. the flower  
that bears his name



**ASSIGN  
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The essential feature of narcissistic personality disorder is a persuasive pattern of grandiosity-that is an inflated sense of how important one is-along with a need for admiration and lack of empathy for other people.

The disorder typically begins by early adulthood, although some causes may be rooted in childhood experiences. Sigmund Freud started the psychological discussion of the disorder with his 1914 paper " on narcissism". The disorder takes its name from narcissus, who in greek mythology was the son of a river god and a nymph.

As a young man he was known for his beauty. However, when narcissus rejected the love of the nymph echo, the gods grew angry with him. They caused him to fall in love with his own reflection in the waters of a pool. Gazing at his beautiful and inaccessible image, narcissus drowned when he fell into the water.

The flower that bears his name sprung up when narcissus died. Narcissistic people tend to exaggerate their accomplishments, often appearing boastful or pretentious. They tend to talk endlessly about themselves and become annoyed if the topic of conversation turns to anyone else. Fantasies of unlimited power, beauty, wealth, or achievement may consume them. Narcissistic disturbance can be found in everyone.

An individual's existence would be in jeopardy if some narcissistic traits were not present. The development of problems occur when narcissistic traits become exaggerated in an individual's personality. During the first eighteen months of life an infant is provided with narcissistic defenses. The infant is able to experience being the center of their mother's world and a oneness

with the mother develops. Being the center of the mother's world makes the child feel powerful and omnipotent and they know no limits to their world. However, a psychological transformation near the end of the eighteen-month period causes the disintegration of the child's oneness with the mother to take place. When this separation period begins the experiences of the child determines the development of the ego and the onset of NPD.

These experiences encompass the mother's ability to be responsive and sensitive to the needs of the child during the first eighteen months. Also, important in the develop of the ego is the limits and consequences the parents provide between two and ten and the amount of abuse or trauma the child receives during the first seven years of life. This abuse does not necessarily have to come from trauma induced by parents. Authority figures or peers can also be the culprits.

A pattern of grandiosity, excessive need for admiration, entitlement, and lack of empathy are the chief components in the diagnosis of NPD. These behaviors begin in early adulthood. A narcissistic individual is unable to trust, relies on others, and thus develops numerous, shallow relationships to extract tributes from others. Because a narcissistic individual has a shifting morality-always ready to shift values to gain favor-any relationship with a narcissist has difficulty. Their tendency is to form friendships or romantic relationships with only those that can enhance their self-esteem or advance their purposes. A narcissistic individual has a basic sense of inferiority.

Under this inferiority is a preoccupation with fantasies of outstanding achievement and an aimless orientation toward superficial interests. The

narcissist uses others to aid them in any tasks they undertake and will frequently take credit for work which others have done. The narcissistic individual may be more successful at their chosen field of work than some of the other personality disorders because their narcissism is advantageous in their employment especially if their work provides narcissistic supply. However, usually they are never able to direct their interests long enough to completely develop any long-term projects and if these projects are completed they may not be of the highest quality.

Narcissists will over inflate their own accomplishments, are boastful, and pretentious. Although he or she may impress others with knowledge and decisiveness, a narcissistic person's information base is often limited to trivia. Lying is an integral part of the narcissist's behavior and all their self-reports are unreliable.

Their cognition is impaired to the extent that they frequently misinterpret other's speech and actions. They may actually believe that someone respects or loves them although this is a fantasy which exists only in the mind of the narcissist. Their