

A Different Facet Of Triangulation

Triangulation involves the narcissist having a third party try to talk to you about what is bothering her. For example, if you have set limits on the time you are willing to spend with your narcissistic mother, she may have your father tell you how you should spend more time with your parents.

There is also another kind of triangulation that is often used mostly by covert narcissists. It is where the narcissist tells you about the terrible things someone else has said about you, & tells them terrible things you have said about them. The things they share aren't necessarily true.

If you have two narcissistic parents, then chances are you have experienced this. I have. My father, a covert narcissist, would tell me anything bad that my overtly narcissistic mother said about me. I'm not sure how much was true. He also told my mother I've said bad things about her when I hadn't.

I've heard of other covertly narcissistic parents doing similar things, & I've wondered why. After praying about it, I think I understand.

Telling their child such things, be they true or false, means the child will pull away from the one narcissistic parent & be closer to the other narcissistic parent. This means more narcissistic supply for the lying parent.

This dysfunctional behavior also causes the child to think poorly of the parent who was lied about, & it makes the lying parent look good by comparison. After all, the narcissist comes across as concerned for their child by saying things like, "I thought you should know what your mother said about you.." And, the lying parent isn't the one who said the hurtful things- he only relayed what he has heard, supposedly because you need to know these things.

This form of triangulation is also a type of deflection, because it takes attention off of the lying parent & his bad behaviors. You become angry with the other parent for saying such terrible things, & automatically don't pay as much attention to the lying parent's bad behaviors since your focus is elsewhere.

Covert narcissists love looking like a martyr, & this type of triangulation helps them to do that as well. See what terrible things he has to put up with? He has to listen to his mean wife talk badly about his child! How horrible for him! He is often so focused on making whatever he claims was said upset you & you fail to realize at first that he didn't defend you. In fact, if you aren't aware of this tactic, you may even feel sorry for him that he had to be exposed to this.

There are ways to cope with this awful manipulative behavior.

Obviously, setting boundaries in a normal way with any narcissist is futile. Instead, do not admit that it hurts you to hear these things, or the narcissist will realize the effectiveness of this weapon to hurt you, & use it often.

Instead, show no reaction. Pretend whatever is said doesn't affect you in the least. He may keep pushing the issue trying to get a reaction. If he does & gets flustered at your calmness, & says something like, "Aren't you upset?" use logic in your response. I've said things like, "Why would I be? I know she hates everything about me. This is hardly a surprise. Besides, I just don't care what she thinks about me anymore."

Change the subject. Repeatedly. As often as needed. Without saying anything along the lines of "On another matter.." or "Let's talk about something different", just bluntly change the subject. Narcissists, overt or covert, don't like subject changes—they want to be in charge of the conversation. It will annoy him, but at least he'll be off the topic. If they keep going back to the original topic, then try to get the narcissist to talk about himself. Narcissists really can't resist the opportunity to talk about themselves, so you might as well use that in your favor. Sure, it's annoying, but at least it beats listening to your parent ramble on about the terrible things your other parent has said about you.