

Childish Behaviors In Narcissists

Years ago, I heard that when someone experiences trauma at a certain age, emotionally, they can get stuck there. For example, a 14 year old who is attacked may continue to grow up, but even 10, 20 or 30 years later may behave in some ways like a 14 year old.

I've only heard this from one person, but it made sense to me in some ways. When I think about my narcissistic parents, they are quite immature & both had trauma in their childhood. This was also true of what other people have told me about the narcissists in their lives.

Childish behavior in adults is incredibly irritating & very manipulative & calculating. It often includes behaviors like feigning ignorance or helplessness so others will do for her, expects others to take care of & coddle her, must be the center of attention, judgmental & closed minded. If a childish person doesn't get her way, she'll pout, cry, get angry, or blames others.

This sort of behavior is hard to deal with from anyone, but especially a parent. Childish parents don't take proper care of their children, & they expect their children to take care of them. Sure the parent may provide food, clothing & shelter for the child, but beyond that, there isn't any real care. They don't teach their child life skills such as how to cook, clean, do laundry or balance a checkbook. And even worse, if the other parent is abusive, which is often the case, the childish parent fails to protect the child. She may say she just doesn't know what to do or is powerless to stop the abuse. She makes her child feel sorry for her so the child doesn't get mad that she allows the abuse.

A child that grows up in this environment will continue in this dysfunctional pattern of behavior until he or she realizes how unhealthy it is but may not know how to put an end to it.

When dealing with a parent like this, it's important to remember never to reward the bad behavior or else it'll continue. Probably other people will be willing to indulge those childish ways indefinitely, & think you are mean for not doing the same. Let them do & think whatever they want to. What you do is up to you, & it's no one's business but yours. By not rewarding bad behavior, you're encouraging your childish parent to behave in more appropriate ways—that is a good thing! You should be proud of yourself for behaving in that manner.

When you interact with your parent, always maintain a calm, pleasant demeanor. If you show your frustration or anger, she'll claim you're mean & she is the innocent victim. She'll probably tell other people the same, which obviously can cause problems for you. Best to avoid that entirely by being calm in her presence. Then, once you're safely away, vent however works best for you.

If your childish parent hints to you, wanting you to do something for her that she's capable of doing, ignore the hints. There is no reason for you to do something she is well able to do herself.

If your parent is upset that she didn't get her way, ignore her tantrum. Let her pout if she wants to pout, or cry if she wants to cry. If she gives you the silent treatment, so be it—ignore her. Never ever try to get her to talk to you again when she's giving the silent treatment, because that rewards her bad behavior. She'll see that all she has to do is stop talking to you, & you'll run to her. Don't let that happen. Let her sulk until she is able to talk to you like a reasonable person. Chances are, she'll start talking to you again when she needs something from you & act like nothing happened.

Remember, you are NOT the parent, she is. It's not your job to baby her & protect her. It is perfectly reasonable of you to have limits on what you will & won't do for your parent.