

Feigning Ignorance

This tool is primarily used by covert narcissists since their overt counterparts don't want anyone thinking even for a moment that they may not be extremely intelligent. Covert narcissists however, don't mind if people think they aren't very smart. In fact, that works in their favor, because people assume they aren't intelligent enough to abuse. When their victim gets upset about something they said or did, if that victim believes the narcissist somewhat slow mentally, they are much less likely to confront the narcissist about their behavior. After all, how can you get mad at someone who simply didn't know any better? Covert narcissists know you can't, so they have no problem with you thinking they're stupid. And, the more people believe this about the narcissist, the more unlikely a victim will be believed, because everyone will think the narcissist isn't smart enough to be deliberately abusive.

Covert narcissists feign ignorance for various reasons. They use it when they are confronted about their bad behavior, to explain why they didn't do something they should, to explain why they did something they shouldn't have, to get out of doing something they don't want to do, or to avoid something are some common reasons.

Feigning ignorance also works well when the covert narcissist is verbally abusive. If a victim confronts the narcissist, they can pretend to be innocent by saying things like, "I didn't know that would upset you," or even "I was just trying to help." Saying things like this puts victims in the place of feeling like they can't get mad, because the narcissist's intentions were good. Feeling that way makes a victim less likely to say anything the next time the narcissist says or does something cruel. The victim also will be more likely to put up with the abuse indefinitely because they believe the narcissist just doesn't know any better.

As I've mentioned before, many covert narcissists are married to overt ones. Usually what happens is the overt narcissist actively abuses their child, while the covert one doesn't get involved.

Often times, the covert narcissist expects that same child to protect the covertly narcissistic parent from the overtly narcissistic parent. When that child grows up, at some point, chances are that the now adult child will realize just how wrong this situation is, & how miserably that parent failed not only by not protecting the child, but also by expecting the child to protect the parent.

When this happens, feigning ignorance works for explaining why they didn't protect their child from their overtly narcissistic parent. They can claim they didn't see the abuse, they didn't know it was all that bad or they didn't even know that it was going on at all. Overtly narcissistic parents often save the worst of their abuse for times when they are alone with their child, like when the other parent is at work. Since the covertly narcissistic parent wasn't there during the worst of the abuse, the child might find it easy to believe that parent didn't know about the abuse.

If the covertly narcissistic parent absolutely can't deny that they knew the child was being abused by the other parent, they also can say they just didn't know what to do. They were helpless to stop it because they didn't know how. If the appearance of naïveté is believed, as it usually is, the child will believe that parent truly didn't know what to do.

When you see the covert narcissist in your life feigning ignorance, don't fall for it! They are not as oblivious as they may seem. Narcissists are observant by their very nature—it's what helps them to be so effective at abusing people. They study people to figure out how to abuse them. They also are intelligent. NO one can be stupid & devious at the same time. It doesn't work that way. So don't fall for their "I didn't know" or "I didn't know any better" nonsense. Don't believe it. They do know & they do know better! They choose to act the way they do because it gets them whatever it is that they want. With narcissists, whether they are overt or covert, their desires are paramount—they matter more to narcissists than anything else in the world.