

## How Narcissists Fool Their Victims

So many victims of narcissistic abuse blame themselves for being fooled by the narcissist that abused them. They beat themselves up for not seeing the person's true character sooner than they did, & wonder how they could've missed or ignored the signs that something was very wrong with that person. Worse yet is when the victim grew up with a narcissistic parent or two, then married a narcissist as an adult. Having been in that position, I can tell you, it's awful. I wondered how I could be so stupid for a long time. The truth is I wasn't stupid, & if you've been in that position like I was, you weren't either. Narcissists are good at what they do, including fooling people.

Narcissists are amazing actors. They have the ability to appear however they want to appear. If they want to appear kind, they do. I wonder if it's because their personalities are so superficial. They have no real depth to their personalities, so maybe that's why it's easy for them to act & be so believable when they do. If they had any depth to their personalities, it might be harder to appear believable when they act in a way they really aren't.

They also can come across as very confident, especially overt narcissists. Confidence naturally attracts people so narcissists use this to their advantage, especially when they are looking for someone to date. This confidence also helps them to get away with lying so much—when a person speaks with confidence in what they're saying, it's hard to believe they could be lying.

Narcissists rarely are obvious in their manipulation. Rather than beating you into submission, they use more subtle tactics. They criticize & shame. They may make suggestions & often add in a small criticism for good measure. For example, your narcissistic spouse may suggest going to the new Chinese restaurant for dinner instead of the Italian place you like since that Italian place isn't very good anyway. The comment may make you feel something is wrong with you for liking it or you may stop liking it because of what was said. Covert narcissists may use guilt to manipulate instead. If they can make you feel guilty for hurting them or doing them wrong somehow, they can get you to do about anything to make it up to them.

They never act up all the time. Narcissists are able to wear their good guy or good girl mask when it benefits them & often for extended periods of time. If you & the narcissist don't live together, you're not going to see the true person often at all, especially if you live far away from each other. If you live with the narcissist, they still can wear the mask, but it'll slip from time to time. When it does, it's so confusing. You wonder what happened to that nice person? Is that the real person or is this evil monster the real one? It can make your head spin unless you know about narcissism.

Narcissists can play on your empathy too, especially covert narcissists. If they know you have a good heart, they will make you feel sorry for them or act helpless so

you're willing to take care of them. They may appear naïve, not able to understand many things. Or, if you're upset with them, they act like you're abusing them, & they were only trying to help you. They claim they didn't know doing that would upset you. Kind people are often fooled the longest by covert narcissists partly because of things like this. They pity the narcissist & feel guilty if they get mad at that person because how can they get mad at someone who just doesn't know any better? It takes quite a lot of time & learning about covert narcissists before most victims find the strength even simply to admit that someone is a covert narcissist. Then, they have to find the strength to set boundaries knowing they'll end up feeling incredibly guilty.

And lastly, if you were raised by at least one narcissistic parent then you grew up to marry a narcissist, don't feel bad. You gravitated to what was familiar, what you thought was normal. So many of us have done that. It's pretty normal, unfortunately. How could you know that narcissism wasn't normal when your parents told you it was & there was something wrong with you for thinking otherwise?

If you've been fooled by a narcissist, please stop beating yourself up. It doesn't mean you're stupid or naïve. It just means that narcissists are great at what they do.