

Infantilization

Narcissistic parents never want their children to grow up. A child is much easier to control than a self sufficient adult.

Narcissistic parents accomplish this by making their child feel like they are forever the child. This is done primarily through evil tactics such as making the child feel shame, fear, manipulation & reminding that child who the "adult" is. To show you what I mean, I'll share some examples from my life.

I was a teenager in the 1980's. My friends were wearing make up by the eighth grade, & dating by the same time. I however, was not. Also, although my mother had told me for years that I could date at 16, when I met my ex husband just prior to turning 17, my mother went completely ballistic when I said I wanted to date him. Her abuse hit its peak, all because I said I wanted to date & called her out on saying I could at 16. She refused to let me date him until 1 week before my eighteenth birthday.

Another way my mother & many other narcissistic mothers keep their children childish is to control their appearance. My mother has dressed much the same way my entire life, & she always has attempted to make me dress like her, especially during my entire childhood. As an adult, my mother would still buy me clothes in her taste, not mine. When I was 29 she got us matching shirts for Christmas.

Age appropriate activities were also discouraged. I was not allowed to get a driver's license until I was 18, & my mother could no longer legally stop me. She did, however, hide my birth certificate & showed it to the employee at the DMV while not allowing me to see it. I've never seen her copy of my birth certificate.

I moved out of my parents' home just after I turned 19, & my mother was livid, acting as if I was betraying her by moving out. It seemed to me that she took me moving out as a betrayal, not as a natural course of events.

Being on my own didn't stop her infantilizing behavior. My mother constantly did little things to show me she disapproved of me. She insulted my home, the town where I live, my car & even my pets constantly.

Behaviors like this are not only painful for the child no matter her age, they also create a deep insecurity & anxiety in the child. A child can grow up overly dependent on the abusive parent. When a parent treats a child as if "Mother/Father knows best", it ruins the child's ability to trust in her own intelligence or instincts.

Once an infantilized person realizes what has happened, reversing the damage takes a LONG time & a lot of work. I was 16 when I began to see that my mother's opinions weren't good for me- they were good for her. I am now 47 & I still have doubts about

myself more often than I care to admit. Even so, the amount of time & energy I've put into shutting out her behavior has been worth it to learn to trust myself.

I recommend running to God immediately. Ask Him "Is this OK?" "Should I do/not do that?" or any questions you have.

I also have found it valuable to question everything. Do I really like this? Why do I feel that way? What will happen if I do/don't do this? What will benefit me?

Getting to know your real self & not the self your parent tried to make you into, is invaluable. The better you know your true likes & dislikes, the less doubt you will have & the more you will trust your own decisions. One way to get to know yourself is to learn your Myers Briggs personality. I found it to be an indispensable tool in getting to know myself!

You also have to learn to trust your instincts. Infantilization ruins one's ability to trust one's own instincts, unfortunately. It really gets easier the more you do it. As hard as it can be, with prayer & effort on your part, you really can conquer the damage done by infantilization!

Link to the Myers Briggs test:

<http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/jtypes2.asp>