

Morbid Envy

As anyone with any experience with a narcissist knows, they are incredibly envious people. They envy the looks, talents, social standings & more of other people. They envy anyone who they deem “better” than themselves in some way. While everyone has the occasional fleeting moments of envying another person, narcissists take it to an extreme. This is morbid envy.

No one is safe from the narcissist’s envy, either. Narcissistic mothers are notorious for showing this behavior towards their children. There are many ways they can exhibit this behavior.

A narcissist who puts someone down either to their face or behind their back when that person accomplishes something envies that person.

Criticizing someone immediately after they received a complement is another sign of morbid envy. My overtly narcissistic mother did this a lot. I knew anytime someone was nice to me in her presence, I was going to pay for it later by her being especially critical & hateful to me.

Nit picking a person’s appearance is a sign the narcissist thinks that person is more attractive. A female narcissist may say things like another woman is too old for the hairstyle she wears, her clothes are too tight or not age appropriate or even that her nail polish is chipped & she should get a manicure. Little, petty, nit picky comments like that are definitely a sign of morbid envy.

Being obviously fake is a sign of morbid envy. Things like being overly sugary sweet, fake smiles or thank yous that aren’t sincere.

Treating someone as if they are stupid, weak, or mentally unstable also is a sign of morbid envy. This is done to make the person feel stupid, weak or mentally unstable, to hurt their self-esteem.

Passive/aggressive behaviors can another sign of morbid envy. Passive/aggression is when a person is obviously upset but refuses to admit it. They may even continue doing things as normal, but you know they’re angry. The silent treatment is a good example. If someone gives you the silent treatment, they won’t speak to you unless it’s unavoidable. If you ask them what’s wrong, they’ll say nothing, yet give you dirty looks or obviously ignore you. Other passive/aggressive behaviors can be constantly being late if you’re punctual, sulking while refusing to discuss why, forgetting to do things you asked them to do or backhanded complements like, “You do this job well for someone with only a high school diploma.”

Turning people against another person is also a sign of morbid envy. If the narcissist doesn’t like someone, they expect others in their circle to feel the exact same way. They want to hurt the one they envy by making them feel as if no one likes them.

If someone a narcissist envies helps them in some way, they act like the help wasn't good enough or maybe was done wrong. Or, they may refuse to allow that person to help them at all, rejecting their offer as silly or even stupid.

In extreme cases, narcissists may bully someone they envy, harass them, vandalize their property or even try to hurt them physically.

There is no way to avoid morbid envy with a narcissist. It's going to rear its ugly head at some point. When it does, the best thing you can do is be aware of what's really happening. Know that it's the narcissist's insecurities, & that there's nothing wrong with you. If you aren't sure if it's the narcissist or you, pray. Ask God to show you the truth. And, think about your situation as if you were an outsider, watching two people interact. You'll see the truth soon enough.

Also, never react when the narcissist behaves in this way. Any negative reaction gives a narcissist supply, & you want to avoid doing that at all costs! The more supply you provide, the more will be expected of you. So when you start feeling angry or hurt about the narcissist being so childish & hateful, stop for a second. Take a deep breath, then exhale. This helps calm you down physically & give you a moment to think of an appropriate response.

It also helps to remind yourself of why the narcissist is behaving this way—because she envies something very good about you! Don't let the narcissist's cruel words diminish your enjoyment of that good thing or take away your pride in an accomplishment! If it wasn't so good, the narcissist wouldn't try to ruin it for you!