

## Sneaky Ways Narcissists Abuse Their Victims

Covert narcissists in particular like to abuse their victims in extremely sneaky, hard to detect ways. This gives the narcissist a plausible deniability. They can say things like, “I was just trying to help” or “I didn’t know you’d take what I said that way.” If the victim isn’t aware of what is happening, the victim most likely will apologize to the narcissist for being upset. This is a double dose of narcissistic supply—not only did the narcissist get to upset the victim, but also make the victim feel insecure or even crazy for being upset in the first place. This means the victim will tolerate more from the narcissist because the victim believes the narcissist didn’t mean to cause pain. How can you get upset with someone who really didn’t know any better? A victim who believes that a narcissist truly doesn’t know better is a victim who is going to be abused over & over & over. That is why you need to be aware of narcissistic abuse, so you won’t be a victim.

One way narcissists stealthily abuse their victims is to say what I refer to as backhanded complements. These so called complements may sound like praise, but there is an insult mixed in. My overtly narcissistic mother is quite good at these. Once when I had lost some weight, she responded by saying “I can see you lost weight. Your shoulders are slimmer.” While it may sound like a complement, it didn’t feel like one. I lost weight everywhere but she only could see it in my shoulders?! I felt like I must be horribly overweight, even though looking back, I realize that I was very thin at that time. I felt like a failure, & like I was fat & extremely ugly. When this happens, you need to remind yourself what the narcissist says isn’t based on truth—it is based solely on the narcissist’s goals of hurting you & destroying your self esteem.

They also like to minimize your accomplishments or talents. Narcissists may completely ignore what you do or they may criticize or trivialize it. This is an attempt to steal the joy & pride you have in your accomplishment or skill, or make you stop doing that skill. Narcissists can’t handle someone being more accomplished or talented than they are, so if they can ruin yours for you, they will do so. Many years ago, my husband & I were at his parents’ home. He needed to repair his car & I helped him with it. While he didn’t need my help, I also repaired a burned out turn signal light on my car. A bit later when we were alone, his covertly narcissistic mother said to me, “You sure like to get all dirty, don’t you?” She also told me that I needed to get rid of my car because it was costing too much money to keep. She never learned to drive, let alone repair cars, & it seemed to bother her endlessly that I like cars. This kind of behavior can be hurtful, I know. When it happens, remember that it’s about the narcissist, not you. The narcissist simply envies you & that is why she’s saying or doing what she is. Don’t let her ruin things for you. Be proud of what you have accomplished or your talents!

Narcissists divert your attention from their cruelty. If there are no witnesses, narcissists have no problems pulling out all the stops. They will say & do the worst things they can come up with. But, if someone comes around, they change their tune

& become very nice. One experience I had also involved my late mother in-law. On a visit to her home shortly after we were married, as soon as we were alone, she told me how disappointed she & my father in-law were that my husband married me instead of a former girlfriend. The next time my husband & I went to her home was for a family get together. My mother in-law introduced me that day to her sister as "my beautiful daughter in-law." This kind of behavior makes you second guess yourself a lot with the narcissist. There aren't witnesses to validate the bad behavior. You can wonder if it really happened that way or if you're overreacting & there is no one to ask since no one saw it. Then, when the narcissist is especially nice to you on other occasions, it makes you doubt even more because you wonder if someone who is so nice really can be so cruel? In a word—yes!! Yes, that nice person can be so cruel. If someone has two distinct ways of acting depending on whether or not there are others around when you are with her, something is very wrong, & it's not with you. Again, remember, the narcissist is the one with the problem, not you.

I hope this video will help you to cope with the especially sneaky ways narcissists abuse.