

## Covert Narcissists

Covert narcissists are much different than their overt counterparts. They are much quieter & sneakier. They are way more devious, too, even to the point victims are often abused for years before they realize that they are being abused.

- Covert narcissists often come across as very meek, shy & naïve.
- They may appear generous, giving money or gifts to people. They often take care of people somehow, even looking as if they are sacrificing greatly for others. Often, their adult child lives with them much longer than most kids live with their parents. Caring for people makes the covert narcissist look like a good person, when in fact all she is doing is getting narcissistic supply when people think or say what a good person she is. If people think she is a saint or martyr, she is happy.
- Covert narcissists have zero empathy, just like their overt counterparts, but they can sometimes act as if they have it. They watch people, study them, which is how they learn to imitate empathy. But that's all it is—an imitation. They really don't care. Once many years ago I was upset with my mother when my husband & I went to see his parents. His mother asked me what was wrong & I told her I was angry with my mother. She grabbed me & hugged me tight saying, "It's OK. I'm your mom now." While that may have appeared nice on the surface, it wasn't. She only asked because my husband was there—she never asked any other time. Plus, "I'm your mom now"?! That's just creepy. It came across to me as one more way for her to tell me I needed to forget my family & morph into hers.
- They also have to be the center of attention, but unlike overt narcissists, it's done in a much more subtle way. They get the last word in a conversation or they interrupt. Sometimes when they interrupt they back down quickly in order to make the other person feel rude. My father has done this. He would actually wait until I started to talk then he would open his mouth as if to speak. I stopped talking so he could speak. It happened a LOT the last couple of years of our relationship. & I asked God was I really being rude or what was happening. He said I wasn't rude—this was my father's way to guarantee I'd talk less so he could talk more. He knew me well enough to know I hate bad manners, so if I thought I was rude, I'd change my behavior.
- Covert narcissists are always the innocent victim. Whatever they did to you can be turned around to making you look like the abuser & they are the victim.
- They are also very good at appearing naïve & helpless & like they need someone to take care of them. Some even refuse to get a driver's license, claiming they just can't understand how to do it.
- Coverts also frequently marry overt narcissists. They come across as the long suffering, tolerant spouse married to that awful person. This is a fantastic scenario for the covert narcissist. Not only do they get that

- martyr label they're so fond of, but they also can abuse quietly behind the scenes since their overt partner is the center of attention.
- They make absolutely terrible parents. They not only fail to protect their child from their spouse's abuse, they expect their child to protect them. They also may make their child feel bad for them because it's so hard for them when the other parent abuses them. This happened with my father. I went to him about things my mother did a few times. He complained that he couldn't do anything to protect me & said it was so hard on him knowing how awful she was to me. I ended up comforting him when I was the one being abused.
  - Another thing covertly narcissistic parents do is throw their child under the bus. If their spouse is angry at them, they'll often mention something the child has done to distract the angry spouse. They'll even lie, making up something to say the child has done.
  - They often create emotionally incestuous situations with their children. IN other words, they expect the child to take care of them instead of them caring for the child. They tell their child about their marital problems or sex life, they expect the child to comfort them when they're upset, things like this. Sometimes physical sexual abuse is a part of it, but not always. These parents also convince other people their relationship with their child is simply loving & close, not abusive.

Many victims of covert narcissists tolerate the abuse for a very long time. Partly because it's so subtle, it's hard to recognize. Also because they don't want to think someone who appears as naïve & martyr-like can be so cruel. That is hard to believe at first, because they are such incredible actors. They often come across as not very smart, but don't believe that about them! No one can be this devious & stupid at the same time. It's impossible! It takes intelligence to pull off the things they do.

A while back, I did a video called "Ways To Cope With A Narcissist." You might want to check it out if you have a covert narcissist in your life.