

The Cult of the Narcissist

By: [Dr. Sam Vaknin](#)Read "[Jesus Christ, narcissist!](#)"**Malignant Self Love - Buy the Book - Click [HERE!!!](#)****Relationships with Abusive Narcissists - Buy the e-Books - Click [HERE!!!](#)****READ THIS: Scroll down to review a complete list of the articles - Click on the [blue-coloured text!](#)****Bookmark this Page - and SHARE IT with Others!**Subscribe to [narcissisticabuse](#)Powered by [groups.yahoo.com](#)

The narcissist is the guru at the centre of a cult. Like other gurus, he demands complete obedience from his flock: his spouse, his offspring, other family members, friends, and colleagues. He feels entitled to adulation and special treatment by his followers. He punishes the wayward and the straying lambs. He enforces discipline, adherence to his teachings, and common goals. The less accomplished he is in reality – the more stringent his mastery and the more pervasive the brainwashing.

Cult leaders are narcissists who failed in their mission to "[be someone](#)", to become famous, and to impress the world with their uniqueness, talents, traits, and skills. Such disgruntled narcissists withdraw into a "zone of comfort" (known as the "[Pathological Narcissistic Space](#)") that assumes the hallmarks of a cult.

The – often involuntary – members of the narcissist's mini-cult inhabit a twilight zone of his own construction. He imposes on them a shared psychosis, replete with persecutory delusions, "enemies", mythical narratives, and apocalyptic scenarios if he is flouted.

The narcissist's control is based on ambiguity, unpredictability, fuzziness, and [ambient abuse](#). His ever-shifting whims exclusively define right versus wrong, desirable and unwanted, what is to be pursued and what to be avoided. He alone determines the rights and obligations of his disciples and alters them at will.

The narcissist is a micro-manager. He exerts control over the minutest details and behaviours. He punishes severely and abuses withholders of information and those who fail to conform to his wishes and goals.

The narcissist does not respect the boundaries and privacy of his reluctant adherents. He ignores their wishes and treats them as objects or instruments of gratification. He seeks to control both situations and people compulsively.

He strongly disapproves of others' personal autonomy and independence. Even innocuous activities, such as meeting a friend or visiting one's family require his permission. Gradually, he isolates his nearest and dearest until they are fully dependent on him emotionally, sexually, financially, and socially.

He acts in a patronising and condescending manner and criticises often. He alternates between emphasising the minutest faults (devalues) and exaggerating the talents, traits, and skills (idealises) of the members of his cult. He is wildly unrealistic in his expectations – which legitimises his subsequent abusive conduct.

The narcissist claims to be infallible, superior, talented, skilful, omnipotent, and omniscient. He often lies and confabulates to support these unfounded claims. Within his cult, he expects awe, admiration, adulation, and constant attention commensurate with his outlandish stories and assertions. He reinterprets reality to fit his fantasies.

His thinking is dogmatic, rigid, and doctrinaire. He does not countenance free thought, pluralism, or free speech and doesn't brook criticism and disagreement. He demands – and often gets – complete trust and the relegation to his capable hands of all decision-making.

(continued below)

This article appears in my book, "[Malignant Self Love - Narcissism Revisited](#)"Click [HERE](#) to buy the print edition from [Barnes and Noble](#) or [HERE](#) to buy it from [Amazon](#) or [HERE](#) to buy it from [The Book Source](#)Click [HERE](#) to buy the print edition from the publisher and receive a BONUS PACKClick [HERE](#) to buy various electronic books (e-books) about narcissists, psychopaths, and abuse in relationshipsClick [HERE](#) to buy the ENTIRE SERIES of eight electronic books (e-books) about narcissists, psychopaths, and abuse in relationships

He forces the participants in his cult to be hostile to critics, the authorities, institutions, his personal enemies, or the media – if they try to uncover his actions and reveal the truth. He closely monitors and censors information from the outside, exposing his captive audience only to selective data and analyses.

The narcissist's cult is "missionary" and "imperialistic". He is always on the lookout for new recruits – his spouse's friends, his daughter's girlfriends, his neighbours, new colleagues at work. He immediately attempts to "convert" them to his "creed" – to convince them how wonderful and admirable he is. In other words, he tries to render them Sources of Narcissistic Supply.

Often, his behaviour on these "recruiting missions" is different to his conduct within the "cult". In the first phases of wooing new admirers and proselytising to potential "conscripts" – the narcissist is attentive, compassionate, empathic, flexible, self-effacing, and helpful. At home, among the "veterans" he is tyrannical, demanding, wilful, opinionated, aggressive, and exploitative.

As the leader of his congregation, the narcissist feels entitled to special amenities and benefits not accorded the "rank and file". He expects to be waited on hand and foot, to make free use of everyone's money and dispose of their assets liberally, and to be cynically exempt from the rules that he himself established (if such violation is pleasurable or gainful).

In extreme cases, the narcissist feels above the law – any kind of law. This grandiose and haughty conviction leads to criminal acts, incestuous or polygamous relationships, and recurrent friction with the authorities.

Hence the narcissist's panicky and sometimes violent reactions to "dropouts" from his cult. There's a lot going on that the narcissist wants kept under wraps. Moreover, the narcissist stabilises his fluctuating sense of self-worth by deriving Narcissistic Supply from his victims. Abandonment threatens the narcissist's precariously balanced personality.

Add to that the narcissist's [paranoid and schizoid tendencies](#), his lack of [introspective self-awareness](#), and his [stunted sense of humor](#) (lack of self-deprecation) and the risks to the grudging members of his cult are clear.

The narcissist sees enemies and conspiracies everywhere. He often casts himself as the heroic victim (martyr) of dark and stupendous forces. In every deviation from his tenets he spies malevolent and ominous subversion. He, therefore, is bent on disempowering his devotees. By any and all means.

The narcissist is dangerous.

Appendix: Jesus Christ, narcissist

Note:

Though most of the quotes in this essay are from the Gospel of Saint Matthew, I was careful to compare them with the texts of the other three canonical gospels. Where the gospels disagree, I avoided using the quote altogether.

Illegitimate and adopted children, especially of humble origins, often develop narcissistic defenses to fend off persistent feelings of inadequacy and inferiority. Admittedly, it is highly unlikely that Jesus was an illegitimate child. Adulteresses in ancient Judea were stoned to death. But, equally, there is little doubt that the circumstances of Jesus's birth were shrouded in mystery. His mother, Mary, got herself pregnant but not by having sexual intercourse with her lawfully-wedded husband, Joseph.

Early on, Jesus developed magical thinking, compensatory grandiose delusions, and fantasies of [omnipotence](#) and [omniscience](#). A firstborn, he was [much pampered](#) by his [doting mother](#). He was a [prodigy](#), a Wunderkind: highly intelligent and inquisitive and more comfortable in the company of adults than with his peers.

When he was a mere 12 years old:

"(T)hey found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions." (Luke 2:46)

Even at this tender age, he showed a marked lack of empathy and a full-fledged case of [pathological grandiosity](#):

"His mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing, and he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" ("My Father" being God - SV). (Luke 2:48-49)

[Gurus](#) at the center of emergent [cults](#) are inevitably narcissistic, if not [outright narcissists](#). The self-imputation of superiority, epiphanic knowledge, and infallibility and the assumption that others need and crave the guru's message are at the heart of an elaborate construct which often borders on the [psychotic](#):

"... (T)he people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." (Matthew 7:28-29)

Referring to his 12 disciples, Jesus made clear that: *"The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord."* (Matthew 10:24)

"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. But that findeth his life shall lose it: and that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." (Matthew 10:37-39)

Here is how Jesus, the lowly, unmarried, and itinerant son of a carpenter - an abysmal failure by the standards of his society - viewed himself:

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats ... And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." (Matthew 25:31-32 and 25:46)

"Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 26:53)

Contrary to his much-cultivated image, Jesus, like the vast majority of cult leaders, lacked [empathy](#) and was a heartless and irresponsible manipulator whose magical thinking ruined the lives of many. He instructed his followers to commit acts that must have had harshly adverse impacts on their hitherto nearest and dearest. Jesus monopolized the lives of his disciples to the exclusion of all else and all others:

"For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." (Matthew 10:35-36)

"Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!" (Matthew 12:47-48)

"And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him." (Matthew 4:18-22)

Consider the disastrous effects their actions had had on their fathers and their families, now left to starve. To Jesus, evidently, these were irrelevant considerations.

Jesus healed only those who visibly, volubly, clearly, publicly and repeatedly worshipped him. In other words, he extended his gift only to his [sources of narcissistic supply](#). There are numerous instances in the four canonical gospels where Jesus actually bargains with the afflicted and demands - sometimes in anger - their unconditional adoration. He is happiest when acknowledged and affirmed as Christ, the Son of Man (son of God). Those who do not recognize his splendid grandeur, unbounded might, and implied divinity are "dogs" and "swine" (Matthew 7:6)

His much-touted love of the poor was not a match for his malignant self-love. When his disciples upbraided a woman for anointing Jesus with expensive ointment because the money could have been better used to help the poor, the great humanist, Jesus, had this to say:

"Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always." (Matthew 26:10-11)

The principles espoused by Jesus were malleable and easily bent. He professed to minister only to the Hebrews (Sons of Israel) and steadfastly refused to heal the Gentiles whom he called "dogs". When a woman of Canaan beseeched him to cast the devil out of her daughter ("Have mercy on me!"), he retorted, shockingly:

"I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel ... It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." (Matthew 15:24-26)

But he soon forgot and retracted this lofty "principle" when she adulated him:

"Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." (Matthew 15:28)

Similarly, he cured the servant of a Roman centurion after his master catered to Jesus's by-now rampant megalomania:

"When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour." (Matthew 8:10 and 8:13)

Jesus's initial [false modesty](#) soon gave way to bragging and outlandish, often [confabulatory](#) claims.

Whenever he affected a miracle - such as restoring eyesight to the blind, cleansing lepers, reviving the crippled, and raising the ostensibly dead - Jesus beseeched them to keep mum about the events. One of many examples:

"And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it." (Matthew 9:30)

But Jesus was not averse to blatant self-promotion when his false modesty failed to elicit [narcissistic supply](#):

"Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." (Matthew 11:2)

"I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple ... For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day ... behold, a greater than (the prophet) Jonas is here ... behold, a greater than (King) Solomon is here." (Matthew 12)

As a true narcissist, Jesus reprimanded others for his own brand of behavior. This [psychological defense mechanism](#) is called "[projection](#)".

This is how he described the Pharisees, the scribes, and the Sadducees (and, inadvertently, himself and his own conduct):

"(T)hey say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi." (Matthew 23:1-6)

Narcissists are disruptive, [counter-dependent](#), combative, and [resent authority](#) (rebellious and contumacious). They feel that they are [above the law](#), or, rather, that they are a law unto themselves. They hold themselves to be [immune](#) to the consequences of their actions:

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword." (Matthew 10:34)

"And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrow the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." (Matthew 21:12-13)

Narcissists are ill-disposed towards [disagreement and criticism](#). They react to the slightest hint of either with [narcissistic rage](#) and fury that knows no bounds and no mercy:

"And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee." (Matthew 11:23-24)

"He that is not with me is against me" (Matthew 12:30)

"For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." (Matthew 23:39)

Narcissists react particularly badly when their concocted personal myth, their [False Self](#), is directly and effectively challenged and they are consequently discredited and [humiliated](#) in public:

"And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, and inasmuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." (Matthew 13:54-58)

Ultimately, the narcissist pays the price for [years of ill-treating others](#) and [sucking their energies dry](#) with constant demands for attention, adulation, and affirmation. People get tired of the overbearing and overweening presence of the narcissist in their lives, of his disruptive and destabilizing influence, and of the pernicious effects he has on their nearest, dearest, and communities. Invariably, they seek to banish him and extricate themselves from his cult. The authorities usually are forced to intervene and lock the narcissist up or, worse, crucify him.

Even his closest followers, supporters, and disciples give up on the narcissist:

"Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled." (Matthew 26:56)

"Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands, Saying, Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?" (Matthew 26:67-68)

"Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." (Peter, indeed, denying knowing Jesus thrice - SV) (Matthew 26:75)

And the fickle "multitude" (the common folk), who were supposed to be the mainstay of Jesus's power and [popularity](#), betrayed him gleefully and with a clear sense of relief and good riddance:

"Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas ... They all say unto him, Let him be crucified ... they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified ... Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children ... And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth." (Matthew 27)

Also Read

[The Narcissistic Pendulum And the Pathological Narcissistic Space](#)Click [HERE](#) to Download "[Narcissistic and Psychopathic Leaders](#)"[Narcissists in Positions of Authority](#)[What Doth a Leader Make?](#)[Narcissists, Terrorists and Group Behavior](#)[Collective Narcissism](#)[Surpassing Man](#)[Hitler - The Inverted Saint](#)[Narcissism in the Boardroom](#)[Resources regarding Leadership Styles](#)[For the Love of God \(Narcissism and Religion\)](#)

Copyright Notice

This material is copyrighted. Free, unrestricted use is allowed on a non commercial basis.

The author's name and a link to this Website must be incorporated in any reproduction of the material for any use and in any means.

[Go Back to Home Page!](#)[More Journal Entries](#)[Frequently Asked Questions about Pathological Narcissism](#)[Excerpts from the Archive of the Narcissism List](#)[The Narcissism List Home Page](#)[Philosophical Musings](#)[After the Rain - How the West Lost the East](#)[Internet: A Medium or a Message?](#)

Write to me: palma@unet.com.mk or narcissisticabuse-owner@yahoo.com