



Peer Support Team Newsletter

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Peer Support Teams are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week



Serve – Protect – Support – Surpass

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Narcissus and Narcissism

There are several versions of the myth of Narcissus. In one of the most popular, Narcissus, the son of the river god Cephissus and the nymph Liriope, was known for his outstanding beauty. Many were attracted to him but Narcissus rejected them all. One day, Ameinias, a young man, met Narcissus and immediately fell in love with him. Narcissus rejected Ameinias, as he had done with all previous suitors. Ameinias was devastated. Narcissus gave Ameinias a sword, with which Ameinias would soon take his own life. But before his suicide, Ameinias prayed to the goddess Nemesis, asking her for divine retribution. Following this and while hunting, Narcissus became thirsty and knelt by a pool of water for a drink. There, for the first time, he saw his reflection as he had never seen it before. He immediately fell in love with it. His attraction was so powerful that he could not break away. He tried to touch and kiss his image, but each time he tried, it disappeared in water ripples. Unable to overcome the attraction of his reflection, he eventually died on the edge of the pool, of thirst and starvation. Where he once knelt, he transformed into flowers of white and yellow. Today, these flowers, and those like them bear his name: *narcissus poeticus*, *narcissus jonquilla*, etc. - commonly known as the daffodils.

Over the years, the myth of Narcissus has influenced poets, writers, film makers, psychologists, and developmental theorists. The tale reminds us of the dangers of excessive self-absorption and exaggerated vanity. These traits, among others, have come to be called *narcissism*. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) identified two types of narcissism, primary narcissism (self-love) and secondary narcissism (love of others). Suffice it to say that Freud thought that both are necessary for a healthy psyche. Psychologically healthy persons develop a balance between primary and secondary narcissism. Difficulties arise when there is a developmental disruption resulting in an imbalance of these libido forces. This imbalance results in varying degrees of neurotic narcissism, including excessive ego-inflation, pathological self-admiration, and cognitive self-delusion.

The modern conception of narcissism is characterized by a grandiose sense of self-importance, a lack of empathy for others, a need for excessive admiration, and the belief that one is unique and deserving of special treatment. Pathological narcissistic persons see themselves as superior. Because they view others as inferior, they are intolerant of disagreement, criticism, and questioning. As they are special, rules do not apply to them. So, they often see themselves as beyond accountability. They tend to have an intense drive for power, attention, and affirmation, which may benefit them in campaigns for corporate management or political leadership. However, once in charge, their focus becomes self-promotion and the suppression of opposition, often through lies, misinformation, and false narratives. *Narcissistic personality disorder* is diagnosed when narcissistic traits significantly impair a person's daily functioning or, much less likely, causes personal distress. The impairment in daily functioning is often observed in interpersonal relationships, primarily due to the person's lack of empathy. It may also manifest as antagonism, fueled by grandiosity and attention-seeking. Personal distress is less likely because narcissistic persons have little "objective" insight into their thoughts and behavior. Therefore, their thoughts and behavior are ego-syntonic (do not cause internal conflict). Any distress they feel is attributed to the behavior of others. (This paragraph includes information quoted from psychologytoday.com).

In the end, it appears that whether or not narcissistic traits become problematic depends upon degree. Mild expressions of narcissism seldom cause significant difficulties. However, as such traits become more prominent, difficulties frequently arise. For others, recognizing narcissistic persons can be difficult. Narcissistic persons often appear friendly, accommodating, and charming, at least at first. But behind this facade exists varying degrees of self-aggrandizement, a drive for power and control, a sense of superiority, a willingness to deceive, an intolerance for criticism and opposition, and additional dysfunctional traits of narcissism...JAD

The Sensation of Pain

Nearly everyone has experienced the sensation of pain. Pain can originate from condition, injury, or illness. It can vary in frequency, intensity, and duration. Research suggests that different persons experience and tolerate pain differently.

Not everyone experiences pain. Some persons are born with *congenital analgesia*, an inability to feel pain. You might think that this is a good thing, but pain serves a purpose. It is an evolutionary alarm that alerts you that something is not quite right. For instance, without pain, accidental contact with a hot stove would not initiate the well-known rapid withdrawal response. Instead, prolonged contact with the stove is likely, resulting in more serious injury.

A common way to report pain is the zero to ten scale, zero being equal to no pain, ten representing severe pain. Medical providers and pain researchers often rely on this self-reported measure of pain to assess the experience of pain.

Medically, pain is broadly classified as acute or chronic. By most standards, acute pain is that which lasts no longer than three months, chronic pain, beyond that. Acute and chronic pain may be episodic, occur anywhere in the body, and have a multitude of causes.

Within current medical practice some causes of pain can be readily and successfully treated. In these cases, pain is eliminated. Other causes of pain cannot be readily treated. A person suffering pain from these causes may experience varying degrees of pain lifetime.

Chronic pain can cause increased anxiety and depression. It has also been cited as a factor in suicidal thinking and behavior.

Some pain treatments have existed since ancient times. The use of opium for pain control can be traced back to at least 3000 years BCE, and acupuncture for pain has been practiced for millennia. These treatments remain in use to this day. Additional contemporary treatments for pain include medication, surgery, non-surgical medical procedures, electronic devices, bodywork, physical and psychological therapy, and life style changes.

Marriage Minute from Gottman: Don't be Rude

Sometimes, arguments and escalations can get the better of us and we might say things we don't mean. But really think about it: why would you want to treat the person you love the most with contempt? Why would you want to be rude to the person you're closest with, the one you share your life with?

Politeness is a way we show respect to people. It helps our intentions sound pleasant and considerate to another person. So, along that thinking, manners can look a lot like love. Do you remember to say thank you to your partner when they do something? Even if it's something they always do or are expected to do, like paying a bill on time, show your appreciation by saying thanks. And don't forget to add "please" when you ask for things.

You can also show your partner that you see them when you greet them as they come home or when they've been in another room for a long time. It's a simple gesture that says, "I notice when you're not around, and I like it when you are." So, mind your manners. A little "please" and "thank you" goes a long way to show the one you love how much you care.

(For more information and to view other "Marriage Minutes" from the Gottman Institute visit www.gottman.com).

On the Science Scene

Shipwrecks Lurking in The Ocean Are a Ticking Time Bomb

At the bottom of the oceans and seas lie more than 8,500 shipwrecks from two world wars. These wrecks have been estimated to contain as much as 6 billion gallons of oil, as well as munitions, toxic heavy metals and even chemical weapons. Most of the wrecks causing greatest concern are of metal, or metal and wood construction. The steel in these wrecks is slowly degrading, increasing the chance of cargos being spilt, and components breaking down. There is increasing global recognition of the need to address this problem. It has remained unresolved to date because of the complex international and interdisciplinary challenge it poses. Many of the wrecks lie in waters off countries that have nothing to do with the original owner of the ship. And who pays for the clean-up - especially when the original owner benefits from the legal loophole of sovereign immunity? (From: www.sciencealert.com)