



# **Why Is It Always About You? : The Seven Deadly Sins of Narcissism**

*Sandy Hotchkiss , James F. Masterson (Foreword by)*

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**Why Is It Always About You? : The Seven Deadly Sins of Narcissism** Sandy Hotchkiss , James F. Masterson (Foreword by)

In this groundbreaking book -- the first popular book on narcissism in more than a decade -- clinical social worker and psychotherapist Sandy Hotchkiss shows you how to cope with controlling, egotistical people who are incapable of the fundamental give-and-take that sustains healthy relationships. Exploring how individuals come to have this shortcoming, why you get drawn into their perilous orbit, and what you can do to break free, Hotchkiss describes the "Seven Deadly Sins of Narcissism" and their origins. You will learn to recognize these hallmarks of unhealthy narcissism -- Shamelessness, Magical Thinking, Arrogance, Envy, Entitlement, Exploitation, Bad Boundaries -- and to understand the roles that parenting and culture play in their creation.

Whether the narcissist in question is a coworker, spouse, parent, or child, *Why Is It Always About You?* provides abundant practical advice for anyone struggling to break narcissism's insidious spread to the next generation, and for anyone who encounters narcissists in everyday life.

## Why Is It Always About You? : The Seven Deadly Sins of Narcissism Details

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# **From Reader Review Why Is It Always About You? : The Seven Deadly Sins of Narcissism for online ebook**

## **Bookchick says**

I read this a number of years ago when interacting with a coworker who could be quite charming and funny. However, over time, I realized that she was also controlling and self-absorbed to the point of often negating me and my life. When I saw this book, I was finally able to put a name to her behavior. While I don't think that most people have full-blown Narcissistic Personality Disorder, there are, unfortunately, an awful lot of people with narcissistic behaviors, and this book is helpful in recognizing the behavior for what it is. The solution seems to be to limit or totally avoid contact with these toxic people. This is a book that many people could benefit from reading for self-reflection or in deciding how to handle these difficult relationships.

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## **Lisa Shultz says**

I re-read this book after my first read over a decade ago. At that time, it helped my recovery from a narcissistic relationship in my marriage. It helped me find sanity from behaviors I did not understand. My second read made me realize how far I have traveled on my healing journey. It also reminded me of strategies for survival with unhealthy relationships. Because there are so many narcissistic people in the world, it is a helpful and empowering read to deal with harmful relationships.

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## **Muffi says**

This book wasn't as helpful to my narcissist problems as *The Wizard of Oz and Other Narcissists: Coping with the One-Way Relationship in Work, Love, and Family* because it doesn't have a lot of practical how-to instructions; just a lot of ranting about how awful narcissists are. Duh--that's why I bought the book--I need instruction, not reiteration of the reasons I bought the book.

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## **Melanie Kirdasi says**

I found the book to be written responsibly more to the layman's understanding with some simplification of the clinical knowledge of how the disorder is developed. This is useful because the writer places emphasis where it should be placed on the failure of proper structure, guidance, and nurturing during the developmental phase of a child and adolescent's life. Because of the pragmatic and direct approach it would allow the reader insight as to which rungs of the ladder are missing, why, and some awareness towards repair. Books of this nature are far superior to authors who vent frustrations about dealing with personality disorders because it offers some direction of recourse to both the PDI and those associated with PDI's. This book offered one of the better advisements for adult children of parents with NPD and the moral challenges they face as caretakers. Relationship dysfunctions as a result of maladaptive attachment in infancy is well explained in the chapter about love interest. Overall the book covered some important aspects.

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## **Kei says**

The subject matter of this book is very important. Once you come to understand what defines a narcissistic human being you will realize you may have had a boss, coworker, friend, lover or family member that portrays many narcissistic character traits. Narcissists often come off as outgoing and charismatic, however do not be fooled by the web that they weave.

For me, this book helped me to find some understanding and acceptance that I WILL NOT be able to understand why these people act the way they do. Narcissism develops early in childhood and is often the byproduct of a narcissistic parent. The root of one's behavior is based on the idea that the person is so insecure they constantly need people around them to boost them up. This occurs by creating grandiosity (they boost you up, so you in turn boost them up) or by putting others down. You are merely an extension of a narcissist's world and the moment you try to set boundaries and have an individual identity, you are no longer of use to the narcissist, and they cut you off. This is where they often portray their lack of underlying moral values. They are so concerned about their own world that they simply cannot have compassion for yours!

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## **Jean says**

All in all, a good read. The title of the Introduction is, "They Are Everywhere!" and narcissists are! In fact we have come to live in a narcissistic culture, which means that in some ways narcissism has come to be regarded as the norm. . . God forbid! The book is divided into five parts; The Seven Deadly Sins of Narcissism, Where Does Narcissism Come From?, Defending Your Self: Survival Strategies for a Narcissistic World, "Special People": The Narcissists in Your Life and Only You Can Prevent Narcissism.

Hotchkiss explains that there is healthy narcissism and unhealthy narcissism, teaches how to tell the difference, how we came to be a narcissistic culture, how to protect yourself against unhealthy narcissists, especially those that are in your life on a daily basis; parent, spouse, child, boss, lover, friend. Finally, she talks to us about how we can prevent the continued reign of narcissism in our families and society.

Be ready to accept your own part in allowing narcissists any role in your life. The book has a lot to say about people being responsible for their own well-being.

This is my favorite quote from the book: "In addition to love, all children need these things, from birth to emancipation: consistency, structure, good boundaries, empathic attunement, and SOMEONE TO BE AN ADULT. They need to know who is in their family and who is not, what place or places they can call home, where and when they are supposed to eat and sleep, what are the rules of conduct of the household and to whom they apply (roles and responsibilities), what belongs to them and what does not. They need to be taught what their own personal boundaries are, who can violate them, and under what circumstances. They need to understand also that others have personal boundaries that need to be respected. They need to know whom they can depend on to meet each of their needs: who will comfort them when they are hurt or sick or frightened, who will protect them when they are in danger, who will provide them with the necessities of life, who will teach them what they need to know to become more self-reliant. The sum total of these "knowings" constitute the boundaries of their lives.

As parents, it is our job to set these structures in place and to maintain or alter them over time."

If people read no more than this of the book, they will have serious food for thought about how to raise

healthy, well-adjusted children who will become healthy well-adjust citizens.

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## **Kathrynn says**

Found this book to be written more like an upper level textbook for someone already well versed in sociology and psychology. The foreword indicated this was in lay person's terms. I didn't find that to be necessarily true. This book was very short (197 trade paperback pages of info, the rest was index stuff) and each chapter was equally short--sometimes too short. Felt that many chapters left more questions than answers.

The author divided the book into 5 parts:

### **Part I: The Seven Deadly Sins of Narcissism**

- Shamelessness is throughout the entire book and seems to be key.
- Magical Thinking
- Arrogance
- Envy
- Entitlement
- Exploitation
- Bad Boundaries
- Interesting examples for trying to establish boundaries with friends or family that exhibit narcissistic behavior. Most will prove to create hard feelings and alienation, which the author indicates in-- several places--may be the only alternative.

There's an example of a mom who threw a fit because her daughter didn't want her bridesmaid dresses in the color her mom did. The daughter rarely stood up to this overbearing, controlling and manipulative mother and this caused her mother to stop talking to her.

So, do you lay down and roll over to allow people to control every aspect of your life, or do you stand up and say, "back off" then they stop communicating altogether?

### **Part II: Where does Narcissism come from?**

- Childhood
- Bad parenting
- Several places the author gives parenting "advice" on how not to create (toddlers) or contributing to (teenagers) narcissistic behavior. I had to laugh at some of the examples given for "communicating properly" with a toddler and felt the author did not have children to have written such nonsense.
- Surviving a narcissistic parent is also mentioned, but no true "survival method" is explained. Just ability to identify and try various methods to cope (boundaries, etc and ultimately exile).

### **Part III: Defending Yourself...**

- Most unhelpful, imo. Basically, this section (book) helped identify and categorize narcissistic individuals,

but I failed to see the point in categorizing something that ultimately can't be changed. The author points out that rarely does someone exhibit full blown personality disorder on this, but many have a tendency for this or that.

However, the author points out at the end of the book that most narcissistic people will not change because they will not acknowledge they have a problem. You can't change what you don't acknowledge.

Part IV: Only you can prevent Narcissism

- The last section on becoming better parents annoyed the heck out of me.

Throughout this book the author presents a checklist of sorts for behavior(s), yet offers no information on the outcome of exhibiting those tendencies nor ways to correct.

I was very frustrated with this book and didn't care for the parental advice.

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### **Maxine (Booklover Catlady) says**

A very significant book that will help you identify and know how to deal with the dangerous, selfish, egotistical and toxic narcissists in your life. I read this book many years ago decided to read it again. Most people don't even know how to recognise narcissists or know that the issues in the dynamics of the relationship is not really about them but the narcissist. That's the trick you see, the narcissist makes YOU believe it's your issues, your wrong perceptions, it's crazy making behavior that can make you doubt yourself and systematically break you down.

An easy to read book and really a book that everyone can get something out of because narcissists are everywhere, it could be your spouse, your coworker, your boss, a friend, what's important is learning to recognise it early on and know how to set boundaries or disentangle yourself from the situation. Highly recommend book.

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### **Jamie says**

Eye opening, often disheartening, frequently confronting but ultimately encouraging. The book identifies behaviors and gives strategies for working/living with and around people who behave with maladaptive narcissistic tendencies - both the obvious, aggressive types and the quieter, more insidious ones. Author noted that we all behave or have a tendency toward such behaviors from time to time - no one is perfect. It was enlightening to see and acknowledge my own forms of unhealthy coping mechanism. I believe all my relationships, including the one with myself, will benefit from what I learned here.

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### **Lyn says**

In an era where it's pretty safe to say we're all on the narcissism spectrum, I think this is a must-read. You get the succinct rundown of seven character flaws seen in extreme narcissists, and ones that will resonate with even the more selfless individuals. Who among us has never been, at one time

- shameless
- guilty of magical thinking
- arrogant
- envious
- entitled
- exploitative
- prone to bad boundaries?

Good anecdotes to illustrate the tendencies, and also some strategies to handle the narcissists in your life. They are not always so easy to spot. They come in many forms, and you may be deep in a relationship with one before you realize it. A helpful guide.

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## **Bryan says**

This is a book I would recommend to everyone. The book is broken up into four parts. Part 1 is the Seven Deadly Sins of Narcissism and a very good description of each behavior. Part 2 is devoted to the explanation of where Narcissism can come from. Part 3 is tips on how to defend yourself from each of the "sins" and ways to avoid being caught in the narcissist's web. Part 4 (and probably the most useful part) is the "Special People" section where Hotchkiss gives countless examples of narcissism in all forms, from the narcissistic child, to the narcissistic boss, loved one, family member and far beyond. Additionally, in this section Hotchkiss offers strategies from Part 3 that have been tailored to fit that specific subset of people.

The layout of this book and the progression of the information is set in a way that it repeats itself a bit but in ratchets up the learning curve with each repetition so it is not annoying or just beating the same information to death for 100+ pages. As a mental health professional I found a lot of this information to be informative despite my pre-existing body of knowledge on the subject. I feel that this is a book that can be given to anyone to help them recognize or begin to combat the narcissist already in someone's life and/or to protect one's self from being pulled in by these rather irresistible people. If you feel like you may have a narcissist on your hands, this is a MUST read!

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## **Benan says**

Irvin D. Yalom'un okuduğum 2 kitabından aldığım lezzeti alamam da bu kitabı okuyarak zaman kaybettiğimi düşünmüyorum. Örnek hikayeleri hem saygıca hem de nitelik olarak çok güçlü buldum. Kitabı çok daha iyi anlayabilmek için, öncesinde, en azından psikolojiye giriş anlamında genel çerçeveli bir kitap okumakta fayda var. Ne de olsa pek çok alanda olduğu gibi psikolojide de kullanılan kavramların içini boşaltarak ya da kasten çarpıtılarak bizlere sunulması gibi bir tehlike ile karşı karşıyayız. Bu tehlikelere maruz kalan kişiler olarak kitaptaki bazı terimleri anlamakta zorluk çekebiliriz. İnsan okuyunca, dünyamızın duygusal anlamda da ne kadar kirlendiğini, çöplüğe döndüğünü çok iyi anlıyoruz. Kitabın özellikle "Yerindeki Narsistler : Gücün Kötüye Kullanılması", "Narsistik Toplum" ve "Daha İyi Ebeveynler Olmak" başlıklı bölümleri bu gerçeği görmemizi çok iyi sağlıyor. Aynada kendisini bir arslan olarak gören kediye fotoğrafı kapak da oldukça yakışıyor bu kitaba bence.

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## **Naomi says**

"To do the job well, parents and caregivers need to have a realistic sense both of themselves and of the child, to be able to control their own aggressive impulses, and, most of all, to not use the child to meet their own needs" (47).

Strategies:

1. Know Yourself
2. Embrace Reality
3. Set Boundaries
4. Cultivate Reciprocal Relationships

"The issue is not whether someone is good or bad but whether you can deal with that person's particular shortcomings" (72).

"The tendency is to recreate the dramas of our earlier life in an effort to write new endings, but if we approach these reparative relationships without awareness or a firm grasp on reality, and with an inability to set limits, we are likely to have the same outcomes as before" (82).

"What kids need. . . is someone who recognizes their unique capabilities and offers encouragement and opportunities from the sidelines while they master real skills. This is quite different from wanting something specific from a child in the absence of any particular inclination or ability. It requires a kind of empathetic attunement to a particular child and his or her native abilities and personal dreams" (94).

"Anything you do to alter your mood that keeps you from addressing underlying problems could be hurting you--or someone you love--more than helping" (118).

"In order to change the way you dance with someone, you may have to sit out a few sets" (119).

[Healthy people:] "admire each other's real attributes and can tolerate their loved one's shortcomings without becoming ashamed or enraged" (122).

"Learn to master the art of non-combative firmness and bland indifference" (170).

"If we cannot tolerate our children's pain, we risk creating an unreal world of indulgence and anxious overcontrol. Not only does the child come to believe in entitlement to that unreal world, but he or she also misses opportunities to master distress" (189).

"While it is undoubtedly true that children are better off with happy parents than with unhappy ones, what is best for children is when parents find happiness in being parents" (190)--response to myth "what is good for me is good for my child."

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## **Seawood says**

This book opens reasonably well in terms of how to recognise narcissistic traits, and that was useful. Part 2 will have you examining your own behaviour for the same traits, particularly if you are reading because you



have a narcissistic parent or child you're trying to understand. Be prepared, it may upset and worry you, so ensure you have someone to talk to. Part 3's survival strategies are ok as far as they go but would have benefited from more practical techniques for use "in the moment", and for when you can't simply cut that person out of your life. The final two sections are weakest, unfortunately, and contain a number of personal hobbyhorses and opinions rather than evidence.

For me it's a springboard book - now I understand the traits better and can identify some of the reasons they develop, but I'm still at a loss as to how to protect myself and others whilst rooting out the influences from my own behaviour. I will continue to look for something more practical.

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### **Krissy says**

A good introduction to narcissism. I liked the parts about how to raise healthy children and examples of what not to do.

The author gives the advice to re-label intrusive words or actions of the narcissist as helpful or caring. I guess I could see how this would work if you 1. Came from a healthy family & have good self esteem 2. Understand that the narcissist is not actually helpful or caring 3. Need a way to cope with keeping this narcissist in your life. But really the take home message is narcissists can't change because they do not believe anything is wrong with them. If you stay in their life and try to fool yourself that they care then you are only hurting yourself.

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