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Narcissists And Women

By Sam Vaknin

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Question: Do narcissists hate women?

Answer: Narcissists abhor and dread getting emotionally intimate and they regard sex as a maintenance chore, something they have to do in order to keep their source of secondary supply.

Moreover, many narcissists tend to engage in FRUSTRATING behaviours towards women. They will refrain from having sex with them, tease them and then leave them, resist flirtatious and seductive behaviours and so on. Often, they will invoke the existence of a girlfriend/fiancée/spouse (or boyfriend/etc. – male and female are interchangeable in my texts) as the "reason" why they cannot have sex/develop a relationship. But this is not out of loyalty and fidelity in the empathic and loving sense. This is because they wish (and often succeed) to sadistically frustrate the interested party.

BUT

This pertains **ONLY** to cerebral narcissists. **NOT** to somatic narcissists and HPDs (Histrionic Personality Disorder) who use their **BODY**, sex and seduction/flirtation to extract narcissistic supply from others.

Narcissists are misogynists. They team up with women as mere sources of SNS (secondary narcissistic supply). The woman's chores are to accumulate past NS and release it in an orderly manner, so as to regulate the fluctuating flow of primary supply. Otherwise, cerebral narcissists are not interested in women. Most of them (myself included) are asexual (engage in sexual acts very rarely, if at all). They hold women in contempt and abhor the thought of being really intimate with them. Usually, they choose submissive women, well below their level, to perform these functions. This leads to a vicious cycle of neediness, self-contempt (how come I need this inferior woman) and contempt directed at the woman. Hence the abuse. When primary NS is available – the woman is hardly tolerated, as one would reluctantly pay the premium of an insurance policy in good times.

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The narcissist does regard the "subjugation" of an attractive woman to be a source of narcissistic supply.

It is a status symbol, proof of virility and masculinity and it allows him to engage in "vicarious" narcissistic behaviours (=being a narcissist through others, transforming others into tools at the service of his narcissism, into his extensions). This is done by employing defence mechanisms such as projective identification. Many of my FAQs and the essay are dedicated to these issues (see: "Malignant Self Love – Narcissism Revisited").

To re-iterate, Primary Narcissistic Supply (NS) is ANY kind of NS provided by others who are not "meaningful" or "significant" others. Adulation, attention, affirmation, fame, notoriety, sexual conquests – are all forms of NS.

Secondary NS is afforded by people who are in CONSTANT, repetitive or continuous touch with the narcissist. It includes the important roles of narcissistic accumulation and narcissistic regulation, among others. (See the essay in "Malignant Self Love – Narcissism Revisited" for more).

The narcissist believes that being in love IS going through the motions and pretending to some degree. To him, emotions are mimicry and pretence.

He says: "I am a conscious misogynist. I fear and loathe women and tend to ignore them to the best of my ability. To me they are a mixture of hunter and parasite."

Most male Narcissists are misogynists. After all, they are the warped creation of a woman. A woman gave birth to them and moulded them into what they are: dysfunctional, maladaptive, emotionally dead. They are angry at this woman and, by implication, mad at all women.

The narcissist's attitude to women is, naturally, complex and multi-layered but it can be rather amply summarized using four axes:

1. The Holy Whore
2. The Hunter Parasite
3. The Frustrating Object of Desire
4. Uniqueness roles

The narcissist divides all women to saints on the one hand and to whores on the other. He finds it difficult to have sex ("dirty", "forbidden", "punishable", "degrading") with feminine significant others (spouse, intimate girlfriend). To him, sex and intimacy are opposite rather than mutually expressive propositions. Sex is reserved to the "whores" (all other women in the world). This division provides for a resolution of his constant cognitive dissonance ("I want her but...", "I don't need anyone but..."). It also legitimizes his sadistic urges (abstaining from sex is a major and recurrent narcissistic "penalty" inflicted on female "transgressors"). It also tallies well with the frequent idealization–devaluation cycles

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the narcissist goes through. The idealized females are sexless, the devalued ones – "worthy" of their degradation (sex) and the contempt that, inevitably, follows thereafter.

The narcissist believes firmly that women are out to "hunt" men and that this is almost a genetic predisposition embedded in their chromosomes. As a result, he feels threatened (as any prey would). This, of course, is an intellectualization of the real, absolutely opposite, state of things: the narcissist feels threatened by women and tries to justify this irrational fear by imbuing women with "objective" qualities which make them, indeed, ominous. This is a small detail in a larger canvass of "pathologizing" others as a means of controlling them. Once the prey is secured – the woman assumes the role of a "body snatcher". She absconds with the narcissist's sperm, she generates an endless stream of demanding and nose dripping children, she financially bleeds the men in her life to cater to her needs and to the needs of her dependants. Put differently, she is a parasite, a leech, whose sole function is to suck dry every man she finds and Tarantula-like decapitate them once no longer useful. This, of course, is exactly what the narcissist does to people. Thus, his view of women is a projection.

Heterosexual narcissists desire women as any other red-blooded male does (even more so due to the special symbolic nature of the woman in the narcissist's life – humbling a woman in acts of faintly

sadomasochistic sex is a way of getting back at mother). But he is frustrated by his inability to meaningfully interact with them, by their apparent emotional depth and powers of psychological penetration (real or attributed) and by their sexuality. Their incessant demands for intimacy are perceived by him as a threat. He recoils instead of getting closer. The narcissist also despises and derides sex, as we said before. Thus, caught in a seemingly intractable repetition complex, in approach-avoidance cycles, the narcissist becomes furious at the source of his frustration. Some of them set out to do some frustrating of their own. They tease (passively or actively), or they pretend to be asexual and, in any case, they turn down, rather cruelly, any attempt by a woman to court them and to get closer.

Sadistically, they tremendously enjoy their ability to frustrate the desires, passions and sexual wishes of women. It endows them with a feeling of omnipotence and with the pleasing realization of malevolence. Narcissists are regularly engaged in frustrating all women sexually – and in frustrating significant women in their lives both sexually and emotionally. Somatic narcissists simply use women as objects: use and discard. The emotional background is identical. While the cerebral narcissist punishes through abstention – the somatic narcissist penalizes through excess.

The narcissist's mother kept behaving as though the narcissist was and is not special (to her). The narcissist's whole life is a pathetic and pitiful effort to prove her wrong. The narcissist constantly seeks confirmation from others in his life that he IS special – in other words, that he IS. Women threaten this. Sex is "bestial" and "common". There is nothing "special or unique" about sex. Women are perceived by the narcissist to be dragging him to their level, the level of the lowest common denominator of intimacy, sex and human emotions. Everybody and anybody can feel, fuck and breed. There is nothing to set the narcissist apart and above others in these activities. And yet women seem to be interested ONLY in these pursuits. Thus, the narcissist emotionally believes that women are the continuation of his mother by other means and in different guises.

The narcissist hates women virulently, passionately and uncompromisingly. His hate is primal, irrational, the progeny of mortal fear and sustained abuse. Granted, most narcissists learn how to suppress, disguise, even repress these untoward feelings. But their hatred does swing out of control and erupt from time to time. It is a terrifying, paralysing sight. It is the true narcissist.

Sam Vaknin is the author of "Malignant Self Love – Narcissism Revisited" and "After the Rain – How the West Lost the East". He is a columnist in "Central Europe Review" and the editor of mental health and Central East Europe categories in The Open Directory, Suite101, Go.com and searcheurope.com. He is the Economic Advisor to the Government of Macedonia. His web site:

The Narcissist in the Workplace

By Sam Vaknin

To a narcissist–employer, the members of his "staff" are Secondary Sources of Narcissistic Supply. Their role is to accumulate the supply (in human speak, remember events that support the grandiose self–image of the narcissist) and to regulate the Narcissistic Supply of the narcissist during dry spells (simply put, to adulate, adore, admire, agree, provide attention and approval and so on or, in other words, be an audience). The staff (or should we say "stuff"?) is supposed to remain passive. The narcissist is not interested in anything but the simplest function of mirroring. When the mirror acquires a personality and a life of its own, the narcissist is incensed. When independent minded, an employee might be in danger of being sacked by his employer (an act which demonstrates the employer's omnipotence).

The employee's presumption to be the employer's equal (friendship is possible only among equals) injures the latter narcissistically. The employer is willing to accept his employees as underlings, whose very position serves to support his grandiose fantasies. But the grandiosity rests on such fragile foundations, that any hint of equality, disagreement or need (that the narcissist "needs" friends, for instance) threatens the narcissist profoundly. The narcissist is exceedingly insecure. It is easy to destabilise his impromptu "personality". His reactions are merely in self–defence.

Classic narcissistic behaviour is when idealisation is followed by devaluation. The devaluing attitude develops as a result of disagreements OR simply because time has eroded the employee's capacity to serve as a FRESH Source of Supply.

The employee, taken for granted by the narcissistic employer, becomes uninspiring as a source of adulation, admiration and attention. The narcissist always seeks new thrills and stimuli.

The narcissist is notorious for his low threshold of resistance to boredom. His behaviour is impulsive and his biography tumultuous precisely because of his need to introduce uncertainty and risk to what he regards as "stagnation" or "slow death" (i.e., routine). Most interactions in the workplace are part of the rut - and thus constitute a reminder of this routine - deflating the narcissist's grandiose fantasies.

Narcissists do many unnecessary, wrong and even dangerous things in pursuit of the stabilisation of their inflated self–image.

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Narcissists feel suffocated by intimacy, or by the constant reminders of the REAL, nitty-gritty world. It reduces them, makes them realise the Grandiosity Gap (between their self-image and reality). It is a threat to the precarious balance of their personality structures (mostly "false", that is, invented) and treated as such.

Narcissists forever shift the blame, pass the buck, and engage in cognitive dissonance. They "pathologise" the other, foster feelings of guilt and shame in her, demean, debase and humiliate in order to preserve their sense of grandiosity.

Narcissists are pathological liars. They think nothing of it because their very self is FALSE, an invention.

Here are a few useful guidelines:

Never disagree with the narcissist or contradict him;

Never offer him any intimacy;

Look awed by whatever attribute matters to him (for instance: by his professional achievements or by his good looks, or by his success with women and so on);

Never remind him of life out there and if you do, connect it somehow to his sense of grandiosity ("These are the BEST art materials ANY workplace is going to have", "We get them EXCLUSIVELY", etc.);

Do not make any comment, which might directly or indirectly impinge on his self-image, omnipotence, judgement, omniscience, skills, capabilities, professional record, or even omnipresence. Bad sentences start with: "I think you overlooked ... made a mistake here ... you don't know ... do you know ... you were not here yesterday so ... you cannot ... you should ... (perceived as rude imposition, narcissists react very badly to restrictions placed on their freedom) ... I (never mention the fact that you are a separate, independent entity, narcissists regard others as extensions of their selves, their internalisation processes were derailed and they did not differentiate properly)..." You get the gist of it.

Can the narcissist be harnessed? Can his energies be channeled productively?

This would be a deeply flawed - and even dangerous - "advice". Various management gurus purport to teach us how to harness this force of nature known as malignant or pathological narcissism. Narcissists are driven, visionary, ambitious, exciting and productive, says Michael Maccoby, for instance. To ignore such a resource is a criminal waste. All we need to do is learn how to "handle" them.

Yet, this prescription is either naive or disingenuous. Narcissists cannot be "handled", or "managed", or "contained", or "channeled". They are, by definition, incapable of team work. They lack empathy, are exploitative, envious, haughty and feel entitled, even if such a feeling is commensurate only with their grandiose fantasies. Narcissists dissemble, conspire, destroy and self-destruct. Their drive is

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compulsive, their vision rarely grounded in reality, their human relations a calamity. In the long run, there is no enduring benefit to dancing with narcissists - only ephemeral and, often, fallacious, "achievements".

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Until recently, he served as the Economic Advisor to the Government of Macedonia.

Visit Sam's Web site at

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