

Communicating with a narcissistic person

When communicating with a narcissistic person there are certain tactics that you can use for better outcomes:

1. Use “I” language vs. “you” language. What this means is you state the circumstances as to how they affect you, rather than accusing the other person in your communication.
2. See if you can compliment the narcissist while you simultaneously set boundaries. Stroke their ego a bit, if you can stand to.
3. Remind yourself you’re dealing with a narcissist to depersonalize the interaction on your end. You can trust that the narcissist is dealing with you in a very depersonalized way. Get as close to that place as you can to mitigate their emotional effects on you.
4. When possible, validate the narcissist while maintaining your boundaries.

Examples:

“You’re saying I’m the one at fault? Okay, we see things differently. I’m not going to accept responsibility for this.”

“I appreciate you want a response right now, but I’m going to have to think about this. I’ll get back to you by Friday.”

“As disappointed as I sense you are by this situation, on my end, I’m disappointed because it appears you think my motive is something that it’s not. Please don’t assign motives to me that aren’t true.”

“One of the many things I admire about you is your writing ability. So I’m surprised you couldn’t find a way in your latest email to express your frustration without me feeling accused.”

“Your last remark was inappropriate. In the future, please know that if you express your feelings using the type of language you just did, we’ll have to postpone communication until we can have a civil discussion.”

“That’s not the way it happened. I’ve gone along with you when you’ve tried to convince me of things that weren’t true in the past. I am not going to let you do that any longer.”

"I realize there are significant issues between us. I would really like to approach these with an open heart and with professional help if need be. I respect your needs at this time and love you forever. Please know that my door is always open to address our relationship with the idea of how best to move forward together. If a mutually respectful relationship between us isn’t possible at this time, I would like to have communication and a loving relationship with the kids. I hope that is possible even if you and I can’t have one."

It’s never a bad idea to write some of these things down in your own language and then practice them so that you feel natural using them. Once you start using them, you’ll probably be repeating them over and over. The narcissist doesn’t like to pull the “do not pass go” card, which is what you’re handing them by stating the truth and establishing a boundary. So be prepared to stand your ground. Be simultaneously assertive and calm.

Things to ask a legal or mental health professional upon consult to determine whether they can most effectively deal with the influences a narcissistic personality will have:

“What experience have you had with the effects of narcissistic behavior in this type of dispute?”

“Have you ever successfully represented someone who has been alienated from their children in a custody scenario? If so, what can you share with me which might be relevant to how we proceed?”

“If you suspected NPD or some other disorder in an individual, or if there was behavior that was detrimental to the well-being of the children in a custody decision, what would be your course of action?”

“How would you assess the landscape in this jurisdiction with respect to familiarity with the effects of disordered behavior? Is there a willingness on the part of the court system to be proactive in order to

protect against those effects? Are there certain judges, guardians ad litem, and other professionals who better identify and understand this?”

The Narcissist: A User's Guide - published in 2010 (please note: somewhat dated, lots of newer resources and material have come out since we wrote this) <http://www.e-junkie.com/37551/product/481705.php#The+Narcissist%3A+A+User%27s+Guide>

The Narcissist at Work - for those who are “blessed” with a narcissist in their workplace <http://www.e-junkie.com/37551/product/481642.php#The+Narcissist+at+Work>

The Narcissist You Divorce - not just for divorcing spouses, but for extended family members who want to support an alienated spouse, or those who are dealing with narcissistic behavior in custody and visitation matters. <http://www.e-junkie.com/37551/product/503162.php#The+Narcissist+You+Divorce>

The above are all purchased as PDF downloads.

The comparison of Narcissistic Personality Disorder characteristics between the DSM-IV and the DSM-V appears in [this comprehensive pdf](#). Please use the link if you are going to share the document, copy parts of it, etc.

The DSM advises laypersons should consult the DSM only to obtain information, not to make diagnoses, and it recommends that people who may have a mental disorder should be referred to psychological counseling or psychiatric treatment.