

Were Your Parents Narcissistic?

I know that a lot of today's estranged parents get accused of being narcissistic. I don't assume that as many are as are being accused; but, if it rings true then you're better off copping to it and making amends than trying to whitewash it. On the other hand, just because an adult child says it's true doesn't make it true.

However, if your own parents were narcissistic, this may have impacted you in important ways for the following reasons: Children can be damaged by excessively entitled or self-centered parents because the parents' needs for mirroring, praise, and empathy get prioritized over the child's. Self-centered parents may greatly attend to the child when the child enlarges the parent, and ignore him or her when the child is involved in ways that leave the parent out. They might act jealous or threatened by a child's beauty or talent. Children who grow up in this environment often develop the belief that it's dangerous to attend too much to their own needs, if those needs are at variance with the people they love.

If you were raised by this kind of parent you may feel like it's your job to make your children feel good about themselves, no matter what the cost. You might have felt more burdened by parenting because you constantly accused yourself of not doing enough. You might feel guilty focusing on your own needs, and ignoring those of others. This may make it harder to compartmentalize your child's accusations or feelings about you.

You may have felt unimportant in your parenting or other relationships. You may feel guilty about valuing your needs because you were raised to prioritize the needs of others. You may carry a feeling of emptiness because you were never given a sense that your own feelings and ideas matter. You also may have chosen a partner who is overly self-involved because you unconsciously comply with the belief that others needs are more important than yours.