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Signs of being a narcissist

If I see one more listicle about introversion, I'm going to cry. It started out with the fairly reasonable "31 Unmistakable Signs That You're An Introvert." Sure, many of the items on the list offered an exaggerated version of introversion, but there were some real gems that had a large grain of truth. Like this one: But then this happened: 22 Signs Your Dog's An Introvert "He often wears headphones with no music playing, in the hopes no one will try and talk to him." You'd think that'd be enough for a lifetime of listicles. But no... they kept coming, mixing together many different traits under the general umbrella "introversion." For instance, some lists include shyness-reated behaviors, but it's well documented that shyness is not the same thing as introversion. Shyness is more related to being anxious and neurotic. There are plenty of introverts who prefer alone time but really aren't anxious or shy when interacting with other people. Another common misconception perpetuated by these listicles is that introversion and sensory processing sensitivity are the same thing. From "23 Signs You're Secretly An Introvert": "While extroverts tend to get bored easily when they don't have enough to do, introverts have the opposite problem -- they get easily distracted and overwhelmed in environments with an excess of stimulation." Actually, sensory processing sensitivity is not the same thing as introversion. There are plenty of socially introverted folks who can deal with loud sounds and bright lights, even though they may get emotionally drained from too many superficial social interactions. Vice versa, there are plenty of socially extraverted individuals who get overstimulated by sensory input. A number of studies support that idea that sensory processing sensitivity is much more strongly linked to anxiety (neuroticism) and openness to experience than introversion. But when I saw this listicle, I just about flipped my lid: 7 Signs Kanye West Is Secretly An Introvert Really? Let's clarify something here: Narcissism is definitely not the same thing as introversion. Have you ever met someone who constantly tells you how "sensitive" and "introverted" they are, but all you actually see is selfishness and egocentricity? I'm sure you have, because these people exist in spades. When most people think of narcissism, they think of the public face of narcissism: extraversion, aggression, self-assuredness, grandiosity, vanity, and the need to be admired by others (see "How to Spot a Narcissist"). But as far back as 1938, Harvard psychologist Henry Murray noticed another breed of narcissist among his undergraduates: the covert narcissist. While the "overt" narcissists tended to be aggressive, self-aggrandizing, exploitative, and have extreme delusions of grandeur and a need for attention, "covert" narcissists were more prone to feelings of neglect or belittlement, hypersensitivity, anxiety, and delusions of persecution. In the 90s, psychologist Paul Wink analyzed a variety of narcissism scales and confirmed that there are indeed two distinct faces of narcissism, which they labeled "Grandiosity-Exhibitionism" and "Vulnerability-Sensitivity". He found that both shades of narcissism shared a common core of conceit, arrogance, and the tendency to give in to one's own needs and disregard others. But that's where the similarities ended. While Grandiosity-Exhibitionism was associated with extraversion, aggressiveness, self-assuredness, and the need to be admired by others, Vulnerability-Sensitivity was associated with introversion, hypersensitivity, defensiveness, anxiety, and vulnerability. Further research by Jonathan Cheek and Jennifer Odessa Grimes at Wellesley College found a moderate correlation between covert narcissism and the Highly Sensitive Person Scale developed by Elaine Aron. In other words, while introversion, sensitivity, and narcissism are all partially separate traits, hypersensitive covert narcissists are more likely to report that they are introverted and sensitive. Are You a Covert Narcissist? By this point, you're probably wondering if you're secretly a hypersensitive covert narcissist masquerading as a sensitive introvert. Without further ado, here are 23 items that will allow you to gain greater insight into your personality. In a recent study conducted on a group of 420 undergraduates, Jonathan Cheek and colleagues found that higher scorers on this "Maladaptive Covert Narcissism Scale" tended to also score higher on tests of entitlement, shame, and neuroticism, and tended to display lower levels of self esteem, extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. In contrast, maladaptive overt narcissism wasn't related to shame, self esteem, or neuroticism, even though overt narcissists reported feeling just as entitled as covert narcissists. It seems if you have to be a narcissist, it's better to be an overt narcissist than a covert narcissist! So here's the test. Be honest with yourself! Maladaptive Covert Narcissism Scale (MCNS)* Please answer the following questions by deciding to what extent each item is characteristic of your feelings and behavior. Fill in the blank next to each item by choosing a number from this scale: 1 = very uncharacteristic or untrue, strongly disagree 2 = uncharacteristic 3 = neutral 4 = characteristic 5 = very characteristic or true, strongly agree ____ I can become entirely absorbed in thinking about my personal affairs, my health, my cares or my relations to others. ____ My feelings are easily hurt by ridicule or the slighting remarks of others. ____ When I enter a room I often become self-conscious and feel that the eyes of others are upon me. ____ I dislike sharing the credit of an achievement with others. ____ I feel that I have enough on my hand without worrying about other people's troubles. ____ I feel that I am temperamentally different from most people. ____ I often interpret the remarks of others in a personal way. ____ I easily become wrapped up in my own interests and forget the existence of others. ____ I dislike being with a group unless I know that I am appreciated by at least one of those present. ____ I am secretly "put out" or annoyed when other people come to me with their troubles, asking me for their time and sympathy. ____ I am jealous of good-looking people. ____ I tend to feel humiliated when criticized. ____ I wonder why other people aren't more appreciative of my good qualities. ____ I tend to see other people as being either great or terrible. ____ I sometimes have fantasies about being violent without knowing why. ____ I am especially sensitive to success and failure. ____ I have problems that nobody else seems to understand. ____ I try to avoid rejection at all costs. ____ My secret thoughts, feelings, and actions would horrify some of my friends. ____ I tend to become involved in relationships in which I alternately adore and despise the other person. ____ Even when I am in a group of friends, I often feel very alone and uneasy. ____ I resent others who have what I lack. ____ Defeat or disappointment usually shame or anger me, but I try not to show it. Done? Now add together all the numbers to come up with a total score. How'd you do? If you thought on some each of these, "Oh dear lord, that's sooooo me," don't panic. As I mentioned, there's some overlap between this scale and other tests that measure introversion and sensitivity. In a recent study conducted on college students, the average score on this scale was in the mid-upper 60s. So if your score hovered around that range, you're about average in covert narcissism. If your score was below 40, you scored very low in covert narcissism. If, however, your score was 82 and above, you scored high in covert narcissism. And if your score was above 97, well, you might want to own yourself as a card-carrying covert narcissist, instead of constantly telling people to stop criticizing you because your sensitive, introverted soul can't handle it. Now, do genuinely introverted people exist? Absolutely. Are there genuinely sensitive people? For sure. There are even many individuals who are both sensitive and introverted. But the latest research suggests that there is also a large selfish segment of the population who say they are introverted and sensitive when they really just can't stand it that everyone doesn't recognize their brilliance. With that said, whoever bans the word "listicle" from the English lexicon is genuinely brilliant, regardless of their shade of narcissism. © 2013 Scott Barry Kaufman, All Rights Reserved * The first 10 items of this scale are taken from the original Hypersensitive Narcissism Scale. The rest of the items were added to create a more reliable and valid scale. This new and improved 23-item scale was recently presented at the 2013 Association for Research in Personality conference by Jonathan Cheek, Holly Hendin, and Paul Wink. Note: Even though Kanye West sings songs such as "I Am A God," I admit it's possible that he is actually the reverse of the focus of my article: a sensitive introvert masquerading as a narcissist. I don't know him personally. Image credit of Kanye West: halterstatus.com Personality trait of self-love of a fake perfect self Not to be confused with Egocentrism. Narcissus (1597-99) by Caravaggio; the man in love with his own reflection. Narcissism is the pursuit of gratification from vanity or egotistic admiration of one's idealised self-image and attributes. The term originated from Greek mythology, where a young man named Narcissus fell in love with his own image reflected in a pool of water. Narcissism or pathological self-absorption was first identified as a disorder in 1898 by Havelock Ellis[1] and featured in subsequent psychological models, e.g. in Freud's On Narcissism (1914). The American Psychiatric Association has listed the classification narcissistic personality disorder in its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) since 1968, drawing on the historical concept of megalomania. It is distinct from concepts of distinguishing the self (egocentrism or egoism) and healthy forms of responsibility and care for oneself ("primary narcissism"). Narcissism by contrast is considered a problem for relationships with self and others and for maintaining a functional culture. In trait personality theory it features in several self-report personality inventories including the Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory. It is one of the three dark triadic personality traits (the others being psychopathy and Machiavellianism). History Main article: History of narcissism The myth of Sisyphus tells about a man punished for his hubristic belief that his cleverness surpassed that of Zeus himself. He has to push a stone up a mountain each day, only to have to recommence the task on the next day. The term narcissism comes from the Greek myth about Narcissus (Greek: Νάρκισσος, Narkissos), a handsome Greek youth who, according to Ovid, rejected the desperate advances of the nymph Echo. This caused Narcissus to fall in love with his own reflection in a pool of water. Unable to consummate his love, Narcissus "lay gazing enraptured into the pool, hour after hour," and finally changed into a flower that bears his name, the narcissus.[2][failed verification] The concept of excessive selfishness has been recognized throughout history. In ancient Greece the concept was understood as hubris. It is only since the late 1800s that narcissism has been defined in psychological terms.[1] In 1752 Jean-Jacques Rousseau's play Narcissus: or the Self-Admirer was performed in Paris.[3] In 1898 Havelock Ellis, an English psychologist, used the term "Narcissus-like" in reference to excessive masturbation, whereby the person becomes his or her own sex object.[1] In 1899, Paul Näcke was the first person to use the term "narcissism" in a study of sexual perversions.[4] Otto Rank in 1911 published the first psychoanalytical paper specifically concerned with narcissism, linking it to vanity and self-admiration.[1] Sigmund Freud published a paper on narcissism in 1914 called "On Narcissism: An Introduction".[5] In 1923, Martin Buber published an essay "Ich und Du" (I and Thou), in which he pointed out that our narcissism often leads us to relate to others as objects instead of as equals.[6] Traits and signs Life is a stage, and when the curtain falls upon an act, it is finished and forgotten. The emptiness of such a life is beyond imagination. —Alexander Lowen describing the existence of a narcissist[7] Four dimensions of narcissism as a personality variable have been delineated: leadership/authority, superiority/arrogance, self-absorption/self-admiration, and exploitativeness/entitlement.[8] Numerous studies (Miller & Campbell, 2008; Russ, Shedler, Bradley, & Westen, 2008; Wink, 1991) have demonstrated that narcissism has two or more variants, grandiose narcissism and vulnerable narcissism. The grandiose variant, which is usually measured using the NPI is strongly linked to the DSM-IV conceptualization and is the variant associated with NPD, a Cluster B personality disorder which reflect traits related to self-importance, entitlement, aggression, and dominance. Vulnerable narcissism reflects a defensive and fragile grandiosity, which functions mainly as a cover for feelings of inadequacy. Vulnerable narcissism characterized by hypersensitivity, defensiveness, and withdrawal and is strongly associated with BPD, which is characterized by the fear of abandonment, interpersonal and affective instability, impulsivity, chronic feelings of emptiness, suicidal ideation, and self-mutilation. Pathological narcissism is when both grandiose and vulnerable narcissism is concurrent, which is linked to poor self-esteem, lack of empathy, feelings of shame, interpersonal distress, aggression, and significant impairments in personality functioning across both clinical and non-clinical samples. Pathological narcissism, as measured by the Pathological Narcissism Inventory (PNI), is embedded within the personality disorders organized at the borderline level, which include antisocial, borderline, narcissistic personality disorders. PNI scales exhibited significant associations with parasuicidal behavior, suicide attempts, homicidal ideation, and several aspects of psychotherapy utilization.[9] Despite the phenomenological and empirical distinction between vulnerable and grandiose narcissism, there is experimental evidence from studies that have employed direct or indirect ego-threat to suggest that grandiose narcissists have also a fragile, vulnerable core.[10] Clinical and research aspects Narcissistic personality disorder Main article: Narcissistic personality disorder Narcissistic personality disorder affects an estimated 1% of the general population.[11][12] Although most individuals have some narcissistic traits, high levels of narcissism can manifest themselves in a pathological form as narcissistic personality disorder (NPD), whereby the individual overestimates his or her abilities and has an excessive need for admiration and affirmation. NPD was revised in the DSM-5. The general move towards a dimensional (personality trait-based) view of the Personality Disorders has been maintained. Some narcissists may have a limited or minimal capability to experience emotions.[13] Treatment and management The Cochrane Collaboration has commissioned two reviews of the evidence for psychological and medical treatments for Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD).[14] In both cases, they suspended their initiatives after the authors had made no progress in over a year. There are no clear treatment strategies for NPD.[15] neither medication nor psychotherapy.[16] There is evidence that therapies aimed at reducing narcissism are effective in the treatment of other personality disorders do not generalise to NPD.[17] Required element within normal development Karen Horney saw the narcissistic personality as a temperament trait molded by a certain kind of early environment. She did not see narcissistic needs and tendencies as inherent in human nature.[18] Normal or healthy narcissism is an essential component of mature self-esteem and basic self-worth.[19][20][21] Dr. Craig Malkin describes a lack of healthy narcissism as echoism, a term inspired by the nymph Echo in the mythology of Narcissus.[22] Freud said that narcissism was an original state from which the individual develops the love object.[23][qualify evidence] He argued that healthy narcissism is an essential part of normal development.[5] According to Freud, the love of the parents for their child and their attitude toward their child could be seen as a revival and reproduction of their own narcissism.[5] The child has a megalomaniac omnipotence of thought.[23] the parents stimulate that feeling because in their child they see the things that they have never reached themselves. Compared to neutral observers, parents tend to overvalue the qualities of their child. When parents act in an extreme opposite style and the child is rejected or inconsistently reinforced depending on the mood of the parent, the self-needs of the child are not met. [citation needed] Freud contrasted the natural development of active-egoistic and passive-altruistic tendencies in the individual with narcissism, in the former, and what Trevor Pederson referred to as echoism, in the latter.[24] This is the place for two remarks. First, how do we differentiate between the concepts of narcissism and egoism? Well, narcissism, I believe, is the libidinal complement to egoism. When we speak of egoism, we have in view only the individual's advantage; when we talk of narcissism we are also taking his libidinal satisfaction into account. As practical motives the two can be traced separately for quite a distance. It is possible to be absolutely egoistic and yet maintain powerful object-cathexes, in so far as libidinal satisfaction in relation to the object forms part of the ego's needs. In that case, egoism will see to it that striving for the object involves no damage to the ego. It is possible to be egoistic and at the same time to be excessively narcissistic—that is to say, to have very little need for an object, whether, once more, for the purpose of direct sexual satisfaction, or in connection with the higher aspirations, derived from sexual need, which we are occasionally in the habit of contrasting with 'sensuality' under the name of 'love'. In all these connections egoism is what is self-evident and constant, while narcissism is the variable element. The opposite to egoism, altruism, does not, as a concept, coincide with libidinal object-cathexis, but is distinguished from it by the absence of longings for sexual satisfaction. When someone is completely in love, however, altruism converges with libidinal object-cathexis. As a rule the sexual object attracts a portion of the ego's narcissism to itself, and this becomes noticeable as what is known as the 'sexual overvaluation' of the object. If in addition there is an altruistic transposition of egoism on to the sexual object, the object becomes supremely powerful; it has, as it were, absorbed the ego." (Freud, Introductory Lectures (1919), pp. 417–18) Where the egoist can give up love in narcissism, the altruist can give up on the competition, or "the will," in echoism. The individual first has a non-ambivalent relations of fusion with authority or love figures, which are characterized by the egoistic or altruistic drives. Second, the individual can move to defusion from authority or love figures which leads to repetitions of ambivalent, narcissistic or echoistic relations. In the third movement, the individual becomes the dead or absent parental figure that never returned love to the echoist, or the perfect, grandiose parental figure in narcissism.[24] While egoism and narcissism concern dynamics of power and inferiority/superiority, Pederson argues that altruism and echoism concern dynamics of belonging and inclusion/exclusion. Pederson has two types of echoists: the "subject altruist" and the "object altruist", with the former being concerned with the belonging of others and loving them, and the latter being concerned with their own belonging and being loved. The subject altruist is self-effacing, a people pleaser, and sacrifices her desire to help others who are outsiders become insiders, or to be the submissive helper of an insider. The object altruist is gregarious, a people person, and wants to be interesting which is based on wanting to fit in and not be an outsider or wanting to be unique as an insider. Both types of echoists show issues with being submissive, having problems saying no, and avoiding conflict.[24] In relation to the pathological condition Freud's idea of narcissism described a pathology which manifests itself in the inability to love others, a lack of empathy, emptiness, boredom, and an unremitting need to search for power, while making the person unavailable to others.[25] Healthy narcissism has to do with a strong feeling of "own love" protecting the human being against illness. Eventually, however, the individual must love the other, "the object love to not become ill". The individual becomes ill as a result of the frustration created when he is unable to love the object.[26][better source needed] In pathological narcissism such as the narcissistic personality disorder, the person's libido has been withdrawn from objects in the world and produces megalomania. The clinical theorists Kernberg, Kohut and Theodore Millon all saw pathological narcissism as a possible outcome in response to unempathic and inconsistent early childhood interactions. They suggested that narcissists try to compensate in adult relationships. [27] The pathological condition of narcissism is, as Freud suggested, a magnified, extreme manifestation of healthy narcissism. Healthy narcissism has been suggested to be correlated with good psychological health. Self-esteem works as a mediator between narcissism and psychological health. Therefore, because of their elevated self-esteem, deriving from self-perceptions of competence and likability, high narcissists are relatively free of worry and gloom.[28] Other researchers have suggested that healthy narcissism cannot be seen as 'good' or 'bad', but that it depends on the contexts and outcomes being measured. In certain social contexts such as initiating social relationships, and with certain outcome variables, such as feeling good about oneself, healthy narcissism can be helpful. In other contexts, such as maintaining long-term relationships and with outcome variables, such as accurate self-knowledge, healthy narcissism can be unhelpful.[29] Commonly used measures Narcissistic Personality Inventory Main article: Narcissistic Personality Inventory The Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) is the most widely used measure of narcissism in social psychological research. Although several versions of the literature, a forty-item forced-choice version (Raskin & Terry, 1988) is the one most commonly employed in current research. Another shorter version, a sixteen-item version NPI-16 (Ames, Rose & Anderson, 2013) is also present. The NPI is based on the DSM-III clinical criteria for narcissistic personality disorder (NPD), although it was designed to measure these features in the general population. Thus, the NPI is often said to measure "normal" or "subclinical" (borderline) narcissism (i.e., in people who score very high on the NPI do not necessarily meet criteria for diagnosis with NPD). Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory Main article: Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory The Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory (MCMI) is a widely used diagnostic test developed by Theodore Millon. The MCMI includes a scale for Narcissism. The NPI and MCMI have been found to be well correlated, r(146) = 0.55, p

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