

Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers Book

This is the e-book/pdf of the website. Words and terms in **bold** are further described in the book.

Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers

My name is **Danu Morrigan**, and I am so, so glad that you have found your way to my website, Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers. This means that you have already identified that something is/was wrong with the way your mother treated you, and have loved yourself enough to search for answers. This is HUGE. It means that you have already taken a big step on the journey of healing from being a daughter of a narcissistic mother.

You may have come here via search terms which did not involve any of the words like 'daughters of narcissistic mothers' or 'narcissistic personality disorder' or 'npd'.

In that case, it means that you don't yet know exactly why your mother is the way she is, you just know that your mother-daughter relationship is very flawed.

You will therefore find the information on this website to be hugely valuable in finally identifying what the problem is, in understanding both your mother's behaviour and your own dysfunctional patterns.

And that alone is very, very powerful. When I identified that my mother had Narcissistic Personality Disorder it was the most liberating thing ever! It made sense of so, so much.

I want this website to provide the same service for you.

But there's much more. I want it to be your guide as you go on what I call the **DONM Journey** - the path of euphoria, then sadness, bereavement, anger and so on that you experience.

And even more, this Daughters of Narcissistic Website and book is about healing from this. That's its main focus, indeed. All the other information is just to provide the understanding and knowledge needed before you can move on.

This is NOT about wallowing in the pain and hurt of being a daughter of a narcissistic mother. Not at all. It's about moving on, healing, and claiming your own self as the wonderful vibrant woman you really are.

It's a four-step journey:

1. First of all you find out more about **Narcissistic Personality Disorder** - or NPD as it's commonly referred to.
2. Then you learn about how it manifests itself specifically in **mothers with NPD**.
3. Then you learn more about the effects of being the **Daughter of a Narcissistic Mother**.
4. And then you're **ready to heal**. The resources I share are cutting-edge, powerful and gentle - and they work.

The motto of this website and book is: 'The Pain Stops Here'.

And if you choose to use the resources and information I share, that is so true for you.

As Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers we've suffered enough - you don't need to suffer any more. The pain stops here.

Narcissistic Personality Disorder

Before talking about Narcissistic Personality Disorder in detail, I need to explain what a Personality Disorder is.

There are many technical explanations which you will be able to find, but at its simplest, somebody with a Personality Disorder is someone who is somehow wired differently from the rest of us, and so they act in ways which are abnormal and dysfunctional by the standards of most humans.

These people are NOT insane. They are sane, and fully aware of what they do, and also are probably aware that society does not approve of these actions. But they don't care. They think the rules do not apply to them.

The DSM IV (i.e. the fourth edition of the American Psychiatric Association's ***Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders***) defines 10 different Personality Disorders, and Narcissistic Personality Disorder is one of those.

Having said that, it was only recognised since 1980. And in my experience, it's still very little known. This means that victims of Narcissists, both Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers and other victims such as spouses of Narcissists, can be living a nightmare without ever realising what's going on.

You can read about the **definition of Narcissistic Personality Disorder**, and the **traits of Narcissists** below.

There are official traits, but sometimes it's hard to relate those to real-life situations. I include specific examples to help you recognise it in the real world.

There is also a **spectrum to Narcissistic Personality Disorder**, and you might be able to identify where on it your mother is situated. I also invite you to read my page on **what causes NPD** - short answer is that nobody is sure entirely.

You might like to also read up on how to **diagnose Narcissistic Personality Disorder**, and read up on the possibilities for **treating NPD** (hint: very few!)

You will also need to know about **Narcissistic Supply** and **Narcissistic Rage** - if you're the Daughter of a Narcissistic Mother, you've been the first one, and no doubt experienced the second.

And very importantly, you'll need to know **how to recognise a narcissist**, and once you've done that, **how to deal with that same narcissist**.

Incidence of Narcissistic Personality Disorder

Nobody knows exactly what the incidence is. **Narcissists rarely present for therapy**. And of course, it's a **spectrum disorder** which makes it more difficult to know. But the estimates are between 0.6% and 1%.

Narcissism Definition

The Narcissism Definition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association's ***Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*** is as follows.

There are nine possible traits, and a person with genuine Narcissistic Personality Disorder will experience at least five of these to attain (if that's the right word) a complete Narcissism Definition.

A person with Narcissistic Personality Disorder:

1. has a grandiose sense of self-importance,
2. is preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love,
3. believes that he or she is "special" and unique,
4. requires excessive admiration,
5. has a sense of entitlement,
6. is interpersonally exploitative,
7. lacks empathy,
8. is often *envious* of others or believes others are *envious* of him or her,
9. shows arrogant, haughty behaviors or attitudes.

Now this information on narcissism definition is interesting enough, I think, but it doesn't give flesh to the whole horror of Narcissism.

Also while it might be easy for trained psychiatrists to use these traits as a narcissism definition, it's hard for laypeople like us to correlate them to our own mothers to see if she is probably narcissistic.

For example, what does being grandiose mean in real life? For some narcissists it means walking around like you're queen of the universe, expecting the world to arrange itself around you, having a superior smile and a patronising manner.

But for others, grandiosity might just manifest itself in your Narcissistic Mother expecting you to hang onto her every word. (I think that's what the case is with my own mother.)

Another disadvantage to this Narcissism Definition list is that we cannot see inside others' heads, and so can't know if our has a grandiose sense of self-importance, if she has fantasies of success etc, or if she believes she's special. It's her actions which will show that she has these thoughts and beliefs.

The other traits are actions, true, but it might help to have specific examples.

To see how these categories play out in real life, **read my page on Narcissism Traits.**

Narcissism Traits

Does your mother have any, or many narcissism traits? This is where you begin to see if your mother actually has narcissism characteristics, and consequently if you really are the Daughter of a Narcissistic Mother.

Now, of course, neither you nor I can accurately diagnose anybody else.

But I think it's fair to say that if your mother has the following narcissism traits, then at the very least the way she treats you is dysfunctional, and the healing help on this website will be valid and valuable for you.

And you know what they say: If it walks like a duck ...

Characteristics of Narcissistic Mothers

1. The most specific of the narcissism traits is that it is, always and forever, about her. End of. She has to always be the centre of attention. She hijacks your successes so she can brag to her friends, **but God forbid she shares your success with you**. She **feeds off your tragedies** - lovin' the drama.
2. Another major one of the signs of narcissism is that she **'gaslights'** - i.e. lies and denies. So many of the cruelties are sly and subtle that it's the cumulative effect which is devastating. But if you try to remind her of previous examples, to show a pattern, she'll deny flat out that they ever happened.
3. Another characteristic of a narcissistic mother is that she's always running you down, often subtly (maybe even by a glance or tone of voice) but equally often overtly.
4. She's extremely sensitive to criticism, no matter how mild. She falls into **rage** with you at the smallest provocation, even something simple as a request for better treatment.
5. But at the same time she's very, very critical of others. The snide comments and the constant running-down of everybody else is a classic among narcissism traits.
6. If she's an **engulfing mother**, then she displays narcissism traits by wilfully and consistently ignoring your boundaries: physical, mental and emotional.
7. If she's an **ignoring mother** she just, well, ignores you. You don't matter. You're just an audience for her. You don't exist as a real person to her.
8. She's clever. It's all subtle. She picks her moments so that there are no witnesses (or no witnesses not also under her dominion, e.g. an

enabling father). This makes it very, very hard to explain to others, and adds to the **crazy-making head-wreckingness** of it all.

9. She talks herself up as being a great mother. "I was so worried about you," she'll tell you, but you get a hollow feeling that it wasn't true. These things are easy to say after all, and require no action or effort.
10. She divides the family to conquer it. Her children might be **golden children or scapegoats**. Neither of these is a good position to be in. (Note: not all Narcissistic Mothers do this - mine didn't.)
11. She's envious of all of your good things, from successes to material things. **She'll try to spoil your pleasure** in these things to bring you down to earth.
12. She never, ever, ever gives a genuine apology. If forced she might say something like, "I'm sorry if you got upset," or similar non-apology. She's more likely to **deny that the offensive situation actually occurred by gaslighting you**.
13. Or another of the signs of narcissism is that she's very likely to blame you for whatever happened. She'll never accept responsibility. I complained to my mother once about the fact she talked all the time. Her reply? "Well, you make me so nervous that I talk all the time from nervousness." I had no answer to that, and to this day cannot think of a proper answer.
14. She'll never accept your genuine apology. Why would she? The one who's been offended has the moral high ground and accepting an apology loses that. So she'll say things like these two favourites of my mother's: "It's too late, you've ruined it now". Or a dismissive 'Hmph'.
15. She lacks empathy. She never feels for other people. Oh sure, she'll say the words: "Oh isn't that dreadful! Poor Mary." But there's no genuine empathy behind it. There may well be genuine emotion, but it'll be excitement as per item 1 above, rather than empathy - it's not just your dramas she feeds off, it's everybody's'.
16. But at the same time as lacking empathy, she's a great student of human emotion. She analyses us (us being the normal ones) all the better to manipulate us.

It reminds me of my dog. My dog studied me intently and knew that a certain shoes and jacket meant a walk and she could get excited. But high heels and handbag meant she wasn't coming out with me. She had no clue about why the different clothes meant different things, she just knew that they did.

Narcissists are the same. They don't experience emotion and don't understand it. But they can observe it and take advantage of it.

17. Depending on how far along the **Narcissism Spectrum** she is, she may well deliberately provoke you in order to hurt you, so she can feed on your pain. In this way she's a classic **Emotional Vampire**.
18. She's selfish. That goes without saying. There's never any genuine generosity. Any seeming generosity has an ulterior motive. Maybe it's so she can tell her friends about what she got you. Or maybe it's so she can throw it in your face at a later date. Or maybe it's a sly dig, e.g. a book on dieting.
19. On a similar note, Narcissists are notoriously bad gift-givers. It's a combination of being very stingy with money, and not knowing, or caring, enough about you to get you what you'd really like. The last presents from my mother were: an orange plastic necklace, and I NEVER wear orange, and a quite pretty beaded bracelet which was so small it would cut the circulation off a six-year old; a tea-plate sized lollipop for my son even though she KNOWS we try to eat healthily and he'd never be allowed it; and a flowery address book for my sister, the least flowery person you'd ever meet and one who has an electronic organiser anyway!
20. Having said that, they can use gifts of money to gain control over you, to make you dance to their tune. So on the face of it, these gifts seem very generous. But there are always huge **strings attached**.
21. She won't be thwarted. If you tell her 'No', she'll most likely find her way to doing it anyway, and normally in a way which manipulates you into accepting it, e.g. she asks can she bring a friend to your party, you say no, and she turns up with the friend anyway. Short of turning the innocent friend away, you're forced to accept this.
22. Her situation is always worse than yours. Even if you're very ill, her trauma of being the loving mother of an ill daughter is worse than yours of being the ill person.
23. She cannot accept ANY criticism, no matter how mild. She'll erupt in **Narcissistic Rage** if you try it. This makes **dealing with a Narcissist** a hugely difficult endeavour.
24. **She won't change**. Best knowledge about NPD is that she *can't* change.
25. She's a bully. The Narcissistic Mother (and all Narcissists for that matter) uses her **Narcissistic Rage** to cower you and terrorise you. And of course a mother with a small child is in an excellent position to do this. I was always so annoyed with myself that here I was, a successful articulate assertive woman, reduced to a lump of jelly around both her and my father.
26. She may have been neglectful, not giving you medical care when you needed it. Or not looking after you physically. I remember as a young girl, too young to be responsible for my own care, wearing the same

vest (undershirt) for months on end; it was literally grey. And I guess I mustn't have had a bath in all that time either or the vest would have been taken off me.

27. She may fail to protect you, by allowing (or, if you're the **scapegoat**, even encouraging) others to hurt you.
28. She may, if she's a **malignant narcissist**, even physically abuse you.
29. She's manipulative. "You'd do it if you loved me." My own mother, if challenged in such a way she couldn't escape otherwise, would just burst into tears and say, "You've upset me now". That being the point at which all useful communication stopped. My father, being an **enabling father**, would get angry at me for upsetting her, and I ended up being the bad guy again.
30. Or she might collapse in over-dramatic tears: "I'm sorry I'm such a bad mother," she'll sob, "You obviously think I'm the worst mother in the world! I wish I'd never brought you into this world to treat you so badly. I wish I'd never been born."

This has the perfect result of moving the discussion away from your legitimate grievance onto her upset and collapse. You may even end up reassuring her that she's not such a bad mother. Either way, it's back to being about her. Result!
31. Often they're total drama queens. They love drama and feed off others' dramas - both good and bad. And if there isn't enough drama happening, they'll even create their own, e.g. crashing the car, taking an 'accidental' overdose.
32. She can be very demanding. She doesn't request as much as demand. And woe betide you if you refuse her decree.
33. She may have done a thing called '**parentification**'. There's more information at that link but basically it means that instead of her looking after you, *you* looked after *her*.
34. As well, or instead, she may have **infantilised** you, i.e. kept you dependant on her so you'd never be able to leave her.
35. She's sly and dishonest. She may steal your money or belongings. She sees no boundaries between you and her, so what's yours is hers anyway, right? So in her own mind she's totally justified in doing this.
36. She may project her own neurosis onto you. So if she's worried about her weight, she's always on about *your* weight. That was something my own mother did all the time. I was the one who, she said, looked so like her, and she was always telling me about people who said it too. (In fairness, some people said it to me directly.) She wasn't confident about her own looks so when she said about me looking like her, she'd say,

"Poor you."

37. She's often very, very vain. My own mother didn't fall into this category at all, but many do. They are always perfectly dressed, maybe even overdressed for the occasion, wearing make-up and so on. These women tend to hate ageing and are prime candidates for cosmetic surgery. (Not that everyone who hates ageing and has cosmetic surgery is Narcissistic!)

38. She interferes in your relationships. She doesn't want anybody else to be happy without her, because happiness without her presence means she's - gasp! - not the centre of the universe. So she might stir it, sly underminings of your husband maybe, "He's not a very good provider, is he?"

A classic is to keep you and your siblings at logger-heads. That way she retains control. She will talk about each of you to the others. She's like a spider at the centre of a web, manipulating you all. This is called **triangulation**.

39. She can be very rude and haughty to people she believes to be below her on the social spectrum, e.g. waiters in restaurants or shop staff. Again, not every Narcissist is like this - my own mother is not. But many are.

40. On a similar note, narcissists can be obsequious to the point of embarrassment to people they judge as being their superiors, whether that's socially or in their workplace.

41. Yet another of these narcissism traits is that they have no sense of humour. They certainly never, ever, EVER laugh at themselves. And God forbid you ever laugh at them, no matter how kindly and how gently - out comes the **narcissistic** rage again.

My mother, a devout Catholic, met an English Protestant family whilst on holiday. She said to me, of them, "And they had a really good sense of humour for Protestants". I had to laugh at that! I said, "Mother, your prejudices are showing". Whereupon she snapped viciously, "Danu, that's enough!"

But not only do they not laugh at themselves, but they've no genuine sense of humour about, well, humour. They just miss the joke somehow.

Having said that, they DO like slapstick humour. People slipping on banana-skins - well, they find that *hilarious*. But subtle, clever humour - forget it.

42. She has a sense of entitlement. Just because. She's the original "Because I'm worth it," woman. Except that she wouldn't even have to say that, because the question of whether she's worth it just wouldn't

arise.

43. She might **be overtly and inappropriately sexual** - flirting with boyfriends you bring home, for example. Thank Heavens my own mother never did that, but I've heard from enough other Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers about their mothers doing that.

44. She judges people as being good or bad based on whether they agree with her or not. So, normal people could think of somebody: "I totally disagree with his religious beliefs, politics and economic beliefs. But he's a very good man".

Not your Narcissistic Mother! Her philosophy is, "If you agree with me, you're good. If you don't, you're bad".

It can also happen that somebody who was previously 'good' disagrees with her on something and is changed immediately into being 'bad' and is thrown into the outer wilderness, metaphorically. (And of course, in her mind, being thrown out of her circle is the *ultimate* punishment!)

Another excellent list of characteristics of narcissistic mothers was hosted on Geocities - but that link along with the rest of Geocities is gone. So I am replicating it here as it's too good to lose. Unfortunately I don't know who wrote this wonderful essay on the characteristics of narcissistic mothers, so I can't ask permission. If the copyright-holder wishes to contact me I will give her full attribution or remove it as per her wishes.

There is a certain amount of overlap with the information above, but there's a lot of good separate information too.

Here is the article:

It's about secret things. The Destructive Narcissistic Parent creates a child that only exists to be an extension of her self. It's about body language. It's about disapproving glances. It's about vocal tone. It's very intimate. And it's very powerful. It's part of who the child is. ~ Chris

1. Everything she does is deniable. There is always a facile excuse or an explanation. Cruelties are couched in loving terms. Aggressive and hostile acts are paraded as thoughtfulness. Selfish manipulations are presented as gifts. Criticism and slander is slyly disguised as concern. She only wants what is best for you. She only wants to help you.

She rarely says right out that she thinks you're inadequate. Instead, any time that you tell her you've done something good, she counters with something your sibling did that was better or she simply ignores you or she hears you out without saying anything, then in a short time does something cruel to you so you understand not to get above yourself. She will carefully separate cause (your joy in your accomplishment) from effect (refusing to let you borrow the

car to go to the awards ceremony) by enough time that someone who didn't live through her abuse would never believe the connection.

Many of her putdowns are simply by comparison. She'll talk about how wonderful someone else is or what a wonderful job they did on something you've also done or how highly she thinks of them. The contrast is left up to you. She has let you know that you're no good without saying a word.

She'll spoil your pleasure in something by simply congratulating you for it in an angry, envious voice that conveys how unhappy she is, again, completely deniably. It is impossible to confront someone over their tone of voice, their demeanor or the way they look at you, but once your narcissistic mother has you trained, she can promise terrible punishment without a word. As a result, you're always afraid, always in the wrong, and can never exactly put your finger on why.

Because her abusiveness is part of a lifelong campaign of control and because she is careful to rationalize her abuse, it is extremely difficult to explain to other people what is so bad about her.

She's also careful about when and how she engages in her abuses. She's very secretive, a characteristic of almost all abusers ("Don't wash our dirty laundry in public!") and will punish you for telling anyone else what she's done. The times and locations of her worst abuses are carefully chosen so that no one who might intervene will hear or see her bad behavior, and she will seem like a completely different person in public.

She'll slam you to other people, but will always embed her devaluing nuggets of snide gossip in protestations of concern, love and understanding ("I feel so sorry for poor Cynthia. She always seems to have such a hard time, but I just don't know what I can do for her!") As a consequence the children of narcissists universally report that no one believes them ("I have to tell you that she always talks about YOU in the most caring way!). Unfortunately therapists, given the deniable actions of the narcissist and eager to defend a fellow parent, will often jump to the narcissist's defense as well, reinforcing your sense of isolation and helplessness ("I'm sure she didn't mean it like that!")

2. She violates your boundaries. You feel like an extension of her. Your property is given away without your consent, sometimes in front of you. Your food is eaten off your plate or given to others off your plate. Your property may be repossessed and no reason given other than that it was never yours. Your time is committed without consulting you, and opinions purported to be yours are expressed for you. (She LOVES going to the fair! He would never want anything like that. She wouldn't like kumquats.)

You are discussed in your presence as though you are not there. She keeps tabs on your bodily functions and humiliates you by divulging the information she gleans, especially when it can be used to demonstrate her devotion and highlight her martyrdom to your needs ("Mike had that problem with frequent urination too, only his was much worse. I was so worried about him!") You

have never known what it is like to have privacy in the bathroom or in your bedroom, and she goes through your things regularly. She asks nosy questions, snoops into your email/letters/diary/ conversations. She will want to dig into your feelings, particularly painful ones and is always looking for negative information on you which can be used against you. She does things against your expressed wishes frequently. All of this is done without seeming embarrassment or thought.

Any attempt at autonomy on your part is strongly resisted. Normal rites of passage (learning to shave, wearing makeup, dating) are grudgingly allowed only if you insist, and you're punished for your insistence ("Since you're old enough to date, I think you're old enough to pay for your own clothes!") If you demand age-appropriate clothing, grooming, control over your own life, or rights, you are difficult and she ridicules your "independence."

3. She favoritizes. Narcissistic mothers commonly choose one (sometimes more) child to be the golden child and one (sometimes more) to be the scapegoat. The narcissist identifies with the golden child and provides privileges to him or her as long as the golden child does just as she wants. The golden child has to be cared for assiduously by everyone in the family. The scapegoat has no needs and instead gets to do the caring. The golden child can do nothing wrong. The scapegoat is always at fault. This creates divisions between the children, one of whom has a large investment in the mother being wise and wonderful, and the other(s) who hate her. That division will be fostered by the narcissist with lies and with blatantly unfair and favoritizing behavior. The golden child will defend the mother and indirectly perpetuate the abuse by finding reasons to blame the scapegoat for the mother's actions. The golden child may also directly take on the narcissistic mother's tasks by physically abusing the scapegoat so the narcissistic mother doesn't have to do that herself.

4. She undermines. Your accomplishments are acknowledged only to the extent that she can take credit for them. Any success or accomplishment for which she cannot take credit is ignored or diminished. Any time you are to be center stage and there is no opportunity for her to be the center of attention, she will try to prevent the occasion altogether, or she doesn't come, or she leaves early, or she acts like it's no big deal, or she steals the spotlight or she slips in little wounding comments about how much better someone else did or how what you did wasn't as much as you could have done or as you think it is. She undermines you by picking fights with you or being especially unpleasant just before you have to make a major effort. She acts put out if she has to do anything to support your opportunities or will outright refuse to do even small things in support of you. She will be nasty to you about things that are peripherally connected with your successes so that you find your joy in what you've done is tarnished, without her ever saying anything directly about it. No matter what your success, she has to take you down a peg about it.

5. She demeans, criticizes and denigrates. She lets you know in all sorts of little ways that she thinks less of you than she does of your siblings or of other

people in general. If you complain about mistreatment by someone else, she will take that person's side even if she doesn't know them at all. She doesn't care about those people or the justice of your complaints. She just wants to let you know that you're never right.

She will deliver generalized barbs that are almost impossible to rebut (always in a loving, caring tone): "You were always difficult" "You can be very difficult to love" "You never seemed to be able to finish anything" "You were very hard to live with" "You're always causing trouble" "No one could put up with the things you do."

She will deliver slams in a sidelong way - for example she'll complain about how "no one" loves her, does anything for her, or cares about her, or she'll complain that "everyone" is so selfish, when you're the only person in the room. As always, this combines criticism with deniability.

She will slip little comments into conversation that she really enjoyed something she did with someone else - something she did with you too, but didn't like as much. She'll let you know that her relationship with some other person you both know is wonderful in a way your relationship with her isn't - the carefully unspoken message being that you don't matter much to her.

She minimizes, discounts or ignores your opinions and experiences. Your insights are met with condescension, denials and accusations ("I think you read too much!") and she will brush off your information even on subjects on which you are an acknowledged expert. Whatever you say is met with smirks and amused sounding or exaggerated exclamations ("Uh hunh!" "You don't say!" "Really!"). She'll then make it clear that she didn't listen to a word you said.

6. She makes you look crazy. If you try to confront her about something she's done, she'll tell you that you have "a very vivid imagination" (this is a phrase commonly used by abusers of all sorts to invalidate your experience of their abuse) that you don't know what you're talking about, or that she has no idea what you're talking about. She will claim not to remember even very memorable events, flatly denying they ever happened, nor will she ever acknowledge any possibility that she might have forgotten. This is an extremely aggressive and exceptionally infuriating tactic called "gaslighting," common to abusers of all kinds. Your perceptions of reality are continually undermined so that you end up without any confidence in your intuition, your memory or your powers of reasoning. This makes you a much better victim for the abuser.

Narcissists gaslight routinely. The narcissist will either insinuate or will tell you outright that you're unstable, otherwise you wouldn't believe such ridiculous things or be so uncooperative. You're oversensitive. You're imagining things. You're hysterical. You're completely unreasonable. You're over-reacting, like you always do. She'll talk to you when you've calmed down and aren't so irrational. She may even characterize you as being neurotic or psychotic.

Once she's constructed these fantasies of your emotional pathologies, she'll tell others about them, as always, presenting her smears as expressions of concern and declaring her own helpless victimhood. She didn't do anything. She has no idea why you're so irrationally angry with her. You've hurt her terribly. She thinks you may need psychotherapy. She loves you very much and would do anything to make you happy, but she just doesn't know what to do. You keep pushing her away when all she wants to do is help you.

She has simultaneously absolved herself of any responsibility for your obvious antipathy towards her, implied that it's something fundamentally wrong with you that makes you angry with her, and undermined your credibility with her listeners. She plays the role of the doting mother so perfectly that no one will believe you.

7. She's envious. Any time you get something nice she's angry and envious and her envy will be apparent when she admires whatever it is. She'll try to get it from you, spoil it for you, or get the same or better for herself. She's always working on ways to get what other people have. The envy of narcissistic mothers often includes competing sexually with their daughters or daughters-in-law. They'll attempt to forbid their daughters to wear makeup, to groom themselves in an age-appropriate way or to date. They will criticize the appearance of their daughters and daughters-in-law. This envy extends to relationships. Narcissistic mothers infamously attempt to damage their children's marriages and interfere in the upbringing of their grandchildren.

8. She's a liar in too many ways to count. Any time she talks about something that has emotional significance for her, it's a fair bet that she's lying. Lying is one way that she creates conflict in the relationships and lives of those around her - she'll lie to them about what other people have said, what they've done, or how they feel. She'll lie about her relationship with them, about your behavior or about your situation in order to inflate herself and to undermine your credibility.

The narcissist is very careful about how she lies. To outsiders she'll lie thoughtfully and deliberately, always in a way that can be covered up if she's confronted with her lie. She spins what you said rather than makes something up wholesale. She puts dishonest interpretations on things you actually did. If she's recently done something particularly egregious she may engage in preventative lying: she lies in advance to discount what you might say before you even say it. Then when you talk about what she did you'll be cut off with "I already know all about it...your mother told me... (self-justifications and lies)." Because she is so careful about her deniability, it may be very hard to catch her in her lies and the more gullible of her friends may never realize how dishonest she is.

To you, she'll lie blatantly. She will claim to be unable to remember bad things she has done, even if she did one of them recently and even if it was something very memorable. Of course, if you try to jog her memory by recounting the circumstances "You have a very vivid imagination" or "That was so long ago. Why do you have to dredge up your old grudges?" Your

conversations with her are full of casual brush-offs and diversionary lies and she doesn't respect you enough to bother making it sound good. For example she'll start with a self-serving lie: "If I don't take you as a dependent on my taxes I'll lose three thousand dollars!" You refute her lie with an obvious truth: "No, three thousand dollars is the amount of the dependent exemption. You'll only lose about eight hundred dollars." Her response: "Isn't that what I said?" You are now in a game with only one rule: You can't win.

On the rare occasions she is forced to acknowledge some bad behavior, she will couch the admission deniably. She "guesses" that "maybe" she "might have" done something wrong. The wrongdoing is always heavily spun and trimmed to make it sound better. The words "I guess," "maybe," and "might have" are in and of themselves lies because she knows exactly what she did - no guessing, no might haves, no maybes.

9. She has to be the center of attention all the time. This need is a defining trait of narcissists and particularly of narcissistic mothers for whom their children exist to be sources of attention and adoration. Narcissistic mothers love to be waited on and often pepper their children with little requests. "While you're up..." or its equivalent is one of their favorite phrases. You couldn't just be assigned a chore at the beginning of the week or of the day, instead, you had to do it on demand, preferably at a time that was inconvenient for you, or you had to "help" her do it, fetching and carrying for her while she made up to herself for the menial work she had to do as your mother by glorying in your attentions.

A narcissistic mother may create odd occasions at which she can be the center of attention, such as memorials for someone close to her who died long ago, or major celebrations of small personal milestones. She may love to entertain so she can be the life of her own party. She will try to steal the spotlight or will try to spoil any occasion where someone else is the center of attention, particularly the child she has cast as the scapegoat. She often invites herself along where she isn't welcome. If she visits you or you visit her, you are required to spend all your time with her. Entertaining herself is unthinkable. She has always pouted, manipulated or raged if you tried to do anything without her, didn't want to entertain her, refused to wait on her, stymied her plans for a drama or otherwise deprived her of attention.

Older narcissistic mothers often use the natural limitations of aging to manipulate dramas, often by neglecting their health or by doing things they know will make them ill. This gives them the opportunity to cash in on the investment they made when they trained you to wait on them as a child. Then they call you (or better still, get the neighbor or the nursing home administrator to call you) demanding your immediate attendance. You are to rush to her side, pat her hand, weep over her pain and listen sympathetically to her unending complaints about how hard and awful it is. ("Never get old!") It's almost never the case that you can actually do anything useful, and the causes of her disability may have been completely avoidable, but you've been put in an extremely difficult position. If you don't provide the audience and attention she's manipulating to get, you look extremely bad to everyone else and may even have legal culpability. (Narcissistic behaviors commonly

accompany Alzheimer's disease, so this behavior may also occur in perfectly normal mothers as they age.)

10. She manipulates your emotions in order to feed on your pain. This exceptionally sick and bizarre behavior is so common among narcissistic mothers that their children often call them "emotional vampires." Some of this emotional feeding comes in the form of pure sadism. She does and says things just to be wounding or she engages in tormenting teasing or she needles you about things you're sensitive about, all the while a smile plays over her lips. She may have taken you to scary movies or told you horrifying stories, then mocked you for being a baby when you cried, She will slip a wounding comment into conversation and smile delightedly into your hurt face. You can hear the laughter in her voice as she pressures you or says distressing things to you. Later she'll gloat over how much she upset you, gaily telling other people that you're so much fun to tease, and recruiting others to share in her amusement. . She enjoys her cruelties and makes no effort to disguise that. She wants you to know that your pain entertains her. She may bring up subjects that are painful for you and probe you about them, all the while watching you carefully. This is emotional vampirism in its purest form. She's feeding emotionally off your pain.

A peculiar form of this emotional vampirism combines attention-seeking behavior with a demand that the audience suffer. Since narcissistic mothers often play the martyr this may take the form of wrenching, self-pitying dramas which she carefully produces, and in which she is the star performer. She sobs and wails that no one loves her and everyone is so selfish, and she doesn't want to live, she wants to die! She wants to die! She will not seem to care how much the manipulation of their emotions and the self-pity repels other people. One weird behavior that is very common to narcissists: her dramas may also center around the tragedies of other people, often relating how much she suffered by association and trying to distress her listeners, as she cries over the horrible murder of someone she wouldn't recognize if they had passed her on the street.

11. She's selfish and willful. She always makes sure she has the best of everything. She insists on having her own way all the time and she will ruthlessly, manipulatively pursue it, even if what she wants isn't worth all the effort she's putting into it and even if that effort goes far beyond normal behavior. She will make a huge effort to get something you denied her, even if it was entirely your right to do so and even if her demand was selfish and unreasonable. If you tell her she cannot bring her friends to your party she will show up with them anyway, and she will have told them that they were invited so that you either have to give in, or be the bad guy to these poor dupes on your doorstep. If you tell her she can't come over to your house tonight she'll call your spouse and try get him or her to agree that she can, and to not say anything to you about it because it's a "surprise." She has to show you that you can't tell her "no."

One near-universal characteristic of narcissists: because they are so selfish and self-centered, they are very bad gift givers. They'll give you hand-me-

downs or market things for themselves as gifts for you ("I thought I'd give you my old bicycle and buy myself a new one!" "I know how much you love Italian food, so I'm going to take you to my favorite restaurant for your birthday!") New gifts are often obviously cheap and are usually things that don't suit you or that you can't use or are a quid pro quo: if you buy her the gift she wants, she will buy you an item of your choice. She'll make it clear that it pains her to give you anything. She may buy you a gift and get the identical item for herself, or take you shopping for a gift and get herself something nice at the same time to make herself feel better.

12. She's self-absorbed. Her feelings, needs and wants are very important; yours are insignificant to the point that her least whim takes precedence over your most basic needs. Her problems deserve your immediate and full attention; yours are brushed aside. Her wishes always take precedence; if she does something for you, she reminds you constantly of her munificence in doing so and will often try to extract some sort of payment. She will complain constantly, even though your situation may be much worse than hers. If you point that out, she will effortlessly, thoughtlessly brush it aside as of no importance (It's easy for you.../It's different for you...).

13. She is insanely defensive and is extremely sensitive to any criticism. If you criticize her or defy her she will explode with fury, threaten, storm, rage, destroy and may become violent, beating, confining, putting her child outdoors in bad weather or otherwise engaging in classic physical abuse.

14. She terrorized. For all abusers, fear is a powerful means of control of the victim, and your narcissistic mother used it ruthlessly to train you. Narcissists teach you to beware their wrath even when they aren't present. The only alternative is constant placation. If you give her everything she wants all the time, you might be spared. If you don't, the punishments will come. Even adult children of narcissists still feel that carefully inculcated fear. Your narcissistic mother can turn it on with a silence or a look that tells the child in you she's thinking about how she's going to get even.

Not all narcissists abuse physically, but most do, often in subtle, deniable ways. It allows them to vent their rage at your failure to be the solution to their internal havoc and simultaneously to teach you to fear them. You may not have been beaten, but you were almost certainly left to endure physical pain when a normal mother would have made an effort to relieve your misery. This deniable form of battery allows her to store up her rage and dole out the punishment at a later time when she's worked out an airtight rationale for her abuse, so she never risks exposure. You were left hungry because "you eat too much." (Someone asked her if she was pregnant. She isn't). You always went to school with stomach flu because "you don't have a fever. You're just trying to get out of school." (She resents having to take care of you. You have a lot of nerve getting sick and adding to her burdens.) She refuses to look at your bloody heels and instead the shoes that wore those blisters on your heels are put back on your feet and you're sent to the store in them because "You wanted those shoes. Now you can wear them." (You said the ones she wanted

to get you were ugly. She liked them because they were just like what she wore 30 years ago). The dentist was told not to give you Novocaine when he drilled your tooth because "he has to learn to take better care of his teeth." (She has to pay for a filling and she's furious at having to spend money on you.)

Narcissistic mothers also abuse by loosing others on you or by failing to protect you when a normal mother would have. Sometimes the narcissist's golden child will be encouraged to abuse the scapegoat. Narcissists also abuse by exposing you to violence. If one of your siblings got beaten, she made sure you saw. She effortlessly put the fear of Mom into you, without raising a hand.

15. She's infantile and petty. Narcissistic mothers are often simply childish. If you refuse to let her manipulate you into doing something, she will cry that you don't love her because if you loved her you would do as she wanted. If you hurt her feelings she will aggressively whine to you that you'll be sorry when she's dead that you didn't treat her better. These babyish complaints and responses may sound laughable, but the narcissist is dead serious about them. When you were a child, if you ask her to stop some bad behavior, she would justify it by pointing out something that you did that she feels is comparable, as though the childish behavior of a child is justification for the childish behavior of an adult. "Getting even" is a large part of her dealings with you. Anytime you fail to give her the deference, attention or service she feels she deserves, or you thwart her wishes, she has to show you.

16. She's aggressive and shameless. She doesn't ask. She demands. She makes outrageous requests and she'll take anything she wants if she thinks she can get away with it. Her demands of her children are posed in a very aggressive way, as are her criticisms. She won't take no for an answer, pushing and arm-twisting and manipulating to get you to give in.

17. She "parentifies." She shed her responsibilities to you as soon as she was able, leaving you to take care of yourself as best you could. She denied you medical care, adequate clothing, necessary transportation or basic comforts that she would never have considered giving up for herself. She never gave you a birthday party or let you have sleepovers. Your friends were never welcome in her house. She didn't like to drive you anywhere, so you turned down invitations because you had no way to get there. She wouldn't buy your school pictures even if she could easily have afforded it. You had a niggardly clothing allowance or she bought you the cheapest clothing she could without embarrassing herself. As soon as you got a job, every request for school supplies, clothing or toiletries was met with "Now that you're making money, why don't you pay for that yourself?" You studied up on colleges on your own and choose a cheap one without visiting it. You signed yourself up for the SATs, earned the money to pay for them and talked someone into driving you to the test site. You worked three jobs to pay for that cheap college and when you finally got mononucleosis she chirped at you that she was "so happy you could take care of yourself."

She also gave you tasks that were rightfully hers and should not have been placed on a child. You may have been a primary caregiver for young siblings or an incapacitated parent. You may have had responsibility for excessive household tasks. Above all, you were always her emotional caregiver which is one reason any defection from that role caused such enormous eruptions of rage. You were never allowed to be needy or have bad feelings or problems. Those experiences were only for her, and you were responsible for making it right for her. From the time you were very young she would randomly lash out at you any time she was stressed or angry with your father or felt that life was unfair to her, because it made her feel better to hurt you. You were often punished out of the blue, for manufactured offenses. As you got older she directly placed responsibility for her welfare and her emotions on you, weeping on your shoulder and unloading on you any time something went awry for her.

18. She's exploitative. She will manipulate to get work, money, or objects she envies out of other people for nothing. This includes her children, of course. If she set up a bank account for you, she was trustee on the account with the right to withdraw money. As you put money into it, she took it out. She may have stolen your identity. She took you as a dependent on her income taxes so you couldn't file independently without exposing her to criminal penalties. If she made an agreement with you, it was violated the minute it no longer served her needs. If you brought it up demanding she adhere to the agreement, she brushed you off and later punished you so you would know not to defy her again.

Sometimes the narcissist will exploit a child to absorb punishment that would have been hers from an abusive partner. The husband comes home in a drunken rage, and the mother immediately complains about the child's bad behavior so the rage is vented on to the child. Sometimes the narcissistic mother simply uses the child to keep a sick marriage intact because the alternative is being divorced or having to go to work. The child is sexually molested but the mother never notices, or worse, calls the child a liar when she tells the mother about the molestation.

19. She projects. This sounds a little like psycho-babble, but it is something that narcissists all do. Projection means that she will put her own bad behavior, character and traits on you so she can deny them in herself and punish you. This can be very difficult to see if you have traits that she can project on to. An eating-disordered woman who obsesses over her daughter's weight is projecting. The daughter may not realize it because she has probably internalized an absurdly thin vision of women's weight and so accepts her mother's projection. When the narcissist tells the daughter that she eats too much, needs to exercise more, or has to wear extra-large size clothes, the daughter believes it, even if it isn't true. However, she will sometimes project even though it makes no sense at all. This happens when she feels shamed and needs to put it on her scapegoat child and the projection therefore comes across as being an attack out of the blue. For example: She makes an outrageous request, and you casually refuse to let her have her way. She's enraged by your refusal and snarls at you that you'll talk about it when you've calmed down and are no longer hysterical.

You aren't hysterical at all; she is, but your refusal has made her feel the shame that should have stopped her from making shameless demands in the first place. That's intolerable. She can transfer that shame to you and rationalize away your response: you only refused her because you're so unreasonable. Having done that she can reassert her shamelessness and indulge her childish willfulness by turning an unequivocal refusal into a subject for further discussion. You'll talk about it again "later" - probably when she's worn you down with histrionics, pouting and the silent treatment so you're more inclined to do what she wants.

20. She is never wrong about anything. No matter what she's done, she won't ever genuinely apologize for anything. Instead, any time she feels she is being made to apologize she will sulk and pout, issue an insulting apology or negate the apology she has just made with justifications, qualifications or self pity: "I'm sorry you felt that I humiliated you" "I'm sorry if I made you feel bad" "If I did that it was wrong" "I'm sorry, but I there's nothing I can do about it" "I'm sorry I made you feel clumsy, stupid and disgusting" "I'm sorry but it was just a joke. You're so over-sensitive" "I'm sorry that my own child feels she has to upset me and make me feel bad." The last insulting apology is also an example of projection.

21. She seems to have no awareness that other people even have feelings. She'll occasionally slip and say something jaw-droppingly callous because of this lack of empathy. It isn't that she doesn't care at all about other people's feelings, though she doesn't. It would simply never occur to her to think about their feelings. An absence of empathy is the defining trait of a narcissist and underlies most of the other traits I have described. Unlike psychopaths, narcissists do understand right, wrong, and consequences, so they are not ordinarily criminal. She beat you, but not to the point where you went to the hospital. She left you standing out in the cold until you were miserable, but not until you had hypothermia. She put you in the basement in the dark with no clothes on, but she only left you there for two hours.

22. She blames. She'll blame you for everything that isn't right in her life or for what other people do or for whatever has happened. Always, she'll blame you for her abuse. You made her do it. If only you weren't so difficult. You upset her so much that she can't think straight. Things were hard for her and your backtalk pushed her over the brink. This blaming is often so subtle that all you know is that you thought you were wronged and now you feel guilty. Your brother beats you and her response is to bemoan how uncivilized children are. Your boyfriend dumped you, but she can understand - after all, she herself has seen how difficult you are to love. She'll do something egregiously exploitative to you, and when confronted will screech at you that she can't believe you were so selfish as to upset her over such a trivial thing. She'll also blame you for your reaction to her selfish, cruel and exploitative behavior. She can't believe you are so petty, so small, and so childish as to object to her giving your favorite dress to her friend. She thought you would be happy to let her do something nice for someone else.

Narcissists are masters of multitasking as this example shows. Simultaneously your narcissistic mother is 1) Lying. She knows what she did was wrong and she knows your reaction is reasonable. 2) Manipulating. She's making you look like the bad guy for objecting to her cruelties. 3) Being selfish. She doesn't mind making you feel horrible as long as she gets her own way. 4) Blaming. She did something wrong, but it's all your fault. 5) Projecting. Her petty, small and childish behavior has become yours. 6) Putting on a self-pitying drama. She's a martyr who believed the best of you, and you've let her down. 7) Parentifying. You're responsible for her feelings, she has no responsibility for yours.

23. She destroys your relationships. Narcissistic mothers are like tornadoes: wherever they touch down families are torn apart and wounds are inflicted. Unless the father has control over the narcissist and holds the family together, adult siblings in families with narcissistic mothers characteristically have painful relationships. Typically all communication between siblings is superficial and driven by duty, or they may never talk to each other at all. In part, these women foster dissension between their children because they enjoy the control it gives them. If those children don't communicate except through the mother, she can decide what everyone hears. Narcissists also love the excitement and drama they create by interfering in their children's lives. Watching people's lives explode is better than soap operas, especially when you don't have any empathy for their misery.

The narcissist nurtures anger, contempt and envy - the most corrosive emotions - to drive her children apart. While her children are still living at home, any child who stands up to the narcissist guarantees punishment for the rest. In her zest for revenge, the narcissist purposefully turns the siblings' anger on the dissenter by including everyone in her retaliation. ("I can see that nobody here loves me! Well I'll just take these Christmas presents back to the store. None of you would want anything I got you anyway!") The other children, long trained by the narcissist to give in, are furious with the troublemaking child, instead of with the narcissist who actually deserves their anger.

The narcissist also uses favoritism and gossip to poison her childrens' relationships. The scapegoat sees the mother as a creature of caprice and cruelty. As is typical of the privileged, the other children don't see her unfairness and they excuse her abuses. Indeed, they are often recruited by the narcissist to adopt her contemptuous and entitled attitude towards the scapegoat and with her tacit or explicit permission, will inflict further abuse. The scapegoat predictably responds with fury and equal contempt. After her children move on with adult lives, the narcissist makes sure to keep each apprised of the doings of the others, passing on the most discreditable and juicy gossip (as always, disguised as "concern") about the other children, again, in a way that engenders contempt rather than compassion.

Having been raised by a narcissist, her children are predisposed to be envious, and she takes full advantage of the opportunity that presents. While she may never praise you to your face, she will likely crow about your victories to the very sibling who is not doing well. She'll tell you about the generosity she displayed towards that child, leaving you wondering why you got left out and

irrationally angry at the favored child rather than at the narcissist who told you about it.

The end result is a family in which almost all communication is triangular. The narcissist, the spider in the middle of the family web, sensitively monitors all the children for information she can use to retain her unchallenged control over the family. She then passes that on to the others, creating the resentments that prevent them from communicating directly and freely with each other. The result is that the only communication between the children is through the narcissist, exactly the way she wants it.

24. As a last resort she goes pathetic. When she's confronted with unavoidable consequences for her own bad behavior, including your anger, she will melt into a soggy puddle of weepy helplessness. It's all her fault. She can't do anything right. She feels so bad. What she doesn't do: own the responsibility for her bad conduct and make it right. Instead, as always, it's all about her, and her helpless self-pitying weepiness dumps the responsibility for her consequences AND for her unhappiness about it on you. As so often with narcissists, it is also a manipulative behavior. If you fail to excuse her bad behavior and make her feel better, YOU are the bad person for being cold, heartless and unfeeling when your poor mother feels so awful.

Narcissism Spectrum

This is my own way of looking at the narcissism spectrum. I think it makes a very workable model. It ties in, too, to the different **forms of abuse** that Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers can experience.

There are four stages in the narcissism spectrum:

1. Healthy, normal, natural narcissism
2. Narcissistic traits in otherwise normal people
3. Fully blown Narcissistic Personality Disorder
4. Malignant Narcissism

Healthy Normal Natural Narcissism

We all need a certain amount of normal natural narcissism, otherwise we'd just be jellyfish. This healthy narcissism is what causes us to look after ourselves, to stand up for ourselves. It's what makes us love ourselves.

Ironically, this is often missing, to a greater or lesser extent, in Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers. Our mothers had too much, we have too little. It's not surprising - people learn healthy narcissism from being treated right as babies and children - and we DOMNs did not experience that. **It's why we struggle** so much with loving ourselves and with appropriate self-care. It's why we often loathe ourselves and have such low self-esteem.

One of the major goals of this website is to help DOMNs learn to love themselves, esteem themselves, and care for themselves.

Narcissistic traits in otherwise normal people

Many people can pick up **narcissistic traits**, e.g. talking too much, dominating conversations etc. The difference between them and genuine NPDs is that they will try to change if they're picked up on it, they won't be totally defensive about it - they may not like it, but they won't go into full **narcissistic rage** about it, and they accept your right to question them.

Again ironically, daughters of narcissistic mothers can often have some narcissistic traits. It's not surprising; after all, we learned how to relate from our parents, same as everybody else. It's just that we learned narcissistic and dysfunctional ways.

One example from my own life: I had a habit, if my husband annoyed me, of just going into a really obvious sulk, and then he would have to cajole me and dance attendance on me to try to figure out what he'd done wrong - and boy would I make him work for it, before I'd tell him.

Of course, that's exactly what my mother would always do, and that's the 'relationship skills' I had learned.

Luckily I realised early on in our relationship that this behaviour was very unfair, that it did not belong in an adult, mature, equal relationship, and that it demeaned both me and him. And I stopped it. It was difficult, because my default action was to behave like this, and I had to learn a whole new way of being.

But the point is, since I'm not a genuine Narcissist, I was *able to recognise* that this behaviour was wrong, I had the *desire to change* it, and I had the *ability to change* it.

Fully blown Narcissistic Personality Disorder

This is where the person has all the genuine **narcissism traits** described in its own section. This person is a full-blown Narcissist.

However, unlike the Malignant Narcissist below, this person will not deliberately go out of her way to hurt you. There's a line out of an Irish song that I think applies very well here: "When we've got all we want, we're as quiet as can be ..."

Once this type of Narcissist is getting all the **Narcissistic Supply** she needs, and is the centre of attention, and you're giving her enough deference, and not challenging her at all - well, she'll be calm and even quite pleasant to be around.

You're always only one step from it all going wrong though. So you can never relax.

I liken it to walking along a very, very, narrow path on a cliff-side. One false step and you're dead meat. And in the same way that walking along that narrow cliff-path would require endless, exhausting, vigilance and concentration, being with this Narcissist is the same.

My own mother falls, I believe, into this category. It can be a tough one to deal with because it's so subtle. If you're actively being mistreated, as in Malignant Narcissism below, then you know it. But this category can be a very crazy-making, head-wrecking one, as I share in the section on **Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers**.

Malignant Narcissism

Malignant Narcissism is where Narcissism seems to meet fully blown psychopathy. It's where the Narcissistic Mother does proactively cruel and

vicious things such as abuse you, or facilitate others abusing you. It's where she gets rid of your beloved pet just because she can, just to see you cry. In Malignant Narcissism, she's actively feeding off your pain. It's being an **emotional vampire** to the max.

If you're the daughter of a narcissistic mother, can you identify where on this narcissism spectrum she falls? And can you identify its **effects on you**?

Cause of Narcissistic Personality Disorder

Nobody knows for sure what the cause of Narcissistic Personality Disorder is.

For sure it runs in families, but is that nature, or nurture?

The best theory, though, is that it is something which is caused, and it can be caused in one of two ways.

The first way is by massive abuse experienced by the narcissist when she was a child; abuse bad enough to cause her to disassociate.

Disassociation is a natural human reaction to extreme stress. It means that the person seems to leave their body and the abuse happens *there* while the person is *here*. *Here* can be anywhere else, as long as it's outside the body.

In many cases another personality will come along to experience the abuse, and that's the cause of Dissociative Personality Disorder (which used to be known as Multiple Personality Disorder).

But in some cases, no personality is left, and the abuse-victim is left with just an empty shell of themselves, with no 'self'.

In this case she spends the rest of her life creating a False Self.

This False Self is perfect and wonderful. But it's also very fragile. She needs constant validation from others that this False Self is real. Other people are, in effect, mirrors to her, reflecting back the Self that she was projected onto them. She needs them for this - this is called **Narcissistic Supply**.

The other possible cause of Narcissism is when a child is over-indulged to the extent that she never learns boundaries between her and the rest of the world. She learns that she's the most important thing in the world. And she spends the rest of her life living up to that, and trying to get other people to live up to that too.

I believe that my own mother falls into this latter category. She had what I now believe to be a very unhealthy relationship with her own father. I don't think there was any sexual abuse. But they were close beyond what you would expect.

Two examples of this are that she wanted to go away to another city to university, but he didn't want to lose her, and asked her not to go, and so she

didn't; and that she told me that if he hadn't died young she didn't think she'd ever have married.

We were brought up with tales of how wonderful and charming this father of hers was, and how everybody, especially women, loved him.

I saw no reason to doubt this, of course, but after having the realisation of my mother's narcissism, I've been re-examining everything, and two stories about my grandfather wave huge flags.

The first is how he tormented a maiden aunt by asking her, every time she got up to go to the toilet, where she was going. This was back in Victorian times, or soon after, and so she couldn't possibly say. So she just said, "Oh nowhere," and sat down again. He did this over and over.

My mother related this story as one of great fun and hilarity, but when I think of it now I find it chilling. It was cruel. If he kept this up for long the poor maiden aunt must have been in great physical discomfort.

The second story is how he brought my grandmother to the pub and asked her what she'd have to drink. She asked for a lemonade, and he said there was no way he was going to the bar to ask for such a sissy drink as that; she'd have a *real* drink. So she had an alcoholic drink after being teetotal for most of her life, and ended up dying a genteel alcoholic.

These stories make me think my grandfather wasn't as nice as my mother always said, and also that they had a very unhealthy relationship.

She was effectively an only child, her siblings being so much older they were reared and gone for most of her childhood, and was - even by her own account - spoiled and indulged by her father.

So who's to say that for her that was the cause of narcissistic personality disorder, but I see warning flags there, and it is certain that my mother treats others in a way which makes me think she is Narcissistic.

Treating Narcissism

Treating Narcissism is a waste of time. It doesn't work. Narcissists don't want to be cured.

It makes sense really - would *you* want to be cured of being perfect?

Would you want to be cured of being above all these messy emotions others have and which make them so vulnerable and open to manipulation? Would you want to give up your position as a superior wonderful person?

No?

Well they don't either.

Narcissists very, very rarely present for therapy, and I venture to suggest, never of their own will. The only way they'll end up in therapy is if it's court-mandated for some reason. And then they see it as a challenge to see if they can fool and manipulate the therapist.

Not only will NPDs not even present for therapy, they won't even admit they have a problem. Their arrogance and self-image just wouldn't allow it.

By definition anything a Narcissist does is right (in her own eyes of course), and therefore There. Is. No. Problem.

And if you think there's a problem - well! *You're* the one with the problem! You're imagining things. You're looking for attention. You're crazy. The details of what they might accuse you of will vary, but one thing's definite - *they're* perfect, *you're* the one who's crazy even to suggest they're less than perfect.

So my advice is to give up on the prospect of treating narcissism, and to concentrate your efforts on protecting yourself.

Your options include going No Contact which means just never having anything to do with her again. It's a very valid option. It has its own challenges of course, extricating yourself from their clutches (especially if she's an **engulfing narcissistic mother**), but it's hugely rewarding.

The other option is to learn **how to deal with her**. Again, this isn't easy, but it's much easier to deal with her once you understand the parameters a narcissistic mother operates within, rather than trying to deal with her like a normal person.

So, **No Contact**, or dealing with her in a specific way, are the best ways, for a layperson, of treating narcissism.

Narcissistic Supply

Narcissistic Supply is the name given to the way Narcissists need attention. They feed on this attention. It's their drug of choice. And guess who gets to give that attention? Yes, you!

Now, all of us love attention - of course we do! But the Narcissist takes this to an extreme level. She is an addict for it.

At some level Narcissists are scared that they don't really exist, so they need to see themselves reflected (and preferably favourably reflected of course!) in others' eyes.

By giving a Narcissist attention, you're providing their narcissistic supply. It's an ongoing job, and you'll need to do it all the time. It's an endless thankless job, but one that, if you're allocated the role, you'll find hard to avoid. And of course, being a daughter of a narcissistic mother means that your role in life is this role.

Since the topic of this website is Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers, we're talking about daughters being the source of Narcissistic Supply. (Sons are too, of course, as are husbands and friends and anybody unlucky enough to be in her sphere.)

It can often work very well in the early years of a child's life. Children automatically adore their mothers and put them on a pedestal, and that suits narcissistic mothers perfectly, and provides them with copious amounts of their narcissistic supply.

The trouble starts when the child gets bigger, and starts getting a mind of her own. And even worse, starts wanting to live her own life.

My own mother said to me once, "The best years were when you were all small." I didn't think much of it then, but it chills me now. It was so indicative, if I had but realised it, of her narcissism and her need for narcissistic supply.

And now that I'm a mother myself and my own son is 13, I'm still thinking that every age has been the best yet, that every age has its own gifts. I *don't* think it was better when he was smaller and more biddable.

But then, I'm happy for my son to be his own person. I'm not looking for narcissistic supply.

The preferred type of narcissistic supply is adoration, admiration or approval.

But failing that, any sort of attention will do. Fear is an acceptable alternative. While you're fearing somebody you definitely paying attention to them. You're watching them and referring to them - lots of narcissistic supply there.

Engulfing mothers often use tactics such as emmeshing to keep their daughters with them, to keep them around as a source of this narcissistic supply. Part of the DONM journey is to extricate yourself from this.

Another trick they use to keep up their level of narcissistic supply is **infantilisation**.

Narcissistic Rage

Narcissistic Rage is something you, as the Daughter of a Narcissistic Mother, will no doubt have experienced.

Narcissists hate being challenged. Because they're such superior, perfect people, how dare you, a mere nobody, challenge them in any way?

This is why Narcissists react out of all proportion to the smallest slight, or perceived slight. Or even, to the slightest request for better treatment.

Any challenge threatens their wellbeing. Their persona is so fragile that it cannot withstand any challenge whatsoever. This is why they go on the attack so viciously. They really are fighting for their life, or it feels like it to them.

As a child with a Narcissistic Mother, this rage is soul-destroying. Your mother is supposed to protect you and mind you - and here she is turning on you. There is no protection against it.

There are no limits to what they'll do or say in the throes of this rage. They'll eviscerate your personality, your very Self. It's like soul-annihilation. It's so destructive and vicious. It's a self-esteem destroyer.

Sometimes this Narcissistic Rage can turn physical, but even if it remains at being verbal, it's terrifying.

It's not surprising that many Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers - including me - have huge issues with people being angry with us. We are so sensitised to it that even normal healthy anger on behalf of others, or even mild annoyance, can seem like a psychic attack. There's an irony to this too - Narcissistic Mothers use **invalidation** on us, and one of their tricks is to call us over-sensitive even when we're not. But having been subjected to Narcissistic Rage makes us over-sensitive too. So it can become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Many Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers report that they are terrified of their mothers. It's not surprising - they know our weaknesses, and they've no hesitation in fighting dirty. It gives them a lot of power.

I know that I, even though normally an articulate assertive woman, would go to jelly whenever my mother would snap at me. "Danu! That's enough!" she'd say, and I'd cower immediately. I'm not proud of it. But I'm sharing it so that you'll see, if this applies to you, that it's a standard reaction.

That is the power of her Narcissistic Rage.

How To Recognize a Narcissist

How to recognize a narcissist? It's a big question, and an important one.

It's as if most people have blinkers on them – Narcissistic Personality Disorder is not at all in the public consciousness (although that's changing slowly) and so people don't even consider it as an option. Also people don't like to think that others can be so soulless and horrible. So there's a bit of denial going on.

And Narcissists are clever. They can cover up well. They study humans in order to see how we operate, and can mimic it quite successfully.

The good news is that once your Narcissist-antennae are attuned, so to speak, you recognise them immediately.

Diagnosing Narcissism

Diagnosing Narcissism clinically is a huge issue, and a difficult one even for professionals, and is beyond the scope of this website.

What we're talking about here is diagnosing narcissism for your own satisfaction.

It's not easy though. Narcissists are masters of disguise. They are able to observe the behaviour of normal people and copy that behaviour in order to fit in. But if you're careful, you can spot how they give themselves away. If there's somebody you suspect might suffer from **Narcissistic Personality Disorder** you can observe them and see which **Narcissistic Traits** they manifest.

- Do they talk constantly about themselves? This might include talking about their children/grandchildren. I remember complaining to my father that my mother was never interested in me, and he said, "Nonsense, she talks about you at the Tennis Club all the time". Now of course I know that that didn't mean she was interested in me. It meant she was interested in getting **Narcissistic Supply** by boasting about my accomplishments. When she was talking *to* me it was a different story though.
- Do they have a sense of superiority? Do they believe that their opinions are automatically right? That's a classic Narcissist trait. My mother always gets personally offended whenever somebody disagrees with her or does anything she doesn't approve of. As if they're doing it to her.
- How do they react to being challenged or disagreed with? If they get affronted at you even daring to do this, it's a red flag.
- How long do their relationships last? Narcissists can be superficially popular, but people tend to see through them after a while. A flag

would be that nobody is in their life long-term.

- Are they always bad-mouthing others? Narcissists rarely have good things to say about others.
- How do they take to being teased? Narcissists take themselves very seriously, and don't take to teasing at all.
- How do they treat people who might be considered to be inferior to them in status, e.g. shop assistants or waiters?
- Are they always telling you how wonderful they are? This might be subtle - Narcissists aren't stupid, and they can moderate their behaviour to fit in with convention. But they'll always be the star of the stories they tell.
- Do they name-drop? Not every Narcissist does, and lots of non-Narcissists do - but it's still a warning sign.
- How do they react to others' tragedies? They'll express the same sentiments as everybody else, e.g. "That was awful. Poor them." But if you listen carefully, there'll be a false note about this. It's very subtle but real. The words just won't ring true. There may be an air of suppressed excitement about them as they **feed off the excitement of the tragedy**.

I repeat that you are probably not qualified to make an official diagnosis of NPD. As indeed, no more am I.

But this, and the **narcissistic traits** page, will give you enough information to know how to recognize a narcissist in order to protect yourself by avoiding them or by dealing with them carefully.

How To Deal With A Narcissist

If you're wondering how to deal with a narcissist, well ... the bad news is that it's not easy. Narcissists are notoriously difficult to deal with. Normal rules are suspended. With a Narcissist it's always opposite day.

Deciding on the best way of dealing with a narcissistic mother depends on whether you still live with her or not.

If you still live with her, and you're too young to leave home, then it's tough. The best thing you can do, it seems to me, is to just accept her behaviour - you won't change it, you won't be able to reason with her, and trying to do so will only incur her **narcissistic rage**.

But while you're accepting it and just getting on, try to keep your head together. Don't buy into what she tells you about yourself. Don't believe her **invalidation** or **gaslighting**. If she's **scapegoating** you, know that's what's happening and again don't let it mess with your head. (If you're a **Golden Child**, same applies, but I doubt that a Golden Child would be reading this as Golden Children are often the last to realise there's a problem, if they ever do.)

The worst thing about being a Daughter of a Narcissistic Mother, in my opinion, is the head-wreckingness of it, the believing it's us that's crazy. If you're reading this, at least you'll know that you're not crazy.

Just bide your time, read as much as you can about Narcissism, use the resources on this website, and plan your escape.

If you're living at home and are old enough to leave, then leave. It's very possible that she's set things up so that this is very difficult, e.g. by keeping you emmeshed or financially dependent. Honestly, no matter what trap she has created, no matter how gilded the cage, it's not worth it. Start planning your escape. Create your own life.

If you're an adult woman living away from home, you still have to deal with her.

You have three options:

1. See her as usual. Just give up any hope of ever having a normal mother-daughter relationship with her. Try to be amused by her behaviour (they really are soooo predictable) rather than frustrated. Don't play her games.
2. Go what's called **Low Contact**. Severely limit the amount of time you spend with her. Make contact be on your terms. She may argue, or try to get over this - turning up uninvited etc, but you'll need to be firm. Somebody who has more experience than I in dealing with her narcissistic mother is writing a piece for me on this, and I will share it as soon as I have it.

3. Go what's called **No Contact**, which is self-explanatory. This is a huge step, albeit very worthwhile, and I very much encourage you to read this section.

Mothers with Narcissistic Personality Disorder

Mothers with Narcissistic Personality Disorder are in a very good position when you think about it. Where else would a Narcissist get such a ready, biddable, vulnerable source of **Narcissistic** Supply than from her own children?

These women have, of course, all the specific **traits of Narcissistic Personality Disorder**. But they have a few other tricks too, especially for their children.

They fall into two categories - **engulfing mothers** who see no boundaries between themselves and their daughters, and **ignoring mothers** who don't particularly even see their daughters, and certainly don't care. Each is hugely dysfunctional and damaging.

One trick, or aspect, of narcissistic mothers, is that **they're quite often nice**. This can be so confusing - part of the head-wreckingness of this whole NPD. The niceness always has **strings attached** though.

One of Narcissistic mothers' favourite tricks is **invalidation**, including a particularly nasty and insidious form of invalidation called **gaslighting**. No matter what emotions or memories you bring up, they'll dismiss them.

They master various **forms of abuse**, including forcing their children into the **Golden Child or Scapegoat** roles, and pure and simple **bullying**.

They're **emotional vampires**, feeding off yours and others' tragedies, and always dismiss or otherwise **ruin your successes and celebrations**. I found therefore that **dealing with my narcissistic mother** involved only the most banal of conversation - I could share neither my highs nor my lows. (Actually I didn't share a whole lot of anything, particularly at the end.)

They also have the twin cruelties of **parentification** and **infantilisation**, where they get you to parent them and keep you dependant on them respectfully. A narcissistic mother could do either or both of these.

Another nice trick is **triangulation**, where they make themselves the pivotal point of the family dynamic and everything has to go through them.

Add to this, most narcissistic mothers' **extreme vanity**, and their sometimes **bizarre attitude towards sexuality**, and you have quite a combination.

Mothers with Narcissistic Personality Disorder can't do it alone, of course. They need help, and **Enabling Fathers** are the perfect ones to give them that help.

Narcissistic Mothers

Most people never even think of the possibility of narcissistic mothers. To the extent that NPD is in the public consciousness at all - which is very little - it's more considered to be men who have it. This is partly because it does seem to be more prevalent in men. And also my impression is that men with it are more likely to be violent and so more likely to come to public awareness.

And if people think of women having it, they maybe think of wives and girlfriends and friends. They don't think of mothers.

We have a huge cultural embargo upon thinking badly of mothers. We esteem mothers, put them on pedestals, worship them almost. I've read that this cultural indoctrination is why the fairy stories always feature wicked *stepmothers* - because to speak of wicked mothers is just undoable. I think there's a lot of plausibility in this theory.

I'm writing this just a couple of days after Mother's Day and it'd make you sick, the sycophancy and adoration of mothers and motherhood that goes on. (Of course, there may well be something sinister about this too, in that this worship of mothers is a way of keeping women in their place, of patronising them. Or at least, the residue of this. That's another discussion though!)

Engulfing Mother

An Engulfing Mother is one whose Narcissistic Personality Disorder manifests itself in her allowing **no** boundary to exist between herself and her daughter. She somehow views her daughter as being an extension of herself, rather than seeing her as a separate person.

This can work fine when the daughter is a baby or toddler - a very young infant sees no boundary between herself and her mother either, and this leads to the mutual love affair we see between mothers and their babies, and that's right and normal, and very important for bonding.

It's sad but quite often the daughter doesn't realise that this is going on, and continues to be emmeshed with her mother. How can she know it? She doesn't know any better.

The Engulfing Mother will use tactics like **Parentification** and/or **Infantilisation** to keep her daughter bound to her. She may use **Triangulation** between family members to keep people off-balance, and hence more dependant on her.

She'll certainly ignore natural boundaries between people - so she'll feel free to read her daughter's letters or e-mail, to ask her daughter overly personal and intrusive questions, to barge into the bathroom when the daughter is bathing or even is on the toilet.

At the same time there's all the other **Narcissism Traits** going on too, such as **gaslighting** and **invalidating** and so on.

It makes for very a very uncomfortable childhood to say the least. A big part of the problem for Daughters of Engulfing Mothers is in figuring out their own **identity**.

The difficulty arises when the daughter quite normally and naturally wants to become her own person in due course, and become separate.

The Engulfing Mother isn't able for this.

She may manifest **Narcissistic Rage** at attempts by the daughter to separate.

The problem persists into adulthood too. The Engulfing Mother might try to be overly involved in her daughter's marriage, for example, asking inappropriate questions about her daughter's sex life! Or running down her daughter's husband, trying to make the daughter unhappy with him.

Another issue with an Engulfing Mother is that she'll often make it very difficult if you try to enforce No Contact. She just won't take no for an answer. I know at least one woman who had to get a legal barring order on her mother before she'd leave her alone. It is *not* a nice situation to be in, to phone the police on your mother.

The tactics for dealing with an Engulfing Mother are the same as for **dealing with other narcissists**. You just have to be much, much firmer and more persistent about it.

Ignoring Mother

The other kind of Narcissistic Mother is an Ignoring Mother. This is the kind I have.

The Ignoring Mother knows well the boundary between herself and her daughter. But seeing as she is the only object of her own concern and interest, she has no interest in her daughter.

This is very hurtful and bewildering. Being the daughter of an **Engulfing Mother** brings big problems, but it does have the advantage that that daughter at least can feel loved - at least until she realises that it's not real love.

Daughters of Ignoring Mothers have no such comfort.

It's hard to describe what it's like being the daughter of an Ignoring Mother. She was physically there (she was a stay-at-home-mother) but not really there. She never really paid us any attention unless it was to get annoyed at us.

She didn't supervise our cleanliness even when we were really too young to do it ourselves. I remember (I am so embarrassed to admit this ...) wearing the same vest (undershirt) for months on end. It was literally grey. I must not have had a bath in that time either or I would have got a clean vest.

My hair was always tangled and unbrushed.

I remember aged about 12 going to school in slippers - it wasn't that we didn't have the money for shoes, it was worse than that, it was just that new shoes weren't got.

Now in fairness I need to say that when I was a teen she listened to me well. She often used to say how delighted she was that she and I had such a good, open, relationship. And we did. I'm at a loss to explain this against the background of all the other stuff. Because that happened too.

I'm talking about things like the fact that I have no memories of her cuddling me or holding me. I have one memory of sitting on her lap, along with my brother and sister and we were all laughing. She said, "Oh I wish we had a camera!" (which we didn't own at the time). Looking back that statement strikes me as very narcissistic. But maybe I'm reading too much into it.

I have no memories of her playing with us either or spending much time with us. She'd play board games when we were older, but that's really my only memory.

I have many such memories of my father, so I know that it's not that my memory was cancelled.

I think back to my second sister who was born when I was twelve, and my own son as a baby - and I have no memories of my mother being very affectionate

with either of them as a baby. I can only remember my mother looking to hold my son once, and that was - I am convinced for other reasons - because she wanted to baptise him behind my back.

She never paid much attention to how we were getting on in school. She never gave me advice on how to be a woman. She never taught me housekeeping skills.

She would, if she was reading this, insist that this is not so. She would say that she held me lots, and played with us lots, and held the babies affectionately, and gave me as much advice as I would take.

That may be so. Just because I cannot remember a thing doesn't mean it didn't happen. On the other hand, there are things I know for a fact didn't happen, that she swears blind *did* happen (typical **gaslighting**), so I don't put too much credence on what she says.

One big result of her being an Ignoring Mother is that when I finally went **No Contact**, she dropped me like yesterday's newspaper. She made no effort to reconcile. (Update: she did contact me since, 9 months after we last spoke. She sent me a birthday card in which she included a purchased laminated card with an apology poem on it. I will write more about this shortly, as it's relevant.)

That hurt, it hurt a lot - even as I was grateful for it. It makes life much easier, unlike for the daughters of Engulfing Mothers who struggle to extricate themselves.

But yet it hurt. And I know I'm not alone. Other Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers say the same.

It just shows how little she loved me, they say.

And yes, it does.

The attempts of the Engulfing Mothers to keep contact do not show love either, though, no matter how much it might seem like it. They just shows fear of losing **Narcissistic Supply**.

But yes, it's very, very hard that they drop us so comprehensively. We have dared to challenge them, and that must be punished by banishing us.

The thing about an Ignoring Mother is that it's more honest. They don't care, they don't really pretend to care. There's a freedom in that, along with the hurt.

Narcissistic Mothers Being Nice

Part of the head-wreckingness of being the Daughter of a Narcissistic Mother is that these women are quite often nice to us. It's not unremittingly awful.

It can be very confusing though. And of course, if you try to tell them you don't like the way they treat you, they can validly point to these nice things.

The thing is that there's always an underlying tension. You're only ever one wrong word away from it all going wrong. You can never relax. If you don't give her her due respect or adoration, or if you disagree with her, or whatever tiny trigger sets her off, then you get at best a cooling-off, and at worst, a bout of **Narcissistic Rage**.

You need to play by the rules, and then all is well.

Just never, ever EVER protest any treatment you get. The nice things are a favour doled out to you by her grace and favour. You actually have no rights. And if you try to assert rights - well, the fun is over and you're put back in your box.

I remember a classic example, albeit not a hugely aggressive one. My mother is a devout Catholic who is totally anti-contraception and also anti-abortion. She was talking about an acquaintance of hers who'd had an abortion because she had been exposed to Rubella. And she was saying that she totally understood this woman's reasons, that she (my mother) had once thought she was pregnant when she too was exposed to Rubella, and she had been so, so worried for ages, till she found out she wasn't pregnant.

I, foolishly lulled into the belief that we were both adult women having a mature adult conversation about major themes such as abortion no less - said to her that if she had used proper contraception she would have known she wasn't pregnant and wouldn't have had that worry.

Immediately she snapped at me, with a dog-bum mouth and a totally oppressive expression: "That's not the point".

So I was back in my box, realising that we were not and never would be, equal partners in any relationship. I used to call it that she was 'pulling rank' on me. I couldn't think of any other way to describe it.

Now that I know about Narcissism it all makes sense.

Another aspect to Narcissistic Mothers being nice is that it's often a control thing, with an agenda - there is often big **strings attached**.

Narcissistic Mothers' Invalidation

One pivotal thing that Narcissistic Mothers do is to invalidate your feelings, your emotions and your right to be upset at the treatment they mete out to you.

They deny either your right to feel upset, or even that you DO feel upset. Or they deny things happened.

Or maybe they totally understate what happened. My mother would say that I was over-demanding because I wouldn't put up with her being 'annoying'. By this she meant, her having annoying foibles. And if her behaviour could be labelled as merely annoying then yes, I was probably being over-demanding.

But what was going on wasn't merely annoying. I could - and did - tolerate her annoying traits.

My issue was with her being dismissive, undermining, **gaslighting**, invalidating, bullying, **wilfully ruining my special days and celebrations** etc - in short, being emotionally abusive. But by labelling her behaviour merely annoying, she could, and did, argue that I was over-reacting and being over-demanding.

It's **head-wrecking stuff** because your own reality/perceptions are telling you one thing, and yet your mother, the authority figure, is telling you the opposite. Which is it?

Over time Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers can come to believe their mothers over their own reality, which can drive us a **little bit crazy**. Or make us think we're crazy, which is very scary.

Writing this page was very difficult for me. Many of these invalidations were things said directly to me by my own **Narcissistic Mother** and my **Enabling Father**.

It's painful to recall them because they were so invalidating and I felt so bad - literally so invalidated, so not-true, not-real - hearing them. And there's also anger at myself for falling for them.

Even during our last row, I remember thinking to myself that I would insist on the discussion staying on course. But it didn't. They (mostly my father) effortlessly took over steering the conversation, used the examples below, and totally put me through the wringer. As daughters of this dysfunctional family dynamic, we're totally conditioned to respond in these ways, so it's not surprising.

Logical Fallacies

Many of their invalidations fall into the category of logical fallacies. A logical fallacy is something which sounds logical at first glance, but which contains an inherent logical flaw.

There are many logical fallacies but here are the ones which are most relevant for our purposes, and the sort of things **Narcissistic Mothers** and the **Enabling Fathers** might say - and have said! - under each category.

Ad Hominem

'Ad Hominem' is a Latin phrase, meaning literally, 'Against the man'. So instead of answering your argument on its own merits, they'll attack you. Examples might include:

- Oh you always take everything so personally.
- Nothing ever pleases you!
- You're so hard to please.
- You're crazy to think that.
- You're just over-dramatising.
- Oh! Always with the drama queen stuff!
- You're so demanding.
- You're not being rational about this.
- You're always over-reacting.
- You're so emotional.
- You're impossible to talk to.
- You're so awkward!
- You're so demanding.
- You're such a cry-baby.
- You're impossible to talk to.
- You always blow things out of all proportion.
- Why do you always have to complain about everything?
- Why can't you take a joke?
- You've no sense of humour!
- Well, you're not so perfect either!
- When you're perfect you can criticise me, but not until.
- Are you never happy?
- You're impossible to please.
- You really think you're the centre of the world, don't you. [Projection, much?]

Appeal to Authority

An Appeal to Authority is exactly what it says - their argument must be true because some authority figure says it is. Of course, in our case the authority figures are themselves! So they might say things like:

- Don't speak to me like that!
- I'm your mother, you should show me more respect.

Argumentum Ad Populum

Literally means: 'Argument by popularity'. In other words, Lots of people think X so it must be true. Examples might be:

- Nobody else thinks that.
- Other people like me, so if you don't, it's your problem.
- Nobody else complains about me talking too much.

Appeal to Fear

This one is self-explanatory. It's about making people scared so they won't argue or fuss. An example from my own life which was often used was:

- Stop crying or I'll give you something to cry for.

Having said that I think that often **Narcissistic Mothers** use fear in a more subtle way rather than an overt threat. It's in the expression, the tone of voice, the body language. If you're a Daughter of a Narcissistic Mother, you'll know exactly what I mean. It's terrifying, isn't it? And no matter how big you get, you never grow out of feeling the fear they engender.

Big Lie

This is the logical fallacy of saying a huge lie, big enough and often enough, and mixing in enough truth so that people start to believe it. Examples might be:

- I *do* love you - I feed you and clothe you don't I?
- I *do* love you - you're my daughter.

Black-and-White Fallacy

Also known as the Either-Or Fallacy. Wrongly stating that if X isn't true then Y must be. Examples might include a time when you were found to be slightly inaccurate about one recollection, so they cling to that as proof that you're 100% wrong about everything you said.

A good example of this happened with my mother. I was citing as examples of her talking too much and totally dominating the conversation.

I had already said that she had talked for two hours about her holiday during our last meal (we were there for two hours and twenty-five minutes and I had taken off a generous twenty-five minutes for ordering food and other necessities).

She denied this of course and I, trying to establish a pattern said that another time she had talked for 40 minutes non-stop about another holiday they'd had,

AFTER she and my father had already told me in almost real-time detail about it.

She said, "I did *not* talk for 40 minutes!"

I said, "You did, I timed you on the kitchen clock," and she immediately changed tack and sneered, "Oh you're such a sad individual actually timing me."

So then I carried on (fool though I was, you just cannot win an argument with a Narcissist) saying that the same thing had applied recently.

She had phoned ostensibly to commiserate with me on the death of my dog, whom I'd had for fourteen and a half years. I was so devastated by this loss, but if I was expecting empathy and sympathy from her I was sadly mistaken.

I said, "You spent one minute talking about the dog, and then twenty minutes talking about your friend's sister's holiday experiences."

She erupted: "I did *not* spend twenty minutes talking about that."

Now, in truth, I didn't know for a fact how long it had been - unlike the other two examples, I hadn't been looking at a clock. So like a reasonable person I conceded, "Well it mightn't have been twenty minutes - " I was going on to say that it was a long time anyway, but she burst in with, "See, you don't know how long it was! That means I don't have to believe anything you say about time! It means the other two examples were wrong too."

I said, "Surely it's the other way around - the fact that I concede when I can't be sure I'm right, means that I'm more believable when I say I know for a fact how long it was."

She said, "No! No! I don't have to believe you and I won't!"

That was a classic Black-and-White Fallacy. Impossible to deal with.

Demonising the Enemy

This logical fallacy again is what it says. Most oppressors use this tool - read what Hitler had to say about the Jews. He called into question their humanity itself, and that made it much easier for him and his followers to kill them.

Narcissistic Mothers do this too. (In fairness, mine didn't. But many do.)

- You're so useless I don't have to pay any attention to what you say.
- Why would I listen to *you*?
- You're pathetic; nobody would listen to you?
- You're so stupid you don't know what the truth is.
- You're so stupid you don't recognise love when you see it.

Direct Order

This is a way of being so emphatic that the listener just automatically obeys without questioning, including obeying about being told what to think or feel. Parents are in a *very* good place, needless to say, to enforce this one.

- Stop complaining.
- Don't be so dramatic.
- Don't be so sensitive.
- Stop being so over-emotional.
- Take that expression off your face.
- Stop sulking.
- Stop this nonsense now.
- You should be happy for me.
- You shouldn't get upset about that.
- I don't want to hear any more about it.
- I'm fed up with you always complaining.

Red Herrings

Red Herrings refers, in this context, to saying things which are true but which are totally irrelevant - but which they try to make you think are relevant.

Examples include:

- But I did X nice thing for you!
- [Sobbing] I was only trying to help.
- [Still sobbing] You've upset me now!
- You should be grateful that I [do x, completely different from what you were saying].
- You'll be sorry when I'm dead!
- I'm not a well woman and you're being so mean to me.
- You're so hard on me. We all have our foibles.
- After all I've done for you ...
- Oh yes? And what about *my* feelings?
- Well *you* hurt *me* when you said ...

Glittering Generality

Making sweeping statements without backing them up with evidence. You're expected to take them as fact on the speaker's say-so.

- I *do* love you.
- You're my daughter, of course I love you.
- I've always been very good to you.

Classic Gaslighting

Gaslighting isn't one of the official logical fallacies, but I include it here because it's such a classic **Narcissism Trait**. It's such a big issue that it gets its own page, but suffice to say here that gaslighting is lying to you outright.

- I DO listen to you.
- That never happened!
- You're imagining things.
- I DID listen to you properly.
- I DID show enough interest in your project.
- That is ridiculous (nonsense, totally absurd, etc.)
- I was only kidding/joking.
- You don't really mean that.
- You've an over-vivid imagination [i.e. you're imagining this.]
- You are being ridiculous now.
- I am so fed up with you and your crazy accusations.

Sarcasm

Sarcasm is also not a classic logical fallacy, but it's another potent invalidation tool by Narcissistic Mothers. Examples include:

- Oh yes, I get it, I'm the worst mother in the world. You've made your point.
- Oh I am soooo sorry. Happy now?
- Oh, have I hurt your widdle feelings?

Drawing The Line

Again, not an official fallacy, but a frequent attempt of Narcissistic Mothers to refuse to accept responsibility for what they did, at the same time as keep you biddable:

- Come on, let bygones be bygones.
- Let's try again, we'll both forgive the other and move on.
- Oh for heaven's sake! You're surely not still sore about that?
- You're always bearing grudges.
- You won't forgive us!
- Other people drown their sorrows - you bring them out and give them swimming lessons.

You'll see that the first two are ingratiating while the second four are more aggressive. But they all put it to you that you're being unreasonable to cling to your hurt.

Now, I'm all for reconciliation and forgiveness. In any relationship there will be hurts and misunderstandings and the need for making up. But two conditions need to apply for there to be real, healthy, reconciliation - and these two conditions never apply in the Narcissistic relationship.

Those two conditions are:

1. The perpetrator takes responsibility for what she did, and
2. There is a very clear agreement on how to move on and avoid creating the problem again.

So, in a healthy relationship, the discussion might go like this: "I'm so sorry that I shouted at you like that. I shouldn't have done that, and I'll do my best not to again. I think I did it because I was so tired and it felt like you were hassling me. Would you be able to give me just half an hour when I get home from work before bringing other problems for me to deal with?"

In a Narcissistic relationship the discussion, whether it's overt or insinuated, is: "Will you forget I did that and carry on as if I didn't? That way I can do it again whenever I want, and if you complain then it's your fault for being so bitter and hanging onto grudges."

Argument ad Nauseum

Literally, 'argument to the point of vomiting', i.e. repeating endlessly the point they want to make until they wear you down through sheer repetition and attrition. Narcissistic Mothers and the Enabling Fathers get lots of chances to do this as they have us as their captive audience throughout our childhoods.

This logical fallacy applies to all the above, as they do all of them over and over and over, brainwashing us basically.

The Good News ...

... is that when you're aware of these fallacies and tricks of invalidation, you can protect yourself against them better by not falling for them, by not getting sucked into them.

You might also like to check out our **Narcissistic Mother-English Dictionary**.

Strings Attached

With a Narcissistic Mother nothing is ever straight-forward. There's an angle and an agenda to everything. So if she is generous, you can be sure there are big strings attached.

Usually the string is to instil guilt in you or a sense of being beholden to them. Or it's the ability to throw it in your face whenever you protest their treatment of you. It's as if this generosity gave them absolute permission to abuse you.

I always hated asking them for any favours and did it as little as I could. But there are times you need help, and we didn't have any family on my husband's side.

I knew though that everything they ever did for me was bound to be thrown in my face again in event of a row. "In case of fire, break glass. In case of row, throw this in Danu's face."

It used to be really confusing because I'd be saying, as calmly as I could, that I didn't like X treatment, and they'd be saying, But we did nice things Y and Z for you.

And if I protested that, they'd say, 'Well are we not allowed to present evidence of when we were nice? You're only concentrating on the bad things'.

And I'd be left silenced. There was a flaw in that logic, but I couldn't put my finger on it. (Not then. I do now. I know it's the **logical fallacy of the Red Herring.**)

It was as if them doing nice things for me was a licence to treat me nastily the rest of the time.

The irony is that my father used to say to me and my siblings when we were children, that it wasn't enough for us to be good most of the time, that we had to be good ALL the time. If we were bold even once, it cancelled out all the good things we ever did.

Which was absolutely cruel I think. We were basically good kids, but were mildly bold sometimes - and that meant that all good was negated. No wonder I have such trouble with self-acceptance now, because I'm not perfect and by my indoctrination, being not-perfect means being a total loser/nothing etc. Argh.

And although my father put the burden of that impossible standard on us, he put the opposite standard on him and my mother. Them being good sometimes gave them a get-out-of-jail-free card for any mean behaviour they want to inflict.

I think that the best thing is to accepting nothing from them. It's easier said than done I know. Now that I am **No Contact** with them, it's scary to know

that there's no safety net. But I don't care. I'll manage somehow, but I will not be beholden to them any more. The price is too high.

Gaslighting

Gaslighting is a strange-sounding term which refers to the way in which abusers such as Narcissistic Mothers lie to you, by word or deed, intentionally or not intentionally, to convince you that your version of reality is not right.

The phrase comes from the 1940's film *Gaslight*, in which an abusive husband deliberately dims the gaslights in the house, but when his wife comments on it he tells her she's imagining it, that the lights never dimmed at all.

Gaslighting is one of the most insidious, viscious, nasty and effective forms of emotional and psychological abuse.

It can make the victim feel as if she's going crazy. If your perceptions of reality are constantly denied, and above all, denied by your mother, the person you look up to and who you think knows everything, it is very, very head-wrecking and crazy-making.

This gaslighting can be done deliberately, as in the example from the film above, in order to make you go crazy. Malignant Narcissists would be prone to doing this.

Or the crazy-making can just be a side-effect and the gaslighting is done in order to preserve the Narcissistic Mother's vision of herself as perfect, without her actually having to do the stuff that would make her perfect.

I wrote about my wedding and how my mother never gave me any compliment, but swears blind, shouting it, that she did. This is gaslighting.

She didn't deliberately say to me on the day, "Pity you look so ugly," and then deny it - that would be the act of a Malignant Narcissist.

But she was too self-absorbed and self-centred to say anything nice to me AND she was too convinced of her own wonderful motherness to even entertain the possibility that she wouldn't say anything nice to me, so she re-wrote history to make that that she did.

It's impossible for non-narcissists to get into the mind of narcissists, so I have no idea if this is right. But my best guess is that in her mind it's a case of: "A wonderful mother would have told her daughter she looked lovely, and I am a wonderful mother, therefore I would have/must have said it, and if Danu says differently she must be mistaken".

Gaslighting is also insidious because so many of a Narcissistic Mother's cruelties are small ones. Any particular example of them can be dismissed as just a thoughtless word, and we're all thoughtless sometimes.

But her cruelties add up to death by a thousand cuts, and if you're trying to reason with her (which, don't bother doing. But until you realise this ...) and you're using previous examples of the same cruelty in an attempt to show a

pattern - well, it won't work because she will simply deny that the previous examples happened.

Another form of gaslighting is the denial of your right to be upset. In this case the Narcissist might accept that the situation happened, but will invalidate you by vehemently denying that there was anything untoward about it, or any valid reason to get upset.

Forms of Abuse

Narcissistic Mothers have many subtle - and sometimes not so subtle - forms of abuse.

She lies to us and about us. She insults us, sometimes so subtly that we're left wondering if we imagined it. Sometimes the insults are wrapped in a cloak of concern, "Poor you, you're always so confused".

She demeans us and doesn't respect us whatsoever.

She ignores us when it suits her and overwhelms us what *that* suits her.

She manipulates us, our feelings and our situations for her pleasure.

She controls us, using us as a pawn to get her **Narcissistic Supply**.

She ignores our personal boundaries, both physical and emotional. She treats us as an object, only existing for her gratification. She denies our basic existence, our very humanity.

She subjects us to her **Narcissistic Rage** on a whim.

She forces guilt onto us, and shame. She tells us in every moment - verbally and otherwise - that we're unworthy and never good enough for her.

She **gaslights** us, making us doubt our own reality and our own sanity.

She's sly and sneaky, reserving her abuse for secret times, so others don't see it, and don't believe us if we try to tell them. Which is even more crazy-making.

She neglects our needs, sending always the message that we don't matter, that we're worthless. This leads to self-loathing and struggles with self-care.

She's unpredictable, capricious and inconsistent, so we never know where we are or what to expect. There's no secure foundation to this world.

She tells us she loves us and distorts the word by doing so, because she doesn't act as if she loves us. Another form of **gaslighting** as our experience contradicts exactly what she is insisting is so.

She makes herself the centre of the family, forcing us all to revolve around her and keep her happy. Her needs are paramount; ours, barely acknowledged.

She can't be trusted. She says one thing one day, and another the next.

She misuses your vulnerabilities. She knows them, as your mother. Anything you say *will* be used against you. She fights dirty.

One of my fellow Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers wrote the following list of what these women do. I share it here with her permission.

She starts off by saying: "I hate our mothers. I'm so sick of their ...

- Dirty little lies
- Manipulations
- Distortions
- Projection
- Temper tantrums
- Dirty tricks
- Favoritisms
- Lectures
- Belittling
- Power grabs
- Haughtiness
- Guilt trips
- Head trips
- Inferiority trips
- Neglect
- Bribery
- Vindictiveness
- Bigotry
- Self-righteousness
- Triangulation
- Jealousy
- Criticism
- Vanity
- Betrayals
- Meanness
- Small-mindedness
- Closed-mindedness
- Ignorance
- Name dropping
- Rejection
- Sabotage
- Arrogance
- Coldheartedness
- Setups
- Ingratitude
- Backstabbing
- Pettiness
- Thoughtless, even hurtful, gifts
- Exclusion
- Secrets
- Punishments for displeasing the queen
- Shaming
- Insistence that their religion/politics/values/decisions/ways etc., are right and good and everyone else's are wrong and bad.

- Smear campaigns
- Self-centeredness
- Demands
- Grandstanding
- Blaming their victims
- Intolerance of others' happiness
- Intolerance of others' success
- Intolerance of others' needs
- Intolerance of others' emotions
- Intolerance of others' beliefs
- Intolerance of others' decisions
- Intolerance of equalities
- Intolerance of the way you raise your children
- Self-pity
- Trap-setting
- Coercion
- Using
- Blackmailing
- Blacklisting
- Denial
- Utter nonsense
- Wild accusations
- Inability to reflect or improve
- Games
- Ulterior motives
- Scapegoating
- Bragging
- Threats
- Insensitivity
- The fact that they ruin Christmas/Chanukah/New Year
- The fact that they ruin Thanksgiving
- The fact that they ruin Easter
- The fact that they ruin both Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, even if they're not Jewish!
- The fact that they ruin your birthday
- The fact that they ruin your children's birthdays
- Phoniness
- Put-downs
- Greed
- Entitlement
- Name dropping
- Cheating
- Mental abuse
- Verbal abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Child abuse
- Spousal abuse
- Familial abuse
- Untrustworthiness
- Unwanted emails

- Unwanted phone calls
- Unwanted letters
- Unwanted cards
- Unwanted presence
- Oppression
- Using money
- Using children
- Using your siblings
- Using her friends
- Using her coworkers
- Using out-and-out strangers
- Emotional irresponsibility
- Devaluations
- Immaturity
- Grandstanding
- Nastiness

Did I leave any out? For some reason, I'm *sure* I must have I've missed at least a few. Hmm... "

Golden Child / Scapegoat

It's very common for Narcissistic Mothers to have a Golden Child / Scapegoat dynamic going on.

In short, one child in the family is the Golden Child, and one or more is the Scapegoat.

The Golden Child, as the name suggests, is the best and most wonderful - at least in the eyes of the Narcissistic Mother. It seems to be that the Narcissistic Mother picks the Golden Child to be an extension of herself, onto whom she projects all her own supposed wonderfulness.

The Golden Child can do no wrong. He or she gets given the best of everything - even apartments or houses bought for them. Their most minor achievements are celebrated and held up for admiration.

The Scapegoat on the other hand is, also as the name suggests, the person on whom all the ills of the family are projected. They can do no right. Their major achievements are dismissed. Any money spent on them is the bare minimum and is spent begrudgingly.

Growing up the Scapegoat can understandably feel very jealous of the Golden Child.

This, of course, leads to friction between the children, which suits the Narcissistic Mother. Divide and conquer and all that, and lots of opportunities for **Triangulation**. Indeed, the Golden Child can be encouraged, either overtly or tacitly, by the Narcissistic Mother, to bully the Scapegoat which adds to the friction.

I'd go so far as to venture that, if you're reading this, you were more likely to have been the Scapegoat than the Golden Child.

This is because, contrary to the way it felt growing up, the Scapegoat is actually the lucky one!

The Golden Child can end up very **engulfed** by the Narcissistic Mother, and her life can end up being emmeshed in hers too. She may well grow without proper boundaries and proper self-identity. She is likely to remain, either forever or for a long time, as a puppet of the Narcissistic Mother.

The Scapegoat on the other hand, is the independent one. She's the one who's driven to seek answers and who may well realise about NPD. She's the one who can break free from the unhealthy dynamics of the family and create a healthy life.

She really is the lucky one at the end.

Here is a long, but absolutely excellent, essay, which was written for this site (by forum member Light) about the Scapegoat:

The Scapegoat

Narcissists are master projectors. No-one is better at looking directly at a person and seeing not who that person is, but who they wish for them to be. When a narcissistic mother looks at her child, she is capable of seeing many things: a source of narcissistic supply, an impediment to her lust for power, the inconvenience of a child's feelings and needs, a string of intolerable annoyances, unwanted limitations, and a myriad of other possibilities. But never the actual child.

In a narcissist's family, dysfunctional roles are the norm, and narcissistic mothers are always the producers, directors, and casting agents for the entire production. Children are assigned roles to play long before they are old enough to resist them, and grow up within the confines of these limitations, knowing nothing different exists anywhere. It is typical of parents with personality disorders to select at least one "Golden Child", who can do no wrong, and at least one Scapegoat, who can do no right.

When deciding (unconsciously) what child will play each role, the narcissistic mother weighs her options on a deep, intuitive level. Which child is the most sensitive? Which child reminds her of a hated parent, or the ex-spouse who stood up to her, or something within herself she cannot accept? Which one asks more of her, either intentionally, or by way of circumstance? Which child expresses unhappiness more often about the unbearable situations the narcissistic mother creates? Which one is more vulnerable, or more outspoken? In short, which child bothers her the most?

This child will be made her Scapegoat.

This Scapegoat will ultimately be made to carry the lion's share of the family's blame, shame, anger, and rejection so the rest can more easily retain their patterns of dysfunction. This child will always and forever be the one who is not good enough, even when she excels at something – indeed, especially when she excels. This child will endure more put-downs, sideways remarks and behind-the-back betrayals than the rest of the family put together. This child will endure the wear and tear of the family's dysfunction in a way that will enable the others to continue looking good despite the family's toxicity.

Because the narcissist cannot accept her faults, she spends her days trying to convince herself that everything she does is perfect. When her personality disorder causes distress within her family, and her children's issues begin to reflect this, the narcissistic mother is forced to make a choice. She must either acknowledge that she is making mistakes that are affecting her children negatively, or she must try to convince herself and others that the problems are coming not from her, but another source. And the latter is the option the narcissist always and unflinchingly

selects. In her mind, by blaming another, she absolves herself of any wrongdoing, and she can continue to believe - and strive to convince others - that she is in fact, perfect. But she must first have someone to blame.

Enter the Scapegoat...

The Scapegoat is the one who assuages the narcissistic mother's (and ultimately, the whole family's) guilt, shame, and feelings of inadequacy. The Scapegoat is the shock absorber, the buffer against the harsh reality that there is something wrong with the family picture altogether - the trash bin into which all unwanted matter is cast. The Scapegoat role facilitates the existence of family denial. The narcissistic mother teaches her non-scapegoat children to accept and support the scapegoating of a given child by affirming and rewarding those children's perceptions that whenever anything is wrong, it is to be the Scapegoat's fault. Children adapt quickly to these roles, and learn readily that if they do not want to be responsible for something, they need only turn to the Scapegoat, whose case will never be sufficiently or properly heard, and whose "guilt" is so readily welcomed. Once the other family members have mastered this approach, they are much freer to do otherwise objectionable things without suffering negative consequences.

For a defenceless child made to play scapegoat, the burdens of being labeled "bad" no matter what she does are heavy. She soon learns she cannot win; there is no sense struggling to improve her family's opinion of her, because that simply cannot be allowed to occur. (This is the point of hopelessness at which some Scapegoats begin playing the role of "bad seed", because her failures will be rewarded, whether consciously or unconsciously.) In fact, commonly, the more the Scapegoat behaves and performs well, the more severely she is oppressed, because doing well threatens the mother's labelling of the child as bad. This causes the narcissistic mother psychological distress, because it suggests that her belief is wrong, and for a narcissist, the thought of entertaining this possibility is completely intolerable.

In a desperate attempt to reduce her mother's active oppression and derision, the Scapegoat succumbs to the roles of underachiever, troubled one, loser, black sheep or troublemaker. This presents the mother with exactly what her mental illness is making her feel she must have - an external object upon which to place blame - so that she can continue the reassuring fantasy that there is nothing wrong with her self or her family on the whole.

For the Scapegoat, there will be disregard and/or punishment for doing well and a "reward" of a little less overt abuse or even occasional expressions of support if she fails to thrive and accepts her role. Many Scapegoats have reported that the only time they felt their mother supported them (if at all) was when the supportive act fostered and reinforced the scapegoats' inferiority, dysfunction or weakness. In an effort to alleviate to some degree the distress of her narcissistic mother's

wrath, the Scapegoat eventually gives in and agrees with the family's assessment of her as inferior and worthy of blame. She internalises the belief that she is inherently bad, worthless, and defective, and believes that everyone she contacts can clearly see this and will reject her as completely her family does. She will bring the telltale signs of deep inferiority with her to the playground, to school, to the workplace, and into her community and relationships.

Commonly, because the Scapegoat's psyche is weighed down with the burden of an overwhelming sense of immutable inferiority, her early behaviour, mannerisms, habits, speech, and even her posture will bear the unmistakable mark of a bedraggled victim, crippled with shame and guilt. She is the one who cannot speak up, and this is immediately obvious to everyone with whom she comes into contact. Having plenty of experience in the role of scapegoat, she is the perfect target for abusive behaviour. She is the one others intuitively know will not fight back. She is the easy target – the pushover - the dupe. She will become the outcast, the bullied one, the marginalised loner, the routinely punished trouble-maker or the laughingstock.

The Scapegoat is accustomed to accepting blame for interpersonal problems, and she has been diligently conditioned to believe that if only SHE could do better, the challenges facing relationships in which she takes part would dissolve. Despite the fact that this is an unattainable state, she has only her family patterns to use as a template for her adult relationships, and she easily tolerates partners who are emotionally irresponsible and expect her to bear too many obligations or who give her the message that any difficulties are inordinately her fault.

It is not uncommon for a Scapegoat to play a similar role in the workplace as well. Just as children can detect who among them is a vulnerable target for blame and ostracism, adults do the same. The Scapegoat may find herself underpaid and overworked more than her co-workers, left out of the picture during office functions, blamed for departmental failures, and overlooked for deserved promotions and commendations. Though the quality of her work may often be far superior to her co-workers', she is not likely to be chosen to participate in the big presentation or serve as a team leader, and her employee evaluations will reflect supervisors' willingness to criticize her more harshly than others. She will be overlooked at best, fired at worst.

While children, some Scapegoats respond to the no-win situations they've been handed by developing destructive, defiant or offensive behaviour patterns. This can create serious difficulties at school and work, as well as the community overall. Scapegoats trapped in the "bad seed" role may find themselves experiencing repeated reprimands and firings from places of employment. If a Scapegoat has developed a habit of getting herself into trouble, her difficulties with work and relationships are more likely to take the form of conflicts and offences related to issues such as rebelliousness and unproductive or destructive behaviours.

Despite some variations in the way role manifests, the Scapegoat never fits in comfortably, and is largely looked down upon or rejected, no matter the vehicle or reasons given (real or imagined) for such marginalisation.

Scapegoats typically seek far more psychotherapy than any other family member. A Scapegoat is deeply accustomed to thinking that things would be fine if only she weren't inherently defective and unworthy, and this often leads her to a therapist's office. (By contrast, narcissists can be defined almost solely by their unwillingness to seek genuine therapy.)

The Scapegoat typically considers her failings to be the central reasons her partner has been insensitive, her boss has cheated her out of a raise, and her siblings talk down to her. She is uncomfortable at school, at work, and in social situations, because she believes she is inferior. Much of this thinking invites scenarios of self-fulfilling prophecies, making it more difficult for her to see that she can reverse the patterns of mistreatment resulting from her observable insecurities and sense of inferiority. She blames herself, as she has been taught to. This often leads her into therapy, where she may discover the real reason for her mistreatment in adulthood. After all, it is not her supposed inferiority that leads her into situations where she is denigrated, reinforcing her feelings of inadequacy, but the palpable bearing of her family's shame and rejection. She has not been overlooked and mistreated because she truly is inferior to others. This has happened because she has believed the lie that she is lacking, and she has behaved accordingly, which makes her an all-too easy target.

Until the scapegoat is able to extricate herself from the lie that she is inherently bad, guilty and wrong, she will struggle. She will attract the wrong people, she will fail to reach her potential, and she will be her own worst enemy. The degree to which she is able to realize that she is mistreated not because she is inherently inferior, but because she is sending messages of vulnerability, is the degree to which she will determine the quality of her future.

Narcissistic Mothers as Bullies

It is a given that Narcissistic Mothers are bullies. Their **Narcissistic Rage** is a classic bullying technique, creating fear in the minds of the victim. **Enabling Fathers**, too, depending on how actively they enable, are bullies in the cause of keeping the Narcissistic Mother happy.

This would have been a very core experience in my own life. Any intransigence, any complaint about how they treated me, any challenge to them, was met with overwhelming force. Not physical, not in my case (although it would be physical in many cases).

But there would be huge amounts of emotional abuse.

I used to describe it (before I knew about Narcissistic Personality Disorder and had that language) as that they had this 'Horrible Danu Mirror', i.e. this image of me that was this truly horrible, nasty, worthless, ghastly, useless person, and they held this image up to me whenever I tried to speak up for myself.

"Oh!" They'd say, "Well you think *you're* so perfect. Let me tell you, you're not!" And out would come a list of my supposed faults.

In retrospect those faults were either too general to have any value, e.g., "You're so awkward", or, in the case of the detailed ones, tiny little foibles like closing the front door after their visit before they'd reached the car and driven out of sight.

But they eviscerated me, and I dreaded them and let myself therefore be bullied into not challenging them.

It bears repeating: Narcissistic Mothers are bullies, and their sycophant husbands are bullies, and they bully us to control us, to subjugate us, to disempower us. And it works. It's a huge part of their abuse of us.

Emotional Vampires

Narcissistic Mothers are almost invariably Emotional Vampires.

They enjoy the drama of people's suffering.

If they're **malignant narcissists** they may even provoke your suffering in order to enjoy it.

Long before I realised that I had a Narcissistic Mother I felt very uneasy about her reaction to tragedies - both my tragedies, and others'.

Often whenever I arrived at her house, almost the first words out of her mouth would be, literally: "I've got some bad news for you!"

There would be an air of poorly suppressed excitement about her which is making me feel very uncomfortable even to remember - little fizzles of distaste popping all over my body at the memory, as would happen at the time.

And did you notice the words: bad news FOR ME. Like a cat bringing a dead mouse as a present.

And then she would tell me the bad news, again with the suppressed excitement and a hard-to-define air of ... could it be? - joy - on her. It's hard to think of a word. But it was pleasure of some kind.

I never had the nerve to say I didn't want to hear it, because I didn't want to be the recipient of her **Narcissistic Rage**, so I used to respond in the barest grunts.

It probably looked very uncaring, but it seemed to me that the only gift I could give those people who'd had the tragedy, was the gift of not partaking in being voyeuristic about it, of not contributing to this Emotional Vampirism.

I wish I'd had the courage to refuse to hear about it at all, but I didn't. Because the price would have been too high - a huge row for sure. I'm ashamed of that now, in part, but under the circumstances I realise I couldn't have done anything better.

Many times I was tempted to respond to her statement that she had bad news for me by rubbing my hands together in a caricature of glee and say, "Have you? Oh GREAT! Let's hear it". Just to point out how inappropriate it all was. But you can imagine the reaction that would have got me.

One time there was a particularly tragic death in her town, of a young woman. My mother went to the funeral, as she knew the woman's aunt somewhat well, and the woman's mother to say hello to. In itself this wasn't inappropriate because in our culture you go to all sorts of funerals no matter how loose your connection - it's a matter of respect.

But she told me about this afterwards, with this suppressed glee/energy about her, and said, "And the aunt was sooo pleased to see me! She took my hand and said, "Thanks so much for coming"! And even her mother recognised me, and thanked me for coming."

I was so close to pointing out, "But it wasn't about YOU". But of course I realise now that, yes, for her, it *was* about her. To be that close to such a dramatic tragedy! How wonderful!

It creeped me out further that she showed me the full-page cutting she had taken from the local newspaper, about the accident in which the young woman died, and the smaller cutting she had taken from a national newspaper. I'm shuddering even remembering this. Why, oh why, would you cut out the articles from the papers? A souvenir of such a thing?

The accident was reasonably high-profile in the whole of Ireland (in a small country like Ireland lots of stuff makes the national press that wouldn't in other places), and it is my considered and absolute belief, based on her actions, that she was so, so excited and thrilled to be involved with something so dramatic and high-profile.

I'm still cringing at it. Taking this young woman's death and the grief of her family and using it to bolster your own need for drama - vultures wouldn't stoop to it.

When I miscarried my first baby she was the same. She came to my hospital bed and there was this air of suppressed excitement about the drama. I started to cry, and she said, "Cry, cry! Get it out. Do". (I'm pretty sure I have that exactly word for word. But pretty close anyway.) It reads like a bad soap opera script, doesn't it? And she said it with all the sincerity and conviction of a bad soap actor.

Her insincerity blocked the tears on me, and I can still vividly remember the pain, the physical pain, in my chest of those unshed tears.

My husband tells me that when I had been taken down to theatre he was sitting there, feeling miserable and worried as you can imagine, and she put out her hand and covered his hand. And he HATED it. The Normals could never imagine why - on the face of it, a loving supportive thing to do. But you guys will get it - it was part of her script of being a Loving Mother-In-Law Supporting Her Bereaved Son-In-Law.

In common NPD ways, there would be total deniability about all of this. The words are always spot on: "Oh isn't it terrible? I'm so sorry for X - she's devastated. The poor, poor family."

But the tone and the expression! It reminds me of this: whenever my dog used to see me put on my walking shoes and jacket, she'd start this quivering. She knew a walk was in the offing, and she was all agog for it. But she couldn't get excited quite yet, so the whole body would shake with suppressed excitement and there'd be this enthusiastic and happy expression on her face.

My mother would be like that, albeit more subtly. She wouldn't be visibly quivering as the dog would be. But it would be definitely there.

And whereas it was totally appropriate for the dog to get excited over a walk, it's totally inappropriate to get excited over others' tragedies. But that's emotional vampirism for you.

Your Success and Happy Days

In most cases **Narcissistic Mothers** begrudge you your success and happy days. That is certainly what I have experienced anyway, as have many other Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers.

One of the biggest gifts of realising about Narcissistic Mothers was realising, finally, just why she was so mean and dismissive about my successes and happy days.

It's because, if it's about *you*, it's not about *her*. And that cannot be. Simple.

One huge example is that of my wedding day. I felt so grieved for so many years over this, but now I can accept it, that given her Narcissism and my father's enabling ways, it couldn't ever have been different.

It started when he and she announced that they had decided that they would keep her Mother-of-the-Bride outfit a surprise from me until the big day. I was a bit taken aback by this. This meant that on my wedding day I'd have to stand there and make a fuss of her. That felt a bit odd, but I accepted it, as I accepted so many things I should not have done.

On my wedding day neither she nor my father made the slightest fuss of me whatsoever. She did not help me get dressed. When I made my entrance downstairs they both ignored me.

She never told me I looked well, or beautiful or anything - although when challenged on this afterwards she literally screamed that she *had* told me this. This contradiction bewildered me so much for so many years. I *knew* that she hadn't, I'd been waiting for that crumb of acknowledgement so hard that I was very aware of what she said and didn't say. But yet she sounded so certain. That was before I knew about **gaslighting**. Now it make sense.

After the wedding service she told me that Mrs X had cried at the ceremony. I asked if she, herself, had cried. She said dismissively, "No, I never cry at these things".

I wondered how she was such an expert on 'these things' such as her daughters' weddings as I was the first one married.

But, hungry for acknowledgement I persisted, "Well, are you happy for me?"

She said, "Well, I'm glad to see you married," making it very clear that she meant, married at last, after living 'in sin' for so long.

At the wedding speech, my father referred to "the most beautiful woman in the room here today ..." and my heart swelled in anticipation. At last, some acknowledgement. But like the good Enabler he is, he went on, "... my wife."

To this day he insists that he was right to do this, that it was up to my new husband to say nice things about me, not him. But he had already stolen the thunder; there can only be one 'most beautiful woman'. And he cannot see that to steal that from a woman on her wedding day is so cruel.

The irony is that my mother didn't even hear him say this! I suspect that, thinking that the speeches wouldn't be about her, that she didn't even listen to them.

When I conceived my first baby I sent my husband to meet my father and tell him, because I didn't want her raining on that parade too. I wish I had kept to this for my second baby. Now, bear in mind that I miscarried that first baby and it took me a long year and a half to conceive again, so the news of the second pregnancy was huge!

My parents took the news in such a muted fashion that I might as well have told them that the price of tea-bags was going up. It was so blatant that my father even apologised. "It might look like we're not excited," he said, "but we are."

There are many, many more examples of this. But this website isn't about me, except in as much as my experiences can provide validation for yours.

Suffice to say that Narcissistic Mothers cannot step outside their own egos long enough to genuinely celebrate anybody else's special days, events, or successes.

It leaves we daughters bruised, hurt, bewildered and confused. Especially when they, again classic gaslighting, insist that they did celebrate us enough.

You want to know how to judge when your Narcissistic Mother thinks you've done well?

Wait for the resulting nastiness. And remember it's her special way of saying, "Great job!"

Fellow Daughter of a Narcissistic Mother

Parentification

Parentification is the trait in Narcissistic Mothers of expecting her daughter to look after *her* instead of the other way around.

This parentification can take the form of the daughter being expected to meet physical needs far beyond her age, such as clothes-washing (her own, or her own and her mother's), cooking, minding younger siblings, fetching and carrying for her mother and so on.

But it can also take the form of the daughter being expected to take care of her mother's emotional needs. In this case her mother will probably speak very inappropriately to her daughter of her relationships (including her relationship with the daughter's father if that's still relevant), of her sex life, of her issues and concerns.

This process of parentification is very abusive as the daughter, correctly judging this as the price of her mother's approval, and not knowing any better, tries to take on the burden of meeting those needs.

This means that she is not paying attention to her own needs and desires and attending to the important business of growing up. And it also means that she's trying to do stuff she's just not equipped for.

Parentification is a huge burden to put on a small girl, but one that Narcissistic Mothers put on without conscience.

Infantalisation

Narcissistic Mothers can also practise a form of Infantalisation, i.e. keeping their daughters young and dependent on them. This is so the daughters will never leave them to being their own adult lives, and so will remain around to provide lots of lovely **Narcissistic Supply**.

This can be done in different ways. Perhaps the mother will forever tell the daughter, to the point of brainwashing, "You'll never amount to anything, you'll never survive in the real world, it's just as well you've got me to mind you."

Another method of Infantalisation is to constantly overstate the dangers of the world, so that the daughter thinks the world is an inherently unsafe place and that the only protection is via her mother. This further creates a dependency. There's such a huge cost though, because the daughter never, ever feels safe, perhaps not even in her own bedroom at night - because bad guys can break into bedrooms at any time.

Now, I know, of course, that bad things do happen, and that there is a danger in the world. I know that most of us work on a false assumption of safety, because that lets us function. But the truth is much more towards the safety end of the spectrum - the odds of any one bad thing happening are miniscule. The mother who terrifies her daughter about being abducted from her bed will happily take her daughter out in the car - where there is a real, albeit small, risk of injury and death.

Infantalisation isn't about genuine protection - it's about creating terror and dependency.

It might take the form of giving money to the daughter, constantly re-enforcing that the daughter can't make it on her own. Of course this money has huge strings attached. It's possible too, that the daughter genuinely cannot really manage her money, or look after herself properly, as she was never taught how, and was brainwashed into thinking she couldn't.

Maybe the daughter has been trained to ask the Narcissistic Mother's advice on everything, which keeps the daughter dependent in that way, and also makes sure she's doing everything in reference to her mother - again, the **Narcissistic Supply!**

Mother's gonna make all your nightmares come true.
Mother's gonna put all her fears into you.
Mother's gonna keep you right here under her wing.
She wont let you fly, but she might let you sing.

Pink Floyd - The Wall

Triangulation

Triangulation is another trick of Narcissistic Mothers.

It involves creating a situation where two people, e.g. two siblings, do not relate directly to each other, but mostly relate via the mother.

This triangulation gives the mother lots of power, of course, and means that she controls the flow of information, the interpretation of that information, and the nuances of it.

It also means that she gets lots of **Narcissistic Supply** from it because everybody is relating to *her*, rather than to each other and cutting her out of the loop.

It can be easy to put siblings into a triangulation situation. She has possibly already divided them by making one a **Golden Child** and the other a **Scapegoat**.

She'll say things like, "Oh, your sister was asking how you were. I told her you were fine, but that Jimmy's having trouble in school."

And you, well-trained, might say, "That's nice of her to ask after me - do tell her I was asking after her."

Narcissistic Mothers' Vanity

Narcissistic Mothers' vanity is a classic one of their traits.

Now, we all like to look well. I'm not talking about normal self-care or pride in your appearance.

I'm talking about an obsession with her looks. I'm talking about ALWAYS being perfectly dressed and made-up - perhaps even just to take out the rubbish bins! I'm talking about over-dressing, i.e. wearing too formal an outfit, and too much jewellery and make-up for an occasion. (Again, people sometimes do this because they misjudge it. And some people just like jewellery and make-up more than others. But this vanity is more than that.)

It might also involve excessive preening of herself in the mirror. Admiring herself, appreciating herself and her beauty.

Narcissistic Mothers' vanity includes body size, you won't be surprised to read. They *hate* being fat, or perhaps even normal-sized, and are very judgemental of people who are overweight. And they can thus put huge pressure onto their daughters to be equally slender, which can often lead to eating disorders.

If she is an **Engulfing Mother** she might project her vanity onto her daughter. She might insist that her daughter is very thin, for example.

For Narcissistic Mothers who have this extreme vanity, ageing is even more difficult than for the rest of us. The rest of us mourn whatever beauty youth gave us - but for Narcissistic Mothers ageing is an absolute disaster. You may find therefore that they become addicted to cosmetic surgery, or maybe just to dressing much younger than they are. Hanging onto their youth with every fibre of their being.

There is an irony to all this of course. Many Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers have real trouble with **self-care**. They were taught, growing up, that they weren't worth looking after, and that's the message they internalised.

Narcissistic Mothers' Strange Sexuality

Many Narcissistic Mothers have strange attitudes towards sex.

They might be over-sexual and act inappropriately flirty, maybe with their daughters' boyfriends or other inappropriate people. (Flirting with their daughters' boyfriends also **invades her boundaries**, making sure the daughters know their place in the grand scheme of things.)

Or they might blur boundaries again by giving their daughters too much information re their own sex lives.

This might even blur the boundaries between inappropriate behaviour and sexual abuse. In healthy relationships mothers are physically intimate in many ways with their daughters anyway, so it's easy for inappropriate behaviour to slip in in unhealthy relationships.

They might refuse to tell their daughters about sex and be over-prudish. They might respond really negatively when the daughter gets her first period - showing disgust maybe, or otherwise making it a bad thing.

I am lucky that my own mother did not fall into any of these extremes. In fairness I think she dealt with sexual issues with me very maturely and very appropriately.

But I know that these issues do cause big problems for daughters who've experienced them.

Enabling Father

In a family situation where you have a Narcissistic Mother, you also need to have an Enabling Father. That is, if you have a father at all.

An Enabling Father is one who panders to the Narcissistic Mother, who facilitates her abuse of the children, who worships completely at her altar and expects the children to do so too.

He can - as is the case with my own father - act as her hatchet man, being the one who defends her viciously, portraying his own version of **Narcissistic Rage**. He's her front-line defence.

He'll do anything to keep the peace, including sacrificing his own children's well-being.

I remember my brother and I going to my father to protest at some specific of our mother's treatment of us. I can clearly recall every word of his reply:

He said, "Don't make me unhappy with the wife I've chosen".

And by saying that, he dismissed our concerns totally. I cannot remember what the issue was, but it must have been serious enough for us to approach him, and we must have had right on our side or he would have argued the case on its own merits.

But he wasn't going to help us. His need to feel that he'd chosen a good wife was more important than protecting his children.

It also shows that he needed to believe his wife was perfect, or near it, to feel he had chosen a good wife.

He was forever talking her up to us, telling us how wonderful she was, how great. This in itself was a form of **gaslighting** (albeit probably an unconscious form) because it didn't tally with our experiences of her.

I remember as a child feeling very lonely and left out because their love for each other was a closed circle and there was no room for me in it. I certainly didn't describe it in those words then, I didn't have the words to describe it. But I distinctly remember the feeling, and thinking they loved each other so much there was no love left for me.

Nowadays I think that their 'love' was more probably an unhealthy co-dependency. My husband and I love each other very much, but that love is not a closed circle. Indeed the more we build a healthy relationship, the more that love spreads outwards, not only to our son but to others too.

An Enabling Father will rationalise away his wife's behaviour. He'll tell the children things like, "She loves you in her own way." Or, "Don't mind her, it's just her way." Or, "Don't annoy your mother, you know what she's like."

This dynamic, of course, means that Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers are living in a no-win situation. They have no champion, nobody to protect them.

Narcissistic Mother-English Dictionary

This is the result of a bit of fun we had on our forum (which you would be welcome to join – it links from the main website). But it's all very real under the humour. It's all classic **gaslighting** and **invalidation**.

WHAT SHE SAYS	WHAT IT MEANS
I love you.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I want to manipulate you. 2. You're showing signs of breaking away and I want to suck you back in. 3. I've heard people say this and it seems to get a good reaction. 4. I command you to love me.
Don't ever feel like you HAVE to come see me for my birthday	If you don't make the 650 mile pilgrimage to celebrate me, I promise I will do something to make you pay dearly.
Go do something constructive.	Be gone, I have no interest in my own children.
You were an "accident".	You are only here because homicide would get <u>me</u> jail time, and I thought you'd be a better slave, so I didn't opt for adoption.
You go have yourself a good cry!	I resent your emotions, but at least I can use them to hurt you.
I never said that!	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Damned if I'm going to admit it. 2. Yes I said that but it doesn't work in the conversation right now. 3. I know I said it but it's so much fun to f*** with your head until you don't know what is true and you think you really are crazy! Yeah me!!!
It's been a long time since I talked to you and just called to see how you were doing.	I am running low on my Narcissistic Supply and need another fix.
I have no idea what you're talking about!	Damned if I'm going to admit to it.
You just aren't remembering correctly.	My version of events shows me in a better light, so that's the official one.
You never do anything for me!	I know you've done a lot for me in the past, but that was then and it no longer counts. What have you done for me today?
It's time this stops.	None of my ploys have worked to pull you back so now I will treat you like a child.

I miss you.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I miss having control over you. 2. I'm lacking my Narcissistic Supply- please provide it pronto.
Who have you been talking to, in therapy with, what book did you read, etc, etc, etc....	I'm not getting the usual emotional response from you and you are too dim-witted to have figured out how to shut me down on your own.
Your brother and sister-in-law took us out to dinner last night. We had such a nice time - I don't think we have ever been treated that well.	You had better step up your game and show some appreciation for all I've done for you.
I'm so proud of you.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You have made <i>me</i> feel good and/or *I* feel good because of you. 2. I can take credit for that accomplishment.
Why are you wasting your time on something so silly and that takes you away from your family?	Why are you wasting your time on something so silly and that takes you away from me?
Your father and I think ...	I think ...
So how are you?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I'd better ask, but don't worry I won't really be listening. Or as soon as you say a trigger word, which reminds me of something else, I'll interrupt and be off again! 2. I'm running out of things to boast to my friends about, so please come up with some accomplishments.
I'm so sorry your beloved 14-year old dog died.	Sigh ... I'd better at least mention it and then I can talk about myself again.
It's so sad!	It's so exciting! I love being this close to tragedies! The drama!
I'm sorry.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I will say the words but never change my behaviour. 2. I'll say anything to shut you up, but don't worry, I don't mean it.
I'm thinking of you.	I will continue to ignore your boundaries.
Let's just let go of the past.	Let's pretend everything is ok and I'm not a nightmare of a mother so I can continue to torture you and get my Narcissistic Supply .
Your sister-in-law is such a great cook!	I want to take away any pleasure or pride

Simply amazing!	you have in your own cooking skills.
I just want you to love me.	All I really want is for you give me my Narcissistic Supply.
What's wrong with you today? What is your problem?	I'm pissed that you are denying me my much needed Narcissistic Supply . Damn you!
I was only trying to help!	I demand the freedom to interfere in your life any time I want. That is my right!
After all I've done for you! You've never appreciated me!" wah wah wah	I have violated your boundaries most of your life and I resent the hell out of your standing your ground and refusing to allow me to interfere, manipulate and control you.
Why are you treating me so badly? What have I done wrong?	I have the right to interfere in your life and abuse you without any consequences.
Because I'm the Mama!	You are really just a child, after all. I'll never acknowledge that you are now an adult.
I want to give you this or that because I love you.	It's really because you will then be beholden to me and this gives me great leverage to milk you for Narcissistic Supply .
I want to help you with your kids.	I plan to interfere in the upbringing of your children by spoiling them, disciplining them differently to your way, and ignoring your decisions and wishes regarding them. I will not acknowledge your position and rights as the mother of these children.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You were very difficult to raise. 2. You were always my problem child. 	You resisted my attempts to violate your boundaries, abuse you and humiliate you.
I never want to be a burden to you.	I will over-run your life and suck the life force from you and your children.
Have you lost some weight?	I am so glad that I brought that sticky bun with me on this visit.
You take me the wrong way.	I will invalidate your feelings as I have done your whole life.
You're such a good cook.	You got that from me!
You're such a good mother.	You got that from me!
You don't respect me!	You won't let me abuse you!
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I have to walk on eggshells around you. 	You won't take my abuse uncomplainingly.

2. You're over-sensitive.	
You won't forgive me!	You won't allow me to allow me to trample all over you even though I have expressed no repentance and will continue to act exactly as I always have.

Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers

We Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers have a lot of issues which come from having lived this cruel crazy-making lifestyle.

I think that living with a Narcissistic Mother is possibly one of the most horrendous abuses of children, because - depending where on the **Narcissistic Spectrum** our mother is located - it can be so subtle that we don't even realise we're being abused.

I certainly didn't. When my sister more or less left home when she was 15, all-but living with a neighbour, and officially left home never to be seen again at age 17, all I could think was, "What's her problem?"

And it never occurred to me to wonder where my own depression, suicide attempt and constant suicide thoughts, and eating disorder, had come from.

We just internalise the stress, and think it's *us* that's wrong, and horrible, and maybe even crazy. This is assisted by the fact that our Narcissistic Mothers and Enabling Fathers *tell* us that we're crazy! Maybe not in as many words, but every time they **gaslight** us to tell us our memory and perceptions are mistaken, it's effectively saying we're crazy.

On my last conversation with my mother she told me patronisingly that I had a very good imagination - the inference being that I was totally imagining all of what I was saying.

We maybe still think our mother loves us because she tells us she does, and we don't know any better to realise that normally love doesn't manifest in such sly put-downs, such undermining, such neglect. And of course our culture tells us, loud and clear and over and over, that our mother loves us, and that we need to love her. And because of this, our friends just don't - cannot - understand any of this, and that's lonely too.

And we believe we love her because, well, that's what daughters do. And as normal loving girls we crave to love.

The heritage of being a Daughter of a Narcissistic Mother just goes on and on - I've heard it described, bitterly, as the *gift that keeps on giving*.

We feel we cannot be our **authentic true selves**, even assuming we can figure out who that authentic self even is.

We suffer from low self-esteem, often to the level of self-loathing, and we struggle with **self-care**. We almost certainly cannot love ourselves and all this is evidenced by our **negative self-talk**.

We may believe we have no right to exist, and almost certainly feel that we're **never good enough**, that we're not acceptable, that at some deep down level we're inherently flawed.

We either are forever self-sabotaging, or burdened with impossible perfectionism.

Although there is often euphoria when we make this discovery about NPD, as we realise we're not crazy, that can be quickly followed by anger, grief, and bereavement, sadness, shame and guilt, and maybe even hatred.

We're weary of our **successes being dismissed** and our **tragedies being used as drama-queen fodder**.

We perhaps still always feel like a little girl, and we're probably scared to own, or access, our own power - and that keeps us feeling powerless too. We've had years of being told we're too sensitive, and possibly we are, now.

We have difficulty setting boundaries, whether that's with our family or with others.

We may well be overly fearful of authority figures, or of people being angry with us.

We worry about whether we ourselves are narcissistic.

We may have body issues - either being overweight, or terrified of gaining weight.

We may find ourselves still experiencing huge fear of our mother, no matter how old we are or how assertive in other parts of our lives.

We may find that we're still trying - in vain, of course - to get her approval, or to get her attention.

We may want to severely **limit our contact with her**, or even to **cut off all contact** - but be worried and confused about that.

We no doubt have difficulties in forming relationships, or maybe we're attracted to unhealthy and abusive relationships. We have a constant fear of abandonment, and huge trust issues. We carry a constant feeling that the world isn't safe.

We also have massive issues around deserving. Deep down we may feel that we don't deserve good things, or good relationships, or even that we don't deserve to heal. We may also have beliefs around healing that healing means she gets away with it, for example, which block us, or the belief that being unhappy is a badge of proof that this happened.

A lot of Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers also have huge difficulty saying nice things about themselves, or celebrating their own successes.

We no doubt have limiting beliefs. These vary from woman to woman but could be things like, It's not safe to be successful, or I have to be quiet and not cause any trouble.

The thing about these beliefs is that often they're so deep down that we don't even know they're there - but they're running, and often ruining, our lives.

EFT is terrific for a) identifying and b) erasing these false and limiting beliefs.

We may feel the burden of keeping family secrets, and feel guilt and shame around those.

We are torn between cutting off contact - but that's so big a decision - and having to **deal with her on a regular basis.**

We doubt our own abilities to be mothers in our turn.

The DONM Journey

The DONM Journey - i.e. the Journey of Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers - is an amazing one.

The first emotion that I experienced was euphoria. It was incredible! Suddenly everything made sense. I **wasn't crazy!**

Those times there was a conflict between what I remembered and what she swore - there was now every reason to suppose I had been right!

All those times I felt she didn't love me - I was right!

All those times my father (who I truly believe loved me, but not enough obviously) put my needs well behind her wants - that now made sense too!

It was a time of things falling into place and making sense. And that was massive. Such a gift.

But then, a few weeks later, the pain started.

The hurt started. The 'why?'s. The bereavement, the knowledge that I had no mother, that in a very real way I had never had a real mother, and above all, that I never would. The knowledge that I was an emotional orphan, and always had been.

Then came anger. How DARE she treat me like that! How dare she dismiss me so easily and neglect me and not care for me. How DARE she lie to me! How dare she dismiss my successes and feed off my tragedies. How dare she ignore and dismiss my darling children!

How dare she tell me it was all my fault. How dare she make me feel like I was never good enough, that who I was was unacceptable.

Then the memories started popping up. Things I had forgotten just popped into my head, and I was now seeing them through the filter of the Narcissism awareness. Remembering how I wore the same vest (undershirt) for *months* on end, and it was literally grey. Remembering the times she had left me go hungry because it wasn't yet dinner time. Remembering eating her toast crusts because she wouldn't make any toast for me - but had done so for herself. So many painful memories ...

Then sadness. A very deep sadness for that little Danu, that little innocent girl who was not loved, who was only fodder for her mother's Narcissism and her father's enabling. A sadness for all the love and laughter I hadn't had. A sadness for the huge, huge loss.

Then liberation. I had already gone No Contact with them, but it was still raw and hurtful. But now I realised the freedom in it. No longer would I have to

dread meeting them, and steel myself for being with her, and put my personality, my very Self, into storage so I could present a suitably docile Cardboard Cutout to her.

I no longer had to inflict this misery on my family. We had our first parent-free Christmas ever, this past year, and it was *wonderful*. We could relax and enjoy. Friends came and we had laughter and it was all so gentle. And calm. No clenching of nerves, no being on my guard all the time.

Then I realised how safe I was now. With my parents I had always felt as if I was on the edge of a cliff. One false step led to horrendous rows and character evisceration and soul annihilation. Now I could relax and just be me, and on the rare occasions I upset people they just spoke to me about it calmly and respectfully. So no stress.

At this time of writing I have had no contact with my parents for just over six months - and the freedom and sense of safety just get better and better.

There were also periods of self-doubt. A moment or two of worry about whether I was a narcissist or not. And then the immediate realisation that I'm not. And then worry because narcissists never think they are. Doubts too about my parenting.

I went through an obsessive stage, reading everything I could get my hands on. This is in part why I've done this website - to be a full resource for you to do the same thing. (The other reason is so that you can then **heal from this.**)

Your Authentic Self

There is nothing more important than being able to be your authentic Self. And there can be nothing more difficult for the daughter of a narcissistic mother.

I'm willing to bet that, all your life, you were taught that who you were was not acceptable, and that it was neither allowed, nor safe, for you to express your authentic Self.

This is one of the main reasons, I'm convinced, that daughters of narcissistic mothers have such low self-esteem and trouble with liking themselves.

It makes sense, doesn't it?

Many daughters of narcissistic mothers struggle with even knowing who their authentic Self even is! They can often have trouble claiming their power too, and an authentic self is a powerful one.

So the issues they face are things like, "It's not safe to me be," and "Who am I really?"

The best way I know of resolving this is to use **EFT** on the issue. Use the above statements as your tapping statement as per the **EFT Instructions** to resolve the issue.

Or, another option would be to contact me on danu@daughtersofnarcissisticmothers.com to arrange to work with me over the phone, using my expertise in EFT, to heal this.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to grow into your authentic Self? It's your birthright, and it's time to claim it.

Stockholm Syndrome

Stockholm Syndrome is a very interesting psychological phenomenon, and it applies directly to daughters of narcissistic mothers.

Stockholm Syndrome is, in essence, the trait of abused people to bond closely with their abusers.

It was first identified in 1973 in Stockholm, Sweden (hence the name) when victims of a bank hostage situation bonded with their hostage-taker to the extent of clinging to them when the police were arresting them and refusing to testify against them in court.

Since then, it has been seen again and again, most recently in the cases of Elisabeth Smart, Natascha Kampusch and Jaycee Lee Duggard who all had the opportunity to escape, but didn't take it.

It's a survival trait, it actually makes sense in many ways.

And interestingly, it seems that victims of abusers as well as kidnappers experience this. And I can see that it applies to daughters of narcissistic mothers. I look back now that I'm free of my mother and father's toxicity and cannot *believe* that I put up with so much bad treatment.

Several traits have to be present in order for Stockholm Syndrome to happen. They are:

- The victim must feel that there is very real danger to their very survival.
- The victim must be cut off from all other perspectives other than those of the abuser - i.e. that the abuser is the only source of information the person receives.
- The victim must have a real, or perceived, inability to escape from the situation.
- The abuser must give occasional kindnesses to the victim.

That last is very important. It's the kindnesses which cause the bonding. Because of the fear and isolation the person experiences, the small kindnesses assume a huge importance in the mind of the victim. He or she becomes incredibly grateful for them. The victim even becomes grateful for things which are their right, such as food, but which they didn't think they'd get and are grateful they did.

One survivor of an aeroplane hijacking said: "They weren't bad people. They let me eat, they let me sleep, they gave me my life".

I find that very interesting, that that person was for them giving him his life, when the truth was that the hostage-takers threatened his life. If they 'gave' him his life and spared him, it wasn't a favour they were doing him - it was his right to keep his life!

Now, how do these four elements apply to daughters of narcissistic mothers?

I don't know if we're in danger of our lives. It's the only one of these four points I'm not sure about. But I think that the mother-child relationship is soooooo integral to a baby/child's survival that any cracks in it will, at a very primeval level, make us fear for our survival. And the fact that we do seem to have Stockholm Syndrome makes me think this element must, in fact, apply too.

As for the second trait - this is where **gaslighting** comes in. Our mothers cannot literally and physically isolate us from other perspectives. But they can make sure we don't *believe* any other information except for what they tell us - up to and including our own perceptions/senses!

The third trait is of course self-evident. A child does have a very real inability to escape. But even more, the abuse can be very subtle (and they tell us it's our fault etc), so that we don't even realise there's anything to escape from! And then, even as adults, our culture tells us that we must love our mothers! So we struggle to escape even then.

And then the fourth trait. The occasional kindnesses. Since running my forum I've read so, so many Daughters say that their mothers are sometimes kind to them. And that confuses them. It's intended to confuse them, I'd say. But more, these crumbs of kindness or attention or whatever, trigger the Stockholm Syndrome, which keeps the daughter even more trapped.

If you are the Daughter of a Narcissistic Mother, don't be fooled by occasional niceness. Healthy relationships are nice the majority of the time. Indeed, I'll go further, and say that while people who are functional and healthy can sometimes be angry, or grumpy, or selfish, or thoughtless etc (same as we all can), they'll never be sneering or nasty or dismissive or cruel.

But even if they are, it should be the absolute exception. Not the normal state of affairs.

So, consider if you might be suffering from Stockholm Syndrome, if you feel you can't leave her.

Narcissistic Mothers and Society

Narcissistic mothers and society is an issue because our society, our culture, has a blind spot when it comes to abusive mothers.

We have this image of the perfect mother, the smiling serene woman with her head bent fondly over her daughter's, holding the little girl safely and lovingly.

Mother's Day every year perpetuates this image, as do newspaper and magazine stories about selfless and even heroic mothers.

I have read that the fact that our fairytales always have wicked stepmothers rather than mothers, is a way of dealing with the issue of cruel mothers without actually facing up to it.

I'm not saying that wonderful mothers don't exist. Of course they do. But they're not the whole story, not by a long way. And of course, *you* know that, or you wouldn't be reading this website.

This hidden insistence that all mothers are angels means that, as well as all the direct problems of being the daughter of a narcissistic mother, we have the burden of secrecy and lack of recognition.

Society's mantra of the perfect mother is another form of **gaslighting**, in my opinion. Not only is our own mother telling us that she's a perfect mother and any thoughts otherwise are down to our craziness, *but society is saying the same thing!*

This makes being the daughter of a narcissistic mother a very lonely path. We can't share our frustration and fear and hurt and bewilderment even with our closest friends. Not because they're uncaring necessarily, but because they just don't understand. "I know," they might sigh sympathetically, "my mother's very annoying too."

And you long to have the words to explain to them that this is so beyond mere 'annoying' that it's in a different world.

Take the example of my dear friend Maggie. She had heard me go on about my mother, many times, as I struggled to explain it to her. The nearest I came before I came to the conclusion that she had Narcissistic Personality Disorder was to say that she had some sort of Princess Complex - i.e. that she was a princess and expected to be treated as such.

Maggie was very supportive and helpful, as befits the dear friend she is. But I'll never forget her expression and words when she finally met them and endured two and a half hours of their company (this was the last-straw meeting which made me go No Contact with them). Once we left them her face had pure shock on it, and she was shaking her head and kept saying over and over, "I never

knew. Oh Danu, you poor, poor girl, that was horrible. I know you said it, but I didn't understand".

We are so lucky in this day and age to have the internet, to be able to access this information and find out what is wrong - with *her*, not with us. And also to use the internet to access women going through similar experiences.

The relief and joy of meeting other daughters of narcissistic mothers is indescribable. To find your experiences validated and understood after a lifetime of **invalidation** and **gaslighting** is the most incredible experience! It's intoxicating nearly - the realisation that you're not crazy, that this did happen to you, that she was that bad, and that you are among people who understand. And so I do invite you to join our forum on www.daughtersofnarcissisticmothers.com/discuss where you'll meet kind and compassionate fellow-DONMs.

Self-Care Deficit

Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers can often have what's called a **self-care deficit**, which is pretty self-explanatory. Basically, we don't look after ourselves or our needs (never mind our wants!) properly.

There are a couple of reasons for this. One is that, because we were not minded or cared for properly when we were growing up, we internalised the message that we weren't worth caring for, and many of us are still living by that.

Another reason we might have this self-care deficit is because our narcissistic mothers **parentified** us, i.e. got us to mind her and look after her needs and wants. And thus we learned to look after everybody else rather than ourselves.

This self-care deficit manifests in different ways.

I know I have to force myself to have a daily shower - it just seems not worth the trouble. I struggle with a proper tooth-cleaning regime - it's much easier just to roughly scrub with the ordinary toothbrush than do the three minutes with the electric toothbrush and the flossing thing. It takes huge discipline to force myself to the right thing, and I don't always succeed.

Then there's issues around eating right and exercising. I used to be on a constant roller-coaster of doing it right, and then sabotaging myself. This is further complicated by the issues around body size anyway, another legacy from my narcissistic mother.

This is all basic stuff to struggle with. But there's even more to the self-care deficit - how often do you take time for yourself for supposedly non-essential things? How often do you claim time to pray or meditate? To draw or paint? To follow your hobby?

This is all an essential part of self-care too.

We daughters of narcissistic mothers need to get over our programming and to claim this right to be cared for as our birthright! Which indeed it is - this is no trick or lie. We just need to know that.

The solution is to re-programme the brain to know that we ARE worth this self-care.

The best way I know how to do this is through EFT. With EFT we can literally erase the belief: "I'm not worth caring for" and replace it with "Self-care is my birthright".

If you would like me to work with you to totally transform your belief around this issue (one session should do it) - then I invite you to contact me at danu@daughtersofnarcissisticmothers.com

Other options to heal this self-care deficit (albeit slower and less efficient options) are through affirmations and journaling.

Also, remember this very, very important truth: Just because you think a thought, doesn't mean it's true. So just because the thought comes, more quickly than you can really focus on it, that it's too much effort to exercise or cook a proper meal or whatever - doesn't mean that it's true. The phrase 'too much effort' means that you aren't worth doing this for. And that's not true. I invite you to read the page on **Negative Self-Talk** for more information on this.

Negative Self-Talk

Where does negative self-talk come from, and why would anybody choose to indulge in it?

Well, first let me define what I mean by negative self-talk.

It's that little voice, usually a squeaky little voice, which constantly narrates in your head, and talks down to you. It's the one which, in essence, has taken over from your Narcissistic Mother. It's the one which says:

You can't do that! You're useless. You never achieve anything. You're not worth looking after. Nobody likes you. You're no good. You'll never succeed, etc, etc

Here's the thing: humans are born with lots of unconnected nerve endings in the brain called neurons. A big part of the work of a baby is to literally make connections between those neurons. Those connections are called neural pathways. That is, for example, how we learn language. We make a connection/neural pathway between the image of, say, a cat, and the word 'cat'.

The more we reinforce that neural pathway between the image of a cat and the word 'cat' the stronger it grows. That's how repetition helps us to learn - learning is nothing more than deliberately creating a desired neural pathway.

This is a brilliant system as it means we don't have to reinvent the wheel every time - we'd go mad if we had to do that.

However, it depends on the right input in the first place. If, somehow, we saw the image of a dog and learned the word 'cat', then the system would still work perfectly, but because we had started with wrong information, our brain would be wired wrong, i.e. we'd think that gormless panting creature was a 'cat'.

The same thing applies to the sense we make of the world. If we are loved we learn that we are loveable, and *that* connection gets fixed in place.

As Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers, of course, either we weren't loved, or were loved very dysfunctionally - and so *that's* the connection we have.

And her messages acted like affirmations, creating those neural pathways:

You can't do that! You're useless. You never achieve anything. You're not worth looking after. Nobody likes you. You're no good. You'll never succeed, etc, etc

Even if she didn't say it in as many words, we humans are very clever at gathering evidence and coming to conclusions. Which again is a very useful trait but can backfire. Because we'll experience how she treated us and *tell ourselves the wrong messages!*

And so our neural pathways were created, and that little voice, that negative self-talk is nothing more than those neural pathways being triggered.

This is very good news. It means - and this is so, so important - that:

Just because we think a thought, doesn't mean it's true.

I would love that everybody would know that. It's so powerful.

It means that if you think, ***I can't do that***, or ***I'm useless, I'll never achieve anything*** - that it's not necessarily true.

Now, an honest assessment of your abilities is no harm. If I - five foot nothing, middle-aged and overweight - say, ***I can't represent my country in basketball*** - then that's probably true.

But I'm talking about the knee-jerk pre-programmed beliefs our **Narcissistic Mother** and **Enabling Father** installed in us.

So, if you think one of these negative beliefs, just consciously think to yourself: *Ah, there's that thought again. How interesting. But I'm not thinking that thought any more. I'm now thinking -----* and fill in a more empowering thought.

Stepping back and observing the thought, with mild interest, is so, so empowering and freeing. It takes away the power of the thought.

Over time the original, negative, neural pathway will wither, and the more empowering thought will take its place. However - it's hard to get into the habit of observing the thought instead of being immersed in it, and the key phrase about changing it is, 'over time'.

It is much, much more efficient and easier to just use EFT on the thoughts, and the underlying beliefs which trigger those thoughts, and re-programme them there and then. If you'd like me to work with you on this, I invite you to contact me at danu@daughtersofnarcissisticmothers.com to arrange an appointment.

Never Good Enough

If you think to yourself anything like:

- I'm never good enough
- I never feel good enough
- I never was good enough, or
- I never will be good enough,

then it's very possible that you are the son or daughter of a narcissistic mother.

And in truth, you probably never were, are, or will be good enough for her. Because such a thing doesn't exist. Her standards are so impossibly high and capricious that nobody could meet them.

Or rather, the only way to meet them would be to totally dissolve your ego, your Self, in her. That's what she wanted. She wanted you to totally adore her, to look after her, to admire her, to be her creature.

And to the extent that you did not do that, you were never good enough in her eyes.

However, this is good news!

To the extent that you managed to avoid all those things, e.g. being her creature, and managed to retain your own Self, you have won and have beaten her. So the extent that she thinks you aren't good enough is the extent to which you have won!

The problem is that she gave you that 'never good enough' message, and you took it on board and internalised it and made it part of your own truth.

This is totally understandable - it's absolutely NOT something to beat yourself up over.

She was your mother, and all children are programmed to totally look up to their mothers and believe them. Why would you not?

Also a lot of this 'never good enough' message was unspoken and subliminal and so went straight to your subconscious. The message was given in deep sighs, and rolled eyes, and silences.

Those messages are very profound, and for a child, impossible to protect yourself against.

The good news is that once you've recognised the whole Narcissistic Mother thing, you can consciously recognise that those 'never good enough' beliefs aren't true. That's huge.

But it's not enough. Those beliefs are very deeply engrained. And unfortunately,

carrying around those beliefs affects your behaviour, and affects how you treat yourself. So they're important to remove.

One way to remove them is explained in the page on **Negative Self-Talk**.

However the quickest, easiest, and most powerful way to remove them is through the use of EFT. EFT literally reprogrammes your beliefs, taking out all those 'never good enough' feelings and replacing them with a quiet confidence. I have made **a** video series for you to follow in order to release this belief – you can access it here: <http://daughtersofnarcissisticmothers.com/never-good-enough-2.html>.

Feeling Guilt

There are mixed emotions when we first realise that our mother has Narcissistic Personality Disorder. There's a freedom and the absolute JOY of realising that it *wasn't* us, that we're *not* mad/crazy. It's heady and exciting.

However, hot on the heels of that comes a feeling of guilt, that we should be thinking about our *mothers* like that, or even worse, talking about her (if we're sharing this information with friends/spouses etc, or talking on our forum).

I believe that a lot of the guilt come from our inbuilt **Stockholm Syndrome**.

Our wise sister, Light (her username on the forum), has the following to say, which she has kindly agreed to let me share here, for the benefit of all Daughters.

It's in answer to a comment raised on the forum by a new member sharing her feelings of guilt, hence some references to that.

At first [after realising your mother has NPD], many people have two "voices", if you will - YOURS and HERS:

"She's mentally disordered, and I just KNEW there was something wrong...it ALL makes perfect sense - she fits the diagnostic. The stuff I'm reading is ringing bells left and right; it's like these women have been a fly on my wall all my life - no wonder this and that happened, NO WONDER!!! What a sense of relief - I never knew - EVERYTHING is changing in my head - I finally get why she did x, I finally know why she does y, and I finally understand why she is such a vindictive, haughty, self-centered bully. I GET it, I GET it, I FINALLY GET it..."

AND

"I'm a jerk. This is my MOTHER, and you only get one! I should work harder to help and understand her - she'll get it eventually - she just has a lot of issues. Besides, I haven't exactly been the perfect child. Who ditches their own MOTHER? She will be LIVID if she finds out I've been thinking she has this - I'll be sca-rewed...there's gonna be some serious payback for thinking this way and making changes.

She's gonna TRASH me, and I'll deserve it for being such an ungrateful daughter...how dare I talk about her like this. I have no right, and of course, she'd be interminably irate - she'll be perfectly justified in wanting to take revenge!"

It's as if your brain is one of those scales - the equal arm balance kind that works like a see-saw. The first beliefs and feelings written above (yours) are on the right side, and the second group of feelings and beliefs (hers) above

are on the left.

Your brain now goes sifting through eeeeeeeevery bit of eeeeeeeverything that has ever happened. Re-evaluating, discerning, questioning, etc.

"Is what she did last spring (or whenever) really this or that NPD thing? Let me think about that one in the light of what I now know about N's..."

And you pick it up up off one side. Maybe it was something that happened at her birthday party, or something she did when you needed her. Maybe that time you asked her to do you an important favor, and she cared so little. Your brain will now "process" this memory in light of the new information it has. And it will go through some "back and forth" on it, trying to determine which side you will now return it to - is the side it was on the correct one? Should it be moved? Does it belong here or there? Were you right or were you wrong? And you may feel very confused, as your mind is dismantling its lifelong brainwashing, and that's NO small task.

That's where our forum (www.daughtersofnarcissisticmothers.com/discuss) works most of its magic. You can say things like, *"Hey, let me run this memory by you guys to see what YOU think about it"*. That is probably the most common thing we do here, and it's absolutely miraculous how this process is able to help ease people out of the brainwashing and into their OWN authentic thoughts and feelings - whatever those may be. As DoNMs, our own feelings can be so foreign to us that we're utterly clueless about our deepest needs and wants.

We've been programmed not to matter to ourselves.

You'll be staring at that item you've taken off the scale, and YOUR thoughts - your deep inner-knowing - will be whispering to you... *"This is the truth about that - you were bullied, you were manipulated, etc."*, but your mother has trained you thoroughly to repress such thoughts and feelings, and, if that training doesn't keep the brainwashing in check, the fear of her retribution will weigh in.

At first, you can't feel very much of your OWN true stuff - it's just all the guilt and entrapment and fear and self-loathing she's put in your head. You might try to slow down or push down some stuff.

Still, the inner knowing tries to break through, even though you're feeling confused and challenged.

And with every new decision of yours that something belongs on YOUR side of the scale, you realize that when it is moved, you must now grieve something - the way things are, the devil you know, family members, get-togethers, the concept of having a mother, etc.

(Everything you decide to move to the right will bring both freedom and a

certain loss you'll have to grieve.)

Bear in mind, largely, any grief will be temporary, and a free mind is both lifelong and life-changing. People who go **No Contact** look back and think, "*I am SO SO glad I got out of that!*"

Getting free of these people is a GREAT deal; it has done SO MUCH for me and so many others I know that I rarely manage to shut up about it for very long.

Here on the forum, we are all daughters of narcissistic mothers. We know very well the crap she put in your head, and we're in various stages of having removed these thoughts ourselves, some of us have done years of work and have lots of very advanced wisdom to share.

If you're a newbie, odds are that most of the women here will be ahead of you chronologically in terms of processing and healing. That's a HUGE help. So when you come here for a reality check, the sisters of the board will CLARIFY, VALIDATE AND SUPPORT YOUR AUTHENTIC, ORIGINAL, PERSONAL THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS. These must begin to be acknowledged and nurtured if we are to heal and become our OWN people.

Narcissists' thoughts and feelings are warped, hurtful and enslaving. Our thoughts and feelings, long neglected, despised and ridiculed, must come forward and be nurtured. They are expressions of our true selves, not merely the by proxy reflections of a mental disorder.

WE have been shoved down in the basement far too long.

And you have begun the process of discovering and nurturing yourself back into the wholeness you were born with, and the greatness you are destined for. You might not feel much like you're headed there, but you ARE. In light of that knowing, I will offer you this...

You've been listening to your mother for your ENTIRE LIFE. Why not give someone else a chance for at least just a little while?

You.

Here's another excellent essay by 'Light' on the same topic. One of our forum members said about looking for resources to help her cope with keeping in touch with her mother, on the grounds that, "After all, she is my mother". And Light answered her:

Oh, my dear...

****Light pours a cup of tea and sits down with Survivor...****

Um...you have read that Narcissistic Personality Disorder is an incurable

mental disorder, right?

Here's the situation. Your mother has NPD. It is a lifelong disorder that renders her permanently incapable of proper empathy. It means she is not able to be responsible for the emotional consequences of her actions. It means her unkindness will always exist, and it will always be someone else's fault - like yours. Like your father's. Like the man in the moon. As long as it's not hers. She'll always be blame-free.

You have to make your own choices. No-one [on the forum] will tell you any different. However, that said, you will get the opinions, wisdom and advice of the amazing women here, who've seen it all. There are hundreds of women on this board, all of whom have (or had) NPD mothers. That's a lot of people with direct personal knowledge of NPD and what it takes to heal from being raised by a mother with it.

So here's mine...

We were trained. Brainwashed. All of us. You, too. We have been conditioned, like elephants at a circus, to believe WE are the ones responsible for fixing our relationships with our mothers. (Remember above, where I said it always has to be blamed on someone else? You, like the rest of us, have been believing that stuff.) We think we have to learn what to do with her, we have to adjust our behavior - to get her to see, to get her to change - if only we could unlock that secret code that would make her cooperative, that would make her listen, that would make her care...that would make her like a real mother.

It ain't gonna happen. If the problem COULD be fixed, it wouldn't be fixable by YOU. Because, contrary to what your mother wants you to think, it isn't CAUSED by you.

It's caused by NPD.

A disorder for which there is not one single documented cured case on planet Earth.

YOU are not the problem. YOU are not the answer. YOU cannot fix this. YOU have no control over your relationship with your NPD mother.

I should know. My mother is NPD as well, and though there are a lot of things I am NOT good at, there is no-one in the universe who is better at fixing things than I am. I'm a fixer. That's always been my work - I spent years fixing peoples' problems, whether they've been mental, physical, academic, situational, or a combination. You name it. I can fix anything - from a motor vehicle to a hurt feeling, to a complicated word puzzle. I put a huge drill into a finger last year and saw no need to go to the ER. I fixed it myself. Today, you can't even see the scar. This is the kind of person I am. If I can't fix it, it flat out cannot be fixed.

And after 38 years of trying, I could not fix my relationship with my mother.

If you feel you have to keep trying, then you have to keep trying. Just promise me this - don't waste one precious nano-second trying more than you absolutely have to. Because every moment spent trying to teach that pig to sing is a moment of your life you could have spent on singing yourself.

Low Contact

Low Contact is the phrase we use to describe a specific way you can keep in touch with your Narcissistic Mother, on your terms.

What exactly those terms are, is something only you can decide. But the important thing is that it has to work for you!

And once you decide those terms, it's about setting boundaries and keeping to them. That can be the difficult thing.

So, say you decided that you'd only visit once a week, say. Or once a month. But your mother invites you in between times, and puts pressure on you to accept. This is where you have to be strong and calmly assertive. It's not easy, but it'll come with practice and every time you do it, you are reclaiming another little bit of your power and it feels very good.

Narcissistic mothers are also masters of manipulation, and so they may well lay it on thick, trying to make you feel guilty if you don't accept. You need to be strong!

Another way of going Low Contact is to withdraw emotionally. You might physically see her as often, but just not share yourself as much. Keep conversation very light and superficial and safe.

Don't tell her any of your good news in case she rains on your parade. And don't tell her any of your bad news in case she feeds off it.

I remember when I used to still see my mother - I could almost literally feel my Self folding in, hiding in a shell, when I went into her company. My whole face closed down, my expression became muted and passive. My natural warmth and enthusiasm got put away. In no sense of the word was it 'me' who was in her presence.

This was not a conscious Low Contact strategy, as I didn't know about NPD then. It was just the only way I could cope. Also, there was the very strong message that the person I really was was not acceptable to them (i.e. her and my Enabling Father) so I had to put that Self away lest it be criticised and attacked.

This wasn't a healthy or functional pattern, but it did make the relationship between me and my parents work, to the extent that it worked at all.

And so, if you decide to operate the **Low Contact** plan, you could try that.

The other option, of course, is to opt for **No Contact**.

Here's an excellent essay by L.J. who's a master of Low Contact:

Dealing With A Narcissist

When we have a Narcissist in our lives we quickly learn how manipulative, difficult and unpleasant they are.

What we often find hard to learn is how to deal with them so that we remain in control and as undamaged as humanly possible. I speak from bitter experience here.

The first thing we have to do is to let go of any hope that they will ever become the reasonable, balanced human beings we would like them to be. That just isn't going to happen. They don't have either the will or the capacity to change and no amount of being reasonable or reasoning with them is going to make it happen. Letting go of that hope is a huge relief. It means that we accept the reality of what they are and we don't have to waste emotional energy trying to make them 'normal' any more.

So how do we deal with them? First you have to set your own limits on what you will and will not accept - boundaries. You have to make these very clear to the Narcissist, you have to be prepared to repeat them endlessly (they will never learn or accept them) and you have to stick to them rigidly. I have found that it is best to deal with their behaviours one 'symptom' at a time, one day at a time.

The first and easiest boundary I set with my Narcissistic mother was about what I am and am not prepared to listen to. Like most Narcissists she can be incredibly negative and nasty about people, including me. Working on the principle that people can only hurt you if you let them I decided not to listen to any of her hurtful nonsense any more. We have the power to control what we listen to by putting the phone down or walking away.

The first time I set this boundary we were out on a jaunt to a local market town, some 12 miles from her home and with poor transport links. Her endless bitching and negativity was wearing me down and I lost it with her. I told her that I was sick of hearing it and if one more negative thing came out of her mouth I would leave her and she would have to make her own way home. She spent the rest of the afternoon looking like a goldfish. Every time she opened her mouth to say something, she realised, stopped herself, and shut her mouth again.

I have repeated this scenario in many different ways since then, often sounding like Joyce Grenfell in the Nursery School sketch. We are, after all, dealing with emotional infants here and things have to be repeated time and time again.

She will start, I will say, "I am not prepared to listen to this," and if she continues I say "That's enough, goodbye," and put the phone down or leave.

I have set another boundary by refusing to be manipulated by her. I have made a game of this and I confess that I rather enjoy it. I have told her many, many times that if she wants anything of me, she has to ask. Like many Narcissists

she is very arrogant and imperious and thinks that I should anticipate all her wants. She believes that she should not have to ask for anything, that asking is demeaning so she tries manipulation.

I deliberately don't get it and we can go on for ages, going round in circles with me trying hard not to crack up laughing! Let me give you an example of the type of conversation that we have had many, many times:-

Mother:- "J's family take her shopping every week."

Me:- "That's nice of them."

Mother:- "Every week without fail."

Me:- "Good for them."

Mother:- "Lots of people here [sheltered housing complex] have families who take them shopping."

Me:- "That's nice."

Mother:- "You don't take me shopping."

Me:- "You never ask me to."

Mother:- "I shouldn't have to ask!"

Me:- "I have told you many, many times Mother, if you want me to do something for you, you have to ask. If I can I will. If I can't I will tell you I can't."

Mother:- "I shouldn't have to ask!"

Me:- "But you do have to ask."

Mother (now childishly petulant):- "I do my own shopping."

Me:- "Good for you."

Mother:- "I go to Aldi with J."

Me:- "That's funny. I thought you said that J's family take her shopping every week."

End of conversation, usually with her declaring that I am just being difficult. and me trying hard not to laugh out loud.

Another aspect of refusing to be manipulated is learning not to be damaged by the fact that she will issue poisonous diatribes about me to anyone who will listen. This vicious bad-mouthing is extremely common with Narcissists and it, or the threat of it can pin down many people in the victim or scapegoat position

for years. So, you just have to move away from it, emotionally.

My mother has done this more times that I can count, spectacularly ruining Christmas a couple of years ago by viciously bad mouthing me to my mother-in-law. That was when I determined never to host them in my own home again. She does it with her friends and the way I look at it is, if they are the kind of people who are prepared to listen to and believe all that bile, they are not the kind of people I want contaminating my life.

These are just a couple of examples of ways that I have found to deal with the Narcissist in my life. Maintaining minimal contact helps a lot, for Narcissists are such HARD WORK. Many people find that no contact is the only way to protect themselves, but minimal or no contact, the important thing is to do what you can to protect yourself.

L.J. - Daughter of Narcissistic Mother

No Contact

No Contact means that you, totally and categorically, cut off all contact with your **narcissistic mother** and **enabling father**.

This is a very big, important subject, and so this is a long page with lots of information - I hope it's not overload! But it's possibly the most important page on this website.

No Contact is a very big decision. It has huge challenges, as I share below. But also there are so very, very many gifts as you shall read below - more than you can even imagine.

The first step to No Contact is the heady, but terrifying, realisation that it's possible! I often longed to, but didn't think it was possible - I mean, you can't leave your *family*!

The cultural indoctrination was too strong: *Of course you have to stay in touch with your family! No Contact is a totally mad idea!*

The fear was strong: *Who will I be able to depend on if I go No Contact with my family? Will I end up so lonely?*

The guilt was strong: *How can I be so cruel as to abandon them by going No Contact?*

Other Daughters have issues I didn't have, such as the splintering of the rest of the family, i.e. siblings and/or their father possibly siding so much with the Narcissistic Mother that they cut them (i.e. the Daughter) off.

(The reason I didn't have those issues is because, with the exception of one sister, my whole family was already irretrievably splintered.)

And so, the realisation that yes, it's possible, and many women do it, is hugely liberating. (And yes, scary.)

The next step is the painful - but ultimately liberating one - of finally giving up the dream, the fantasy, that you'll ever have a proper mother. I think the biggest thing that keeps us emmeshed in this dysfunctional and damaging relationship is the hope that one day she'll change.

The reality is that she won't. If she's truly Narcissistic, she won't.

And a hugely important part of our journey is to finally accept that, so that we can walk away. EFT can help with this process, as can journaling and using the **Five Question process**.

There are other issues to think of too.

For instance, how are you going to actually go No Contact. As I explained in the section **about me**, I was literally sick with nerves wondering how to tell them I didn't want to see them again.

Some people phone, some write. Others tell their father (although their father, still enabling and protecting the Narcissistic Mother, might not pass the message on).

Others just stop contacting and hope that she'll get the hint. If she's an **Ignoring Mother**, she might (although that has its own issues as I share below), but an **Engulfing Mother** never will.

In fact, separating from an **Engulfing Mother** can be very difficult. She's going to feel threatened at the prospect of losing all the **Narcissistic Supply** she gets from you.

So she may try all sorts of tricks to keep you emmeshed with her, such as suddenly becoming nice, and seeming to become the mother you always wanted. This is very hard to resist, of course! It's like all your dreams come together - and just when you had finally accepted it wasn't going to happen.

But be warned, if she's a true Narcissistic Mother, then she can never really change. As soon as you're back involved with her, she'll drop the 'nice' and revert to how she always was - or maybe be even nastier for a while, to punish you for having thought of leaving her.

Or, if she has successfully infantilised you enough, she might sneer at you that you'd never survive without her - and you may well believe her.

Or she may just refuse to honour your decision, and call around, and phone, and basically stalk you. It's not unheard of for Daughters to have to get barring orders for their mothers - not fun.

Or she may try to get to you via others - your siblings, your father, other relatives. She may prime them to phone you and get them to say things like, "How could you do this? You're breaking your mother's heart, you know. She's crying all the time. She can't believe you're doing this to her. After all she's done for you, all these years. She loves you and misses you and all she wants is to see you again."

It's very hard to stand up against that.

And of course, it's up to you whether you *do* stand up to that, or not. Nothing in this website is about advocating No Contact, or any other action. You need to do what's right for you. This website is about empowering you, not about being yet another way of you being controlled.

I would just suggest that you ask yourself what is behind their reaching out to you? Is it genuine remorse, or manipulation? Is your Narcissistic Mother owning any of the problem, or is she saying things like, *'the difficulties between us'*, i.e. hinting that you're both equally responsible?

And if you do go back, does her behaviour genuinely change? That's the acid test. Anybody can say anything, and Narcissists are very good at saying anything that's necessary to get what they want. But they cannot consistently and genuinely change their behaviour. (Indeed, deep down they don't even see why they *should* change their behaviour!)

No Contact 101

What exactly No Contact involves

This comes from a very interesting site called Luke Ministries: <http://luke173ministries.org> - this website offers a Christian perspective on advice and help for 'adult daughters of controlling or abusive birth-families' - and their information is valid and useful for non-Christians too.

And here's what they have to say about No Contact (this information copied with their permission).

Please note that this is *descriptive*, not *prescriptive*. In other words, it tells you what true No Contact is; it doesn't tell you that you have to do it this way.

You should do exactly what you want, and what you decide is best for you. Nothing on this website is about replacing your **Narcissistic Mother** in controlling you!

No Contact means:

NO Talking To Them No Matter What Happens And No Matter What You Hear

NO Letting Them Talk To You, NO Listening To Anything They Say, NO "Hearing Them Out."

NO Letting Them In Your House And NO Going To Their House. If It Is Possible To Move, Then Move, Get A P.O. Box, And Don't Let Them Know When Or Where You're Going.

NO Phone Calls and NO Returning Voicemail Messages. Change Your Number To Unlisted and Unpublished, And Do Not Give It To Anyone You Can't Trust Not To Give It To Your Abuser. NEVER pick up the phone. Screen Your Calls. Use Caller ID Or Let Your Machine Pick Up.

NO Sending Or Responding To E-Mails. Block Their E-Mails, IMs, And Ability To See When You Are Online

NO Meetings to "Talk Things Over" Or "Work Things Out".

NO Communication At All Except Through Attorneys.

NO Cards or Letters and NO Responding to Cards or Letters. NO Birthday Cards. NO Christmas Cards. NO Mother's Day or Father's Day Cards.

NO Gifts and NO Accepting Gifts. If A Gift Is Sent To You, NO Acknowledging It And NO Responding.

NO Exceptions For Holidays, Birthdays, or Anniversaries

NO Visits, Including Hospital Visits

NO Letting Them Near Your Kids. If They're Too Toxic For You To Be Around, Then They're Too Toxic For Your Children To Be Around. Warn Your Children To Stay Away From Them. Notify Your Children's School To Call The Police If They Show Up.

NO Public Pleasantries. If You Run Into Them In a Public Place, Ignore Them, Turn Your Back, And Walk Away. If They Approach You, Say In A Loud Voice, "Leave Me Alone!" And "Do Not Talk To Me". If They Persist Or You Believe You Are Being Stalked, Call The Police.

NO Discussing Them With Anybody Who Has Contact With Them.

NO Speaking At All To Anyone Who Might Be Pumping You For Information Or Spying On You, And Reporting Back To Them. Cut Off Anyone Who Is Not Loyal To You.

NO Listening to Any News About Them. If you're absolutely DYING of curiosity, listen but do not show undue interest, do not respond, and do not give any information in return.

NO Giving Other People Information About You Or Your Family That They Could Carry Back To Your Abuser

NO Invitations to Your Big Events and NO Responding to Invitations They Send You

NO Responding To News That They Are Getting Married, Having A Baby, Getting A New Job, Retiring, Moving, Taking A Trip, Sick, Dying, Or Dead

NO Big Announcements or Telling Them Anything About Your Life- NO Letting Them Know You're Getting Married, Moving, Or Having A Baby. NO Letting Them Know When Your Children Get Married, Where They Live, Work, or Go To School, Or When Your Grandkids Are Born.

Print Out E-Mails and Keep All Cards, Letters and Other Communication In A File For Future Harrassment Or Stalking Charges, But Do Not Respond.

No Contact means NO CONTACT. Nothing, Nada, Zilch, Zip, Zero. As if they were total strangers who also happen to be dangerous, deranged, psychopathic stalkers. Which they pretty much are. So why would you not protect yourself and your family from them?

Narcissists do not understand limits, maintaining a comfortable distance, taking it slow, or being cordial while still keeping someone at arm's length. They only deal in extremes, and must be totally enmeshed with you, with no boundaries or restrictions. It's all or nothing with them. Because of this, it's important to accept that it is NOT possible to have "limited" or "occasional" contact- for

instance, only when there is a big event like a wedding or funeral. This only sends a mixed message to your abuser, who will interpret ANY willingness at all on your part to communicate with him as a sign that all is forgiven, you've gotten over your little snit, and everything can now go back to normal, without him ever having to apologize or stop abusing you.

No Contact is THE END. You have already wasted your entire life trying everything possible to have a nice peaceful relationship, and nothing worked. That's why you reached this crossroads. There is nothing left to try. It's OVER. It's time to put a period on it, walk away, and never look back. Time to finally live your life. Time to do what you must to protect yourself and your loved ones from evil people who would do you harm. If you break No Contact, you will only be sucked back in. If you keep No Contact, you will live your life in peace, freedom, and safety. And after it's all over, I leave it up to you whether you go to the funeral or not. If you have moved on with your life and left the past in the past, you won't feel the need to.

Here's a lovely article on the joys of No Contact, from our forum member Light:

NEW TO No Contact?

C'mere, I wanna tell ya somethin'...

I've been No Contact with my entire family for over 3 years now. Something that goes through my mind a lot is about the women just starting out No Contact, and how they, like me, have no clue how much more than they ever dreamed is about to happen for them, because they're focused (appropriately) on the losses they're adjusting to.

When I started No Contact, it was all about the adjustment to it. There was a hole - an emptiness, like when people die. At the time, the losses loomed large - my mother, both sisters, my best friend and my partner all took off - or were cast from - my life at around the same time. MY WHOLE WORLD. Every single one of them was not good for me. Nevertheless, losing every person significant to you at once is no small loss. It was as if they'd all gone down in a plane crash together, each having sent cutting last-minute cell phone messages in unanimous agreement that I was the only one to blame for the accident and should fry for it. Not for the faint of heart.

I just figured, okay, I have to adjust, and that's all this is about. No-one can hurt me like that again, and starting now, **that's** my reward for refusing to initiate, reconnect, etc. Well, that really **wasn't** my real reward for no contact. That was just a little thing, actually. I thought, "Well, my Narcissistic Mother can never use me again", for instance. And that was true, but that wasn't why I was going through this painful process. In time, I saw it was **WAY, WAY** beyond that.

If you're just starting No Contact, you should know that not only does it get easier, but if you stick with it, you will begin awakening to a whole new world - one where you will be more than you ever thought you could be. It's like a kind of Alice-In-Wonderland backwards world, Narcissistic Mother's world. Most of the rest of the world is frontwards. It takes time for your psyche to adjust. Be patient. There are HUGE, HUGE benefits that take a little time to grow.

It's kind of like being raised in a dark attic, where Narcissistic Mother is the only source of light, like a flashlight, and if something is not important to her, she won't shine on it. If something is, she does - way too much. And when you're the target, she points at your eyes and blinds you. So instead of being in the dark attic and turning on a nice general overhead light so everyone can see everything and look at whatever they choose, all anyone can see is what's important in HER world, and HER choices and her world are warped by NPD. There's a lot of guessing and fear, mistakes and confusion. No-one can ever see properly for themselves.

You should have been able to see the world around you. You should have been

able to see - really well - who you were. You should have been able to see the unfairness, the lies, the tricks, etc - but the flashlight never pointed on those things. It only pointed at mistakes and grudges and manipulations and lack of choices and your supposed inferiority, and...and...

Going No Contact is like leaving the attic and allowing other sources of light to reach your eyes. At first, it will hurt, because it's so weird to be seeing everything, and the light is so bright. It's disorienting. It will take time for your eyes to adjust, and it will feel foreign - even lonely. Your old framework is falling apart, and other people, other things, other perspectives will start to filter in.

Yes, it will feel for a while like there's a void. ACCEPT the void. It's the first stepping stone to the life you always dreamed of. It's temporary. That void is like the void that's created when a piece of land with a condemned old house is on it, and you buy it. First, wreckers come in and knock down the old house. You're so used to that old house being there that every day when you pull up, it will look funny - empty and strange. Really foreign.

But over time, your new house will emerge. A new foundation will be dug by your psyche's internal diggers. Then the concrete truck - your faith - will appear. Framers (your new thoughts) will show up and build the walls. Those will be sheathed and insulated by your new commitment to nurture yourself. You keep going, and the roofing and siding start. Those are your new healthy boundaries. Then the doors and windows go in - big bright ones that keep the cold out and the warmth in. This is your new discernment about who is worthy of your time and your gifts. Electricians (your new ability to make things easier for yourself) arrive and rough in all the wiring. Plumbers - self-care - appear and set the drains and supply lines so you can keep yourself and your home free of the dirt that swirls around you. Sheetrockers come in and turn the studs into walls and ceilings, affirming your decision to have a true home, and healthy boundaries with those you let in. Flooring is laid - you are supporting yourself. Plumbing and electrical fixtures are finally put in place so you can see and take care of yourself. Locks and knobs are installed, preventing people with the wrong intentions from disrupting your serenity.

There does come a day when it stops feeling like an empty lot. Then it starts to feel like the shell of something. Then there comes a day when it looks like a wooden box. Then a house, but unfinished. Then finally a home.

It takes time for these things to happen, but they're impossible to achieve without NC. There's something about that break that opens the gates.

I have been No Contact for over 3 years. I would not trade the gifts I've received in just that 3 years gifts for 20 years of life. Not only do things keep growing and growing, there are unbelievable changes I could only have dreamed about. And they keep coming!!! My life is changing so dramatically, I can't begin to tell you. I've had HUGE breakthroughs personally, one after the other, and many in places I never ever would have expected. To anyone considering or beginning No Contact - all I can say is, IT IS BEYOND WORTH IT. Wade through the rough patches and stick with it. The benefits are

unfathomable. Things I'd long been banging my head against the wall about have vaporized. It's been one stunning three years. And it happens gradually, with big chunks of insanely effortless progress thrown in now and again. I feel like all my life's mysteries are getting solved. I am MUCH stronger.

I knew No Contact would be a relief, but I didn't know it would turn me into a whole different person, and one I like TONS better than I ever liked the pushover I used to be - I'm rapidly becoming the REAL me - the ORIGINAL me. This is going to sound weird, but it's kind of like in a lot of ways, people's thoughts can't hurt me anymore. That's the best I can describe it. I do what I want and what I feel is right, and I no longer value externals like approval and criticism very much. Following my heart is first, and everything and everyone else is second. (I have no children).

For me, No Contact has felt like biting the bullet to get a little relief from one thing and getting that, AND the entire moon and stars handed to me on a silver platter.

The pain got easier every day. But honestly, even if it hadn't, I think I'd still be No Contact - the benefits - ones we can't even imagine - are **astounding**. So if right now, you're wading through the pain of it - just remember - you're going to get **much** more than you're thinking you will.

MUCH, MUCH more...

It's much much more than just breaking free of your Narcissistic Mother. It's about releasing all the stuff she put in your head, too, and all the fear and inhibitions that have been holding us back. I could never "get at" those things until No Contact.

'Light', 40, Daughter of a Narcissistic Mother

Resources for Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers

I intend this website to be very resource-rich. It's about healing from being Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers, moving on and living the rich and happy lives we were meant to live.

In the first instance I offer you the resource of EFT.

I will also be offering recommended books, assertiveness-training and a lovely **Seven Step process**. I mean, that I'll be introducing them - I won't be doing all that myself! But I am sourcing wonderful resources for you.

One big issue for Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers is negative self-talk. It's as if we take over from our darling mothers with their abuse of us. EFT is the best resource I know - it IS superb - for deleting that self-talk and replacing it with empowering messages.

Emotional Freedom Technique

Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) - which is simply **tapping on acupuncture points** - is a major tool for healing **all the pain of being the Daughter of a Narcissistic Mother**.

It literally **erases negative emotions and limiting beliefs**, more quickly, easily, and gently than you ever thought possible.

Trauma and false beliefs (e.g. 'I'm not good enough') are held in the body. So talking about them doesn't help very much. Just like, if you had a splinter, you wouldn't go and talk to somebody about it. You wouldn't describe over and over how you got the splinter. You wouldn't just ignore the splinter and get on with life, trying to ignore it. You wouldn't join a support group for splinter-suffers, and sit around sharing your splinter experiences.

You'd just pull the splinter out, right?

Well, the same thing applies to traumas.

Traumas live in our bodies, and we need to pull them out.

And EFT is the way we do that.

**Check out Seven Words To Change Your Life
(<http://daughtersofnarcissisticmothers.com/sevenwords.html>), to
see how to
use EFT to shift your self-image and self-esteem.**

Think how easy it is to pull a splinter out, and how quickly your finger heals after that.

The same thing applies to trauma - once we 'pull' it out of our bodies, the healing is instant - even quicker than with a splinter!

Quite frankly, EFT makes traditional counselling obsolete. Why just talk about it, when you can heal it?

Let me help you heal all your trauma with EFT -
Contact me at danu@daughtersofnarcissisticmothers.com

The sort of issues **Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers** experience, and which EFT will help you heal, are:

- I keep hearing her voice in my head, telling me I'm useless.
- I need to know that I am not who she/they said I was.
- I still hope she'll change.
- I'm worthless.
- I'm not worthy of healing.
- I'm not worthy of [fill in issue here]
- I'm so hurt that she didn't love me.
- I always thought I was crazy.
- I still worry that she was right and I'm crazy.
- I'm worried that I'm narcissistic myself.
- I'm worried about what kind of mother I'll be.
- You're supposed to love your mother!
- She tells me that she loves me but it doesn't feel like it.
- My friends don't understand - they think I'm horrible.
- I feel so guilty about not loving her.
- I hate her!
- It's not safe to be my authentic self.
- I don't even know who I am.
- I hate myself. I can't love myself.
- I have such low self-esteem.
- I struggle with self-care.
- I've no right to exist.
- I've never been good enough.
- I can never be good enough.

- Who I am is not acceptable.
- I'm inherently flawed.
- I keep sabotaging myself.
- I'm too perfectionist.
- I'm so angry at her.
- I'm feeling so sad that she'll never love me.
- I'm facing the bereavement of never having had a mother.
- I'm an orphan, and I'm just realising now that I always have been.
- I feel such formless, pervasive shame.
- I feel so guilty over my feelings about her.
- I'm so sad.
- I'm so lonely.
- I can't enjoy my successes.
- She always dismissed my successes.
- She always fed off my tragedies.
- I still feel like a little girl. Will I ever be grown up?
- It's not safe to access my power.
- I'm over-sensitive.
- I'm always walking on eggshells around people, terrified to offend them.
- I find it impossible to set boundaries.
- I'm scared of authority figures.
- I'm terrified of people being angry with me.
- I've real body-image issues.
- I'm terrified of my mother.
- I hate my father for enabling her.
- I'm still trying to get her approval and her attention.

- I want to cut off contact with her, but I can't.
- I want to handle her better when we do meet.
- I have such low self-esteem.
- I'm always attracting abusers.
- I can't trust anybody.
- I'm so scared of abandonment.
- The world isn't safe.
- I don't deserve good things.
- I don't deserve good relationships.
- I don't deserve to heal from having a Narcissistic Mother.
- It's not safe to heal.
- She'll win if I heal.
- I can't say nice things about myself.
- I can't celebrate my own successes.
- I'm terrified of speaking the family secrets.
- I'm scared to be powerful.

There are many, many others of course. You know best what is going on for you, and with EFT we can identify them (if they need identifying - you might know them already) and heal them.

You can also use EFT yourself, to pretty good effect. Doing EFT yourself compared to working with a practitioner such as myself is the difference between First Aid and brain surgery - but there's a place for First Aid! Click here: <http://daughtersofnarcissisticmothers.com/eft-instructions.html>

You As Mother

One issue every daughter of a narcissistic mother has to concern herself with is being a mother herself.

We worry about replicating the dysfunction and harming our children just as we were harmed. As well, we simply don't know how to be a high-functioning mother. All girls learn to parent by absorbing how her mother's parent, and unless we proactively choose to learn differently, that's what we'll know.

Well I have good news for you!

The first thing is that, almost by definition, if you're reading this page, you're NOT going to be the sort of mother that your own mother was. By caring enough to worry about being a good mother and make it your business to read how to do differently, you're already proving that you are so, so different from your own narcissistic mother.

So take a deep breath and absorb that good news.

You're NOT like her.

Now you might have some narcissistic traits as explained here. But as I explain on that page, you'll be able to recognise them and change them. But obviously you're not narcissistic because a narcissistic mother would NEVER doubt that she was anything less than perfect.

But what about practical parenting skills? How do you become a good mother?

I share my own journey here, and the resources I have found, and the observations I've realised, and I hope you find them useful. I am not being so arrogant, I hope, as to say I'm a perfect mother (and indeed my son would let you know I'm not!), but I have put a lot of effort into learning and applying good parenting skills, so I do get 10/10 for effort. And some of it has rubbed off.

When a baby is born, one of her first jobs is to learn how the world works. She's always looking for evidence and drawing conclusions. Those conclusions get literally wired (in the form of neural pathways) into her brain as part of her 'map' of the world, and will influence everything about her life. She's asking questions like: Am I a worthwhile person? Am I loved? Is the world a safe place? Will my needs be met?

It's our job as parents to answer those questions that Yes, she's a worthwhile person, yes she's loved, yes her world is safe, and yes her needs will be met.

We do that by proving it to her.

But how do we do that?

The best thing I did, bar none, was to join the breastfeeding support group La Leche League when I was about seven months pregnant. I thought I was going to learn about breastfeeding - and I did. But I also learned how to be a mother.

This came about in two ways. The first was that La Leche League has what I believe is a wonderful philosophy of how children should be treated and they provide much practical resources to help you learn these, in the form of books (I share my favourites below) and conferences. It's a full course in learning how to be a mother.

The second way in which La Leche League taught me to be a mother is through simple modelling of wonderful mothering. The Leaders (as the facilitators are called) and other long-term members are, by definition, very child-centred and are, in my experience, absolutely inspirational to observe and learn from.

Breastfeeding itself really helps in mother-child bonding. When you breastfeed your body produces the hormone oxytocin which helps you bond with your baby. The more you bond, the more love you feel, the easier it is to be responsive to her. For sure women bond without this help, but this makes it much much easier. And seeing as daughters of narcissistic mothers are perhaps starting from behind we need all the help we can get.

Breastfeeding also means that you're spending more time with your baby, and that also helps you bond with her. It means you both get to know each other really well, and learn how to work together, and that encourages a good relationship between you. With my son I found that I was nearly psychic about him. If he cried I'd know exactly what was wrong. It may have been that he had different cries but a) if he did, they were subtle enough that I couldn't consciously distinguish them, and b) even my husband, who was a very hands-on dad, couldn't do this.

I also recommend attachment parenting. It's superb for proving to the baby that she's worthwhile and loved. Now, attachment parenting can be challenging to our society, and you might find these suggestions challenging. But it's truly the way humans have raised their babies for most of our history.

Attachment parenting involves: baby-wearing, co-sleeping, empathetic discipline. Learn more [here](#).

One of the best pieces of advice I ever received was from La Leche League. It was this: Up to a year old, a baby's wants and needs are the same. You won't spoil her. On the contrary, by meeting her needs you're teaching her to trust you, and she'll be more likely to accept your discipline/guidance as she moves into the toddler years.

Once the child is older their needs change. My parenting bible, which is the single best resource I ever had, was the strangely named book *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk*. You can buy it [here](#) from Amazon:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/0380811960?tag=donm-books-20&camp=14573&creative=327641&linkCode=as1&creativeASIN=0380811960&adid=13FG91NY825ZHQ4FQT77&>

There is so much excellent advice, and really good techniques in this book. One of my favourites was this: when a child is upset, reflect her emotions back to her.

I genuinely think that every parent should have a copy this book. Especially daughters of narcissistic mothers who didn't learn good parenting the natural way.

Some other thoughts.

I realised very early on the power of 'You are ...' statements. As said above, a child is learning about the world, including - indeed, primarily - who they are. They look to the parents for the information about who they are. We, as parents, teach children who they are by how we treat them, as explained above. But we also tell them in as many words. Every time you say "You are ..." you are literally telling the child who she is.

And so, saying things like, "You're naughty", or "You're useless," or "You're careless," and so on. As the daughter of a narcissistic mother, I have no doubt that you can think of many more.

To parent well, use "You are ..." statements very, very judiciously.

In practice this means that in disciplining, always label the behaviour; never label the child.

So: "That was a naughty thing to do" rather than "You are naughty".

Or at the very least say what the child has done, rather than what the child is.

So: "You are being very naughty right now" rather than, "You are naughty."

I would go further. I would hesitate even to label the child as being good. Because that means that if the child is good to do X, that makes her feeling good very conditional upon always doing X. I wanted my son to feel inherently good about himself, regardless. This is *not* to say that there is no standard of behaviour - of course there is. But it's a parallel thing to how the children feel about themselves.

So I wouldn't say, "You were a good girl to share your toys." Instead I would still label the behaviour by saying something like, "I saw the way you shared your toys. That was very kind."

That way the child gets the approval of the job well done, but it doesn't mean that if she doesn't share her toys another time her self-image is tarnished.

Now, there *is* a time to use "You are ..." statements. That's when you say things that you want to become part of your child's internal map. These are stand-alone unconditional statements like:

- * You are loved.
- * You are precious.
- * You are a gift in my life.
- * You bring me joy.

Another thing we found good was to realise that there are only three rules. Our son was allowed to do anything he wanted as long as it didn't:

- * hurt himself, or unduly risk hurting himself,
- * hurt others, or unduly risk hurting them. This included hurting their feelings.
- * damage property, or unduly risk damaging property.

This may not work for you, but it has worked very well for us. We have never come across anything that he wasn't allowed to do that didn't fit into one of those categories. And it helped clarify our own thoughts as parents, when we asked ourselves if he was allowed to do things.

The teenage years.

Our son is only 6 months into the teenager years, so we cannot count ourselves experts on this stage.

The theory behind the attachment parenting though is that it raises happy and contented children who respond well to the teen years. I remember reading a comment by one of the authors of a book I got through La Leche League. I cannot remember the book nor the author, but the quote never left me: "Get up with them at night when they're small, and you won't have to get up at night to deal with problems when they're big."

Maybe we're just lucky, or maybe the years of parenting in this way have paid off, but our son is the most amazingly easy teen. For sure we occasionally have the rolling eyes and him talking to us like we're stupid. But not often, and that's the worst it gets. (I should say that we also home-educated him, and that may help in this - all the home-educated teens we know seem to be equally easy and happy kids.)

Another thing I learned was to parent with humour and humility.

Humour is something lacking in narcissistic mothers. Nice humour anyway, they often like slapstick humour. And if we can bring humour to our parenting it's a way of showing that we don't take ourselves unduly seriously, and it lightens things up.

Once he was resisting doing something and I said, "If you don't do it I'll use Mum-power and *make you*."

Quick as a wink he said, "Well then I'll use whinge-power!" and he started pretending to whinge and complain and cry.

By humility I mean that you don't have to have all the answers, and you don't have to pretend to have all the answers. I was saying to my son the other day that we would all be experiencing changes soon as he grows old enough to date, with all the issues coming from that. I explained to him that it would be a new thing for us all - that we'd never parented a dating son before, and he'd never dated before, and we'd all have to find our way.

This means we're all growing together and finding our way. We're still the parents, and the buck still stops with us. It's not about abrogating responsibility. But it is about creating a genuine mutually respectful relationship.

About Me

Hi, I'm Danu Morrigan.

It's not my real name. I don't want to use my real name on this website as I don't want it coming up in search engines. I don't want my parents finding this website, because their wrath would be awful to behold and I am, frankly, scared of what they would do. Their narcissistic rage when I tried the slightest speaking up for myself was bad enough - I really think this would be beyond awful.

Staying anonymous also means that I can be more honest about my experiences.

It's hard to encapsulate a lifetime of experiences here. And in many ways there's no point in doing that. This website is about YOU, and my experiences are only relevant in as much as they give you examples you can relate to.

I believe that my mother is Narcissistic, and that my father is Enabling.

In fairness, though, there are many Narcissism Traits she does not have.

She does not seem to have fantasies of unlimited success. Her grandiosity, if it exists at all, is about her importance in her own sphere rather than any global grandiosity.

She is not rude to people such as waiters and shop staff - on the contrary, she is very polite and friendly to everybody.

She is not inappropriate sexually.

She is not vain - again, the contrary, she never really bothered about her appearance beyond proper hygiene.

But having said all that, she does share many traits.

It's always about her. She's totally self-centred. She demands respect and obedience. She gives blatantly unsuitable presents. She talks non-stop about herself and her doings. She has no real interest in me or mine.

She likes my successes so she can boast about them but never celebrates those successes authentically with me. She has no real empathy for my problems and tragedies, but feeds off the drama of them. She does not tolerate me being my real and authentic self.

She would deny all the above, of course. As she has denied them to my face when I have said this, always in a bullying and aggressive way.

But all of the above is true. Or at least, I am not privy to her thoughts, feelings and motivations. But her actions shout loudly that this is the truth and I am finally learning to believe my perceptions.

I went NC - i.e. No Contact - with both her and my Enabling Father last September, after a last-straw meeting with them. It was just unendurable - we were at a restaurant for two and a half hours, and except for ordering food and other such exchanges, she talked non-stop about a holiday she'd recently been on.

What was different about that meal was that a friend of mine came. And it was she, who, horrified, sat me down afterwards and told me just how dysfunctional this was.

She acknowledged that I had told her beforehand how awful spending time with both my parents was, but said she just hadn't understood, that she simply couldn't have imagined that depth of dysfunction.

She had been observing, she told me, and saw that my mother never once even so much as looked at my son. Apart from saying hello to him when we met, she, and my father, ignored him. Likewise with my sister - neither parent seemed to register her presence. (Needless to say, they didn't have the courtesy to speak to my friend either.) As for me, my mother latched onto me as the Official Audience and spoke at me, but she didn't see me or register me either.

It was so liberating to hear this, and I realised that I really did not want to see them again. Ever.

But how to tell them?

I spent two weeks being literally nauseous at the prospect of telling them this. As I said above, the simplest request to be treated better brought wrath and abuse upon me - I dreaded to think how they'd react to this.

Would I write to them? Or phone them? Or text them? Or just ignore them and hope they got the hint?

Two weeks later my father rang and suggested we meet again for lunch. I said that I did not want to, that the previous lunch had been an ordeal and I was not anxious to repeat it. He asked how it had been an ordeal. I told him, as calmly as I could - with him repeating this to my mother.

Once I had finished he took a deep breath and the abuse began. He called me names and made hugely sweeping statements about my horrible character and personality. I, like a fool, sat and listened to it and tried to defend myself.

After a while my mother came on the phone and took over the second shift of abusing me, gaslighting me to the max over what had happened.

It was horrible.

It ended with us hanging up the phone in mutual fury, and that was it. We haven't spoken since, and that was seven months ago, at the time of writing.

The Narcissism Realisation

It was in mid-October that it happened: I was doing routine stuff (going to the bathroom to brush my teeth before bed - it couldn't have been more mundane!) and wasn't thinking about her. But out of nowhere the realisation hit me, as clear as a voice, "She has Narcissistic Personality Disorder".

My reaction was: "Of course!"

I had researched NPD for a project a few years previously, so did know about it. But I had not equated it with her until that moment. What I had been researching had been Narcissistic men, and the grandiosity etc, as I say, did not apply to her. And the classic idealisation/devaluation pattern did not apply either as she and I had never met as strangers.

The next day I researched NPD with a view to considering if it could be true. And Oh. My. God. The boxes that were ticked! The lightbulbs that went on!

And so began my DONM (Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers) journey.

After a while I began to get excited. I had already studied EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique) and was working as a practitioner. This was no coincidence - I had come to it seeking healing for my own pain, even though I didn't have a name for it for many years.

But I knew it could really, really, help Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers.

And, hence this website, and the resources and healing I offer to you here. (I hadn't planned to do this. I was doing other stuff in my life. But I feel that all my experiences have been leading to this single point.)