



NARCISSISTIC IN-LAWS

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?

When we fall in love and find the perfect person of our dreams, most of us don't stop to evaluate their family. Sadly, the man or women of your dreams can have parents that can literally derail your marriage, taking it from a fairy tale to a nightmare, in what feels like an instant. One of my favorite quotes is: "When did my life go from a Hallmark movie to a Lifetime movie?" This was my life, if this is your life, read on.

TRACY MALONE

Founder Narcissist Abuse Support

YOU ARE NOT CRAZY; YOUR IN-LAWS ARE!

Everything you need to learn about your Narcissistic In-Laws

OVERT OR COVERT?

An **overt narcissist** is the typical self-centered person that doesn't hide their own self-love or their need for admiration. They demand loyalty and people are pawns for them to get what they need. They are often easy to spot with their "full-of-themselves" mannerisms.

The **covert narcissist** is more like Wonder Woman's invisible plane. On the surface they are loving, caring in-laws that want the best for you but beneath the charming façade they harbor jealousy and do everything to manipulate your lives and create division between you and their child.



HAPPILY, EVER AFTER... MAYBE NOT!

When we fall in love and find the perfect person of our dreams, most of us don't stop to evaluate their family. Sadly, the man or women of your dreams can have parents that can literally derail your marriage, taking it from a fairy tale to a nightmare, in what feels like an instant. One of my favorite quotes is: "When did my life go from a Hallmark movie to a Lifetime movie?" This was my life.

If you think about it, when people first start dating, the family doesn't come into the mix until things have moved along in a positive way. When you finally meet their parents, they are on their best behavior. The "mask dial" is set to impress and win your heart. If they have a narcissistic parent, this behavior is an act; they are checking you out and rating you on a potential threat scale. Even during the courtship, the relationship with your partner's parents generally keeps them on their best behaviors. Remember that your partner is sharing their family with you and it may be the first time they have been vulnerable to have someone else's eyes on the family relationship, so they are going to really put on a good show (at first anyway).

Over time you may be faced with them testing your boundaries and your loyalty to them and their child, Narcissists are quite famous for creating the "charming mask"; it always starts with the charm and kindness role. They are good at it and it's easy to get swept up in the excitement of becoming part of your potential mate's family.

Narcissistic in-laws can make your life a living hell. They will be jealous of you, they will inject themselves into your lives and will do everything to break up your marriage or steal your children. If you are new to this narcissistic world, you should know that narcissist traits can run on a spectrum and not everyone will have all the behaviors we outline below. They do not need to have all these behaviors, and some might manifest after 30 years of marriage. There are many other types of labels for narcissists, but the two I want you to understand from the beginning are overt and covert.

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The **covert narcissist** is more like Wonder Woman's invisible plane. On the surface they are loving, caring parents that want the best for you and their

child. Beneath the charming façade they harbor jealousy and do everything to manipulate your lives and create division.

Before we start to talk about narcissistic in-laws, we must look at adult children of narcissistic parents because it all ties together. If your spouse's parents are narcissistic that means your spouse is an adult child of one and there are many ways that can manifest in their parent's relationship with them.

The five ways your spouse has dealt with their narcissistic parents that can affect your future:

Your spouse has probably been controlled by their abusive parent's most of their life and they can either *see and understand the behaviors*, or they may *not recognize the behaviors* as abusive at all. As you probably know, narcissistic behavior can appear on a spectrum and some may be low on the crazy scale while others are raging, jealous manipulators that behind closed doors do everything they can to break up your marriage. In their opinion, you are simply not good enough for their child.

They are simply used to the “crazy” and learned to deal with it in their own way.

- 1) **SEES ABUSE, BUT SETS BOUNDARIES AND USES DISTANCE** - If your spouse does *see and they understand the behaviors*, with luck they have created good boundaries and kept the relationship on their terms; this is the best scenario. Distance makes narcissistic parents (in-laws too) easier to deal with and tolerate because the distance gives the adult child back some control.
- 2) **SEES ABUSE, BUT USES HUMOR AND EXCUSES TO JUSTIFY** - If they *see the behaviors* and make light of them, this could mean they are under the parent's control. If this is your spouse, they will never recognize or be willing to see the behaviors that their parents are doing to you. Common things victims trapped in this scenario hear from their spouses are: “That's just mom. You have to get used to her.”; “You are taking this all too personally, she didn't mean it that way.”; “You married me, now you have to deal with my Dad too!”; “My mom is very protective of me, she will get used to you. Just play nice and it will be fine.” This denial of behaviors is abusive to themselves and your family and will make it nearly impossible for your spouse to have the skills to support you later.
- 3) **SEES ABUSE, BUT THEY ARE TOTALLY UNDER THE CONTROL OF PARENTS** - Another possible scenario is that they *see the behaviors*, but they are disempowered to break free or speak up. They feel trapped and helpless. Many adult children of narcissists become codependent, or people pleasers, simply because their way of coping was to placate the parent to keep the peace. This may make it difficult for them to stand up to their narcissistic parent to protect you, your kids or themselves. Boundaries and distance are always helpful in this scenario.
- 4) **COMPLETELY BLINDED BY THE BEHAVIORS OF THEIR PARENT** - This scenario is that your spouse *does not in any way see the behaviors* of their parent for what they are, and there are two possible reasons why. This is your most dangerous type of child of a narcissist. If they don't see the behaviors as wrong, they could also be a narcissist using these learned behaviors in their own lives. Or another scenario is that that are so under control and obedient that they never felt the need to stand up. The role of “Golden Child” makes this scenario possible. If they were idolized by their parents and they have shielded them from seeing the abuse, they will not have the tools to protect you and stand up for you and your family. An important thing to remember, if they were the golden child you do not automatically get that shared status; in fact that status puts up a wall around them that no one else will ever be good enough for the golden child status.
- 5) **THE INHERITANCE GAMER** - The “motivated by money” type of adult child tolerates the parent's behaviors to secure their inheritance. They talk badly about their parents behind their backs, especially to you, but then go along with the parent's controlling behavior. To them, tolerating the parent's behavior is just the price you pay

to stay in the good favor to secure they get that money. It's almost like they drank the blood money Kool-Aid. This type of adult child is so dangerous because often they are working both ends. Talking badly about their parents to you and talking badly about you to them. Like a double agent, they walk a fine line of always needing to remain in close alliance with the pocketbook parents, and you risk being used as a pawn. In case you are wondering, the battle between you and the parents/purse usually doesn't end well for the spouse. Disclaimer: the emotional maturity and the financial entitlement of your spouse and the size of the purse can be determining factors.

TYPES OF NARCISSISTIC IN-LAWS

- Child is used as an appendage of the parent; if they make the parent look good, adult child is in good graces.
- Control of the adult child has always been and always will be the toxic in-law's priority.
- Jealous of any new partner of their adult child – they want to keep them to themselves.
- The interfering type of in-law can't mind their own business
- Boundary breaker in-laws – nothing stops them, especially silly rules
- Gaslighting experts - they deny your reality and use gaslighting to make you think you are losing your mind.
- The “you're not good enough” / put-down in-laws. If they believe you are unsuitable, they will make your life a living hell, with private jokes about you. They will fabricate lies and stories to smear you to your spouse.
- Drama In-laws – they stage drama to suck you back in, to get your attention or to rescue them.

BEHAVIORS YOU MIGHT HAVE SEEN

THINGS THEY DO

- Love bomb you at the beginning, telling you things like, “You are the daughter we always wanted”, “We hardly know you, but if our daughter loves you, then you are part of our family”.
- They manufacture a false relationship which you feel loved and safe. This is an illusion of what you are seeking in your new family, not the way they really feel.
- They only validate you if you make them look good. Don't worry, this has been your partners job their whole life.
- They talk about you behind your spouse's back (smear campaigns) – trying to poke a hole in the weaknesses or struggles that you are having as a couple. Once the weaknesses or differences are discovered, they build entire smear campaigns to have your spouse leave you because of these weaknesses.
- They begin an isolation campaign against you and your family, or you and your friends. At first it seems so wonderful that they are getting to know you as a couple now that you are part of the family. Over time they start to make little digs at your family pulling, in nuggets of truth of your imperfections. Eventually, like a cult member, you are cut off from all support; this was the goal. Now that you are hooked and alone, they take the “break up our child's marriage campaign” to new heights.
- They become critical of you behind your back, at first planting seeds in your spouse's head. Little things become inflated to become issues they advise your spouse to watch out for. Examples might be that: “they think you drink too much”, “you don't take care of yourself well”, “your skills in the kitchen will never match up to Mom's, so if you are ever starving for real food know that they are always welcome home” and “you really aren't a good

mother/dad". Eventually once the seeds of confusion are placed in your partner's head, they begin to verbalize things in front of you. These generally start out in a joking way to make light of it, but the core of doubt is peaked because your spouse has the inside meaning to this cruel display.

- Narcissistic in-laws seek control of your relationship. They may feel entitled to your family's time, often demanding holidays and vacations with you, dominating vacation choices or even the menu on holidays. The victim of this type of divisive abuse quickly learns to stay in their lane and not complain because it's met on deaf ears. These arguments are just not worth the fight. The eggshell dance has just begun.
- The narcissistic in-law uses denial as a tactic. They will deny that anything is happening when serious concerns are brought up to them. If they can give a perfect denial performance and get away with it, or use their age as a reason they forgot, or discount what happened by turning the whole thing into a joke, they will. Narcissists take no accountability.
- To prove that you are worthy to be a part of this cray-cray family, your loyalty to them will be put to the test. Having you keep a "secret" is a great way to test you. Regardless of your ability to keep the secret, you have been set up and can never win. Dare you question their actions that warrant the need for keeping a secret or that stand up about keeping a secret and being part of the family lie to cover it up. You will be judged for keeping the secret because to them this means you can keep secrets from them and judged for not being willing to lie for them.
- Creating impossible win situations, the narcissistic parent will become competitive with you. They need to show your spouse that you are "too competitive" and in that your character will be judged.
- From the moment you met a narcissistic in-law, the lies were being thrown at you. You will see them tell lies even when the truth would do. Your role will be to never question their alternate reality, or they will begin the smear campaign to get rid of you. They demand loyalty and silence.
- They will undermine your relationship with manipulations designed to separate you as a family unit; then they get their "precious child" back.
- Invade your privacy: showing up at your home uninvited, maybe insisting they have a key and then using it, calling or texting at all hours. Going through your drawers and closets to gain intel.
- Isolate the second set of in-laws (your parents) and keep them away from grandchildren.
- You will eventually be left out of conversations and family gatherings. This might come off that they want to maintain the bond with their own kid or grandchildren without you.
- A common tactic is called triangulation. This is where they tell you one thing and tell them another to plant seeds of discord between you. If this works, the way they hoped it will, they will isolate the two of you from each other. They can also pull this tactic on your kids to pit them against each other or against you.
- Narcissistic in-laws will dominate holidays and vacations, stealing attention from your children by their constant need to be in the spotlight. Holidays are all about them or if they need to all about what great grandparents they are.
- In extreme cases where a narcissistic in-law is not getting their way, you can expect them to turn your kids against you. This could be done by trying to buy your children's love.
- They might dominate your children's time (they are the grandparents after all). This is especially obvious as the children grow and want to spend time with friends. Expect them to get angry with your child and ultimately you for not making the kids stay home with grandpa or grandma.

- They may feel entitled to your money and property.
- They may not realize that your spouse has responsibilities in your household and that they are not always going to be able to drop everything when their TV breaks.
- They torment you by using your own weaknesses against you.
- They smear your name to other family members, starting with false concerns. Over time they label you not good enough or as a bad parent, alcoholic, drug addict, or gold digger.
- Expect them to turn others against you. The secret part of this is that they might turn your sister in-law against you, but then the sister in-law pretends to be on your side. It's like a spy coming in to gain intel. Flying monkeys is a term created from the monkeys in the Wizard of Oz that did the witch's bidding. This sister in-law might be coming to you to pretend she is really worried about your MIL and she needs your help. Classic Trojan Horse.
- When you speak up to your narcissistic in-laws you might be shut down, simply because you have a different opinion.
- Erasing you and your kids - There could be a noticeable difference in the treatment of other grandchildren and your kids compared to your spouse's sister. The in-laws have pictures up all over the house and yet no pictures of your kids. This can also be done on Facebook and social media. They are always attending Bobby's games and events and posting pictures. They never come to your kids' games and there are no pictures on Facebook of your kids. The grandparents might offer to pay for Bobby's college but never even buy your kid a toy at Christmas. This hurts so much, and yes, they do know they are doing it! These are not your battles to fight alone. Your spouse must be willing to step up for equal treatment.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- **Start a conversation with your spouse** by describing a behavior you are witnessing with his or her parents; do they see these behaviors as toxic? Do this in a non-confrontational way. Ask your spouse to help you set up "your family's house rules" to give to both sets of grandparents. What will our holidays look like? What should our communication plan with the in-laws on both sides look like? Vacations? Gifts for the kids (if they are the type to buy love)? How often will you see them? How often can either in-law side see the kids? What are the rules for that? Sleepovers, bedtimes, food the kids eat while at the grandparents' home. Talk together about your family's parenting methods and what to do if either in-law set interferes? Set enforceable consequences – be united. Please be consistent with the consequences; if you enforce once and then let the next time slide, you are teaching the in-laws in that one moment that your boundaries are easily broken. You will lose all credibility if you do not stay consistent.
- After you and your spouse have **set this plan up, present it to the in-laws as a united front**. It's like a big boundary setting meeting where you are laying out the rules to be in your family's lives. If the trouble in-laws are the type to take this in an attack way, give the talk to both sides of your families together so they can see that this is you and your spouse as a family building rules for both sides. It will help keep them from taking it as an attack to use against you later. Ask them to respect these rules as rules you came up with together.
- **Be careful when speaking to your spouse** if they have a weird connection with one of their parents. The defensive claws will come out. This is not to say don't discuss things their family is doing that is not right in your eyes but do it at a time when you are not fighting. Bringing out family accusations when you are fighting will make it sound like you are the angry one. Set up a time to talk about "some concerns" leave it at that.
- **Set boundaries for communication, visits, and to protect your family plans**. Expect them to not like the fact that you are setting boundaries. Set small ones at first and set them slowly and correctly with a consequence if

they do not comply. Be willing to enforce the consequence. If your partner is not on board with enforcing the consequence or wimps out and makes you stand up to them, take note of this as it will be a pattern in your life. When you do set boundaries and they do not comply and they must pay the pre-defined consequence of not seeing the kids, expect them to tell a different story to everyone. They will be the victim of your cruelty because they cannot accept accountability or responsibility for their own actions.

- **If your narcissistic in-laws are being nasty** decide together as “your family” to stop going to family events if you are not supported. Be careful to set the boundaries that if you stop going to Sunday dinner, so do your kids. Do not allow your children to go in isolation.
- **Your kids are your greatest weakness and your greatest strength** to help gain a bit of your control back with your in-laws. Expect your kids will be used as pawns; if this hasn't happened during the marriage you can count on it after a divorce.
- **When your spouse is put in a position** that they must choose between his/her parents and your family and they don't choose you, run! It will never get better. The seeds of dysfunction were planted when your spouse was young, and he or she just demonstrated that you are and will always be second.
- **If your spouse claims they are Switzerland** when it comes to your relationship with their parents – run! A healthy partner will stand up and fight for you and your children. Despite the humor that may be displayed in this claim, it really is abusive to leave you to fight with the wolves they don't even have the courage to face.
- **Take a look at your brother and sister in-laws' relationship with the parents.** How do the in-laws treat them? Is it the same as they are doing with you? How does that spouse of your sister in-law deal with them? Be careful not to voice or share your concerns about the difference in treatment until you are completely sure that whatever you say will not be taken back to the in-law parents.
- If the in-laws are toxic to your family staying strong, you may need to **go no or low contact.**
- **Understanding what Grey Rock is** will help those awkward times when you are forced to be in the same location as toxic in-laws. Grey Rock is a practice where you are emotionally non-responsive when going no contact is not an option.
- **Geographical distance is so good for your marriage** if things get to be impossible. Geographical distance can be your only choice if you plan on staying married your emotional health is at stake.
- **Get professional help from a therapist or coach** that understands narcissistic and cluster B personality disorders. Remember that your spouse is the adult child of a narcissist and that must be looked at so they can heal old wounds and can understand their patterns of behavior.
- A person with a narcissistic personality disorder can never change, repeat NEVER! They first must accept that they have a problem and that will most likely never happen.



WHAT DO YOU DO NOW?

I believe that people come into our lives for a reason, and both good and bad experiences bring us lessons we must learn. If we don't learn the lesson, life tends to repeat itself until we finally learn that lesson. That said, it is usually the more difficult lessons, the ones that scar our souls, that are the hardest to understand and heal from. These lessons, while extremely painful, are here to warn us, teach us, and enlighten us to the fact that not everyone is created equally or meant to stay in our lives forever. A mistake that many people make when it comes to understanding these lessons is that they think doing something repeatedly is learning the lesson, while in fact we are just repeating familiar patterns. Learning how to protect yourself from ever letting this happen means doing the work, educating yourself and changing things about yourself.

FIND SUPPORT

<https://narcissistabusesupport.com>

TALK TO ME

<https://narcissistabusesupport.com/narcissistic-abuse-coaching-sessions/>

It is fair to say that most people have a physical scar somewhere on their body. That scar had a story, the story of when you fell out of a tree and broke your arm. If I were to ask you the day you fell out of that tree to describe your story it would be filled with emotions and drama. As time passes the story fades, but the lesson is still there. Perhaps you learned to be more careful or wear proper shoes when climbing a tree; it was a lesson and that scar reminds you of it.

When we encounter someone with narcissistic personality disorder, people often get wounded, hurt and broken. Victims live through abandonment, betrayal and disappointment and there is a healing lesson to be learned. A lesson can simply be to understand what happened or the lesson we must learn is to protect ourselves in the future from never letting this happen

again.

Like that scar, the pain from this emotional abuse will be forgotten in time and the lessons will be what remains. Your job is to educate yourself to understand everything you can about this type of personality disorder, so you can learn the lesson and never have it repeat again.

Sadly, most victims of narcissistic abuse get stuck in a cycle of attracting the same type of person and the cycle continues. The "story" often told to survivors is that they are attracting them. The truth is you were prey, being hunted because of your vulnerabilities and what type of supply you will make. The formula is simple: since narcissists are takers, they look for givers.

If you are ready to understand what your vulnerabilities are and if you are ready to break the cycle, I would suggest that you take my online workshop called "Change the Story". Your wounded story gives the clues to a new narcissistic person that attracts them to begin this cycle again with you.

Healing from emotional abuse is not something you can rush; there is no 'Betty Ford Clinic' to check into to get fixed. Each person's wounds are different despite the similarities of the abuse, so each person's prescription for their recovery journey is different.

Stop the cycle for you and your children. I am living proof that the stories fade, and you can create new chapters in the story of your life.



CHANGE THE STORY WORKSHOP

Victims of narcissistic abuse stories are all different and yet so similar. You have endured verbal abuse with lies, gaslighting, underhanded tricks and general confusion of the abuse.

You might have a terrible story and have good reason to hold onto the full-blown crazy story. I get it, but if you want to heal, you need to learn a new skill to control the triggers and protect yourself. Every time you share the crazy drama with someone, you risk getting triggered and causing the cycle of abuse to hold you stuck in that place and time. In this workshop, you will learn how to take control and CHANGE the story.

To be clear, you are not sweeping your story under the rug. You are not denying what happened. You will learn skills to extract the lesson and shorten the story, so it doesn't throw you back into the pain cycle. A story has the power to hold us in that story and live in that time as if it was today. The opportunity to create a new life (new chapter) is not possible because we are busy reliving the pain and horror from the wounds of abuse.

A WOUND STORY ATTRACTS NARCISSISTIC PEOPLE. If you are one of those unlucky survivors that keep repeating the patterns by being in relationships with narcissists, you need to understand that your story is the magnet that drives them towards you. You aren't picking them they are picking you and you gave them everything they need to abuse you again!

LEARN HOW TO HEAL

<https://narcissistabusesupport.com/stories/>

In this course you will learn:

- The six reasons your story is hurting you
- What secrets your story is revealing
- What are 'Green Flags' and why you should never give anyone the ammunition to hurt you
- What vulnerabilities your story shows
- What assets you have that made you a perfect supply and how not to be targeted for those
- How important it is to understand the "lesson" and how to find it
- How do you rewrite the story? You will be provided with over 50 examples of survivor's stories to illustrate how you can rewrite your story.

I am very proud of this workshop. There are six videos with worksheets to help you craft your new chapter.

I have been teaching and perfecting this workshop for many years and I am finally able to bring it into your living room. These skills are simple once you understand the concept. they will free you from triggering yourself and all your friends and family. When you change the story, your friends will have their friend back and you too will notice a change right away.

Check out this workshop - <https://narcissistabusesupport.com/stories/>



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tracy Malone is a surTHRIVER who is passionate about raising awareness on the subject of Narcissist Abuse Support. She is excited to share the empowering hero's journey story of how she turned her life around to help others do the same.

LEARN HOW TO HEAL

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Tracy Malone is the founder of NarcissistAbuseSupport.com, a global resource for victims from more than 145 countries. In addition, she created a support Facebook group for victims of narcissistic abuse with more than 8,000 members. She is a popular and well-respected YouTuber on the subject. Her channel has now reached more than 1,300,000 survivors; her work can also be found on her podcast.

Tracy's website concentrates on educating survivors and leading them to the resources they need to heal. Her passion is coaching survivors with a compassionate understanding heart. Tracy has been successfully running two in-person support groups. She understands the important value of finding community to heal, so her website maintains a support group directory as well as state by state domestic violence agency listings where people can get access to counseling, legal services and support.

tricks they pull during the divorce.

Tracy is currently completing her first book on divorcing a narcissist and the

Become more than a survivor. Be a SurThrivers!

FOLLOW THE LINK TO RESOURCES.

Visit my website - <https://narcissistabusesupport.com/>

Subscribe to my YouTube channel to listen to the over 400 videos on Narcissistic abuse -

<https://www.youtube.com/c/TracyAMalone>

Like to listen to podcasts? Follow me wherever you listen - <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/podcast-narcissist-abuse-support/id1244854330?mt=2>

Need extra support? Join my Facebook Group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/getnarcissistAbuseSupport/>

Download my Free Red Flags Checklist - <https://narcissistabusesupport.com/free-red-flag-checklist/>

If you are struggling and want to know what to do next, I suggest my coaching sessions. Every session is geared to educate, validate, and get you started on healing. I coach people by video all over the world; it's your turn.

<https://narcissistabusesupport.com/narcissistic-abuse-coaching-sessions/>