

NARCISSISTIC DAUGHTER OR SON IN-LAW



If your child marries a narcissist, the world as you knew it may be over.

Most people don't know that the person they married is a narcissist until the ultimate commitment has been made and they have signed on the dotted line. The dotted line, however, is fluid... it could be anything from cohabitating to marriage or it could be another Life-Changing event like having a baby.

A predictable pattern with all narcissists is that the chase is far more exciting than real life and once the person who sparked their interest has been caught, things change. I always say, "you want me until you have me." Then, the fun is over.

The love bombing stage brings visions of the perfect dream come true, the fairy tale... What we typically forget about fairy tales is that there is always an evil villain.

This is directed to the parents of those who fell victim to this type of abuse. Let me offer this piece of advice to anyone whose children are entangled with a narcissist sans the marriage license: their journey is similar except for the fortunate lack of financial and legal responsibilities that would accompany a divorce. It might be difficult to see it now but that is a blessing in disguise.

If your child marries a narcissist, control will be their weapon of choice. To control your child, they must be isolated from you. A false narrative will be constructed to convince your child that *you* are that villain and only *they* can save them. After all, "They are their only real family now." This is an easy line to fall under the spell of, especially if the victim comes from a dysfunctional family. There might be no one who notices or has any interest in getting involved. A strong family unit will sense this disturbing change in your child's attachment immediately.

Oftentimes, the narcissist will further trap their victims (your child) upon the arrival of their own child. This child will be weaponized and used to threaten your child to go along with them or never see them (the narc and the child) again. It is a cruel use of power but an even easier method of winning and that is what it is all about.

As a parent, you may have done nothing wrong, yet your child will believe the narcissist's lies. Take heart; narcissists are good at what they do and your child was simply too good to resist. They are

being abused and whether they recognize it or not, they willingly drank the love potion poison. The shock will be intense later when they discover the truth.

Narcissists can be men or women, but female narcissists seem to often be more offended by competition (you). Sidenote: This is not a scientific fact, but I have had more clients (parents of narcissists) whose children have female spouses.

Why your kid? WHO IS THE NARCISSIST LOOKING FOR?

To understand this, it will help to break it down and look at the big picture: what is the supply your child offers to the narcissist? This helps to better recognize 'the why' your child was targeted.

- Money, assets, & security
- Good education, job, & potential
- Social status
- Family status or wealth
- Quality parenting genes (i.e., they will make a great mother)
- Arm candy (that family picture with everyone in khakis and blue shirts will look good behind their desk)
- Caring
- Empathic souls make a good supply because the narc tells victim stories and empaths believe the excuses
- Forgiving
- Loving
- Generous
- Spiritual - church-going people tend to be more forgiving and believe in the sacred vows of marriage so they try harder, forgive quicker, and trust more easily

CYCLE OF ABUSE AND HOW IT GETS DEPLOYED

Idealize – By now, you accept the fact that the narcissist love bombed your child to get them hooked. At this point, the narcissist is their drug. Your child believes they are in love and that “they have never been loved like this before.” Why do they believe this? Because the narcissist TELLS them that this is the case every day. This is the first dose of venom and it gets injected deeply inside of them. This is a stepping stone towards loyalty that will be used against them later. Your child will search the rest of their lives for the person they believed their narcissist was in this love bombing stage, just like any addict does for the next high. This is one of the reasons they stay.

What you might not yet realize is that you were also love bombed.

You welcomed them into your home: they were sweet as pie, strong, and appeared to have a secure future. Most importantly, they seemed to clearly love your child. Then and there, you unwittingly made a deal with the devil.

You may have vacationed together or just spent quite a bit of time with them, and you saw, firsthand, how much they loved your son or daughter. The time spent with your family was an investment strategy designed to reassure you that they were family-oriented and that it will always be perfect like this once they join your family.

You fell in love with an illusion, just as your child did. It is not uncommon. Parents often learn later of the suffering their child

endured during those times together after-the-fact. Perhaps the narcissist perceived they were not supportive or loving enough to build the narrative properly or they were injured over some other viewed slight. It may have been subtle at first, but it was a test of the familial bond is to determine where your child's loyalty lies. Keep your eyes open for this type of behavior and establish open lines of communication with your child but the frightening thing about it is they might not even consider it abusive. That's when the knowledge hits that this is a very dangerous individual.

You were love bombed into giving your approval. They are slick and even if you think you were in charge, believe me it was always them. If they are still around, things are progressing exactly according to their plan. They rarely drop their masks early in the game. Note: Once you give your approval and pay for the wedding, they no longer need you. This is when the abuse and control amplify to a deafening level.

Devalue – At this point, the narcissist will start to find issues with the relationship you have with your child. They begin to nitpick and create alternate reality stories. All along, the narc has been planting false narratives in your kid's mind about you and now is the time they become vocal about it.

How does the truth get manipulated in the devalue stage?

Example: You help your child financially (as a nice thing), but it will be spun as 'you are trying to control them' by the narc (yet they still expect/accept your money).

Example: You are helpful and babysit – that would be spun as controlling them and your grandchildren. You will be accused of everything from unsatisfactory parenting styles to abuse. The parenting of your own child will be pulled into the conversation.

Example: Your daughter-in-law never does laundry so while you are there babysitting, and the baby is sleeping, you do it in an effort to help out. This immediately makes you “controlling and judging their lifestyle.”

Example: Both work so you babysit to alleviate some of the pressure. You decide to do them a favor by picking up groceries or making dinner ... this often gets spun as “controlling and you don’t think they do anything right.”

Example: Your narcissistic son-in-law can’t/won’t take care of the house/property, so you offer your help to fix a screen or mow the lawn ... “control and judgement.”

These gaslighting and brainwashing tactics begin to occur as the relationship enters the devalue stage. These transplanted narratives always turn them into 'the victim' of you and make them into 'the hero' for trying to save your adult child from their evil parent(s).

Discard – Once your child is sufficiently hooked and they have successfully put distance between you, the discard process begins. Prepare to get tossed aside, ghosted, and blocked.

Narcissists tend to be smart. They are calculating and know exactly what they want and how to get it. They are expert manipulators and have control tactic techniques unlike any other. I have seen one scenario in particular quite frequently as of late and it is very frightening to parents, for good reason.

THE APOLOGY HOSTAGE SCENARIO

Remember the narcissist's goal is to isolate your child. There are many ways to go about it, both in public and in private, but this is one way it can happen behind closed doors. The narrative your child hears daily is slowly poisoning their mind against you, their siblings, grandparents, and their friends. Your child is ultimately forced to choose between you and their narc or suffer more verbal (and more) abuse.

STEP 1: A dramatic event is created, and then unrealistic expectations are made of you, the parent(s). Demands are made that you drop everything to help them “this minute!” When/if you are unable/unwilling to walk away from your job or commitments and get sucked into this false emergency, the narcissist will get wounded. They are wounded because the need to control you is real and you didn’t jump fast or high enough.

This is one test you will never win. Even if you do show up, it’s never adequate. They need to control *the way* you show up.

This theatrical situation with its interwoven and distorted chronicle is designed to triangulate you and your child. As with any narcissist, these concocted fictions usually hold only a spec of truth – and that is simply to make it more believable.

STEP 2: The narc son or daughter-in-law will blow up and manipulate this conflict to show your child how you don't really care about them or attempts to convince them that...

"Your parents are trying to spilt us up."

"Your parents don't like me."

"Your parents never gave me a fair chance."

"Don't you see, they are never there for you, EVER!"

"I am your real family. You must choose. It's either me or them! I can't deal with them."

As it escalates, the divorce card will usually get played as a threat – possibly compounded with, "You will never see your children again, is that what you want? Do you even care about them?"

I am sorry but, in this situation, your child is being abused. Not all abuse has physical signs, but the emotional trauma can be devastating.

STEP 3: With the long list of infractions mounting against you, the narcissist tires of trying to explain. When your child attempts to justify how you helped so much by fixing the screen door, they are met with anger and verbal abuse. Maybe this time they will only be forced to sleep on the sofa for not agreeing and taking their narc's side in the disagreement, but the level of abuse will be cranked up with each infraction.

Behind the scenes, you are oblivious of these arguments about how unhelpful/controlling/judgmental you are, so you keep reaching out. Your desire to see them gets spun into control; this is

how brainwashing works. Be aware that part of the narcissist's game is to mix the crazy with loving sweet behavior. This creates a true trauma bond where your child is no longer in command of their own emotions.

STEP 4: Then it happens – the ransom offer gets thrown out: If you apologize for all of the terrible things you have done, *then* you can see the grandkids (or, in some cases, your own child).

I have actually seen ransom letters, drafted by the narc, with all the false allegations meticulously listed, almost like they were keeping score. In other situations, you will be expected to inherently *know* the terrible things you have done. Sadly, if you don't or are unable to divulge a long-detailed list off the top of your head, you are not taking responsibility and that will get twisted and used against you.

You can never win!!

I have had some clients who wanted to see their grandchildren so bad that they agreed to meet and apologize. Did they know what they were apologizing for? Not really. It may work that one time, but will you get to see the grandkids again? No! Why? Because your apology was insincere or it wasn't your idea or you looked at the narc funny... whatever the circumstance, according to the narc, it couldn't possibly be accepted with a clear conscience. Out of frustration, you get up to take a break and hear the narc-in-law say, "See, didn't I tell you not to trust them!" As you pick your heart up off the floor and leave, you will feel even more hopeless. You sense more doors have been closed. You sucked up pride and took responsibility for things you never did... now what!?

STEP 5: Once you're gone, your child will be verbally abused about your insincerity. At the same time, the fact that you apologized is now masterfully being used against them as well.

"Didn't you see how your <mother or father> admitted they did these terrible things?! We can never see them again!"

Your child might not agree but they are effectively trapped to choose between their past (you) and the future with their spouse (and children).

This is just one scam I have seen but there are many others. I hope this will help you compare the patterns to whatever is happening in your family.

THINGS THAT MIGHT HAPPEN

- Expect them to be unforgiving of the perceived slights by you.
- They might medicate your child for depression (because of you) or some other fabricated mental illness. This tactic will be helpful in the case of a divorce; they will tell the court how your child struggles with depression and therefore should not have access to the children, for their safety.
- They may call the police and report abuse to them or the children and make false allegations to get them arrested. This tactic is typically used later in custody battles to prevent your child from getting custody of their own. They have no empathy for the harm this can do to your grandchild.

- They may project and accuse your child of being a narcissist or bi-polar.
- They will likely make claims to your child that you are trying to undermine their marriage/relationship and control their lives.
- Intimate secrets can get twisted into false betrayals.

You can never do enough so please do not hold onto the belief that you did something wrong.

Every victim of abuse says three things:

- What did I do?
- Who does this?
- You can't make this shit up!

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Do whatever is necessary to stay in your child's life. Don't give up – you will lose them forever.

You must set long term goals:

- To keep them in your life
- To keep your grandchildren in your life
- To keep relationships with other siblings and family members stable

WHAT YOU *MUST* DO

- Never tell your child that you suspect they are married to a narcissist - at least not until they figure out something is wrong too. This could get back to the narcissist and then they

will cut you off completely. They hate being exposed (or in their minds, falsely accused) and will go into survival mode. Anyone who gets in their way will be at risk of psychological or emotional damage.

- Learn how narcissists work - tactics & strategies.
- Understand the cycle of abuse and what to expect.
- Educate yourself on control and what your child is living with.
- Accept that shame and guilt will be used against your child.
- Find allies - if your child will not talk to you but will still talk to siblings/grandma/MIL/an old friend, try to get pictures of the grandkids from them, and any intel on how things look from their perspective. However, don't be shocked when you hear that your child has also withdrawn from them.
- Be careful. If you get too involved and try to help your child, the narcissist will rename your helpfulness into a weapon to prove that you are against their marriage. Anything you say will be manipulated by the narcissist. Until your child comes to you with concerns of their own, you can only make things worse by pushing the issue. It can be quite dangerous for your child.
- It's hard to hold your tongue when all you want to do is shake your child until they snap out of it! Please maintain your composure. The stakes are high.
- It's human nature to want to defend yourself against malicious misrepresentations. It is critical you see that being defensive at the wrong moment could make it worse for your child. The risks outweigh the benefits at this point.
- If the narc does let you back into their lives, expect the eggshell dance to be the sole method of communication.

- If things are in a heated stage, avoid being alone with the narcissist – they will manipulate you. They may tell you false stories to test your loyalty or bait you into conversations by bringing up that spec of truth to engage you in a conversation about your child. It will haunt you in the end. Narcissists have been known to record conversations with parents to later show their victim their own parent's betrayal for saying these horrible things about them.
- Try not to be judgmental or speak negatively about the narcissistic spouse in conversation with your child. It will only backfire.
- If the situation isn't 100% no contact, try to arrange one-on-one meetings with your child. Tactfully remind them of all the happy times with the family and that you are still there for them.
- It may be easier to contact your child at work or via email. Try to set up secret weekly calls. Let them know you love them and miss them - but do not pry, do not accuse, and do not show too much sadness because that may add to their guilt and feelings of hopelessness. Keep the conversation light about family and friends. Start slowly with the hope of earning some additional time.
- Support your other family members by sharing this information. A sibling or grandma may be the next target if they get too involved and it is important that everyone is on the same page.

One fact that you can take to the bank is that the narcissist has been consistently building narratives behind your child's back to anyone who would listen. They are especially fond of sharing tales about your child's temper, anger, infidelity, addictions, and lies...

this smearing and spinning of misinformation is usually hidden from your child and used later when they get out of line or stands up for themselves. If they get angry and try to tell others what is really happening, the narcissist will duck and weave while they pull out the 'you are a liar card' so no one believes the stories told about them. However, when you understand that intermittent reinforcement is one of the reasons your child stays, you can see a ray of hope that they do have good times too. Despite them not knowing that those are fake, take comfort in the fact that they do feel loved in the love bombing stage.

The bottom line is if you get involved in the drama, they will turn your kid against you. The narcissist is hoping you say bad things about them so they can prove that you don't like them or are trying to break apart the marriage.

This is not something you can easily fix and you may need to face the reality that it could be years before you see your child again, unrestricted. I really am sorry to say that but please don't panic at those words. Nothing is written in stone and every narcissist is different, but you should go in with your eyes open to the possibilities – both good and bad.

Get help. Find a therapist or coach that understands narcissistic abuse.

My name is Tracy Malone and I am the founder and author of NarcissistAbuseSupport.com I can coach you through this or help your child understand what is happening if they are ready. You can learn about my coaching services @ on my website <https://narcissistabusesupport.com>

My new bestselling book on Divorcing Your Narcissist may also give you insights as to what your child may have to deal with if this comes to divorce. It is not like a normal divorce.

You can get the book on Amazon, Barnes and Noble and Kindle and Audible.

