

Understanding Narcissistic Tactics

Introduction

In this booklet, we will explore the common psychological tactics used by narcissistic individuals to manipulate, control, and disorient their victims. Recognizing these behaviors is a vital step in healing from narcissistic abuse and reclaiming your sense of reality and self-worth.

1. Gaslighting

Gaslighting is when someone manipulates you into doubting your own perceptions, memories, or sanity. They may say things like, "That never happened," or "You're imagining things." Over time, this leads to self-doubt and confusion, making you more dependent on their version of reality.

2. Love-Bombing and Devaluation

Love-bombing involves overwhelming you with affection, praise, or attention early in the relationship or during moments of control. Later, this often shifts into devaluation-sudden criticism, coldness, or emotional withdrawal-keeping you off balance and craving their approval.

3. Blame-Shifting

Blame-shifting occurs when a narcissist refuses to take responsibility and instead blames you for their behavior. For example: "I wouldn't have yelled if you hadn't provoked me." This keeps you feeling responsible and constantly trying to fix things.

4. Triangulation

Triangulation involves bringing another person into the dynamic to create insecurity, jealousy, or competition. For example: "My ex never had a problem with this," or "Even my friends think you're too sensitive." This isolates you and increases their control.

5. Silent Treatment and Withholding

The silent treatment is used to punish or control. Withholding affection, communication, or information is meant to provoke anxiety or compliance. These are manipulative tactics-not signs of healthy boundaries.

6. Projection

Projection is when the narcissist accuses you of the very things they are doing-such as lying, being selfish, or manipulative. It's a way to shift focus and avoid responsibility while confusing and disarming you.

7. Hoovering

Hoovering is a tactic where the narcissist attempts to pull you back into the relationship with sudden affection, apologies, or promises of change. It often happens after a breakup or boundary. It's not about healing-it's about regaining control.

Closing Reflection

Understanding these tactics can help you rebuild trust in your own perceptions and validate your experiences. You didn't imagine it. You didn't cause it. And you deserve relationships rooted in respect, clarity, and emotional safety.