

A GENTLE GUIDE TO RECOGNIZING PATTERNS



7 SIGNS OF NARCISSISTIC ABUSE

Recognize the patterns. Trust yourself again.
Begin reclaiming your worth.

You deserve clarity

If you have been wondering whether what happened to you counts, this guide offers words for seven harmful patterns. You do not need a diagnosis of another person to take your experience seriously.

By Beverly Adams, founder of Warrior of Worth. A survivor, not a therapist.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Start with what you notice

Abuse can look different behind closed doors. A person may seem charming to others while you feel confused, afraid, or diminished. These signs describe behavior patterns, not a way to diagnose Narcissistic Personality Disorder.

A PRIVATE CHECK-IN

Which moments leave you doubting yourself or changing your behavior to avoid a reaction?

Your pace matters

You do not have to make a decision about a relationship today. If someone monitors your phone or papers, choose a safe place to keep this guide. A private journal is helpful only if it is safe for you.

Seven patterns to look for

- 1 Questioning your reality
- 2 Walking on eggshells
- 3 Affection followed by put-downs
- 4 Everything becomes your fault
- 5 Your boundaries are ignored
- 6 Losing contact with support
- 7 No longer feeling like yourself

SIGN 1 OF 7

01

Questioning your reality

They deny what they said, tell you that you are too sensitive, or repeatedly rewrite events. After a conversation, you may feel less certain about what you saw, heard, or felt.

YOU MIGHT NOTICE

You save messages or replay conversations because you want proof that your memory is sound.

A REMINDER

Two people can remember a moment differently. Repeatedly erasing your experience is a harmful pattern.

REFLECT, IF IT IS SAFE

What happened, in my own words, before anyone explained it away?

SIGN 2 OF 7

02

Walking on eggshells

You watch their mood and carefully choose your words to avoid anger, ridicule, or withdrawal. Their reactions begin shaping ordinary decisions.

YOU MIGHT NOTICE

You rehearse what to say or feel relief when they are in a good mood.

A REMINDER

A relationship should leave room for your needs and opinions.

REFLECT, IF IT IS SAFE

What do I change about myself to avoid their reaction?

SIGN 3 OF 7

03

Affection, then put-downs

Intense attention or promises may be followed by criticism and devaluation. You may work hard to get back to the warmth you felt earlier.

YOU MIGHT NOTICE

Compliments and closeness feel unpredictable, while criticism feels familiar.

A REMINDER

You do not have to earn basic respect by becoming someone else.

REFLECT, IF IT IS SAFE

When did I begin trying to earn back their affection?

SIGN 4 OF 7

04

Everything is your fault

When you bring up a hurtful action, the focus shifts to your supposed mistakes. They may say you caused their anger, insults, or betrayal.

YOU MIGHT NOTICE

You end up apologizing after trying to explain how you were hurt.

A REMINDER

You can own your choices without carrying responsibility for someone else's behavior.

REFLECT, IF IT IS SAFE

What responsibility belongs to me, and what belongs to them?

SIGN 5 OF 7

05

Your boundaries are ignored

A no, a request for space, or a limit around your body, time, or privacy is met with pressure, guilt, ridicule, or punishment.

YOU MIGHT NOTICE

You stop saying no because the aftermath feels exhausting or frightening.

A REMINDER

Your limits deserve respect. You never owe someone access to your body.

REFLECT, IF IT IS SAFE

Which boundary has been difficult to hold, and what support would help?

SIGN 6 OF 7

06

Losing contact with support

They criticize people you trust, create conflict around visits, or make it hard to spend time away. Isolation can happen slowly.

YOU MIGHT NOTICE

You talk to friends or family less, and reaching out now feels complicated.

A REMINDER

Safe connection can help you hear your own voice again.

REFLECT, IF IT IS SAFE

Who has treated me with care and respect?

SIGN 7 OF 7

07

No longer feeling like yourself

You may feel anxious, numb, or worn down. Interests and parts of your personality that once mattered have become hard to reach.

YOU MIGHT NOTICE

You miss the way you used to laugh, decide, create, or feel at ease.

A REMINDER

The parts of you that feel distant can be rediscovered at your own pace.

REFLECT, IF IT IS SAFE

What is one small thing that still feels like me?

YOUR NEXT GENTLE STEP

Clarity is a first step

You do not have to solve everything at once. Choose one safe action that fits your situation.

01 Notice the pattern

If it is safe, write down what happened and how you felt in your own words.

02 Reach toward support

Consider one person or service that listens without pressuring you.

03 Plan with care

If you are thinking of leaving or fear harm, a domestic violence advocate can help you make a safety plan.

YOU ARE WORTHY OF PEACE.

Your worth was never determined by how someone else treated you.

If you need support in the U.S.

Immediate danger: 911. National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233 or text START to 88788. Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: call or text 988. Crisis Text Line: text HOME to 741741.

More encouragement and tools: warriorofworth.com

Educational content only. Beverly Adams is a survivor, not a therapist. This guide does not diagnose anyone or replace professional, legal, or crisis support.