Chapter 9
Narcissistic Leadership in Organizations: A Two-Edged Sword

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Introduction

The BBC documentary (co-produced with the Open University) Child of Our Time (BBC, 2000), designed to build up a scientifically accurate picture of how genes and environment interact to make a fully formed adult, vividly demonstrated the results of a study on employees working in a high-rise building. The higher the floor in which their offices were located, the more senior their management positions. The employees had filled in a personality questionnaire and after then were videotaped upon entering the elevators at the beginning of a working day. Those whose agreeableness level was the highest came out of the elevator in the lowest floors, while those whose agreeableness level was the lowest came out of the elevator in the highest floors, where the offices of the top management were located (Winston, 2010).

A recent meta-analysis (a statistical analysis that combines the results of multiple scientific studies), based on 310 independent samples drawn from 215 sources (O'Boyle, Forsyth, Banks, Story, & White, 2014), yielded a negative statistically significant correlation between narcissism and agreeableness across the many studies reviewed in this meta-analysis.

Agreeableness is one of the Big Five personality traits (a personality model consisting of openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism) (Costa & McCrae, 1992) that reflects individual differences in general concern for social harmony. Having an optimistic view of human nature, agreeable individuals value getting along with others and are generally considerate, kind, generous, trusting and trustworthy, helpful, and willing to compromise their interests with others. Disagreeable individuals, on the other hand, place self-interest above getting along with others, are generally unconcerned with others' well-being,

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and are less likely to extend themselves for other people. Sometimes their skepticism about others' motives causes them to be suspicious, unfriendly, and uncooperative.

Individuals high in narcissism may be charming and gregarious initially, but they show little concern for others' opinions, do not go out of their way to help others, and are anything but modest (Campbell & Miller, 2013; Samuel & Widiger, 2008).

- Do people have to be disagreeable and/or narcissistic in order to reach the position of senior managers?
- Are agreeable non-narcissistic individuals doomed to remain subordinates?
- Does promotion and leadership go hand in hand with egocentrism and ignoring the needs of others?
- How can organizational leaders harness the personality needs that led them to leadership for the sake of the organization without suppressing their subordinates and abusing them as to satisfy their self-serving needs?

The chapter consists of five sections: section "Narcissism: A Personality Trait or a Personality Disorder?" is devoted to the psychology of narcissism, starting with the Greek myth of Narcissus, followed by the psychoanalytic theories, the "narcissistic personality disorder," a review of recent empirical studies, and a discussion of healthy narcissism. Section "Narcissism: A Personality Trait or Cultural Phenomenon" puts individual narcissism in a cultural context of the narcissistic era that offers individual channels to express their narcissism. Section "Narcissism in Workplace Environment" presents narcissistic leadership in workplace environments as one of these channels, introducing the problematic aspects of destructively narcissistic managers, followed by their incredible pros and the inevitable cons, and ending in the difficulties to contain both the bright sides of narcissistic leadership. Section "Harnessing Smart Power to Maximize the Benefit and Minimize the Cost of Narcissistic Leaders" offers some practical recommendations for organizations, trying to avoid the recruitment of toxic narcissistic leaders in the first place, followed by coaching narcissistic managers who are already working within the organization, and ending in strategies to prevent attempts to seek revenge by malignant narcissistic executives, when replacing them is imperative. Finally, section "Practical Recommendations for Organizations" equips employees with a toolbox of coping strategies with narcissistic bosses, starting with distinguishing between things that can and cannot be changed, do's and don'ts while having to deal with them, strategies of "managing the managers," and finally, the challenge of seeing the possible scared inferior child behind the façade of the scary grandiose narcissistic boss.

Narcissism: A Personality Trait or a Personality Disorder?

The Greek Myth

The term "narcissism" comes from the Greek myth of Narcissus, a handsome Greek youth who rejected the desperate advances of the nymph Echo, which led him to fall in love with his own reflection in a pool of water. Unable to consummate his love, he lay gazing enraptured into the pool, hour after hour, and finally changed into a flower that bears his name. The concept of excessive selfishness has been recognized throughout history. In ancient Greece the concept was understood as hubris (Gantz, 1993). Only more recently narcissism had been defined in psychological terms.

The Psychoanalytic Perspective

According to Freud (1914), narcissistic individuals turn the psychosexual energy. (known as "libido"), usually directed toward other people, toward themselves. He distinguished between primary and secondary narcissism. Primary narcissism occurs in the early infantile phase of object relationship development, when children have not differentiated themselves from the outside world and regard all sources of pleasure as originating within themselves. In "secondary narcissism" the psychosexual energy ("libido"), once attached to external love objects, is redirected back to the self. "Secondary narcissism" during adulthood may take the form of falling in love with one's own ideas, values, and actions. According to this view, this is the source of all battles of egos and respect games.

Kernberg (1975) considered high level of self-reference in interpersonal contacts as a central characteristic of narcissists, because of a discrepancy between an inflated self-evaluation and an extreme need for admiration from others. At the same time, the narcissistic individual devaluates those others and feel no empathy toward them. The grandiose behavior serves, in fact, as a defense against an infantile pathological rage toward rejecting parents, who are often narcissistic themselves. Kohut (1971), on the other hand, did not consider narcissism as essentially pathological but rather as a sequence, ranging from infancy to adulthood. In Kohut's opinion, a measure of narcissism among adults may well be mature and healthy, whereas pathological narcissism takes place when one cannot assimilate one's ideal self with one's actual deficiencies, hence demanding from other people the admiration one has not received from one's parents.

The Current Criteria of Narcissistic Personality Disorder: The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) for Diagnosing "Narcissistic Personality Disorder" (NPD)

The psychoanalytic view of pathological narcissism is currently translated in DSM-V (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) into narcissistic personality disorder (NPD). The DSM, published by the American Psychiatric Association (2013), offers a common language and standard criteria for the classification of mental disorders. NPD is defined as a pervasive pattern of grandiosity (in fantasy or behavior), need for admiration, and lack of empathy, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by five (or more) of the following:

1. Has a Grandiose Sense of Self-Importance (E.G., Exaggerates Achievements and talents, expects to be recognized as superior without commensurate achievements).
2. Is Preoccupied with Fantasies of Unlimited Success, Power, Brilliance, Beauty, or ideal love.
3. Believes that he or she Is "Special" and Unique and can Only Be Understood by, or should associate with, other special or high-status people (or institutions).
4. Requires excessive admiration.
5. Has a sense of entitlement (i.e., unreasonable expectations of especially favorable treatment or automatic compliance with his or her expectations).
6. Is Interpersonally Exploitative (I.E., Takes Advantage of Others to Achieve his or her own ends).
7. Lacks Empathy: Is Unwilling to Recognize or Identify with the Feelings and Needs of others.
8. Is often envious of others or believes that others are envious of him or her.
9. Shows arrogant, haughty behaviors or attitudes.

Recent Empirical Psychological Literature

While the origins of the psychological discussion of narcissism are psychoanalytic, recent studies suggest other theoretical models which are all rooted in the conceptualization of narcissism as a personality disorder. There seems to be a fine line between healthy self-esteem and pathological grandiose narcissism. The latter is characterized by insatiable craving for adoration, feeling a special entitlement and right to be insensitive, even cruel, to others, but at the same time being either enraged, or crushed, by criticism. Narcissists feel that they deserve special treatment but are extremely upset if they are treated like any ordinary person. They are marked by grandiosity (in fantasy or behavior), need for admiration, and lack of empathy (Furnham, 2007).

Morf and Rhodewalt (2001) proposed a dynamic self-regulatory processing model of narcissism that casts narcissism in terms of motivated self-construction, in that the narcissist's self is shaped by the dynamic interaction of cognitive and affective intrapersonal processes and interpersonal self-regulatory strategies that are played out in the social arena. A grandiose yet vulnerable self-concept appears to underlie the chronic goal of obtaining continuous external self-affirmation. Because narcissists are insensitive to others' concerns and social constraints and view others as inferior, their self-regulatory efforts often are counterproductive and ultimately prevent the positive feedback that they seek—thus undermining the self they are trying to create and maintain.

Foster and Campbell (2007) developed the extended agency model. They argue that narcissism is a quality of the self that has significant implications for thinking, feeling, and behaving and that individuals with narcissistic personality possess highly inflated, unrealistically positive views of the self. This includes strong self-focus, feelings of entitlement, and lack of regard for others.

Narcissists focus on what benefits them personally, with less regard for how their actions may benefit (or harm) others. Most interesting from their perspective as self-researchers is the vast array of self-regulatory strategies used by narcissists (e.g., admiration-seeking, bragging, displaying material goods, socializing with important individuals, etc.). These strategies are both causes and consequences of narcissists' inflated self-beliefs. Their general orientation toward the narcissistic self is evident in the agency model of narcissism (Campbell et al. 2006). According to this model narcissists focus on personal rather than communal concerns. The narcissists are approach-oriented, their self-regulation is focused on acquiring self-esteem, they have an inflated view of themselves on many dimensions, and narcissism is linked to entitlement, which is widely regarded as a core feature of narcissism (Ackerman & Donnellan, 2013).

Back et al. (2013) presented a process model that distinguishes two dimensions of narcissism: admiration and rivalry. They proposed that narcissists' overarching goal of maintaining a grandiose self is pursued by two separate pathways. In a set of seven studies, they validated this two-dimensional model using the newly developed Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Questionnaire (NARQ) and showed that narcissistic admiration and rivalry are positively correlated dimensions, yet they have markedly different networks and distinct intra- and interpersonal consequences. Narcissistic admiration and rivalry showed unique relations to the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI), the Big Five, self-esteem, pathological narcissism, and other narcissism-related traits like Machiavellianism, psychopathy, self-enhancement, and impulsivity. In one of the studies, 96 students participated in individual experimental sessions, filled out a questionnaire (including the NARQ and NPI), and were asked to sit down in front of a camera, while three videos were recorded for each participant. The participants had to introduce themselves, read aloud a standardized weather forecast, and act as if applying for a scholarship. The investigators used edited videos to obtain (a) full videos (audio and visual), (b) silent videos, (c) auditory tapes, and (d) transcripts of spoken words for each target on each speaking task. For each file, two independent observers then assessed

behavioral indicators on an 8-point Likert-type rating scales and by counting ascribed behaviors, respectively. Despite the positive relation between admiration and rivalry, the two differentially predicted general interpersonal orientations and reactions to transgressions in friendships and romantic relationships, interpersonal perceptions during group interactions, and observed behaviors in experimental observations.

Can Narcissism be Healthy?

Although narcissists are notorious of being manipulative, demanding, and self-centered to the degree that even therapists do not like them (Furnham, 2007), there is a fine line between pathological narcissism and "healthy narcissism," a concept that developed slowly out of the psychoanalytic tradition. The healthy narcissist has been characterized as possessing realistic self-esteem without being cut off from a shared emotional life, as the unhealthy narcissist tend to be (Crompton, 2007).

Freud (1914) considered "normal" narcissism essential for the development of a healthy personality. Freud did recognize the allure of the narcissist for other people, but he didn't have a concept of "healthy narcissism" as such. Kohut (1971) spoke of a child's "normal narcissism" and normal narcissistic entitlement and considered that if early narcissistic needs could be adequately met, the individual would move to a mature form of positive self-esteem and self-confidence which may be considered as healthy narcissism. At another level Kernberg (1975) specified three subtypes of pathological narcissism – regression to the regulation of infantile self-esteem, narcissistic choice of object, and narcissistic personality disorder – as well as normal infantile narcissism. He also described normal adult narcissism, defined as normal self-esteem based on normal structures of the self. Brown (2008) suggested a continuum of narcissism, from the healthy to the pathological, with stable narcissism and destructive narcissism as levels in between.

Meanwhile Lubit (2002), who focused on destructively narcissistic managers, considered the positive characteristics of healthy narcissism as high outward self-confidence in line with reality (unlike unhealthy narcissism), the ability to enjoy power, real concern for others and their ideas without exploiting or devaluing them, having values and following through on plans, and healthy childhood with support for self-esteem and appropriate limits on behavior toward others. Healthy narcissism is based on relatively secure self-esteem that can survive daily frustrations and stress. Failure to attain desired goals, criticism, and seeing the success of others may cause disappointment, but it does not threaten the self-image of healthy individuals as worthwhile, valuable people. In addition to the self-confidence provided, we need self-esteem to tolerate frustrations, stand up for our beliefs, and maintain commitments to values. Secure self-esteem and healthy narcissism are also necessary to relate in a healthy manner with others, i.e., empathize with others, enjoy true friendship and intimacy, and inspire confidence in others. Although both healthy and destructive narcissism provide outward self-confidence, they are very different

phenomena. The grandiosity of destructive narcissistic managers may appear to be due to high levels of self-confidence, but it is frequently a reaction to fragile self-esteem.

Narcissism: A Personality Trait or Cultural Phenomenon

So far in this chapter narcissism has been discussed from an individual psychological perspective.

However, narcissism can be sanctioned or encouraged by cultures. Some cultures endorse or encourage narcissism to make this appear normal or even desirable. Can this explain what seems to be an epidemic rise of narcissistic personality disorder?

On a more macro level narcissistic phenomena are also discussed from cultural and sociological perspectives. Pride, one of the essential elements of narcissism, is traditionally considered as one of "the seven deadly sins," also known as the "capital vices" or "cardinal sins" (Tucker, 2015). Lasch (1979) defines a narcissistic culture as one where every activity and relationship is defined by the hedonistic need to acquire the symbols of wealth, this becoming the only expression of rigid, yet covert, social hierarchies. It is a culture where liberalism only exists insofar as it serves a consumer society, and even art, sex, and religion lose their liberating power.

In such a society of constant competition, there can be no allies, and little transparency. The threats to acquisition of social symbols are so numerous, varied, and frequently incomprehensible that defensiveness, as well as competitiveness, becomes a way of life. Any real sense of community is undermined—or even destroyed—to be replaced by virtual equivalents that strive, unsuccessfully, to synthesize a sense of community. The question of whether narcissism is a personality disorder or a cultural phenomenon was discussed recently in a trilogy of three studies, comparing narcissism among candidates for the "Big Brother" reality TV show, gym trainees, women who have undergone cosmetic surgery, and three control groups. The narcissism levels of all of the research-group participants were significantly higher than those of the corresponding control groups, suggesting that although we live in a culture of narcissism, there are narcissism differences between those who choose or choose not to use the ever increasing opportunities for grandiose-exhibitionist individuals offered by the society in a narcissistic era (Rubinstein, 2014).

Narcissism in Workplace Environment

Self-absorption with dreams of fame, avoidance of failure, and quests for spiritual panacea means that people define social problems as personal ones. This personality trait involves a limited investment in love and friendship, avoidance of dependence, and living for the moment. The narcissism, or the ethic of domineering self-image,

appears to some people to be the best way of coping with the tensions, vicissitudes, and anxieties of modern life. The traits associated with this ethic – charm, pseudo-awareness, promiscuous pansexuality, hypochondria, protective shallowness, avoidance of dependence, inability to mourn, dread of old age, and death – are, according to Lasch (1979) who does not provide evidence, learned in the family and reinforced in the society but are corruptible and changeable. Ultimately the paradox of narcissism is that it is the faith of those without faith; the cult of personal relations for those who are disenchanted with personal relations. This cynical view of the change of the work ethic into the narcissism ethic is an analysis from a sociohistorical view of current in the USA. To what extent it is generally or specifically true is uncertain or, indeed we may wonder, if it applies to other countries with apparently broadly similar political and economic systems. It may also be that norms and values in the USA workplace condone and promote narcissism. It is therefore possible that many organizational cultures take on board narcissistic values which are trumpeted. Organizations may therefore have selected, sought, and praised these with self-esteem bordering on narcissistic personality disorder. In this sense narcissism can be seen as the property of culture as well as property of individuals (Furnham, 2010, 2015).

Foster, Campbell, and Twengeb (2003) examined a large (n = 3445) sample of participants representing several different world regions and ethnicities and found that that participants from more individualistic (Hofstede, 1980) societies reporting more narcissism. This finding is especially relevant to workplaces, where competition between individuals play a central role. The link between the egocentricity narcissists and the conflicting interests between individuals, who compete for the achievement of limited career resources, is extremely expressed by Hobbes (1998), who adopted the Latin proverb "Homo homini lupus" meaning "A man is a wolf to another man" to describe the nature of relationship between human beings.

While narcissistic individuals are self-centered, societies, cultures, and nations can also be ethnocentric, i.e., judging another culture solely by the values and standards of one's own culture. de Zavala et al. (2009) introduced the concept of "collective narcissism" to define a type of narcissism where individuals have an inflated self-love of their group, in which they are personally involved. While the classic definition of narcissism focuses on the individual, collective narcissism asserts that one can have a similar excessively high opinion of a group, and that a group can function as a narcissistic entity.

The same is true with respect to organizations. In hospitals, for example, physicians use medical jargon both to communicate with each other in front of the patients, and quite often while talking with the patients. This prevents clear and open communication, which makes patients feel ignorant, even if they are highly educated in other fields. Duchon and Burns (2008) argue that in order to protect their identities, organizations can become self-obsessed and display extreme narcissistic behaviors which will, in the long run, lead to decline. In their opinion, extreme narcissism can take two forms. The high self-esteem narcissistic organization institutionalizes an exalted sense of self-worth and becomes blind to its weaknesses. The low self-esteem narcissistic organization institutionalizes a profound sense of

unworthiness and becomes blind to its own strengths. In between the extremes, an organization can remain reality-based and institutionalize a healthy sense of self-worth and value.

Destructively Narcissistic Managers

Discussing the organizational culture, Lubit (2002) argues that organization's cultural norms of behavior, values, and beliefs are forged from the role models that leaders provide, the myths and stories leaders tell, what the organization measures and rewards, the criteria used for hiring and promoting people, and the organization's historical norms of behavior and values. Some organizational cultures are tolerant.of destructive narcissism behavior and some are not so accepting. Those not tolerant force destructive narcissistic managers to change or leave. In Lubit's opinion, many destructive narcissistic managers survive and prosper because the influential contacts who supported their elevation to their present positions continue to support them despite evidence of problems.

Most managers have to skillfully handle their relationship with both their supervisors and their subordinates. They have to be agreeable toward their supervisors, but the more narcissistic they are, the more disagreeable they can be toward their subordinates, agreeableness being negatively related to narcissism across many studies (O'Boyle et al., 2014). Some degree of narcissism, which is identified with lack of empathy and disagreeableness, may be necessary to get to senior management positions, while agreeableness and taking into account the need of others may counterproductive to this process. Narcissistic managers have both the audacity to push aside others obstructing their way to more senior positions and the audacity to push through revolutionary changes that organizations periodically need, defined by Maccoby (2000) as the "incredible pros" and the "inevitable cons" of narcissistic leaders.

Narcissistic leadership is a leadership style in which the leader is only interested in himself or herself. Their priority is themselves – at the expense of their people/group members and colleagues. This leader exhibits the characteristics of a narcissist: arrogance, dominance, and hostility. It is a sufficiently common leadership style that it has acquired its own name. Narcissistic leadership (especially the destructive form) is driven by unyielding arrogance, self-absorption, and a personal egotistic need for power and admiration (Neider 2010). Lubit (2002) also considers narcissistic managers as essentially destructive to organizations and argues that destructive narcissism particularly limits the ability of managers to work effectively with colleagues and subordinates. Lubit claims that the outward self-confidence, drive for power, and ruthlessness of destructively narcissistic managers facilitate their rise to positions of power. At the same time, their devaluation of others, singular focus on what is best for themselves, and difficulties in working with others can markedly impair an organization's morale and performance and even drive away the most talented employees. In his opinion, most large organizations have enough

destructive narcissistic managers to present a significant and costly problem. He discusses why such managers are able to survive and prosper in some organizations despite their destructive behavior, how people can recognize them more quickly, and how to design organizations to decrease the prevalence of them. He even provides recommendations for how other managers, executives, and board of directors can deal with destructive narcissistic managers and CEOs, for instance, paying attention to things that lead to problems and avoiding them, avoiding gossiping with destructively narcissistic managers, trying to obtain written directions, documenting one's work as a measure of defense against unfair criticism about failing to do one's job properly, and documenting interactions and the course of events for defending oneself to someone higher up. Sometimes moving to another position within the company may be the best long-term strategy. This is particularly important for very capable individuals, who destructively narcissistic managers will see as a threat and will therefore try to undercut. After such an employee is out of their unit, he or she can report to superiors how the narcissist manager treats people. If possible, it is better to do this reporting in collaboration with others who can validate such statements. Informing superiors of the problem may help the company as a whole and improve the working environment for all.

Pathological narcissism among managers, on the other hand, is also associated with "toxic leadership,", which includes an apparent lack of concern for the well-being of subordinates, a personality or interpersonal technique that negatively affects organizational climate, and a conviction by subordinates that the leader is motivated primarily by self-interest (Reed, 2004). Pelletier (2010) reviewed characteristics of harmful leadership, which includes bullying, i.e., using mental or physical strength against someone who is likely to be in a weaker or subordinate position to the person who is engaging in bullying that often occurs at the hands of top leaders and middle managers. She provides empirical support for the behavioral and rhetorical constructs associated with toxic leadership in organizational contexts by conducting two exploratory studies that examined behavior and rhetoric of leaders through the lenses of abusive, bullying, destructive, toxic, and tyrannical leadership theories. In a qualitative study, participants expressed their direct experiences with leader toxicity. Eight behavioral dimensions emerged. Integrating those findings, a 51-item leader behavior assessment was developed to assess agreement of the severity of harmfulness of these dimensions. Her analyses revealed eight dimensions of leader toxicity that involved the leader breaking down followers' self-esteem, threatening employee's occupational and/or personal security, promoting a culture of inequity, intimidating employees physically and mentally, and being dishonest. Leaders were also considered toxic when they fostered a divisive culture or when they failed to listen or act on employee concerns. In short, the behaviors identified in theories of harmful leadership were supported; employees had experienced these behaviors directly, or had witnessed their leaders exhibiting these behaviors toward their coworkers. Observers in these two studies generally agreed about what constituted toxicity and employees' reports of their actual experiences with destructive leaders provided an in-depth representation of the prevalence (98% had witnessed

leaders exhibiting destructive behaviors) and manifestation of leader toxicity in organizations (Pelletier, 2010).

When the DSM-V criteria for narcissistic personality disorder (NPD), such as a sense of entitlement, lack of empathy, envy, and arrogance (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), mentioned earlier in this chapter, appear among CEOs and other leaders, their destructive potential on the organization is obvious. These characteristics of the narcissistic leader are in complete contradiction to the collective teamwork recommended in the literature on organizational behavior: "A functional team must make the collective results of the group more important to each individual than individual members' goals" (Lencioni, 2002, p. 217–218). In fact, NPD and antisocial personality disorder have a lot in common (Samenow, 2011). Indeed Stout (2005) points out that narcissism is half the element of sociopathy, although unlike sociopaths, narcissists often are in psychological pain, and may sometimes seek psychotherapy.

The link between narcissism and leadership has long been recognized (Campbell et al., 2011), with early psychological treatments of narcissism linking narcissism and leadership (Freud, 1950). Indeed, narcissists are likely to be perceived by others as self-confident and outgoing, two characteristics that occupy a prominent place in the perception of leadership (Lord , Foti, & DeVader, 1984). As noted by Kets de Vries and Miller (1984): "Narcissistic personalities … are frequently encountered in top management positions. Indeed, it is only to be expected that many narcissistic people, with their need for power, prestige, glamour, eventually end up seeking leadership positions. Their sense of drama, their ability to manipulate others, their knack for establishing quick, superficial relationships serve them as well" (p. 32).

However, it seems essential to distinguish between different degrees of severity of narcissistic personality disorder in the context of organizational leadership. While a mild disorder might look like a personal style that may be beneficial to the organization, a severe disorder might be harmful. The damage of a narcissistic disorder of a manager might be manifested in various ways, including difficulties to listen to and consider contrary views or evidence, to work with partners and to show respect for their contribution, and to nurture subordinates as well as confusing and contradictory attitudes to rules and regulations while displaying unrealistic fantasies.

Brunell et al. (2008) investigated whether individuals with high narcissism features would be more likely to emerge as leaders during leaderless group discussions. They assessed narcissism using Raskin and Terry's (1988) Narcissism Personality Inventory and examined groups of unacquainted individuals working on a group task. Emergent leadership was assessed from ratings of each individual's contribution to a leaderless group discussion instead of leader ratings among preestablished groups. In three studies, they used groups of four unacquainted individuals, assessing emergent leadership in three complementary ways. In Studies 1 and 2, they examined (a) the emergent leadership rating of each member made by the other three members of the group as well as (b) self-ratings of both the desire to lead and of emergent leadership. In Study 3, they used ratings of unbiased expert observers to assess leader emergence of practicing managers. In Study 2, they accounted for leadership effectiveness by investigating performance on the group task. Their

primary hypothesis was that narcissism would predict leadership emergence measured by peer ratings of leadership and self-reported leadership in Studies 1 and 2 and observers' ratings of leadership in Study 3. They further investigated the unique role of narcissism and its dimensions above and beyond self-esteem and the Big Five personality traits (Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism). In Study 2, they investigated achieving goals or performance at the task but made no a priori predictions that narcissists would be any better at achieving goals or task performance than the other group members would. Studies 1 and 2 used undergraduate students, and Study 3 used practicing managers enrolled in an Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) program. In Study 1, participants were told that they were on a committee to select a director of the student union. Each participant was to be an advocate for a particular candidate but the end goal was to reach a group consensus to select the best candidate for the job. In Study 2, participants were told that they were shipwrecked and needed to rank a list of items for their survival. Finally, in Study 3, participants assumed the role of a school board deciding how to allocate a large financial contribution from a fictional company.

In the three studies, participants completed personality questionnaires and engaged in four-person leaderless group discussions. The results from all three studies revealed a link between narcissism and leader emergence. Studies one and two further revealed that the power dimension of narcissism predicted reported leader emergence while controlling for sex, self-esteem, and the Big Five personality traits. Study 3 demonstrated an association between narcissism and expert ratings of leader emergence in a group of executives.

In contrast, Crompton (2007) has distinguished what he calls "productive narcissists" from "unproductive narcissists" and characterized the healthy narcissist as possessing realistic self-esteem without being cut off from a shared emotional life, as the unhealthy narcissist tends to be.

The Incredible Pros and the Inevitable Cons of Narcissistic Managers

Maccoby (2000) acknowledged that productive narcissists tend to be oversensitive to criticism, over-competitive, isolated, and grandiose. He did, however, consider that what draws narcissists out is that they have a sense of freedom to do whatever they want rather than feeling constantly constrained by circumstances and that if they are able to show elements of charisma, they are able to "draw people into their vision and produce a cohort of disciples who will pursue the dream for all it's worth. In his opinion, narcissism can be extraordinarily useful –even necessary. He even saw narcissists as closest to the collective image of great leaders, because they have compelling, even gripping, visions for companies,and they have an ability to attract followers. He argues that productive narcissists understand the essence of vision,

largely because they are by nature people who see the big picture and attempt to create it. However, despite the warm feelings that charisma can evoke, narcissists are typically not comfortable with their own emotions. They listen only for the kind of information they seek. They don't learn easily from others. They don't like to teach but prefer to indoctrinate and make speeches. They dominate meetings with subordinates. The result for the organization is greater internal competitiveness.

Similarly, Rosenthal and Pittinsky (2006) review and critically assess the theoretical and research literature on narcissistic leaders in order to understand the potential positive and negative consequences of their leadership, the trajectories of their leadership, and the relationship of narcissism to established models of leadership. Discussing the downside of narcissistic leadership, they point out arrogance, feelings of inferiority, insatiable need for recognition and superiority, hypersensitivity and anger, lack of empathy, amorality, irrationality and inflexibility, and paranoia. However, discussing the upside of narcissistic leadership they cautiously agree with Maccoby (2000) about the ability of productive narcissists to inspire great numbers of followers. They propose a new definition of narcissistic leadership, which enables them to transform the discussion from a good to bad debate about narcissistic leader traits to an examination of the dynamics between leaders' psychological motivations and behaviors and the motivations and behaviors of the constituents and institutions they lead. In so doing, they hope to facilitate a more advanced and fruitful discussion about the role narcissism plays in leadership.

This paper aimed to establish a critical synthesis of the dynamics of narcissistic leadership in organizations. Moreover, Rosenthal and Pittinsky (2006) offer suggestions for research aimed at providing greater insight into this form of leadership.

In a review of the dynamics of narcissistic leadership in organizations,

Ouimet (2010) presents details of four factors that can trigger manifestations of narcissistic leadership:

(a) *Idiosyncratic factors* – traits that are compatible with assertiveness (egotism, self-esteem, and the need to exercise power). The manifestation of narcissistic leadership may also be facilitated by the weakness of some subordinates and the ruthless ambition of others. Fundamentally rooted in a blind affective dependence, the weakness of subordinates nourishes the all-powerful feelings of the narcissistic leader.
(b) *Cultural factors* – The level narcissism among members of individualistic cultures (Hofstede, 1980) is higher than that found among members of collectivistic cultures. The more a culture emphasizes individualism, the higher the level of narcissism of its members. Also, by relentlessly pushing their members to outdo themselves and promoting immediate results, audacity, ambition, individual initiative, financial success, professional prestige, and social celebrity, organizations have become a veritable breeding ground for a culture of narcissism. Essentially, the ideology upheld by this culture is that self-realization ultimately depends on each individual's determination, courage, and talent.
(c) *Environmental factors* – When facing a period of severe political, economic, or technological instability or any other type of imminent, alarming threat,

members of an organization are particularly receptive to the reassuring rhetoric of a leader who displays supreme confidence in his or her ability to ward off ill fortune. These two circumstantial factors literally pave the way for the emergence of a narcissistic leader whose innate and arrogant self-assurance can be so reassuring in times of crisis.

(d) *Structural factors* – The absence of mechanisms providing for oversight of executive behavior and the strict control of information, which cripples subordinates' ability to act, give narcissistic leaders all the latitude they need to act out their fantasies of omnipotence. Firmly convinced that everyone owes them something, narcissistic leaders work relentlessly to expand their sphere of influence. From a structural perspective, it can be argued that only institutionalized rules placing formal limits on the narcissistic leader's prerogatives and the circulation of information aimed at making the organization's members truly aware of the value of the power exerted by them can effectively keep the excesses of their grandiosity in check.

Discussing the bright side and dark side of chief executive officer (CEO) personality, Resick, Whitman, Weingarden, and Hiller (2009) report on an examination of the relationships between CEO personality, transformational and transactional leadership, and multiple strategic outcomes in a sample of 75 CEOs of Major League Baseball Organizations over a 100-year period. CEO bright-side personality characteristics (core self-evaluations) were positively related to transformational leadership, whereas dark-side personality characteristics (including narcissism) of CEOs were negatively related to contingent reward leadership. In turn, CEO transformational and contingent reward leadership were related to four different strategic outcomes, including manager turnover, team winning percentage, fan attendance, and an independent rating of influence. CEO transformational leadership was positively related to ratings of influence, team winning percentage, and fan attendance, whereas contingent reward leadership was negatively related to manager turnover and ratings of influence.

Brunell et al. (2008) found that the power dimension of narcissism provided a unique explanatory contribution. The key practical implication of their work is that narcissism, a trait that is linked to a range of potential leadership problems, from risky decision making (Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2006) to white-collar crime (Blickle et al., 2006), actually predicts leader emergence. In other words, the same characteristic that facilitates an individual's emergence as a leader can also make this person a potentially destructive leader. Some attempts have been made to discuss "healthy narcissism" and to show its possible advantages of narcissistic leadership in the context of organizational behavior (e.g., Maccoby, 2000).

Narcissistic Leadership: A Two-Edged Sword

The dark side of narcissistic leadership does include negative and unpleasant interpersonal aspects, like arrogance, lack of empathy, requirements for excessive admiration, exploitativeness, and envy (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). However, a question may be raised whether individuals, who cannot or do not wish to put themselves in the limelight (even if it involves a certain degree of grandiosity or self-importance), may have enough motivation to take the role of leaders. Ideally, a good organizational leader would have only the bright side of narcissism, i.e., high self-esteem together with the ability and the motivation, or at least the pretense, to take into account the needs of other (e.g., Crompton , 2007), but is it not just our idealization or fantasy that we can "choose" just the bright side of narcissism and turn it to leadership? Are we not trying to defend ourselves by splitting between the dark and the bright sides of narcissistic leadership? Might we suggest that the narcissistic leader is using smart power?

Splitting is a primitive defense mechanism that helps the individual to oversimplify ambiguous and threatening situations by dividing people, groups, and human phenomena into bipolar dichotomies, such as "good" and "bad" and "black and white." In this way the individual avoids the complexity of human nature and interpersonal situations (i.e., an individual's actions and motivations are all good or all bad with no middle ground) (Carser, 1979).

Frenkel-Brunswik (1949) introduced the construct of "ambiguity tolerance-intolerance" to define and measure how well an individual responds when presented with an event that result in an ambiguous stimuli or situation. Perhaps the difficulty to contain and integrate the bright and the bad sides of narcissistic organizational leaders is a case of ambiguity intolerance of us as subordinates of narcissistic managers, who are grandiose enough to promote themselves and provide a vision (Maccoby, 2000), on the one hand, and may be arrogant and unsympathetic to our needs, on the other hand.

Harnessing Smart Power to Maximize the Benefit and Minimize the Cost of Narcissistic Leaders

The Origin of "Smart Power" in International Relations

The term smart power, originally coined within the discipline of international relations, is defined by the Center for Strategic and International Studies as "an approach that underscores" the necessity of a strong military, but also invests heavily in alliances, partnerships, and institutions of all levels to expand American influence and establish legitimacy of American action. It refers to the combination of hard power, the use of military and economic means to influence the behavior or interests of other political bodies, and soft power (Nye, 2004), the ability to attract and co-opt

rather than by coercion and to shape the preferences of others through appeal and attraction (Wilson, 2008).

Smart Power: From Politics to Workplace

While smart power, as the combination between hard power and soft power, has been discussed in the context of international relations, much research has been done on the importance of soft skills in the workplace. Klaus (2010) found that 75% of long-term job success depends on people skills, while only 25% is dependent on technical knowledge, while in another study it was found that hard skills contribute only 15% and the rest 85% are attributed to soft skills (Watts & Watts, 2008, as cited in John, 2009). According to Wilhelm (2004), employers rate soft skills as number one in importance for entry-level success on the job. Robles (2012) identified ten top soft skills as perceived the most important by business executives: integrity, communication, courtesy, responsibility, social skills, positive attitude, professionalism, flexibility, teamwork, and work ethic.

Smart Power as a Coping Strategy with Narcissistic Managers

While soft power skills of employees are considered to be so important by employers, there seems to be a lack of either theoretical works or empirical studies regarding the use of smart power for the sake of dealing with the problematic issues arising from the conduct of narcissistic managers.

As we saw up to this point, although narcissist managers are only interested in themselves at the expense of their subordinates, even to the degree of bullying them, they also have the appearance of an ability to offer the big picture (even when over simplified) and the audacity to push through the massive transformations that organizations periodically undertake as well as the apparent charisma that makes them able to stir enthusiasm among their followers for the sake of advancing the organization. Moreover, without some degree of narcissism, one may not have the ambition to pave one's way to top management position in the first place. The challenge is therefore not just how to avoid narcissistic managers in order to liberate the human potential of the employees and protect them from the toxic potential of narcissistic managers but rather how harness the concept of smart power to cope with them, so that their own human potential will be used for the sake of the organization without risking the human potential of the employees. In the spirit of this book, it is suggested to harness the concept of smart power in order to maximize the benefit and minimize the cost of narcissistic leaders.

As far as organizations are concerned, it is suggested to limit the use of hard power strategies to the inevitable necessity to replace toxic narcissistic managers, although even in those extreme situations using some soft power skills may be

necessary as to avoid acts of revenge as a result of narcissistic rage. However, as long as the unique contributions of the narcissistic manager may still be beneficial for the organization, coaching that apply soft power skills, is recommended. As far as employees are concerned, soft power skills, such as "managing the manager" or relating to the "scary child" who maybe hides behind the grandiose façade of the narcissistic manager, may be useful, although "formalizing" the situation by setting limits to abusive behaviors, documenting the interaction, and turning to those who are in charge of the narcissistic manager may also be required.

Practical Recommendations for Organizations

The literature on coping strategies of organizations with narcissistic leaders can be divided into two main issues: (a) how to avoid preemployment of extreme cases of narcissistic leaders, who are more likely to do more harm than good, and (b) how to coach narcissistic leaders who already work within the organization as to maximize their potential contribution and minimize their tendency to bully their subordinates.

Selection of Candidates for Top Management Positions

According to Robinson (2009), the first and most important opportunity begins at the first meeting between the investors and the key individuals representing the prospective company or when a board is considering hiring a new CEO. He warns organizations of the misleading exceptional capability of executives, who fit the description of a narcissistic personality disorder, to be gracious, humorous, empathic, and slyly manipulative when it suits their purposes. It is therefore recommended to set clear parameters about board involvement before signing any agreements and to make it known to what extent a board member will be involved in decision making. The board must develop a strategy to attempt to coach the problematic executive while preparing for the likely outcome of having to find a replacement.

Given the above review of the literature, there are healthy aspects of narcissistic leadership that can serve both the personal needs of the leader and those of the organization. However, as far as pathological narcissism is concerned, there seems to be a paradox in which those narcissists who may cause harm to the organization by humiliating and harassing their subordinates for the sake of feeling superior. The danger of workplace bullying of narcissistic leaders becomes clearer, if one looks at the overlapping parts between NPD and antisocial personality (Samenow, 2011). It is therefore recommended that organizations introduce a procedure of referring candidates for management positions to institutes specializing in human resource selection, based on personality assessments. It is also recommended that this assessment

should include a measure of narcissism, like the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Raskin & Hall, 1981). This questionnaire measures the leadership-authority dimension of narcissism, which may contribute to the organization, as well as the entitlement-exploitativeness (EE) dimension, potentially harmful for the welfare of the subordinates of the manager. A high EE level should serve as a warning signal during the process of selection.

According to Lubit (2002), one of the best tools for early recognition of destructive narcissistic managers is 360-degree feedback, since they are unlikely to contain their problematic behaviors when dealing with subordinates and colleagues. A potential difficulty is that subordinates may fail to give accurate assessments, out of fear that their negative comments about a manager will get back to the manager, be traced to them, and lead to retaliation. Despite Lubit's (2002) sweeping recommendation to use the 360-degree feedback as a regular part of the organization's routine, other researchers argue that it's utility depends largely upon the cultural values held by participants (e.g., Shipper, Hoffman, & Rotondo, 2007).

In case of narcissistic managers, the subordinate must transmit his or her concerns explicitly. To get around this conflict, one can make it clear to employees that negative comments about their manager will not be forwarded unless the concerns are widespread and unless the negative feedback can be given in a way that protects the anonymity of the people who provided it. In addition to supporting the use of 360-degree feedback, executives should foster an organization in which communication across multiple levels of the hierarchy is supported.

Coaching Narcissistic Managers

Coaches of narcissistic executives are advised to engage them in a dialogue about what the board believes are areas for "development" (vs. problem behaviors) and to elicit feedback from them as to their perception and interpretations, with an open mind and without a predetermined position regarding the situation. Because individuals with extreme narcissistic characteristics are basically insecure, the coach must be careful how to deliver information that they will perceive as criticism. The executive may actually have better insights and solutions to problems than coaches may have, so it may be useful to remember that to become an executive possibly requires a degree of narcissism. Because of the volatility of the narcissistic individual's reactions, it may be necessary to hire an independent and objective professional to facilitate difficult discussions. A "facilitator" could help contain the reactions of the parties involved and train this group of strong-willed individuals how to work better together (Robinson, 2009).

In his work as an executive coach, psychotherapist de Vries (2014) identified four personality disorders among bosses. One of them is the pathological narcissist, who is selfish and entitled, has grandiose fantasies, and pursues power at all costs. de Vries believes that with appropriate coaching, toxic bosses can learn to manage their conditions and become effective mentors and leaders. The first rule when

dealing with narcissistic managers is to avoid anything that might upset their delicate sense of self, despite the temptation to administer a loud wake-up call. Narcissists may seem very confident, but that confidence conceals a deep vulnerability. The coach's first goal must therefore be to place the narcissist's self-esteem on firm foundations rather than destroy it. de Vries' recommendation for the coach is to show empathy in order to build initial trust and attempting minor confrontations of individual dysfunctional behaviors. Narcissists are prone to transferring their childhood desire to please their parents onto other authority figures, and experienced coaches will use this propensity to establish a more secure working relationship that allows them to begin confronting the narcissist about their dysfunctions, pointing out how they are limiting opportunities. Narcissists' ambitions can also be used to motivate them, as long as the coach avoids fueling the narcissist's grandiosity. Since narcissists tend to regress into their old ways, it is important to follow up with more engagement.

Boyatzis, Smith, and Blaize (2006) also believe that coaching others with compassion can be a partial antidote to narcissism, because the leader is genuinely focused on others. At the same time, the improved quality of the relationship with others around the leader could result in people being willing to provide the leader with disconfirming, negative, or even critical reactions. Put in a more positive way, coaching with compassion could result in the leader being more open to others and their ideas. It allows or invites more self-awareness by moving a person into a relational world in which to get feedback and have to look at it. Limits on neural activity and inhibition of neurogenesis under chronic power stress will, on the other hand, lead to a more defensive posture toward critical feedback.

Replacing Narcissistic Executives

After recommending ways to avoid hiring potentially harmful narcissistic executives in the first place, as well as coaching them once they are already hired, Robinson (2009) suggests tactics to replacing harmful executives, when the circumstances require that. In such situations one has to be forewarned, prepared, and unequivocal about one's decision before taking any action. It is essential to prepare a face saving exit strategy for the individual before making any public announcement, since in extreme forms individuals with a narcissistic personality disorder may harbor fantasies of revenge and act on them to sooth their broken ego (e.g., announce publicly that the board is incompetent and the company is doomed).

Practical Recommendations for Employees

Reality Testing: Possible and Impossible Missions

Until better selection of managers is applied, employees will still have to cope with their narcissistic (and often destructive) managers. For such coping, employees may find the Serenity Prayer of Reinhold Niebuhr potentially useful: "God, give me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the courage to change the things I can; and the wisdom to know the difference" (Niebuhr, 1962). Distinguishing between what can and cannot be changed, as well as what is included in our inner world and what is included in the external environment or in others, is not a simple goal.

Acceptance of both the bright and the dark sides of narcissistic leadership in organizations requires applying some strategies to cope with the negative potential of narcissistic managers. Many nonacademic websites suggest various strategies of dealing with narcissistic managers, written by organizational consultants, who accept the inherent narcissistic personality of managers as fait accompli, or in terms of the Serenity Prayer terms "things one cannot change."

Do's and Don'ts

Smith (2014) suggests seven tactics for handling narcissistic bosses:

1. Recognizing their narcissistic traits (requirement of excessive admiration, lack of empathy, speaking more than listening, externalizing blame and never taking responsibility for their own mistakes, enjoying telling others what to do, and never wanting to be challenged)
2. Keeping distance (avoiding sharing too much personal information that can potentially be used against you)
3. Establishing boundaries (deciding what are and are not acceptable ways to be treated and having the courage to speak up when the line is crossed)
4. Being deferential, respectful, and guarded (understanding that winds change quickly and you may be undercut at any time)
5. Avoiding gossip (avoiding of being the one who talks about feeling stressed, disrespected, or guarded with your boss)
6. Speaking up (scheduling a private meeting with your narcissistic boss, telling him all the things that you appreciate about him, and making some specific suggestions as to what you would appreciate he works on)
7. Establishing an exit plan (starting looking for another job in case the above tactics do not improve or considering looking for another position within the organization)

Managing the Manager

Realizing that narcissistic managers often flatter their superiors in the workplace hierarchy, to make themselves look good, and that that may include putting someone else down, Eddy (2009) also suggests eight tactics of managing narcissistic managers:

1. Understanding their predictable patterns of behavior
2. Understanding that their behavior is deeply rooted and cannot be changed
3. Understanding their moods and behavior will swing back and forth
4. Trying to connect with empathy, attention, and/or respect
5. Analyzing your realistic options (getting a different job, a different organization, or a different position at the same company, talking to someone else about strategies for dealing with them, studying the organization's policy of bullying)
6. Responding quickly to misinformation (providing the correct information to the superiors of the narcissistic manage – without directly challenging the narcissist – before her or she puts you down)
7. Carefully setting limits on really bad behavior
8. Dropping little hints about the respect you get from others or let them know more formally

The Inferior Child Behind the Grandiose Monster

So, if you are a subordinate who is not, yet narcissistic enough to be a manager. yourself, the above counter-manipulations might be considered a good reality check that could be helpful in coping with the manipulations of your narcissistic manager. If you are not a narcissist yourself, then you should be selfless enough to be a flattering mirror of your narcissistic manager. Remember that behind the threatening, self-centered, nonempathetic, and even humiliating narcissistic manager, there is an attention-seeking child, who is not equipped with adequate and mature interpersonal skills to get your attention.

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