

12 Fascinating Facts Most People Get Wrong About Narcissism



Narcissism, a term frequently tossed around in both casual conversations and serious discussions, is often misunderstood. This psychological concept goes far beyond mere self-absorption or vanity, touching on deep-seated personality traits and behaviors. Here, we'll explore 12 fascinating facts about narcissism that challenge common misconceptions, shedding light on the complexities of narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) and related behaviors. Understanding these nuances is crucial today, where the term is increasingly relevant in discussions about mental health, social media, and leadership.

1. Narcissism Spectrum: Not All or Nothing



Many believe NPD is a clear-cut condition—you either are a narcissist or you're not. In reality, narcissism exists on a spectrum, ranging from healthy self-esteem to pathological narcissism. Most people exhibit some narcissistic traits, such as confidence or self-focus, without fitting the full diagnostic criteria for NPD. Recognizing this spectrum is key to understanding the varied ways NPD can manifest in behavior and relationships.

2. Narcissism vs. Confidence: A Fine Line



A common misconception is equating narcissism with high self-confidence. However, the two are fundamentally different. Confidence is a healthy sense of self-worth and abilities, while NPD involves an inflated self-image often rooted in deep-seated insecurities. Narcissists may appear confident, but their self-esteem is fragile and dependent on external validation.

3. Empathy in Narcissism: Not Always Absent



It's widely believed that narcissists lack empathy entirely, incapable of understanding or caring about others' feelings. Recent research suggests a more nuanced view: many narcissists can show cognitive empathy, understanding others' perspectives, but may struggle with emotional empathy or sharing in others' feelings. This distinction highlights the complexity of narcissism and its impact on interpersonal relationships.

4. Vulnerability: The Hidden Side of Narcissism



Contrary to the image of the always confident and brash narcissist, many individuals with NPD experience profound feelings of vulnerability and inadequacy. This “vulnerable narcissism” is characterized by hypersensitivity to criticism, social withdrawal, and a constant need for reassurance. This facet of NPD is often overlooked, leading to misunderstandings about the internal struggles some narcissists face.

5. Narcissism and Success: A Complicated Relationship



The belief that narcissism naturally leads to success, especially in leadership roles, is a simplification. While certain narcissistic traits, like charisma and risk-taking, can be advantageous in leadership, they can also lead to unethical behavior, exploitation of others, and, ultimately, leadership failure. The relationship between NPD and success is complex and highly context-dependent.

6. Genetics vs. Environment in Narcissism Development



The origins of narcissistic traits are often debated, with many assuming it's purely a result of upbringing. In reality, narcissism is influenced by a combination of genetic predispositions and environmental factors, such as parenting style, early experiences, and cultural influences. Understanding this interplay is crucial in addressing and treating narcissistic behaviors.

7. Narcissism and Social Media: A Double-Edged Sword



The rise of social media has been linked to increased narcissism, with platforms providing an ideal stage for narcissistic expression. However, it's a double-edged sword—social media can both amplify narcissistic tendencies and serve as a platform for seeking validation and connection. The relationship between social media and narcissism is complex and not solely responsible for the rise in narcissistic behaviors.

8. Treatment and Change: Hope for Narcissists



There's a common belief that narcissists can never change. While treating NPD can be challenging, change is possible with appropriate therapy, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and dialectical behavior therapy (DBT). Acknowledging the potential for change is essential for both individuals with narcissistic traits and those in relationships with them.

9. Narcissistic Supply: Beyond Attention Seeking



Narcissistic supply refers to the admiration and attention narcissists seek, but it's more than just about ego. For many narcissists, this "supply" is a way to validate their worth and soothe their deep-seated insecurities. Understanding this need can provide insights into the often perplexing behaviors of narcissists.

10. Narcissism in Relationships: Not Always Dominant



While narcissists are often portrayed as domineering in relationships, their behavior can vary widely. Some may exhibit controlling and manipulative behavior, but others might adopt a more passive or covert approach, using guilt or self-deprecation to meet their needs. Recognizing this diversity is crucial in understanding and navigating relationships with narcissistic individuals.

11. Narcissism and Culture: A Global Perspective



Narcissism is often viewed through a Western lens, but cultural factors play a significant role in its expression. In collectivist societies, narcissistic behaviors may be less tolerated or manifest differently than in individualistic cultures. Exploring NPD from a global perspective reveals the influence of cultural values on personality traits.

12. The Gender Myth in Narcissism



There's a stereotype that narcissism is predominantly a male trait. However, NPD is not confined to any one gender; it manifests in both men and women, albeit sometimes in different ways. Gendered stereotypes can obscure the recognition of narcissistic traits, particularly in women, leading to underdiagnosis or misinterpretation.

Debunking Narcissism Myths



By debunking these myths and exploring the multifaceted nature of NPD, we can foster a more nuanced understanding of this complex personality trait. Recognizing the diverse expressions and underlying vulnerabilities associated with narcissism is essential for empathy, effective communication, and addressing the challenges it presents in personal and professional relationships.

The Best Plants for Mental Health Benefits



My two biggest passions in life are art and mental health. Gardening is an art form. Also, gardening has many mental health benefits. I was curious to do some research into the best plants for mental health benefits. Of course, this will vary from person to person. Nevertheless, there are some plants commonly considered beneficial in this way.

Plants and Mental Health

[Keeping plants improves mental health](#) according to numerous studies and personal anecdotes. Potential benefits include:

- Reduces stress
- Reduces loneliness
- Improves mood
- Creates routine and structure
- Improves cognitive function as well as creativity
- Enhances self-esteem
- Improves sleep

Notably, of course, this will vary from person to person. I'd argue that keeping plants can help most people's mental health but that what this looks like for each person will vary. For example, if you have severe depression, then it can be really challenging to get the motivation to water every day. Going out to your garden each day can help ease the depression. And yet, if you can't keep up with it and your plants die, that can make you feel worse. As someone who lives with recurring depression, I understand that there's a fine line. So for people like me, keeping fewer plants that require less care can be a good solution.

The Best Plants for Mental Health Benefits

The plants that people prefer are also very individual, of course. Some people feel best when growing healthy vegetables that they can eat. Others thrive with lots of very colorful flowers around. You'll know – and continue to discover – what is right for you. That said, there are some plants that are [widely considered](#) the best plants for mental health benefits. Here are some common examples:

Lavender

Lavender is known for its calming and relaxing properties. It has been shown to lower heart rate, blood pressure, and levels of the stress hormone cortisol. Lavender also has a soothing scent that can help to promote better sleep. Personally, I use lavender essential oil in my diffuser every night. I also use lavender spray on my bedding. Natural lavender growing in a garden would likely be even better.

Jasmine

Jasmine has a sweet, floral scent that has been shown to reduce anxiety and promote relaxation. Like lavender, it can

also help to improve sleep quality. Moreover, it's been shown to reduce symptoms of depression. If you're looking for an all-over "feel good" plant for mental health benefits, jasmine is one good choice.

Aloe Vera

Aloe Vera is a low-maintenance plant that can help to purify the air and remove toxins. It can also help to reduce stress and promote relaxation. In fact, aloe vera has natural sedative properties that can help to reduce stress and anxiety, improve sleep, and boost mood. Therefore, this is a really great indoor plant for both physical and mental health.

Peace Lily

Just the name tells you that this plant might have mental health benefits. Similar to aloe vera, the Peace Lily is another plant that can help to purify the air and remove toxins. Moreover, the plant contains compounds that can help to promote relaxation and improve mood. It is easy to care for and can thrive in a variety of environments, making it a great choice for those looking to improve their health without taxing their energy.

Snake Plant

The Snake Plant is yet another low-maintenance plant that can help to purify the air and remove toxins. The plant releases oxygen at night, which can help to create a more restful sleep environment. Additionally, it is known for its hardiness and ability to thrive in a variety of environments, so it's a versatile option in terms of plants for mental health.

Spider Plant

Similar to the Snake Plant, the Spider Plant is a low-maintenance plant that purifies the air. While the Snake Plant

is particular good at cleaning the air at night, the Spider Plant provides overall toxin clearing. A room with both of these should have nice clean air, making it easier to breathe and rest. This is always good for our mental health!

Rosemary

There are several great herbs that you can grow to promote mental health. Rosemary is a great example. The scent of rosemary has been found to stimulate the brain, which can improve cognitive function. Many mental health conditions affect concentration and memory. Rosemary can help with that! And yet, even while it boosts mood, it's also a calming plant.

Moreover, you can, of course, consume the rosemary that you grow. This has many physical and mental health benefits. Reducing inflammation and improving immune system function are two of the biggest benefits. This helps both the body and the mind.

Basil

Basil is another herb that can help to improve memory and concentration. It also has a calming effect and can help to reduce stress and promote relaxation. Moreover, it has cardiovascular benefits. Plants that support your overall health are good for your mental health. After all, mental health is health, as they say!

Sunflowers

Personally, I find it hard to be unhappy when looking at a sunflower. Of course, in the throes of depression, it's hard to recognize that beauty. Nevertheless, I've found that the little things do help with my baseline mood. Sunflowers are mood-boosting flowers. Their bright yellow color and large size make them a joy to look at. Plus, their association with sunshine and warmth can have a positive impact on mood.

Marigolds

These are also great flowers for mental health benefits. Their vibrant colors and easy care make them a popular choice for gardeners and flower enthusiasts. The bright colors are great mood boosters. And yet since they're easy to take care of, you run less risk of low self-esteem from times when you lack the energy to provide full care.

Chamomile

This is another flower that is relatively easy to grow and care for. Chamomile is especially known for its ability to promote sleep and reduce insomnia. After all, haven't you ever been offered chamomile tea to sleep? You can make tea with the plant in your garden or just reap the mental health benefits of tending to it.

Read More:

- [6 Health Benefits of Gardening](#)
- [5 Ways Healthy Gardens Help the Planet](#)
- [Being a Beginner in the Garden](#)
- [Choosing a Bed: Sleep Number vs Tempurpedic](#)

5 Ways Depression Costs Me In the Garden



I struggle with chronic, recurring depression. While it's well-managed, the symptoms do creep up from time to time. [Depression is an expensive mental health condition](#), in ways that might surprise you. In fact, during bouts of depression, I find that it costs me in the garden. This does mitigate the many [mental health benefits of gardening](#). However, it's an important thing to know about if you're a frugal gardener who lives with a similar mental health challenge.

5 Ways Depression Costs Me In The Garden

Here are the five most common ways that depression costs me in the garden.

1. Lack of Energy Means Slack in the Garden

A garden requires tending. Most plants need attention weekly if not daily. When this is part of a normal routine, it's

great. In fact, it's a healthy part of the day. However, sometimes, depression wins. When it does, fatigue sets in. It literally feels impossible to get up out of the bed to do anything at all. If that happens, then gardening doesn't. And this can mean the plants wither and die.

2. What's The Point Anyway?

That refrain runs through my head when I'm dealing with a bout of depression. Depression is characterized by hopelessness and pointlessness and a lack of interest in doing things normally enjoyed. It's really hard to stay motivated to work in the garden when you can't see the point of doing it. Again, this means that the garden withers and dies.

If we can overcome these feelings (through medication, therapy, self-care, and other means,) then the growth and beauty of the garden can remind us of the point. But, sometimes, depression takes over.

3. Low Self-Esteem or Black/White Thinking

For me, depression is accompanied by a feeling of worthlessness. Some people experience black and white thinking because of their mental health conditions. In either case, this can lead to feeling like you aren't good enough to make a garden grow. A plant starts to die, I feel like "I don't know how to garden," and I just give up.

Someone who loves gardening might see a small mistake in the garden and suddenly hate gardening. We lose the joy as we lose ourselves in depression. So, we abandon the garden. Or we get in there and rip it up entirely, destroying what we spent time and money creating.

4. Reckless Shopping

Although this is more commonly a characteristic of mania in bipolar depression, people, like myself, with unipolar depression, can fall into wasteful shopping as well. For me, it's usually online shopping. I'm imagining some other life I want to have where I'm not depressed, and I'm allowing the easy mindlessness of the scroll to convince me that I just need this gadget or that to feel better. So, suddenly, I find myself buying new garden tools, plants, or a gardening apron that I can't afford and won't ever use.

5. Injuries

Ideally, I work through the challenges and overcome them and get back to doing things that I love. However, sometimes, when you push through before you're ready, you end up injuring yourself. If you're in the brain fog of depression while working with gardening tools, then you might injure yourself. This can cost me in medical care as well as lost work.

Tips for Coping

There are many amazing benefits of gardening. It's just sometimes hard to remember them in the throes of depression. It's helpful for me to keep lists of things I love, what the benefits are, little stories or photos that remind me of the good parts, etc. Then I look at those in depression to try to help myself overcome the inertia and get back to myself.

Read More:

- [7 Reasons Why You Should Try Gardening](#)
- [If You're Over 50, Here's Why You Should Start Gardening](#)
- [7 Financial Benefits of Backyard Gardening](#)