

Narcissism

Ancient Greek culture has had an oversized impact on the English language. An example of this is the character of Narcissus, who, in Greek legend, saw his own reflection in a pond and fell in love with it, forsaking his family and friends to spend time gazing at himself. The word 'narcissist' comes from this story, and there is even a psychological illness named after it: narcissistic personality disorder.

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A person with this disorder cannot feel empathy for others and sees other people merely as a source of approval, otherwise ignoring them; they may have been divorced several times. They seek attention and may make go to ridiculous lengths to make people notice them, such as appearing on television and running for high political office. They may make grandiose claims, such as knowing more than doctors about how to treat a new disease. When they are criticised, they tend to react aggressively, possibly spending hours each day posting tweets about how unfair or terrible their critics are. This disorder is extremely dangerous, because the sufferer will never admit fault and will literally allow people to die rather than confess an error.

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Where does the word 'narcissist' come from?

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How does a narcissist react to being criticised?

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Do you know of anyone who may be a narcissist?