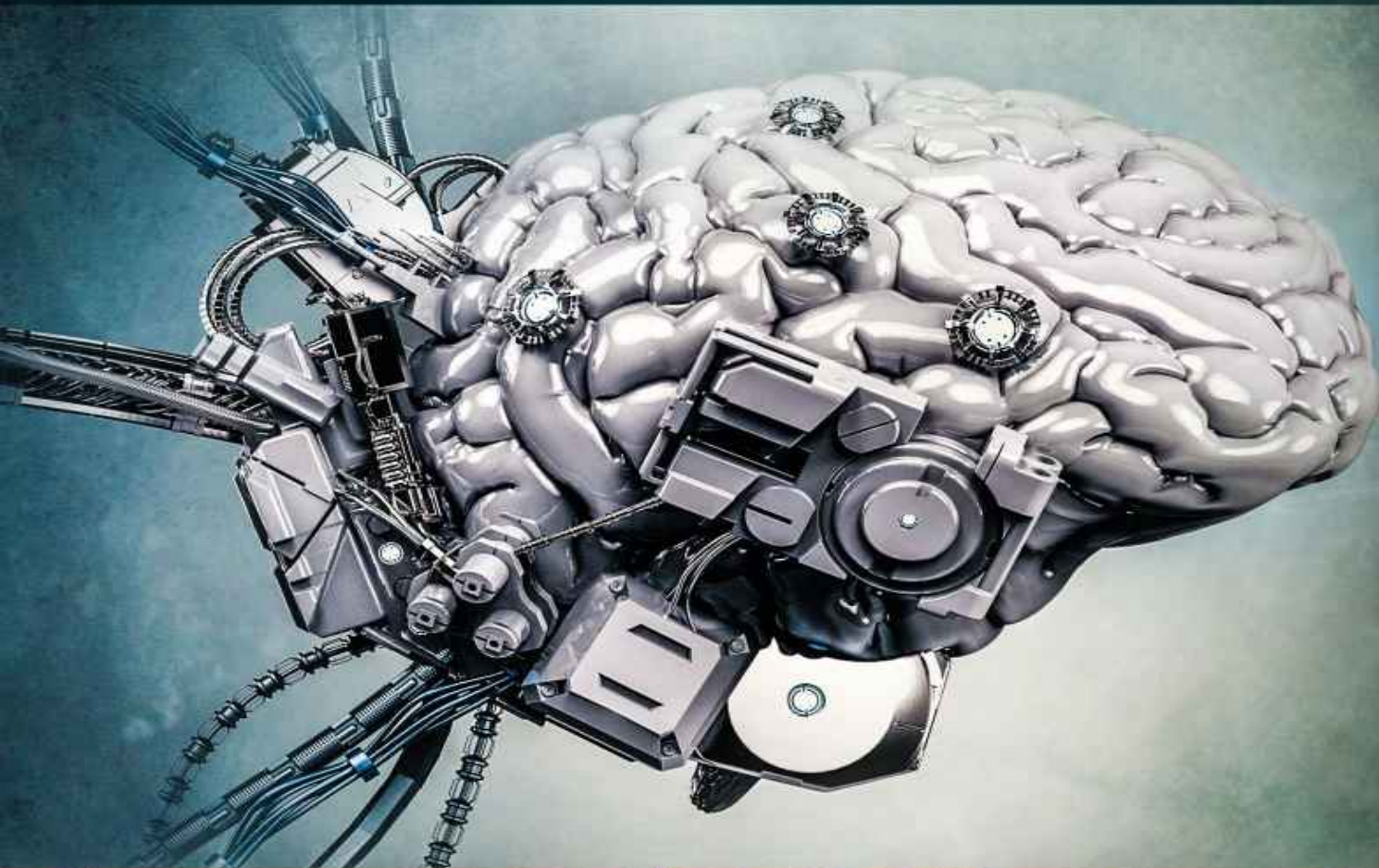


DARK PSYCHOLOGY

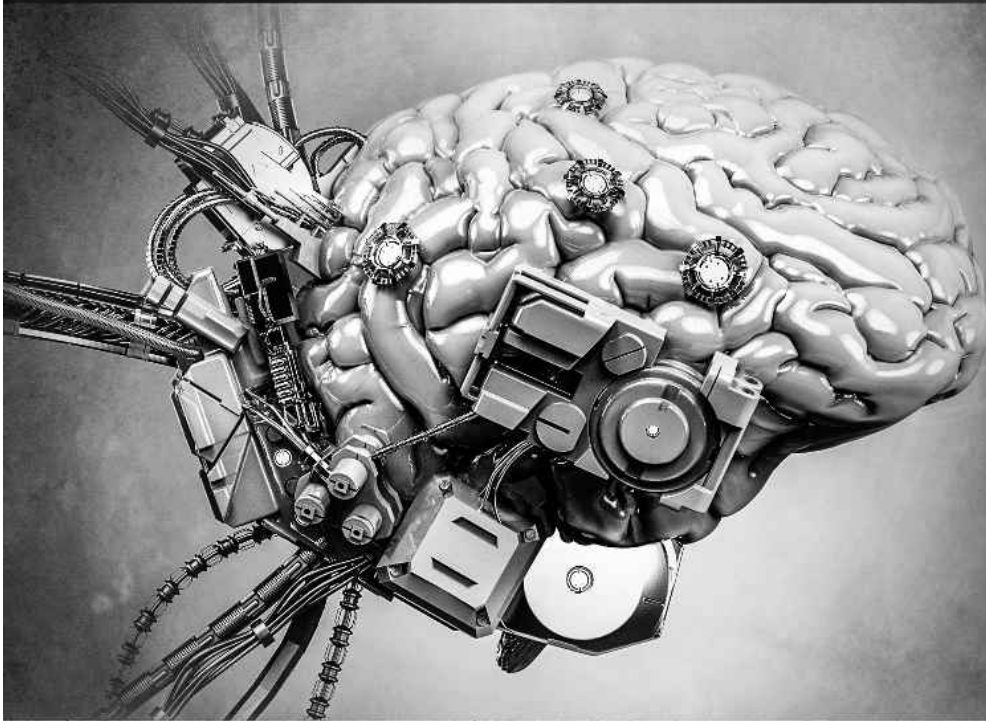
SUPER ADVANCED TECHNIQUES TO PERSUADE ANYONE,
SECRETLY MANIPULATE PEOPLE AND INFLUENCE THEIR
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RICHARD CAMPBELL

Dark Psychology Secrets

Learn powerful manipulation techniques to control people's minds and get what you want in life; understanding how brainwashing, hypnosis, persuasion, and deception work and how to defend yourself from.

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Chapter 1: Dark Psychology 101

In a utopian world, all human beings would look out for each other. Neighbors would be friends, colleagues in the corporate world would not be cutthroat in their competitiveness, and strangers would all be kind. There would be no theft, kidnappings, or even murder. There would just be perfect happiness and harmony. You could go about your business without worrying that someone was trying to take advantage of you. You could leave your bank cards unattended because nobody would be trying to steal from you. Sleeping with your windows and doors open would be the norm. Identity theft would not exist. Jails would become obsolete, and women could walk in the dark without worrying about getting attacked. Unfortunately, this is not the kind of world we live in.

In the real world, people use and abuse each other all the time. It almost seems that there is always someone waiting to take advantage of you at every turn. In today's world, where physical boundaries have been obliterated by the Internet and numerous other technologies, you are at an even greater risk of being preyed upon by other humans. Not only are you being preyed on by the people you interact within the physical world, but there is also the additional threat of virtual predators. Suffice to say, humans have become even more predatory than wild animals.

Most people would rather believe the best of everyone they meet until proven otherwise. Think about it. When you meet a new person, do you often think of them as a good person or a bad person? High chances are, you want to hope everyone has as kind a heart as you do. That they would never do anything to harm you or another. If you go through life believing

that everyone is as good as you are (assuming that you are indeed a good person), you are at a very high risk of getting manipulated and taken advantage of.

Let's back up a little.

When a human being is born, they are born with some inherent qualities that are critical for their survival. For instance, a baby is born with the ability to cry in order to get their needs met by another person. This is because the baby indeed needs another person to cater to them because they are too little to get anything done on their own. As such, a baby will cry when it needs to be fed, cry when it needs to sleep, cry when it needs comfort...cry for just about anything. Nobody trained this baby to cry--it is a survival tool it came with straight from the womb. If the parents of this baby do not set particular boundaries as far as responding to the baby's requests, the baby learns that it can get just about anything by crying. This is how manipulation begins. That is not to mean that parents are solely responsible for the breeding of manipulators. While parents contribute to the development of manipulative behavior by virtue of genetics and the kind of nurturing, or lack thereof, provided to offspring, there are other factors at play. At the very core of our being, we are selfish beings. We want the best for ourselves first, and others later. For some people, there is a line as to what extent they are willing to go to get the best for themselves. For others, the line is blurry and sometimes even non-existent. Where the line is blurry or does not exist is where dark psychology begins.

Dark psychology in the simplest terms is the study of predatory human behavior. In other words, dark psychology explores humans as they prey on other humans for their own benefit. It dives into the much darker side of human consciousness, where conscience, empathy, and selflessness are

unheard of. Dark Psychology seeks to understand why some humans do not seem to have any qualms about causing others harm as long as they stand to gain something from it. Dark psychology acknowledges that not everyone is a nice person, however inclined you may be to think so, and then tries to answer why that may be the case.

Human predatory behavior is something that has been in existence since the beginning of time. Humans have always preyed upon each other. This is a constant fact; only the methods of predation change. Typically, human beings utilize two main channels in their predation: intragroup and intergroup, which are internal and external channels, respectively.

Intragroup versus intergroup predation

In any group of people such as a society, community, county, or region, where there are shared similarities, there are typically superior and inferior parties. The superiority or inferiority is often determined by what the group of people defines to be the criteria for the same. For instance, it might be the economic power or the social class or so on. Often, you'll find that the superior parties' prey on the inferior ones for their own advancement. When this happens, intragroup predation is at play. A group of corporations setting up industries in a residential area occupied by poorer residents is an example of intergroup predation. In this instance, the richer section of society has no reservations about harming another less fortunate section that is vulnerable and easy prey on.

If a group considers itself to be superior to another group and preys on them (externally), this is referred to as intergroup predation. That is predation between two or more different groups. This is essentially what happened during colonization where European countries invaded other countries that they considered inferior and uncivilized, for their own benefit.

In your everyday life, you may not consciously notice the predators in your midst. Human predators are highly skilled at blending in with the rest of the population. They look like normal people leading relatively normal lives. Whenever there is a murder or any other criminal incident in a community, you'll often hear a member of the community say of the perpetrator: *he was such a good man, well-liked by everybody in town. We would never have suspected that he was capable of such an evil act.* The truth of the matter is that the suspect was not really a good man. More often than not, he was just a bad man disguised as a good man. Of course, the terms bad and good do not do any justice in explaining the complex and often confusing elements that play a part in causing one to choose to become a predator.

While the monsters in your life may not always be obvious, there are some simple ways to identify a predator. If you are observant of the people you relate with, you will have an easier time telling apart the good ones from the bad ones. This is especially true if you listen more than you talk. You learn more when you are just listening and observing. So, what are the distinguishing marks of a human predator?

Identifying a human predator

Your favorite colleague at work might be someone that you really get along with or someone who pretends to get along with you for their own benefit. How do you tell the difference?

They are unbelievably charming

The most efficient predators are also extremely charming. They know how to do and say the right things so that they come across as appealing to

others. They come off as highly likable based on their ability to get in anybody's good books by virtue of a few well-placed compliments and smiles. When you meet such a charmer, they will make you believe that you are the center of their universe. They will pay you attention, make you feel special and pull all the stops to impress. For many charmers, this is a learned art form. They have had years of practice to perfect the Mr. Charming act.

When two normal people with no hidden agendas meet, the interaction that occurs is natural, sometimes awkward and often superficial. That is, there is likely to be a whole lot of small talk to fill the silences instead of deep heartfelt conversations. The latter conversations happen after you have gotten to know each other a little better. Be cautious of anyone who tries to charmingly divulge any unnecessary information that paints them as this perfect human who is incapable of making a wrong move. Be careful of anyone who always has the perfect answer to all questions. Lastly, be wary of anyone who seems to float effortlessly through social interactions. This kind of person may be a well-meaning social butterfly, but there is also a chance that they are putting on a show that you will pay greatly for.

Entitlement is the order of the day

Have you ever come across someone who behaves as if the world owes them something? This kind of person must have what they want at whatever cost. If they do not, they will throw a tantrum and make everyone pay for it. Human predators are often entitled people. This is the reason why they often have no problem getting what they want at whatever cost--even if it means hurting others. After all, the world is in their debt, and this debt must be repaid even if it means stepping on a few or many toes along the way.

At the workplace, entitlement is played out in the form of a colleague who believes they deserve a promotion by virtue of any reason that they come up with. This kind of employee will go to great lengths to ensure that the boss gives them the promotion that they believe they have earned even if they barely pull their weight at the office. They will try to make everyone else look bad and undeserving of the promotion. If they do not get their way and the promotion goes to someone else, they will consider that person their life-long enemy. After all, how could that person take away their promotion? It will never occur to this entitled employee that they probably need to work harder to rise up the ranks.

They love being in control

Most people love having some control in certain aspects of their lives. It is normal to want to be able to call the shots, within reasonable bounds. The problem begins when a particular person feels that they need to call the shots in their lives and in other people's' lives. Most manipulators are control freaks. Some of them have subtle ways of expressing this control, while others could not be bothered to make it less obvious. If you have a control freak in your life, you probably already know it. Control freaks are often hard to miss thanks to their ability to involve themselves in just about anything and everything. At the workplace, control freaks have a very hard time delegating to others, even when it is necessary. They want to run each and every show because they know the reward is theirs to reap.

Another sign of a control freak is the inability to admit when they are wrong. Humans are prone to error, and it requires a certain level of grace to accept that you are on the wrong. This is a kind of grace that most control freaks lack. A reason why people who love to be in control find it hard to

admit error is that they view it as an admission to being weak, which contradicts their idealized self-image that they are better than everybody else. If you ever find yourself engaged in an argument with a control freak do not expect to win. In any battle involving a control freak, they always win. If they do not win, the winner becomes the newest enemy that must be defeated come what may.

Control freaks also like to nitpick everybody and anybody, judging them according to the superior standards they have set for themselves. A control freak will have an opinion about anything under the sun, even when this opinion is uncalled for or even unsolicited. Their critique is harsh and often leaves others feeling worse. This is a way of gaining control for them; if you make someone feels inadequate and small, you have a better chance of getting them to comply with your demands, whatever these may be.

As you may have guessed, *control freak* is not the official psychological term for such individuals. Rather, this is a term that is used in informal circles to describe anyone who has an obsessive desire to get others to comply or to have control over others. While this unnatural need for control is motivated by the need for manipulative power over others, there are several root causes for this kind of behavior.

Control freaks often have personality disorders that cause them to behave as they do. A personality disorder is defined as a pattern of behavior that deviates from what is considered normal behavior. For this sort of behavior to be classified as a personality disorder (and not just a teenager having a bad day), it has to show up consistently, to the extent where it becomes deep-set in the individual's life and daily choices. Everyone has their bad days from time to time when they make questionable decisions; an individual with a personality disorder has a bad day every day. Often,

personality disorders are diagnosed by adolescence. In some people, it might take longer for a diagnosis to be arrived at.

There are three personality disorders that are likely to result in a person becoming obsessed with having control over others. These include antisocial personality disorder, histrionic personality disorder, and narcissistic personality disorder. Individuals with antisocial personality disorders often have an exaggerated sense of self-worth and very little empathy, if at all, for others. As such, they are often predisposed to controlling others without feeling any sort of mercy or sympathy. Sufferers of histrionic personality disorder, on the other hand, love attention. They will go to any lengths to gain attention from others. They must be in full control of the show even if it means lying about everything in their life to get this kind of attention. Getting attention is the means to and the outcome of the control they have over others. In short, attention is a song they can dance to forever.

Narcissists love control because they believe they are better than anyone else and that they are entitled to this control. There is simply no getting your way with a narcissist. If you are involved with a narcissist, be it at work or in a personal relationship, the only answer you will ever be allowed to utter is yes. Narcissists thrive on control because it feeds their unending desire to be the biggest deal in every room that they are in.

Their emotions are not authentic

Have you ever come across someone who seemed very kind and generous, but your instincts told you not to trust them? It's probably because your sixth sense could detect that all that kindness and generosity was not

authentic. While it is possible for the heart and mind to be fooled, the sixth sense is almost always able to pick out the lies from the truth.

Human predators know that there are certain emotions and behaviors that are beneficial in relationships. They know that kinder people are well-liked, and generosity is taken to mean that a person is good at heart. Predators will not care much for kindness but will go to great lengths to paint the required picture of perfection. They will show up to community gatherings with home-baked cookies. At charity events, they will have the biggest check. They will always have the brightest, and warmest smiles. On the surface, they will be the picture of neighborly friendliness and hospitality. That is why they always catch people unaware when they decide to unveil their other side--the one that is not as kind and not as generous.

When dealing with someone who goes to great lengths to prove that they are a really nice person, take with you a pinch of salt. Pay attention to what your gut says about this person. Your ears and eyes may deceive you, but that inner voice of reason will always have your back.

They like to be the victims

One of the best ways to deflect attention from your wrongdoings is to turn the spotlight onto another person's wrongdoings. Human predators have mastered the art of playing the victim. It allows them enough time to victimize another person while everyone else is distracted. A person that plays the victim will never apologize for anything they do. If they are late, it is because someone else sent the wrong meeting invitation. If they cheated, it is because their partner did not pay them enough attention. If they hit another person, it is because that person made them so mad that it drove them to violence. It is always one story or another.

The truth of the matter is that the predator is never the victim. They are often incapable of being the victim. After all, they have orchestrated their lives and those of others to suit their own interest. However, predators also know that people like to feel sorry for victims. As such, they will play the victim for as long as it suits them.

With this understanding of how predators look like, you might be wondering what steps you can take to protect yourself. First, it is important to acknowledge that this first chapter only touches the surface of dark psychology and the players therein. The subsequent chapters will dig deeper into peeling back the more intricate issues at play. At the end of this deep dive, you will have gained an even better understanding of how manipulators and other dark characters operate. This knowledge will help you to protect yourself and, if need be, turn the tables as appropriate. That being said, you can still protect yourself as early as now.

Basics of Defending Yourself Against Human Predators

The first thing you need to know is how to identify the props that the predator is using to disguise their real self from you. This could be faked kindness and generosity in the form of excessive gifts or forced affection. Beware of anyone who comes across as too perfect. A wise person once said that if the deal is too good, you should think twice. If a person comes across as flawless and perfect, it is probably because they are wearing a mask. Once this mask comes off, you will be in a whole lot of trouble.



Secondly, know yourself in and out so that another person will never be able to blindside you. Everyone has their vulnerable spots. If you are unaware of where your blind spots are, you will be open season for human predators. Predators are like sharks--one drop of blood and they are all over you like white on rice. Get to know where you bleed from and keep this knowledge hidden far away inside of you until you are one hundred percent certain that a person can be trusted with this information.

The third way to defend yourself against predators is by using time to your advantage. According to statistics released by the World Bank, the average life expectancy in the US in 2018 was 78 while in Canada this figure stood at 80. This means that if you live in either of these places, you have a very good chance of living past the age of seventy. So why is everyone in such a hurry? Unfortunately, we live in a world where everyone is in a hurry to go

somewhere or get something. In the midst of all this hurry are predators preying on those who are desperate to catch up. If you rush through things, you will look back and wonder at all the mistakes you made that you could have avoided. Use time to your advantage when it comes to getting to know someone, or when it comes to understanding an investment. Predators like to instill fear in their prey by making them think that they are running out of time. You are not running out of time. Time is on your side. Use it wisely. If you pause to reflect every time you are faced with a decision, you will find yourself making much better decisions, and avoiding numerous traps laid for you by the predators circling around you.

Chapter 2: A Deep Dive into the Dark Triad

In the field of psychology, there is a phenomenon referred to as the dark triad. The dark triad is a set of three personality traits, namely narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy. This set of three is referred to as dark because of the typically malignant behaviors associated with these traits. The stark contrast of the dark triad is the light triad, which in itself is a topic and discussion for another book. While the three traits represented on the dark triad are distinct on their own studies, it is shown that in reality they often overlap. What this means is that a person who scores highly on the dark triad test will likely have all of these traits present with blurred boundaries. For instance, it might be difficult to tell where narcissism stops, and psychopathy starts.

Discussions about the concept of the dark triad were initially started in 1998 by three psychology experts (names to be included) who argued that narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy occurred in an overlapping manner in normal samples. Later on, in 2002, two psychologists by the names of Paulhus and Williams would coin a name for this concept: the dark triad.

In trying to understand the personalities of the dark triad, discussions, and debates have often ensued regarding the role played by nature and nurture. To put it simply, behavioral scientists, psychologists, and researchers have been keen to understand whether dark triad persons are born or bred. Are we born evil and manipulative, or do we become so as a result of the things we are exposed to as we grow up? According to numerous researches conducted, it has been noted that the dark triad has a significant genetic

component to it. That is, some people are born with a predisposition to the dark triad traits. However, narcissism and psychopathy rank higher than Machiavellianism as far as heritability is concerned. That is, a psychopath parent is more likely to transfer the trait to their offspring when compared to a parent who ranks highly on the Machiavellianism scale.

In news that may not be very pleasant to anyone who is employed, the dark triadic traits have been shown to be well-represented in upper-level management. During the unpacking of the components of the dark triad in the sections below, it will become apparent why this representation may be so. After all, very few CEOs, if any, got to where they are by playing nice.

Unpacking the Dark Triad: Narcissism

In Greek mythology, a story is told of a young man called Narcissus. Narcissus was a hunter who was well-known for his striking good looks. Despite the adoration he received from his admirers, Narcissus did not have the time of day for them and even pushed some to take their own lives in order to prove their love. While there are different versions of Narcissus' story, all of them point to him being incredibly self-absorbed, which ultimately ended in him dying a death that was a punishment for his selfish way. Thanks to this young man's story, the term narcissism was first coined by Sigmund Freud. Freud, in his famous 1914 essay aptly titled *On Narcissism*.

In the simplest terms, narcissism is the excessive and obsessive self-admiration that a person has towards themselves and their physical appearance. A narcissist is often easy to spot because their actions and beliefs easily give them away. Wondering whether you have a narcissist in your life? Here's what to look out for:

Narcissists like to feel superior and are often entitled

Normal, healthy relationships involve a reasonable amount of give and take, be they work, personal or business relationships. Narcissists do not subscribe to this logic. They like to do all the taking while someone else does all the giving. They feel that they are owed the things that they demand, even when this is not the case. Narcissists are unrelenting in their pursuit to be always right and always at the center of attention. At the workplace, a narcissist will never take responsibility for anything that goes wrong in a team. Whenever an issue arises, the narcissist will deflect blame from themselves and place it on another party. After all, they believe themselves to be superior and incapable of wrongdoing. If you are dating a narcissist, they will try and make it all about themselves. You must eat where they want, do the things they want and place your life on hold to make them happy. They will have no problem doing all these things that normal people would frown upon because in their minds they are actually doing you a favor by dating you. If you come across these signs of extreme self-centeredness in an individual, you are likely to be dealing with a narcissist.

Narcissists are often type A perfectionists

For many people, flaws and imperfections are a normal part of life. If a party does not go exactly according to plan, most people have no problem kicking back and enjoying it all the same. Not so for narcissists. For a narcissist, if something is not perfect, then it does not count. Narcissists seek perfection in everything that they do because they believe they are perfect and therefore, deserving of only perfection. If you are dating a narcissist, they will demand perfection from you as far as how you dress, the way you talk, the kind of friends you keep, the neighborhood you live in

and just about anything. It will be an ever-ending conquest that you are most likely going to lose. Seeing that perfection is often so hard to come by in everyday life, narcissists often end up miserable and frustrated.

Narcissists have an unquenchable thirst for control

It is important always to be ready to take charge when called upon. This is a mark of all great leaders. In your own life, it helps to have a healthy sense of control over various aspects. After all, you cannot go through life drifting here and there with no sense of purpose or direction. For narcissists, however, the need for control is more visceral--they must be in control come what may. Remember their great need for perfection? Well, narcissists feel that they must be in control so that they can achieve this perfection. They simply cannot trust other 'lesser beings' to be in control because then they will mess everything up. A narcissistic partner will want to dictate what friends you can have, whether you should have a job or not, whether your friends can come over to your house or not and just about every detail of your life. At the beginning of a relationship with a narcissist, you might find you mistake this need for control for undying love and devotion. Later on, however, you will start to feel mistrusted and suffocated, and that will mark the beginning of the end. In the workplace, narcissists love to manage every aspect of their employees' work. A narcissistic supervisor will not give his juniors any room to breathe and will do everything possible to ensure that he is the one calling all the shots.

Narcissists have no sense of boundaries

Your boundaries are those guidelines that you have set to determine how your personal interactions will go about. Boundaries establish what is acceptable and not acceptable in your life. For many people, boundaries are second nature. For instance, most people will not take insults while lying

down. It is simply not acceptable for them to be disrespected this way. Normal people are able to acknowledge boundaries in their everyday life. Narcissists, on the other hand, have no time for such frivolities. A narcissist will have no problem intruding in your personal space because they believe they have a right to be there. They get a high from flouting social norms and rules because they believe these rules do not apply to them, and nobody can do anything about it since they are superior to everyone else anyway.

How Do Narcissists Control Others?

Now that you know how a narcissist looks like, you are probably wondering what the narcissist in your life is doing to control you. The traits of a narcissist discussed in the previous section seem pretty easy to notice. After all, how hard can it be to notice when someone is trying to control you? The answer is that it can be very hard, especially when this person disguises their actions as simply looking out for you. Most narcissists are usually very smart and are able to blend in your everyday life without calling attention to themselves. They may also be very talented and creative, and this will usually be the charm that draws you to them. When you are out there looking for a monster in the form of a narcissist, you might not be looking for that talented and super creative friend who always has a solution for everything. And yet, she might be the one narcissist in your life who is only concerned about winning regardless of who gets hurt along the way.

Besides making use of their aforementioned traits to the best of their abilities, narcissists are also very keen liars. In a bid to be the star of every show, narcissists easily master the skill of deceit in its various forms. Deception is the narcissist's way of throwing you off reality so that they remain in control. In any case, they also live in an altered reality where they

are perfect, and everyone else is their inferior. Deception is, therefore, also a way for them to loop you into this unending narrative where they are the main character.

Unpacking the Dark Triad: Machiavellianism

Niccolo Machiavelli, often referred to as the father of modern political science, was an Italian of the Renaissance period who wore many hats. Machiavelli was a politician, historian, humanist, poet, author, and diplomat, among others. In 1513, Machiavelli wrote his most famous book, *The Prince*. In this book, Machiavelli described and endorsed the use of unscrupulous means to gain and maintain political power. From this work and his endorsements arose the term Machiavellianism, which was used to refer to the type of political leaders and tactics that Machiavelli described in his book. This term was later borrowed by psychology experts to describe a personality trait that is characterized by lack of emotion and a desire to achieve at the expense of others be it through deceit, manipulation or flouting of common rules of decency and morality. In the simplest terms, a person who exhibits Machiavellianism is willing to do just about anything it if means winning. Machiavelli is the reason why the phrase *the end justifies the means* exists.

Since the adoption of the term Machiavellianism in psychology, much research has been undertaken to determine exactly what drives the individuals who score highly on the Machiavellianism test, otherwise known as high Machs. It has been found that high Machs tend to value power, money, and competition above everything else. High Machs place very low premium on things like community building, family, and even

love. The reverse is true for those who score low on the Machiavellianism scale, otherwise known as low Machs.

Characteristics of High Machs

High Machs are all around us. You probably know one or even work for one in your current workplace. High Machs are driven and often successful. They have worked hard and smart to be where they are, often stepping on others' toes unapologetically. If you know someone who is highly successful and seems to be feared by everyone around them, then you are likely dealing with a high Mach. So, what exactly distinguishes a person that scores highly on the Machiavellianism scale?

High Machs hate structure

Structure comes with rules, and high Machs hate rules. Ergo, high Machs hate structure as well. High Machs would rather be left alone to make their own rules as they go by. They abhor having to do something simply because someone else said so. Rules do not make sense to them, and the structure is imprisoning. High Machs, therefore, thrive in environments where they are boundless and free to be as creative as they want. As far as professions go, high Machs tend to prefer business environments while shunning any profession that involves helping other people. High Machs, for instance, makes very effective salesman by a count of the fact that they are willing to tell lies to sell a product if it earns them a commission. An individual who scores lowly on the Machiavellianism scale might feel guilty about selling hot air to a consumer. Not so for a high Mach. As long as the benefit of a fat bonus and commission is awaiting him, a high Mach will ensure that customer gives them their money in return for whatever

they are selling. In other words, the end will always justify the means for a high Mach.

High Machs are highly opportunistic

While other people go through life smelling the flowers and doing other cliché things that make normal people happy, high Machs look at life as a game where they must win. They think of life as a giant chess board where every move must get you closer to winning. As such, high Machs are highly opportunistic and will leap at every chance they can grab to get ahead. They have no concern for others on the chessboard because they believe that there can only be one king while the rest stay on as pawns to be used as instruments for the achievement of power and status.

High Machs are emotionally detached

High Machs have the uncanny ability to remain emotionally detached from every situation that they are in. They avoid commitments and will often make very frustrating relationship partners. For high Machs, emotions and feelings are just distractions that will keep them from achieving their goals. If you are married to a high Mach, you might find yourself very lonely when all family time is replaced with work commitments. To the high Mach, work must be done, so that power and money are achieved. It does not matter to them that they are neglecting their family. They simply must do what needs to be done. This, however, does not mean that every workaholic is a high Mach. However, more often than not, this is usually the case.

Because of their ability to detach their emotions from situations, high Machs are also prone to having numerous sexual encounters, often with people they are not well-acquainted with. There are two reasons for this. Oscar Wilde once said this: *everything in human life really is about sex,*

except sex. Sex is about power. Nobody relates to this better than a high Mach who has convinced yet another conquest to join him in bed. The second reason for the numerous sexual partners is the ability for emotional detachment, which allows a high Mach to jump from person to person without feeling any sort of commitment to anyone.

High Machs lack empathy

Empathy is defined as the ability to share the feelings of another. Seeing that high Machs are not emotionally attuned to people or situations, it goes without saying that they are not exactly in the best position to be empathetic. This lack of empathy also works to their benefit in that they can easily harm others to get ahead without blinking. After all, if you are incapable of feeling someone's pain, you really have no problem causing them the pain in the first place.

High Machs make good teammates but not good friends

When you are competing in a sport or in a debate, you want to get the teammate who will help you win the top prize. Because of their competitiveness and willingness to use any means to get ahead, high Machs make very good teammates in competitive scenarios. The same cannot be said for personal relationships. While many people will rush to team up with a high Mach, not too many will be willing to date them or be best friends with them. This is simply because they do not make very good friends. A high Mach will throw you under the bus at the drop of a hat even if you have been friends for years. Then again, high Machs do not really make friends--they simply collect pawns and instruments for later use.

High Machs are often mysterious

Since they believe they are playing a game, high Machs rarely put their hearts on their sleeves. They are hard to figure out and will often come across as aloof. Most people often have no problem mingling with others and sharing bits of information about themselves. A high Mach will find this frivolous and unnecessary. Thanks to their emotional detachment, they have a hard time bonding and sharing with others. Also, since they believe that life is a game to be played and won, they are fearful of divulging any information that may cause them to lose. As such, they would rather hold people at a distance than let them in. High Machs also prefer to be feared than loved and hence do not have much time for hand-holding and other niceties reserved for friendships.

Unpacking the Dark Triad: Psychopathy

Psychopathy is a personality trait that is characterized mainly by a lack of sensitivity towards others. Psychopaths hardly experience any empathy for others and will rarely feel any remorse even when they have hurt other people. There are numerous views in regard to psychopathy, but most of them seem to agree on the three main characteristics that distinguish a psychopath from any other normal person. These three characteristics include boldness, lack of inhibition, and meanness than any other person would find unbecoming.

Psychopaths are bold and fearless and are not afraid of venturing into unfamiliar territory even when there is potential danger awaiting them. While other people are typically stressed by such situations, psychopaths will go about these circumstances as if they are carrying out their everyday tasks. Psychopaths will often have high self-confidence and social assertiveness that enable them to go interact with people without any of the

shyness or anxiety that others might have. Often, when a gruesome crime is committed, you might hear of the details of the crime and shudder while thinking to yourself: how could a person live with himself after doing that? For a psychopath, it is business as usual to murder someone and then grab a sunny side up at their favorite cafe. This is not to mean that all psychopaths have murdered someone. Some psychopaths have rendered their lack of remorse and sensitivity to other crimes and transgressions instead.

Psychopaths exhibit poor impulse control in that they are unable to control their urges. When a normal person gets an urge of whatever kind, they are often able to put it under control and talk themselves out of that state. For example, if you are dealing with an annoying colleague who will just not shut up about their upcoming bridal shower, you will likely be able to fight the urge to punch them in their face. A psychopath, on the other hand, will often be overcome by impulse and react without thinking twice about what the cost of their decision will be. In simple terms, psychopaths are prone to snapping. Often when they snap, somebody gets hurt.

Common decency calls for a certain level of civility and kindness when dealing with others. This is not something that psychopaths care about. While the rest of the population worries about caring and kindness, a psychopath will have no problem being the meanest person in the room. They might be subtle or direct about it depending on the circumstances at hand.

Besides these three main areas of commonality in their personalities, psychopaths also tend to have other distinguishing characteristics:

They are risk takers

This is related to their boldness and lack of fear. While everyone else fears about their safety, psychopaths do not spend two seconds worrying about safety--theirs or anybody else's. This trait is an advantage if it is used for good purposes. On the flip side, taking huge risks can be costly, especially if the burden of the risk is borne by somebody else. It is no surprise, therefore, that psychopaths who have been nurtured in stable environments go on to become successful businessmen and politicians. After all, they are genetically predisposed to take all the big risks that will get them ahead in business and politics.

They are extremely charming

A psychopath will put on their best suit, wear their best smile on their face and tell you everything that you need to hear, and you'll never be able to guess that you heard it from a psychopath. Even though psychopaths are not able to feel or experience things the same way as everyone else, they are intelligent enough to know that people expect certain things to go a particular way. So, while your date may not really be falling in love with you after one dinner, they know that they are supposed to act as if they are. Psychopaths are great students of life in that they are able to mimic normal behavior, thus allowing themselves to go undetected for the longest time. Do not fall for the charm of a psychopath--it is fickle and comes at a high price.

They often lack long-term goals

There is nothing thrilling about long-term goals, at least as far as the psychopath is concerned. Psychopaths live for the adrenaline rush of the moment and not the ten-year wait for a goal to materialize. The perennial bad boy who refuses to grow up and will not commit to a meaningful

relationship could very well be a psychopath who simply cannot overcome his inherited genes.

The Dark Triad Test

The dark triad test is a measure of how one scores as far as the three personality traits of narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy. The test is often used in various settings and particularly in courts of law and by the police. Corporations also use the dark triad test to gauge their employees. The main reason why the dark triad test is applied is to determine an individual's personality traits and possibly predict their behavior for purposes of preventing unsavory habits. It has been noted that people who score highly on the dark triad test are more likely to cause trouble and social distress be it in the workplace or even in their places of residence. At the same time, these individuals are also likely to have an easy time attaining leadership positions and gaining sexual partners.

The dark triad test requires you to answer a set of questions on various topics including how you feel about yourself and others, whether you keep track of information that you could use to hurt others and your general perspectives about life, death, and social interactions, among others. When self-administered, the dark triad test can be a fun way to gauge how you score on the dark triad test. When administered by courts of law and the police, the dark triad test may not be very accurate as the respondent may intentionally alter their answers so that they can look better than they actually are. This is a key limitation of the dark triad test. If you are interested in taking the dark triad test, there are several sites online where you can complete a test in a manner of minutes. Be careful about taking the results of the test too personally--sometimes the answers you give are based

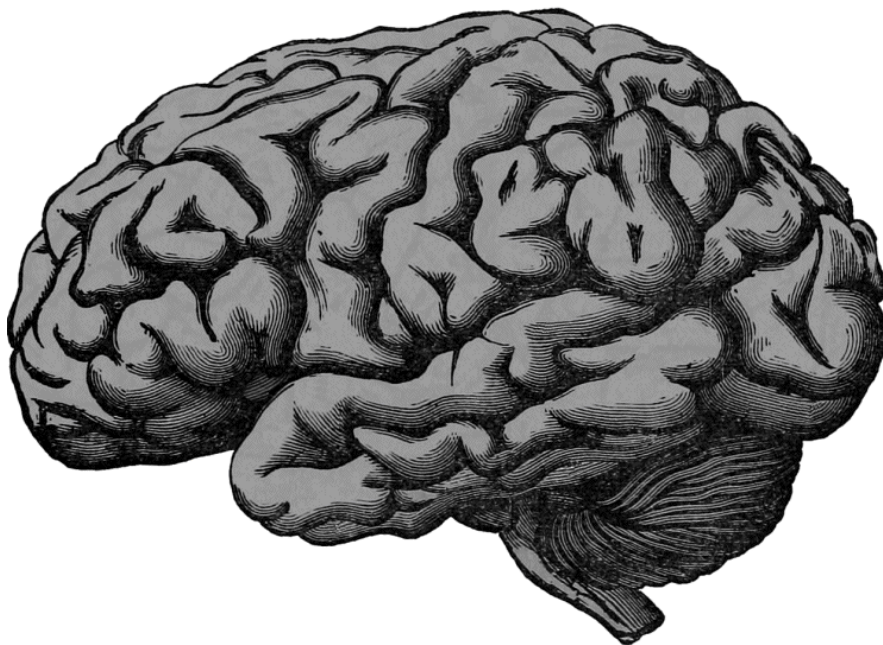
on the kind of day that you are having and not on the kind of person that you are. In any case, if you consider yourself a decent human being who always treat others with respect and has never and would never harm others, then you should not worry too much about what a test says about you. On the other hand, if you always seem to run into conflicts and arguments and have to constantly talk yourself out of harming others, then a high score on the dark triad test might be the explanation you have been waiting for all along.

Dealing with Dark Triad Personalities

They may not have taken the test and brought you the results, but you probably know a few dark triad personalities in your life. These are easy to spot. They are...

Chapter 3: The ABCs of Brainwashing

Brainwashing is perhaps one of the most intense forms of social influence in that it demands a whole lot of commitment from the brainwashed and the victim. Brainwashing, also referred to as mind control, thought reform or coercive persuasion, is not a technique that can be applied on a one-off basis with results. It requires consistent input from the manipulator up until the point where they are able to break down the victim to their desired results. More likely than not, you've heard someone described as brainwashed. You may even have used the term yourself to refer to someone who expressed opinions that seemed too brazen to be true, that is obviously not their own. While many people will often use this term loosely in everyday conversation, the full extent of this manipulation method is something that can only be understood after acknowledging all facts about it.



First things first: many manipulation methods, or social influence methods if you prefer, rely on particular approaches to achieve intended results. There is the approach of compliance where you make a subject do something without really caring about their underlying ideas or beliefs. Then there is the persuasion approach that seems to make someone do something by targeting their beliefs or attitudes. For instance, a manipulator might try to tell you that doing something will help you feel better or become more successful. In other words, they are trying to convince you to adopt a different attitude about yourself or your life. Lastly, there is an approach that is referred to as the propaganda method or education method if you like. This approach aims to get converts by showing them the error of their past ways and introducing them to better ways and beliefs. It's similar to walking up to someone and showing them that everything they have ever believed in up until that point has been a lie, while making them think that you are the sole bearer of the ultimate truth. The reason why brainwashing is so powerful and difficult to undo is that it combines all three approaches. It is often near impossible to convince anyone that has been brainwashed that they are actually brainwashed.

In the modern world, brainwashing is a daily affair. The media is a particularly nasty culprit as far as brainwashing goes. Since time immemorial (or at least since the invention of the newspaper and television), media houses have been in charge of disseminating information at their own discretion. The media decides which tone to set for various social, political, and economic topics across the board. Television shows, TV personalities, marketing departments, and glossy fashion magazines have time and again defined which beauty standards are acceptable and which ones are not. As a

result, a great segment of society is left feeling as if they are not beautiful or worthy enough because the media said so.

Politicians and religious leaders are two other significant culprits as far as brainwashing goes. Many politicians are self-serving and would do anything to get ahead in the world of politics. They have mastered the art of brainwashing masses of people to get behind them because the greater the number of brainwashed supporters they have, the further they are likely to advance. Brainwashed supporters also do not ask for much accountability from their leaders. It is thanks to brainwashing that a whole lot of political leaders have managed to mobilize their followers to commit senseless crimes that a sane person of normal thought and conscience would not commit.

Religious leaders who brainwash their followers, on the other hand, are keen to surround themselves with people who can be easily controlled and who believe in the same things as the leaders themselves. Think about it--if you were a self-serving pseudo-religious leader yourself, you'd want to have a subservient congregation that did as it was told. The last thing you'd want is an outspoken crowd of people who question each and every sermon that you give. This is something that many questionable religious leaders have made a note of, much to the detriment of their followers. Perhaps some of the starkest reminders of effects of brainwashing in the religious spheres are the multiple mass suicides that have occurred, as congregants seek to reach for the afterlife at the instruction of their religious leaders.

One such example is the mass suicide of the followers of Heaven's Gate religious group. Led by Marshall Applewhite, Heaven's Gate group believed that their deaths would help them get on a spaceship that would take them to the other world. This belief was brought on by years of brainwashing by a man who believed himself to be Christ's representative on Earth. Besides Heaven's Gate, there have been numerous other incidences where groups of

people have been convinced to take their lives because of one religious belief or another. Even when they are not convincing congregants to take their own lives, some religious leaders can brainwash their followers in other often harmful ways.

Perhaps one of the questions to come to mind when you hear of such events in history is this: how can a person be so gullible and trusting of another person to the extent that they follow them so blindly? The answer is simple: brainwashing strips you of your identity and makes you conform unquestioningly to the will of another. In fact, breaking down your victim's identity and making them question everything they ever knew about themselves is the very first step of brainwashing

The Ten Steps of Brainwashing

As earlier noted, brainwashing is not a one-day event. Often, it takes years of hard work to brainwash a person completely. It is no wonder then that some cult leaders will take years building a following before they finally make their mark in the world, albeit infamously. Though they may overlap from time to time, the steps of brainwashing are often distinct and can be broadly classified into three stages. The first stage includes all the steps that the predator uses to break down their victim; the second stage includes showing the victim that there is a chance at salvation, and lastly, the third stage includes leading the victim towards salvation, or at least their own definition of salvation.

First Stage: Breaking Down the Target

Step 1: Assault on identity

In order for a predator to break down their target, they must first target that which makes the target what they are: their identity or ego. Every human being has an image of themselves in their mind, which is what they believe themselves to be. This is how they identify. You can have multiple identities. You could be a career woman and a mother. You could be an astute businessman and a father. You could be a struggling college student. You could be a Christian. There are endless identities that you can choose from. This identity is your answer to the statement *tell me a little about yourself*.

Take a moment and think about your identity as a person. What/who are you?

Suppose you woke up one day and someone told you that you are not what/who you think you are. How would you handle hearing that? If this is something that was mentioned in passing, you'd probably brush it off and move on with your life. Or perhaps you'd think about it for a couple of minutes or hours, and maybe get upset for a while, but eventually move on. Now suppose someone came to your house every minute of every day to tell you that you are not the person you believe yourself to be. How would that make you feel? If this persisted over weeks or even months, you'd probably be out of your mind at the end of it all. You'd be disoriented and left wondering where to draw the line between reality and fiction.

If you had previously thought of yourself as a good writer, you'd start doubting it. If you believed yourself to be the biological father of your children, you might start questioning it. If you grew up thinking you were a good Christian, hearing contradicting reports on a daily basis would make you start to believe that perhaps you are not.

The first step of the brainwashing process is where all the dirty work begins to take root. A person who has had the ugly seed of doubt planted in them is

vulnerable to manipulation. As human beings, we like to believe the best of ourselves. Moreover, we like to have other people believe the best about us. Yes, there are people who do not care for the validation and approval of others. This is admirable and should be something we all work towards. But at the end of the day, the person who goes to bed believing they are the worst of the worst (thanks to other people's feedback) sleeps more restlessly. Of course, having high self-esteem and a solid sense of self protects you from the predators looking to prey on you, but that is a topic for another chapter.

The outcome of the first step of brainwashing is a full-blown identity crisis that the predator can prey on for the purposes of the second step.

Step 2: Guilt-tripping

Guilt may be a useless emotion, as it has been called, but it is also a very powerful emotion. Guilt can make you promise things that are out of your scope as a person. Guilt will have you staying up at night wondering why you are such a horrible human being when in fact you are not. The power of guilt is constantly being harnessed by the human predators around us.

The second stage of brainwashing works this way: the brainwasher has already convinced their victim that they are not what they have always thought themselves to be. The victim is hence in a state of confusion as they seek to answer the identity question for themselves. That is, if they are not a good person, then who are they? At this point, the predator swoops in and starts taking them for all the guilt trip of their life. When you are unsure of who you are, it can be very easy to believe every lie that you are fed about yourself. A brainwasher will make statements that convince their victim that they are essentially a bad person, regardless of the context that this adjective is used.

For instance, a brainwasher might try to convince a young mom that they are a bad person and a bad mother because they have agreed to vaccinate their kids or prefer the bottle to the breast. A predator will take every opportunity to remind the victim that they lack in a specific field or in all fields of their lives and that the only way to redemption is to listen to and accept what the predator has to offer. The predator is merciless in their attack on the victim because the end goal is to break down the victim to the point where they are helpless and completely free of their authentic self-image and identity.

Steps 3 and 4: Self-betrayal and breaking point

Most people are fiercely loyal to themselves. They will defend themselves and their actions and fight to have their voices heard. Even those people who are unable to stand up for others are often able to stand up for themselves. A brainwashed person is the complete opposite. After constantly being bombarded with messages of being the opposite of what they have believed themselves to be, brainwashed persons have no problem denouncing themselves and everything else attached to them. These include their relatives, friends, belief system, and any other associations that they might have that connect them to their old identity which the brainwasher has 'evaluated' and found 'severely lacking.'

There are certain reasons why a brainwashed person easily finds themselves in this step and unable to fight back. For starters, they have already gone through the first two steps and come out feeling disoriented and drowning in doubt and guilt. More often than not, they do not have the energy to fight back. Keep in mind that sometimes there is the risk of physical harm if compliance is not achieved, so the target might be too afraid to contradict all the messages that they receive from the predator. At the same time, guilty people have a way of wanting to make up for their sins. For some people,

especially those who have been broken down through brainwashing, making up involves cutting ties with everything connected to their 'sinful' past.

Unfortunately, what often happens is that the victim is often left in an even worse place after they have disowned their friends, relative, and belief system. The shame and guilt they felt before increases. After all, they are now a traitor, and the fact that they could not be loyal to their circle is proof enough that they are as bad a person as the predator surmised. It is quite easy to see that brainwashing is psychological warfare that aims at tearing down a person to the point where they are unable to think coherently and independently. It is all-consuming and exhausting, and victims often have a really difficult time extricating themselves from the jaws of their predators, especially if they make it through the other stages of the brainwashing process.

Second Stage: Dangling the Carrot of Salvation

Step 5: The Olive Branch

After the first three steps of brainwashing described above, a brainwashing victim is often feeling so terrible about themselves that they are looking to redeem themselves at whatever cost. The victim is often in a poor mental state and suffering from a low self-image. They have lost their former sense of identity and will clutch at any straws that are offered for the sake of feeling something again. It is likely that a target will undergo a nervous breakdown at this point, and this becomes the predator's cue to swoop in and offer salvation.

After breaking down their target for a sustained period of time, the manipulator will often extend an olive branch so that the target can fall into the trap of believing that there is some light at the end of the tunnel. At this

point, an olive branch might be anything from a kind word to a gift or maybe even some form of physical affection. This olive branch serves to show the target that there is some leniency to benefit from if they are on the manipulator's good side. After all, the manipulator is a 'good person' who wants the best for them. At least that is what they have heard since the brainwashing began.

Step 6: Compulsion to confess

Consider this: you have been subjected to intense psychological torture from an individual for a period of time. You have lost your sense of identity and are feeling confused and unworthy. You are nearing a nervous breakdown or have already undergone one and cannot make head or tails of any aspect of your life. You have been living in isolation after denouncing your social circle and cannot remember the last time you had a proper meal. Then this individual shows up at your doorstep one day carrying a steaming pot of coffee and freshly made muffins. They say they just want to talk. You let them into your home. You cannot believe it. This is the only kindness you have received in the longest time. What do you think will be your reaction to this unexpected kindness from your former abuser?

More often than not, you will feel a sense of indebtedness. Human beings like to reciprocate kindness for kindness. When someone does something nice for you, it is human to want to do something nice in return. For a brainwashed person, the need to pay back is even greater because they feel that they must also pay for everything that they are wrong about (at least as per the gospel of the brainwasher). As such, the brainwashed party will be more than eager to offer back some form of kindness. In their tortured minds, this kindness will often be in the form of a confession. Typically, the predator will offer the option of a confession as a way of getting paid back.

Step 7: Guilt channeling

After weeks and months of being told that they are wrong about everything, a brainwashed victim is often riddled with so much overwhelming guilt that they really have no room for any other emotion. The target has been bombarded with so much psychological torture from the predator that they are not even sure what they feel most guilty about. The victim just knows that they are guilty of something. In this confusion, the manipulator swoops in and convinces them that the guilt is because of all the wrong things that they have previously believed in. In other words, the predator channels the guilt to the belief system. The victim now starts to associate the guilt and the burden of dealing with the guilt with their belief system. The predator is, in essence, making their victim learn to associate all the bad feelings with their past, while at the same time making them believe that there is the chance of being redeemed and feeling better if they choose alternative beliefs.

Step 8: Release of guilt

At this point, the victim is feeling a little bit relieved to realize that he is not inherently wrong; rather, it is his beliefs that are wrong. By dissociating himself with his beliefs, he can be right again. He releases his guilt by giving up everything and anything that is tied to his wrong beliefs, including those closest to him. He confesses the errors of his past ways and is ready to take up the new belief system that is offered by the brainwasher.

Third Stage: The Rebuilding of the Brainwashed Self

Step 9: Progress and harmony

At this point in the brainwashing process, the target is eager to redeem themselves and look good in the eyes of the brainwashed. As such, they will begin to rebuild a new identity that is based on the belief system offered by

the manipulator. After going through the suffering and torture of the earlier stages of brainwashing, the victim is convinced that their old belief system will only bring them pain and guilt. They are happy to be rid of the old self and replace it with a new self, which is their safe haven from all their past and present suffering.

Step 10: Final confession and rebirth

After accepting the new belief system, the victim often feels a sense of relief to be done with their past and all associated suffering. They will cling onto their new identity like the proverbial last raft on a sinking ship because this is the only peace they have known in a long time. At this point, the brainwasher has successfully managed to gain a convert, and might even hold a ceremony to welcome the new convert into the sacred inner circle. It is common for most victims to be completely isolated from their families at this point. They will have gotten it in their minds that they are now different people who must not associate with the bad things of their past. It is typically near impossible to convince a brainwashed relative who has gone through these ten steps that they have been brainwashed. The damage that has been done at this point is so immense that a do-over is an uphill climb. Professional help may be sought to save a loved one who is brainwashed, but it is never a guarantee of success.

A simple way to describe how the brainwashing process works are as shown in the table below:

Steps of Brainwashing	Message to the Target	Intended Outcome
Step 1	You are not who you say you are	Self-doubt
Step 2	You are a bad person	Guilt
Step 3	You need to agree with me that you are bad	Intimidation and guilt

Step 4	You are completely unaware of what you are	Confusion and disorientation
Step 5	I can save you	Loyalty to brainwasher
Step 6	You can save yourself	Compliance
Step 7	This is why you are suffering	Blaming the belief system
Step 8	It's not you; it's what you believe in	Exoneration
Step 9	If you want to feel better and be better, choose well	Indoctrination
Step 10	You are now good	Acceptance and relief

Fig 1: Table illustrating the ten steps involved of brainwashing (Source: Robert Jay Lifton)

The ten steps of brainwashing are credited to Robert Jay Lifton, an American psychiatrist, and pioneer of thought reform studies. Lifton interviewed prisoners of war and wrote about the psychological effects of the experiences they had undergone.

What Makes a Person Susceptible to Brainwashing?

What makes one person more vulnerable to brainwashing than the next person? Have you ever wondered why some people seem to be recruited into radical cults more easily than others? There are reasons for this.

There are some people who through one reason or another have a weak sense of identity. A person is not born with an identity; self-identity is something that develops over time as a baby grows through childhood and into adulthood. Self-identity is molded by the associations that a person has, the

things they do, and even the choices they make. If a person is unable to define who they are convincingly, they are at a greater risk of falling prey to brainwashing. This is because they do not have an identity to protect themselves in the first place. A strong, solid sense of identity makes it harder for a brainwasher to tear you down. For instance, if you strongly believe that you are a strong, confident, capable and caring person who is a believer and a good sister and mother, it is almost impossible for someone else to convince you otherwise. But a struggling teenager who thinks of himself as a loser will easily believe the misinformation that the brainwasher feeds him. After all, he already has an extremely poor perception of himself and is most likely looking for a way out of his self-imposed psychological jail.

Another factor that makes an individual more susceptible to brainwashing is the absence of a support system. You can never overrate the significant role played by a community of supportive friends and family who rally around you in times of trouble. Unfortunately for some people, this support system is absent. In the absence of a strong circle of people looking out for you, a predator may swoop in and give you the community that you so crave for. Brainwashers understand the importance of a support system; this is why they will go to great lengths to isolate their prey from the people who care about them. It is indeed true that there is strength in numbers, and this sort of strength is exactly what a brainwashing agent does not want their target to have.

Some people do not seem to have the skills that are required to go through life successfully. As a child, you are wholly dependent on your parents or guardians to keep you alive, at least to the best extent of their ability. As you grow older, you are required to venture out on your own and make the best of your life, to the best of your ability. Certain skills come in handy when you are on this journey to self-actualization. These skills include knowing

how to handle decision-making, how to make money so that you can pay your way through the basic needs at least, proper care of your body, maintaining a positive attitude, and even building a good, beneficial relationships. Some people, sometimes through no fault of their own, making it to adulthood without the necessary survival skills. When this happens, they look to others for survival. A person who does not know their way through life will follow the first person who seems to know the way. Look at it this way: if you were drowning in the deep end of the pool you would not care who threw in the life jacket; you'd take it and be forever grateful to this person. This sort of indebtedness and feeling of being rescued is what some brainwashed people experience when they finally get the 'life jacket.' What they do not know is that what seems like a life jacket is actually a trap to keep them floating in waters riddled with falsehoods.

The type of family set up that one is exposed to may also make one more vulnerable to brainwashing. This could be argued in two ways. First, a child that is neglected will often gravitate towards the first person that shows interest in them. After all, they are used to getting scraps and will do anything for a full meal, so to speak. Secondly, if a child grows up in a family that is eccentric in their beliefs and behaviors that a child is at a high risk of being brainwashed. After all, they have grown up experiencing things that are outside of the norm--what is one more thing?

Persons who are living in difficult socioeconomic conditions are also at high risk for brainwashing. A person that can barely afford a meal a day is often not in the best frame of mind to choose well for themselves. On top of this, the promise of a better life may be used to entice them into a belief system of the brainwasher's choice. Some extremist groups, for instance, have been known to recruit youths from economically disadvantaged backgrounds with the promise of economic rewards and recognition. For a young person who

is used to being invisible economically and otherwise such a reward is worth all the misinformation that they may be subjected to, albeit unknowingly.

Protecting Yourself Against Brainwashers

Predators who are looking to control your mind walk the same streets that you do and probably live on your block as well. While some attempts at brainwashing may be apparent and easy to detect, others are more subtle. As such, it is possible to be sucked into the process while unaware. The important thing is to remain alert to any signs of abuse and manipulation and always to second-guess everything that you hear. In short, go through life with the proverbial pinch of salt to season all the information that is shared with you. Besides having a healthy dose of skepticism, there are other ways that you can protect yourself.

Remain aware of your vulnerabilities

However smart you may think yourself to be, always remember that the mind is prone to making mistakes in the way it processes things. Once in a while, your mind might get sloppy and make you vulnerable to being controlled by external forces. Remember also to watch out for the people who matter in your life who are especially vulnerable on the basis of how their minds work. The elderly and the very young for instance are ripe candidates for brainwashing thanks to the naivete brought on by inexperience and being out of touch with modern brainwashing scams.

Watch out for spun tales

A person can dress up truth to the extent where it becomes a blatant lie. The media is particularly guilty of this. There is a wise person that said that news is when a man bites a dog and not when a dog bites a man. In a bid to show

that the man bit the dog, news outlets are always looking to sensationalize what they report. A media company might carry out a quick poll of ten men living in Indiana and then report it as a survey of American men in the Midwest. Hardly a representative sample, but it packs a greater punch this way. Always be aware of the element of exaggeration and whenever possible, ask for sources to be cited for every claim that you come across in the media.

Don't believe the hype

Have you ever noticed that the things that receive the most hype are often overrated? Many marketing gurus have mastered the art of passing off their products and services as the best in the market when, in fact, they are not. Before you believe all the hype created about a person or product take a moment to consider why the said entity requires so much advertisement if they are as good as they claim to be. A thing of value does not require announcing because people will naturally flock to it.

Today's world is particularly invested in the hype, especially since it has become so much easier to disseminate information, false and otherwise. A person just needs to write an article or create a video that will 'go viral.' Before you know it, there is an individual at the other end of the world that believes that a certain individual or product is the solution to all their problems.

Be wary of groupthink

In the simplest terms, groupthink is the uncanny ability of otherwise intelligent people to make stupid decisions just for the sake of consensus. Groupthink is a trapdoor for the people who do not like standing out in crowds or being the dissenting voice. Brainwashers are particularly happy about the existence of groupthink because more often than not, they do not

like their targets to question them. Groupthink is the reason why hundreds of followers of a questionable religious figure will make decisions that do not seem normal to everyone else. Whenever you find yourself in a room with others where a decision needs to be made, do not be afraid to be the voice of reason that the room so desperately needs. You just might save yourself and a couple of others from being brainwashed.

Choose timelessness over trends

What phone do you have? What happened to the last phone that you had--did it outlive its usefulness, or did you buy because you felt you had to upgrade? Do you buy things when you need them or because you feel pressured to have them? Depending on how you have answered these questions, you might start to see a habit in your choices: you are either the practical type that buys for functionality or the trend junkie that has to get every new version of the iPhone whenever it is unveiled. There's nothing wrong with owning the sleekest new model of anything, but you have a big problem on your hands if you have been brainwashed into believing that you must have the newest of everything.

You can protect yourself from further descent down the slope by always choosing timelessness over trends. More often than not, most upgrades are not even upgrades. A manufacturer might claim that something is new and improved when in fact they only just changed the packaging. Such a manufacturer is only preying on your desire for shiny new objects. You cannot blame the manufacturer--that's how they stay in business. You can only make sure that you do not fall for their tricks.

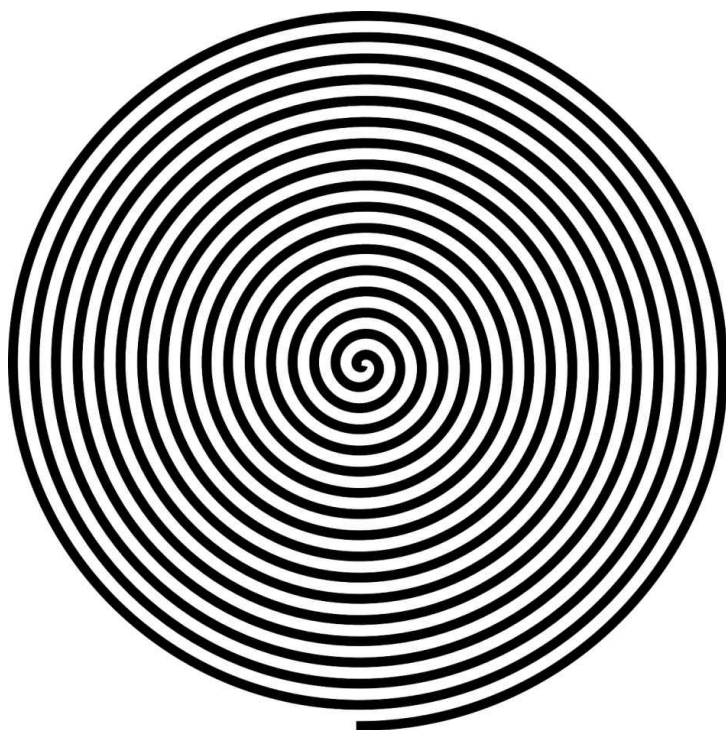
Pay attention to your gut feeling

Whether you prefer to call it *intuition* or *a hunch*, your gut feeling is something that you should acknowledge as you go about your daily life.

Many people have saved themselves a whole lot of trouble and pain by listening to that nagging inner voice that so many love to ignore. Your unconscious mind can quickly pick up danger before your conscious mind does. If someone is selling you an idea that does not feel right, listen to your gut feeling. Your unconscious mind has already picked up signals that do not sit right and is sending you red flags for your own preservation.

Chapter 4: The Truth about Hypnosis

What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear of the term hypnosis? For many people, the answer is this: a Hollywood film with a terribly executed scene complete with a hypnotist and his mythical swinging watch. Across the hypnotist is the poor individual that is about to be sent to some place in their mind that they have yet to visit in over twenty years. The truth is that in the real world, hypnosis is less dramatic. In the simplest terms, hypnosis is a form of manipulation that involves reducing a person's awareness of their external surroundings and heightening their inward attention. When an individual is under hypnosis, they respond to suggestions more favorably because their critical thinking is impaired. This is why the movies will show a subject responding unquestioningly to commands from a hypnotist.



There is some science behind hypnosis, and it involves understanding how the human mind works. The human brain is structured in such a way that there is the conscious mind that controls critical thinking and the subconscious mind where memories are stored. The critical mind is what tells you that crossing a busy road without looking is dangerous and stupid; while the subconscious mind is likely to tell you that losing weight is difficult because the memories of the last time you (unsuccessfully) tried losing weight are stored therein. Hypnosis works by altering the subconscious thoughts you have about certain things and replacing them with better and more beneficial thoughts.

Busting the Myths about Hypnosis and Manipulation

It seems almost impossible to imagine that hypnosis is in use in our everyday lives, but the truth of the matter is that it is. You may not have any swinging watches thrust in your face, and your eyes might be open all the time during your waking time, but you are most definitely being hypnotized as you go about your daily life. How so?

When is the last time you read a really engrossing book that made you lose track of what was happening around you? While you were in that state of being fully absorbed in your book, you were essentially hypnotized. The high chances are that you were not even remotely aware of other people walking past you and going about their lives. Rather, you were on a train somewhere riding along with the thoughts and actions of the book's main character. This is hypnosis in real life. No hypnotists and no watches-just you and your subconscious mind taking a trip to an alternate universe.

Self-induced hypnosis is also common in children who often slip into this state at least several times in a day. This is why you'll call out to your child while they are watching their favorite cartoon series without any response. They are not deliberately ignoring you. They simply cannot hear you because they have tuned out the conscious mind and world and are existing in a different world where they are fully attuned to the subconscious. Artists and athletes who need focused attention to perform excellently in their sport or art often also go into hypnotic trances during their performances. Many will refer to this trance as being 'in the zone.' What often happens is that the artist's mind is so focused on what they are doing that nothing else matters during this period. Writers also get in the zone as far as the writing process is concerned. When this happens, you might find the writer transported into the world that they have woven with their words. Unable or unwilling to leave this world, the writer will churn thousands of words per

day when they have previously been unable to go beyond a few hundred words thanks to writer's block.

When it comes to manipulation and mind control, certain groups and individuals have mastered effective ways of utilizing hypnosis to their advantage. For instance, making a lengthy speech and holding a long and seemingly never-ending seminar both have the effect of sending the audience into a trance-like state. This may be because of boredom or tiredness or a combination of both. When an audience is in this state, they are more agreeable and likely to sign up for whatever it is that you are offering. This is something that many cult leaders have mastered and would explain why many cult meetings are often long and dreary. You will rarely find that a cult meeting has ended in a few minutes. If you conclude a meeting in fifteen minutes, the attendants' minds will still be sharp and questioning. But if you go on and on for hours, they begin to slip out of consciousness unknowingly and will not be as opposed to your suggestions as they would have been in the first fifteen minutes.

Another tactic that is used to achieve hypnosis is the presentation of contradicting information as if it is not contradicting but totally logical. What does this mean? As mentioned earlier in this chapter, there is a part of your brain that thinks critically. This part of the brain is what keeps you alive and out of trouble by helping you process important information. When this part of the brain is bombarded with contradictory information without being given sufficient time to process it, it shuts down. (That is why it is always so important to step back and process information especially when you feel as if you are being rushed to make a decision in any situation). When your critical thinking has been bypassed, you are likely to accept any suggestions given to you even though these would not be

accepted by a normal-thinking person who is in tune with the logical parts of their mind.

How to Hypnotize Someone Without Them Knowing

In everyday life, you can use hypnosis to get what you want out of people without them suspecting what you are up to. A good thing about hypnosis as a tool of manipulation is that it is subtle and leaves behind no evidence. Unlike lying where you might get caught up in your lies, hypnosis leaves no traces behind. Nobody will walk up to you and accuse you of hypnotizing them into doing something. In the worst-case scenario, you are only going to be accused of having a way with something.

That Jake, he has a way with the ladies, they will say.

What they don't know is that you have mastered the art of hypnotizing ladies into doing exactly as you say.

The first step to successfully hypnotizing a person is to form a connection with them. Very rarely will you be able to hypnotize a stranger with whom you share no bond at all. Forming a connection with a person is relatively easy. You just need to watch your body language and theirs as well, and their facial expressions and respond appropriately. The whole point of establishing a connection is to ensure that the other person is open to you and will respond favorably to your subtle mind control, otherwise known as hypnosis. After making certain of the existence of some rapport between you and your subject, make use of any of the following tips to hypnotize them:

Tip #1: Throw them off the familiar

The human mind loves patterns. They are easy to interpret, predictable, and comforting. Patterns are a big component of the comfort zone and do not require a whole lot of critical thinking. What are the patterns you have established in your life, and how do they help you? For many people, patterns simplify life. Let's consider a simple pattern that can be interrupted with the intention of hypnotizing a person. Let's say you and your spouse have a way of saying goodbye every morning before work that involves a quick hug and a kiss on the cheek. One morning, you are feeling particularly philanthropic and decide to replace your pattern with a tight lingering hug and a full kiss on the lips. Your spouse's mind will be thrown into disarray because that is not what the mind is used to. In the five seconds of confusion that will ensue in your spouse's mind, you will have a narrow window for a hypnotic command.

Can you make lasagna today?

Sure, your spouse responds instantly.

On any other day, they would have sat back and considered the work involved in making lasagna and probably suggested an alternative. On the day that you throw them off your pattern, they will say yes without thinking too much because you have essentially short-circuited their conscious mind.

Tip #2: Make use of the Zeigarnik effect

In psychology, the Zeigarnik effect is the concept that people are more likely to remember incomplete tasks than those which have been completed. Think about it: if you intend to do your laundry, you are likely to have this thought lingering in your mind until you actually wash all your dirty clothes and put them away. Soon after completing your laundry duties, you will no

longer have any interest in remembering anything to do with laundry. The Zeigarnik effect was named so after a Russian psychologist who investigated the phenomenon after being inspired by her professor. The professor, one Kurt Lewin, made the observation that a waiter was able to remember more accurately the orders that were still unpaid.

In everyday life, the Zeigarnik effect is used in many scenarios. Soap operas and television series, in particular, are keen to leave their audience wanting more by ensuring that each episode ends with a cliffhanger. When the episode ends anticlimactically, your brain stores this in your short-term memory as an incomplete task. This is why you keep going back to your favorite soap opera because your mind tells you to finish what you started. As long as the incompleteness is lingering somewhere in your brain, your attention will be drawn there.

To hypnotize someone using the Zeigarnik effect, consider telling an exciting story complete with pauses in between during which you give them hypnotic commands. This might look something like this:

You will not believe what happened last weekend when I decided to go hiking with my friends. We were walking up this rather lonely trail when all of a sudden we [could you please shut the door for me] hear these strange noises coming from the woods. They sounded like a cross between a coyote and a bear, and they were getting louder and louder the further we got up the trail. At this point, of course, we are getting very concerned but [could you also file these documents for me] we knew that there was no turning back. We were four of us, and we were prepared to fight whatever it was...

During this storytelling, you can ask your conversation partner to do pretty much anything that you want without much objection. This is because their mind is focused on the story that you are telling, and their brain is yearning

for the completion. While they are in this trance-like state, they are your putty to work with.

Tip #3: Stay ambiguous

Ambiguity keeps your audience guessing. If you want to linger in the minds of people you interact with long after the conversation has ended, you must strike a balance between being memorable and staying ambiguous. Ambiguity keeps the mind wondering: what exactly did he mean when he said this or that? As long as their mind is wondering, you are in control of the other person. Ambiguity and vagueness confuse the conscious mind. There are things that cannot be processed by the conscious mind, and the mystery of ambiguity is one of them.

In the world of dating and relationships, ambiguity can serve a particularly important role in convincing others to go out with or date you. Many relationship experts will concur that a little mystery serves a long way as far as keeping things exciting. What most is not explain is why. The reason why mystery is so exciting is that as long as you have not been fully processed and understood by a person's conscious mind, you will always linger in their mind. You can hypnotize your partner or lover into doing whatever you want them to do by always ensuring that you are ambiguous and mysterious about one or two things.

Tip #4: Negative words have more impact

It is often believed that the subconscious mind cannot hear negatives. Instead, any negatives communicated to the subconscious mind are interpreted as positives. For example, if you were to tell someone, *do not go peeking into my room when I am away*, that person is likely to interpret this subconsciously as, *do go peeking into my room when I am away*. This is

probably the reason why there are so many exasperated parents of kids who seem to do the exact opposite of what they are told not to do.

As such, if you are looking to get someone to do something without being too direct about it, you can hypnotize their subconscious mind by using negative wording. Instead of telling your friend:

Please come over and help me pack up for my upcoming relocation.

Consider this:

You do not need to come over to help me pack.

Throughout the course of their day, your friend's subconscious brain will be telling her that she needs to help you pack for your move because that is how the mind interpreted your statement. Of course, whether your friend actually comes over or not is a question of how much premium she places on your friendship.

Tip #5: Effective keywords

Have you noticed how sales copy or advertisements often have this descriptive wording that gets you imagining all the possibilities presented by a particular product or service? Certain words hold a particular charm when it comes to hypnotizing people. For instance, when you tell a person to imagine something, you are already sending them into a hypnotic trance where they are attuned to their subconscious mind. When they are in this state, they are more suggestible and will likely do what you ask of them. If you do not believe this, go and look up any travel destination advert and have a listen. At the end of it, you will likely be thinking of booking your next vacation to that destination.

As long as the subconscious mind is imagining something, then it is getting programmed by that particular thing. This explains why some people are

fearful of the dark--they have imagined the dark to contain bad things, and as long as that imagination is active, the fear remains real and present. It also explains why many people are afraid of horror movies. Think about it--there is nothing scary about horror movies. They are just a bunch of normal people acting out fake scenes, so why do you feel so afraid? Because your mind has *imagined* everything to be real, that's why.

Protecting Yourself Against Hypnosis

The occasional self-hypnosis in the form of a captivating book or movie is always welcome. Once in a while, it helps to escape the harsh reality of everyday life. What might not be so welcome, however, is the hypnosis brought on by other sources that you are not too comfortable with. How do you protect yourself against the hypnosis that exists in your daily life? For a start, it is important to acknowledge that you really might not be able to escape all the hypnosis that is present in your life. It would be too big of a war to fight. That being said, there are certain battles that you can win as far as hypnosis goes.

One of the things that will help you to protect yourself against hypnosis is to live by principle. Living by principle does not mean being stuck-up or unrelenting when you should be flexible. It simply means knowing what you will accept and what you would rather forego, instead of simply going with the flow. If you are the sort of person that goes with the flow in the name of being easygoing, you might find that you have drifted too far from the safe shore. Manipulators who prey on others through hypnosis know to attack those who are not safely anchored onto something unshakeable. If you are the kind of person who upon being told to imagine how easier your

life will be with product X rushes to buy product X unquestioningly, you will find yourself with a whole lot of clutter in your life. Having one or two principles about certain aspects of your life helps you to make more conscious decisions that are not influenced by the actions or words of other people.

There's a wise person that once said that if you go looking for something you will find it. The reason why so many people are hypnotized in their daily lives is because they are not even looking for hypnosis so they cannot really spot it. As long as you are aware of the fact that hypnosis exists, you will be able to notice it from a mile off and guard yourself consciously against it. You will notice it when your friend tries to get you to agree to something that you would ordinarily not agree to, and you will notice it when your cunning colleague is trying to get a favor from you. Staying conscious of the fact that there are people out there who are trying their best to take advantage of you will go a long way in protecting yourself against mind control.

A good thing about life is the free will that is gifted to every human being living in the civilized world. Free will means that you get to choose what you allow into your life and what does not get to make it through the gate. In today's world, there are numerous channels that are utilized to influence you. Television, movies, films, the Internet, books, magazines, radio shows, the music...the list is endless. You are at liberty to choose what you allow in your life because you can be certain that most of these channels are being used to put you in a certain state of mind that is advantageous to the channel owners. In short, you get to decide what gets filtered out of your life. Choose wisely.

What about Hypnotherapy?

Sometimes, hypnosis is used as a form of treatment for various conditions. When hypnosis is used this way, it is referred to as hypnotherapy. Hypnotherapy is essentially mind control where the person being controlled has given their consent for the same to a clinical psychologist. As with most alternative forms of treatment, there are divergent views on the efficacy of hypnotherapy. The fact that there is very limited research on the same does not do the case for hypnotherapy any good.

Hypnosis as a form of treatment is used to help patients break bad habits such as bad eating habits, and also in the treatment of addiction, eating disorders, and even insomnia. Hypnosis is also used in childbirth where pregnant women are advised to self-hypnotize so that they can prepare themselves mentally for almost painless childbirth. This is referred to as hypnobirthing and essentially involves the programming of the subconscious mind for pain-free labor.

Chapter 5: The Art of Persuasion and Deception

Merriam-Webster defines persuasion as the *ability to persuade* while persuade is further defined as to *move by argument, entreaty, or exhortation to a belief, position, or course of action*. In fewer words, to persuade someone is to convince someone to do something. Persuasion is an art form that must be mastered by anyone who wants to get people to do something. It is an incredible tool to have, especially if you are constantly surrounded by people who need a little prodding every now and then.



Deception, on the other hand, is defined as the act of causing someone to believe that something that is false or invalid is, in fact, true and valid. Deception is a form of manipulation on its own and also a tool through which you can achieve your persuasion goals. This is probably where things get blurry as far as persuasion goes. For the longest time, there have been debates regarding the thin line between manipulation and persuasion. There are camps that are completely convinced of the malevolence of persuasion, while others believe that persuasion is a totally harmless way of getting what you want from people. The topic of manipulation in itself is a grey area for a lot of people. Morality is subjective depending on the metrics put in place by different societies and cultures. The question of whether manipulation is right or wrong is one that should be answered individually.

That being said, there exist some technical differences between persuasion and manipulation. Manipulation often has a clear self-interest while persuasion may be undertaken for the greater good of an entire community. Consider the case of an activist who persuades people to plant trees for the good of the environment. They may have to push and prod before they get the numbers to make the tree-planting exercise a success. Some people may view this as manipulation, but at the end of the day, the outcome of their efforts benefits the entire community.

Persuasion often presents a clear and coherent argument for a particular case, while manipulation will often involve a manipulation of facts intended to distort a person's perception of reality. At the end of the day, persuasion and manipulation often serve the same goal, which is to convince something to do something that you want them to do. The key difference lies in how the parties choose to go about it: there is the all cards on the table method, which is persuasion and the hidden cards method of manipulation.

The Principles of Persuasion

To master the art of persuasion, you must be aware of the underlying principles that will enable you to harness your power of influence. Human beings are a touchy lot; one wrong move, and you'll lose all ability to convince people to get on your team. It is necessary that you make strategic moves that are informed by the necessary underlying principles. The six principles of persuasion are reciprocity, consistency, social proof, liking, authority, and scarcity.

The Principle of Reciprocity

Reciprocity is simply doing unto others as you would have them do unto you. As you go about your daily interactions, reciprocity calls for kindness and generosity. Showing kindness to others is a good thing that makes others, and yourself feel better about your interaction. Even more than that, doing good is your way of collecting chips that you can cash in later. If you have been nice and kind to another person, you stand a better chance of them being nice and kind to you.

If you are hoping to be able to persuade a person, you must behave in a decent manner towards them. Speak a kind word, do them a favor or even buy them a gift. Later on, when you need to convince them to do something, they will be more agreeable. After all, you have proven yourself to be a kind human being who has their interest at heart.

The Principle of Consistency

Consistency in persuasion works this way: people are more likely to commit to bigger tasks or favors if you have convinced them to agree to smaller ones. That is, you can get someone to swim oceans for you if you

first get them to jump a puddle for you. There have been some studies conducted to support this theory. In one study, for instance, a group of researchers asked some homeowners to put up an ugly *Drive Safely* billboard on their front lawn. Very few homeowners said yes. The researchers then took another approach to the experiment: they first got the homeowners to agree to the small commitment of putting up a Drive Safely postcard in the front windows of their homes. Ten days later, they returned with the billboard request. This time round more homeowners agreed to put up the billboard despite its lack of aesthetic appeal. The reason for this is that the homeowners subconsciously felt compelled to remain consistent with their earlier response.

The foot-in-the-door technique is a compliance technique that is premised on consistency. It involves getting people to agree to a larger request by first testing the waters with smaller requests. If you want to execute this technique cleverly, you will need to condition your target to be consistent in their responses to your request. For example, if you want your employee to work the weekend shift, you might first want to get them to agree to work the overnight shift--or vice versa depending on which is the least preferred shift in your business.

The Principle of Liking

If a person likes you, they are more likely to meet your demands, whatever this may be. A person that is not liked and is unlikeable as well will hear no more times than a person that is well-liked. But how do you go about getting people to like you? According to science, the secret to being liked is a combination of three main factors. First, people like those who are similar to them. For you to appear similar to the person you are hoping to persuade,

you must find common ground with them. For instance, many foreigners have learned that the simplest way to become more likable is by learning and speaking the local language. The other thing that you need to be aware of when making yourself more likable is flattery. Flattery will open many doors for you if you use it well. People like people who pay them compliments. If you want to ask someone to do something for you, start first by paying them a genuine-sounding compliment. Just because it's called flattery does not mean that you must be effusive about it. In fact, being too excessive in your praise will be counterproductive to your need to be liked. Last but not least, be the kind of person that is usually agreeable and cooperative towards the achievement of mutual goals, and you'll be one step closer to being likable. If you are always stepping on other people's toes in order to get what you want, you will have very few friends, and this will not help your case when you need to persuade someone in future. Remember, being agreeable and cooperative does not entail being a doormat. Sometimes, it just means putting in some little effort that helps a person achieve a goal that is significant to them. For instance, if a colleague is struggling with a due report, offer to assist them with the printing and mailing. It is not a whole lot of work, but you will go from the uninvolved, nondescript colleague to the likable colleague that is kind and helpful. Later on, you can cash this chip as you so wish.

The Principle of Authority

A person who is an authority figure in a particular field will have an easier time influencing other when compared to a complete newbie. If you wish to persuade more people to do a particular thing, you must build your credibility by making yourself seem like you have expertise in whatever field you are playing in. This principle is a key reason why professionals display their diplomas in their field. Think about it--when you walk into a

therapist's office, for instance, you are likely to consciously look out for the type of credentials they have hung on their walls. If it so happens that your therapist has a whole lot of credentials displayed, you will likely feel a sense of comfort in their expertise and experience. As such, any recommendations they have for you will be easily welcomed and implemented by you. The therapist, in essence, has managed to influence you without even saying a word.

It is a fact that your authority will not be taken very seriously if you are the only one talking about it. As such, you must ensure that you recruit others to beat the drums on your behalf, so to speak. There are subtle ways of doing this. In the office, you can identify a field that you are passionate about and become the office guru of that field. For some people, this might be the field of Microsoft Excel or reporting. The guy who is known as the office Excel guru will have an easier time getting things from people because they already know he knows what he is talking about. He has also proven himself likable and useful by solving all their Excel problems, and his colleagues will want to pay him back somehow. You do not have to learn Excel to make your mark in the world. There are numerous other fields that you can excel in and present yourself as an authority figure.

The Principle of Scarcity

In economics, the laws of demand and supply are simple and straightforward: when supply is low and demand is high, prices go up. To translate this, scarcity builds value. If you are a businessperson looking to convince people to buy your product or service, it helps to highlight the fact that the product is on offer for only a limited amount of time. Further, let your customers know that they stand to lose out significantly if they do not access this product on time. When the marketing message is packaged that

way, they will be more people rushing to beat the time limitation on your product.

In the world of business and personal relationships, it is important to become a scarce product yourself. If you are always available to everyone every time they need you, you will quickly lose your value. You have got to learn the art of being inaccessible and unavailable if you wish to retain your air of mystery and influence around you. When you do finally show up, your word will be revered more than the word of a person that is constantly showing up and talking themselves out of any relevance and value.

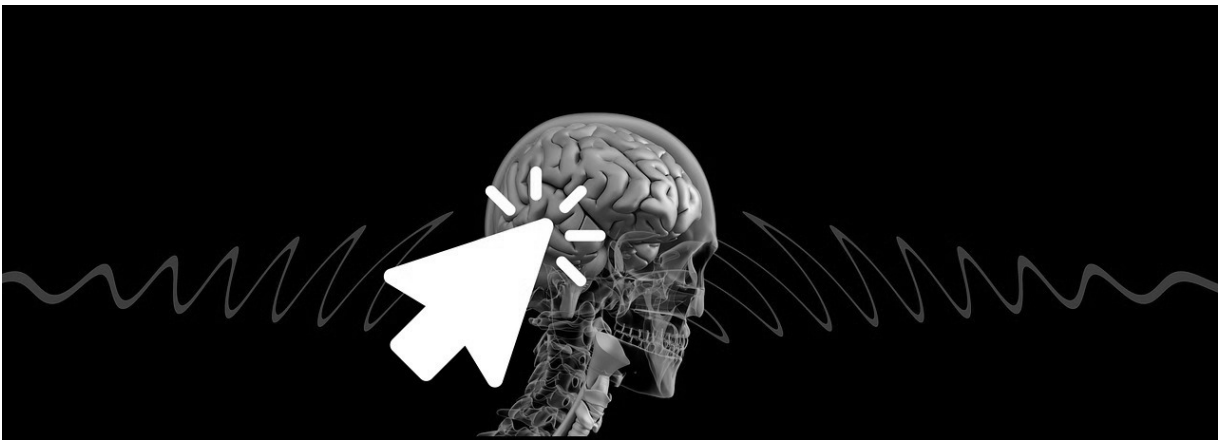
The Principle of Consensus

In everyday interactions, people look to others who are similar to them for cues on what to do or say. A person that is a good influencer understands that all it takes is one person to buy into their idea, and the entire crowd will. There are various ways in which you can apply the principle of consensus to your benefit. In an office setting, for instance, you can get a section of the employees to agree to a cause and champion that cause to their colleagues. These colleagues are more likely to be convinced that the cause is worthy because their peers said so.

If you have ever bought anything from Amazon, you may have seen that they include a section that shows the other items bought by customers who ordered the product that you have just purchased. Why do you think this is so, and what effect does that section have on you as a buyer? More often than not, you will likely consider buying those other items because these customers who obviously have similar tastes and needs to yours bought it. You may not have originally planned to purchase the additional items, but just the fact that others did it will have you thinking that you need to as well. This is the principle of consensus in effect.

Persuasion Tips for Everyday Use

If you are looking to influence people, it is not enough to simply understand the principles underlying persuasion. You must also master the simple yet effective ways that you can put these principles to use in everyday life.



If you are a persuasive person, you will have a much easier time in life and will often achieve your intended results without having to jump through

hoops. Some of the tips to being more persuasive can be implemented instantly while others will require a bit of practice.

Tip #1: Appear confident

Confidence does not come naturally to all of us. Some people seem to have an easier time being confident while others struggle quite a bit. Whether you are naturally confident or not, you must ensure that you appear confident to others at all times. If you are insecure about how you look or your abilities in a particular subject, nobody else needs to know this. Do not give your insecurities a platform on which to shine. Instead, practice faking it until you make it.

There are people in this world who do not know a whole lot of things and yet have managed to get scores of people to support them and their ideas. Reason? They are the epitome of confidence. They walk into rooms as if they own them. They speak authoritatively even when they are uncertain of what they talk about. Confidence says you know what you are talking about. People allow themselves to believe the people who know what they are talking about.

Tip #2: Be subtle with your approach

Even when they allow themselves to be persuaded into doing something, most people like to think that it was their idea to do something in the first place. Nobody wants to believe that they allowed a particular idea to be shoved down their throat. For success in persuasion, you must be subtle in your approach. Instead of introducing a certain topic full-on, consider starting with an anecdote. If you are looking to get someone to buy into an investment, start by mentioning how you and your friends went for a cruise last weekend after receiving your payout from Investment X. Do not even try to sell them that investment. Instead, get the other person thinking about

how they could also have gone for the cruise had they invested in the particular investment vehicle. In short, entice people without being too obvious with your temptation.

Tip #3: Be flexible with your methods

The methods of persuasion are not set in stone. Different people respond to different things. Also, the same person will respond differently to different methods depending on the time and occasion. You must know when to switch gears accordingly. Sometimes you will need to work with the principle of liking and other times you will need to base your method on the principle of authority. Reading social cues will allow you to determine which methods to use.

Tip #4: Timing is everything

If you want to convince someone to buy a house, you'll have more success if you catch them when they are shopping for houses. This holds true for most things. If you want your crush to go from crush to partner, you will have an easier time if you talk to them when they are looking for a relationship. To master the art of persuasion, you must also master the art of knowing when the timing is right. If not, you will fall into the trap of harassing people to agree to things that they have no interest in. Nobody likes a person that is constantly pestering them into doing things, especially at the weirdest of times.

Tip #5: Being interesting is a plus

Most persuasive people are not boring. Nobody pays much attention to boring people. Boring people are not fun to talk to. They are not engaging, and they are definitely not memorable. If you want to win at persuasion, you must be an interesting person. The good news is that there are countless

ways of being interesting. You just need to identify something unique about yourself and amplify it for the world to see. It could be a skill or a hobby that you are really good at. It might also be your sense of humor or the way you dress. Perhaps, you might even want to share your unique view of the world with your audience. Whatever it is that you opt for, make sure that it helps people remember you long after the conversation ends.

Tip #6: Listen more than you talk

You might think that being persuasive means doing a whole lot of talking, but this could not be further from the truth. In order to influence people, you must train yourself to be a good listener. Listening skills serve two purposes. First, as long as people are talking and you are listening, then it means you are gathering crucial information that you can use to your advantage. Second, people like a good listener. Why? Because people love talking about themselves. Keep your mouth shut and your ears open and you will be well on your way to increasing your likeability quotient. If you do not believe that this is important when it comes to influencing others, refer to the principle of liking as discussed in the previous section.

Types of Deception and How to Get Better at All of Them

Deception comes in various forms, all of which are intended to throw a subject off the truth. At the beginning of this chapter, we defined deception as the act of causing someone to believe something that is not valid or true. In this section, we will explore the different ways through which you can

deceive someone, how to get better at these methods, and how to protect yourself against deception in your everyday life.



Lies

Lies are the most popular form of deception. They are used every day during small talk, meetings, in relationships, in transactions, when you want to get out of an awkward situation, and in just about any type of conversation or circumstance. A lie is quite simply a statement that is the direct opposite of the truth. An example of a lie would be telling your boss that your grandmother has passed away so that you can get compassionate leave when in fact your grandmother is very much alive, and you just want a day off. Lies are easy to tell--you just need to find the contrast of the truth and tell it.

Equivocations

An equivocation refers to the use of a particular word or phrase to change the meaning of a sentence, in order to knowingly shift the intended message. Equivocations are hardly used in everyday conversations, although some clever person might find a way to weave them into their deceitful web. Equivocations are essentially wordplay. They fall under the broader term of the fallacy, which is defined as faulty reasoning, which is intended to make an argument seem better than it actually is.

Examples of equivocations include the following:

Dating my boyfriend is a real headache. Aspirin can make headaches go away, so maybe I should take an aspirin to make my boyfriend leave.

I have a right to free speech. Therefore, it is right for me to say what is on my mind at all times.

Equivocations are often a great source of funny jokes that you can tell at every opportunity. For example:

Two cannibals were eating a clown, and one turned to the other and said, "Does this taste funny to you?"

In all seriousness, though, equivocations are hardly your biggest worry when it comes to deception. At best, equivocations will bring you some laughter in your life; at worst, you are likely to end up confused, but only for a couple of minutes before you figure out what's going on.

Concealments

When you engage in concealment, you omit information for purposes of deceit. This is a preferred form of deception, especially since it is easy to get yourself off the hook if you are caught. You can simply explain yourself by saying that you forgot to reveal the particular fact. Concealments are sometimes referred to as lying by omission. Let's say, for instance, that you

are planning to buy a house. You know a good realtor, and you reach out to them with your specific requirements. The realtor has a few open units that fit your description, and you arrange for a site visit. Come the day of, you are impressed by this one particular unit that is conveniently located near your workplace, and spacious enough to accommodate you and your dogs. You want to make an offer on it, but you just need one question answered: why did the last owner give up the unit?

Your realtor tells you that the previous owners decided to move on to greener pastures after living in the unit for three years. However, the realtor conveniently omits the fact that the need for greener pastures was necessitated by the fact that property values are declining in the particular area that you want to buy your house in. By omitting this crucial fact, your realtor convinces you to buy the house. They did not tell an outright lie--they simply refused to tell the whole truth. This is the concept behind concealments.

Exaggerations/Overstatements

An exaggeration is a stretching of the truth. Some people do not like to tell the truth in its plain form as it sounds boring that way. Rather, they will embellish it to the point where it is hardly recognizable. An exaggeration or overstatement looks like this: your friend puts their money in a small-size investment that is giving them returns of \$100 per week. Instead of your friend reporting accurately on their returns, he goes around telling everyone that he is making bucket loads of money from his investment. Depending on the economy you live in, \$100 may be several cups of coffee and a nice meal or a quarter of the month's rent, but it hardly the vacation-paying, ready-to-retire fortune that your friend wants to make it seem. Yes, he is

making money, but yes, he is also stretching the truth...perhaps to make you jealous.

Understatements

Understatements are the direct opposite of overstatements. Understatements are also referred to as the minimization of truth and involve downplaying a truth so that it does not seem as bad as it actually is. Understatements are often used by people who are in denial about something, or those who want to rationalize an otherwise irrational decision that they have made. Abusers may also downplay the truth when confronted by or about their victims so that they can shed off some responsibility for their abuse.

Let's say for example, that a couple who have been married for ten years mutually agree to have the husband run the finances of the household. Confident in his wife's business sense and financial acumen, the trusting wife contributes diligently to their investment kitty and lets the husband do all the investing. Unfortunately, the husband makes a few bad investments that wipe out all their money, leaving them with nothing but a few months' paychecks. Sensing that something is amiss, the wife asks for an update upon which the man says that things are not good. Technically, the husband has told the truth: things are indeed not good. What he has also done is not said exactly how bad things are. If he was honest, he would have said that things are terrible and that they are on the brink of financial hardship. In this case, deception by the form of understatement has occurred, and the husband gets to avoid sleeping on the couch for at least one more night until the piling bills blow his cover.

Now that you know the different types of deception, you must be wondering how you can master the art of deception. For starters, it is important to acknowledge that deception is not exactly a nice thing, as far

as morality and ethics go. You really do not want to base all your relationships and interactions on deceit because then you'd be taking away from the people around you and from yourself as well. Genuine relationships that are based on honesty and authenticity have a better shot at withstanding the test of time. That being said, it is also necessary to acknowledge that life does not always play out in black and white. Sometimes, there are other colors in between that call for us to be creative. Once in a while, you may have to use deception to get to where you need to be. In such instances, you will need to be very careful about how you package your deception.

One of the things you need to be careful about is your body language. You may have the most elaborate lie outlined in your mind and deliver it exactly as you had practiced in front of the mirror and still fail at deception. Why? Because your body language gave you away. There are certain body signals that will give a liar away. These include the inability to maintain eye contact, fidgeting, and even stuttering. Some people have been known to touch their noses whenever they lie. Watch out for this tell-tale sign of lying and make sure you steer clear of them while you are spinning your big tales.

The second thing you need to be careful about when being economical with the truth is the reason for the deception. Deception is worth the trouble only if it gets you something you want or somewhere you really need to be. Other than that, deception is just a waste of everybody's time. If you get into the habit of lying for the sake, everybody is going to think of you as a pathological liar who can never be trusted. This will ruin any credibility you may have built, and you will no longer be in a position to manipulate or influence people.

Never mix up your stories. This is the surest way of getting caught. If you must deceive someone, make sure that you have the entire story laid out in case you have to answer any probing questions. You do not want to get caught in an incomplete story that has more holes than a fisherman's net. Most inexperienced liars especially get caught up in their web of lies because they cannot remember what they said to who and when. If you must keep a notebook to track your lies, please do. It might just save you the embarrassment of being caught in lies.

Chapter 6: Defending Yourself Against Dark Psychology

However much you might want to believe in the best of everyone, the truth of the matter is that we are all sitting ducks as far as manipulation goes. There are people in this world who leave their houses with only the worst of intentions. Their intentions are to hurt others and to get the most they can out of other people without giving anything in return.



The knowledge of dark psychology presented in this book is not intended to be used to cause harm to others. Rather, the main objective is to help you recognize manipulation in its various forms for what it is and if need be, to turn the tables to protect yourself. If you can manipulate a manipulator before they get the best of you, then that is a win for you and the rest of humanity.

Factors that Make You Easier to Manipulate

Besides knowing how to identify a predator, it also helps to understand what makes a person more vulnerable to psychological attacks. Simply put, there are sitting ducks that are closer to the line of fire than others. In *Chapter 3: The ABCs of Brainwashing*, we explored some of the factors that make a person more susceptible to brainwashing. However, we now know that brainwashing is just one of the ways through which people are manipulated. So, what makes a person vulnerable to all of the types of mind control and manipulation that exist?

You are Intelligent

You are probably confused by this one because you have always believed that smarter people are harder to outwit, right? Here's the thing though: intelligent people like to use logic to aid their decision-making process. Logic is easier to manipulate. Hence, intelligent people are more likely to be manipulated when you corner them with logical arguments. Less intelligent people are harder to convince with logic and tend to be more stubborn in the face of facts and scientific arguments. It is no wonder that a whole lot of people who have been scammed by con artists and Ponzi schemes happen to be people who are relatively smart and who you'd not expect to be easily

fooled. The reason why this is often the case is because scammers know to appeal to this kind of people with facts and statistics. People who are less smart will be easily dismissive of anything that sounds like hullabaloo because they do not understand it.

You are trusting and like to believe the best about everyone

Believe it or not, there are bad people in this world. There are people who leave their homes every morning with the intention of harming others. There are people who have no qualms about inflicting heartache and turmoil upon others. While you may be seated in your house worrying about mega rich corporations who steal from the poor, there is a boardroom full of corporate big shots who are about to steal from the very poor that you are worried about. Simply put, not everybody shares in your conscience and your empathy. People are wired differently. People on the dark triad are wired even more different than you could ever imagine. When you meet a new person, it is noble to want to believe the best of them, but it is wise to expect to be surprised in a not-so-great way. Keeping your expectations of people to a minimum is a great way to protect yourself against everyone that is trying to get a piece of you.

You are constantly seeking external validation

When it comes to manipulation, a person that is constantly seeking validation from others is akin to a sheep walking inside a lion's den. It is only a matter of minutes before the sheep is completely annihilated from the face of the earth. Manipulators are highly capable of noticing loopholes and exploiting them to their benefit. A big, glaring loophole for a manipulator is a lonely or insecure person who wants some companionship at whatever cost.

Everybody is prone to feeling lonely every once in a while. We are social beings, and in the absence of company, we can often feel unloved and dejected. Do not seek external validation to the point where you make yourself a sitting duck for validation. It is okay for people to like you, and it is also okay if they do not like you. Liking yourself is good enough. When you have put on the armor of self-love and acceptance, you make it a little bit harder for predators to creep through your defenses. This is not to mean that any person who has been manipulated does not love themselves enough. However, in romantic relationships, you can really protect yourself if you have already internally validated yourself before going out there to the wolves.

You have isolated yourself from family or friends

You've probably heard this story before--an elderly person who lives alone meets a charming young man on the Internet. This online acquaintance quickly becomes a romantic interest. A few months down the line, the young man is saying all the right things and getting money wired into their bank account every month. A year down the line, the elderly woman or man has exhausted all their retirement savings and reeling from the discovery that their online love interest was just a con. While the victim wallows in embarrassment and wiped out finances, you can only wonder how the con managed to pull off a scam that is so simple and obvious that it is laughable. How can a person be so gullible, you wonder? It really is simple. It is easier to fool one person than it is to fool many.

One person who obviously had some wisdom in him put it this way: *You can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time.* This is a fact that predators know--it is much easier to hunt the lone antelope as it wanders in the

savannah, alone and unprotected against all the dangers of the world. When you are surrounded by loving friends and family, you have a wall around you that keeps the predators out. Even when you are certain that you are in love and your partner is the best thing that happened to you, there will be that one person in your circle whose critical thinking has not been impaired by the passion of a new relationship. That one person will be your buffer against manipulation. It is no surprise that many people who manipulate and abuse their partners try to keep them away from their family. These manipulators and abusers know that if another party comes into the mix, their entire gig will be up.

You are highly emotional

Emotions are great. The ability to experience happiness, joy, surprise, love, sadness, and every emotion of the human experience is a gift. For some people, this gift was given in spades. If you are the kind of person who goes through life feeling things more than thinking things, you are highly vulnerable to manipulation. Manipulators are able to fake emotions while saying and doing everything you need to hear. They do not even have to make sense--they just need to verbalize the things that you long for, and you are sold. Now, if you are highly emotional, there is not a whole lot of things you can do to change yourself. You are born that way, and you can only learn how to cope with being so highly emotional. That being said, you can always make sure that you stay conscious of your emotions so that they are not always dictating your decisions for you.

You do not educate yourself

You do not need to go back to school to learn all the ways that people are trying to take advantage of you. A good thing about living in today's world is that information is freely available right at the fingertips. You only need

to be willing to learn. A whole lot of people are taken advantage of because they do not know the tactics employed by manipulators. If you do not know that manipulators have a thing known as the mirroring technique, you might think that you and your date simply have amazing chemistry when this is definitely not the case. A good thing about manipulators is that most of their techniques are already in the books and all you need to do is grab yourself a book and get to reading. This way, you will be able to stop any predator in his tracks before he gets too close to cause you any harm.

In the same breath, the free availability of information means that you can always look up someone so that you authenticate their identity before they get a chance to grab anything from you. Gone are the days when you had to hire a private investigator to carry out a background check on someone. In today's world, it is possible to run a background check on someone on the Internet and have the results ready within minutes. This could either be a paid background check or a quick cursory check of their social media pages. Fortunately, almost the entire world is on social media nowadays, and a majority of us love to overshare.

Simple Strategies You can Adopt to Protect Yourself

Whether you consider yourself highly vulnerable or resistant to manipulation, it always helps to be safe rather than sorry. Luckily, it is possible to keep the narcissists, psychopaths, and high Machs at a safe distance in your life. How so?

Psychopaths are present in our workplaces, in business transactions, in our personal relationships and even in our families. Sometimes, you just cannot avoid a psychopath by virtue of the nature of the relationship that exists between the two of you. For instance, it might be impossible to ignore or avoid your psychopathic boss because you need to do your job, get paid and advance in your career, or at least pay your bills. If your boss is a psychopath, you just have to deal with him somehow. You might, for instance, have to figure out a way of keeping your interactions to a bare minimum at most. However, if you ever have the choice to not deal with a psychopath, grab it and run. For instance, if you are starting to get to know a new person with the intention of dating them and start to realize some tendencies that match the psychopath criteria, run and do not look back. You do not need to stick around something or someone that is not good for you.

Do not fall into the trap of thinking you can change a psychopath, sociopath, or narcissist into being a better person. Not only is this not your job, but it is also virtually impossible. For starters, the things that make people dark and manipulative are so deeply embedded in their psyche that they cannot just be removed and replaced with sugar and spice at will. Secondly, change is a personal choice that is made by an individual. A person that changes does so because they want to change and not because another person asked them to. Last but not least, if you are dealing with a psychopath and thinking that you can change them, you are essentially waging war against biology and genetics. Who do you think is going to win?

Pay attention to actions more than you do words. Predators are very good with their words because words are their most powerful tools. Instead of focusing on what a person says, look at what they do. Did they fulfill the

promise they made to you about doing a particular thing? Do they treat everyone as well as they want to make it sound? A simple way to check whether a person's actions match their words is by utilizing something that is referred to as the rule of threes.

Here's how it works: if a person seems to tell a lie or makes a promise that they do not keep on one occasion, you may be dealing with a simple misunderstanding. If this happens a second time, there is likely to be a serious mistake that requires addressing. However, if there is a third occasion, then you are probably dealing with a liar. Lies are often the first sign of manipulative behavior. If you are able to identify this recurring pattern in your relationship or interaction, then you know you have yourself a situation on your hands. How you decide to handle this situation will mean the difference between freeing yourself from the jaws and drama of a manipulator or staying on for the most overwhelming ride of your life.

Whenever possible, let the psychopath win but not at your expense. The personalities that love to win are often aggressive and will go to great lengths to ensure that they trump all their competitors. If you ever find yourself facing a psychopath on a negotiation table, always go for the suggestion that guarantees a win for the both of you. This is an effective means of ensuring that you do not expend all your energy trying to fight off a psychopath who is trying to finish you.

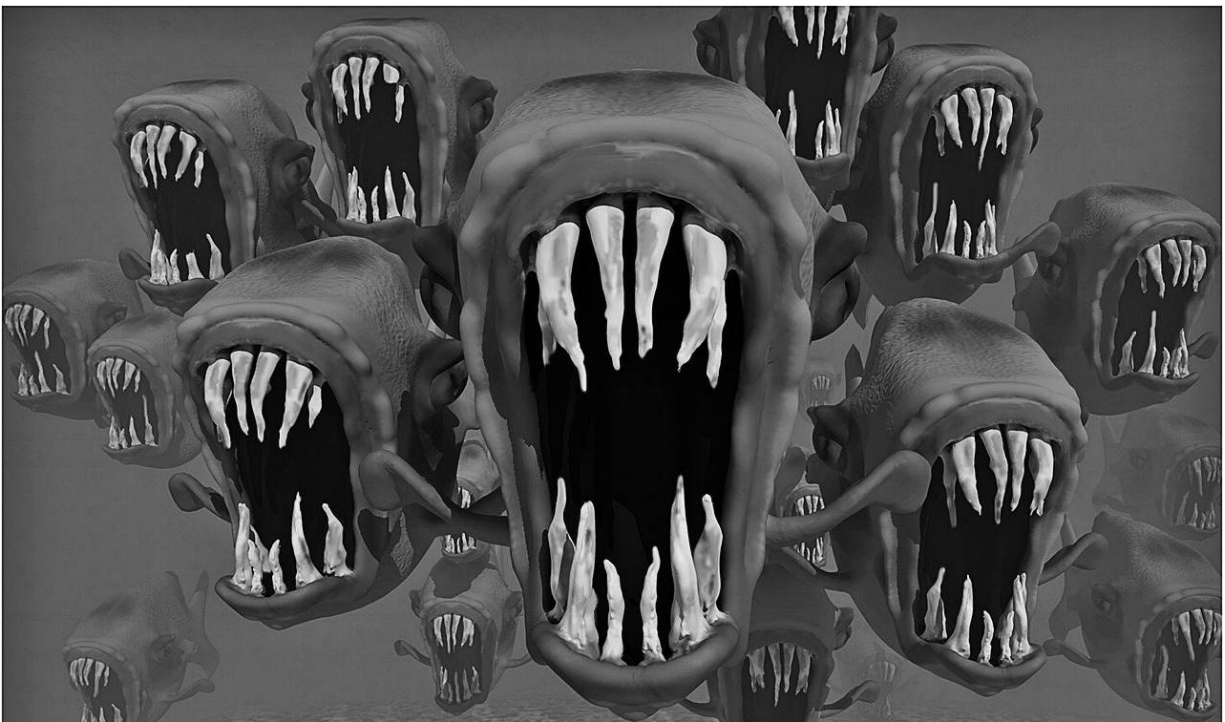
When dealing with people, be they saints or sinners, always listen to what your gut has to say. Scientists who have tried to explain gut instinct say that it is the body's reaction to an intraspecies predator. This makes a whole lot of sense when you consider how sometimes you'll feel uneasy around someone you do not know only to later find out that that person was not a good person. Do not let your gut instinct go ignored when it is working so

hard to prevent you from making a mistake. In many instances, psychopaths assume roles such as mentor, boss, supervisor, church leader, guardian, or even parent. While these roles are indeed noble, your gut feeling might be screaming that the church leader is not as trustworthy as he might want to make you believe. If this is the case, always give priority to the gut feeling. What your gut says is always a better bet than what you think you know.

Do not allow yourself to get drawn into the games that psychopaths, sociopaths, narcissists, and other dark personalities play. Sure, you've read this book and are feeling particularly confident about your knowledge on the dark triad personalities. At the back of your mind, you believe that you have what it takes to take on a psychopath and win. What you do not know is that while you have just read this book, a psychopath has had his whole life to practice on his victims. Do not be drawn into their manipulations. It is not your job to entertain the psychopath. Your number one job when dealing with a psychopath is to protect yourself against their tricks.

Chapter 7: Myths and Misconceptions about Dark Psychology

There are numerous topics which are safe for dinner conversation. Dark psychology is not one of them. The last thing you want to ask during Thanksgiving is how Uncle Joe scores as far as their Machiavellianism orientation is concerned. Because of the malevolence surrounding dark psychology, there are usually very few open discussions regarding the topic.



Let's take the dark triad test, for instance. Are you planning to take it? If yes, do you plan to share your results with anyone? The high chances are that if you answered *yes* to the first question, you are probably going to answer *no* to the second one. Most human beings like to think of themselves as good people. What's more, they like other people to think of them as good people.

Putting your dark triad test on display for everyone to see might not exactly serve this purpose. Because of all of this hush-hush surrounding dark psychology, there is, therefore, a whole lot of misconceptions and myths about the personality traits that are key vessels for dark psychology. This chapter explores these myths and misconceptions while shedding some light on the same.

Myth #1: Psychopaths and sociopaths are one and the same thing

Truth: Psychopathy and sociopathy are two different types of antisocial personality disorders

The term psychopath and sociopath are used interchangeably in everyday conversation. However, the two traits are significantly different from each other. That being said, these two personality disorders do share some similarities. Experts consider sociopathy to be a less severe disorder than psychopathy. The table below shows some of the characteristics that distinguish a psychopath from a sociopath.

Psychopath	Sociopath
Has no conscience	Has a weak conscience
Are able to blend in by being charming and are therefore harder to spot	Have no intention of blending in and are often easy to spot. Will primarily be interested in themselves only
Cold-hearted and calculating	Hot-headed and leap without looking

Myth #2: Psychopaths are made and not born

Truth: Psychopaths are born that way

Psychopathy is a very complicated personality disorder in that psychopaths are more often born rather than made. A psychopath comes out the womb wired differently than most people. As a result, they deviate from the tangent of what is normal and often times find themselves in positions that any other 'normal' person would not necessarily find themselves in. Research undertaken has indeed shown that the brains of psychopaths function differently when compared to the brains of other people who do not have any recorded personality disorders. So, what happens when a psychopath is born?

Depending on the type of environment the psychopath grows up in, the psychopath will become one of several things. If the young child who shows signs of psychopathy grows up in a nurturing environment, he will likely become a business or political leader of much influence. If the child grows up in a violent or traumatic environment, they are likely to become serial killers or murderers. Psychopaths who are nurtured in an environment that is somewhere in between the first two environments end up in positions of power in fields such as law enforcement and management.

Myth #3: Sociopaths are born

Truth: Sociopaths are mainly a product of their environments

More often than not, sociopaths are as a result of the environment that they are brought up in. It often starts with a biological or genetic disposition to sociopathy, which is then worsened by the type of nurturing that they get. For instance, a child who grows up in an environment where nobody seems to care for him will probably carry the same lack of empathy in his adulthood. If they grew up with adults who had no sense of integrity and

lacked a moral compass, their conscience would be highly impaired as a result.

Myth #4: Females cannot be psychopaths

Truth: There are recorded cases of female psychopaths

More likely than not, when you hear of the term psychopath, you automatically think of a male character. After all, Hollywood has done its best to portray psychopaths as ax-wielding males on a murder spree. However, it is important to note that psychopaths can be female too. Unlike their male counterparts, however, female psychopaths are less likely to be physically aggressive or violent. Rather, they resort to using their sexuality and femininity to manipulate others. Female psychopaths are also likely to have a high number of sexual partners.

Myth #5: Psychopaths are obsessed with murder.

Truth: Psychopaths are thrill-seekers.

Murder is just one of the ways through which psychopaths quench their desire for the thrill. When most people think of psychopaths, they automatically thinking of murders left, right, and center. However, while it is true that a killer is more likely to be a psychopath than not, it is also true that psychopaths are not thinking of committing murder any more than the rest of the population. Many psychopaths go through their lives seeking thrills and never really causing anybody violent harm. Yes, they might break a few hearts as they jump from one sexual partner to the next and throw several people under the bus in an aim to climb the corporate ladder, but that's as far as most of them go. If you are looking for a psychopath in your life, you will not likely find one if you are only looking for violence and bloodlust.

Myth #6: Psychopathy is a mental illness that can be cured.

Truth: Psychopathy is a personality disorder that has no cure.

If psychopathy were a mental illness, there would be an option for treatments. Instead, psychopathy is a personality disorder, and this means that no cure exists that would turn psychopaths into normal, feeling, and empathetic human beings. Because they really do not believe that anything is wrong with them anyway, psychopaths would not even be interested in treatment even if it existed. In instances where psychopaths have been convinced to get into therapy for purposes of mending existing relationships, it is not uncommon to find them trying to manipulate the therapist into thinking that the therapy is working or has already worked. Remember, these individuals are highly manipulative and capable of utilizing whatever means necessary to get themselves out of difficult situations. Thanks to their bold lack of fear and absence of empathy, a psychopath will have no problem wasting a loved one's time in therapy if only to make it seem like they are making an effort.

Myth #7: You can change a person on the dark triad by loving them correctly.

Truth: Most people who score highly on the dark triad test remain so for the rest of their lives.

Love is a strange thing in that it makes people believe that they are capable of the impossible, even when the truth is laid bare before their eyes. If you are in a relationship with a person who scores highly on the dark triad test, the first few months of your relationship are likely to be blissful. Manipulative people have a way of love-bombing you into believing that they are the perfect match that you have been waiting for all along.

Unfortunately, this is usually just an attempt to lure and entrap you into a relationship that is just smoke and mirrors. Once you have settled into this kind of relationship, the manipulator's true colors come to light. In many cases, you will find a relationship partner sticking around with the hope that things will change. That love will be enough to turn things around.

Unfortunately, this often never happens.

For starters, the fact that psychopathy is mostly genetic means that it is incredibly difficult to defeat. At best, the psychopath can only channel their lack of sensitivity towards achieving goals that are not detrimental to the overall society. As for Machiavellianism and narcissism, these often stem from deep psychological trauma that may require a whole lot of arsenal to overcome. Many people will gravitate towards Machiavellianism and narcissism as a defense mechanism. Any attempt to get them out of this will only come across as an attack thus causing them to launch their own defense. As such, intervention in the form of love may be incredibly counterproductive. It is also necessary to acknowledge that love and other flippant emotions are not exactly a dark triad person's cup of tea. They may not even notice it for what it is. As such, should you find yourself in a relationship with a person who exhibits the characteristics of the dark triad, you might want to re-examine whether that is what you really want.

Myth #8: People who score highly on the dark triad are more attractive.

Truth: This has been established to be untrue.

Why is it that people often gravitate towards the narcissists and the psychopaths of this world? Is it because the dark triad personalities are more attractive than the rest of us? In a bid to determine whether dark triad personalities are better-looking, academic researchers took to studying

several subjects who had high dark triad scores. The results of these studies suggested that the reason why these subjects appeared attractive was because they dressed up and presented themselves physically in a manner that was well put together. When dressed down in boring clothes, these subjects did not appear as attractive as before. As such, it is almost safe to assume that the attention and effort that goes into getting ready and the confidence thereafter are what makes a narcissist or psychopath seem more attractive than they really are.

Myth #9: Psychopaths change when they have children.

Truth: Psychopaths are unable to have emotions of empathy or caring even towards their own children.

Psychopaths start their own families, and when this happens, they usually have a very hard time nurturing their offspring. Unlike normal parents who are not on the dark triad scale, psychopaths have a hard time distinguishing their children as separate entities. Rather, they consider them to be tools or extension of themselves which are available for their use as they please. Psychopaths are more likely to view their children as trophies that make them look good than as young, impressionable individuals who are looking for someone to guide them through life. As such, a typical psychopath will push their kids to excel in something they have no interest in even though this is at the expense of the kids' mental health and well-being. They might forcefully enroll the kids in swimming classes, for instance because they believe their kid becoming an expert swimmer and competitor will improve their social standing in the community. Needless to say, psychopath parents are very hard to please seeing that they are used to excelling themselves and will not understand why their kids will not do whatever it takes to get to the top.

Myth #10: You are either on the dark triad or not

Truth: The dark triad is a continuum on which some score highly while others score lowly

The traits of narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism are inherent in all of us. The only difference is that in some people, these traits are magnified to the point where they often become destructive to the people around them. Take narcissism, for instance. Everybody has a way that they think about themselves. More likely than not, you like to think good things about yourself. You like to believe that you are good-looking and talented and easy to love. For a narcissist, this self-image is blown out of proportion to the extent where their entire life revolves around. It is not enough for them to believe these things about themselves--they also want everyone else to believe they are perfect and saintly and all things good.

Psychopathy, on the other hand, is also a spectrum. Everybody has their place on this spectrum. Think of it this way: have you ever done something that was not so nice and yet did not feel guilty about it? Have you ever acted in a manner to suggest that you are not exactly empathetic towards someone? If you have answered yes to any of these questions, then you exhibited psychopathic traits at least once in your life. This does not mean that you will go on to murder someone later in your life. It only means that there are instances when the psychopath in you comes out, and other instances when you might be able to catch yourself just in time. The way you were raised has an effect on whether you are able to stop yourself from unleashing your full psychopath.

Myth #11: Your boss is a psychopath

Truth: Your boss may or may not be a psychopath

It is true that many psychopaths who do not become career criminals go on to become highly successful in business, politics, and other fields. However, this is not reason enough to accuse your boss of being a psychopath. Some people are simply driven and demanding because it is what they know and understand to be the requirement for success. In any case, not a whole lot of people have sleepovers and brunches with their bosses. There is a certain dynamic expected from a boss-employee relationship. Your tough-talking, merciless boss may be a completely different person when they are not wearing their boss hat. Do not go thinking that everyone in authority positions is a sociopath or psychopath. It does not always work that way.

Myth #12: Your ex is a psycho

Truth: A relationship ended on a sour note. This does not make any of you a psycho.

A lot of people are fond of referring to their exes as psychos. Every once in a while, a relationship will end on a good note where both parties go on to become great friends for the rest of their lives. Unfortunately, this is not how most relationships play out. Many courtships end in tears and accusations and name-calling. Before you call your ex a psychopath, evaluate the signs elaborated in this book and find out whether your ex's behavior matches any of these. Of course, this should not matter if you are done with the relationship, but it might help you avoid falling into the same trap of dating someone who exhibits the same signs. If you are currently involved with someone who shows any of the signs discussed here, you might want to consider leaving them for your own safety. It is important to acknowledge that the process of leaving a psychopath or narcissist is different from that of leaving a normal person who does not take the departure as an affront to their own person. There are numerous resources that are available to persons

who are looking to leave abusive and manipulative relationships. These resources can be found through a simple online search.

Chapter 8: Famous Dark Triad Personalities

It is not enough to read about the traits that dark triad personalities embody; it must also be acknowledged that dark triad persons have names and have lived among us either in our time or before. In all of history, there have been persons who have acted so outrageously in all their dark triad glory for all to see. This chapter is dedicated to those individuals who have left, or continue to leave, their dark mark in the world.

Alexander the Great

Son of Philip II of Macedon and Olympias, Alexander the Great was a king of the ancient Greek kingdom known as Macedon and a raging narcissist as well. Alexander believed that he was destined for greatness and that anything that existed within his imagination was attainable in real life, regardless of the expense. His mother did not make things any better for him--she had lofty ambitions for him. He sought to actualize these ambitions all his life, and it is no wonder that he ended up being named 'the Great' in recognition of his fierce achievement as an unrivaled military commander.

Perhaps the greatest indication that Alexander was a narcissist is the fact that he thought of himself as a deity. In other words, he thought himself to be a god. Again, his mother had led him to believe that he was the son of Zeus, the king of the Greek gods. Further, Alexander was fond of downplaying his own father's achievements to his friends. In his eyes, these achievements did not matter, and the only wins that counted were those that had his name on

them. He was constantly worried that his father did not leave him any legacy that counted.

In response, he made it his business to win as many battles as he could. He took his army on endless battles in a quest for his own personal glory. It did not matter who lost their lives or got injured. Alexander was on a mission to create his own legacy, and anything or anyone who stood in his way was the enemy.

Napoleon Bonaparte

Bullied as a young boy, Bonaparte rose through the ranks to become a general in the French Revolution at the age of 24. Unfortunately, Bonaparte carried with him the effects of his bullying and low self-esteem, otherwise referred to as an inferiority complex. While he was able to achieve a legacy that many men of his time did not, Napoleon carried with him the psychological scars of his past. It is believed that Napoleon lashed out and acted aggressively to make up for his shortcomings. Which shortcomings, you might wonder.

For starters, Napoleon was shorter than the average man. Standing at five feet and two inches, it is easy to see why Napoleon may have been insecure about his height. His stature notwithstanding, Napoleon believed that he was something special and even wrote about it in his book aptly named *Thoughts*. In the book, Napoleon talks about how he had come to believe that he was special and could go forth to achieve things that he had only previously believed to be fantasy.

At the end of the day, it's probably unfair to fault Napoleon for turning to narcissism to cheer himself up. He was probably only trying to make up for

the feelings of inadequacy that he had grown to be familiar with thanks to his childhood taunts from his classmates and schoolmates.

Adolf Hitler

Who is the most self-absorbed person that you currently know of? Take that person's thoughts, behaviors, and actions and then multiply them one million times. What do you get? Adolf Hitler, that's what. Adolf Hitler lived in the early 1900s so he must have done some pretty bad things to be still talked about today. And indeed, he did.

Not only did Adolf believe that his race was better than everyone else, but he also had to get everyone else on the propaganda machine too. As a result, millions of Jews lost their lives thanks to the calculations and machinations of one man whose narcissism and thirst for power got out of hand. Hitler's leadership style was structured such that he was at the top, and nobody else could question him. His inferiors were to take these commands unquestioningly because he believed he knew better than everyone else.

While his generals were killing the Jews left, right and center, Hitler had no empathy for those dying and suffering. In fact, he wanted this murder spree to continue for as long as it could, or at least until he was able to wipe out the inferior race.

Hitler will forever be remembered as the reason for one of the biggest wars ever witnessed on earth, and all because he believed that he and white Germans were superior to everybody else.

Charles Manson

Charles Manson is one of the most well-known cult leaders of modern American history. Manson was an unemployed ex-convict who utilized psychopathic manipulation to create himself a following which he named the Manson Family. Manson had an ability to convince young people to join his family by preying on their weaknesses and making them feel as if he was their safe place and messiah. After drawing them in, Manson then convinced them to commit crimes on his behalf. In the summer of 1969, for instance, Manson's Family killed nine people on his command.

Even after being arrested, Manson showed no remorse or guilt for the suffering he had inflicted on others. He had a disregard for humanity that can only be described as callous.

That being said, Manson was also highly charming, and this caused people to gravitate towards him. Even while in prison, Manson was still able to use his psychopathic charm to lure women, even to the point of getting engaged to one.

Albert DeSalvo

Nicknamed The Boston Strangler, Albert DeSalvo was a criminal who confessed to killing thirteen women in the Boston area, by way of strangulation. DeSalvo was a typical psychopath. Right from childhood, he exhibited the signs of a psychopath. For instance, he tortured animals. This is a typical warning sign that you might have a young psychopath on your hands. Kids who torture animals often go on to commit other heinous crimes

later on. Many murderers and serial killers have a history of animal abuse in their past.

What's most notable about DeSalvo's murders was that most of his victims were elderly and alone at the time of the attacks. While most people are capable of showing pity, mercy, and overall empathy on the elderly, DeSalvo was quite the opposite. He knew that this was a vulnerable group that could be easily subdued to fulfill his dark desires.

It is reported that DeSalvo had an extraordinary sex drive, which is another sign of a person that may be predisposed to psychopathic tendencies. DeSalvo also liked to brag outrageously about his conquests, sexual and others. His tendency for exaggeration led some people to believe that he was not really the Boston Stranger even after he confessed to the killings.

Jeffrey Dahmer

Jeffrey Dahmer was an American serial killer who was found guilty of the rape, murder, and dismemberment of seventeen boys between the period of 1978 to 1991. Dahmer's crimes were too horrid that it is difficult to imagine that a human being actually committed them. Not only did he kill his victims, but he also performed necrophilia and cannibalism on their corpses.

Dahmer's childhood was not any more eventful than the typical childhood of a kid growing up in America during his time. That being said, some sources intimate that Dahmer was ignored by his parents as an infant. A lack of attention and affection, and overall neglect can cause a kid to develop into a full-blown psychopath later on in his life. Dahmer's mother had a myriad of issues that she had not worked through, and his father was unavailable most

of the time. As a result, Dahmer was left to fend for himself and find ways to occupy his time.

Growing up, Dahmer was largely reserved. He, however, did have a reasonable number of friends that he could talk to and play with. His friends reported Dahmer having an interest in animals. That in itself would not be a problem if that's all it was. Instead, the interest spiraled into something darker and sinister. As a child, Dahmer collected large insects and roadkill and went on to dismember this at his home or in the woods near his home. This should have been his parents' first sign that something was wrong, but reports have it that the parents were preoccupied with other matters that did not include nurturing their son.

Later on, as Dahmer's fascination with animal carcasses and bones grew, he reached out to his father and asked to be taught how to bleach animal bones. His father, happy that his otherwise reserved son was reaching out, demonstrated the proper way to bleach bones. Dahmer would use this knowledge to clean the carcasses he continued to collect.

Dahmer was eighteen years old when he started targeting human victims. His first victim was a young man by the name of Steven Hicks, who was a hitchhiker that he picked up and lured to his house on the pretext of enjoying some alcoholic drinks together. After this first murder, Dahmer dissected his victim's body and buried it in a shallow grave in his yard. Then he continued to live his life as if nothing had happened--no guilt and no remorse. In the course of his life up until when he got caught, Dahmer went on to steal the lives of twelve more unfortunate victims.

Amy Bishop

Amy Bishop was a biology professor who worked at the University of Alabama in Huntsville up until February 2010 when she walked into the university complex and killed three of her colleagues. Three other people sustained severe but non-fatal injuries from this attack. There are several reasons why Amy Bishop makes this list. First, Amy exhibited clear signs of narcissism when she went around letting everyone know that she had earned her Ph.D. from Harvard. It was almost the very first thing that she told you upon meeting. By virtue of having a degree from Harvard, Amy believed herself to be better than everyone else. She thought of herself as a capable professor who was deserving of tenure despite the fact that her students had complained about her abilities and teaching methods on numerous occasions. Much earlier, before she killed her colleagues, Amy had shot her brother in what was later ruled as an accident. Some sources intimated that Amy might have killed her brother deliberately because he was getting the attention that she thought she deserved.

On the day of the murders, Amy attended a faculty meeting and sat quietly as it progressed. She appeared to be calm and just being her normal self. About forty minutes later, Amy calmly pulled out a handgun and started shooting. She was subdued after killing three faculty members and injuring three others. It is interesting to note that Amy planned to kill her colleagues after getting denied tenure at the University. Despite her otherwise poor performance as a professor, Amy believed that she deserved tenure. In her mind, she was the best of the best, and nobody else had a greater right to be at the university.

Amy lost her tenure in 2009, and it was not until 2010 that she killed her colleagues. It is clear to see that she was cold and calculating and took the time to come up with just the right plan to eliminate her 'enemies' — Amy's actions throughout her life point to a person that was highly narcissistic and

psychopathic as well. A member of a writing group that Amy belonged to is cited as saying that Amy came across as a person who felt entitled to praise. She is also said to have been abrasive in her interactions with others.

No doubt, these individuals are just a drop in the ocean of dark triad personalities that have walked on this earth. With psychologists suggesting that psychopaths make up about one percent of the general population, it goes without saying that making a list of all psychopaths ever to exist would be a lifelong task.

How to Talk to Your Child About Dark Psychology



Other than the cases where there are classic warning signs of psychopathy such as the abuse of animals, you might have noticed that a whole lot of the

personalities listed in the previous sections went through a normal childhood. If you are a parent, the safety of your children is paramount.

The kind of concern you feel towards your children extends from their interaction with other people to their own internal dialogue taking place without anybody else's notice. In other words, you want to know that your child is safe when with other people and when alone as well.

It is especially disconcerting to know that there are people in this world who use their time, thoughts, and efforts to hurt children. While there is not especially much that you can do to change that kind of people, you can prepare your child to deal with the kind of people who are more likely than not to use dark psychology to take advantage of others.

Make your home your child's safe haven

Your home should be where your child feels safest. The outside world is not the friendliest place there is out there. There are bullies in school, pedophiles lurking in parks and playgrounds and child killers who have no qualms about ending young lives. When your child is done dealing with all the dangers presented by the modern world, they should always have a safe place to come to. This means that you must be careful about who you invite into your house at all times. Many times, the people who take advantage of children are people who are well known to them. As such, it helps to vet who make it into your child's life and who doesn't. Besides making the home physically safe by making it inaccessible to predators, you must also be your child's safe place emotionally. Children who know that they can count on their parents have an easier time opening up about the challenges they are facing, which will include that worrisome conversation they had with the creepy uncle during the last family get-together.

Be vigilant about what your child is watching and listening to

When predators are unable to access children physically, they make use of other virtual channels to do their evil work. Parents of millennials and other older generations had an easier time as far as keeping the predators away. Predators back then approached kids while they walked to school, at the playground, in shopping malls, and in other places that were easy to monitor. Predators of today have gotten smarter and will enter your home even when you have locked all doors. Thanks to smartphones and the Internet, there is probably someone spying on your kid or trying to feed your kid information that they are better off without. If you must buy a smartphone for your teen, make sure you give them a long, hard talk about the dangers that lurk on the inner web. Monitor the type of content that your kid is watching and make the use of parental controls that are offered by most video platforms. Do not allow your child to make friends with strange people on the Internet. Some of these strangers who contact children on the Internet have the worst of intentions, including being involved in child trafficking rings.

Do not sugarcoat truths

When your child is young and incapable of understanding harsh truth, you'll most likely do your best to sugarcoat the truth so that you do not give them weeks of endless nightmares. For example, you'll not tell your kid that their goldfish died; instead, you'll lie to them that little Mr. Bean went to live in another fish tank with his best fish friends. This is a normal part of parenting that involves wanting to shield your young one from the cruel realities of the world. As your child grows older; however, it is important to let them hear the truth from you before they start hearing half-truths from other people. Kids are very impressionable and tend to believe what adults tell them. You

must ensure that your child's first point of contact is yourself. Do not let a predator creep into your child's life under the guise of being their go-to person. If something bad happens in the community, explain this gently to your child and let them know that bad people who want to harm other people exist and they live among you, and there are certain signs that she should look out for.

Be the parent

Yes, you want to make sure that your child likes you. Nobody wants to be hated by their kid. At the same time, you must acknowledge that winning a popularity contest is not your first priority as a parent. Your child is free to think of you as a party pooper as long as you are focused on keeping them safe. If something does not sit right with you, use your authority as a parent to question it until your gut instinct approves. Your sulking teenager will not be in their teens forever, and once they are older, they will be grateful that you looked out for them when they needed it most.

Stay ahead of the game

Predators are constantly changing the rules of the game because they know the rest of the population is catching up. For instance, some predators have taken to placing harmful messages in seemingly harmless kids' videos and other content. Online games and the constant social media challenges are also at times used to manipulate, and influence children do engage in practices that are harmful to them. As a parent, you must ensure that you are aware of the trick and treachery being used to manipulate your kid and then nip this in the bud before it is too late.

What If Your Child is the Problem?

Nobody wants to believe that their child might be anywhere near being a psychopath, sociopath, or narcissist. And yet, adults who score highly on the dark triad were once children. We want to believe the best of our children, but perhaps this is the denial that causes parents to miss out on opportunities of helping the kids get help before it is too late.

First, it is important to note that psychologists are not fond of calling children psychopaths even when these children exhibit behaviors that are worrying and abnormal. This is simply because the term itself carries too much stigma and finality. When a child is called a psychopath at age six who is not to say that they will not aspire to grow to live up to the name? Also, children are just that--they may be troublesome as kids and then turned out to be something totally different when they are older. Instead of antisocial personality disorder, therefore, children are often diagnosed with conduct disorder. In order for this diagnosis to be given, a kid must meet certain criteria that have been agreed upon and behave in a manner to exhibit these criteria for at least six months. What this means is that a teenager who behaves aggressively in one or two instances is not exactly a candidate for conduct disorder. More likely than not, they are just having a bad day. So, who qualifies for the conduct disorder spectrum?

A child that has a high chance of becoming a psychopath in their later life exhibits the following characteristics:

- They extremely lack in empathy. This is the sort of child who will not flinch when their friend gets hurt on the playground. In fact, you might even catch them laughing at the pain of others.

- They lack remorse and guilt. A child who does not have remorse or guilt will do wrong and not feel the need to apologize for it. They might hit their little brother or hurl the family pet against the wall and smile about it. When asked to apologize, they will be stubborn and might even completely refuse to cooperate.
- They are indifferent to punishment. Most children get very dramatic when punished. They sob their little hearts out and even try to make you feel bad about punishing them. Not so for children with conduct disorder. More often than not, such children will not care for the punishment. They will not be moved one bit and will ensure that you know they are not moved. This is simply because they do not experience pain and emotions like everybody else.
- Lastly, adults who went on to become full-on psychopaths exhibited signs of aggression and cruelty in their childhood. Because a child is a tiny individual who does not have much strength to take on bigger victims, children will often target helpless animals to take out their aggression and cruelty on. If one day your child wakes up and kills the family cat, you should be very worried.

What do you do when you are faced with a child who displays all these signs? The first thing you need to do is understand that not every psychopath is headed for doom and destruction. As mentioned earlier in this book, some psychopaths go on to become very successful in their fields because of their risk-taking, laser-sharp focus. A child that is seemingly destructive and restless can be molded to become something great in their life. Instead of worrying that your child will become a serial killer, think about how you can turn them into the next world-famous CEO. A good thing about kids is that

they are easy to distract. Keep your child busy, and they will not have the time to think about all the cruel things they could be doing with their thrill-seeking selves.

Depending on the nature of the disorder that is present in the child, there might be a need for professional intervention. Professionals who work with kids that exhibit psychopathic behaviors do not try to change them because they know that it is all in the brain, and there's not much that you can do. Instead of changing the kids, the professionals instead opt to work with what is left of the 'good brain' to push the kids towards good behavior. For instance, even though a psychopath's brain might not be capable of empathy and emotion, they are still able to recognize reward and the excitement of getting that reward. What clinicians do therefore is to train the kid to do good in exchange for a reward. Psychopaths love winning, and the same is true for kids who exhibit psychopathic tendencies. This reward approach is also used in prisons where the population of psychopaths tends to be higher.

If you have a child who is showing signs of being a problem child as far as the listed signs go, you must be very careful about how you call out the problem. The messages that children hear about themselves are what they grow up to believe. If a child grows up being called stupid, they will live out their stupid to the best of their ability. A child, regardless of their psychopathic disposition, will grow into something great if they hear reinforcing messages about themselves. Nurture may not always win over nature every time, but it is always worth a shot. It might be thinking of something empowering to say to a child who kills little animals but labeling them as a killer will only give them something to aspire to.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that hearing there are people out there whose sole purpose in life is to manipulate and influence others is not comforting news. This is the kind of information that is guaranteed to make you skeptical about all your interactions. You might find yourself wondering whether the people in your life like you for you or for the things that you are able to provide. While it is true that there are bad people out there, it is also true that there are some pretty good people living among us. The good news is that the number of people who measure highly on the narcissism, psychopathy and Machiavellianism scales is much lower than the number of people who measure much lower on the same scales. What this means is that not everybody is out to get you. At worst, one out of five people is out to get you. For example, if you have five bosses, one of them is likely to be a psychopath. This is not too bad. You just have to make sure you get the other four on your team, and you will be good to go.

In all seriousness, however, it helps to stay conscious of the bad sides and the good sides to life and people. This book is an acknowledgment of the bad sides that exist--which sometimes can be used for good, depending on how you look at it. A Machiavellian leader who is committed to protecting his people at whatever cost, for instance, can be a great asset to have in a community.

That being noted, it is also important to acknowledge the many ways that smart people use to manipulate others into doing not-so-smart things. The chapters on brainwashing and hypnosis are particularly useful if you want

to refresh your memory on the many ways people are controlling your mind against your will.

This book is not a call for you to live nervously and in fear. Bad things and bad people have existed since the beginning of time, and this did not stop billions of people from living their lives to the fullest. As much as this book calls for your guard to be up as far as keeping out the predators, it is also an assurance that you can let your hair down once in a while. As long as you know who's hunting you and how they are hunting you, you can give allow yourself to relax when the predators are away.

Lastly, should you wish to flip the tables on the predator, you can go ahead and apply any of the tactics suggested in the book. Just make sure that you can deal with your conscience after the fact. The reason why psychopaths are able to sleep soundly at night after doing something bad to someone is because they do not have a conscience to keep them awake. And who said you could only use dark psychology to go bad anyway? If you can hypnotize your boss into giving you a raise or a promotion, more power to you!

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