

PSYCHOPATHY AND IT'S POTENTIAL BENEFITS

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Abstract

Discussed is some of the basic research and understanding of psychopathy and how it is classified (ie the PCL-R). Then we will discuss the finer points of the classification process. The modern understanding tends to be more towards the psychopaths that find them themselves in prison. There are alternatives to treatment of these individuals. A lack of empathy is discussed in a useful context. Further benefits are described for the trait of willingness to manipulate.

Psychopathy Benefits

Psychopaths are individuals who have a certain set of personality traits. The specific personality traits that these individuals tend to exhibit include deception, irresponsibility, lack of forward planning, impulsivity, lack of empathy, lack of guilt, antisocial behaviour, and stimulation seeking behaviour (De Oliveira-Souza, Moll, Ignacio, & Hare, 2008). It is not hard to see the effects a psychopath could have in any number of situation. When diagnosing psychopathic individuals, the most used and widely respected measure for a persons psychopathy is the *Have Psychopathy Checklist - Revised* (PCL-R) (Nickerson, 2014). The PCL-R measures a wide range of personality traits and ranks them on a scale of 0 to 2, adds them up, and gives the person a score out of 40. Anyone over a score of 30 is labeled a psychopath. The specific traits are as follows "glib and superficial charm, exaggerated grandiosity, need for stimulation, pathological lying, cunning and manipulateness, lack of remorse or guilt; shallow affect (superficial emotional responsiveness), callousness and lack of empathy, parasitic lifestyle, poor behavioral controls, sexual promiscuity, early behavior problems, lack of realistic long-term goals, impulsivity, failure to accept responsibility for own actions, many short-term marital relationships, juvenile delinquency, revocation of conditional release, and criminal versatility (Hare, Hart, & Harpur, 1991). Don't be surprised if you can think of a few people one can fit a fair amount of theses criteria; the psychopath is a large sum of all these traits and not just a subset of them. These traits tend to lead an individual with them to a life of criminality and imprisonment.

The key point to get for the PCL-R is that a psychopathy is a range of values. A person can

still rank high on the scales if they lack a couple of the less useful traits. Something like a lack of unrealistic goals would be very detrimental to anyone, but they would still rank high on the PCL-R. Another trait that would be not so beneficial in most situations would be poor behavioural control, but the person would still classify as a psychopath. A combination of these traits, would still affect a large subset of the psychopath community, but would be less prone to criminal, or anti-social behaviour.

The research done on psychopaths tends to be done of incarcerated individuals who have managed to get themselves prison time because of their ailment. This has led to a bias in the research data. Because psychopaths have a tendency to get themselves into prison, research has been focused to the psychopaths in prison and diagnostic tools used to detect psychopaths were developed to detect psychopathy in prisoners. The research is slightly biased towards individuals who have a criminal history. Although a psychopath is more likely to go to prison than the non-psychopathic individual, there is a large amount of psychopaths, labeled Successful Psychopaths, that have managed to successfully navigate away from the criminal justice system. These individuals will be the focus of this paper.

Psychopaths are usually considered hard, if not impossible, to treat (Kiehl & Hoffman, 2011). As an alternative we should be looking for ways to integrate these individuals into society. This paper will argue that due to a psychopath's lack of empathy, and willingness to manipulate, they can be productive members of society.

A psychopath's lack of empathy is arguably one of their most obvious traits, and one that could easily lead to a psychopath ending up on the wrong side of the criminal justice system. A psychopath doesn't have the ability to think about another person and how their actions affect others. People who have empathy may take a problem, and consider how it affects their coworkers, friends, family, and then get to solving the problem. This may lead to a complex solution to what may be a simple problem, because due to the complications of human relations, may end up become a problem that is infinitely harder to deal with. A psychopath, on the other hand, will look at the problem in terms of mostly logic, and will not be held back by the emotional baggage of the

people related to the problem.

Willingness to manipulate can be a useful trait in many situations. Pesky environmental regulations getting in the way of building your multi-million dollar shopping mall? A psychopath will have no problem lying to the government and telling them that the building meets all environmental standards. Is the UN calling you out for bombing your neighbouring terrorist state? Well just send your friendly neighbourhood psychopath to go tell the UN that it has been the enemy guerrilla fighters that are bombing civilian targets. Just like a lack of empathy can get past certain social boundaries, so to can a willingness to lie and deceive get you past the need for telling the truth. No longer will you have to publicly admit your wrongdoings when you have someone to lie for you. This leads to having a buffer between you and the law. If anyone ever catches the psychopath lying, you can deny any involvement and place the blame solely on the psychopath.

These are just some short examples where psychopaths can be productive members of society. These traits, not found in the general population, can be useful to anyone who can realize their potential. The cost of doing business in the modern era is sometimes fraught with needless bureaucracy, social responsibility and other peoples feelings. Why not have someone who can get past these impasses for you. When your business is getting a little dirty, why not have someone who doesn't mind getting a little blood on their hands. Besides, what is more important than making money? Nothing.

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