

Tales From The Narc Side: ...

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# The Unbearable Loneliness of Loving Someone Who No Longer Exists

A reflection on losing someone to delusion, not death



Elena Byron

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There are breakups where two people drift apart, where love fades gently into the past. And then there's this — where the person you loved doesn't just leave, but **dissolves into an alternative reality**, slipping beyond reach while still walking the same earth.

I didn't lose him to death. I lost him to delusion. And in some ways, that feels worse. He is still alive, still speaking, still moving through the world — but in a place where I can no longer reach him, no longer share reality, no longer hold a meaningful conversation with any version of the man I once loved.

The last time I saw him, I still held onto hope that there would be a moment of truth. That behind all the **chaos, the rewriting, the denial, the gaslighting**, there would be a glimpse of something real. But instead, he stood before me, performing a happiness so forced it cracked at the edges, telling me his life was wonderful and had dramatically improved since our story ended.

**That I was the problem.**

**That I had never really mattered anyway.**

In his mind, he had rewritten our story into something where I was nothing more than a passing character, a mistake, a glitch in his grand narrative.

And I stood there, watching him erase me in real time.

## **How Do You Grieve Someone Who Is Still Alive?**

It's one thing to lose someone to death. You grieve. You remember. You hold on.

But how do you mourn a person who is gone in **every** way that matters, yet still breathes, moves, speaks – but denies reality?

**How do you let go when you are the only one left holding onto the truth?**

People don't fully understand this kind of loss. Most think it was just a relationship that didn't work out, failing to grasp the **slow, insidious emotional erosion** that took place.

Some say, "**You just need to move on,**" as if grief works like a switch I can flip, as if love can be unlearned overnight.

But how do you “move on” when the person you loved is still out there, rewriting history in a way that makes it seem like you never existed?

How do you make peace with the fact that **you were erased — not just from someone’s life, but from their entire version of reality?**

## The Fragile Illusion of His New Reality

The cracks in his story were obvious. His words were an act of **desperate self-preservation, not truth.**

I began to see more clearly how deep the illusion ran — how it wasn’t just about him, but about what I had believed, what I had tried to hold onto. I explored this more in *Unmasking the Illusion: The Man I Thought I Loved Never Existed.*

His new world — a **fragile, shimmering bubble** — was built not to embrace reality but to **shield himself from it.**

He could not bear to see himself, to **acknowledge what he had done**, to feel any pain.

And so, he restructured his existence, **sculpting an illusion** where he was free from responsibility, where he never had to face all the damage he left behind.

**A performance of happiness, rather than the real thing.**

What kind of happiness can exist only in denial?

I would be happy for him if he had faced the truth, admitted his struggles, chosen to heal.

But there can be no real happiness inside this lie.

## **Letting Go of Someone Who Won't Remember You**

I wanted him to say it — just once.

That he loved me in his own way, but he couldn't stand to be left, so he had to destroy me first.

That he had to rewrite me out of his story because acknowledging me meant acknowledging himself.

But that will never come.

If he were capable of this level of insight, he would be another person altogether.

The hard truth is: there will be no closure from him, no reckoning, no moment of recognition.

And maybe that's the real answer.

There is no need for me to erase him.

Maybe I just have to let time do what he couldn't — rewrite the story into something true.

*I wrote a follow-up exploring this further – Unmasking the Illusion: The Man I Thought I Loved Never Existed*

If this resonated with you, *follow me for more raw and honest stories on healing from narcissistic abuse. I'd love to hear your thoughts in the comments.*

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What are your thoughts?



Tamara Wilcock

Mar 8



Thankyou, for putting into words how I've felt for years, but haven't been able to articulate, adequately enough. Yes, recovery, after divorce from a covert narcissist , takes longer and is a more complicated process, than your average divorce. I was gutted, for years, when I worked out the truth of my life with my ex. Once again, grateful thanks!



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Naomi Shippen



Mar 26



We will heal and come back better than ever and their madness will eventually destroy them.



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1 reply

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Pete Moore

Mar 10



This is one of the saddest things I've ever read. It's sad because I am living this right now. When my narc wife left me (for another man) I didn't have clue what was going on. I reflected on the relationship and tried to figure out when that loving person I met changed. I was able to pinpoint the time and it broke my heart because I came to the realization that that person had died eleven years ago. And it really is like mourning the death of somebody. In those eleven years I became an emotionless zombie and didn't understand why.

Thank you for the dark but enlightening article.



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