

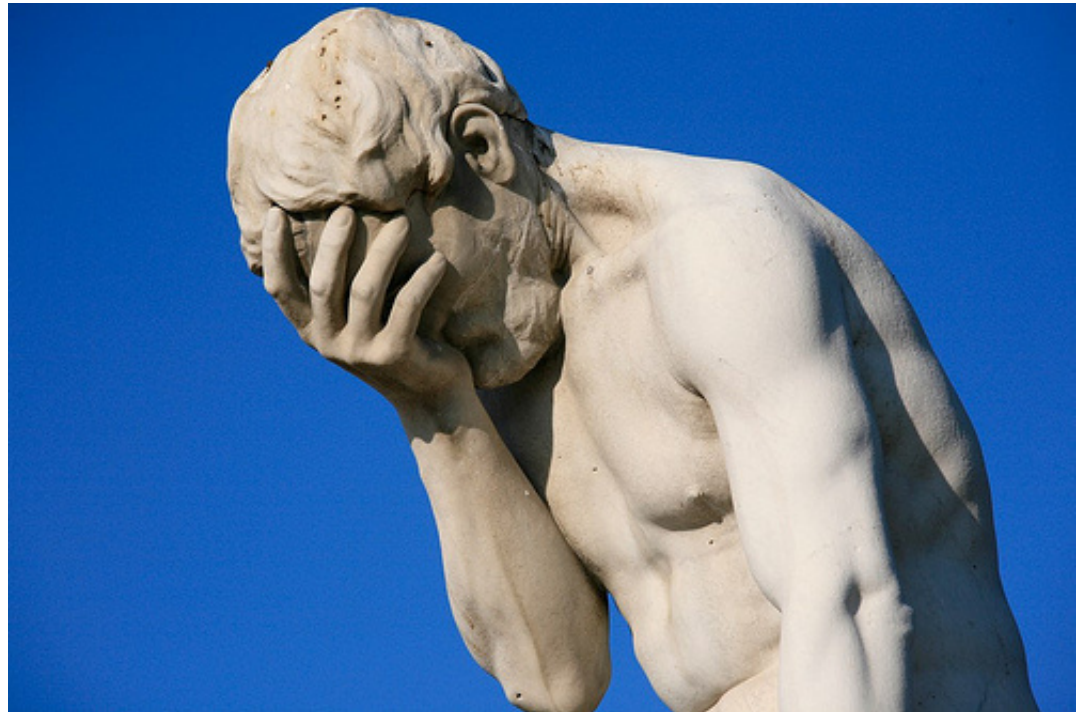
After Narcissistic Abuse

There is Light, Life, Love & Laughter

SIGNS THAT YOU'VE BEEN ABUSED BY A NARCISSIST

DEC 1

Posted by [ANA - After Narcissistic Abuse](#)



(<http://afternarcissisticabuse.files.wordpress.com/doubt.jpg>)

1. YOU DOUBT YOURSELF

Do you recognize that you're doubting yourself more than you ever have before?

Victims of narcissistic abuse often appear uncertain of themselves, constantly seeking clarification that they haven't made a mistake or misheard something.

This reactive adaptation to narcissistic abuse is because the narcissist is ALWAYS finger pointing and shifting blame to YOU for ALL of the ups & downs both in the relationship AND in the narcissist's personal psyche.

Because this relationship has NON EXISTENT boundaries, you will find YOURSELF constantly PUT UPON and FORCED to accept responsibility for things you didn't do or say. This borrowed humiliation and shame is exactly what the narcissist intends for the victim to take from the narcissist. Their own unfelt core of shame.

2. CONFUSION

Just refer to the above explanation of self doubt and boundary transgression if you want to understand the CONFUSION that is part and parcel of narcissistic abuse.

Daily boundary transgression and criss crossing of responsibility starts to wear on even the clearest minded of targets.

Suddenly you wake up and realize that all the realities and borders between yourself and others is not only BLURRED but MISSING.

It's confusing to KNOW that you aren't responsible for someone else's behavior, thinking and feeling but to be CONSTANTLY SCOLDED for behaving, thinking and feeling as if you ARE.

It's crazy-making and a narcissist purposefully causes this confusion. They know that a divided and conquered mind is their most vulnerable and susceptible target who won't be able to identify that their confusion is caused by an abusive technique called 'gaslighting'.

Gaslighting is a technique of psychological abuse used by narcissists to instill confusion and anxiety in their target to the point where they no longer trust their own memory, perception or judgment. With gas lighting, the target initially notices that something happens that is odd, but they don't believe it. The target attempts to fight the manipulation, but are confused further by



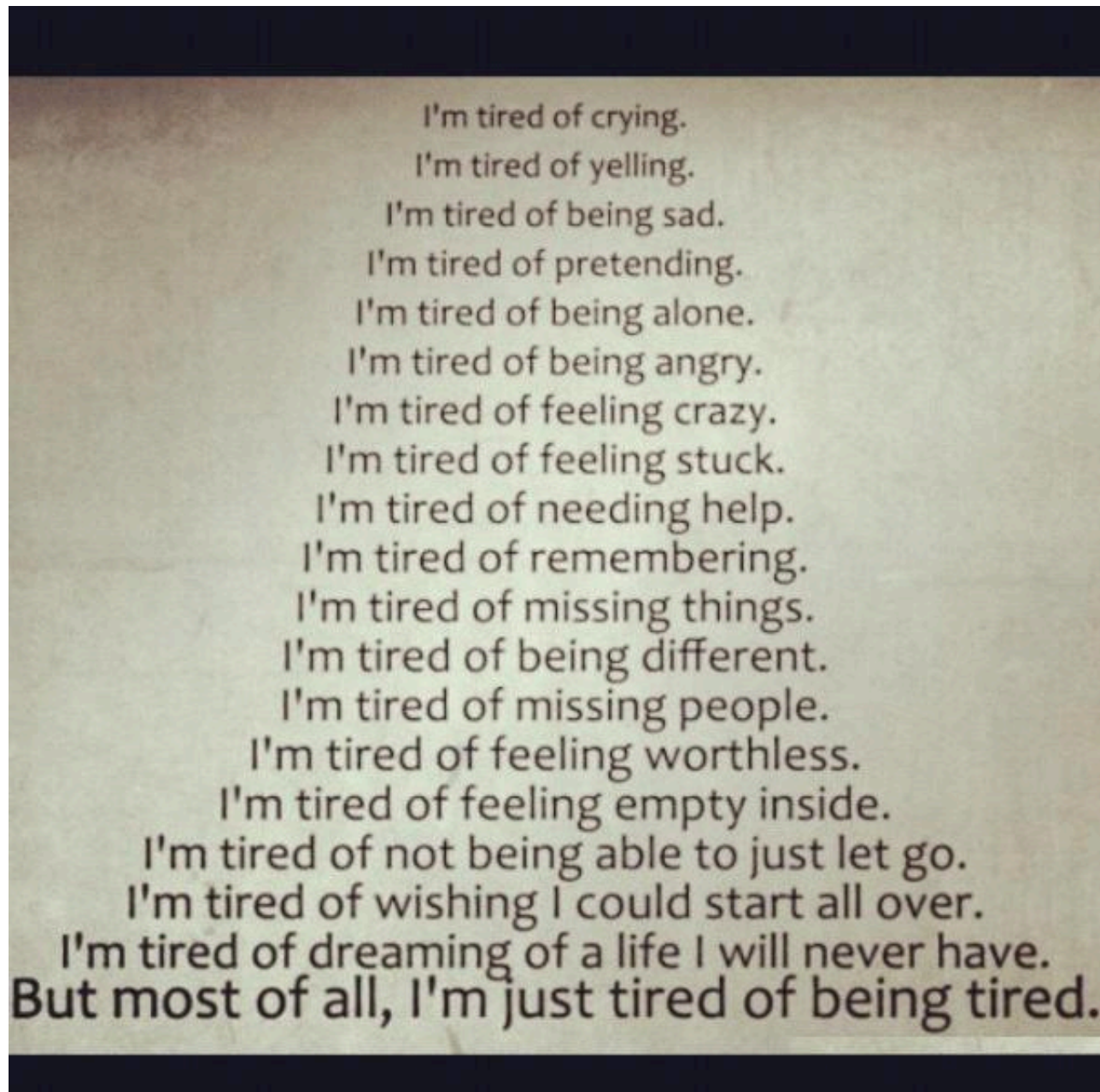
being called names or told that they're: 'Just Too sensitive', 'Crazy', 'Imagining things' or the narcissist flat out DENIES ever saying anything hurtful. Gradually, the target learns not to trust their own perceptions and begins doubting themselves. Broken and unable to trust themselves, they isolate further. The target now doubts everything about themselves: their thoughts and opinions, their ideas and ideals. They become dependent on the narcissist for their reality.

For it is in your CONFUSION and acceptance of responsibility that belongs to the narcissist, that a narcissist is able to successfully CONTROL YOU and USE YOU as a scapegoat for their problems.

3. FEELING CRAZY

Every minute of every hour of every day of every year, a Narcissist, who has a DSM classifiable personality DISORDER (ie: not playing with a full deck) is PROJECTING their disorder onto those around them. If you don't think that having a crazy person constantly blaming you for being "crazy" will make you crazy, I'd like to introduce you to a narcissist that will convince you otherwise.

This disorder isn't a relationship gone wrong. This disorder isn't kid stuff. It's MALEVOLENT. It's a transference of malevolence and MENTAL DISORDER from the person who has it to the person who DOESN'T.



<http://afternarcissisticabuse.files.wordpress.com/2013/12/love-quotes-39.jpg>

Frankly, before a narcissist, I've not once in my life, FELT CRAZY. Neither have I ever been told by a psychologist and I've seen lots of them – that I had anything WRONG with MY own MENTAL HEALTH. Personally, I always had it “together”. I was resilient, mentally tough, and withstood many events in my life that would make others crumble.

Yet, when I unwittingly dated someone with this serious mental health malady, I wanted to slam an entire set of broken porcelain down his throat sideways and every obtuse moron that believes the garbage that comes out of his mouth. No, it's not that I suddenly became a person interested in physical violence, I suddenly became a person who was witnessing a DSM category all wrapped up into a physical being – who turned his mental health problems ON Me. I became a target of a person with a problem. They say, “Hurt people, HURT people”. I say, “Narcissistic People DESTROY PEOPLE”.

4. EMERGING CLUSTER OF SYMPTOMS THAT HAVE NO OTHER EXPLANATION



<http://afternarcissisticabuse.files.wordpress.com/2013/12/1inexplicable.jpg>

All I could muster to the narcissist in my dear john letter when I broke up with him that wonderful New Year's Eve, was "I DONT KNOW what's WRONG!! But I just don't feel like myself. Something feels EXTREMELY TOXIC and I don't know why".....This should be the alert when a victim of narcissistic abuse presents themselves to therapists. The inexplicable "complaint".

My first visit to my therapist were those words exactly. "I don't know what's wrong with me, but It's SERIOUS!" I felt it. I did – I felt BEWILDERED inside, but I could not articulate what it was. (another red flag for someone usually able to articulate every feeling and explanation about myself in-depth).How was it that after 43 years of explaining, analyzing and discussing my own deficiencies quite well, I could NOT for the life of me explain to my therapist what was so "wrong" with me that it was palpable. His answer, set me free, it really did.

“YOU HAVE BEEN IN A DOMESTICALLY VIOLENT RELATIONSHIP WITH A NARCISSIST “

My therapist had some background with this person. He'd WITNESSED the narcissist calling me,

berating me during sessions. I held the phone away during one session, so that my therapist could hear the narcissist on the other end questioning me about cheating, "Accusing me of having an affair with the therapist". Grilling me about what the therapist looked like and would speak to me like. He even accused the therapist of wanting me sexually and that was the reason the therapist spoke so lowly of the narcissist. (of course it couldn't just be that the narcissist had a bad reputation and the community was on to him)

Sufferers report that their spark has gone out and, even years later, find they just cannot get motivated about anything.

Unaware that we've been living in a war zone with a tyrannical narcissist, we can't quite grasp the words to articulate the abuse, yet at the same time, we VERY MUCH FEEL IT. We present ourselves to the mental health community, incapable of speaking about an abuse we yet know nothing about. Until that word, "**NARCISSISTIC ABUSE**" is given to us, we have NO IDEA that is what's causing our pain. That's why it's SO IMPORTANT to get the word out there, what narcissists look like, their modus operandi, the words and phrases they use, so that when a victim of their abuse begins looking for answers, they quickly will be able to identify that they are involved with a narcissist.

In Narcissistic Victim Syndrome you are looking for a cluster of symptoms to emerge many are the symptoms of trauma (avoidance, loss of interest, feeling detached, sense of a limited future, sleeping or eating difficulties and nightmares, irritability, hyper-vigilance, easily startled, flashbacks, hopelessness, psychosomatic illnesses, self-harming, thoughts of suicide etc). Some victims develop Stockholm Syndrome and want to support, defend, and love the abuser despite what they have gone through.

5. DISSOCIATION

Victims tend to 'dissociate' or detach from their emotions, body, or surroundings. Living in a war zone where all forms of power and control are used against you (intimidation; emotional, physical and mental abuse; isolation, economic abuse, sexual abuse, coercion, control etc), the threat of abuse is always present. Dissociation is an automatic coping mechanism against overwhelming stress.

Symptoms of dissociation resulting from trauma may include depersonalization, (disconnecting your body awareness from your physical self) psychological numbing, disengaged from life and passions, or amnesia regarding the events of the abuse.

It has been hypothesized that dissociation may provide a temporarily effective defense mechanism in cases of severe trauma; however, in the long-term, dissociation is associated with decreased psychological functioning and adjustment.

Other symptoms sometimes found along with dissociation in victims of traumatic abuse (often referred to as "sequelae to abuse") include anxiety, PTSD, low self-esteem, somatization, depression, chronic pain, interpersonal dysfunction, substance abuse, self-mutilation and suicidal ideation or actions. These symptoms may lead the victim to erroneously present the symptoms as the source of the problem.



6. PTSD

Let's face it. If I didn't mention PTSD, or Complex PTSD, I would NOT be doing the topic of narcissistic abuse syndrome ANY justice.

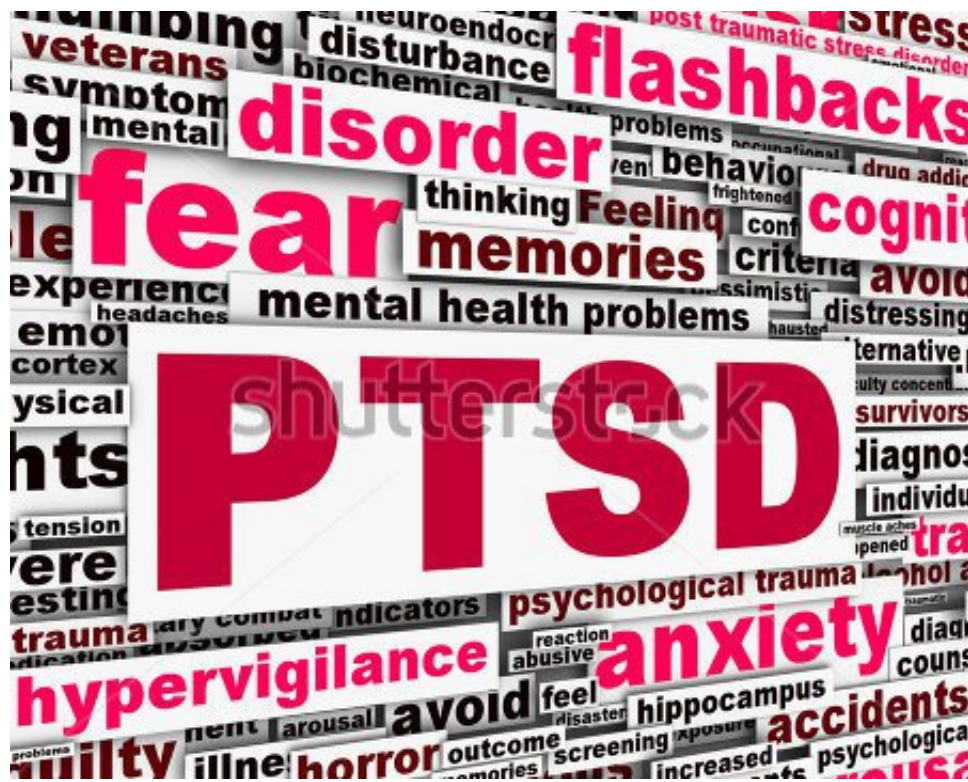
Ptsd, in layman's terms? From a fellow sufferer? A Cerebral anxiety attack that makes your whole body come alive with PALPABLE FEAR. The rapid heart beat, the intrusive and spinning thoughts and fears – just like the abuse is CURRENTLY HAPPENING SEQUENTIALLY ALL OVER AGAIN. This is called RE-LIVING. It's as if the traumatic abuse event is occurring in the present tense. All the emotions of fear, shame, shrinking, wincing, looking over your shoulder & walking on eggshells waiting to be attacked ruthlessly AGAIN.

<http://afternarcissisticabuse.files.wordpress.com/2013/12/ptsd.jpg>

Physical numbness -

(toes, fingertips, lips) is common, as is emotional numbness (especially inability to feel joy).

Avoidance -



of places, sounds, tastes, and songs that remind them of their abuser or the abuse. Intense feelings of anxiety even in anticipation of having to revisit the memories.

Memory Loss - Almost all targets report impaired memory. Partially due to conscious avoidance as well as from the damage done to the hippocampus, an area of the brain linked to learning and memory.

Need for solitude / tendency to isolate -

We're EXHAUSTED after

narcissistic abuse. Feelings of withdrawal and isolation are common; we just want to be in our own head for a while, find our own answers; thus, solitude is sought.

Lack of Joy and Hope -

Inability to feel joy (anhedonia) and deadening of loving feelings towards others are commonly reported. One fears never being able to feel love or trust again.

The target becomes very gloomy and senses a foreshortened future sometimes with justification. Many targets ultimately have severe psychiatric injury, severely impaired health and/or stress related illnesses.

Sleeplessness-

Melatonin became my new best friend after narcissistic abuse. The nightmares and night terrors can be overwhelming that good restorative sleep becomes impossible. Napping became my new favorite passion.

Sleep becomes almost impossible, despite the constant fatigue; such sleep as is obtained tends to be unsatisfying, unrefreshing and non-restorative. On waking, the person often feels more tired than when they went to bed. Depressive feelings arrive very early in the morning, making falling back to sleep an impossibility. Feelings of vulnerability and loneliness may be heightened overnight.

Anxiousness, Guilt & Disturbing thoughts -

Targets have an extremely short fuse and are easily irritated. The person frequently experiences obsessive visions of violence happening to the narcissist hoping for an accident for, or murdering the narcissist; the resultant feelings of guilt further limit progress in healing.

Fight or Flight Response -

With your system on alert for ever-present danger in the environment it's easy to react sensitively to sudden changes – causing the startle response.

Awareness of symptoms -

It's very harrowing to realize that you are different from you were before the narcissist; **FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFERENT**. When you are very aware that PTSD has replaced the narcissist, it emotionally drains the target of any hope for being **PERMANENTLY NARCISSISTIC FREE**. We don't want to be constantly reminded and aware of the person we escaped. We want to live freely, however symptoms, are a constant reminder that we **DON'T**.

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Narcissists are Character Assassins

NOV 18

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