

# How to: Recover From A Relationship with A Narcissist



**HEALING** SPACES

A background image featuring a close-up of green leaves on a branch in the upper left corner, with a soft, out-of-focus green background. A large, dark grey quotation mark is positioned above the text.

“

Never argue with someone who  
believes their own lies

DANIEL MARK SCHWARTZ

# Table of Contents

01

## About Kelsey Grimm & Healing Spaces

Kelsey is the founder of Healing Spaces and ridiculously passionate about Mental Health. Learn about what she cares about and what it is like to be supported by the amazing counseling team at Healing Spaces.

02

## What is Narcissism

Learn more about what narcissism is and how to better understand it.

03

## What do Narcissists do: Narcissistic Supply

04

## What do Narcissists do: Gaslighting

05

## What can you do if you have a narcissist in your life

06

## Activity & Resources

Hungry for more?



Healing Spaces Founder, Kelsey Grimm

# About Kelsey Grimm

Hello, my name is Kelsey!

I am the Founder of Kelsey the Counsellor, a counselling influencer brand dedicated to creating a community of mental health resources, and Healing Spaces, a clinical counselling practice based in British Columbia. I strongly believe in the power of the human spirit, the ability to overcome obstacles, and that the phoenix rises from the ashes.

I have witnessed brave people willing to face challenges, willing to learn, and willing to change. I believe my role is to support each person who wishes to grow, grow – who wishes to heal, heal – and who wishes to learn, learn. I support each person uniquely, and together we will face your current life challenges and move through them towards a brighter and better tomorrow.

*xo Kelsey*



# About Healing Spaces



Healing Spaces Office in Kamloops, British Columbia

Healing Spaces provides a warm and welcoming place with our main focus on supporting you move towards the life you dream for yourself! We focus on counselling support for anxiety, depression, grief, trauma, chronic pain, and chronic illness.

We offer counselling to children, youth, adults, couples, parents and families in person in Kamloops , British Columbia and virtually all over British Columbia.

Our team of counsellors are well trained and experienced in multiple areas of counselling with different specialties. We offer in person and virtual counselling options, which allows our team to support you from the comfort and safety of your own home.

# What is Narcissism



## Why are narcissists so narcissistic?

Narcissists are hurting.

**I AM NOT JUSTIFYING THEIR BEHAVIOUR.**

I just think it might be helpful to understand.

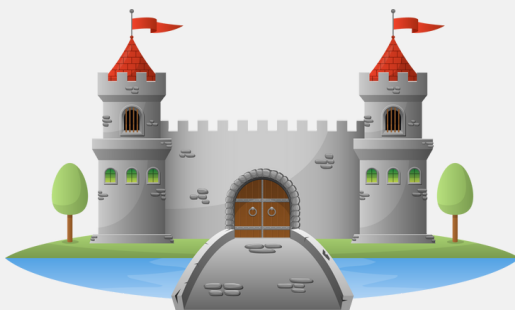
I want you to imagine this...

There is a small person sitting in the very centerpoint of a giant castle. They are in a locked room and there are guards surrounding the only entrance into this room. Around these guards are more guards. And around them more guards. And then there is a moat with alligators, a drawbridge and more guards. They are in the middle of nowhere and around the city limits are more guards and perhaps another alligator or two.

Narcissists have such a vulnerable sense of self they only want to create a sense of safety for themselves to create another persona and hide their vulnerabilities. What happens, however, is that no one wants to get close to them or when we do we constantly are fighting with an alligator. The narcissist tries to convince us that we are in the wrong but there could be nothing further from the truth.

Being in a relationship with someone who is a narcissist or has narcissistic tendencies is really really really hard, often toxic and can be abusive.

One of the most challenging things about being in a relationship with a narcissist is they are highly unlikely to change. We are the ones who have to decide if we are going to continue to be in this relationship as it is or if we are going to step away.



# What do Narcissists do: Narcissistic Supply

## What is Narcissistic Supply?

Think of narcissistic supply as the energy that keeps the narcissist going.

If they are running low on their supply, they might struggle with their feeling of security and power. To regain a sense of security and power, they might try to gather more narcissistic supply.

They might look at ways that are socially acceptable to get recognition or accolades. They might search for 'way to go's' from their workplace, community or family.

They might feign empathy or vulnerability because they know it is a socially acceptable way to find connection and attention.

### Getting Narcissistic Supply in a relationship looks like:

- Pretending to care about your feelings
- Pretending to empathize with you
- Reducing their abusive behaviour temporarily to convince you it isn't that bad.
- Try to get more attention/affection from you.
- Remind you of how skilled/brilliant/capable/great they are.
- Seeking negative attention (any is better than none)
- Trying to do something 'special' for you but really it is only to boost themselves up

# What do Narcissists do: Gaslighting

## What is gaslighting ?

Acting in such a way to cause another to question your own reality.

The term gaslighting has gotten a lot of public attention. It can be used out of context if we don't really understand it. But when it is actually happening, it's implications are significant.

Gaslighting is when someone acts in such a way that it causes the other person to question what they have done, what they think, what they believe, and about their perception of reality. It's like pulling the rug out from underneath you.

One of the tricky things about gaslighting is often it is used by a person trying to keep or obtain power and control over another in a relationship. This is an important feature because it is used with mal intent.

The danger is if we start to question our own reality we then may buy into their false reality and can become further entrenched in this power struggle. It's hard to see it when it is happening but it can be very dangerous.

### What does gaslighting look like?

- Someone is lying in such a way, you start to question what you know as true.
  - Someone manipulation the facts or the perception of facts to lead you to wonder if what you know is true
  - Someone smooth talking you into believing you are completely at fault, but it is okay you didn't mean to
- Gaslighting can sound like
- You don't know what you are talking about
  - You really hurt my feelings, how do you think I feel when you think I am lying to you
  - I think you are really having an off day
  - How could you ever believe that about me?
  - Really, you think that? I only want what is best for you. How could you say that? After all I do for you?
  - Have you taken your meds today?
  - Who is putting these ideas in your head?



# What can you do if you have a narcissist in your life?

## Recognize it is happening.

One of the hardest things about being in a relationship with a narcissist is that we don't always see it happening to us! The behaviour we see might not look like what we would expect behaviour of a narcissist to look like.

It is not always the case that they overtly seek attention of others and drive a flashy car and have a fancy high paying job. Someone can look rather typical in a typical job with a typical car and still exhibit narcissistic tendencies in their relationships.

It is not always the case they yell at us and create overt violence in our relationship. They might be more covert and use guilt tripping and manipulative tendencies. They might not allow space for you in the relationship or allow your emotions to be validated.

## Recognize you are not doing anything wrong!

It's not you it's me does apply here!

You have not done anything wrong. You are not doing anything wrong. You do not deserve this type of treatment.

It is likely the other person is not going to change. So you can choose to make some changes in how you respond to their narcissistic tendencies or you can change the dynamic of the relationship.

Depending on who the person is in your life and how you are doing might influence your decision.

Whatever decision you make today is a great decision for today. You can make a different decision tomorrow if you want to.

# Activity

## STEP 1: Consider your relationship and what your own thoughts and feelings are

You will need:

- Some quiet space
- Some time
- Something to write things down, if that is your way
- A trusted loved one, if that is your way

What you do:

- 1) Consider – if you felt safe – what you would tell this person. All the things you have never said and probably some things you will likely never say. This is NOT about communicating these things to them, it is about giving yourself space to think about what you think about the situation.
- 2) Breathe in and out.
- 3) Feel all those feelings and express them in a safe way. Perhaps you can journal or yell into a pillow. You can go for a walk or talk with someone you trust.
- 4) Remember to believe yourself and your feelings. Your feelings are giving you information. Start by listening to them and believing them no matter what anyone says.
- 5) Write down or try to remember what you know is true. When you have some space from the other person try to hear your own voice. Try to document it in written form if safe or just by memory if you can't write it down. If and when you start to stray from what you believe remind yourself of what is true.

## STEP 2: Start creating change

Change the game.

- Start small and ensure you take action in a way that you might feel nervous but safe.
- Choose the path of least resistance. See if there is an opportunity to respond differently.
- Consider setting a boundary and then remind them you will be setting that boundary when it is likely crossed.

Don't expect them to want to change or like it when you change the dance

- Use "I" language. For example, "I have decided I need something to change. I am going to ask that when xyz happens we do abc instead of Imnop"
- Expect resistance and keep going.
- Expect them not to respond kindly all the time
- Keep an eye out for new ways they might be seeking narcissistic supply

# Resources



Playlist



Book/Article



App



Video



Podcast



## What is Narcissism

Kelsey the Counsellor

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AAj-gcWTGKc>



## What is Gaslighting

Kelsey the Counsellor

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=szZtHxHNpuw>



## A Narcissist as my Teacher

Kelsey the Counsellor

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wu2SGBVMTCQ>



## NarcissistTrauma Recovery Podcast

Trust me - check it out!

<https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/the-narcissistic-trauma-recovery-podcast/id1527479270>



## Lindsay Gibson

Adult Children of Emotionally Immature Parents: How to Heal from Distant, Rejecting, or Self-Involved Parents

[https://www.google.ca/books/edition/Adult\\_Children\\_of\\_Emotionally\\_Immature\\_P/cZpGCQAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover](https://www.google.ca/books/edition/Adult_Children_of_Emotionally_Immature_P/cZpGCQAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover)



# THANK YOU

Feel free to reach out if you have any questions! I am looking forward to chatting with you!



[kelsey@healingspaces.center](mailto:kelsey@healingspaces.center)



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