



Recovery from Narcissistic Abuse

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If you have experienced narcissistic abuse, you will know there is not one way to recover from the abuse of a narcissist. Each person is unique. The personal experience of the abuse will be different for different people. The length of time the abuse took place and the degree of the abuse will vary amongst victims. And so, the journey to recovery will be different for each person. If you have experienced narcissistic abuse you may feel that you will never recover. You may feel that the damage is so deep recovery is not possible. Know that things can get better, that you will get stronger, and that you can recover a great deal from the abuse if you are prepared to work at it. Below are some generally accepted practices which can help heal the wounds of narcissistic abuse.

1. **Acknowledge what happened to you.** Read up about narcissistic abuse so you understand your experience. This is important in helping you to make sense of what you went through. It is too easy for victims to blame themselves and wonder where they went wrong. And it is very easy to buy into the blame of others. You need to know what happened. And you need to know that the narcissist was wrong in what they did. Recognise the abuse for what it was. You are not crazy. You are not at fault.
2. **Understand how it impacted your life.** Typical outcomes of narcissistic abuse are low self-esteem, self-doubt, anxiety, fear, depression, PTSD, isolating yourself, and others mentioned in previous newsletters. You cannot change and heal what you do not acknowledge, so understand what the impact of the abuse was. If you want to read more about this or work with a professional, then do so.
3. **End relationships with the narcissist and/or create boundaries.** You are not going to recover if you continue to interact with the narcissist as before. This person knows you well and knows how to upset you. A narcissist almost always never changes. Get out and stay away. Do not try and play them at their own game. I have come across people who were so angry they wanted to dish out the same to the narcissist. Don't. Just don't. It won't end well.
4. **Get support.** Most people who have experienced narcissistic abuse have also been quite isolated. This is part of the narcissist's tactics. To take you away from those who love and care for you, while often telling you that those people don't actually care. Don't try and go it alone. Because you have been abused in a relationship with a person, having people around you who care for you can make healing much easier. We get wounded in relationships and we can heal in relationships. Even if you don't have that many family and friends around, look for support groups of people going through the same experience. There is nothing quite as

comforting as being with someone who knows what you have been through and has been through it as well. Keep in regular contact with those supporting you and don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it.

5. **Take care of your physical and mental health.** Get enough sleep. Eat well. Stay hydrated and exercise. If you suffer from anxiety, depression, PTSD or any other mental health issue then get professional help so you can start getting well and looking forward to life again.
6. Anyone who has been through abuse will feel extremely emotional at times. Emotions can include extreme sadness and anger at what has happened. **You need to express your emotions.** Sometimes people are afraid that if they express their emotions, for instance cry or yell, they will never stop. Our psyche has an inbuilt process whereby when things get too much we do stop. So, don't be afraid to express how you feel. You need to feel all the hurt and anger and pain. Just make sure you don't harm anyone, including yourself in the process. If you need help to learn how to express your emotions correctly, then get it. Writing and talking about your experiences do help you to put it all in order, make sense of them, and eventually be able to pack them away.
7. **Focus on self-care. Work on rebuilding your self-esteem and confidence.** Get to know yourself again. A lot of people tell me, they have "lost themselves". Take up new hobbies. Do things that are fun and that you love to do.
8. Start thinking about **creating a new future for yourself. Set new dreams and goals** for your life. Meet new people. Join new groups. Look for and take up new opportunities. You still have a lot of your life left.
9. One way in which people who have experienced narcissistic abuse can feel more empowered going forward is to **learn to recognise the warning signs.** Learn how to recognise a narcissist. Learn to notice red flags. Pay attention to your gut feelings. When something doesn't feel good it isn't good.

It takes courage to heal from narcissistic abuse. It takes courage to do most things that are difficult. You want to do it though, because after your experiences you deserve a good life. Sometimes people think that behaving just like the narcissist is the way to go. They decide they will never allow themselves to be abused again and so they start acting like the abuser. This is not a good idea. Abusers, at some stage, are usually outed. Life has a way, over time, of revealing the truth. Also, you don't want to stay submissive and helpless, so you become a target for other abusers. You want to work on yourself, get to know yourself, get to value yourself, and know that you deserve people in your life who are also concerned about your needs and wants and welfare.