

**Video transcription:**  
**Sam Vaknin Seminar: "The Need To Be Seen".**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jvuRmP3KP1g>  
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Text sections and some extra headlines are added for readable reasons.

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**Sam:** [Sitting at a table in front of the audience, tapping on his phone]  
Does it bother you, that I'm surfing the phone?

**One from the audience:** Yes.

**Sam:** Who else is bothered? Two people are bothered. You're bothered that I'm surfing the phone? It's Instagram, it's very interesting [some are laughing].  
[Putting down his phone, rise up, standing in front of the audience].

Please stand up [audience gets up].  
Nice, sit down [audience sits down].

I started by ignoring all of you. It bothered you. Then I gave you an utterly irrational, unjustified, crazy instruction and literally all of you slavishly obeyed it. You acted like robots, no thinking, no criticism, no critical thinking.

What was the difference between my first behavior and my second behavior?

First behavior: I did not see you. You did not exist for me, you were transparent, you were air. The second thing I did: I saw you. I acknowledged your existence. I looked at you. I recognized that you exist, I recognized that you are here.  
2:08

Look at the power of being seen. Just by virtue of seeing you, I made you act completely irrationally. Being seen is a critical part of human psychology. It's an enormous power. If you are not seen you feel uncomfortable, you feel degraded, you feel humiliated, feel rejected and you begin to develop mental illness. The source of most mental illnesses, if it's not biochemical, is not being seen. If you are seen even minimally, absolutely mini-mini minimally, the person who sees you, can make you do anything, as I just demonstrated to you. There are people here with academic degrees, with history, with families and literally all of you rose to your feet and sat down for absolutely no good reason. Just because I saw you.

I will now let Julia introduce the event, Julia are you still here? Then we will continue the seminar [Julia gives a short introduction/very low sound].

**Sam:** The chair also recognizes Richard Grannon, who is hiding in the audience. He is a master of all things narcissistic. In the good way, I meant [smiling].

4:22

### **An epidemic of not being seen.**

There is an epidemic of not being seen. As the number of people multiplies there are 7.4 billion people now on this poor planet. When I was born, which was when the last dinosaurs were dying, there were 3 billion people. Today there are 7.4. It is more and more difficult to stand out. It's more and more difficult to be special, more and more difficult to be unique. We are not seen, no one sees us.

50 years ago, 100 years ago we lived in villages and small towns. We were embedded in communities, we had families. We don't have any of these things anymore. Fewer and fewer people get married. 53% of all marriages in the west end in divorce, more than 70% of second and third marriages. The nuclear family is gone, extended family is gone, villages are gone, communities are gone. We have no one left to see us. We are all atoms floating in space, single, desperate, lonely, unseen, invisible. It's an epidemic of invisibility.

6:02

You saw how irritated you became, that I was surfing my Instagram and ignoring all of you. And yet I am not a meaningful figure in your life and this thing is passing, an 1 hour experience - and with me it's guaranteed to be a bad experience - still it got you irritated. Then you saw, once I acknowledged your existence, how I was able to manipulate all of you, almost without any exception, to do an utterly insane thing. Being seen is a crucial, crucial thing.

### **The power of being seen.**

When a baby is born, the first thing the baby cares about is to be seen, because as a baby if you are not seen, you're dead. Babies exist in a binary state, either they're seen or they're dead. To be seen is a question of survival in the first few years of life. If you're not noticed, if you're not seen, you could die. So babies provoke their parents to see them. Babies cry, do other things, smile, wave their hands and little feet to attract the attention of their parents to be seen. Again, it's all about being seen. Gradually the baby develops what we call "object permanence", "object constancy". The baby believes that even if mother is not in the room, she will be back and she will see him or her. Again it's about being seen.

7:50

One could reduce the overwhelming majority of human psychology to this single question 'being seen'. Every pathology that's not biochemical, emanates from this, and many of the drives, many of the behaviors, many of the traits have to do with exactly this.

Why do you think you have private names and not numbers? Why each and every one of you wears a different attire. Why are you in pink and you in green and you in black, why all these things? Why are you doing all this? Why are you not all wearing exactly the same thing and why aren't all of you called Margo?

There is no good reason except one: To be special, to be unique, to be identifiable, to be seen. That's the reason for the fashion industry, for makeup, for private names, for everything. It's all about being seen. It's the most crucial thing in life.

9:05

### **If the child is not seen.**

What happens to you when you are not seen as a child? There is only one way to be seen, only one, but many ways to NOT be seen. For example you could simply be neglected and abandoned and ignored as a baby, as a child. That's a way to not be seen. Or you can be

treated as an instrument of gratification to realize your mother's lost dreams or your father's hidden wishes, to become an extension of the parents, to bring honor and pride to the family, to be put on a pedestal, to be worshipped and idolized. This sounds exactly the opposite of not being seen, but it is not being seen, because the child is not seen as a child. The child is objectified. The minute the child is objectified, the child disappears and an object appears. When the child is not allowed to develop his or her boundaries to separate and individuate, the child is not seen. All this tampering, spoiling, being put on a pedestal, being idolized, all these are forms of not seeing the child, forms of abuse.

10:40

How do children react to this? They react in 3 ways and 2 mental health conditions:

1. Children react to this state of not being seen by remaining children for the rest of their lives. They remain children until they die. As children they try to attract attention, they try to be seen. They were not seen when they were six years old, maybe they will be seen when they're 60 - or 16 or 26 or 36. They try and try and try again to be seen and they never grow up. They remain children.

2. They are traumatized, that's the second reaction. Not being seen is a major trauma and they are traumatized for life. This trauma never goes away. It's not something that heals. There's no scar tissue. It opens and reopens again and again and again every time the person is not seen. Of course in life very often we are not seen. We go to a government, bureaucracy, we are not seen. We go on a trip, other people don't see us, we are not seen on many occasions. So, remaining a child, infantilisation and being in a traumatic state, that's the second reaction.

12:08

3. The third reaction is what we call abandonment or "Separation Anxiety". It is the fear of being abandoned or being separated from the person, who sees us. That person could be an intimate partner or someone else. Abandonment and separation anxiety are overwhelming.

When you put the three together, what do you get? When you put a person who never grows up, always remains a child, he's always traumatized and is terrified of abandonment and separation, what do you get? You get what we call "Cluster B personality disorders". You get Borderline Personality Disorder. You also get Narcissistic Personality Disorder and you get Codependency.

These three characteristics are typical of both narcissists and codependents, borderlines and codependents.

13:15

### **The powerful attraction between narcissists and codependents.**

Now perhaps you understand why narcissists and codependents attract each other so powerfully; the powerful attraction, the bond between narcissists and codependents. Because narcissists and codependents are flip sides of the same coin. They share a common legacy and a common heritage. They ARE twin souls. It is not in the imagination of the codependent, it is absolutely true.

Both narcissism and codependency are post-traumatic conditions, but narcissists chose one solution, codependents chose another. Still they come from the same "country". They inhabited the same warzone, they suffered the same casualties, they are both wounded identically, they bleed the same way. The minute they see each other, they recognize a twin. The bonding is ultra extremely powerful, almost unbreakable. This is precisely what we call "Trauma Bonding". Probably most of you've heard of it.

14:45

We have codependency and narcissism. You remember that I said, that both these are post-traumatic conditions. Both these involve someone who refuses to grow up. Both of them are

cases of "Arrested development". These are cases of people, who have attachment disorders. They don't know how to attach functionally.

### **Their different attachment styles make a perfect match.**

The codependent attaches by vanishing, by eliminating herself, by disappearing. She attaches by disappearing. The narcissist attaches by consuming. It's a perfect match. The codependent wants to be consumed, the narcissist wants to consume. It is perhaps the only case in nature, where the prey seeks the predator and experiences fulfilment by being consumed.

15:52

Narcissist and codependent when they meet, they start a dance macabre; sort of a sick dance, where the narcissist probes the boundaries and the borders of the codependent. It's like the codependent is encased in some kind of gel, some kind of gelatine thing. And the narcissist puts his finger in and identifies the soft spots, where he can tear apart the cover. Then the codependent submits, she plays along. She collaborates, because she lives, she experiences being alive only through another person.

16:45

### **Narcissists and codependents live by proxy.**

Codependents live vicariously by proxy. Narcissists also live by proxy. Remember narcissists and codependents come from the same background. Codependents live vicariously through other people. Narcissists feel that they are alive only when they consume other people; when they, more precisely, consume their input - known as "narcissistic supply". But both of them feel alive only when they have consumed or have been consumed by another person. In other words, they do not have an autonomous existence.

Codependents and narcissists do not have personal autonomy. They are not autonomous units, they cannot survive alone. A codependent panics when she's alone. She experiences extreme anxiety, extreme depression. Many codependents become suicidal, when they are alone. Many self-mutilate and many try to commit suicide. Similarly a narcissist without sources of narcissistic supply - I can tell you from personal experience - a narcissist feels that he is disintegrating. When I don't have sources of supply, I feel like the painting by Salvador Dali, you know with the molecules. I feel that I'm disintegrating, floating into thin air. I need this glue. The glue is the narcissistic supply. The codependent similarly needs me. This is the background.

18:41

I started by saying that the problem is, that more and more of us are no longer seen. Again: 100 years ago your mother saw you, your father saw you, your cousin saw you, your grandmother saw you, your grandfather saw you, your village saw you, your parish, your community. There were many people who saw you, even gossiped about you. You were the center of attention, malevolent attention very often, but malevolent attention is better than no attention, trust me. There was always someone there to see you.

### **Today many are not seen by anyone.**

Today we are so alone and so atomized, that many of us are not seen by anyone. You know the famous story about people who died in apartment buildings and they're discovered weeks later, because no one paid attention and so on so forth. The other day there was a guy who shoot up a synagogue in St. Petersburg and CNN went and interviewed several people who lived across the hall from him. They never saw him. One of them, a woman, saw him once, but she didn't know his name. They have been living together across the hall for well over 4 years. This is 'not being seen' at its extreme. I would venture to say, that he shot up the synagogue in order to be seen finally by someone, never mind in which light, just to be finally seen.

20:33

### **Narcissism as the organizing principle of our society.**

What happens when the majority of people are not seen? Well, we begin to have something called "Network effect". When an individual is not seen, individual becomes narcissist or codependent. What happens when everyone is not seen? Everyone becomes narcissistic or codependent. We are beginning to see narcissism and codependency on a societal scale, on the scale of collectives, on the scale of whole societies, whole cultures and potentially whole civilizations like Western civilization.

Narcissism is no longer an individual diagnosis. Narcissism is fast becoming the organizing principle of our society. The principle that gives meaning to our society, explains our behaviors and imputes to us the traits, that we adopt in order to be socially acceptable. To put it more simply, which is not something I do very often: If an entire society is narcissistic, you - even if you don't want to, even if it's against your nature, even if you are trying actively to avoid it - will become narcissistic. We ARE our society. If the condition to be socially acceptable - in other words if the condition to be seen is to conform - you will conform. Period. Don't think you can resist. Resistance is futile.

22:26

### **To conform is to be seen.**

I demonstrated it to you, if you remember. You all stood up, you conformed. Never mind now, each one of you, I'm sure, had a different motivation. Some of you respected me, the more deranged types respected me, some of you succumbed to peer pressure, some of you didn't know what's happening. I'm sure each and every single one of you had an excellent reason why you stood up, but the fact is: You all stood up. To conform is to be seen and to be seen, remember again, is the key to human psychology. So, if the price to pay is to be more narcissistic, you will become more narcissistic. If the price to pay is to be more codependent, each and every one of you will become more codependent.

### **Why narcissism and codependency are basically the same.**

There is no difference between narcissism and codependency. Think about it this way: The narcissist is someone who is dependent on narcissistic supply and the sources of supply. So, in a way the narcissist is the ultimate codependent.

If the majority of people do not find solutions as to how to be seen, entire societies become narcissistic, psychopathic and codependent.

Consider the case of Nazi Germany. What happened in Nazi Germany? In 1919 the Germans were forced, shamed and humiliated into signing the Versailles contract. The Versailles Agreement was an agreement that degraded, demeaned and ruined the pride and dignity of Germans. In other words, the Germans were not seen. No one saw the Germans. They were lumped together into this obstruct, and the obstruct was humiliating. The Germans as Germans were not seen, because had anyone seen the Germans, the outcome would have been different.

24:56

### **Trauma eliminates empathy.**

When we are vengeful, when we seek revenge, when we are aggressive, when we are angry, when we are traumatized, level of empathy goes down. That's not a New Age statement. This is based on studies in Psychology. We know for example that traumatized people have much less empathy than people, who are not traumatized. This is why I sit alone at home - alone of course, I'm not seen - I sit alone at home.

I love, absolutely love when I read trauma victims claiming, that they have more empathy or they're empathic. Because the first thing the trauma does, it eliminates empathy. Traumatized people have no empathy.

The Germans were traumatized, they were mistreated, they were not seen. Result: Someone who saw them. Adolf Hitler was a midget, ugly, hunchbacked, Austrian failure, but one thing he did well: He saw the Germans. He saw them. If you read the speeches of Adolf Hitler, they are all about 'I see you, I feel you, I understand you, I sympathize with you, I empathize with you' etc. etc. etc. ad nauseam. The Germans gave him all the power in the world, because he saw them and he was the only one who saw them. So, whole societies can become narcissistic, psychopathic.

26:38

### **Narcissistic, psychopathic and codependent societies are emerging.**

We see unfortunately a similar trend today in numerous societies around the world. We have seen it in the United States, where someone like Donald Trump was elected president of that country. Inconceivable only 10 years ago. Why? 40 million Americans are not seen by the political establishment, by academia, by anyone. They were shunted and relegated to ghost towns with closed factories, with poverty levels which rival sub-saharan Africa, with low education etc. etc. etc. They were not seen. And suddenly this guy came, Donald Trump. Very poor man, exactly like them, not educated - I'm joking. It was the exact opposite of these people, but he saw them and that was enough.

Similar things are happening in Turkey, Erdogan - in the Philippines, Duterte - in Brazil, Bolsonaro. Wherever leaders emerge who claim to see through the unseen, the invisible, they take over. We are beginning to see narcissistic, psychopathic and codependent societies, whole societies. All the individuals in these societies conform. When I say conform, you say to yourself 'that's nonsense, even if society is psychopathic I can resist it, I'm a good person, I will never be a psychopath'. Right? Wrong.

28:26

In Nazi Germany the SS, Schutzstaffel, started with 12,000 members. By 1941, when Nazi Germany invaded Russia, the official membership of the SS was 3.3 million people, including teachers, priests etc. etc. The composition of a typical unit that killed Jews in the Holocaust was middle class, well-educated people with no background in the military or some background only in the police. That's all. People became psychopaths in Nazi Germany, because it was the only way to be seen. Don't kid yourself, it can happen anywhere, and if trends continue as they do, it will.

Now you can say 'okay what's this guy talking about? We didn't come to hear a lecture about politics'. What do I care what you came to hear, I'm a narcissist. I'm going to talk about what I want to talk [audience laughing].

29:47

### **You are already infected.**

The reason I'm mentioning all this - talking a lot about Adolf Hitler and other favorites of mine - is that societies are being transformed as we speak. Each and every one of you is already infected. I'm coming to tell you, that you have been infected, like the "Zombie apocalypse", right? You're all infected.

For example: In the United States, starting 20 or 25 years ago, there was a new movement in education. It was called child empowerment. Did you hear about it? Every teacher in the United States was taught to tell children 'you are unique, you are special and if you only put your mind to it, there is no limit to what you can do'. I'm kidding you not, this is the official message in American education system: "If you just put your mind to it, if you just decide, you can do anything you want".

Life coaches all over the world and business coaches and so on so forth are spreading exactly the same message. Educators, life coaches, gurus all over the world are spreading exactly the

same message. It's a highly - fallacious of course, counterfactual - narcissistic message.  
31:21

Result: According to Twenge and Campbell in a series of studies between 2003 and 2006 the number of students - diagnosed through The Narcissistic Personality Inventory, diagnosed with extreme narcissistic traits - went up 5 times. There were 5 times more narcissists in 2006 among the student body than in 1985, which is the baseline. That's a result of the education system doing its thing.

The famous science magazine New Scientist (by the way published close to home, in the United Kingdom, not in the United States ) - which is a British science magazine and one of the two best in the world together with Scientific American - had a cover story July 2017 advising parents to teach their children how to become narcissists. I am not kidding you.

So don't think that what I'm saying is 'theoretical far away, there is time'. There is no time. You have no time left. All of you are already indoctrinated via the media, via the education system, online. You're all already infected to varying degrees and varying measures.

In every study we have, the level of empathy is down by anywhere between 40 and 70%. In all populations including nurses and medical doctors. In every study we have.  
33:21

Narcissism shot up, depending on the country, as I said between 3 and 5 times. Today in clinical settings we diagnose 3% of people with malignant narcissism. The figure in 1989, when Theodore Millon wrote his "Personality Disorders in Modern Life" (which is the Bible), was 0.3%. Today it's 3%. The situation is becoming worse and worse.

### **Where is the boundary beyond which self-confidence becomes arrogance.**

The thing is this: You are being taught to be assertive, to be self-confident, to develop self esteem, to trust yourself. Everyone is teaching you that, especially Grannon [laughing]. Grannon and I have this, don't take it seriously, he is by far my favorite online guru [audience laughs].

There is this message in the air: You should be more assertive, more self-confident, you should have more self-esteem and so on so forth. Nothing of course is wrong with this message. Except that no one is telling you where is the limit, where is the boundary beyond which self-confidence becomes arrogance, or self-esteem becomes vanity, and assertiveness becomes aggression.

### **Inhibitions are part of socialization and acculturation.**

No one gives you any quantitative or even I would say qualitative indicator where you should stop. That's a serious problem, because all inhibitions are important. We know in psychology that inhibitions are perhaps the only mental construct, that is part of socialization and acculturation. In other words, it comes from outside, you can't develop it from inside.  
35:39

### **Narcissistic phenomena are multiplying.**

You know the famous book and movie "Lord of the Flies". You have these kids and they're on an island. They develop actually narcissism and so on. These kids have a problem, because no one is socializing them. No one is teaching, so they have no inhibitions. These kids have no inhibitions. By the way, the kids develop traditions, rules, procedures and a proto-state, proto-country, proto-government. They develop everything, everything happens. Except they don't have any inhibitions, because inhibitions come from outside. The problem is, that if no one teaches you where to stop, you will not stop. We say, that if no one teaches you inhibition, you will be disinhibitory. In other words you will simply not stop. It's a perpetuum mobile.  
36:38

This is exactly what's happening in my view. There were decades of psychology's and gurus and coaches, and I don't know what, telling all of you, that you should be assertive and self-confident in and have self esteem and so on so forth - and yet they neglected to tell you when to stop. Consequently, I think many, many people went overboard. And I think narcissistic phenomena are multiplying.

### **Narcissism is contagious.**

The thing is this: Narcissism is an epidemic. It's contagious. It's exactly like Ebola, only much faster. Victims of narcissistic abuse know that. You start your life with a narcissist, you get married to a narcissist. At the beginning you're nice, you're empathic, you're loving, you're caring, you're engulfing, your everything. 5 years later you're a narcissist: You're aggressive, you're a disempathic, you are humiliating, you're insulting, you're vicious, you're malicious. Narcissism is contagious. If 10% of these people didn't know were to put the boundary and became narcissistic, another 10 were infected and they infected another 10 etc. etc. And we have this in my view.

Consequently your chances of coming across a narcissist today are much higher, than when I was a kid. Actually, when I was a kid - remember the dinosaurs - no one mentioned the word. The word was unheard of. Why talk about being a kid?

38:36

### **You are much more likely to come across a narcissist today.**

In 1995 when I started my work on narcissism, no one heard of narcissism, not a single person. I started the first website and that's how it all started. No one heard of it. For many years it was difficult for me to explain what is a narcissist. I remember that we spent many years just explaining what is a narcissist, but today it's not a problem. It's in movies, it's in the news, politicians are analyzed as narcissists. Narcissism is a meme. You are much more likely to come across a narcissist today.

39:12

The more you are exposed to narcissism, the more you're infected. Your immunological system is destroyed the more often you come across a narcissist. You have immunity against narcissism, but it's destroyed by exposure to narcissism. And this exposure today is much higher than before.

What's happening? Where you started with assertiveness and self-control and self-esteem, you end up with grandiose fantasies. Even if you start in a healthy way, you end up being grandiose. You can see it online. Go online and read the comment section on Facebook, on YouTube and so on. Everyone is a genius, everyone is an expert, everyone knows everything about everything. You can teach no one nothing, 'your facts are your facts', 'his facts are his facts', 'your truth is your truth', 'he has his truth', 'she has her truth'. The people online are utterly narcissistic.

You could say 'well this a tiny minority'. It's not a tiny minority. Well over 300 million people are active daily online. According to Facebook in a typical week 700 million people access their accounts. According to Google 1.4 billion people are active online in every given week. This is not a small number. Consider the fact that 3.9 billion people are adults, the rest are children. 3.9 billion people, 1.4 billion is half. This is a representative sample, narcissism IS on the rise. And it creates a phenomena, that I dubbed "Malignant egalitarianism".

41:20

### **Malignant egalitarianism.**

Malignant egalitarianism is 'everyone is as good as everyone', 'everyone is as knowledgeable as everyone', 'everyone should have the same power as everyone', 'everyone is equal to everyone'. This sounds very democratic. It's actually very narcissistic of course. Not everyone

is equal to everyone, trust me, there are retards and there are geniuses. I repeat, there are retarded people and they're geniuses.

According to the very Foundation of Statistics, exactly 50% of people have less than average IQ. What to do? It's called "Median IQ". The median IQ today by definition is 100. It is adjusted all the time, going up, but it's 100 by definition. Exactly 50% of people have less than 100 by definition. That's what it means, "median". These people don't have the capacity of the other half or above 100. And of course they don't have the capacity of someone with 190, me [laughing with audience].  
42:47

### **Narcissism as a post-traumatic condition.**

What am I saying here? I'm saying that, in response to several of the questions during the break, hitherto until now narcissism, pathological narcissism, has been treated as a personality disorder. I am trying, at this stage single-handedly but hopefully not for long, to recast pathological narcissism not as a personality disorder, but as a post-traumatic condition.

Trauma can happen at any stage in life. Trauma can happen in childhood and can happen much later. It's possible to have, like in dementia, late onset narcissism. There were hints of this before.

There's something called "Situational Narcissism", situation and narcissism. Studies found out that among rockstars, amongst celebrities there is a marked rise in the score on narcissistic personality inventory. In other words, these people were totally normal and then, when they became stars, they became narcissists, clinical narcissists, diagnosed. This is late onset narcissism. It's called Situational Narcissism in academe, but I'm trying to generalize it.  
44:23

### **Narcissism is a combination of four elements.**

I'm trying to say, that narcissism can develop at any stage in life, because it is not a personality disorder at all. It is a combination of four elements:

- A. Attachment disorder, attachment problems.
- B. Post-traumatic condition, when the trauma can happen at any time.
- C. Addictive personality. Having an addictive personality. Because narcissists are addicted to attention, narcissistic supply, adrenaline, they're risk-takers like psychopaths.
- D. Regressive elements. In other words, narcissists are like children.

What I'm saying is not merely cosmetics or semantics. It explains exactly why all known therapies fail with narcissists. All therapies we know are complete failure when it comes to narcissists. The success is to modify some behaviors, and that's it. But none of the therapies we know, not a single one, touches the core of the narcissist, or heals or cures narcissism. Why? I'm saying: Because they are treating their own condition.  
45:55

### **Why all known therapies fail with narcissists.**

1. First of all: All the therapists talk to the narcissist as though the narcissist is an adult. But the narcissist is not an adult, it's a child. We need to use techniques from child psychology, not from adult psychology.
2. They treat narcissism as a problem of personality.

But narcissism is not a problem of personality. The personality of the narcissist – shock, in my view – is utterly okay. It's perfectly functional. All of you have healthy narcissism, it's a good thing. All of you should have healthy narcissism.

So, the personality is okay, but it is subjected to enormous torsion, an enormous stress known as trauma. It's a post traumatic condition. Like a Vietnam vet or like a woman, who is subjected to domestic violence for 20 years. It's a traumatic condition, so of course no one's succeed to cure narcissism.

What I'm saying is, that narcissism is contagious by virtue of socialization, acculturation, by virtue of social signaling, social cues, conformity to social mores and ethos and so on. You can acquire narcissism, you can become a narcissist, a late-onset narcissist. That's what I'm saying.  
47:37

### **Revolutionary and utterly new claims.**

Just to make clear: All these are revolutionary claims, so don't go around thinking, that this is what they teach in university, the orthodoxy. These claims are utterly new and not accepted yet by the academic establishment. I'm teaching courses in personality theory in several universities, where I'm kind of poisoning the students with my ideas. But otherwise if you go to Harvard, they will not recognize any of these ideas, of course. But I'm pushing with my limited resources. I'm pushing towards this direction: Narcissism is an epidemic.

Generally I think psychology would do well to adopt epidemiological models, because many human behaviors and many technologies are virus-like. They behave like viruses. For example, Richard and I were shooting some documentary and I told Richard, that I consider social media to be a form of virus, to have virus-like behavior. The same with narcissism, psychopathy and codependency. I think they are viral and they can modify behaviors of people, they can invade your mental DNA and mutate it. You can become mutated by being exposed to narcissists and to codependents, but especially to narcissists. This is just to clarify what I've been saying.  
49:22

### **Narcissism is based on trauma and attachment problems.**

I'm trying to switch the conversation, to change the conversation from narcissism as a clinical entity, like let's say tuberculosis or cancer. I'm trying to change this and to say, that narcissism is mainly a social and interpersonal dysfunction based on trauma and attachment problems and so on. To make it more context dependent, not something in the air.

It's very interesting, because for example we have studies of narcissists and psychopaths in prisons. I can tell you, that narcissists stop being narcissists very fast, when they are in prison. There are two types of narcissists in prison: Dead narcissists, those who did not stop - and all the others. All the others are not narcissists. I mean, suddenly all their behaviors vanish, their arrogance, their superiority, their entitlement, everything vanishes.  
50:35

### **Narcissism is an acquired behaviour.**

We also know, that narcissists modify their behavior according to context. For example if a narcissist wants to succeed in a job interview, they put up a facade, which is utterly non-narcissistic. So it seems that narcissists can turn on and off their narcissism. Do you know anyone with cancer, who can do that? I don't. Do you know anyone with tuberculosis, who can turn on and off his tuberculosis? I don't and Kafka didn't. It seems that narcissism is not like tuberculosis, not like cancer.

In other words, it's what we call "acquired parameter", "acquired behavior". Exactly like "learned helplessness", which we can reverse very easily. So, it gives a lot of hope to treating narcissists. Because if narcissism is an acquired thing and if it is dependent on trauma, we know how to treat trauma very, very effectively.

We have no idea how to treat narcissism and psychopathy, but we cure and heal trauma victims, almost 80 or 90%, depending on the trauma. So, if it's accepted that narcissism is trauma based, chances for healing are very high. Actually I developed a treatment modality, which I'm using on unfortunate patients. The results are promising, but I will not go into it right now.

52:13

As society becomes more and more narcissistic, and more and more psychopathic, the gatekeepers of society, the scholars, the intellectuals, the leaders, the opinion makers, the firstmovers, the shakers adopt. They adjust. Suddenly you see in universities studies about high functioning narcissists, productive narcissists. Narcissists are great in business, they are wonderful leaders, they have traits and behaviors which are conducive to creativity, profit making etc. etc.

Suddenly narcissism is not so bad. You have scholars like Michael Maccoby or Kevin Dutton who say, that for certain positions - like for example military leader, political leader - for these positions it's better to knowingly and consciously select for psychopaths. Kidding you not.

Suddenly psychopathic narcissism are in vogue, bon ton, in universities. So of course these are the opinion makers and then think tanks adopted. I can show you, or you can go to youtube and find for yourself, interviews where psychologists and psychiatrists appear on CNN and so on. They say 'yes Donald Trump is a great guy', 'it is precisely because he is a high-functioning narcissist, that he's exactly the man for the job' etc. etc. etc. This would have been unthinkable 15 years ago, 10 years ago, you know what, 5 years ago. Unthinkable. Now everyone is adapting and adjusting.

54:18

It's like bullying. When you have a single bully, the weaker members of society and so on coalesce around the bully, and together with a bully, they bully others. These are all infectious phenomenon. I'm using models from epidemiology to explain them. In epidemiology we have two interesting insights, two interesting observations. First of all, viruses infect very fast. They have Network effects (which would explain Facebook), they spreads very fast, but then suddenly they stop. It's called self-limitation. They stop.

Did you ever bother to ask yourselves, why the black death in 14th century Europe didn't kill all the Europeans, which would have been a great thing for Africa? Why this virus suddenly stopped? Why Ebola didn't kill millions of Africans? Why AIDS didn't kill everyone in its wake? Why viruses stop? Well, they stop because humans are food, and you never eat the whole refrigerator. You leave something for tomorrow.

55:45

### **The behaviors of narcissists and psychopaths are self-limiting.**

Exactly same is happening with narcissists, with psychopaths. They have self-limiting behaviors. The behaviors of narcissists and psychopaths are self-limiting. This is a crucial, and by the way totally new insight. I think maybe you're the first group that hears it, as far as I know [audience laughing]. It's a new - and you're my guinea pigs - insight in the sense, that if you look at narcissists and psychopaths, they never destroy absolutely everything.

For example, consider a intimate relationship, narcissistic codependent intimate relationship. The narcissist would push the codependent to a certain limit, and then suddenly will stop. We call this "intermittent reinforcement", hot and cold, hateful and loving. But actually it's viral self-limitation. The narcissist knows how to push to a certain point, where it would become non-productive to continue to push. And he stops.

Same with psychopaths. For example we have many cases, documented by Robert Hare among others, of psychopaths who stole millions. They stole millions from banks, from saving institutions in the 1980s. No one - not even Robert Hare - asked the question: Why did they

steal only millions, when they could have stolen hundreds of millions? Or why did they steal 20 million, when they could have stolen 50 million? Because of self limiting behavior.

Now, this is great news and very hopeful news, because it means, that once narcissism or psychopathy reach a critical level in the population - exactly like the Black Death or Ebola or AIDS - it will stop at that point. There will be self-limitation, the epidemic will stop. That's an interesting scenario. But at this stage we are only at the beginning of the epidemic, of the very beginning of the epidemic. At this stage there are many scholars, as I said, and academics, who are fanning the flames of this epidemic.

58:15

### **The complicity of the so-called victims of narcissistic abuse.**

Let's talk about romantic relationships, then I will shut up, yeah, and you will be able to ask questions. In romantic relationships - it's an oxymoron, it's a contradiction in terms talk about romantic relationship with a narcissist, with a psychopath or a relationship, I mean. But okay, in what YOU call romantic relationships with narcissists and psychopaths.

I have claimed for a very, very long time - and I have been hated for it - that there is a very high level of complicity of so-called victims. I think this complicity comes in 4 forms, in 4 ways.

59:12

## **4 forms of complicity.**

### **1. Passivity.**

Start with passivity. Victims, so-called victims, adopt a stance of passivity. I mentioned it yesterday in the seminar. There is a phrase like "in magnet", the victim is a magnet like a force of nature. She is not responsible for it, she's just a magnet. She attracts narcissists and so on. It's a very passive view. There's no ownership of the contribution of the victim to this situation. Even the word 'victim' or 'survivor' or 'in magnet', all these phrases imply passivity.

The impacted person, the codependent for example, is a receptical, a container fixed in space, fixed in time. And here comes the obnoxious narcissist and pours acid into it, or some toxic material, toxic sludge. But it's never ever the containers fault. Because containers are containers, that's what they are designed to do. They're designed to contain.

Passivity is a form of complicity in abuse. The vast majority of victims and survivors, so-called, are passive by choice. They love these metaphors. Whenever there's a new metaphor of passivity, all the victims jump on it. They all become empath. Empath, this utterly idiotic word, utterly idiotic. Everyone has empathy with the exception of narcissists and psychopaths. Everyone has empathy.

There is no such thing as an empath. Every human being has empathy. There is a fraction less than 3 people in 1 million who have heightened empathy, very, very high level of empathy, and they are known clinically as super-empaths. But it's 3 people in 1 million. In this room there is not one, who is a super-empath, you're all merely human beings. What is empath? I can't help it, I have empathy, I can't help it, it's not my fault, I was born that way, an empath. Rubbish of course.

1h:01:39

### **2. Malignant optimism.**

Second form of complicity is malignant optimism. The utterly grandiose belief - narcissistic defense - that your love, your empathy, your caring, your nurturance can affect any change, however minor, in the narcissist and psychopath. Utterly delusional grandiose belief. None of this has any effect or impact or consequence, and is never of interest to the narcissist and

psychopath. But malignant optimism: 'If I only loved him enough', 'oh he's the wounded child', 'if I only', 'I can see the child in him', these are all forms of malignant optimism.

I explained yesterday why this recurrent theme of child, because the narcissist and psychopath present the child. Remember they are frozen in time. They are really children. So they present the child first to captivate you and then you're hooked. Malignant optimism is a form of complicity.

1h:02:52

### **3. Mythologizing.**

Then there is mythologizing. You have been married to an asshole, you have had a bad marriage, happens, shocking but happens. No, you have to mythologize it. Your abuser is the greatest since Atilla the Hun. 'It is a war between good and evil', 'it is of cosmic consequence', 'you're going to write a book about it', 'everyone is writing a book about it', 'you are going to leverage your experience to help millions never to'. Give me a break.

You had a bad marriage, so what? 53% of all marriages in the West disintegrate for good reason. They're bad, simply bad, mismatches, assholes, jerks, most of them men I agree, but that's all that happened to you. You've had a bad marriage. Some of these assholes and jerks are narcissists and psychopaths, so you've had a very bad marriage. But you are aggrandizing and mythologizing. What am I saying?

I'm saying, that you're narcissistic. You have been infected. If you go to support groups of serial killers, you will see more empathy and compassion than many of the support groups for victims of narcissistic abuse. Utterly vicious forums. Sorry. You came to this lecture, from me you hear only the truth. The interactions on many of these so-called support groups are anything but supportive. There is a lot of power plays, mind games, viciousness, grandiose, malignant narcissism and so on. Not entirely your fault, you've been infected, you've been exposed. That's a form of inoculation.

But identify your grandiosity. 'I can cure him with my love' is a delusional grandiose statement. 'It's good against evil' is a delusional grandiose statement. 'He is the worst abuser since Adolf Hitler' is a delusional grandiose statement. There's only one such person and it's me. So only my wife Lydia can say that.

**Audience** [a woman's voice]: I don't exist.

**Sam**: Of course you don't exist, you have 20 years with me [all laughs].

1h:05:43

### **4. Narcissistic victimhood.**

Victimhood becomes a profession. Victimhood becomes the found and the source of the meaning of life. It gives your life meaning. It's easy to fall into the trap of victimhood, because victimhood is a very narcissistic grandiose stance. Especially if it permeates you and defines you. I saw many, many survivors of such marriages define themselves as survivors or as victims. Not as for example a teacher of psychology, or a farmer or a carpenter. But as a victim.

It becomes a defining an identity. Victimhood becomes an identity, a profession and a source of meaning. It's a very dangerous trap. What you don't understand, I think, is that to be such a victim, is to be a narcissist in disguise. It's as simple as that. I know it's not a popular view, especially here.

I call this "Münchhausen by Narcissist". You know, there is "Death by Cop". You go to a cop in the United States. You tell him 'you're fat, ugly and your breath stinks'. You're dead, he kills you. That's called "Death by Cop". Münchhausen by narcissist is using a narcissist to attract attention, using the narcissist in your life to attract attention to yourself. Especially attention of life coaches, mini gurus, celebrities, whatever, especially such attention.

1h:07:37

You know what is Münchausen syndrome? These are mostly women by the way, don't be insulted, who feign and fake illnesses and diseases. And sometimes really hurt themselves, take poisons, mutilate, whatever. Just in order to secure the attention of medical staff. Only medical staff by the way.

Then there is Münchausen by Proxy. These are gain women who use their children usually but not only, sometimes parents, sometimes... They hurt their children or hurt their parents with poisons and everything so as to secure attention, usually of medical stuff.

I say, that there is a new phenomenon of "Münchausen by Narcissist". These are women, who use the fact. The fact. I'm not disputing the fact, I'm not invalidating. There IS a narcissist. They're using the fact, that there is a narcissist or a psychopath in their lives to suddenly gain attention; sometimes admiration, definitely sympathy, pity and so on so forth. Especially from specific figures, specific usually online figures.

It's a whole new cult, a whole new subculture. There are many, many support groups with 250,000 members, many. On Facebook you can find hundreds of support groups with 50,000 members. We are talking millions. Millions.

I'm warning, I'm sounding the alarm about this phenomenon. It's a prime example of infection, prime. Because all these women, I think without exception, before they were exposed to the narcissist, I don't think they were narcissistic. Or at least not that narcissistic. But now they are. If you wanted an example of infection or epidemic, this is it.  
1h:09:44

With this upbeat note, I will now open the stage to a brawl. Anyone wants to beat me please stand in queue, my wife first of course. If you have questions, I'm available.

## Q & A:

**Audience:** ...? [not possible to hear due to very low sound].

**Sam:** Passivity, malignant optimism, let me consult my notes, mythologizing and the fourth one is narcissistic victimhood. It's a complicity, because when you as a victim are rewarded, when you are reinforced as a victim, when being a victim feels good, because you get attention this that, you have no incentive to stop being a victim. It's a form of complicity. We are animals, we are conditioned. If we push the lever and we get attention, we push the lever and we get sympathy, so we will keep on pushing the lever. It encourages victimhood behaviors. This system of rewards and positive reinforcement encourages the victim to remain victim. In this sense it creates complicity.  
1h:11:23

**Audience:** You talk about ...?, but you never talk about the five monkeys ...? very strong effect ...? I was a victim of criminal abuse from a couple of people. Then the police completely ...? Then I was put through the ....? system, which is a horrible ...? system of abuse. And the nurses don't even recognize, what they are doing. The local government is like ...? and I can't even get proper safeguarding or any kind of proper procedure ...? they are not keeping it ...? How do you defend that, I mean how do you not ...? higher societies around it ...? it's very hard to stand against it [very low sound].

**Sam:** This is exactly what I'm saying: When society itself is transformed into narcissistic, psychopathic environment, a cesspool, then it's very difficult to remain non-narcissistic, non-psychopathic. You continue to behave in a non-narcissistic, non-psychopathic way.

**Audience:** I try.  
1h:13:01

**Sam:** You try. Had you changed your behavior and became narcissistic and psychopathic, your outcomes would have been much better. You have incentive to behave like a narcissist and a psychopath in a narcissistic, psychopathic society. In Nazi Germany you had incentive not to

hide Jews, but to turn them to the Gestapo. You understand what I'm saying? Society forces you to modify your behavior to obtain better outcomes.

**Audience:** But then you dismantle society.

**Sam:** You don't dismantle. You change its nature, change its character.

Let's see if there are additional questions.

1h:13:40

**Audience:** What would be the boundaries between ...? and ...? [low sound and loud noises].

**Sam:** The boundaries critically depends on context and especially social context. That's precisely what I've been trying to say. That because society itself is becoming narcissistic and psychopathic, these boundaries essentially vanish. It's part of the infectious process. You start by trying to be non-narcissistic, non-psychopath but just assertive and so on. But it's very easy to deteriorate and become a narcissist, because society no longer puts this perimeter and tells you up to here. Actually society encourages you not to have a boundary. Society tells you, you are not assertive enough.

Society defines it of course, this is social behavior, socially acquired behavior. But if society is disinhibitory, has no inhibitions, you are disinhibitory as well. In certain societies for example, sexual behavior is much, much more free than in other societies. Why? Think about it for a minute, why? Because society signals - this is called "Signaling theory" - society signals to you 'it's okay, you can'. You know, there's no boundary, go on. Same with assertiveness. You try to be assertive, you're testing, we are all testing, we're all sending signals all the time. I try to be assertive with you for example. I try to be assertive, I see how you react, how others react. This is how the boundary is formed.

But if all society signals to me, 'go on, you're not assertive enough', further 'look at Donald Trump'. There's no inhibition, no internalized inhibition, everyone becomes disinhibitory. Which is precisely what is happening in the world today, on all fronts from sexual behavior to aggression.

1h:15:42

**Audience:** You identify narcissism as an infectious phenomenon which ...? contact, and I'm wondering if you can just talk ...? as well as the idea of ...? in another role of ...? You just mentioned the Münchausen syndrome mainly affects women and obviously talking about sexual contexts ...? patriarchy and ...? female identify itself. It seems to be quite present as well within the role of narcissism and the perceived impact or ...? [very low sound].

**Sam:** Until about 10 years ago narcissism was considered mainly a male phenomenon, congruent with social mores, patriarchy if you wish - in some societies of course, so on and so forth. But today we don't think so. Today we believe that narcissism is a gender-neutral behavior, and the only parameter that affects rates it is opportunity. Men have many more opportunities to be narcissistic than women, but we have discovered in studies, that when women are given the same opportunities, they're as narcissistic as men, absolutely.

There are also behaviors that are not necessarily narcissistic. For example adultery extramarital affairs. We discovered, that when women have same opportunities like men, they are equally adulterous. Of course in absolute terms, men cheat much more than women. But we discovered that's because of opportunity. So today the prevailing thinking is, that it's all opportunity-related, not power structure-related, not of course biology-related, not psychology-related, but simply a matter of 'does the person have the opportunity to act or not'. If the opportunity arises they will act.

1h:17:43

We even discovered amazing things. For example in studies of cheating men. We discovered that the vast majority of cheating men, cheated with women who were older and much uglier than their own wives. When we asked why, most of them said 'because we could'. There was opportunity. Today we place huge emphasis on opportunity of course.

Opportunity inevitably is connected to the social power structure. The more power you have, the more opportunities you have. Ask Harvey Weinstein. Women still don't have enough power to have enough opportunities, but in some societies it's already changing. For example, in most societies in the West, women are a majority in colleges and universities. Anywhere between 30 and 40 percent of breadwinners are women, depending on the country - I'm not going now into each country - and in certain professions like legal profession medicine, women are the majority.

1h:18:53

Even in IQ tests women not long ago equalled men, and then passed them. Richard and I have 2 videos online, conversations about the collapse of patriarchy and the future is female. I'll recommend that you have a look [[The Sam Vaknin interviews - Patriarchy is not natural, is the future female? \(part 1\)](#) and [The Sam Vaknin interviews - Patriarchy is not natural, is the future female? \(part 2\)](#) ].

**Audience:** ...? narcissism and borderline [very low sound].

**Sam:** What's the difference between narcissism and borderline?

### **The difference between NPD and BPD.**

We're in the throes of a major change in thinking in psychology. Until more or less 2009 we made lists like borderline is 1 2 3 4 9, narcissism is ... etc. We made lists. This was called "The categorical approach". Each diagnosis was a category with well-defined criteria and so on. It was very primitive. It's like making grocery list or like Linnaeus who classified plants. We call it taxonomic system, system of classification. It's very descriptive, but doesn't tell us anything about processes, dynamics, clinical picture, nothing. It's just a list.

1h:20:18

DSM-5, Diagnostic and Statistical Manual 5, is a revolution already, because DSM-5 is what we call "dimensional". Not fully. Still there are very strong interest from the pharmaceutical industry not to become dimensional. But in the dimensional approach, we are beginning to think, that all these distinctions between borderline, narcissistic, this, that, are pretty artificial distinctions. They are gender biased and they are culture-bound. There are suggestions now to have a single personality disorder with emphasis, which is a suggestion that I made in 95. In 95 I suggested to put all personality disorder to make it 1 with emphasis. Of course it's not because of me, but I'm just saying, I agree. I made the same suggestion.

I think that's what will happen, because the tests that we used to diagnose borderline include a module for narcissism. The PCL-R, which is the test we use to diagnose psychopathy, has a module for narcissism etc. The diagnostic tools are not separate. Only the diagnosis are separate. It's an extremely bizarre situation, total divorce between those who test and those who diagnose. This cannot continue.

1h:21:54

### **All of them are about narcissistic supply.**

I suggested in 95 that borderline, narcissist, histrionic and psychopaths and others, that all of them are about narcissistic supply. All of them have to do with narcissistic supply. Only each one has a different type of supply. Narcissist his attention. Histrionic his flirtation, seductiveness and sexuality. Borderline is mainly to be present, abandonment anxiety and so on. But that's one way of looking at it. I think ultimately all of them will become one, all these lists.

It's also constructed very stupidly. In the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual 3, 4 in text revision, we have something called "polythetic form", means that if you satisfy 5 out of 9 criteria, you're diagnosed. So I can have two narcissists. One of them will satisfy 5, these 5, and the other one will satisfy another 5. They will have in common only 1 criteria, but they are both narcissists. How's this possible? It's utterly idiotic. Imagine someone with tuberculosis

and tuberculosis, and the only thing in common between the two of them is that they go to the toilet. It's a completely insane structure. As a result we have comorbidity, where people are diagnosed with many ... okay, let's not go into a lecture.

1h:23:30

**Audience:** ...? impacting ...? become narcissistic or get infected...? In my society ...? and a number of other things ...? that I decided to ...? How do you find the right balance in order to ... [very low sound].

**Sam:** Where are you from? Which country?

**Audience:** Zimbabwe.

**Sam:** Zimbabwe. I spend a lot of time in Africa.

### **Narcissism expressed via the collective of the individuals.**

Narcissism is like a constant quantity. If it cannot be expressed via the individuals, it's expressed via the collective of the individuals. For example: In Japan no one is allowed to be a narcissist. It's a highly collectivist society. If you stand up or stand out, the society suppresses you, mocks you, excommunicates you, ostracizes you. But the society as a whole is highly narcissistic. The Japanese believe they are superior, they are the most clever, they are the most amazing, they think their aesthetics are superior to Western aesthetics etc. etc. Japanese are extremely highly narcissistic as a collective, but very rarely as individuals.

1h:25:29

In China a very interesting phenomenon happened, owing to Confucius. In the most of the history of China narcissism was expressed on the collective level. China for example believed, that it was culturally superior to any other country in the world, and when Marco Polo came from Europe, they treated him as a barbarian. They refused even to meet the kings of Europe, because they said they are barbarians, they're animals, they're savages. China had grandiosity inbuilt into the culture, into society for millennia, for 5000 years.

### **The East get infected with narcissism on the individual level.**

Then China was exposed to American culture via mass media, via show, I mean television, movies, smartphones, internet. And in 50 years suddenly the Chinese individuals are highly narcissistic. Society is still narcissistic, but the individual started to be narcissistic to the extent that China revised its Manual of Mental Health to include narcissism for the first time. It's a prime example of infection.

I used to live in Nigeria, several years. It was in the 80s before and after the military coup. I saw with my own eyes how tribal narcissism became gradually collective narcissism, as people studied in the West and came back or made a lot of money or bought flashy cars and flashy clothes. I watched with my own eyes how narcissism was developing among individuals. When before that it was restricted to the tribe. I mean, you couldn't really be a narcissist in the tribe, it was very controlled. I think it's only a question of how it erupts. It's a quarter where the water goes, but the water is there.

1h:27:36

**Audience:** How often do you think that people will get attracted to narcissists ...? [very low sound].

### **Codependency.**

**Sam:** There are no studies of course, because codependency is not a recognized mental health diagnosis. There is dependent personality disorder, but there's no codependency.

Consequently academia refuses to conduct studies using the construct of codependency, so we have no data. I think codependents are only one type of person, who is attracted to the narcissist - and definitely not the only type, that the narcissist is attracted to. That's another myth, that narcissist target. It's also a part of the mythologizing, that narcissist target. If the narcissist targets you, you're special - but narcissist don't. If you give me supply, if you give

me supply right now, I know nothing about you, but it's okay, you can be mine. I don't know if you're codependent, I don't even know if you're tall or short. All this is not relevant. The only question: Can you and will you give me supply. The minute you stop giving me supply, you can be as codependent as anyone, and I will dump you. It's all about supply.

1h:29:22

It's like pushers. You don't fall in love with the pushers personality. They say 'wow this pusher knows existentialism, it's amazing. I buy heroin from him and then we talk about Sartre all night'. You're going to buy drugs and gives a s\*\*t if he knows existentialism or not.

It's the same with the narcissists spouse or intimate partner. She should give him supply. All the rest is utterly irrelevant. The narcissist studies his partner very deeply, but only in order to manipulate her better to provide supply. Not because there's a specific profile, that she has to fit. Narcissists are utterly omniverse, indiscriminate and equal-opportunity abusers. So I don't discriminate, really. If you want to be abused, come to me afterwards [audience laughing].

1h:30:26

**Audience:** Yesterday you had a seminar about divorcing. I just wonder if you have any advice as to how to handle them, when they are basically just running amok and not enjoying the divorce procedure at all. How do ... ? How do you deal with them? [very low sound]

### **How to manipulate a narcissist.**

**Sam:** There are well-established strategies on how to manipulate narcissists, how to get them to do what you want, but I'm not sure this is the right forum to go into each and every one of them. But If you go online, there is literature and there are many, many YouTube videos - also by Richard for example, but on my channel as well - on how to manipulate narcissists, get them to do what you want.

My website has a special page dedicated to divorcing the narcissist, where you have links to 70 articles on each and every aspect of divorce, including how to get narcissists to do what you want. There's mirroring and there's threatening them and there is providing them with supply, how to make them think, that the idea is their idea etc. etc.

To tell you the truth, many of you come across these techniques by yourselves. You don't really need an education. You discover, that if you want the narcissist to do something, you find a way to convince him it was his idea, or you give him supply. Narcissists are very easy to manipulate. They are very gullible and they are very stupid. We call this form of stupidity "pseudo-stupidity". Even the narcissist with the highest IQ [pointing at himself] is essentially an idiot. It's very easy to manipulate. If you care to manipulate.

1h:32:33

But many people say 'I can't manipulate, it's against my nature, I feel degraded'. This is going back to the beginning of my lecture. In a world full of narcissists and psychopaths you have to manipulate. And it's true, manipulating is a narcissistic trait. You have to become a narcissist. That's one of the transmission mechanisms of the infection, that the narcissist forces you to become narcissistic just to survive. If you don't, you will not.

If there's one narcissist, that's okay, you can avoid him. But what do you do, if the infection is total? It's everywhere, in the court system, in law enforcement, in education system, among your neighbors, your friends, your colleagues. How many of your friends became narcissistic over the years? They were not so self-centered, they were not so egotistical, they were not so disempathic, and suddenly you discover that they are.

How many of your neighbors suddenly erupt with unexpected aggression? How many of your colleagues at work sabotage you and stab you in the back and undermine you? I mean, it's all over the place. It's the zombie apocalypse, you have to shoot them [audience laughing], nothing else.

1h:34:02

**Audience:** ...? a response to trauma, but you also said that it spread like an infection. Do you think that as a society that we are all so traumatized that ...? so easily...? [low sound]

### **Traumatized societies develops narcissism.**

**Sam:** Yes, absolutely. We are a traumatized society, absolutely. And every time in human history, that there was a traumatized society as a society, we had an enormous surge in narcissism. Every collective that has been traumatized repeatedly, developed narcissism that had become a part of the collectives acknowledged psychology.

**Audience:** What is it that is traumatizing us so badly. Is it ...? [1h:34:54] number of narcissists around us so ... [low sound and much noise]

**Sam:** Narcissists force you to be narcissistic, I just explained. You can't cope, if you're not narcissistic. If there's one in this room, you will survive. If everyone here were a narcissist, they would not let you talk. They would suppress your speech or shout at you or whatever. And you will have to shout back, if you want to survive.

Narcissism has many transmission mechanisms. But we have had cases in history of whole collectives, who were traumatized on a continuous, repeated basis. And these collectives are highly narcissistic. I belong to one of them. I'm a Jew. I'm sorry, it's not anti-semitism. Jews are highly narcissistic. They are highly narcissistic, because they have been traumatized for thousands of years, repeatedly, horribly, insupportably. They had to become narcissistic.

Jews were forbidden to work in most professions throughout human history, so they had to do things that today we identify with narcissism. Then they had to survive, they had to be narcissists. In Auschwitz, if you were not a psychopathic narcissist, you were not ... [show a gesture with his arms].

And after that, when they establish the State of Israel, and long before that when they had a fight with Rome the big Empire, and so on so forth. Jews had pogroms and holocausts and genocides repeatedly thousands of times in the last 2,000 years. It worked. Most of them, I would say, are narcissistic. The collective is definitely narcissistic. The ethos is narcissistic. You have today a big part of the Jewish people and the Israelis, who absolutely believe, that they are truly chosen one way or another. They're very arrogant and vain and aggressive. That's an example.

1h:36:50

But Jew is one. For example Russians are the same. Highly narcissistic collective, even I would say, cross the line and became psychopathic collective. It's happening. This is not theory, this is happening. All you need to do is swing the globe and you will find many many many many many examples of whole cultures, societies, civilizations and collectives, who became narcissistic. Many religious minorities, many minorities have been suppressed and so on so forth. I see pronounced signs of narcissism among black Americans. Pronounced signs. I said it in a podcast and after that day I was threatened severely.

**Audience:** You've taught that an individual narcissist will be destructive and ...? (1h:38:10). We take the example you keep bringing up of Nazi Germany in generally the world at the time. That we know that the societal narcissism, that event, ended in a destructive and self-destructive way. Can you apply that to now and the future and ... ? (1h:38:30).

1h:38:30

**Sam:** Self-destruction, absolutely. It doesn't have to be in a mushroom cloud. There are many ways to self-destruct. For example, I think we are in the thick of self-destruction by for example becoming totally isolated, totally automatized, very lonely, not interacting with each other, afraid of being traumatized, avoiding each other, retreating.

I give in all my lectures, because I'm lazy, the same metaphor. When I was born - remember the dinosaurs - there was this giant screen and 2,000 of us entered the same place. We ate

popcorn, we made out, I will not go into details. We were watching the same screen, which was a shared experience. We were talking, by the way we were smoking and everything. Then we went out. This shared experience was recounted to family members and whole families, it was all wonderful. It was one screen.

10 years after that the screen became much smaller. That screen was cinema. Then the screen became much smaller and that screen was called television and now we couldn't get two thousand people to watch television, so we had 30 40. These 30 40 shared the same experience, ate popcorn, made out and went out and told family members. But it was much, much smaller resonance in a much lesser shared experience.

1h:40:19

Then 10 years later the screen shrank again and it became the personal computer and then only 3 people could share the experience. Then it shrank again and only 2 could share. Now it shrank to the point, that only one person can share this experience with himself. Which is what we used to call, when I was a child, masturbation [audience laughing]. This screen we have to hold like this [holding one in vertical position in front of his eyes]. It's a design choice. Don't kid yourself.

The screens could have been designed utterly differently, but it's a design choice. This screen separates us from the world. It's a firewall, it cuts us off. If you go to any airport watch families, watch teenagers, gorgeous girls and stunning boys pay no attention to each other. Sex is dead, everything is dead. We live inside these screens. It's virtual reality, it's utter shared psychosis. You're telling me that we are not self destroying? Are you kidding me?

Dating among teenagers collapsed by 53%. Sexual acts among teenagers - this is life, sex is the force of life - collapsed by 60 percent. These are the studies of Twenge and Campbell. In several countries 80 to 90% of people under the age of 24 never ever interacted with the other sex, Japan. In the United Kingdom 40% of teenagers prefer video games far more than dating a girl. Dating a girl is number 4.

These are signs of death. We are dying, alone, each one in his cubicle, we are dying. And you're telling me we're not self destroying? This is much worse than any nuclear apocalypse. How many can you kill with the nuclear apocalypse? How many can you kill by destroying sex, by destroying love, by destroying romance, by destroying interpersonal interactions, by isolating ourselves, by automizing ourselves. There's nothing shared. Even when we go online we go into bubbles, like-minded bubbles. There's no fertilization anymore, no interdisciplinarity. There's no food, we are consuming ourselves. This is what we call in biology "Autolysis". We are eating ourselves and then we die. That's the end of it. The apocalypse is here, don't you realize it? It's here.

1h:43:10

[some talk about practical issues due to this seminar]

1h:43:43

**Audience:** I was going to ask you why you invented the term narcissistic abuse ....? but since ...? how familiar you are with the work of Pete Walker ...? narcissism and codependency ...? so different .... [many words missing due to low sound]

1h:44:44

### **The medicalization of human psychology, a narcissistic phenomenon.**

**Sam:** At the risk of sounding narcissistic, I suggested that to use PTSD in conjunction with narcissistic abuse in 95, so it was a bit before Pete Walker. But Pete Walker and the whole school, they are very concerned with appearing to be medical, scientific and so on. I'm adamantly opposed to the medicalization of human psychology, because I think it's a narcissistic phenomenon. We do not know enough, we have just started. Our level of ignorance is enormous. To make any claim about the nervous system, the biochemicals of the brain and so on so forth, is very grandiose, simply.

We know nothing, close to nothing. We have just discovered a totally new structure in the brain, which connects well over 80% of the brain. This discovery is six months ago [this video was released 3. Dec. 2018]. That's how much we know.

To make any claims about the nervous system, the brain, neurotransmitters, ...? [1h:46:01] polymorphisms and so on, is the hubris and arrogance of narcissistic scientists. And the ignorance of those who are trying to emulate an imitator. This can and will happen probably in 200 - 300 years time, but the time has not come yet. We don't know enough. Simply.

Thank you very much for coming.  
[Applause]

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