



Emotional Vampires: Dealing with People Who Drain You Dry

Albert J. Bernstein

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Protect yourself from people who take undue advantage and suck the energy out of your life

Emotional Vampires will help you cope effectively with the people in your life that confound you, confuse you, and seem to sap every ounce of your energy. Bestselling author Dr. Al Bernstein shows you how to recognize each vampire type--antisocial, histrionic, narcissists, obsessive-compulsives, paranoids--and deal with them effectively. He uses many examples from the latest news headlines, which will help you distinguish between the types and deepen your understanding of each one.

In response to the daily calls and emails he got about the previous edition of this book, Dr. Al Bernstein has added his advice for dealing with those emotional vampires who come in the shape of spouses and lovers, relatives, and children. Dr. Bernstein shows you how to deal with each vampire type and what you need to do to keep from getting drained.

Emotional Vampires: Dealing with People Who Drain You Dry Details

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From Reader Review Emotional Vampires: Dealing with People Who Drain You Dry for online ebook

Daniel Taylor says

This a dangerous book: if you start labelling your friends as vampires, then you'll quickly find yourself without friends.

Based on work into personality disorders, this book equips you with practical tools to drive a stake through the heart of the emotional vampires that suck your energy.

On my first read-through, I got the impression that this was one of those personality-type books that are hard to wrap your head around and keep the distinctions clear. But as I did my second reading, I spotted two vampire-types in my life, and I identified my own vampire tendencies.

This book injects humour into its lessons and is a good read and I'm looking forward to testing the tools.

White says

This book is genius. It is probably the best written self-help book on the shelf. It not only teaches about the concept of emotional drainers, it also gives different styles, techniques, and focus on various types of emotional vampires. From Paranoid vampires to obsessive compulsive vampires to passive aggressive vampires to antisocial vampires. This book has it all. It also gives reasons for the predator to prey as he does which gives the reader a compassionate understanding that helps connect the behavior with the underlying problem.

Excellent book. This is way beyond a five star. This book goes overboard in its quality.

Marc MacYoung says

This book is a sanity saver. And the sanity it will save is yours.

What I particularly liked about this book is that it takes the DSM IV section on 'personality disorders' and turns it into something a layman can understand. That means this isn't some half-baked, feel good, self-help book. It's nuts-and-bolts practical about dealing with people who have low level personality disorders. And there's a lot of them out there folks...

Not only does the author explain the nature of the beast and how these conditions commonly manifest -- but best of all -- he teaches you what boundaries you must set with the different kinds of people. Due to the different nature of these disorders, there is no one-size-fits-all set of boundaries. You have to tailor the boundaries to individual. By showing you this simple, but profound idea, the author helps you to cope with toxic people in your life.

Zoe says

I bought this book about 5 years ago, when I was dealing with a difficult situation at work. Sadly 5 years later, I dug out this book again for another difficult work situation.

I personally find this book very helpful, because it gave me the information I needed. I was looking for specific information which will help me understand a specific type of personality disorder. I am fairly informed on said disorder. So I knew what I needed when I read the book. I was able to quickly locate the information that is most relevant to my situation and inform myself more on this particular subject.

The book discusses categories of emotional vampires, both in private and professional settings. It also makes suggestions on what one may do to counteract the negative effect of having to tolerate such a toxic character in one's life. For my particular interest, the information was limited. But I still found it to be helpful and informative. I just wish there was more knowledge on this particular subject in the book but I suppose that would greatly limit the book's scope.

I find the book to be well-written, with the right balance of "story-telling" and "clinical discussions". Minimal story-telling and extensive discussions on each disorder type. But a book cannot discuss everything in details. So the readers must be realistic. We all face different emotional vampires in different walks in life. Take what applies and in the end, we must digest the information and turn the knowledge into something that we could use to keep such evilness at bay.

Jenny says

Loved this book! Wonderfully accessible and practical look at a handful of not-quite personality disorders. And how recognize and handle people who drain you.

Emotional vampires never grow up/they are immature, they are not connected or empathetic (you exist to serve their needs) or fair. They take, they are selfish, and they do not follow social rules. They cannot be at fault, they won't wait for what they want, and things have to be their way. They have no insight and no guilt. They thrive on secrets and your shame. Forget about punishment: the opposite of a reward is no reward. Don't stand in the way of consequences to mostly self-destructive choices they make.

Antisocials: simple but dangerous, addicted to excitement/parties, hate boredom, need stimulation, often criminals, you can't turn a Ferrari into a Toyota, impulsive and charming.

Daredevils: the battle you need to win is about substances/addiction.

The Action Hero: ask, don't tell; structure, structure, structure; ignore grumbling, send him on a mission, keep doing exciting things, don't be his drinking buddy

The Liar

The Unfaithful Lover

The Used Car Salesman

The Bully: don't explain anything, don't yell back, break the "uh-huh" phone rule, figure out how to think instead of being paralyzed by the flight/fight response, ask "what would you like me to do?"

The best thing you can do is stand aside and let them face their own consequences. They do not need advocates to help them escape consequences of their behaviour.

Histrionic: always acting, lost in their role, seeks attention/approval, needs to look good, all drama all the

time, expert in denial and lying to themselves, social but insubstantial, dependent, highly suggestible,

Hams will do anything for attention whether it's crude, rude, transparent and superficial. Avoid being written into their script as the person who gets drained. Praise them madly when they are good and maybe you'll get a repeat performance. Ignore the tears.

Passive-Aggressive: history of interpersonal problems, their world consists of villains and victims, always pay attention, make contingencies explicit, always give lots of positive feedback, avoid punishment because it never works, be consistent, be fair, be sensitive

Narcissist: don't think of anyone else unless they need something (so it's fleeting), so tie your interests to theirs. Well-advertised talent and intelligence, achievement, grandiosity, competitiveness, conspicuous boredom, entitlement, lack of empathy, inability to accept criticism, ambivalence in other people. Always drive a hard bargain and get what you want upfront. Might be legends in their own minds, but they can't make themselves do the things that need to be done for success (the things they don't want to do). Might be superstars that did do the work and found the success, but it's never enough/insatiable needs.

Obsessive-Compulsive: addicted to safety, try to control everything, have a tough time making decisions, harder on themselves than you could ever be on them, perfectionists, attention to detail, they believe that punishment works (it doesn't). They are reliable, rigid, preoccupied with details, suffer from emotional constipation, indecisive, and have lots of unacknowledged hostility, prone to being puritans.

Paranoid: seeing what others don't, detectives, try to remove ambiguity from their lives with black/white principles, they don't forgive, they vacillate between extreme naivete and utter cynicism, they demand that you believe in them, often jealous and vindictive.

Protecting yourself:

1. know them, know their history, know your goal, know yourself
 2. get outside verification
 3. do what they don't
 4. pay attention to their actions, not their words
 5. pick your battles
 6. let contingencies do the work
 7. choose your words as carefully as you pick your battles
 8. ignore tantrums
 9. know your own limits
-

Kristin says

This is a book about dealing with people (family members, coworkers, significant others) who drain you emotionally, financially, and any other way you can imagine. Their ability to "suck the life out of you" is rooted in their tendencies (or full-blown pathology) toward certain personality traits and disorders (the antisocial, passive-aggressive, narcissist, histrionic (drama queen), paranoid, and bully-types). The author, Albert Bernstien, a clinical psychologist and business consultant, outlines each personality type in an easy-to-follow format, describing key features of each "vampire," how to recognize them, and finally how to deal with them effectively. I especially like the way he writes: he is witty, to the point, and very adept at bringing a very complex topic to the layman. You will find yourself reading along and thinking of the vampires in your own life.

I gave this 4 stars instead of 5 only because Dr. Bernstein focuses the majority of his topic on work relationships, and I would have preferred more information on how to deal with family and loved ones. This is no cut to his incredible work, but my initial reason for buying it was for the "vampires" of my personal life. I have definitely learned some great techniques for spotting and dealing with "vampires" at work. Anyone in the workforce will definitely benefit from Dr. Bernstein's experience as a psychologist and expert in personality disorders. I hope he will write a follow-up for personal relationships, as this is probably where most of the blood-sucking occurs.

R. says

Didn't finish because the library was closing on a late autumn night - but read enough to get the gist, though I've since forgotten some of the strategies for dealing. Emotional jiu-jitsu: that kind of thing. But not this, the simplest of the lessons: when you can, avoid 'em.

And wasn't just reading to avoid the "vampiric, emotionally", either: was trying to see if I was one of the needy undead. But there's a fine line, isn't there? We're all dependent on others to *some* extent: it's unavoidable. The problem with pop-psych manuals *like* this (but, perhaps, not this one: I've forgotten much of it) is that they want to create a legion of super-independent zombies who don't need anybody ("No way, no how!" is their battlecry) and never reach out (and are never reached) for fear of the dreaded label of "co-dependency".

Yep. Wow. This rantview was written like a truly co-dependent personality in denial! Can't wait to go to work and absorb all of that golden tension in the air.

Joey says

It is said that bad feedback could be attributable to your personality problem. If you do not know why you are disliked by a majority of people around you, well, it's about time you learnt the Johari's window: There may be some things the people around you know about you that you never know.

Admit it. There is someone or at least some of your co-workers whom you find annoying drain you dry in the sense that you cannot put up with them any longer. No matter how colossal your patience is, but still you tend to have had it. So, you cannot avoid gossiping about them with among your co-workers. Poor them! Or poor me. I may never know. (laughs)

But the themes of this book about the people above said are more "appalling" than you will expect. The book deals with different kinds of emotional vampires who drain your dry. Emotional vampires because metaphorically speaking, they suck you to death. Dr. Albert Bernstein, the author of the book, categorized them into THE ANTI-SOCIAL TYPES, THE HISTRIONIC TYPES, THE NARCISSISTIC TYPES, THE OBSESSIVE -COMPULSIVE TYPES, and THE PARANOID TYPES. Dr. Bernstein discusses the nature of their personalities, how they affect your lives negatively. In fact, he discusses some approaches to dealing with them as though you are going to be a shrinker yourself. However, the deeper the content you read, the more you find the book exaggerated and imaginary. Are these people real? Upon reading it and based on my experience to boot, my answer is yeah.

As a matter of fact, I have a co-worker who has met the said category. He is a narcissistic type. He loves

crowding to the world that he has this one, he has done something, he will do something like this. Fiddlesticks! No wonder most of my co-workers find him a nuisance. So, they avoid eating together with him. They do not talk to him. And they think-ill of him in his absence. He has had such plague history since he began working in our company. Poor him! No one of us has the audacity to chasten him. In fact, I engaged in a colloquy with him one time. (laughs)

Since I have a background in psychology, I always believe that every person we meet has the bright side: We are all kind like an innocent child. We just fall victims to our bitter experiences. On the contrary, this is the reality of the world that we can always never be such a lamb to a slaughter: We have to treat those kinds of people above.

Jeanette says

This is a book I would have given a 4 star rating to before I went back to get my last two degrees in my 50's. And especially if I had not done the 9 years of counseling or had so much input on case studies for those seeking vocational or consequential path realities and/or choices. Or maybe even then I would have, but not after I supervised a Federal Work Study Program.

Why? Because he just paints this picture with an enormously wide brush. Too wide. Yes, there are personality disorders. Yes, people use other people in their own specific and habitual ways for these reasons. He's more than 90% correct. But people are just NOT or very, very rarely all of one category or another like this is posited. They are more usually combinations of at least two.

This book holds an immense amount of repetition. Most is to get across that you are NOT going to "win" playing the games these individuals invent and evolve. In that it's a 5 star. You can't repeat it enough. If it's done to you more than twice, you are as complacent in "error" as the other.

I always remember my Sicilian Grandfather when I read these kinds of books. He said this in the store at least once a month. "Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me."

In my real life, there are more and more Antisocial characteristic people all the time around the digs I have lived. Rules only apply to others and charm will get you all. And it's all about "feeling great". (And they leave the destroyed or unfinished work, mess, litter, ruin and lacks of any true kindness in their wake. Constantly and not just on occasion.)

Some of the listed "self-cures" were very good- 5 star. Self adjustments are always a good idea and some of them were excellent.

But most of these perceptions are not just born into humans (much here in this book would lend you to believe that idea) but are enabled in order for it to proceed to a "me centered" core of perceptions. Someone or some system has encouraged and abetted in the construction process to get into these stated levels of full blown acting out in these categories. Many people have the perceptions and yet don't hold with most of the dynamic and invasive "other" actions that go with them- as the examples that are given here. Because of a morality taught? Because of consequences for non-action or against any "using others habit" given time and again in childhood? Could be. I certainly know full blown personality disorders of "perceiving the world" in which practice has contained that first impulse to that person becoming NOT being whole category like this. Not a cure by definition, but it goes a long way to NOT being an emotional vampire for a goodly portion of their lifetime.

If you are introverted, mild in getting your own way and preferences, often completely happy being settled into the background of "normal" and "now" - you will probably like this book much more than I did. Maybe I'm wrong. But I think most introverts just want the rest of us to just about shut up and go away. And the answer given here in this book is mainly to discount and exclude all toxic actions people. WOULD that it be so easy!!

In truth, nearly all leaders, most entrepreneurs, most who hold a "whole piece or we think" worldview (like a pivotal religion or economic/political view), adventurers of the explorer breed level, sports mavens in their fields, inventors, entertainers, politicians, people who argue with words aloud or in print for a living (lawyers or actuaries etc.) and nearly every "boss" of more than 50 people in any enterprise hold some of these strong grouped personality disorder traits.

If you recognize that a person is a user in any of these ways- it is up to you to not overlook the manipulation that has occurred. Opposition in a fighting or derogatory sense has to be specific. Name the pattern to them. Don't call them names or attack the person- attack the act and the outcome in detail. And don't allow a repeat.

This is one of the reasons you never marry, partner, business share, even sign rental leases with others until after a considerable, better than that a lengthy, association.

Jessica says

The concept for this book is good. It describes five common personality disorders and how they manifest themselves in day-to-day life, so you can recognize the signs in other people (even if they only have a slight tendency toward a disorder) and learn to protect yourself from getting bullied, hoodwinked, or just constantly irritated.

Unfortunately, the execution is lacking. It's overly simplistic in almost every way, from the broad generalizations that are sometimes flat-out false to the screenplay-esque scenarios illustrating the various manifestations of the disorders. Even when it's possible to recognize people you know in the profiles he sketches (and you will), you'll probably find yourself saying every time, "Well, they're not *that* extreme."

The book gets a second star for giving me suggestions for my own obsessive-compulsive tendencies. Other than that, I didn't find it nearly as useful as it could have been if Bernstein hadn't tried to be so theatrical about the whole thing.

Damaskcat says

Do you have people in your life who seem to drain your energy? Do they need your attention all the time and expect you to put their needs before everything else in your life? Do they question you minutely about what you've been doing, who you've spoken to and where you want?

If you can answer yes to all those questions you may have one or more emotional vampires in your life. Like the fictional blood-sucking variety they may seem more attractive and more fun than anyone else you've ever known. But you need to be aware that this is just the surface and something much darker lurks underneath.

This fascinating, amusing and frightening book will help you to understand the vampire in your life and may

help you to salvage a bit of your own life from the wreckage before you become just an accessory to the vampire. The author divides emotional vampires into categories – antisocial vampires, histrionic vampires, narcissistic vampires, obsessive-compulsive vampires, paranoid vampires. Some people may show tendencies from all these categories and all human being may exhibit some of the symptoms and behaviours at times.

The author demonstrates by means of everyday scenarios how vampires manipulate you into doing what they want you to. They put you in the wrong so that you feel obliged to help them and they twist what you say and use it against you. The only way to deal with them is to play them at their own game and stand your ground even if means ending your relationship with the vampire. Even if you don't think there is a vampire in your life at present this is still interesting reading if you are interested in psychology.

Judith E says

Dr. Bernstein gives a good overview of various personality disorders and ways to deal with them. From daredevils to histrionics to antisocial bullies, he gives good examples of their draining behaviors and how best to survive them. I closely read about the personality that, unfortunately, is in my circle of acquaintances and I now remind myself of the best survival strategies to keep from being 'bitten'.

Jennifer says

Emotional vampires, Dr. Bernstein tells us, are the people who leave us feeling drained whenever we interact with them. Bullies, thrill seekers, the overly dramatic and excessively paranoid, they may wear a variety of faces, but they're all manifestations of the same basic immaturity and desire to control. And after decades of working with them, Bernstein has some concrete suggestions on how to make our interactions with these soul-suckers more peaceful and productive.

In fact, those simple, concrete suggestions, while perhaps not easy to implement, are one of the best things about this book. Bernstein doesn't offer miracles--he acknowledges that most of the people exhibiting these traits will not change--but rather concrete steps to protect yourself and make the best of difficult situations.

Even better, the author points out that we are all, to one extent or another, flawed people who at times exhibit these traits. So there are tips for how to take steps to be less of a drain on others, ideas that will probably benefit me in the future.

Best of all, Bernstein writes with humor and compassion. He points out the strengths of these difficult personalities as well as the issues, and reminds the reader that none of us are perfect, and even the most trouble folks among us often have rich contributions to make.

Natalie Richards says

I remember reading this several years ago and found it to be so insightful and very helpful to me. This book then led me to research the topics of narcissism, personality disorders and toxic relationships and although I have learned so much since first reading this book, and for me better readings, it holds a special place in my

heart as it gave me "lightbulb" moments and for that I'm grateful.

This book would be a great place to start for anyone interested in "emotional vampires" as it is so easy to read.

Greta says

Emotional vampires draw you in, then drain you. At first, emotional vampires look better than regular people. They're as bright, talented, and charming as a Romanian count. You like them; you trust them; you expect more from them than you do from other people. You expect more, you get less, and in the end you get taken. You invite them into your life, and seldom realize your mistake until they've disappeared into the night, leaving you drained dry with a pain in the neck, an empty wallet, or perhaps a broken heart. Even then, you wonder—is it them or is it me? It's them. Emotional vampires. Do you know them? Have you experienced their dark power in your life? Have you met people who seemed so perfect at first, but later turned out to be a perfect mess? Have you been blinded by brilliant bursts of charm that switched on and off like a cheap neon sign? Have you heard promises whispered in the night that were forgotten before dawn? Have you been drained dry?

When people are driving themselves crazy, they have neuroses or psychoses. When they drive other people crazy, they have personality disorders.

The author considers the five that are most likely to cause people trouble in their daily life: Antisocial, Histrionic, Narcissistic, Obsessive-Compulsive, and Paranoid. He chose these five because they occur most frequently in the population, and, more often than the others, they may be present to a subclinical degree. The main reason he chose these five is that each of the types discussed in the book, although pathological and draining, also has characteristics that people find very attractive. Over the course of more than 40 years as a psychologist and business consultant, He has seen that these five disorders consistently cause the most trouble for the most people, at home, at work, and everywhere in between.

Emotional vampires never grow up. Throughout their lives, they see themselves as victims of fate and the unpredictability of others.

Emotional vampires take. They believe that whatever they want should be given to them immediately, regardless of how anyone else might feel about it. Social creatures trust each other to follow basic social rules, and emotional vampires betray that trust. Their lack of connection to something larger than themselves is also the reason for vampires' internal pain. The universe is a cold and empty place when there is nothing in it bigger than your own need.

Emotional vampires see themselves as the innocent victims of forces beyond their control.

Emotional vampires are not intrinsically evil, but their immaturity allows them to operate without thinking about whether their actions are good or bad. They see other people as potential sources for whatever they happen to need at the moment, not as separate human beings with needs and feelings of their own. Rather than being evil itself, vampires' perceptual distortion is a doorway through which evil may easily enter. The purpose of this book is not to consider the morality of emotional vampires, but to show how to spot them in your life and give you some ideas about what to do when you find yourself under attack by the forces of darkness. Understanding emotional vampires' immaturity is your ultimate weapon. Many of their most outrageous actions would make perfect sense if they were done by a two-year-old.

When they lure otherwise normal and intelligent people into stupid behavior, it's harder to imagine how a deficiency in their personalities could confer such dark and destructive power. Even people with small traces of personality disorders can show the same pattern of being alluring, draining, and fiendishly difficult to understand. That's the real reason for *the vampire metaphor*. It's easier to see both such people's strengths and their weaknesses by pretending they're supernatural creatures who stalk the night, using their hypnotic

powers to seduce normal people and drain them of their life forces. It does kind of make you pay attention, and helps you think of these people as something more than everyday annoyances.

Emotional vampires will use you to meet whatever needs they happen to be experiencing at the moment. They have no qualms about taking your effort, your money, your love, your attention, your admiration, your body, or your soul to meet their insatiable cravings. They want what they want, and they don't much care how you feel about it. They are not thinking about you at all. If you get angry at them because you think they are deliberately trying to hurt you, your misunderstanding will make you even more vulnerable. They will see themselves as victims of your attack. Then you will become the target.

Vampires can't see themselves in a mirror. Emotional vampires have no insight. You can describe vampires to themselves a thousand times, and they still won't see what's plain and obvious to everyone else. You can show them the chapter in this book that describes them perfectly, and they'll think it's about you. Emotional vampires are far more comfortable with their own immaturity than you are with yours. Also, they have absolutely no shame.

When vampires don't get their way, they throw tantrums. They can explode into all sorts of emotional outbursts whose only purpose is to get you to give in. Don't. If you give in after the tantrum starts, you'll only teach vampires to be persistent.

Every type of vampire has its own favorite kinds of tantrums. They yell, they cry, they pout, they lecture, they give you the cold shoulder, or they induce guilt even more skillfully than your mother.

Remember, vampires thrive on confusion and misunderstanding.

How could you be so stupid? The answer is the same as for everyone else who has been drawn in and drained by an emotional vampire. You were hypnotized. Emotional vampires are the most charming people you'll ever meet. Do bear in mind that the original meaning of the word charming was "casting a magic spell."

All emotional vampires lie. Antisocials lie because it's the easiest thing to do at the time, Histrionics lie to you because they believe the lies they tell themselves, Narcissists lie because it's expedient, Obsessive-Compulsives lie because they can't possibly be wrong, and Paranoids lie when the facts don't support their beliefs.

Honest people are more damaged by lies than they need to be because they have little or no experience with lying themselves. They make one huge mistake that clouds their minds and often breaks their hearts: they believe that doing something wrong means the same thing to an emotional vampire as it does to them. It's almost impossible to teach empathy to an emotional vampire. They can fake it, but they have a hard time feeling it. Arguments that are convincing to an emotional vampire must always be in that vampire's own language—self-interest.

ANTISOCIAL VAMPIRES

Antisocial vampires are addicted to excitement. They're called antisocial, not because they don't like parties, but because they're heedless of social rules. These vampires love parties. They also love sex, drugs, rock 'n' roll, and anything else stimulating. They hate boredom worse than a stake through the heart. All they want out of life is a good time, a little action, and immediate gratification of their every desire. Of all the vampires, Antisocials are the sexiest, the most exciting, and the most fun to be around. People take to them easily and quickly, and just as quickly get taken. Aside from momentary fun, these vampires don't have much to give back. Ah, but those moments! Like all the vampire types, Antisocials present you with a dilemma: they're Ferraris in a world of Toyotas, built for speed and thrills. You're apt to be very disappointed if you expect them to be reliable.

HISTRIONIC VAMPIRES

Histrionic vampires live for attention and approval. Looking good is their specialty. Everything else is an

unimportant detail. Histrionics have what it takes to get hired into your business or your life, but be careful. Histrionic means dramatic. What you see is all a show, and definitely not what you get. Vampires can't see their reflections in a mirror. Histrionics can't even see the mirror. They're experts at hiding their own motivations from themselves. They believe that they never do anything unacceptable, like making mistakes or having bad thoughts about anyone. They're just nice people who only want to help. If you question that, you're likely to suffer. It's amazing how much damage nice people can do.

NARCISSISTIC VAMPIRES

Have you ever noticed that people with big egos tend to be small everywhere else? What Narcissistic vampires want is to live out their grandiose fantasies of being the smartest, most talented, and all-around best people in the world. It's not so much that they think of themselves as better than other people as they don't think of other people at all. Narcissists are legends in their own minds. Surely, you don't expect them to live by the rules of mere mortals.

Narcissists present a difficult dilemma. Although there is plenty of narcissism without greatness, there is no greatness without narcissism. Without these vampires, there wouldn't be anyone with the chutzpah to lead. Regardless of what they say, Narcissists seldom do anything that isn't self-serving. As long as you can tie your interests in with theirs, they'll think you're almost as great as they are. Narcissists need to win. Don't compete with them unless you can just about kill them. Even then, watch out. They've been known to rise from the grave to wreak vengeance. Better you should sneak up on their blind side with an ego massage and learn how to give them the adulation they need without giving in.

OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE VAMPIRES

Obsessive-Compulsives are addicted to safety, which they believe they can achieve through scrupulous attention to detail and complete control over everything. You know who they are: anal-retentive people who can't see the forest because of the excessive number of superfluous, overabundant, and redundant trees. What you may not know is that all that attention to detail is designed to keep the Antisocial vampire inside safely contained. Without Obsessive-Compulsives, none of the world's difficult and thankless tasks would ever get done, nothing would ever work the way it should, and none of us would do our homework, ever. For good or ill, Obsessive-Compulsives are the only people watching to see that the rest of us don't go too far astray. We may not always like them, but we need them.

For Obsessive-Compulsives, the most important conflicts are internal. They take no joy in hurting others, but they will hurt you if your actions threaten their sense of control. To Obsessive-Compulsives, surprises—even pleasant ones—feel like an ice-cold spray of holy water. They don't mean to retaliate, but they do feel compelled to state their opinion.

The second-longest wait in the world is for Obsessive-Compulsives to make a decision. The longest wait is for them to speak even a single word of praise. Perfectionism, over-control, and attention to detail—Obsessive-Compulsive vampires indulge in vices that masquerade as virtues. They habitually confuse process with product, and the letter of the law with its spirit. Your best protection from these vampires lies in continuing to keep your own eyes on the big picture and not getting lost with them in the dark forest of obsessive detail.

PARANOID VAMPIRES

In common parlance, paranoid means thinking people are after you. On the face of it, it's hard to imagine that there could be anything attractive about delusions of persecution. The lure of Paranoids is not their fears, but what lies behind them. Paranoia is really a supernatural simplicity of thought that enables these vampires to see things that others can't. Their goal is to know the Truth and banish all ambiguity from their lives. Paranoids live by concrete rules that they believe are carved in stone. They expect everybody else to live by these rules as well. They're always on the lookout for evidence of deviation, and they usually find it. Think of them as the detectives of the vampire world. You feel safe and secure in their certainty—until you become a suspect.

Paranoids can see through all forms of subterfuge to the heart of a matter. Just as easily, they can rip that

heart out and tear it to pieces—especially when it belongs to someone close to them whose only crime is being human. Paranoids draw you in with their perceptiveness; they see the confusing and uncertain details of life so clearly. Later, they drain you with endless probing of the uncertainty they perceive in you. What Paranoids never see is their own role in creating the ambiguity that so terrifies them. Their distrust invites duplicity. Their suspiciousness keeps people from telling them the whole truth. Their incessant doubts drive away the people who say they'll always be there.

Paranoids can feel like they're at the center of a vast conspiracy to rob them of the certainty they so fervently desire. Naturally, they become even more guarded and suspicious. What Paranoids really fear is the uncertainty at the center of their own souls. They desperately want to be close, but are terrified at the ambiguity that comes with closeness. They try to drive the desire for intimacy out of their hearts. In place of love, Paranoids search in vain for purity and truth.

In the minds of Paranoids, truth, loyalty, courage, honor, and the like are not abstractions. They are living, breathing presences that they live by, and will kill or die for if called upon to do so. At least, that's the way the Paranoids themselves imagine it. The reality is, of course, more complex. Paranoids are just as likely as anybody else to justify their self-serving actions in terms of high-sounding principles. More likely, actually. The most dangerous thing about Paranoids is their utter certainty of their own virtue. Paranoids seldom forgive. Paranoids happily consign sinners to the flames.

Aside from their questionable approach to morality, Paranoids are capable of extreme purity of thought. Many discoveries of the organizing principles that bind the universe together are the products of Paranoid thinking. So is every crackpot theory you've ever heard of.

Imagine a date with the man or woman of your dreams. You talk of nothing in particular, yet you desperately search your companion's every word for clues to what he or she really thinks about you. Your heart soars at tiny signs of acceptance and falls to the pit of your stomach at the slightest hint of rejection. This is business as usual for Paranoids, who analyze every conversation with the same degree of scrutiny. Awash in a flood of ambiguity, they grasp at straws, often clutching them so tightly as to make them break up and drift away. To Paranoids, many of the straws turn out to be anvils. Paranoid existence is one perceived betrayal after another. Their suffering is exquisite, the sorrowful and pretentious center from which their entire universe radiates. Being Paranoid hurts.

Paranoids see things that others can't. They may even see more than you want them to. They're always looking below the surface for hidden meanings and deeper realities. Sometimes they discover great insights, but more often they find reasons to doubt the people whom they should be able to trust. In the world of Paranoids, the line between perceptiveness and suspicion is as thin as a spiderweb and sharper than a razor blade.

Paranoids can shower you with affection one minute and with ice water the next. Their moods are dependent on their momentary perceptions of the honesty and faithfulness of the people around them. If Paranoids sense treachery, they attack so fast that you won't know what hit you. Or why. They can back off just as quickly. Many of their attacks are tests of loyalty.

Loyalty is everything to them, so important that they can't simply accept it on faith. They poke it, prod it, and all too often question it to death.

In relationships, Paranoids expect absolute loyalty and complete devotion that must be proved and reproved forever. Paranoids are always on the lookout for the tiniest hint of perfidy in word, deed, or thought.

Inevitably, they find what they're looking for, not because it's actually there in any objective sense, but because they continually focus on smaller and smaller details. No regular human can live up to a Paranoid's standards for purity of mind. One reason Paranoid jealousy is such a problem is that people usually handle it in exactly the wrong way: by trying to appease and reassure.

In their search for truth, Paranoids connect everything with everything else, then take it all personally. To poor virtuous Paranoids, the universe is a conspiracy designed to make them miserable. If you associate with Paranoids, it won't be possible for you to say or do anything that does not relate to them.

Paranoids believe that revenge is the cure for what ails them. They never seem to see that it is also the cause. It's not that Paranoids never forgive; they just do it at the same rate as glaciers melt.