

# Gaslighting:

## The Ultimate Narcissistic Mind Control

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this ebook to my family.

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# GASLIGHTING: THE ULTIMATE NARCISSISTIC MIND CONTROL

## Introduction

You try to commiserate with your friends and family, but they seem to shun you lately. Your friends don't know what you are talking about when you complain about your unhealthy relationship. They think that your partner is a perfect angel. Your family is confused about your erratic behaviors. Everyone thinks that you have gone stark-raving mad. You try to get your wits about you, but your partner is always there to tell you that you are worthless, clingy, emotional, needy, and crazy.

Maybe his parents and his other family members are supportive of him. They don't seem to like you. His charm has won over everyone else. You wonder if you are the one who is the problem. After all, why can't everyone else see that your partner is causing the decline in your mental health? Why don't they empathize with your emotional pain?

You don't feel like yourself anymore. You feel like a shell of your former self. You were so much vibrant and live-loving before you met the narcissist in your life. You love him, but you recognize that he is tearing you down at the same time. You wonder why your relationship isn't supportive, loving and filled with personal growth.

The problem is this: you can't tell which one of you is crazy. At first, you were certain it was him. But lately, you wonder if your own sense of sanity is declining. You feel emotional, exhausted, depressed, frazzled, stressed and confused. You think that you might even suffer a nervous breakdown any second now. Not even the counselors believe the suffering that you are experiencing. Most people have no idea what you are going through.

If you are feeling this way, my friend, there is a simple explanation. You may be dating or married to a narcissist. Your self-absorbed partner may be gas-lighting and manipulating you. He may cycle between love-bombing and distancing himself from you. He seems to be a nice guy to your face sometimes, but then you find out that he is talking bad about you to others. He seems to triangulate you with other women or family members in order to make you jealous and boost his own ego.

Does he talk you in circles when you confront him about his whereabouts when he is running late? Does he tell you that you are being 'too clingy', 'too emotional', and 'too needy' when you say that you

want to spend time together? Does he get defensive when you want to move the relationship forward in any way? Does he balk at anything resembling maturity and commitment?

Does he isolate you from friends and family so that he has the opportunity to win everyone over to his side? Does he stop you from having any independence because he is afraid that you will leave him if you had some moral support? Is his self-esteem wavering to the point where he thinks that you might get smart if you talk to others? Does he fear you 'figuring out' what he is up to, especially if other people validate it to you?

## **What is gas-lighting?**

Gas-lighting is the attempt of another person to twist your reality. The purpose of gas-lighting is often to force another person to experience or accept an alternate reality. Gas-lighting is used in order to pass someone's bad feelings onto another person. Narcissists cannot and do not take responsibility for their own behavior. Instead, they seek to shame and blame others in order to dodge the bad feelings. This is sometimes referred to as projection.

## **The Narcissist at His Core**

Narcissists are very immature. Many of them have the emotional stability of a child who is around the age of 9. Many parents of narcissists did not teach their child life skills beyond this point. Once the child began to individuate in a normal way, the parent either suffocated the child by being over-protective, or invalidated the child emotionally. Either way, the child became stunted in their own personal growth in the absence of a healthy adult to help to open doors for them in the real world.

A child without opportunity ceases to grow. They become wrapped up inside their own emotional pain from being invalidated and ignored. They suffer from Complex PTSD and PTSD from childhood trauma. A child who suffers from childhood trauma often goes on to suffer to emotional relationship trauma later as an adult. The narcissist has been so wrapped up in himself and licking his childhood wounds that he forgot to learn how to relate to other people in his adolescence. This sets him back significantly in his maturity in his twenties and thirties.

A narcissist who has grown up in a home with busy, frazzled or harried parents often doesn't see his parents interacting in healthy ways. Without this solid foundation, he often grows up feeling as though relationships are not all that important. If his role models instilled work ethics in him, it is far

more likely that he will spend most of his time and energies on being successful at work. He will avoid the home and family life, which is the location which he feels the least successful overall due to his lack of adequate role-modeling and his lack in communication skills.

Many of us marry beneath us. We are attracted to the boyish charm of the narcissist. He is playful, witty, and funny. He is sexy in a childish way. We see him as the playful parent to his children. He makes us forget about our own problems and our own responsibilities with his whimsical and childish behaviors. The narcissist uses escapism in order to make his life more fulfilling, as he is often lacking in many of the skills required to be successful later in life.

According to the popular book by Dan Kiley, the narcissist is the 'Peter Pan' man and we are the 'Wendy'. We feel the need to fix him, to nurture him and to coddle him. He lashes out towards us in the way that a child would. He dislikes authority, and he eventually views his partner as an authority figure just for having sense of responsibility towards the world. He negates the needs of the world and the social rules that he should be conforming to, and he bucks anything else that remotely resembles social norms.

The narcissist thinks that he is special and above all others. He dislikes that others are better at certain things than he is. He will often seek to sabotage or spoil someone else's efforts in order to take credit. He hates when others point out his mistakes, and thus he will work to embarrass anyone who does this to him. He often has a fantastical temperament which he unleashes whenever he allows it to. He thrives on his boyish charm, and thus his temper is only shown to those who question the 'special treatment' that he demands from others.

The narcissist has many unhealthy coping mechanisms. He may use sex, drugs or alcohol in order to numb his low self-confidence and self-esteem. He might become impulsive and reckless in order to seek stimulation, because he is often unable to get it in healthy ways. He often lacks foresight and planning, and thus cannot foresee the consequences that will be doled out in direct relation to his actions.

Different types of narcissists may employ different types of gas-lighting: intentional gas-lighting or unintentional gas-lighting. The narcissist's strengths, weaknesses, and brain wiring often dictate which type of gas-lighting he will use.

## **Intentional gas-lighting:**

Intentional gas-lighting means that the narcissist is covertly or overtly manipulating, lying, and distorting reality for the victim. People who are victimized by intentional gas-lighting become more and more erratic in their own behavior. They question their own sanity and motives. They get paralyzed in their ability to trust others or to make even the most trivial decision.

The narcissist strips away most of the 'human' elements of his partner. He wants her to become one with him. She is to be an extension of him, as are his children. He is object-oriented and task-oriented, and thus sees her as being part of himself. This object-orientation is why narcissists react so badly in the wake of their partner cheating or leaving them. A narcissist also reacts quite severely to anyone threatening his belongings and his livelihood, as can be seen in narcissists who commit homicide during divorce and custody battles.

The narcissist strives to convince his partner that she is the one who must be crazy or delusional. He denies often that he is off-balance or unhealthy in any way. He has been reacting with overt and covert manipulation towards others for most of his life. He has sometimes learned no other way to relate to another human being.

The narcissist omits information or lies to his partner in order to avoid a breakup. He lies about who he is with and his whereabouts. He is often bothered and annoyed by conflict. He feels that he is always right. He feels that his opinion is more important than everyone else's opinions. He feels that the world should revolve around him. He flies into severe tantrums when it does not.

The malicious and intentional narcissist feels that the ends justify the means. The narcissist becomes annoyed when he cannot control his partner. He invalidates her emotionally. He shuts her down when she tries to get her needs met. The narcissist ceases all communication if it isn't going according to his plans. He interrupts, ignores, tantrums or cuts off discussions that aren't ultimately in his favor. He conveniently forgets everything that he promised or agreed to.

The narcissist distorts and twists the words of the other person. He hears things in his own way, and he processes them completely opposite to how they were intended. He hears what he wants to hear, and he changes the rest. He conveniently misunderstands and doesn't listen to information or requests which are important to another person. Sometimes he clarifies too much

in order to be difficult for another person, and other times he can't be bothered to clarify at all.

This narcissist relishes his independence. He strongly denies the fact that he is like everyone else. He is fiercely threatened by efforts of others to get him to conform or to emasculate him in any way. He exerts his dominance and his manliness continuously. He flares his feathers in a way that a peacock does.

This type of narcissist might regularly lose his temper and abuse his partner. Some narcissists even end up killing their partner because their efforts to control the situation are not working. Narcissists often get more abusive as time goes on. The abuse has less and less immediate effect on the victim as she becomes desensitized to it. She becomes overall more obedient as he exerts more force, and then alters her life to largely conform to him. She becomes trauma bonded at this point.

The narcissist thinks of other people as his 'property'. He will become angry and upset if someone else tries to take what is his. He will throw tantrums just like a child will in order to protect what is 'his'. He seeks to break down the needs, desires and opinions of his mate. He is a control freak, and he dislikes anyone else having any power over him. Thus, everyone around him must be broken down and viewed as his minions.

He is ultimately the king of his own domain. He is in his own delusional world where he is better than everyone else. Everyone else must celebrate his 'specialness'. He is a spoiled child looking for validation from others.

The narcissist may fill other people with misinformation in the hopes that it gets back to his partner. A narcissist might tell his mother that he was fishing all day with his friends. He hopes that she passes this information to others. If his partner confronts him for coming home 4 hours late (due to being out with his mistress), he falls back on the alibi that he has created by telling his mother he would be fishing.

This behavior serves multiple purposes. He is able to project feelings of shame back onto his partner if she confronts him. His mother then chastises his partner for checking up on his whereabouts at all, inferring that she is mistreating him in some way. His mother sides with him to commiserate when he is complaining about his partner.



Narcissists can use this as a step to further their advantage in custody battle or divorce. His mother can attest that he is committing no wrongdoing. He and the mother (and possibly other family members) can make accusations that the partner has paranoia or jealousy issues, even when the narcissist is found to have cheated.

A narcissist may lie, omit information or falsify documents in order to reinforce his gas-lighting. He may skew another person's reality in order to gain an alibi. He may purposely disappear or push his partner's buttons in many ways in a cruel attempt to get his own way. The ends justify the means. He doesn't care what it takes for him to get what he wants out of a situation. He will stoop to a new low that is surprisingly immoral to his partner without even batting an eye.

A narcissist may do even worse and more manipulative and malicious acts. He might sabotage another person's job, livelihood, relationships or belongings. He will often do this very covertly. He always projects the blame back onto the victim. They caused his temper problems. They were the ones who were forgetful. If only they had done things differently. He strives to cause the other person to go stark raving mad in order to protect his place in the world.

The narcissist has a certain 'view' of his own morals and values. He must project so that he doesn't have to distort his own views of himself. If he believes that men should never hit women, he will blame his abuse on his victim. He cannot see himself as being an abuser, and thus it must be her fault for being deserving of the abuse that he doled out.

Narcissists who delight in gas-lighting, lying and manipulating others often have a tell-tale sign that they show while they are in the process of gas-lighting another person. Many psychopaths and sociopaths use what is called 'duper's delight' when they have learned that they outsmarted a jury and got away with a homicide. This 'duper's delight' is also shared by the narcissist who just got away with gas-lighting his victim. He is satisfied with himself for outsmarting another person, getting away with something, or avoiding punishment for something he has done wrong. It is no different than a child who sneaks a cookie from the cookie jar and lies to avoid being caught. The narcissist is emotionally immature, and thus reacts the same way as a child who is elated at getting away with a lie.

## **Unintentional gas-lighting:**

Some narcissists gas-light because they have cognitive and learning deficits. The narcissist who claims that he never had a conversation with someone might just have a memory deficit. A narcissist who seems disorganized in his thinking patterns might have undiagnosed Schizophrenia, Asperger's Syndrome or Autism Spectrum Disorder.

A narcissist generally has other issues of trauma, PTSD, and Complex PTSD that underlie his basic personality. He adopts maladaptive coping mechanisms for almost every area of his life because of the negative experiences that previously caused his narcissistic injury. This can be from exposure to other narcissistic, self-centered or unaware people. This can also be from exposure to people with mental health problems, personality disorders, low IQ and social difficulties.

The unintentional narcissist often has brain wiring problems that cause him to lose his own grip on reality. He becomes fearful that he is going crazy. He wants to find tangible things that justify to him that he is not losing his wits about him. He may be lapsing into the world of schizophrenia, unsure of what delusions are real and what are not. The man who is aware that he is losing his own sanity experiences significant emotional problems that cause his condition to deteriorate ever more rapidly.

The narcissist doesn't choose his parents. He generally experiences significant neglect or trauma in his childhood in order to become narcissistic and self-absorbed. Or, he experiences a smothering guardian who refuses to allow him to become his own person. He spends the rest of his life pushing back against the world so that no one else will smother or suffocate him. If he is still an extension of someone else, his life will be devoted to both rebelling against and protecting the narcissist who seeks to consume him.

If his external world is largely hostile or confusing, he will find solace inside himself. He will see others external to him as being dangerous and mystifying. He will see his world as being hostile, and thus will be defensive at all times. He will see people as being only objects. If the narcissist's parents are largely neglectful, absent, ill or deceased, the narcissist is at risk in his childhood to acquire the same deficits as his parents in areas of career, education, parenting skills and social interactions (or lack thereof).

Everyone's perception of an experience is sometimes significantly different from our own. If we have been hurt or frightened previously in a similar set of circumstances, chances are good that our

later experiences may be met with resistance, fear, paranoia, apprehension or caution. If we experienced something positive, we might feel joy, elation or excitement when met with similar circumstances in the future. The narcissist always views life with a negative light, just like the people who raised him.

## **Signs of Gas-Lighting:**

An abuser will say things like “you don’t know what you’re talking about” or “you’re psychotic”. He will blame, shame and humiliate the victim each time the victim tries to question a situation. The abuser will constantly deny that things “didn’t happen that way” or that the victim’s perception “is all in [her] head”.

The abuser will use control and ultimatums in order to deny and avoid detection while they are in the process of gas-lighting their partner. They will break up, cheat or threaten to leave their partner if the partner complains that things didn’t occur the way they remember. The abuser will withhold love, affection and attention if the victim tries to speak out against the gas-lighting or tries to prove that they are being taken advantage of.

The abuser will reinforce the gas-lighting by telling others that their partner is ‘crazy’ or ‘delusional’. The more an abuser is able to ‘convince’ other people of his alternate reality, the more depressed and isolated the partner becomes. They feel as though ‘everyone’ is out to get them. They begin to feel paranoia, distrust, and anger towards others. Their level of aggression might reach dangerous levels as their mental state declines.

The abuser distorts facts, words, conversations, and questions from others. They are only intermittently present and in the moment, and thus their fluctuating attention span means that they may only catch half of what is really going on in the world. The rest of the time, they are having conversations with themselves in their own head. A narcissist will act as though others are interrupting his thoughts and ‘bothering him’ much of the time because he is so buried deep inside himself trying to get away from reality.

The narcissist always infers that their partner is too sensitive, too emotional, irrational or needy. The partner continuously tries to regain traction with the narcissist, but is never successful convincing him otherwise. The more that the victim refutes these facts, the more exhausted she becomes. She

eventually resigns to his way of thinking, which is exactly what the narcissist wanted in the first place. The faster she conforms to his way of thinking, the happier the narcissist is. If his partner doesn't conform, he gives up and finds an easier target. The narcissist doesn't like anything that is 'difficult', and thus he will not waste his efforts on something he deems as 'unconquerable'.

The narcissist never faces reality head on. If he has responsibilities, he often shirks them. He finds excuses to refuse doing nearly anything that drains his low energy reserves. He spends so much of his time employing maladaptive coping skills that he cannot focus and cannot learn adequately. It takes him a lot of time to process things, and he 'fakes' understanding in order to get other people off his back.

The narcissist always denies that his behavior needs to be changed. He never seeks personal growth unless another person motivates him. Even then, he is apt to drop the ball if he is not hand-held to the end of a project at times. If he cannot do something perfectly, he feels that there isn't even a reason to start the project at all. He must conserve his energy for gathering attention and admiration via the easiest routes possible. He cannot be bothered to put the real work into something in order to reap the rewards. His life is full of shortcuts.

## **A Grim Reality**

Gas-lighting is always damaging to another person's psyche. A person who gas-lights another person is abusing them, even when the gas-lighting is unintentional. The partner of a narcissist has their words, thoughts, ideas and opinions twisted and thrown back at them often. They view the outside world as being hostile. The narcissist's partner is often isolated because the narcissist sees little reason to relate in positive ways to others.

Most people who date or marry a narcissist already have some prior narcissistic wound that was caused by someone else. Their coach, caregiver, parent, adopted parent, teacher or family member taught them maladaptive ways in which to cope with life. They were not actively mentoring and encouraging individuality in the child. The child learned how to survive, but not how to thrive. They carried these survival mechanisms into adulthood, and never stopped to realize that this was no way to live.

Gas-lighting usually worsens in a relationship. The more the victim tries to differentiate what is

real versus the abuser's fabricated reality, the more disoriented the victim becomes. The psyche is a very fragile thing. A person who is subjected to abuse and fabricated reality on a continuous basis eventually falls into a sort of folie a deux, or shared psychosis.

## **How to prevent gas-lighting:**

Gas-lighting can occur for malicious reasons and innocent reasons. Regardless of reasons for the gas-lighting, it is very detrimental to the partner's mental health. The most severe forms of gas-lighting can cause hospitalization, divorce, relationships violence, child abuse, suicide, homicide or accidental death.

Gas-lighting can be prevented by initiating a series of self-protective measures such as:

1. Installing video cameras for a narcissist who may be verbally, emotionally, physically or sexually abusing another person.

This is especially important if the narcissist claims that things did not happen the way that he remembers them. If a narcissist is physically abusive, he may experience dissociation during an abusive event. He may change the reality in his own mind due to being delusional or dissociative.

The narcissist may have poor memory recall or may minimize the seriousness of an abusive event. He may twist reality to maintain his own image of himself. He may be justifying the event in his own mind so that he does not get into trouble. He may feel that the victim is deserving of whatever it is that occurred, and thus will seek to do it again in the future in order to further punish, control or agitate the victim.

2. Using audio recording on a smartphone in order to clarify what is said during conversations with the narcissistic person.

When the narcissist claims not to have heard what was said during a conversation, one can then review the audio recording at a later time to determine which party has the incorrect perception of what occurred during a conversation. This can help to determine whether the narcissist has disorganized thinking patterns, inattentiveness, dishonesty or deficient memory as it pertains to overall communication.

3. Using written communication wherever possible.

A victim who experiences constant gas-lighting attempts while in a conversation with a narcissist may seek to avoid having these conversations in person. Some discussions, agreements or promises should be communicated in writing. The narcissist can sign the agreement. If he refutes the agreement later, the documentation can be referred back to for further clarification. This keeps both parties accountable for their actions.

Some narcissists cannot think through complex problems. If their cognitive skills cause them to be short-sighted, short statements communicated in written form might be easier for them to digest. Some narcissists are visually oriented, which means visual reminders might be all that is necessary for a narcissist to conform to a promise that he made.

4. Have a designated third party to listen.

If a narcissist is guilty of projecting and distorting the facts during conversation, it may be beneficial to have another person present for interpretation. The third party can be a mutual friend, family member or a counselor. Sometimes the narcissist must hear things worded in a different way to gain full understanding of what is being said. A third party may also hold him accountable if he is guilty of dissociating, drifting off and daydreaming in another environment. It is more difficult to be distracted in a counselor's office than it is at home or at work.

5. Ignore the narcissist's reality. Look at him for the injured person that he is. Feel sorry for him, but don't let his distorted reality take over your own reality. If you don't question your own sanity when you are around *anyone else*, odds are pretty good that the narcissist is the one with the problem. If other people don't seem to distort your thoughts, opinions and words, then spend more time with them to keep grounded.

6. Avoid isolation with the narcissist at all costs. Isolation causes even prisoners in solitary confinement to lose their grip on reality. They become hyperaware of themselves, mentally ill and begin to lose social skills. Some narcissists were emotionally dissociated or isolated in their childhood or adulthood for a variety of reasons. Don't let them make this isolation a reality for you. Isolated people lose their sense of reality and their place in the world. We need other (healthy) people in order to ground us in reality.

## **Conclusion**

If you suspect someone is gas-lighting you, or if you know someone else who is being gas-lighted, get help as soon as possible. Severe depression, anxiety, PTSD, paranoid personality disorder, Alice in Wonderland Syndrome and even psychosis has resulted from gas-lighting. To tamper with someone else's state of mental health is a very severe form of cruelty. Complex PTSD and Developmental Trauma Disorder can result from relationships that are declining due to the presence of gas-lighting.

Many women have Battered Woman Syndrome from gas-lighting, even in the absence of other forms of isolation and physical/emotional/sexual violence. They become ostracized from their friends and family due to their partner's gas-lighting. The more isolated people become and the more they begin to question their own sanity, the more likely they are to lose touch with reality and to experience various forms of psychoses, delusions and dissociation.

A brain that is under severe forms of stress switches into survival mode. The only reactions that this traumatized person ultimately has are a fight/flight or freeze response. They may turn to drugs or alcohol. They may resort to violence against their perpetrator. Or they may become dissociated in order to deal with their unhealthy state of mind.

It is rare for a person at this state to reach out for help if the abuser is still in their life. They fear further retaliation from their abuser. They fear their own reactions to the stress. They fear other people around them that might harm them further by invalidating the reality that they are going through. Other people are uncomfortable with pain, abuse and trauma. They have enough on their plate to cope with, and thus cannot put themselves in the shoes of another.

These are taboo subjects that no one else wants to talk about. Many counselors even struggle to sympathize and empathize with victims. They either have no point of reference as to what the survivor is going through, or they are desensitized to the needs of their patients after working for some length of time in the field (caregiver burnout). Many caregivers and counselors have taken on their professional role as a means to heal themselves from developmental trauma or abuse. In the absence of adequate healing, they cannot always give good advice to their patients in a constructive and sympathetic manner.

Email us with questions, stories, comments and more at [FlurriesofSnow@gmail.com](mailto:FlurriesofSnow@gmail.com).

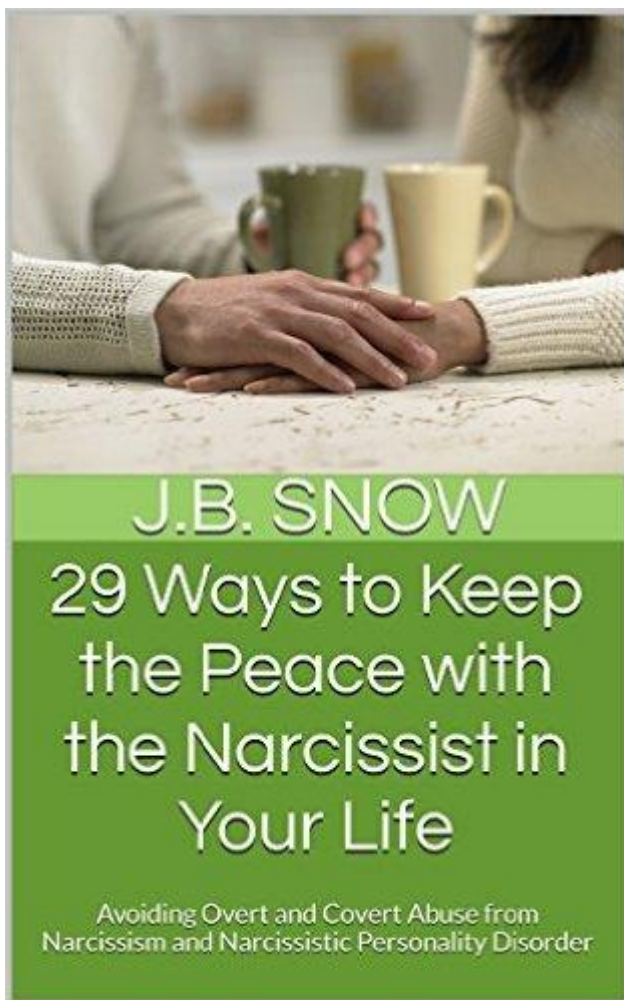
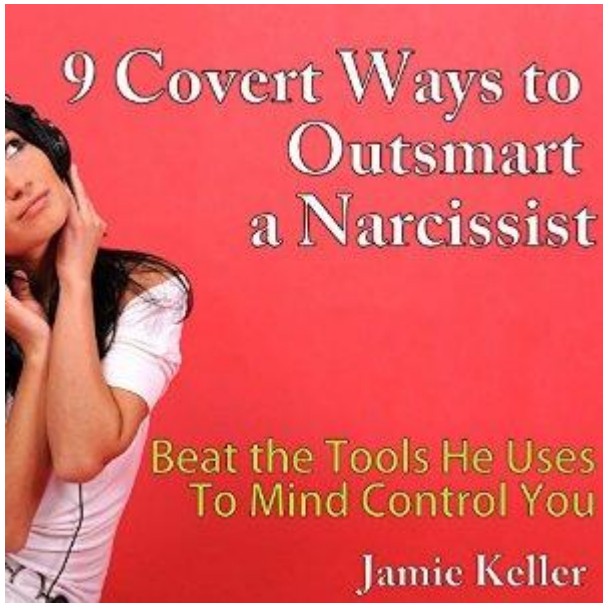
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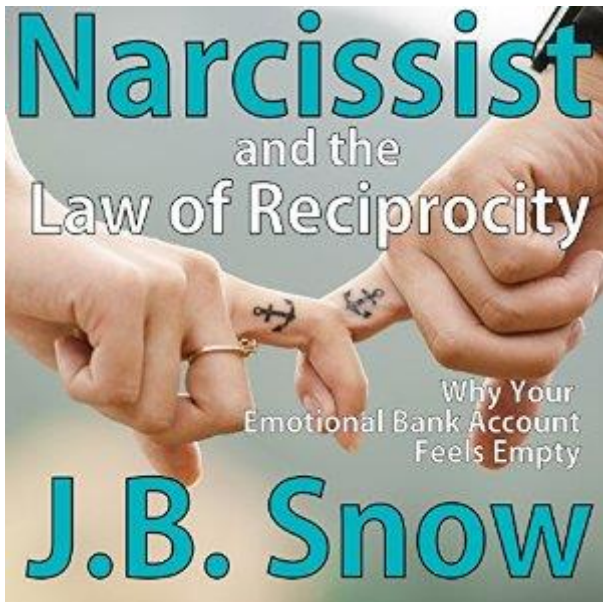
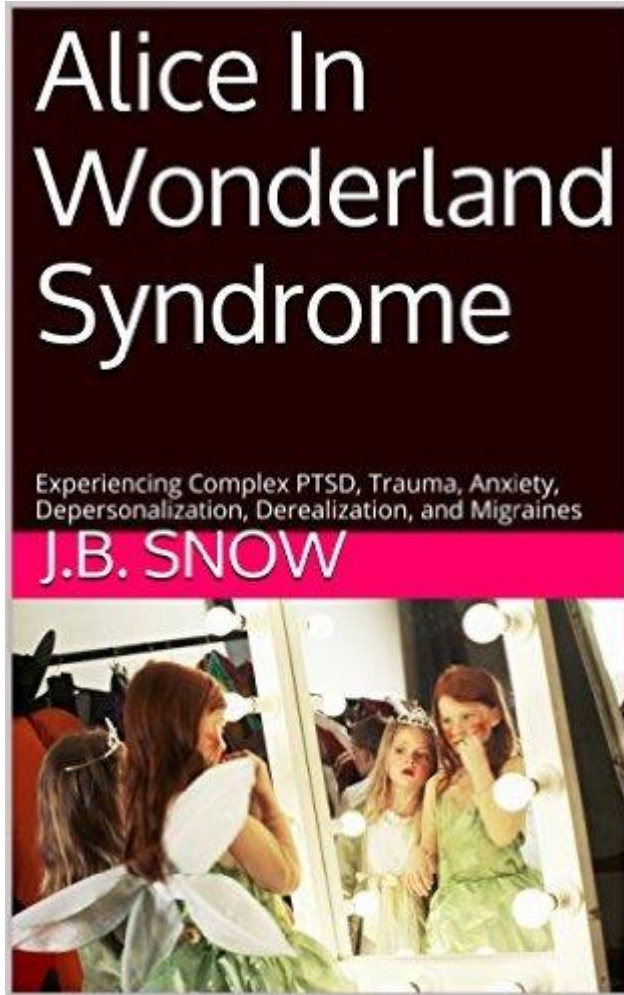
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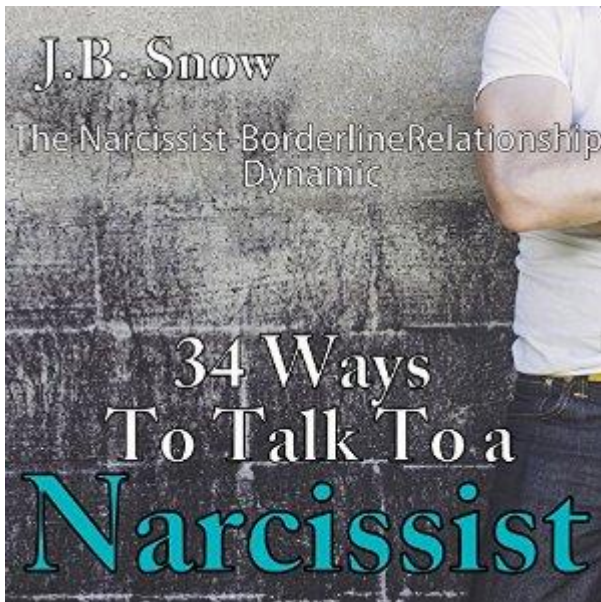
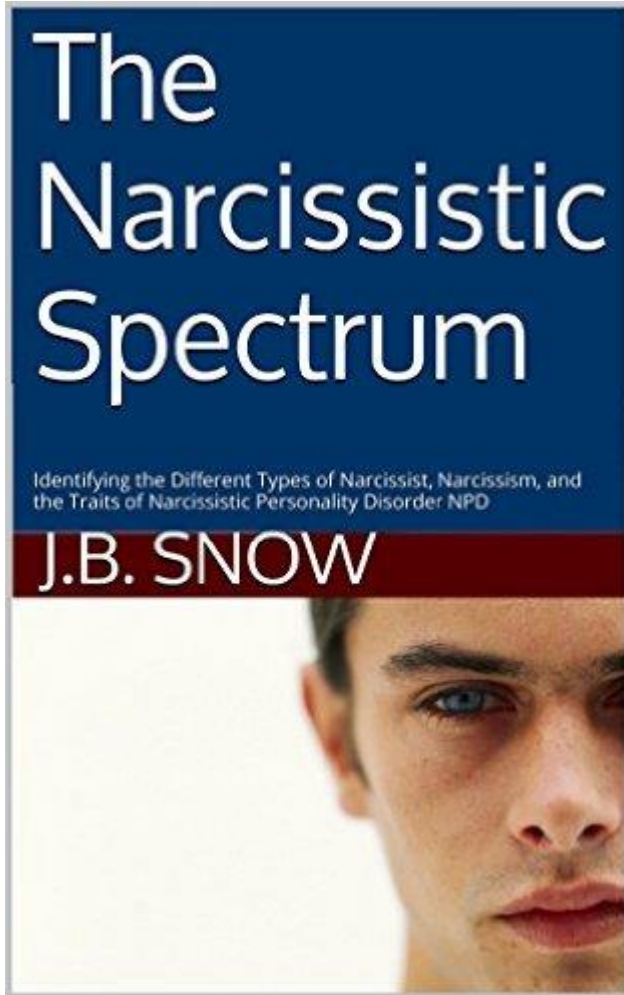
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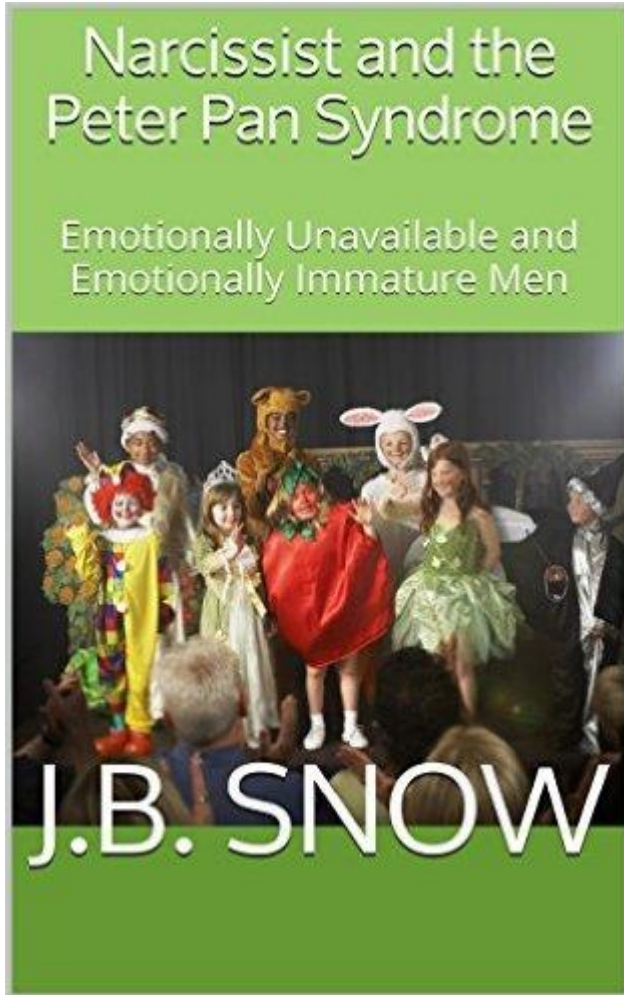
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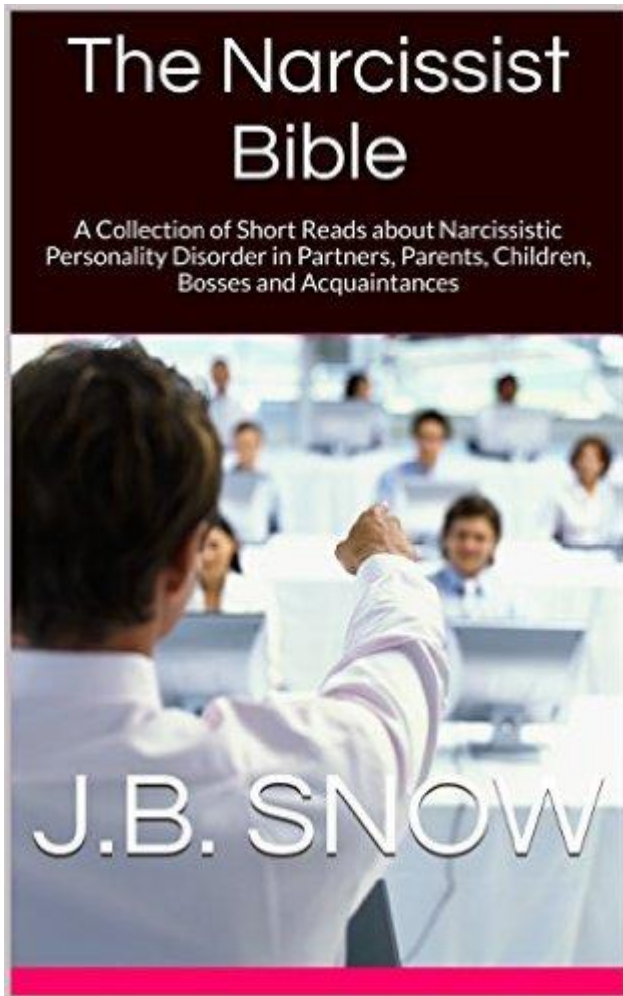












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### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

J.B. Snow lives with her family,  
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