



Reactive Self-Protective Personas

4 Ways We Adapt to Survive Narcissistic Behavior

Whether you realize it or not, you and others around you, will use self-protective personas in reaction to narcissistic behavior. Personas represent automatic patterns of behavior that we use to deal with people and situations.

These personas come from our self-protective system and the one you like to use depends on your Striving Style or MBTI type because they are from the brain quadrant of your dominant function.

The following are the 4 ways we react and adapt to survive narcissistic people.

Impostor/Closet Narcissist

Self-Protective Persona of the Left Rational Brain

This self-protective persona comes from the left rational brain where the thinking function resides. The strength of this function comes from deciding objectively. It is a powerful function and decides the relative usefulness of people, things, situations, etc. This survival persona fuses with the narcissistic leader by becoming indispensable to the narcissist to achieve their own agenda.

While they also have characteristics of the narcissistic persona, they get their need to be admired met vicariously, by emulating the thoughts, actions, and behavior of the narcissistic leader. Like “Mini-Me” from the Austin Powers movies, they survive by running interference from others who might upset their boss or insert themselves in their valued position.

One of our clients demonstrated this behavior by insisting his peers let him do the presenting of ideas to their boss because she was more likely to listen to him. He would convince them that the project was more important than who presented it. This allowed him to increase his value and present the idea as his own.

Innocent/Child

Self-Protective Persona of the Left Emotional Brain

This self-protective persona comes from the left emotional brain where the sensing function resides. This function helps us sequence, follow and gather information about our experience – positive or negative. This persona fuses with the narcissist by being a good soldier, always obeying and doing their duty. In a child-like fashion, this survival persona stays silent when the narcissist exaggerates or distorts reality. They follow without question when told what to do even though they know better so they don’t get in trouble.

The Innocent trusts blindly. They are convinced that their narcissistic boss knows better and to survive, they have to follow orders and make sure others do as well. Even when they don’t completely believe the narcissist, they will insist others conform and do what they are told; to not make waves. They accept no responsibility for negative consequences or outcomes because they feel they had no choice and

expect others to let them off the hook when ultimately things devolve.

Caretaker/Victim

Self-Protective Persona of the Right Emotional Brain

This self-protective persona comes from the right emotional brain where the feeling function resides. This function is used to make decisions based on subjective values and to maintain harmony. Those using this survival persona feel both victimized by the narcissist and responsible for caretaking them. This persona fuses with the narcissist by convincing themselves that the narcissists behavior will improve because they put their needs ahead of their own.

This belief compels them to increase their value to the narcissist, anticipating their feelings or needs, and taking care of them. They make the narcissist the center of their world, giving up their ability to be authentic and independent. Feeling victimized when not valued or appreciated, they abdicate their power and authority, feeling helpless and submitting to the demands and behavior of the narcissistic leader. They share their victim stories with anyone who will lend an ear, absolving themselves from their responsibility for themselves.



Compromiser/Prostitute

Self-Protective Persona of the Right Rational Brain

This self-protective persona comes from the right rational brain where the intuitive function resides. We use this function to imagine, envision possibilities and see future potential. When using this persona, individuals fuse with the narcissist by adapting and becoming what the narcissist wants them to be.

Those using this survival persona want to be independent but feel compelled to seek physical

security at any cost, even if it means selling themselves out to be in favor. They convince themselves that they are in control and independent but are actually dependent on the narcissist and have abandoned their own visions for physical and material safety. They will ignore their own values and integrity for approval, even doing something that goes against their ethics. They know how to manipulate the narcissist to gain approval despite the great cost to themselves.



Stop Being at the Mercy of Your Self-Protective Persona

By understanding your brain and the mechanics of your mind you increase your ability to live authentically and achieve your potential.
For more information about your Striving Style and self-protective persona, take the [Striving Styles Assessment](#).

ABOUT CALIBER

Caliber Leadership Systems is a Toronto-based consulting firm working with global clients striving to achieve their full potential. We offer therapeutic coaching to help leaders shift from self-protective to authentic leadership behavior by understanding the mechanics of the mind and the emotional drivers of behavior.

We specialize in helping clients build the infrastructure - systems, processes, structures, behaviour and leadership practices - necessary to prepare for and master the next level of organizational growth and development.

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