

## How To Develop Dark Triad Traits

### Description

## What Is The Dark Triad?

The dark triad is made up of narcissism, psychopathy, and machiavellianism. The triad is not a grouping of personality disorders, as is mistakenly assumed. It is simply a trait grouping. This trait grouping does purportedly have a relationship with antagonism, coming from the big 5 personality trait of disagreeableness (low agreeableness). Some scientists have argued that the traits aren't sufficiently distinct and that there really is only support for separating narcissism from the other two on the basis of neurology.

**Narcissism** in the dark triad context is generally focused on the grandiose version. Grandiose has traits like dominance, arrogance, exploitation, and exhibitionism.

**Psychopathy** in the dark triad context has traits like violating social norms, callousness, lack of empathy, being impulsive, irresponsibility, charm, manipulation, and feeling little emotion.

**Machiavellianism** in the dark triad context has traits like manipulation, callousness, goal oriented behavior, impulse control, and anti social behavior.

See this [meta analysis](#) for more information.

## What Makes Dark Triad Traits Useful?

Each trait has some advantages and disadvantages depending on one's desires and the situations they find themselves in. **The traits are useful because they give the holder an advantage in certain competitive situations.** The traits are advantageous enough that people go out of their way to try to develop them. See the section below.

Traits that are useful in a business setting are almost completely found in the machiavellianism section of the triad. **For example the ability to manipulate** and not be held back by empathy would be useful in a business setting as it would make it easier to play people against each other, and it would make it easier to undermine people's livelihoods with no remorse. Also, traits like impulse control and goal oriented behavior have obvious benefits when someone is trying to accomplish a set of difficult tasks. Anti social behavior could be a less useful or even detrimental part of machiavellianism.

Other traits that are unique or opposite to the Machiavellian traits actually would **make it more difficult** to become successful. For example, irresponsibility and impulsiveness would both be traits that would make you less employable and reliable. Grandiosity could go either way since sometimes it blinds the person to reality, but sometimes the extreme confidence can be useful.

## How Do You Develop Dark Triad Traits?

At a certain level, you can't. There is some literature that shows significant negative events can aid in loss of emotion, but the cost significantly outweighs the supposed benefit. But you can improve the skills related to these traits through learning and practice.

**The first step** would be to accept the reality of your existing traits. You might not have certain elements of machiavellianism that seem useful. But you do have other traits. Experiencing empathy can blind you but it can also make you understand it better. It also allows you to have a fuller life. Learn to turn things you see as [weaknesses in to strengths](#). A cinema character once said, "You know what I learned losing that duel? I learned that I'll never win. Not that way. That's their game, their rules. I'm not going to fight them, I'm going to f\*\*\* them. That's what I know that's what I am. And only by admitting what we are can we get what we want."

Another way to understand yourself is to study your shadow. [Jung](#) believed your shadow was all the parts about yourself that are repressed by social and personal pressure. For example you might believe you need to be nice, respectful, and friendly, so you conceal your aggressive and competitive side. Jung believed you needed to get to know this part of yourself to become a healthy human. Studying your shadow will help you better understand your strengths, weaknesses, and ways you need to improve.

**Second** you must study how those traits work. Learn to not make decisions when you are feeling emotional. Delay for a day or for a few hours while you think. Stoicism and logic are practices that seek to maximize rational thinking, and minimize emotion based decisions. Study books like [Meditations](#) and learn about [emotional reasoning](#), [cognitive distortions](#), [fallacies](#), and more. By understanding how something works you will find it easier to separate yourself emotionally from the process, and see it from a more logical point of view.

Develop manipulation skills by reading articles like how manipulation works at [basic](#) and [advanced](#) level. Goal oriented behavior can be developed simply by being honest with yourself about what you really want in life. See step 1.

If you lack confidence, don't try developing grandiosity. It isn't helpful because it blinds you to reality. Instead, develop real confidence. Read about things like [Dunning Kruger](#). Read about how [certainty](#) works in the brain. It isn't the strong logical process we think it is. Understand that most people who are confident might not actually be as competent as they are confident. Lastly, develop confidence through competence. Practice daily at the things you value and find impressive. It isn't a quick fix, but accomplishing goals you find impressive will eventually build the correct and long lasting version of confidence you seek.

**Third** you need to practice. Simply placing yourself in situations and practicing over and over again is the most simple, effective, yet difficult step. Try practicing in small every day work situations where the stakes aren't high. Escalate your practice until you get to important situations like salary or contract negotiations.

**Finally, a note of caution.** These traits can be useful in business and warfare situations. But we

strongly suggest not applying these traits and skills in relationships. Healthy relationships are built on trust, and these characteristics erode trust. Draw a line between your relationships and work, and don't ever cross it.

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### **Category**

1. Manipulation

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