

No, Donald Trump is Not a Narcissist

by [Miguel Nunes Silva](#) (July 2025)



Echo and Narcissus (John William Waterhouse, 1903)

Ever since Donald J. Trump ran for the US presidency in 2016, recurrent criticism of his politics has frequently been coupled with the ad hominem accusation that Trump is a narcissist, in addition.

What this means is that Donald Trump allegedly suffers from Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD). This type of pathologization is frequent in contemporary politics, especially coming from leftist sources.

I, for one, am not convinced and will explain why. I am by no means an expert and speak only as a layman but one with some personal experience in matters pertaining to NPD. I also have

never met Donald Trump and cannot possibly diagnose him. Ultimately, I do not know and very few people can know. Nonetheless, I believe there are superficial considerations that can be made that disprove this speculation.

Politics, with its connection to power structures and public exposure is, of course, a fertile ground for narcissistic types, so it would not be particularly surprising to learn that any particular political leader exhibits narcissistic tendencies.

That being said, a simple observation is that unpleasant people do not necessarily make for bad leaders. Leadership is not judged by how many friends one makes but rather by how effectively things are improved.

Nevertheless, narcissism is on a spectrum and taken to an extreme, it may very well be detrimental to those being ruled by the narcissist, so while an ad hominem, it would be relevant to assess whether any particular politician really is a case of NPD.

It is important, though, to understand that fame and power cause narcissistic traits to appear in any human. Being 'narcissistic' is not the same as being a full-fledged 'narcissist.' A famous artist throwing a tantrum over the wrong furniture arrangement in his dressing room is not the same as seeking to isolate a partner from family and friends, to give an example.

There are four characteristics of Donald Trump's conduct that make me seriously doubt the diagnosis coming from the Left: one is the mental health of his children, another is his willingness to cause controversy. There is the overall good impression he has made on his employees over the years and, finally, the element of self-awareness.

The Mayo clinic definition describes NPD as:

(...) a mental health condition in which people have an unreasonably high sense of their own importance. They need and seek too much attention and want people to admire them. People with this disorder may lack the ability to understand or care about the feelings of others. But behind this mask of extreme confidence, they are not sure of their self-worth and are easily upset by the slightest criticism.

Going from this definition, Trump might fit the bill nicely since, even before his political rise, he had pursued political endeavours, relished attention, making his own name a famous brand, had a successful TV career and had always sought to remain in the limelight of both popular culture and financial news. What undermines the comparison is the last sentence. Is Donald Trump actually an insecure child who bullies for self-affirmation?

What we know from Trump's childhood is that he was a young cadet captain at the New York Military Academy and that he won three varsity letters. These are not easy feats for insecure people and true merit—especially in a military atmosphere—is difficult to fake. Moreover, he seems to have been popular, active as he was in different sports.

So let us focus on popularity, for a start. Trump definitely enjoys and seeks it which is a narcissistic trait. Yet, here we have to delve into the difference between performance driven popularity and authentic popularity. Take the following quote:

There are a lot more important problems than Sri Lanka to worry about. Well, we have to end apartheid, for one, slow down the nuclear arms race, stop terrorism and world

hunger. We have to provide food and shelter for the homeless and oppose racial discrimination and promote civil rights, while also promoting equal rights for women. We have to encourage a return to traditional moral values. Most importantly, we have to promote general social concern and less materialism in young people.

Who do you think spoke these words? If you're thinking Donald Trump, you'd be wrong. This monologue belongs to serial killer character Patrick Bateman, from *American Psycho*. Bateman is adamant throughout the film that he wants "to fit in." This is a main difference between artificial social acceptance and accolades and genuine popularity. Donald Trump is a politician and strives for popularity but he has never shied away from speaking his mind and risk being controversial. Listening to his takes on politics in the 1980s is not different from listening to him today. He has been remarkably consistent in his views and always maintained a somewhat confrontational and competitive persona. These are very much not the habits of a narcissist.

It is important to add that some more hysterical Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) individuals do crave attention in any form, even if negative, however, this is very much not the norm for narcissists. Narcissists tend to maintain a politically correct external persona in stark contrast with their very egotistical personal life. In fact, in my experience, narcissists tend to conduct themselves in the exact opposite manner as Jordan B. Peterson would advise: they very much do not make their beds, so to speak, and do adopt moralist stances on global problems; they externalize altruism and are privately very selfish.

Then there is the issue of those closest to Trump. Blake Lively recently encountered somewhat of a comeuppance when she found herself socially isolated in her conflict with a fellow

artist. This happened because of years of bridges burnt with many of her colleagues due to poor behaviour. In the case of Trump, it was his entry into right-wing politics that sparked the outrage and not personal conflicts.

Unlike the children of Hollywood stars who often experience behavioural problems, substance abuse, and even suicide, Trump's children appear to be stable reasonable individuals who love their father and try to help him as best they can. Often enough, narcissistic parents try to turn their children against each other, play favourites or push them to pursue their own failed dreams so as to live those out vicariously. Both Trump's children and his employees do not seem to have many complaints of Donald Trump and actually seem fond of him.

There is one other aspect which, I believe, exonerates Trump. It is true that his speech is often demonstrative of hyperbole and exaggeration; many have described it as simplistic and most fitting a used cars salesman. Yet, Trump seems to be very self-aware: watching his rallies, Trump makes people laugh because he knows they are not taking his words literally. He makes his point with simple terms and humour, without being academically meticulous. This is to say that he does not expect his words to hold up to any intense scrutiny: he is making a point, he is not passing a math exam. This matters because while Trump takes pride in his rhetoric and will defend it, he enjoys debate and being opposed. One might even posit that he is intentionally overblown to create a polemic and have others compromise closer to the middle. Again, nuance and a love of adversarial dynamics are not attributes of narcissists.

Donald J. Trump has his flaws. Personalities vary and some personalities are not pleasant or even kind but one must take care not to equate brashness with mental disorder, assertiveness with pathology.

Sentimental leftists allow themselves to view the world as

caricature; let us not follow their example.

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