

5 Hooks That Narcissists Use To Keep You Coming Back



If you've ever dated a narcissist, you're fully aware of how difficult it is to break off your relationship with them. Those charming, manipulative jerks seem to know just which buttons to press in order to make you feel like you're the villain for giving up on your union, even after they've put you through more levels of emotional hell than you could ever describe.

Breaking free is possible, however, especially if you're aware of the key tactics narcissists will use to try to keep you in their lives. Knowledge is power, and if you spot this behavior, you can disarm it, evade it, and remove these persons from your life for good.

Here are 5 common hooks that narcissists employ to lure you back into their clutches:

1. Hoovering

Let's say you've managed to cut ties with your narcissist ex. You've maintained radio silence, you've started to put your life back together... and out of nowhere, they get back in contact with a message that just kicks you in the guts.

Maybe they heard that your parent died and they text you just to let you know that they're sending their condolences. Or perhaps you get a tear-stained note

taped to your door in which they lament their brokenness and say that you were the only good thing that had ever happened in their life, and they're so sorry for having f*cked things up between you.

Like your standard vacuum cleaner, this is a hook that's meant to suck you back into their web.

If you've opened yourself up to this person, they know your vulnerabilities. They know what makes you tick, and like a well-trained assassin, they know the weak spots they can target to achieve their intent: in this case, to get you back in some way.

In all likelihood, they don't actually want to rekindle a relationship with you – they just want to prove to themselves that they could have you if they wanted to, so they can suck up your energy to fuel their ego games for a little while before discarding you once again.

2. Intermittent Reinforcement

Remember when things were really wonderful at the beginning of your relationship? Before everything went to sh*t? When you were their world, their sun, their stars? Before every single thing you did irritated them? It's those memories that a narcissist will draw upon to hook you back.

Imagine a dog that gets kicked by its owner 95 percent of the time, but the remaining 5 percent, they get cuddles and treats and love. The dog will tolerate the kicking because of the memory of how wonderful it was when they had moments of being truly loved, and just like a narcissist will treat you like crap most of the time, they might gaze at you adoringly now and then, marveling at how gorgeous you are, and how they really don't deserve someone as amazing as you are.

This technique is especially effective if you have low self-esteem, because the little blips of kindness are like oases of hope in what is otherwise a wasteland of shite. If and when those moments happen, remind yourself of the overwhelming ugliness that happens the rest of the time, and how those fleeting moments really don't make up for how horribly they treat you. Print out abusive text messages and emails and hang them on your wall for instant reminders, if you need to.

3. Promises Of Change (Lies Lies Lies)

The person you dated, but have mercifully been free from for a while, suddenly emails or texts you to let you know that they're in therapy.

They've realized that they need help. They want to change. They're taking steps to do so, and one of the things they want to rectify is how horribly they've treated you.

...and there go your heartstrings, because you did care about this person fiercely (and possibly still do), and they've just prodded on that soft spot in your heart that always hoped (prayed, dreamed) that they would wake to their potential and be the person you always knew they could be.

The thing is, they know full well how effective this hook can be, which is why they use it. It's a crock of sh*t, of course, but it's a damned good manipulation tactic because it appeals to your empathy and compassion.

Other essential narcissist reading (article continues below):

- [How To Deal With A Narcissist: The Only Method Guaranteed To Work](#)
- [Love Bombing: An Early Warning Sign That You're Dating A Narcissist](#)
- [8 Things A Narcissist Cannot Do For You \(Or Anyone Else\)](#)
- [Coping Mechanisms When Leaving A Narcissistic Partner Behind](#)
- [The Language Narcissists Use To Manipulate And Traumatize Their Victims](#)

4. Rescue Me!

Yet another hook that will stab into your marrow and draw you back in is when the object of your previous affections is suddenly in danger. Maybe their new relationship has (supposedly) turned abusive, and they need your protection or strength to extricate them from it. Maybe they've taken a drug overdose, or gotten arrested, or found themselves in some other horrible situation and omg you are the only person in the world they can trust and count on when they're in such a bad place so please please help...please.

Effective, isn't it? You're basically f*cked either way: if you come to their aid, you're sucked back into their blackened vortex of horribleness and the entire cycle will begin anew. If you don't help them, you'll feel like the world's most cold-hearted person for abandoning them when they had a moment of vulnerability and reached out to you (to you! They MUST really love you!). Furthermore, if you don't help them when and if they cast their fishing line out to reel you back in, you might find yourself faced with...

5. Smear Campaigns

Some people choose to go back to a narcissistic partner in order to prove to themselves (and others) that they're not a horrible, abusive charlatan... which is how the narcissist has chosen to paint them after a breakup.

If your narcissistic ex has been in contact with your social circle and told them horror stories about how you were cruel to them and then abandoned them, you're going to look like the worst person on the planet. You might find yourself frozen out of people's lives, or cut down by complete strangers for actions that you either didn't do, or that you did in order to save yourself.

Like leaving.

In this situation, you might actually be the one who tries to re-form a connection with the narcissist, in order to amend the perception that you're an awful human being. You might find yourself apologizing to them for making them feel bad when you called them out on their abuse. You may grovel and ask for a second chance after you dared to walk away from their gaslighting and neglect.

If they consider you worthy enough, they might do you the honor of letting you back into their life, at which point the entire cycle will begin anew. Won't that be fun?

When it comes to narcissists, it's important to remember that they are the way they are because they're hurting. They've been damaged, and their behavior stems from a place of severe internal damage. It's rare that a narcissist can change, but you can be damned certain that they'll hurt most of the people they allow close to them.

If you love a narcissist, that's okay: you're a kind, probably empathic person who has wanted to help someone who's obviously in pain. But you need to love yourself more, and get the hell away before you end up more damaged than they are.