



# IS YOUR EGO WORKING HARD ENOUGH?

You know where nice guys finish. Here's how to avoid that fate without losing your friends, alienating your colleagues, or selling your soul.

**DO YOU TWEET TRIUMPHS? EASILY PERSUADE** colleagues? Think of yourself as a maverick? Congrats: You may be a narcissist. And that can be good—at least for your career. U.S. presidents have higher-than-average levels of “grandiose narcissism,” say Emory University researchers, whose study linked that particular type to persuasiveness, risk taking, and crisis management. Think Kevin Spacey in *House of Cards*. “In moderation, some narcissistic traits can be helpful at work,” says Tony Ferretti, Ph.D., a Florida-based psychologist. “High self-confidence, extroversion, and self-motivation are actually called ‘adaptive narcissism.’” The trick is to embrace the traits that fuel success and dump the ones that make you a bad friend. So take a look in the mirror (“nice!”), and at our quiz, to pull it off.

Pop styling: Angela Campos/Stockland Martell; Stockphoto (man)



**1 Your posts on Twitter, Facebook, or other social media sites are...**

- A All work: updates about your accomplishments and photos with VIPs.
- B All social: what you're up to, pics of friends, links to funny cat videos.
- C Work and personal: industry links, selfies, photos of friends and pets.

**BALANCE YOUR PASSION** Because they crave accolades, narcissists bleed commitment to the job. But sacrificing too much can cause burn-out, says Jane Dutton, Ph.D., a business professor at the University of Michigan. Instead, craft your job to fit your strengths, values, and interests. Seeing your career as a calling can bring dedication and passion to your work. (Best answer: C)



**5 In your spare time, who are the people you usually hang out with?**

- A People who can help you: superiors at work, local bigwigs, reporters.
- B A mix. You talk to everyone, from the janitor to the CEO.
- C People like you—that is, folks of similar age and corporate rank.

**NAIL NETWORKING** Surround yourself with powerful, driven people. Adopt the pursuits that higher-ups enjoy, says Peter Shankman of the marketing consultancy Shankman Honig. (Or at least be able to talk about those activities.) If you golf with the CEO, find that line between believable praise and butt-kissing: "Compliments disarm and get people talking," Shankman says. (B)



**2 Your CEO's affair just hit the news. What's your damage control plan?**

- A Let the HR and PR folks handle it.
- B Draft a plan to reassure everyone, and discuss it with the core team.
- C Write a memo that the boss can send out, stat. Hey, someone on the staff has to save the day.

**FIGHT, BUT NOT ALONE** Executives at Boeing and Best Buy reportedly faced similar scenarios. Narcissists thrive in crises because they're fearless, says Ferretti. But they may steamroll any coworkers in their path. Your takeaway: Face a sticky situation head-on. Don't back down from challenges or be afraid to take risks, but ask for help from the best people on your team. (B)



**6 When was the last time you blasted a coworker who underperformed?**

- A Never. You always keep your cool.
- B You shout and punch the wall at least once a week.
- C Hmm...there was that time you yelled at Jones after he shit the bed on a big presentation.

**CRITIQUE CONSTRUCTIVELY** Passion and strong language are fine, but losing your cool creates enemies, says Robert Sutton, Ph.D., a professor of management science at Stanford. A better way to deliver a bad review? Preemptively. Periodically thank coworkers for their efforts; tell them what they are doing right and how they can improve, says Ferretti. You've just won allies. (C)



**3 You have a great idea for your firm. How will you make sure it's heard?**

- A Persuade key coworkers to push your ideas companywide.
- B Draft a memo to the CEO and offer to implement what he likes.
- C Mention it at a meeting. If the conversation moves on, you drop it.

**LEARN TO BE PERSUASIVE** Narcissists are like puppetmasters. Learn to control, er, persuade people using three key tactics: obligation, fear of loss, and fun, says Steve Martin, coauthor of *Yes!* Help colleagues so they'll feel more obliged to return the favor; point out the downsides of not following your idea; and use humor, such as attaching a non-fireable cartoon to an e-mail. (B)



**7 You're at a conference or work event. How will guests remember you?**

- A You were that fun guy with the great lead on a new running coach.
- B As that intense guy who wouldn't stop talking about his project.
- C Who? I really don't remember anyone by that name at the party.

**LISTEN AND CHARM** The trait to steal here is the desire to solve problems; narcissists thrive on challenges. "Listen closely to learn what the person might need," says Arruda. Is he or she looking for a good half marathon? A hot book? A better wine store? That's your cue. And if you make a connection, follow up with an e-mail the next day to cement the relationship. (A)



**4 The biggest fish at your company knows who you are because...**

- A Uh, actually she doesn't know your name or position.
- B You comment on all of her posts and push your own agenda.
- C You run the company volunteer days—and she participates.

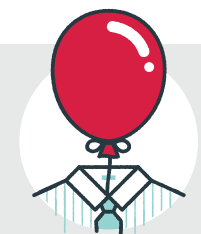
**HELP OTHERS HELP YOU** This is the crux: Successful narcissists can be relentlessly self-promotional, but they avoid alienating people. How? Instead of showboating, they help out by doing the things they excel at. "Personal branding is not about chest pounding," says William Arruda, author of *Ditch, Dare, Do!* It's about demonstrating what you do best to influential people. (C)



**8 Think about it: Deep down inside, how truly confident do you feel?**

- A It varies. I have moments at work when I want to curl up and cry.
- B Very: I'm confident in my abilities and proud of my accomplishments.
- C I'm the most confident S.O.B. you've ever met. On the outside, anyway.

**PROJECT CONFIDENCE** Positive self-esteem is "healthy narcissism—that balance of confidence and self-focus," says Eve Kilmer, Ph.D., a psychologist in Boulder, Colorado. Boost your mojo before a presentation by standing with your legs apart, hands on hips. It can raise your testosterone while reducing levels of the stress hormone cortisol, a study in *Psychological Science* found. (B)



**> EGO SCORE**

1. A=3 B=1 C=2	5. A=3 B=2 C=1
2. A=1 B=2 C=3	6. A=1 B=3 C=2
3. A=3 B=2 C=1	7. A=2 B=3 C=1
4. A=1 B=3 C=2	8. A=1 B=2 C=3

**8-12**

▶ You might not be narcissistic enough. Your relationships are healthy and strong, but you may want to consider brushing up on perseverance and competitive drive on the job.

**13-19**

▶ You're ideally egotistical, a real-life healthy, adaptive narcissist. An abundance of self-esteem, plus your well-moderated charisma, focus, and perfectionism, can take you to the top.

**20+**

▶ Get over yourself, dude! You're well equipped to dominate the office and achieve success—until your mistreatment of others crashes your career.