Dangerous Love

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Why some men and women are attracted to dangerous people

- For men: short term mating evolutionarily adaptive (Bush and Schmitt, 1993)
- For Women: Good genes trade off for lack of commitment (Gangestad, 1993)
Women attracted to dangerous men

- High value assigned to facial and body attractiveness
- Desire for protection
- Willingness to overlook potential costs
  - Pregnancy
  - STD’s
  - Violence
  - (Van Dongen, & Gangestad 2011)
Men attracted to dangerous women

- Predisposed for casual sex
- Desire for shallow relationships only
- Less commitment = fewer parental obligations = more potential offspring

(Van Dongen, & Gangestad 2011)
The Dark Triad

The underlying psychology of a predator:

“A combination of personality traits, that if developed when one is young enough, often predisposes them to develop the kind of behaviors all too often seen in people in positions of power in our society today.”

Mauka, 2018
The Dark Triad

The foundation of a host of undesirable behaviors including:

- Aggressiveness,
- Sexual opportunism,
- Uncontrolled impulsivity,
- Psychopathy and
- Predatory behavior in general.

Mauka, 2018
What do these dangerous folks look like?
The Dark Triad

- Narcissism
- Psychopathy
- Machiavellianism
Narcissism

This person truly believes they are superior to everybody else simply because they are who they are and they exist.

- God complex
- Infinite self-regard is coping mechanism
- Deeply fractured sense of Self
- History acts of sexual abuse.
- Consumed with self ‘love,’
- No ability to empathize with another’s pain
Narcissism, cont.

- Dominance

- Sense of entitlement

- Grandiose self-view (Raskin & Terry, 1988)

- Greater in men than women (Foster, Campbell, & Twenge, 2003)

- Ability to compete with own sex

- Repels mate shortly after intercourse (Van Dongen, & Gangestad 2011)
Narcissism, cont.

- Easy to begin new relationships
- Perceive multiple opportunities available to them
- Less likely to remain monogamous (Campbell, Foster, Finkel, 2002)
- Have more illegitimate children (Rowe, 1995)
- Groom and advertise wealth and resource provision (Campbell and Foster, 2002)
Psychopathy

How your brain connects your behavioral choices to your sense of guilt/remorse.

- No aversion for immoral or harmful behavior
- Feel no empathy, guilt or remorse
- The result of being abused so horribly that they cannot interact with others in a normal way.
Psychopathy, cont.

- Callousness
- Lack of empathy
- Erratic behavior
- Moral deficit
- Antisocial (Rules don’t apply to me.)
Psychopathy, cont.

- Interpersonal hostility
- Superficial charm
- Deceit
- Sexually exploitative
Niccolò di Bernardo dei Machiavelli

- Italian diplomat, politician, philosopher, humanist, and writer of the Renaissance.
- Brought cynicism into politics
- Made evil recommendations to leaders
- Wrote *The Prince*
- “The offenses one does to a man should be such that one does not fear revenge for it.”
- “Never attempt to wild force what can be won by deception.”
Machiavellianism

The tendency for someone to see all social paradigms and scenarios as games of strategy that require meticulous maneuvering.

- See life as a game of poker or chess
- Always gaming for a win.
- Manipulative
- Intelligent
- Make mental moves way ahead of their perceived competition.
- Can not relate to others.

Machiavellianism is the art of duplicity which forms the core intellectual component of the dark triad.
Machiavillianism

- Deceitful
- Insincere
- Extraverted
- Manipulative
- Coercive
- Opportunistic
Dark Triad
(Narcissism, Psychopathy, Machiavillianism)

- May represent male adaptation for short-term mating
- Most studies depend on self-report
- Strong association with Big 5 traits
The Dark Triad Survey

1. I tend to manipulate others to get my way.
2. I tend to lack remorse.
3. I tend to want others to admire me.
4. I tend to be unconcerned with the morality of my actions.
5. I have used deceit or lied to get my way.
6. I tend to be callous or insensitive.
7. I have used flattery to get my way.
8. I tend to seek prestige or status.
9. I tend to be cynical.
10. I tend to exploit others toward my own end.
11. I tend to expect special favors from others.
12. I want others to pay attention to me.
Big 5 Personality Factors

- Extraversion
- Agreeableness
- Openness
- Conscientiousness
- Neuroticism
Big 5 Personality Factors, cont.

**Dark Triad Core Traits:**

- low agreeableness,
- aggression,
- impulsivity,
- low emotional intelligence,
- potentially low neuroticism.

Stead, 2012
This model indicates that poor parenting practices and childhood trauma:

- increase the expression of anxious attachment
- decreases children’s self-control.

Anxious attachment and low self-control influence the expression of the Dark Triad.

Stead, 2012
Attachment Styles

- Secure
- Anxious-preoccupied
- Dismissive-avoidant
- Fearful-avoidant
Insecure-Anxious Attachment Style in Adults

- Usually disinterested in someone available with a secure style.
- Usually attract someone who is avoidant.
- Anxiety is enlivening and familiar
- Anxiety is uncomfortable and makes them even more anxious
The Dark Triad Personality: Attractiveness to Women

- First study to ask women rather than depend on men’s self-report; high DT men always report more sexual prowess than controls.

- 128 undergraduate women rated fictional men designed to reflect dark triad characteristics as well a control group.

- Physical attributes were constant in order to test the DT personality traits and attractiveness.

Carter, et al., 2013
The Dark Triad Personality: Attractiveness to Women, cont

- These 12 DT traits were described to the women as the “dirty dozen traits”:

  - A. A **desire for** (1) attention, (2) admiration, (3) favors, and (4) prestige
  - B. The (5) manipulation, (6) exploitation, (7) deceit, and (8) flattery of others
  - C. A **lack of** (9) remorse, (10) morality concerns, or (11) sensitivity
  - D. (12) Cynicism

Carter, et al., 2013
The Dark Triad Personality: Attractiveness to Women, cont

- Women rated the high DT characters as more attractive.

- Attractiveness not correlated to the big 5 personality traits

The Dangerous Woman

- Much fewer than men
- Viewed as nonthreatening
- Behaviors minimized
- Held less responsible
- Criminal behavior unexpected

Honey, 2017
The Dangerous Woman, cont.

- Same exploitive, antisocial behavior as men
- Compete successfully for mates, resources and power
- Underestimated ability to deceive and harm others
The CDC-Kaiser Permanente Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study is one of the largest investigations of childhood abuse and neglect and later-life health and well-being.

The original ACE Study was conducted at Kaiser Permanente from 1995 to 1997 with two waves of data collection.

Over 17,000 Health Maintenance Organization members from Southern California receiving physical exams completed confidential surveys regarding their childhood experiences and current health status and behaviors.

The CDC continues ongoing surveillance of ACEs by assessing the medical status of the study participants via periodic updates of morbidity and mortality data.
Adverse Childhood Experiences Study, cont.

Seven categories of adverse childhood experiences were studied:

1. Psychological abuse
2. Sexual abuse
3. Physical abuse
4. Violence against mother

Living with household members who were:
4. Substance abusers
5. Mentally ill
6. Suicidal
7. Ever Imprisoned
Adverse Childhood Experiences Study, cont.

One of the most important effective environmental factors in shaping personality disorders is childhood abuse experiences.

Counselors and therapists must consider the symptoms of these variables and design appropriate programs based on them to prevent shaping dark triad traits of personality.

Badbreah, 2015
Adverse Childhood Experiences, cont.

- Related to the occurrence of the Dark Triad:
  - Being raised in a low SES environment,
  - experiencing trauma,
  - being the child of poor parenting styles,
  - An anxious or avoidant attachment style and
  - low self-control

Badbreah, 2015
Adverse Childhood Experiences, cont.

- **Neglect abuse:**
  - Positive significant relationship with narcissism
  - Negative significant relationship with psychopathy and Machiavellism

- **Physical abuse:**
  - Negative relationship with narcissism
  - Positive relationship with psychopathy
  - Positive relationship with Machiavellinism

- **Sexual abuse:**
  - Negative relationship with narcissism

Badbreah, 2015
Sex offenders have experienced in childhood:

- 3 times more sexual abuse
- 13 times more verbal abuse
- 4 times more emotional neglect, broken homes

Levenson, 2016
Adverse Childhood Experiences, cont.

- Maltreatment co-occur with other household disfunction in a disordered social environment.

- Higher ACE scores correlate with sexually offending behavior.

- Need for better trauma-informed interventions that respond to the clinical needs of sex offender clients.

Levenson, 2016
Partner Violence

- Happens in relationships of all sexual orientations but most research on heterosexuals.

- 1 in 3 women has been a victim of physical sexual violence by an intimate partner at some point in her lifetime.

- To cope with partner violence, some women engage in smoking, drinking, drug use, and unsafe sex.

- Death by heart disease, stroke, cancer, and HIV/AIDS.
Intimate Partner Homicide

- Average of 20 women a year per state are killed by a partner or former partner. That is about 1000 people in the US each year,

- Most have a history of physical and emotional abuse and violence.

- In 2011, 82.6% of women killed, their assailant was someone they knew

- Of women over 18, 79.2% were killed by a current partner and 14.3% by a former partner. (93.5%)

FBI, 2015
Motives Behind Partner Murders

1. Anger expresses in a pattern of escalating rage, abuse, and violence
2. Fear of abandonment and loss (insecure attachment)
3. Sexual jealousy
4. Assailant is suicidal

Dietz
Treating the Dark Triad Client

*Often undiagnosed DT*

- Difficulty admitting fault (can do no wrong)
- Blames the partner or circumstances for problems (external locus of control)
- Gaslighting (denies partner’s reality)
- Dishonest
- Lacks empathy for partner
Partner of an DT Individual

- Often suffers low self-esteem
- Desires emotional connection, feels pushed away
- Feels uncared for
- Feels and (sometimes) acts crazy
- Desperate to be acknowledged, validated
Couple’s Counseling the DT Individual and Partner

- Usually only one partner is DT. (When two DT’s marry, they seldom come in for counseling.)

- Need for strong, experienced therapist

- Only after extensive individual counseling

- Group counseling?
Couple’s Counseling
the DT Individual and Partner, cont

- Internal motivation
- Expression of empathy
- Validation skills
- Communication (listening, talking)
- Self Care
Internal motivation

- Most research done in schools and in the workplace
- Help individual consider the benefits of intrinsic rewards through assignments and talk therapy
- Practice art of open-mindedness
- Foster ownership of responsibility
- Goal setting (Locke, 2002)
Expression of Empathy

- Encourage empathy for self/inner child
- Have client take the ACE test
- Provide examples of times client has shown empathy (pets, children)
- Point out expressions on partner’s face, body language
- Role play: how would like others to respond to you in similar situations

Empathy is...
seeing with the eyes of another, listening with the ears of another, and feeling with the heart of another.
Validation Skills

- Give the client words to use
- Have client think about times they felt validated
- Have client remember times they felt invalidated
- What does client wish had been said or done?
Communication

(Listening and Talking Skills)

Role Play:

- Speaker uses few and simple sentences.
- Listener repeats what was heard.
- Speaker repeats or rewords what was said.
- Above is repeated until speaker feels heard.
Feedback Loop

- What I heard you say, what I noticed
- What I thought, made up about it
- What I felt about it (fear, loneliness, anger, hope, etc.)
Role Play Speaking and Listening Skills
Self Care

Finding balance:
- Work/play
- Family/time to self
- Exercise
- Diet
- Rest/sleep
- Hobbies

You cannot drink from an empty cup.
FILL YOURSELF UP. YOU'RE WORTH IT.
Ethical Considerations

- Am I qualified?
- Seeking Consultation
- Should the partners do couple’s work?
- Group work?
- Offenders and victims together?
Self-Care is a priority and necessity - not a luxury - in the work that we do.

This applies to all of us in the caring field as well!

Seek Consultation
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