How to identify a Narcissist
7 Top Traits
A narcissist is an individual who has too much self-love

Psychologist, Psychiatrist, Psychoanalyst
The Psychology ecosystem for a layman

Is it possible to ‘choose’ a romantic partner in life?
The answer is NO. A simple and uncomplicated NO.

HOW TO LOVE LIKE AN ADULT AND SAY BYE TO RELATIONSHIP CONFLICTS
Dear Readers,

Why are we bringing out a special magazine on psychology devoted to the new generation? Are their psychological make-up in any way different from the others?

In my opinion the need for a new magazine to address the problems of the new generation was long over-due.

You may wonder why.

Since 2011 we have embarked on a new journey in our social lives. With the advent of social media people’s psychology has also undergone a sea change. They have become more open. More open about our successes, failures, love, sex, everything.

What good or bad has it done to us?

We are already living in a world steeped in stress. We are already struggling in a constantly changing, constantly shifting, dynamic environment with cut throat competition in all spheres of life. Social media is not helping the situation. Though helping us keep in touch, social makes it easy to compare our lives with those of others, adding to the stress factor manifolds. This is increasingly creating new problem areas in our lives, earlier not seen.

The new generation is experiencing higher levels of anxiety, depression, and thoughts of suicide than generations past. The reasons are thought to be a combination of the excessively high personal standards they set for themselves but also their overly critical self-evaluations.

This brings about a psychology unique to this generation. And we need to understand it, accept it, deal with it and thus get the better of it.

In our first edition we have some very crucial and interesting write-ups that might change your mental wellbeing, relationships, career for the better!

Editor: Sachin MITTAL
Our cover story in our 1st edition ‘How to love like an adult and say bye to relationship conflicts' tell us exactly why we have conflicts in our romantic relationships, something that we have never known before. That we psychologically fall in love like children and how we can love like adults.

Other extremely interesting and important writeups we have on relationship and psychology include 'Is it possible to choose a romantic partner in life?' and 'Why we chase who we can't have?'. Also a very enthralling write-up on 'How to identify a narcissist - the 7 traits!'

To give a boost to your career, we have a writeup on something that affects the output of 80% of the workforce - procrastination!

Most importantly we talk about the 9 times in life when we should go visit a psychologist and also explain the psychology eco-system for a layman. Should you visit a psychologist, psychi analyst or psychiatrist?

So read this, consume this, act on it and send us your precious feedback for us to improve further in getting to you what you need to know in life.

Till our next issue, keep reading and keep getting happy!
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How to love like an adult and say bye to relationship conflicts
How to identify a Narcissist

Who is a Narcissist?

A narcissist is an individual who has too much self-love or self-admiration. In simple words, when we notice excessive self-admiration in a person, especially towards his/her own physical appearance, we call the person a narcissist.

If we look at the psychological definition of a narcissist, it talks about an excessively selfish individual who believes his/her talents are great and craves for admiration from others. This happens to be an important trait in his/her personality.

Going to the psychoanalysts’ definition of narcissism, it is characterised by extreme self-centeredness arising from the lack of ability to distinguish self from external objects during childhood or due to some mental disorder.

So it is quite clear that narcissism is a lot more than a person taking too many selfies. So how do we identify a narcissist?
Let’s see the 7 most common personality traits that narcissists have.

1. Blaming Others
   Since narcissists think no end of themselves and admire themselves all the time, they do not think that they can do anything wrong, or commit any mistakes. As a result, in case of any problems, you will see narcissists always blaming others. They can never accept their own mistakes.

2. Lack of Empathy
   Empathy refers to feeling for others or being able to put oneself in someone else’s shoes and understanding their problems and issues. One of the hallmark traits of people with narcissist personality disorder is their complete lack of empathy. Since they are consumed by their own selves, they just cannot put themselves in another person’s shoes and understand the other person’s experiences. They just cannot be empathetic towards others.

3. Expectation of Gratitude
   Empathy refers to feeling for others or being able to put oneself in someone else’s shoes and understanding their problems and issues. One of the hallmark traits of people with narcissist personality disorder is their complete lack of empathy. Since they are consumed by their own selves, they just cannot put themselves in another person’s shoes and understand the other person’s experiences. They just cannot be empathetic towards others.

4. Superficial Charm
   Narcissists usually reflect superficial personality traits such as charm and charisma. Firstly they crave admiration which is why these superfluous charisma are generated, secondly because they receive admiration from these, this becomes a habit and infact a personality trait. Often you will find narcissists putting down and blaming family members or people from his/her inner circles but reflect a huge amount of charm and charisma to his/her outer world.

5. Putting other people down
   Another behavioural trait that narcissists show is that of putting other people down. The craving for admiration that they have often leads them to talk or behave in a certain way wherein another individual is put down and thereby take themselves higher (read become more admirable). Basically they reinstate themselves by dishing or degrading someone else or their achievements.

6. World’s perception to be wrong
   While most narcissists are often self-consumed and arrogant people, there are many who look depressed and even angry at the world. This is because they think that the world is not realizing their importance or not giving the amount of admiration that he/she deserves. This is one of the reasons why some narcissists also are quite depressed and in pain.

7. Entitlement and rage
   Since narcissists think themselves to be special, they think that everywhere they go they deserve to be specially treated by everyone. They have this sort of ‘entitlement’ ingrained in their personality. So when they do not get what they think they deserve they erupt in rage. Narcissists characteristically have short temper which they can lose at the drop of a hat!

Conclusion
As a conclusion it can be safely said that narcissism personality disorder is an identified psychological disorder and arises out of a lot of life issues. It is just not admiring how one looks and taking selfies. It is pretty serious and people suffering from that need help. So now that you know how to identify a narcissist, and if you have a loved one who sounds like this, please see to it that they get help before it ruins his/her life and his/her relationships.
NORMAL FORGETFULNESS

Vs. Dementia

How to know the difference?

Let’s face it, all of us have forgotten names, misplaced stuff and completely blanked out while meeting an acquaintance. And with stress and age, this forgetfulness becomes more and more common.

What one faced at a younger age as a one-off situation gradually becomes a pretty common thing in life, and so one often wonders whether there’s any reason for concern. Simply put, is this normal forgetfulness that comes with age or is it the start of a serious memory problem such as dementia?

What is age-related forgetfulness?

Age-related forgetfulness refers to the common instances of memory lapses that occur with increasing age. The three reasons why age-related memory loss happens, include:

1. Deterioration of the hippocampus of the brain (area of the brain that forms and retrieves memories)
2. Decline of proteins and hormones that protect brain cells and repair them
3. Decreased blood flow to the brain which results in memory loss and decrease in cognitive skills.

The all-too-common age-related forgetfulness symptoms include:

- Opening the fridge or a door and forgetting what you wanted
- Forgetting what you read, watched or the details of a conversation

However the main and most pertinent question is – Does this lapses in memory affect your ability to function in life?

What is Dementia?

If your symptoms are a little graver than what we have discussed above and is clearly starting to hamper your ability to function in daily life, then it might be dementia. Simply put, the primary difference between these two is the fact that dementia is ‘disabling’ while normal forgetfulness is not.

If we were to define dementia, it might be stated as a chronic disorder resulting from a brain disease/injury that is characterised by memory loss, impaired reasoning and personality changes.

In other words, unlike in age-related forgetfulness, dementia causes a continuous disability in either two or more intellectual functioning such as memory, thinking, language, judgment, etc. The memory loss becomes so serious and severe that it affects an individual’s work, relationships, social activities, hobbies, etc.

What is MCI?

MCI stands for Mild Cognitive impairment and is the middle-ground between age-related forgetfulness and dementia. While there might be only a very thin line of difference between the symptoms of normal forgetfulness and MCI, the difference is of degrees. For example, forgetting names of acquaintances vis-a-vis forgetting names of close loved ones.

While MCI might mean you are going on the trajectory of Alzheimer or dementia, but it doesn’t necessarily prove the inevitability of it. Usually close friends and family can understand the decline in memory and functional ability in an individual.
A USEFUL CHART TO EXPLAIN THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO:

**NORMAL FORGETFULNESS**
- Ability to function day to day regular activities independently despite occasional instances of memory lapses
- Ability to remember and describe instances of memory lapses
- Not getting lost in familiar places and ability to follow directions (even if it is with slight problems)
- Ability to have a normal conversation even if one forgets a few words of choice
- No effect on decision making or judgment making abilities

**DEMENTIA**
- Difficulty in performing daily regular activities independently. Forgetting to do thing which one does many times, E.g – washing, dressing, bill payments, etc
- Inability to remember or describe instances of memory lapses
- Getting lost in familiar places and inability to follow directions
- Inability to hold a conversation. Most words are forgotten and mixed up.
- Inability to make the right judgment, difficulty in choosing and projecting socially inappropriate behaviours

**NEED TO KNOW**
In other words, unlike in age-related forgetfulness, dementia causes a continuous disability in either two or more intellectual functioning such as memory, thinking, language, judgment, etc.
DEGREE OF MCI TEST

Following is a 21 question set by www.helpguide.org that is designed to measure the degree of MCI in an individual and is meant to be answered in either yes/no by a close family member.

MEMORY
1. Does your loved one have memory loss?
2. If yes, is his or her memory worse than a few years ago?
3. Does your loved one repeat questions, statements, or stories in the same day? (2 points)
4. Have you had to take over tracking events or appointments, or does your loved one forget appointments?
5. Does your loved one misplace items more than once per month, or so that he or she can’t find them?
6. Does your loved one suspect others of hiding or stealing items when he or she cannot find them?

ORIENTATION
7. Does your loved one frequently have trouble knowing the day, date, month, year, or time, or check the date more than once a day? (2 points)
8. Does your loved one become disoriented in unfamiliar places?
9. Does your loved one become more confused outside the home or when traveling?

FUNCTIONAL ABILITY
10. Does your loved one have trouble handling money (tips, calculating change)?
11. Does your loved one have trouble paying bills or doing finances? (2 points)
12. Does your loved one have trouble remembering to take medicines or tracking medications taken?
13. Does your loved one have difficulty driving or are you concerned about him or her driving?
14. Is your loved one having trouble using appliances (e.g. microwave, oven, stove, remote control, telephone, alarm clock)?
15. Does your loved one have difficulty completing home repair or other home-related tasks, such as housekeeping?
16. Has your loved one given up or significantly cut back on hobbies such as golf, dancing, exercise, or crafts?

VISUOSPATIAL ABILITY
17. Does your loved one get lost in familiar surroundings, such as their own neighborhood? (2 points)
18. Does he or she have a decreased sense of direction?

LANGUAGE
19. Does your loved one have trouble finding words other than names?
20. Does your loved one confuse names of family members or friends? (2 points)
21. Does your loved one have trouble recognizing familiar people? (2 points)

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE TEST SCORE IS AS FOLLOWS:
0 - 4: No cause for concern
5 - 14: Memory loss may be MCI, an early warning of Alzheimer’s
Above 15: Alzheimer’s may have already developed
Pointed to be noted is that this test is only meant to measure whether one needs further professional diagnosis for his/her memory loss problem and is no way intended to replace a professional diagnosis of Alzheimer/dementia or the like.
Why we chase who we can’t have?

THE TOP 5 REASONS!

Chasing the person we can’t have! Sigh! Is it a disease? A game? A challenge? A habit? Sheer bad luck? Let’s face it... We have all thought of this ‘why?’ sometime or the other in life and have come up with one or many of these further questions! But do we still exactly know why or how? Why is it that we constantly get attracted to and fall for people who we know we can’t have? Maybe they are already taken? Maybe they are just not interested in us? Maybe they have a different sexual orientation altogether? Reasons can be many, but why do we always fall for the wrong people, leading to so much heartache later on? Why? So let’s see why.
The Scientific

When we like someone, our brain produces a hormone called dopamine. It’s called a happy hormone because it tends to make you feel happy. So psychologically you get addicted to this happy hormone like a drug and start chasing this ‘high’. So when you are chasing someone you like, you produce dopamine, and when you take more time to get him/her, or let’s say when the chase is longer, the more dopamine you produce. So that’s the scientific reason behind us being attracted to and chasing the people we can’t have.

The Vanity

Vanity does not necessarily mean the ‘how good I’m looking in this dress’ kind of stuff. There is much more to it, and specifically linked to one’s self-perception, self-image and self-worth. As human beings we all want to feel important, wanted, attractive and special and thus we are all essentially vain. When we receive all these in return, it boosts our confidence, pride and self-image.

Now, when we have a burning desire for an individual who we can’t have, clearly it’s a blow to our individual vanity. Psychologically, your mind then wants you to get back the self-image it lost and how so? By pushing you to try and get the object which wounded your self-image in the first place – the unattainable person in question! So you keep going after or desiring him/her!

The Thrill of the Chase

Psychologically human beings are said to find more satisfaction in getting something that they have worked hard at, put a lot of effort in. So we chase people who do not want us since our minds go for the higher level of satisfaction that it expects to win once the object of desire has been persuaded.

Psychologists say that the ‘Thrill of the Chase’ is good enough reason for us to get attracted to and keep desiring people who we know we can’t have. It is not in the attainment but in the chase that we experience or enjoy the thrill. For many people, getting introduced to a person who is clearly attracted to them kills the desire instantly. All other factors being more or less same, it is those that do not show interest or desire, catch our attention. It is these ‘not responding’ individuals who we tend to get attracted towards and start desiring since the thrill lies in this ‘chase’ and ‘conversion’.
Conclusion

It can be concluded that there are many reasons why we get attracted to and keep desiring and chasing the people we cannot/should not have. And it is infact frustratingly alluring to play steamy fantasies about them in our minds and keep yearning for them. On one hand it gives us many a sleepless nights and many a heartaches, but on the other hand it psychologically gives us a thrill, an insatiated desire and yearning that we can’t stop from! The more we learn and understand these reasons the more we gave a better understanding of our own selves inside. And that perhaps is the only way to get out of this (if at all!)
WHILE SOME OF US FEAR VISITING A PSYCHOLOGIST AND REFUSE TO ACCEPT THAT WE MIGHT NEED HELP, SOME OF US REMAIN CONFUSED AS TO WHEN ONE SHOULD GO VISIT A PSYCHOLOGIST. “DEPRESSION AND STRESS HAPPEN TO EVERYONE, DO I NEED TO GO TO A PSYCHOLOGIST OR SHOULD I HANDLE IT MYSELF” IS AN ALL TOO COMMON CONFUSION IN THE MINDS OF MANY. IN A RECENT SURVEY, MORE THAN THE COMMON ‘MENTAL BLOCK’ THAT PEOPLE HAVE TOWARDS MENTAL HEALTH, THE CONFUSION REGARDING ‘WHEN TO VISIT A PSYCHOLOGIST’ IS A BIGGER REASON FOR MANY TO DELAY ACCESSING HELP AND IN THE PROCESS SUFFERING IN THEIR LIVES.

Losing a loved one, be it parents, friends, even pets can be extremely traumatising for people, especially if the death was sudden and unexpected. Different people cope with grief differently, but this is one time when reaching out to a psychologist helps in identifying the coping mechanism sooner, making the unbearable pain of the loss slightly more manageable.
So when should one reach out for a psychologist’s help? Here are 10 times in your life when you should!

2. Anxiety:
Stress and anxiety are a part of everyone’s lives. It creeps up during examinations, job interviews, in relationships, and also sometimes without any reasons. While many know how to handle stress or anxiety, many also do not realize how they are affecting them internally. People who have panic attacks are also at a higher risk of losing their cognitive functioning very fast. Visiting a psychologist in order to get to the roots of your anxiety and stress and learning how to manage them is always a good idea!

3. Depression:
The common feeling of being tired all the time, losing interest in things, not really being happy even while you are doing things you like are all signs of depression. Often we do not take help since we believe it’s just a phase or ‘I’ll suddenly snap out of it’. However, that usually never happens. Visiting a psychologist and getting to the roots or sources of your depression is that start of your journey towards feeling better and being happy!
4. Phobias:

Phobia refers to an extreme fear of something that is irrational. Thus it means there is no reason to fear but you are driven out of your mind for fear of that! Examples can be fear of heights, closed spaces, spiders, etc. Many times such phobias do not interrupt one’s functioning, however phobias such as phobia of eating, phobia of commitment, etc can restrict a person from living a normal life. Visiting a psychologist to understand the reason behind the phobia and then gradually getting out of it, works miracles!

5. Relationship Issues:

Almost all of us face relationship issues with our family, partners or even colleagues. While relationships are the source of our happiness, it can also be the source of a lot of problems, stress, anxiety and depression in life. It is always good to talk it out with a psychologist to see things clearly in order to work it out.

6. Addiction:

Unhealthy habits or addictions (drugs or otherwise) are issues in life when you need to go visit a psychologist in order to let him/her help you to regain control of your own life. Therapy also helps to manage the symptoms of such habits such as eating disorders, sleeping problems, etc
Whether you realize or not, performance is clearly linked to mental wellbeing, readiness and motivation on the part of the performer. Simply put, performance enhancement is mostly a psychological aspect of one’s life. Be it an athlete going for Olympics or a businessman going for a big event, we all need the support of a psychologist to help us get our minds ready for the optimum performance enhancement.

Sometimes all we need is a little clarity of thought. Just by talking about one’s problems aloud to somebody neutral, people gain their concentration back, regain focus, understand the issue and find their own solutions to their problems. In short, you have any problems, any confusion, you go visit a psychologist.

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Conclusion

As a conclusion it can be safely said that in order to live a happy, content and fulfilled life, one needs to not only take care of his/her physical health but mental health too. Having a mental block regarding going to a mental health professional is an archaic attitude based in irrationality. However, for people who do not have such blocks but are confused regarding when is the right time to go visit a psychologist, always remember ‘NOW’ is always the right time! Put the responsibility of ‘whether you need psychological help or not’ decision on the psychologist. Just go visit one. Sit. Talk. Who knows, your life might just be on the verge of a great turning point!
Is it possible to ‘choose’ a romantic partner in life?

The answer is NO. A simple and uncomplicated NO.

You ask me why? Simply because it is the truth.

The fact is, you cannot choose a romantic partner since you can’t choose whom and when to fall in love. Love just happens. It is natural. It is spontaneous. You get to know when it happens. You know that you have fallen for someone, but you can’t ‘choose’ to make it happen really, never. You don’t discover love, love discovers you!

Then what does the phrase ‘Choosing a partner’ mean?

It’s just a phrase that people use, economists, philosophers or even psychologists for that matter. It is not to be taken literally. It’s a verbal shorthand which if taken seriously (which it happens very fast, and has in fact) does nothing but deceive you in your life. Think about it – You may choose a person on a dating app, you may choose to go out with him/her/zer, you might even choose to have sex. But love? You can’t choose to fall in love right? If it happens it happens. You just know or you know that irrespective of everything else, it has not happened.

What does the economist has to say?

From the economist’s point of view, ‘choosing a partner’ almost sounds like ‘choosing a soap’ where there are various options present, you evaluate each and then choose one. This model would appeal to economists, who will look at romantic relationships as ‘consumer decisions in the marriage market’. Again, from the point of view of economists, ‘choosing a romantic partner’ would be based on two kinds of research – Extensive research and Intensive research. One, getting information about many options and second, getting more information on one option, respectively. Thereafter, choosing the best option.

But does love actually happen that way?

This above model is extremely inaccurate since this is not how it happens at all. At least if you are talking about real love, that is. If we are talking about love here, then you do not choose the time or the person or love per se to happen. You can’t. You suddenly discover it, you find it, it spontaneously happens and it finds you! The most that we can do is to choose place, time, persona, behaviour, actions that will make this feasible at max, but that does not really ‘make it happen’, it can’t.

Let’s take an example: Dating sites

In today’s world where options of potential romantic partners are galore and you just need to swipe left or right to ‘choose’, does this guarantee love? At max you can ‘choose’ to create the foundation on which love can happen easily. For example, you choose people you
WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN FOR ME?

The summary for all this in our lives is for us to understand that in life there are somethings that we can choose and somethings that we can’t. And the sooner we are able to identify the things we can’t choose, the happier and at peace we can be. And that holds so true for aspects such as romance and love. These are one of the most crucial aspects of our lives which define our happiness and contentment. But we go on thinking that we can choose it and then despair when we can’t. So what we need to know, despite many people saying many things, that we can’t choose it. So let’s stop feeling bad about that in the first place. Choose everything else, open yourself up and see what happens. And then whatever happens, choose what you want to do with it. You decisions regarding love is your choice. But love per se, isn’t.

think you might fall for, you choose to go out with them, you choose to behave in a certain way with them, you might also choose to have sex with them. But nothing can actually make you fall in love with them unless it actually happens naturally.

So essentially, you can ‘choose’ to increase the chances of love but not love itself.

A crucial difference between love and sex:

We should also be matured enough to differentiate between these two. Between emotions and pleasure. This is not to say that these two are not overlapping, of course they are. You would love to have sex with someone you love and you might fall in love with people who you have sex with, but there is a world where these two do not intersect. When you choose someone as a sexual partner from a dating app or otherwise, yes you can ‘choose’ them. But when it comes to romantic partners you can’t. Hence the difference between sexual partners and romantic partners.

Choices after we find love:

What about the choices after we find love? Well, we might choose to stay with the person who we have fallen for, we might also choose not to stay with the person we have fallen for, or we choose to go with the flow and see where it takes us. In short, we choose stuff before love and we choose stuff after love, but not love itself. That is completely out of our hands.
IN A WORLD WHERE STRESS AND ANXIETY ARE AS COMMON AS APPLES AND ORANGES AND WHERE MOST PEOPLE TALK ABOUT SYMPTOMS WHICH SOUND LIKE DEPRESSION OR EVEN BIPOLARITY, TAKING A SMALL STEP TOWARDS BETTER MENTAL HEALTH OR WELLBEING OF AN INDIVIDUAL IS A MUST.
Who are Psychoanalysts?

Psychoanalysts are those mental healthcare professionals who on top of their degrees and study of psychology and psychotherapy have also undergone a specialised training on the basis of Sigmund Freud’s Psychoanalytic theory. This involves years of intense training on patients as well as on themselves under supervision and this specialised field, unlike psychologists, is more about discovering and interpreting the dynamics of the patient’s subconscious/unconscious mind that has an influence on the way the patient feels, relates and behaves with others. While psychologists mainly diagnose and treat issues arising out of an individual’s conscious mind, psychoanalysis make use of the ‘couch’ approach where a patient lies down comfortably and talks about childhood, experiences, feelings etc where the psychoanalyst identifies, analyses the dynamics of the patient’s subconscious mind to get to the roots of cases of very complex personality issues.

Who are Psychiatrists?

A psychiatrist is a mental health professional who has graduated from medical school and has undergone a post graduate specialised training in psychiatry. Simply put, these are the only medically trained doctors specialised in the diagnostic and treatment of mental / psychological / psychosocial disorders. Psychiatrists basically assess a patient’s condition to analyse whether the problems the patient is facing is a result from physical illness, psychiatric illness or a combination of both. Since they are doctors, they are the only ones out of this list who can prescribe medicines. They also use psychological interventional tools such as tests or cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) for treatment. Since counselling is a crucial part of mental healthcare and many treatments include a complimentary counselling approach, psychiatrists refer patients to psychologists for the same. Usually psychiatrists work out of institutions such as psychiatric wards in hospitals, asylums or as consultants in public or private health service units.

Who are Psychologists?

A psychologist is a professional who has a psychology degree followed by a doctorate degree in their chosen field within the broader subject of psychology. For example, a psychologist can be a clinical psychologist, forensic psychologist, industrial psychologist, occupational psychologist, educational psychologist, so on and so forth. Though these professionals are well trained but since they are not ‘medically’ trained, they are not authorised to prescribe medicines. Psychologists assess, analyse, diagnose mental/psychological issues and disorders, study mental processes, behaviours and actions and thereafter treat them. A psychologist’s area and scope of work is huge. They offer a range of evidence-based treatments starting from CBT to counselling, as well as psychological evaluations gained from observation, interviews and even psychometric tests. Like psychiatrists refer to psychologists for complimentary counselling, psychologists also refer psychiatrists in case there is a need of medicines for the patient.

Though many still suffer from the irrational and baseless stigma of visiting a mental healthcare professional, thankfully many have also realised that the stigma is baseless and actually do want to take that initiative towards ‘talking it out and seeking help’.

However, in this context, one of the most common and popular question that people ask is this – “Who should I visit? A psychiatrist, psychologist or psychoanalyst? What do they do and who exactly should I visit?”
Which of these 3 should you go visit?

Firstly, do not let the confusion regarding who to go to, keep you from taking that first step towards mental wellbeing. Usually, who you need to visit, solely depends on the issues you have. However, if you are not sure, just go and meet anybody. All professionals deal with mental health and would be able to help you and also guide you and refer you to the correct professional in case you need that.

Having a Panic Attack?

Three techniques to HELP YOU OUT!

SO WHAT IS A PANIC ATTACK AND WHY DOES IT OCCUR? PANIC, AS WE KNOW IT, IS INTENSE FEAR. SO A PANIC ATTACK IS A SUDDEN EPISODE OF SUCH INTENSE FEAR WHEN IN REALITY THERE IS NO ACTUAL CAUSE FOR IT TO OCCUR. PANIC ATTACKS RESULT IN SEVERE PHYSIOLOGICAL REACTIONS AND IS AN EXTREMELY FRIGHTENING EXPERIENCE SINCE PEOPLE FEEL THAT THEY ARE LOSING CONTROL AND ARE GOING TO DIE!
Believe it or not, millions of adults have panic attacks everyday all over the world! Every 15 minutes someone is having a panic attack somewhere or the other! And mind you, panic attacks are really scary! Your palpitation increases manifold and the pounding heart feels as if it will burst out of your ribcage, your eyes grow wide, you can’t breathe, you have racing thoughts and you can’t slow down your mind. All in all you feel you are having a heart attack or you are dying!

However, there are a few things that one can do during such an episode to ease the attack intensity and get some relief. These are as follows:

**GO THROUGH THE WAVE OF THE ATTACK:**

Be aware that panic attacks come in waves. A wave of fear and related feelings and sensation grip you and pass over after some time and gets repeated again. Most people try to resist the wave and try to fight the accompanying sensations such as nausea, dizziness, tingling sensations, racing thoughts, etc. Doing that makes them tired, overwhelmed and all the more scared since the attack anyway runs its due course. Alternatively, when you start getting the sensations and feel the fear of a panic attack, the tip is to not avoid them. Close your eyes, lie down if possible, breathe in and out deeply and as risky as it may sound, give in to the sensations constantly telling yourself that it is a wave and in sometime it will pass through. Simply put, calmly ride out the wave.

**Ground yourself in your body:**

Panic attacks are often surreal in nature and many a times people have an out of body experience during that episode. You might feel you are leaving your body, not in touch with reality, or losing control. So a great tip is to find and exercise ways in which you can ground yourself, be in touch with yourself and the reality and thereby not feel the sense of losing control. One way to do this is to concentrate on your breathing. Lying down calmly and not focusing on anything else, try and concentrate on your own breathing. Feel the air enter your body, travel through it, flow in and out of the lungs and cruise all through your body till you exhale. Concentrating on such an exercise keeps your focus on a bodily element and hence keeps you grounded in your body and in reality.

The second and perhaps easier way to do this is to use one of your senses to get your focus away from the attack and to ground yourself. A technique can be pressing an ice cube between two finger tips as hard as possible till you can’t tolerate the pain and numbness from the cold anymore. What happens is your focus gets diverted to this sense, away from the attack sensations, and also keeps you grounded in your body and very much in touch with the reality. When you can’t tolerate the cold in one hand, switch hands and repeat. Your feelings and sensations and control will come back to your limbs in no time.
When you are having a panic attack, talking to yourself makes you use your prefrontal cortex part of the brain, leading to pulling away from the emotional or Limbic Part.

**SWITCH ON YOUR LOGICAL OR THINKING BRAIN:**

Understand this – there are broadly two parts to your brain, an emotional part and a logical part. The first one feels while the second one thinks. During a panic attack, the emotional part of your brain switches off the logical and thinking part completely. Your brain is tuned to do this in to favour of the ‘fight or flight’ mechanism since in pre-historic hunting-gathering times this was required. However, this doesn’t help in the current situation specially when there are actually no causes of fear or panic. The tip is to switch on your logical brain again, and good news is that it is very much possible.

When you are having a panic attack, talking to yourself makes you use your prefrontal cortex part of the brain, leading to pulling away from the emotional or Limbic Part. Try and plan the daily activities that you will do that day after the panic attack is over (For example, going to a shop, brushing your teeth, cleaning the kitchen, going to the gym etc). Such thinking or planning even mundane tasks would signal to your brain that you are not dying and having just a painful passing episode instead.

Lastly, as a conclusion it can be said that panic attacks are no doubt harrowing experiences, but if you are aware from beforehand what you can do and remember to do it during such an episode, then the intensity of fear and the severity of the sensations will be much less and the wave of the attack will pass gently.

However, this in no circumstance should be taken as an alternate to visiting a doctor. One should definitely seek medical help in order to find out the causes of the panic attack and get treated thereof. However, during an attack, these three are the techniques that you can try. Don’t panic, these will surely help!
How to love like an adult and say bye to relationship conflicts
MANY OF OUR RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS WOULD GO AWAY IF WE COULD UNDERSTAND WHETHER WE LOVED LIKE A TODDLER OR AN ADULT. NEEDLESS TO SAY WE NEED TO LOVE LIKE ADULTS IF WE WANT SMOOTH AND STABLE, LIFELONG RELATIONSHIPS. HOWEVER, OFTEN WE LOVE WITH OUR TODDLER BRAINS, NOT BEING AWARE OF THAT FACT. IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND OUR SELVES AND THE WAY WE LOVE, WE NEED TO FIRST UNDERSTAND OUR TODDLER’S BRAIN AND OUR ADULT BRAINS AND WHAT WE MEAN BY THESE TERMS.
What is Toddler Brain?
All of us have this part of our brain which is the limbic – the emotional, impulsive, spontaneous and wonderful part! When we ‘fall’ in love it is through this volatile limbic toddler brain of ours. This phase of love is wonderful, spontaneous but faces conflicts, contradictions and pain since our toddler brain essentially reaches its structural maturity by age 3. With our toddler brain, we can just see what we want and how we feel, but we cannot appreciate different perspectives. Nor can we experience valuable human emotions such as compassion, kindness, etc. For that we would need our adult brain.

Which is our Adult Brain?
Our adult brain is that phase post age 3 where our prefrontal cortex comes to focus. This reaches structural maturity at about age 28. This is the part of our brain using which we ‘stay’ in love. It is the most stable and profound part of the brain where emotions and values such as kindness, compassion, desire to grow, etc take root in.

Toddler brain and conflict
When we love like toddlers we often confuse intimacy with having no autonomy. It’s like, if we are so intimate we should necessarily feel and behave in the same way. If partners feel or behave differently than we perceive it as nothing less than a betrayal. We fail to perceive the unique set of personality, values, beliefs, interest, etc that our partners have. With our toddler brains which start identifying our partners as an extension to ourselves, we start asking questions like – ‘Why don’t you understand what I need and then just do it?’ or ‘Why can’t you be like me?’

Toddler brain and Love
By now you must have realised that love comes easy to the toddler brain. If you think of real toddlers, apart from the fact that they are sometimes cranky and moody, they are all about being joyful, excited and happy all the time! To be a toddler is all about being curious, being full of wonder and oozing affection! Is it not how one is or how one feels when they are in love? Think about it. Moreover, love brings out some of the deepest vulnerabilities in us, the kind which we have not felt since we were toddlers. In the initial phases of a relationship, in case of any conflict, we feel powerless and dependant like how we must have felt when we started to walk!
When we love like toddlers we often confuse intimacy with having no autonomy.

The core of the conflicts

The core of our conflicts usually are based on the great contradiction of mankind. Unlike all other animals, which either exist independently, by itself in an autonomous nature of life, or live in groups, human beings live in the contradiction of both wanting autonomy as well as wanting to connect to others. Think about it, human being mostly, and you can even analyse yourself for that matter, they need their own space, want to live with their own unique traits, interests, preference, freedom to be who they are, doing what they want to. On the other hand we are also creatures who want to be connected to others, to bond, to depend on or have others be dependent on us.

Loving with our toddler brain

In the beginning of our relationships, when we love with our toddler brain, hormones such as vasopressin and oxytocin are produced which gives us our share of the euphoria and limitless energy that we feel. Think about the new couples in love and you will know what I am talking about! The sleepless nights, the ‘into each other’s eyes’ moments in the restaurants being oblivious to the existence of anything or anyone around. Yes, that what loving with toddler brain looks like!

As the bonding hormones fade out (after a few months), the conflicts in our toddler brain creeps in. The initial euphoric feeling dies down and we gradually start noticing things in our partners which we do not like. What we need to remember here is that we do not necessarily stop liking the people we are in love with. But we stop our toddler brain idealistic attributions, or thinking that they are everything that we like in life! This projection of our toddler brain usually gives rise to all problems which brings on those fights afterwards.

Adult brain and love

As a conclusion it can be safely said that mature or long-term love is all about loving as an adult. This means that the bonding is not necessarily based on the spontaneous euphoria and wondrous feeling of joy and feeling like two people are an extension of one another. It is more about accepting that the other person is a separate individual with a unique set of values, beliefs, interests and preferences. It is also about realizing and accepting the great contradiction in not only ourselves but also in our loved one where both of us want to remain independent as well as want to belong to someone, and how both people feel both these differently.

Only the calm, stable and profound adult brain of ours can make sense of this and live a fulfilling life with our loved one.

So love with your adult brain, because love is easy but relationship is hard.