

# The Damage of Drama

By Cheri DeMoss

**F**or many of us from abusive, alcoholic and/or personality disordered families, drama - in all forms - is what we were taught and often what we become. Whether we are aware of our behaviors or not. In fact, the majority of adult children from these types of families are unaware that one or both of their parents may have a personality disorder.

We become walking drama addicts – chaos makers. Drama is not good for us. It is not good for our relationships. Drama is a form of reaction and it only causes damage. Drama, like reactions, dissolve our bonds with those we love and replaces feeling loved and loving with feelings of blaming or being blamed, isolation, loneliness, and depression.

The default response of Drama people is a “knee-jerk” behavior & belief to figure out how “It” is not their fault. They are unaware of their own reactions in the moment and feel that the other person is *causing* them to react. Our families do these behaviors to us. They act as if we caused their feelings. They act of is we need to take care of their



*Adult children coming from a family where one or both parents suffer from a personality disorder experiences a frequent sense of being off balance in the world.*

## Obstacles Into Options Self-Esteem Classes

**A**s infants & toddlers we felt good about ourselves. We didn't worry if people liked us. In fact, we had every confidence that we were completely lovable and likeable. We didn't try to hide what we felt or who we were from others.

We easily shared our feelings, thoughts & accomplishments. As we grew up we were given the message that what we felt, did or thought was not okay.

Our self-esteem affect all

aspects of our lives and our relationships. By learning how our childhood self-esteem turned into adulthood self-doubt we can easily reverse the process.

### You'll learn to:

- Turn obstacles into options
- Expand your self-esteem
- Enhance your relationships
- Recognize your strengths
- Change fear patterns
- Feel consistently confident
- Find the adventure

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feelings. When we grow up we have learned it is “the way” to respond to the world and to relationships. We then act as if we expect those closest to us, those we love, to take care of our feelings and to actively *prevent* our reactions.

**Drama: The Disordered Personality.** A Drama person's first response is to show that they are not responsible for the problem. Their reaction is “It's not my fault”. People, who have learned that drama is an effective means of be-

*They are easily upset by things that most people consider part of normal life.*

having, seek to validate their own self-esteem and position by creating, using and perpetuating drama (i.e. the abusive, alcoholic or personality disordered parent).

When something goes wrong or is upsetting, drama people perceive it as dramatic - feel victimized - then become angry. They complain about others and describe themselves as helpless to effect change. Their language  
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# The Damage of Drama

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conveys the complete belief that others need to take care of their feelings. Others need to do things their way. They are easily upset by things that most people consider part of normal life.

When a problem occurs, drama people make the problem about them because it feels personal. *They consistently create agree / disagree situations.* This is a disordered way of moving through the world.

They do stalking behaviors like asking a question . (i.e. "What are you thinking?") When they don't like the answer they attack both the answer and the person answering. They do this with the emotional goal (conscious or not) of making the other person feel bad and wrong. This reinforces to themselves that they are right and good; it esteems them.

***Drama people make things personal and eventually make most things about them.***

They have little tolerance of other family members feeling good about themselves and will often subtly attack the family member that demonstrate the most joy.

Their emotional world is very black or white. They truly feel the other person

is bad or they truly feel they are bad. *Someone must be bad & blamed.* Instead of looking for possible solutions they will ruminate over one or two possibilities and not take action.

People raised in these families are emotionally fragile. The Jack Nicholson movie line, "You Can't Handle The Truth!" is the most accurate definition of how disordered people react & respond. Those around them feel as if they are walking on eggshells.

They repeatedly justify and rationalize their victimhood, immobility & need to be emotionally protected from ever feeling bad about themselves. Yet, they are usually the 1<sup>st</sup> one to

make someone else feel bad about themselves. *Especially the child who demonstrate any significant level of self-esteem.*

In Drama Families (abusive, alcoholic, or personality disordered) the original problem goes & stays unaddressed & more obstacles and "problems" are created.

Family members are not allowed to seek understanding of the true problem or the truth about what led up to it.

There is an abundance of pseudo insight where they talk at length about self-awarenesses they have had, but nothing changes. It is pseudo insight comprised of what they meant to say or do or what they will change

in the future; but very little actually changes. If a possible solution is "chosen" little or no action is taken.

The drama family "goes through the motions". The unconscious or unspoken motivation is to create chaos/drama/stress and keep it going because this supports their feeling that they are a victim in their own life.

They will often solicit others family members to become a part of the drama by emotionally assaulting & blaming. This creates a distraction that gets others (especially the children) to rescue them from their feelings of loneliness & badness. Once this is accomplished they will then persecute the rescuer for not doing "it" correctly.

**Non-Drama: The Normal Personality.** Non-Drama people seek real understanding and problem  
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## Checklist: Normal vs. Disordered

**T**his is a checklist to help you recognize the difference between normal and disordered personalities. Normal personalities are low emotional maintenance & feel good to be around. Disordered personalities are high emotional maintenance & are difficult or scary to be around.

### **Normal Personality**

- Can Talk About Their Impact On Others
- Expresses Support, Hope, Positivity
- Doesn't Blame Others For Their Feelings & Reactions
- Communication Is Sincere & Two Way
- Healthy, Consistent Intimacy

### **Disordered Personality**

- Cannot Talk About Their Impact On Others
- Expresses Negativity, Fear, Criticism
- Blames Others For Their Feelings & Reactions
- Communication Is Not Sincere & Is One Way
- Unhealthy, Inconsistent Intimacy

# The Damage of Drama

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solving when something in life goes wrong or is upsetting.

Drama people live in some form of ongoing, perpetual upset with short periods of harmony and calm. (i.e. always being late or being disorganized which leads to a continuous level of stress and drama)

Unlike their counterparts, Non-Drama people live in ongoing, perpetual harmony and calm with short periods of problems that they are quick to under

**Non-Drama people are not easily upset by things that are part of normal life.**

stand and resolve. (i.e. effective at managing time & organization that leads to a continuous level of relaxed normal functioning). It is a normal way of behaving that is different from the disordered or drama lifestyle.

When something goes wrong or is upsetting non-drama people perceive it as normal (even if it is inconvenient or upsetting). They do not feel victimized nor do they blame others.

They describe themselves as able to effect change in their environment and in their life.

Their language & actions convey their absolute belief

that they can take care of their own feelings, needs & reactions. They are not easily upset by things that are part of normal life.

Non-Drama people *do not fear being accountable for their behaviors, feelings or reactions.* They want to understand the impact they are having on those around them – decide if it is hurtful or helpful – then take appropriate actions to change what needs to be changed.

Their first response is to neither blame themselves or others. But instead to solve the problem, listen to the feelings of others and hear about their impact on those around them; without making themselves or anyone else feel bad or wrong.

When a problem occurs the Non-Drama person wants to understand the truth of it and the truth about what led up to it.

They then look for possible solutions, chose one and take action on it. They evaluate the outcome and make adjustments, if needed, until the problem is solved.

In Non-Drama families the goal is to maintain a loving connection between family members. The original problem is focused on, understood and no obstacles are created to change the focus or subject.

The family members are taught, encouraged and allowed to understand the truth of the problem and the truth about what led up to it.

The Non-Drama families try to solve problems & hear each other's feelings with openness and accountability so they can go back to a loving balance. This emotionally safe balance can be recognized by the easy flow of conversation about all family member's ideas, thoughts and feelings. No one is afraid to share.

The conscious motivation is to create calm connection and keep it going. They will often solicit others family members to become a part of the solution by using non-blaming, non-attacking actions that let family members help with the situation so that the family and all its member can feel esteemed.

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## About Cheri DeMoss - Empowering Options

**C**heri DeMoss is Founder and Director of **EMPOWERING OPTIONS®**, an organization specializing in personal empowerment. For the past 17 years Cheri has been teaching others how to turn obstacles into options. Cheri's warm, innovative approach focuses on how learned shame and dysfunctional beliefs from childhood dictate our behaviors as adults. She creates a shame-free, completely supportive and positive environment where you can easily understand and explore the behavior patterns and ideas that no longer serve you.

In addition to working with individuals, groups and couples **EMPOWERING OPTIONS®** offers seminars, workshops, CD's, newsletters, and uniquely effective classes for couples. Cheri provides a safe, encouraging environment for clients to understand how these patterns shape our experiences in relationships, work situations, and our own self-esteem. She provides information, validation, and ideas that make it easier to create the changes you want.

Cheri maintains a private practice, as well as designs, produces and presents **EMPOWERING OPTIONS® Empower By Example** seminar series. Cheri also provides in-service training for school districts, and customizes workshops, classes & training seminars for mental health professionals and local communities. She provides consultation for a wide variety of businesses and presents at national and state conferences. Cheri and her associates conduct a full time private practice in Chicago.

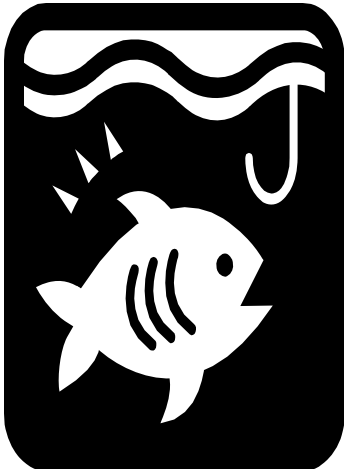
The more information, the easier it is to see the options in our lives. Raising our esteem helps us feel safe in the world and reach our goals. For more information about relationships, parenting, new ideas, behaviors and options go to [www.EmpoweringOptions.com](http://www.EmpoweringOptions.com)

# The Narcissist & The Borderline

## How They Hook Patterns

By Cheri DeMoss

**B**oth Narcissist and Borderline personality disordered individuals share two very distinctive traits. Neither of them have the ability to own their own behavior. It's not a matter of being unable to apologize. Many high functioning NPD or BPD can say they are sorry. But what they can't do is have a conversation or discussion about the impact their behaviors have



on those around them. It is literally intolerable to them & they often become angry or enraged if they are forced to hear how upset others are about their behaviors.

Another thing that both disordered personalities share is the goal to show how they are not responsible. When they are confronted with the im-

pact of their behaviors their first "knee-jerk" response is to blame someone else. Usually the person who is trying to talk to them about their behaviors.

To be in an intimate relationship is to be known for all we do, say and to be held accountable for the impact our behaviors have on others. Since neither the NPD nor the BPD can hear about or *discuss* their impact on others, nor stop themselves from reacting and blaming those around them for their feelings — it is easy to see why they seldom can tolerate long term intimate relationships.

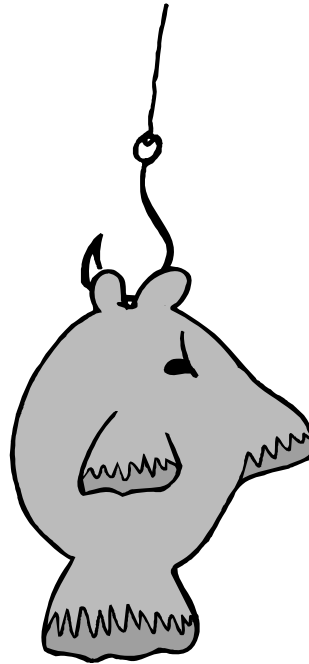
Below are some of the key ways they hook each others patterns, dependencies and fears.

### The Narcissist

1) Believes they are special, unique & can only be understood by another special person.

2) Feels superior with a strong need to prove their superior value. Whether it is true or not.

3) Drama, chaos & feeling victimized makes them feel important, and better than by getting the attention on themselves. The BPD's need for reassurance causes the Narcissist Personal-



ity Disordered individual to react in anger. The NPD feels both victimized by "what he has to put up with" & better than because the BPD looks "crazy" or "out of control".

4) Feels very important. Expects to be recognized for anything & everything. Lacks sincere empathy & compassion for others but has this in abundance for themselves. Requires a lot of attention. Gets angry or shuts down if someone else is getting attention.

5) Feels angry & resentful that the BPD no longer admires, looks up to & worships them. Shifts back & forth be-

tween rage, manipulation & depression. Seeks outside sources to meet these needs.

### The Borderline

1) Is constantly scanning to see how they are not special and are very attracted to people who make them feel special. They are drawn to people they perceive as powerful & then over idealize them.

2) They inevitably devalue these people as soon as see them as being human. Their fear of abandonment kicks in and they then feel victimizes and angry.

3) Seeks validation, empathy, & compassion. Even normal degrees of these needs trigger anger in the NPD - this result in the BPD over reacting & appearing "crazy".

4) Deep terror of abandonment, whether real or imagined, causes the BPD individual to be needful, clingy & overly dependent. When scared the BPD only has attention for themselves & vengeance for others..

5) The BPD person lives in constant terror that, literally, anyone (real or imagined) can & will "take" the NPD away from them. This causes the BPD to shift back & forth between rage, vengeance, manipulation & depression.

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