

# 28 Questions That Reveal Whether Someone Has A ‘Dark Personality’

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Psychologists have long been interested in understanding the personality traits that promote socially unwelcome or offensive behavior.

One of the more well-known constellations of negative personality traits is known as the “Dark Triad.” According to researchers, the Dark Triad is composed of three groups of socially offensive personality traits: *narcissism*, *Machiavellianism*, and *psychopathy* (defined below).

- ***Narcissism*** refers to someone who is self-obsessed and believes that they are special, gifted, and superior to others.
- ***Machiavellianism*** refers to someone who is manipulative, tricky, and ingratiating.
- ***Psychopathy*** describes people who are dangerously risk-seeking and lack empathy for others.

Interestingly, a growing body of research suggests that a fourth dimension — called *sadism* — should be added to the Dark Triad. According to new [research](#) published in the *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, sadism “satisfies the criteria of “callousness or impaired empathy” while also adding a “unique element not covered by the Dark Triad members, namely, intrinsic pleasure in hurting others.”

It’s one thing to define a new personality structure, but measuring it is another thing altogether. To this end, a team of psychologists led by Delroy Paulhus of the University of British Columbia in Canada developed a 28-item scale to measure the personality traits of narcissism, Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and sadism. Here is what they came up with. (Note that all statements are responded to on a 5-point, strongly disagree to strongly agree, scale.)

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