

Characteristics of Selfishness

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ABSTRACT: Selfishness may be regarded as the trait that leads people to frequently act in their own interests without any regard for how their actions could impact others. Although everyone can display selfish behavior from time to time, when these traits become predominant, they harm relationships and it may be necessary to address such behavior for healthier interpersonal dynamics. Being selfish is regarded as a negative trait. The best way to avoid selfish people is by knowing their characteristics and avoiding them when you identify the traits. In this paper, we will examine the common traits of a selfish man regardless of what relationship role he's in – boyfriend, husband, father, friend, or brother. These characteristics constitute a way to describe selfish people. Knowing them will help us spot selfish individuals.

KEYWORD: selfishness, selflessness, traits, characteristics

INTRODUCTION

Today we live in a society where everything is about self. The world is full of all kinds of people. It takes all kinds of people to make this world an interesting place. We have selfish people as well as selfless individuals. The opposite of a selfish person is a people pleaser. The people pleasers act selflessly and neglect themselves. They live their life to satisfy their own needs. Once you know their characteristics, you can easily avoid getting into a difficult situation and letting them hurt you.

Selfishness refers to the quality being selfish, which is the act of prioritizing one's own interests, needs, and desires over those of others. Figure 1 displays a demonstration of selfishness [1]. It is important to note that a certain degree of self-interest is natural and necessary for personal well-being, but excessive selfishness can lead to negative consequences in personal relationships and societal interactions. People are inherently predisposed to be self-focused, egocentric, and egoistic. Some people prioritize their own interests more than others do, sometimes to the point of disadvantaging or exploiting other people to get what they want some people prioritize their own interests more than others do, sometimes to the point of disadvantaging or exploiting other people to get what they want [2]. Selfishness is often regarded as an undesirable characteristic, whereas altruism is typically considered universally desirable and virtuous. Not all selfishness is necessarily bad, and not all altruism is necessarily good. Selfish people are often viewed negatively. By nature, people are selfish to a certain degree. Some are more selfish than others, to

the point that they ruin their relationships. Selfish people are everywhere. Selfishness is an innate quality that can help people survive and thrive, even in times of hardship. This can cause a lot of problems in personal and professional relationships.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SELFISH PEOPLE

To be selfish is to be self-centered. Selfishness is always considered as a negative trait. A selfish person is someone who is overly concerned with himself. Selfish people only care about themselves and their own needs, and they are not seldomly interested in the needs of others. They behave the way they do because of their innate self-absorbed personality and characteristics. Using the characteristics, one can tell someone who is truly selfish. Characteristics commonly associated with selfish behavior include the following [3-7]:

1. *Prioritizing Personal Gain:* Selfish people often put themselves first. They tend to prioritize their own needs, desires, and interests above the needs of others. They may be unwilling to make sacrifices for the greater good or the well-being of others. They will always think about their personal gains or interests before anything else. They are only looking for opportunities. Selfish people typically do not bother much about your interest. They often put their interest before others' convenience. They do not share easily. They always talk about themselves and make themselves the center of each conversation. They may not be conscious that they are selfish. They just assume they are nice people who care about their own happiness more than anything else. They think that they are needed more than they need you. They always say the problem is someone else. They crave people's attention and sympathy. They want others to make all the efforts in the relationship but contribute none themselves. A typical selfish person is shown in Figure 2 [8].
2. *Failure to Consider Others:* Selfish individuals may overlook the needs and perspectives of others. They might make decisions without considering the impact on those affected, leading to strained relationships. They love attention, and it is all about them. Remember, they are in a relationship with a purpose. They will constantly and perpetually need something from you. They will do what they want, when they want without consideration for others. They do not care about the thoughts and feelings of others. They cannot help but calculate. Since they care less for the opinion of others, selfish people tend to look down on others and feel that they are the most important person in a group. They are unteachable.
3. *Sense of Entitlement:* Entitlement means you think you deserve everything, even when you do not. Selfish people may have an exaggerated sense of entitlement, believing that they deserve special treatment or consideration without reciprocating. They consider themselves better than others and are entitled to other people's time and attention. They have an innate thought that they deserve what they desire. They tend to take things for granted. This self-centered behavior makes them take what they think they deserve and reject anything less. Selfish people are not thankful for the help they receive. Instead, they take it for granted. They are impossible to satisfy. It is difficult to build a relationship with selfish people who do not love you.
4. *Manipulation:* Manipulation is essentially the art of persuasion and conversation, used for selfish means. Selfish people are masters of subtle manipulation. Some selfish individuals may resort to manipulation or deceit to achieve their goals, even if it harms others. They may use tactics to exploit or take advantage of people around them. Selfish people are good at manipulating others to solve their problems. They play on your emotions and undermine your rights. If you have ever had a selfish friend or partner, you will know how they can manipulate you into doing anything. Through manipulation, selfish people will not hesitate to use other people for their selfish goals. If someone is

manipulating you, they might try to control your behavior or emotions by making you feel guilty, ashamed, or afraid. Manipulation is not something that people are born with. It is developed over time and is practiced.

5. *Lack of Emotional Intelligence:* Emotional intelligence is the ability to monitor one's own and other people's emotions, to discriminate between different emotions. Individuals with high emotional intelligence stay positive and manage difficult situations successfully. They make thoughtful decisions. They keep their emotions under control and discuss sensitive issues maturely and thoughtfully. Emotional intelligence is learned through action and observation. Selfish people lack emotional intelligence. They lack the ability to show their emotions in a healthy, functional manner. Rather than take accountability for their own actions, selfish people are quick to pass blame to others. Children who do not feel loved usually grow up to be adults who have lack emotional intelligence. To make a relationship last, you need to strive to be empathetic to your partner.
6. *Lack of Empathy:* Empathy is the ability to identify with and understand the wants, needs, and viewpoints of those around you. It is a component of emotional intelligence. It is being able to understand how others are feeling. People with empathy have the ability to put themselves in someone else's situation or look at situations from other people's perspectives. They are considerate and apply the Golden Rule to all areas of their lives [9]. Empathy is a great trait to have, but it is lacking in selfish people. It is the lack of empathy that makes selfish people to be unconsciously rude and difficult to be around. Selfish individuals often struggle to understand or share the feelings of others, for they lack empathy. They have no empathy for the suffering of other people. They are not interested in others' well-being or feelings. They see things from their perspective but cannot put themselves in others' shoes. They may not be sensitive to the needs or emotions of those around them. They are uncaring to the needs of others.
7. *Failure to Accept Criticism:* Selfish individuals do not accept criticism kindly. They react badly to even well-meaning constructive criticism. They may resist feedback or constructive criticism that challenges their self-centered behavior. Their ego just cannot admit that constructive criticism is for their own good. They cannot see that criticism is good because it lets you learn from the opinions of others. They may be unwilling to acknowledge or address the impact of their actions on others. Selfish people also do not listen to alternative opinions, whether they are critical or not. They resist those who do not agree with them. They may be annoyed or enraged when others fail to see things their way.
8. *Limited Cooperation:* Selfish people may be hard to work with. You cannot expect selfish people to work in a team as they only want you to go with their ideas. Selfish people may have difficulty working cooperatively with others. They may be more inclined to pursue their own goals at the expense of collaboration and teamwork. They are highly self-centered and they focus on their own interest. Whatever does not bring them something in return is considered a waste of time. Selfish people have acquaintances but no real friends because friendship requires a certain level of sacrifice and compromise. A one-sided effort is often a sign that someone is selfish. Working with selfish people can be frustrating. Selfish people cause pain and problem to those around them.
9. *Difficulty in Sharing:* Selfless and compassionate people give generously to others. Selfishness is associated with a lack of generosity or a reluctance to give, whether it be in terms of time, resources, or emotional support. It is often characterized by a reluctance or refusal to share resources, time, or attention with others. This can manifest in various aspects of life, such as sharing possessions, knowledge, or responsibilities. Selfish people are uncaring and neglectful of other people's needs. They are not used to sharing with others. They hoard their resources because they have a scarcity

mindset. They rarely share and when they do, they have a motive. Caring, sharing, and giving are not easy for them to do. They will think twice before giving to others of their money, time, or resources.

10. *Avoid Responsibility*: One of the characteristics of selfish people is the disproportionate responsibilities they take for what they ask for. Selfish people avoid responsibility as much as possible. For example, a selfish husband will ask his wife to take care of the children and chores. But he is not willing to contribute to the family domestic work. He does not think that there is anything wrong with that. He asks his wife to cut on spending but he does not cut his. He expects to have sex whenever he feels like. Being in a one-sided relationship or marriage is draining both physically and emotionally. Selfish people lack give-and-take balance. They like to blame others for their problem and refuse to take responsibility.
11. *Selfish Ambition*: This refers to inordinate ambition or displays of selfishness, trying to get ahead at the expense of others. Timothy George said, "It is also true that politics attracts those persons given to self-promotion and self-service rather than the service of others." Greed and selfishness often appear together in one person. Selfish people tend to be more ambitious in life and desire the best for themselves. They putting effort into overcoming whatever obstacles come their way. They expect others to meet their selfish needs. They make unrealistic demands. When the demands are not met, they feel unhappy, dissatisfied, or miserable. They do not do anything for free. They always ask: "What's in it for me?" They take credit for other people's work. They are scared to show their weakness or insecurity. Selfish people create their own storms and then get upset when it rains. They often behave in reckless ways in pursuit of their selfish goals.
12. *Lack of Humility*: Most selfish people are arrogant and lack humility. Humility is a quality that defines how we think, live, work, and interact with people. Humble people are usually tolerant of others. Humility is exhibited in healthcare/medicine, in business, in education, in religion, in ethics, in leadership, in politics, at the workplace, and in our homes [10]. Selfishness comes with immaturity and arrogance. Humility is a precious human virtue that is needed for us to grow as people and as social beings in our environment. But selfish people due to their ego will always look for ways to stand out and exaggerate their achievements. They cannot tolerate failure of any sort and public humiliation. They tend to think that their approach to a particular problem or situation is the only one that will work and they need everyone to get on board. They are competitive in an unhealthy way. They may have a sense of superiority over others.
13. *Material Possessions*: The American dream is becoming more and more materialistic. Today, there is an endless lists of things that people want: the latest smart phones, luxury cars, designer shoes, and Rolex, etc. Materialism may be regarded as a worldview or philosophical system which regards matter as the only reality in the world [11]. Selfish people value material possessions over people. They might be obsessed with status symbols, money, or power. These selfish, materialistic people dislike others who have more, not just money or things, but happiness, love, or success. They will try to bring you down to make themselves feel better. Your success makes them feel inferior. They buy fancy or expensive stuff and brag about them. They measure success by the amount of money or properties they have.
14. *Lack of Forgiveness*: Since selfish people lack empathy, they are unable to forgive others. G. Herbert said, "He who cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he must pass himself." Forgiveness is important in marriage where husband and wife are bound to offend each other. Someone has said, "If you would increase your happiness and prolong your life, forget your neighbor's faults.... Forget the peculiarities of your friends, and only remember the good points which make you fond of them.... Obliterate everything disagreeable from yesterday." As long as you live in this imperfect

world, interacting with imperfect people, you are bound to offend someone or someone is bound to offend you. There is no perfect marriage in the world. We do not marry a perfect spouse and we do not raise perfect children. A selfish spouse finds it difficult to forgive and forget. They hold on to the past and do not let go. They do not realize that forgiveness is key to their own happiness.

15. *Loneliness*: Loneliness can increase self-centeredness, and self-centeredness can increase loneliness. Self-centeredness means focusing solely on your own needs and desires. It can lead to social isolation. Loneliness is the problem that marriage and friendship are designed to solve. Friends and family of self-centered people can grow resentful or intolerant of the behavior over time and move away from the relationship. Loneliness (for others, it might be jealousy, abandonment, anger, depression, regret) could be your personal nemesis. As shown in Figure 3, loneliness is not good for anyone [12].
16. *Short-Term Gratification*: Gratification is a self-indulgent behavior that many people engage in. Our food, entertainment, online shopping, and even dating have been engineered to make it incredibly easy for us to obtain whatever we want in short order. A mentality of instant gratification could actually be described as short-sighted. Selfish individuals may prioritize short-term gratification over long-term well-being, disregarding the potential consequences of their actions on themselves or others. They show signs of selfishness when they act impulsively. They indulge themselves in the foods and hobbies that they love.
17. *Bad Character*: Good character takes intentional effort to develop. Little things tell a lot about a person's character. Selfish people put themselves above others and care only about themselves. They are ungrateful, unkind, and insensitive. They always think that they are right. They are highly self-centered and they focus on their own interest. They care less about how their actions affect other people. They never run out of excuses. They have few real friends because of their bad character. They are more interested in their accomplishments than their moral integrity. They find it difficult to apologize.
18. *Unethical Behavior*: Human beings can behave ethically or unethically, and behind those behaviors can lurk selfish or unselfish intentions. Selfish or unethical behavior can bring negative consequences for individuals and the community at large. Prominent philosophers and economists have claimed that selfishness and ethicality are closely linked. Unethical behaviors often coincide with selfish intentions. To act unethically is often to act selfishly. Self-interest often breeds unethical behaviors, particularly in situations where self-interest conflicts with the interest of others. Instead of adhering to a stable set of moral code, selfish individuals apply their beliefs and judgments strategically to maximize their personal outcomes. Selfish people only refrain from behaving unethically when the risk and cost of being caught are high [13].
19. *Greed*: A selfish person will be significantly attached to money and thus, be greedy as well. Greedy people are always looking for more than they need or deserve. They are individuals who hoard wealth and possessions, always craving more. In the end, the only thing that matters to them is themselves, their own feelings. Left unchecked, the insatiable desire for more and better material things can be destructive. As Aristotle said, "Greed has no boundaries." Figure 4 shows a greedy person [14].
20. *Lack of Respect*: Self-respect is one of those things we all aspire to have, but sometimes we lose sight of it in our relationships with others. Our sense of respect comes from how we see or feel about ourselves. Selfish people do not respect others because they lack self-care and self-love. They often feel inferior, lack confidence, and feel empty inside. They do not respect other people's time. Lack of

self-respect breeds unhappiness and is a form of self-abuse. We can practice self-respect by setting boundaries, forgiving ourselves for our mistakes, and tolerating our imperfections. A disrespectful husband often mocks his wife and speaks to her sarcastically. To improve their marriage, he has to become a more considerate person.

CONCLUSION

Selfishness is the tendency to act solely in a manner that benefits oneself, even if others are disadvantaged. It is one of the ugliest traits a person can have. It is one of the many things that cause unhealthy relationships. Selfish people are immature and self-centered. You do not need to put up with selfishness; you can walk away. Knowing their characteristics will let you know how to deal with them. They are best to be avoided, as much as humanly possible. If you have a relationship with a selfish person, practicing healthy communication and setting boundaries can help you protect your own well-being. More information about the characteristics of selfish people can be obtained from the books in [15-17].

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Figure 1 A demonstration of selfishness [1].



Figure 2 A typical selfish person [8].



Figure 3 Loneliness is not good for anyone [12].



Figure 4 A greedy person [14].