

5 Types of People Who Can Ruin Your Life in a Hurry

Tom fell hard for Kara. She had an electric personality and a unique ability to draw him out. After a passionate courtship they were engaged, then married—all within a couple months.

Tom had never been so happy. Then things soured.

A few years into marriage, Kara filed a restraining order against Tom and kicked him out of their home. Contact with his daughter was limited, a nightmare that continued for seven years.

Tom was amazed at how well Kara could lie and do it with such ease. She was clever and persuasive. Tom was stunned by how readily people consumed even the most outrageous stories Kara told.

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This paraphrased story is just one of many real-life experiences shared by Bill Eddy in his new book [5 Types of People Who Can Ruin Your Life](#).

Eddy, a certified family law specialist and co-founder of the [High Conflict Institute](#), identifies five “high-conflict personality” types that are the source of many of the most intense relationship conflicts today, even though they account for just 10 percent of the population.

You probably are acquainted with someone who is HCP even if you do not know it, Eddy writes, since traits often are not visible to those who are not their “Targets of Blame.” Here are five types of people who can seriously ruin your life:

1. Narcissistic HCPs:

Often charming at first, narcissists harbor feelings of superiority and struggle to feel empathy for others. They demand respect and near-constant attention. Targets often are insulted, misled, humiliated, and held in general contempt by the narcissist.

2. Borderline HCPs:

They tend to be warm and congenial at first, but borderline HCPs can many times be identified by their sudden swings in mood and temperament. They are often sensitive to slights—real and perceived—and can respond in vengeful and disproportionate fashion to the slightest provocation, including verbal attacks, physical violence, lawsuits and legal threats.

3. Antisocial (or Sociopathic) HCPs

Antisocials tend to have little remorse and are said to possess “no conscience.” They may appear charming, but they are driven to dominate others. Behavioral traits include pathological lying, publicly humiliating others, stealing, and occasionally (in extreme cases) murder.

4. Paranoid HCPs

Paranoids are beset by constant fear of being betrayed by those close to them. This fear can spawn wild delusions and accusations of conspiratorial behavior in others. Paranoids will often preemptively attack others whom they fear are “out to get” them.

5. Histrionic HCPs

Romantic, vibrant, and exciting, histrionic personalities are prone to getting carried away with drama. When no drama is present, they sometimes create it. They tend to tell wild stories (some true, some fictitious). The histrionic personality is in many ways vampiric, draining energy from others—particularly those they’ve identified as their Targets

of Blame.

Eddy points out that high-conflict personalities are in a separate category than personality disorders, a condition present in roughly 15 percent of the population. There are at least 10 types of personality disorders, but Eddy says each of these share three characteristics: **a lack of social awareness; an incapability to change; general interpersonal dysfunction.**

Personality disorders and high-conflict personalities can be debilitating and sabotaging in themselves, but the people most dangerous are those who possess both a personality disorder *and* a high-conflict personality.

“If and when you do encounter someone who falls in that overlapping area, you need to be able to recognize them, avoid them, and, if necessary, deal with them,” Eddy writes.

This is good advice. But avoiding high-conflict personalities is becoming more difficult because the percentage of high-conflict personalities is increasing, evidence suggests.

I asked Eddy why. He said there does not appear to be a single answer, but he highlighted two major factors: narcissism and social isolation. Both of these are on the rise in modern society, he said.

“Narcissism in particular can be traced to the self-esteem movement in society, which started in the early 1970s. The idea was to give children good self-esteem, since low self-esteem has been proven to be related to crime, drug abuse, depression and other problems,” Eddy told me. “However, the self-esteem movement made a big mistake, which we still see today in many schools and with many parents. When children are taught from birth that they are special, can do anything, be anything and have anything, it unfortunately feeds a sense of entitlement and narcissism.”

He continued:

“Social isolation—which seems to be increasing with social media, working alone, living alone, etc.—appears to be increasing our sense of fear about other people, so that paranoia and antisocial behavior may be increasing due to lack of the daily reassuring interactions that we need to feel secure and happy. This reinforces a more cynical and self-centered future perspective.”