



The Narcissistic Plaintiff

Publication

3.25.05

According to the American Psychiatric Association, the essential feature of Narcissistic Personality Disorder is "a pervasive pattern of grandiosity, need for admiration, and lack of empathy that begins by early adulthood and is present in a variety of contexts." Narcissists "routinely overestimate their abilities and inflate their accomplishments."

A diagnosis of Narcissistic Personality Disorder on the part of the plaintiff may be relevant in a wrongful termination lawsuit in two respects. First, it might help to explain the plaintiff's conviction that he was wronged and the zeal with which he is pursuing his claim. It might also suggest that his claim is but a fabrication conjured in a quest for revenge growing out of narcissistic rage. Second, even in the absence of narcissistic rage, a diagnosis of Narcissistic Personality Disorder may undercut a plaintiff's credibility in a lawsuit. This is because a narcissist may attempt to reinterpret historical events to place himself in a better light.

This article discusses several cases that illustrate how narcissistic employees are often insecure, high-maintenance, and disruptive. They disregard the rights and needs of others and they tend not to feel constrained by the same rules and policies that others have to follow. Accordingly, they can pose quite a management challenge

This article appeared in the Spring 2005 issue of the *Employee Relations Law Journal*.