

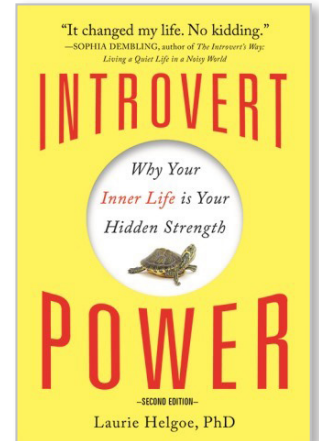
Dr. Laurie
Helgoe

Publicist Information

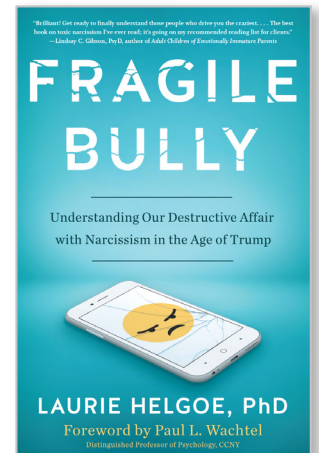
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Note: Requests can be made for a complimentary review copy of **INTROVERT POWER** through Ms. Kelsch.



For media bookings only, contact
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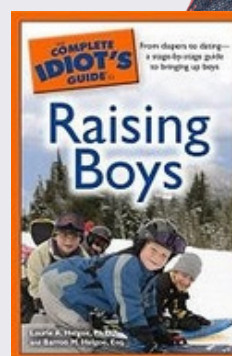
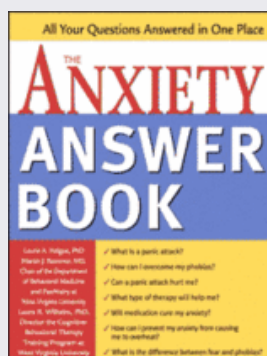
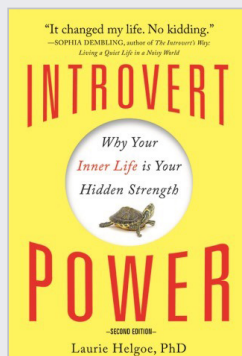
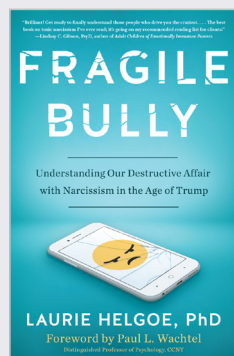


Dr. Laurie Helgoe, Ph.D. is a clinical psychologist, educator and author, with a special interest in the relationship between personality and culture. She is author of the critically acclaimed book, **Introvert Power: Why Your Inner Life Is Your Hidden Strength** (Sourcebooks, 2013, 2008), which is published in six languages. Dr. Helgoe advocates for the widespread recognition that introversion is a natural disposition that, when respected, permits individuals to flourish creatively, work productively, and form enduring and meaningful relationships. Her newest book, **Fragile Bully: Understanding Our Destructive Affair with Narcissism in the Age of Trump** (Diversions Books, March 12, 2019), explores the relationship between narcissism and American political and interpersonal discourse. Dr. Helgoe also authored the **Psychology Today** cover story, "Revenge of the Introvert," wrote an expert contribution for the textbook, **Contemporary Organizational Behavior in Action** (Pearson-Prentice Hall, 2016), and has been quoted in several national and international publications including the **Wall Street Journal**. She interacts with readers through her blog for PsychologyToday.com entitled **Introvert Power: Food for the Inner Life**, as well as her **Introvert Power** and **Fragile Bully** pages on Facebook.

Dr. Helgoe's insights are featured in reports for The Wall Street Journal, and she serves as an expert for Well+Good Media. She authored the cover story, "Revenge of the Introverts" for the September-October 2010 issue of Psychology Today, and has contributed to print and digital media such as **Parent's Magazine**, FastCompany.com, Today.com, Real Simple Family, Oprah.com, **Body+Soul Magazine**, **Seventeen**, **The Arizona Republic**, Esquire.com, and Washingtonpost.com.

Helgoe has been a television guest and commentator on affiliates for ABC, NBC, and CBS, and has been interviewed dozens of times on radio stations and podcasts nationwide. She is a frequent invited keynote speaker for professional and educational conferences. Her books include: **Fragile Bully**; **Introvert Power**, recipient of a **Publishers Weekly** starred review; **The Anxiety Answer Book**; **The Complete Idiot's Guide to Raising Boys**; **The Boomer's Guide to Dating (Again)**; and **The Pocket Idiot's Guide to Breaking Up**.

Dr. Helgoe is also a professional oil painter. View her creations in this site's [gallery](#). She lives with her husband (an extrovert!) in Minneapolis, Minnesota.





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“The archetypal narcissist is a crazy maker, at once needy and aggressive, desperate for love and yet rejecting of it, fragile child and bully.”
—from the Introduction

Fragile Bully
Understanding Our Destructive Affair with Narcissism
in the Age of Trump

By **Laurie Helgoe, PhD**

Foreword by Paul L. Wachtel

Narcissism is part of the assumed “national character” of Americans, according to a 2015 survey of views from home and abroad. While few people in the United States meet the criteria for Narcissistic Personality Disorder, the ones who do have a way of gaining center stage in our culture. America loves its narcissists. And America loves to hate them, too.

In her new book, clinical psychologist Dr. Laurie Helgoe looks beyond the soundbites of self-aggrandizing celebrities and the tweets of self-centered politicians to reveal narcissists for what they really are: fragile bullies who “repeatedly threaten and intimidate others—passively or aggressively—into feeding his or her grandiose self, while remaining convinced that he or she is the victim.”

Dr. Helgoe also discusses the vicious circles that arise in a relationship with a narcissist, looking at how so many of us get hooked by them and how they can leave both parties dehumanized and diminished. As Dr. Helgoe explains, “the relationship contract with the narcissist requires emptying the self and assuming the role of mirror and echo.”

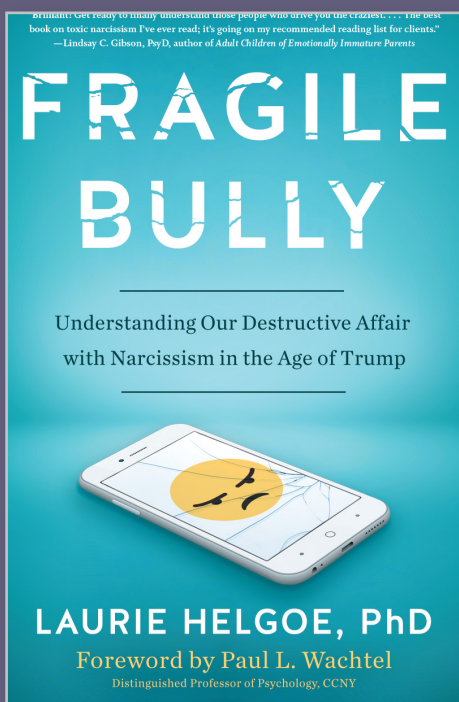
Using the Trump presidency and other contemporary examples to underscore how the condition is fed by both supporters and detractors, ***Fragile Bully*** sheds necessary light on people who are uniquely capable of both power and destruction. Most importantly, it also provides a blueprint for how those caught in their web can return to life—by recognizing our limitations, listening to our body, finding healthy mirrors that allow us to see ourselves more fully, and remembering what we love.

Laurie Helgoe, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist, educator, and author with a special interest in the relationship between personality and culture. An Associate Professor of Behavioral Sciences at the Ross University School of Medicine, Dr. Helgoe is the author of six books including the critically acclaimed *Introvert Power: Why Your Inner Life is Your Hidden Strength*, which has been published in six languages.

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DrLaurieHelgoe.com



Advance Praise for Dr. Laurie Helgoe's *Fragile Bully*

"Brilliant! Get ready to finally understand those people who drive you the craziest. Dr. Helgoe reveals how fragile bullies enrage us with their hostile self-centeredness while simultaneously hooking us with their underlying emotional vulnerability. A first-class researcher with a storyteller's gift, Dr. Helgoe describes the high costs of narcissism in both intimate lives and national arenas, then shows you how to disentangle yourself without attacking them or betraying yourself. The best book on toxic narcissism I've ever read; it's going on my recommended reading list for clients."

~ Lindsay C. Gibson, PsyD, clinical psychologist and author of *Adult Children of Emotionally Immature Parents* and *Recovering from Emotionally Immature Parents*

"This is a thought-provoking book that reveals not only what drives the narcissists in our lives, but also the dances that keep us engaged with them. Helgoe draws from research as well as her own practice and family experiences to help us look within at the postures we take. She offers clinically sound ways to make changes, improve relationships, and find authentic ways to connect with the people we love. Given the current political scene and our fascination with reality TV, this book has something relevant to offer for everyone."

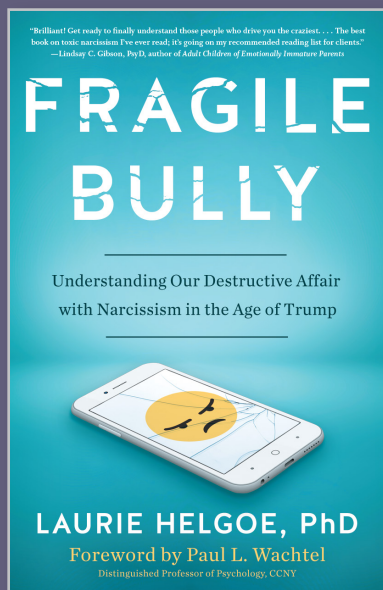
~ Judith Siegel, PhD, LCSW, Editor-in-Chief, *Journal of Family Social Work* and author of *Stop Overreacting: Effective Strategies for Calming Your Emotions*

"*Fragile Bully* is a wonderful, timely, and broadly relevant book that grapples with the dynamics of narcissism in a nuanced and rich manner. Laurie Helgoe's treatment of the topic is both sensitive and incisive. The title beautifully captures the paradoxical dynamic of narcissism—that the grandiosity and surrounding bravado belies an underlying fragility and brittleness. Through the use of evocative clinical examples and vignettes, Helgoe vividly brings to life these dynamics in a manner that will resonate with readers from a broad range of disciplines and interests. As such this book is suitable for a range of disciplines—clinical psychology, social psychology, political science, and any form of contemporary studies. This gem is a must read."

~ Kenneth N. Levy, Ph.D., Licensed Psychologist and Senior Fellow, Personality Disorders Institute, Joan and Sanford I. Weill Medical College, Cornell University



DrLaurieHelgoe.com



A Talk with Dr. Laurie Helgoe, author of *Fragile Bully*

How did you become interested in the topic of narcissism? Did the current cultural and/or political climate play a role?

As a psychologist, I have always been interested in personality, and particularly the way in which culture and personality interact. During the 2016 presidential election, I was curious about the ways in which the very personality characteristics people were finding repellant were at the same time being reinforced. What stood out to me was what I call the fragile-bully dynamic, one that was familiar to me from childhood and a central characteristic of unhealthy narcissism.

What narcissistic traits or tendencies have you seen President Donald Trump exhibit?

What I'm noticing in the interactions between President Trump and the public—and particularly, the media—is the fragile bully dynamic I talk about. I have never met or evaluated the president, so I only see what is available to the public. What becomes very visible is the mix of grandiose provocations (bullying) and retaliatory defensiveness (fragility) evident in Trump's tweets and rallying points. The reason I resist diagnosing the president is not only because I lack the data and permission to do so, but also because this temptation is part of the problem. We are far too focused on the personality of Donald Trump, and in our reactions to that personality, we begin to evidence the very behaviors we ascribe to him. This is the meat of my book—that destructive narcissism is bigger than any of its subscribers, and that we need to understand the ways our “solutions” end up contributing to the problem.

Is there a correlation between narcissism and leadership?

Yes and no. What the literature typically finds is a “double edge” of positive and negative features. Narcissistic leaders may appeal initially because of their charisma and bold visions. However, they do poorly when it comes to team support and employee satisfaction. A retrospective analysis of U.S. presidents up to and including George W. Bush revealed an increasing trend toward narcissism among U.S. presidents. High levels of grandiose narcissism were correlated with both “greatness” and unethical behaviors.

What role does the media play in reinforcing narcissism?

Media is a narcissist's best friend, though the parties involved may not appreciate their bond. Especially in the age of diminishing attention spans and limitless competition, media cannot survive without followers. A narcissist can't survive without followers. Narcissists help the media by providing spectacle, by inciting reactions, and by creating drama. The media helps narcissists by keeping the focus on that spectacle—even if the focus is negative.

In your book you say, “in the world of celebrity, no publicity is bad publicity, and, sadly, the best publicity often comes with fragile bully drama.” Can you give us some examples?

Take any designated villain on *The Bachelor*. She hogs the spotlight, comes off as arrogant and self-absorbed, and she’s mean. Viewers want to see *The Bully* taken down, so they stay glued to the drama. But opponents go too far, or else *The Bully* can’t take what she dishes out. She breaks down and becomes *Fragile*. “Everyone is so mean,” she may cry. The witness to this breakdown may feel a tug, or just get angrier, but this is good drama, and it fuels the franchise, season after season.

How do you know if you’re dealing with a narcissist? What are the characteristics/signs?

With some mental health disorders, such as major depression and generalized anxiety disorder, the one with the disorder is the one who suffers. With severe personality disorders such as borderline and narcissistic personality disorders, it is often the people in the lives of the affected person who suffer. So we can often sense we are dealing with a narcissist by the feelings he or she arouses in us. Narcissistic characteristics such as grandiosity and a sense of entitlement tend to elicit aggressive feelings—a desire to put the narcissist in his or her place. The narcissist’s lack of empathy may elicit extreme frustration. And on the flip side, the narcissist’s focus on his or her fragility can leave others feeling trapped—trying to “fix” the narcissist so that he or she can be more available. People are also drawn in by the narcissist’s charisma or fragility, gaining a sense of importance by being in the shared spotlight or by the promise of being the fragile narcissist’s savior.

What advice do you have for someone with a narcissistic co-worker?

Watch for the hooks. A fragile bully reflexively shifts away from responsibility by provoking, then acting hurt in response to retaliation. So even though the fragile bully started the fight, he or she may end up reporting you to a supervisor. Don’t take the bait. Try to view narcissism as something acting on both of you, and work to stay under its radar. Sometimes an honest disclosure of what you need from that coworker will empower him or her to respond, and sometimes you’ll just learn that it’s not safe to bring any needs to that relationship. Document problematic behavior instead of retaliating. And watch the tendency to focus your best mental resources on the least rewarding relationships. You will not outwit the narcissist, and even if you do, the reward will leave a bad aftertaste.

In what ways do narcissists damage those who love them?

At worst, a narcissist can manipulate a loved one into participating in his or her own destruction. The fragile-bully dynamic leaves loved ones with nowhere to turn: defend yourself, and the partner feels victimized; distance yourself, and the partner feels abandoned; express an independent thought, and the narcissist feels threatened. The unwritten contract is to empty yourself and keep dancing in step with the narcissist’s needs, even when those needs hurt you.

What steps should someone in a relationship with a narcissist take to break free and recover?

Breaking free from a destructive relationship requires a great deal of compassion for oneself. It is easy for those in relationships with narcissists to turn on themselves, asking how they got into this mess in the first place or even wondering if they deserve better. Developing empathy for oneself is crucial to the process of healing and emancipation. It’s also important to make room for the grief of ending a relationship—even a destructive one. The grief may have more to do with disappointment that you were unable to “fix” the narcissist or that you invested so much in a relationship that turned on you. Practicing self-care, finding trustworthy support, and planning for how to deal with the inevitable push-back will help ensure a successful separation. There will be plenty of pulls to re-engage, so engaging instead in other meaningful pursuits will help quell the temptation.

Is there anything that can be done to help a narcissist gain self-awareness and become a better person?

This is tricky territory. It’s tricky because so much of what we do reflexively to help the situation often feeds the vicious circle. For example, trying to “help” the narcissist may allow him or her to continue to neglect your needs. Extreme narcissists are very crafty at keeping the focus on themselves, and are likely to be unresponsive to invitations to change. There is evidence, however, that moderate narcissism can be modified in strong relationships where there is sufficient investment. Narcissism sets up a “you versus me” dynamic, so breaking that dynamic is key. “You are important to me” statements combined with what Craig Malkin calls “empathy prompts”—“I feel/need/want,” help empower the self-absorbed to be cognizant and supportive of the loved one. If such efforts—which may be better accomplished with the help of a therapist—do not work, this may be a sign that the capacity for empathy is just not there.



