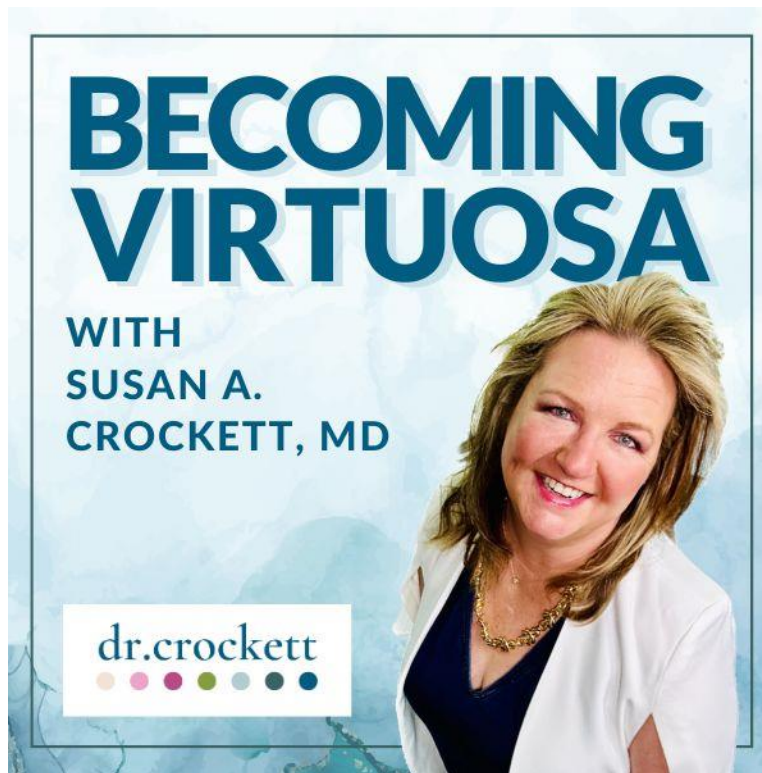


Ep #78: Navigating Narcissism: Red Flags with Jim Denning



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Susan A. Crockett, MD

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Dr. Crockett: You cannot hope to change the narcissist. Even a narcissist who, on the rare occasion recognizes that they see themselves in these red flags, and seeks therapy can change behaviorally to manage their relationships. But if you're the person that's on the other side of the relationship, you can't think that they're going to change or get better.

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Dr. Crockett: Hi guys, welcome back to the show. This is the second part of my conversation with our special guest, Jim Denning. Please enjoy!

You want to do the red flags? I was going to say I think we should. I think our viewers might want to know the red.

Jim: They're just, these are really more, it's conceptual. Just trying to kind of paint a picture of because you know you got chameleonic is a good word. Narcissists are very good at contouring to certain situations because they're predatory.

Dr. Crockett: Yeah.

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Jim: So they're going to be predatory by nature. So they're going to contort to these things. But there are some eminently predictable traits.

Dr. Crockett: we've done some lists today. This one's gone on a little long. We might even chop this into two episodes for you guys because it's so good, and there's so much content. It's really good content. I don't want to lose it. So yeah, I think that would be a huge benefit for us to kind of run through the red flags.

Just as you're listening, kind of listen along, see if there are any that hit home with you. Then at the end, we're going to talk about what to do if you recognize yourself in this scenario with all these red flags. We're going to give you a little bit of actionable items at the end. So let's see what you got, Jim.

Jim: So overly charming. You have a soulmate feeling about them. So they're very good at listening to cues, catching things, trying to get. Again, it's predatory behavior. Love bombing. Do they seem to have everything you ever wanted? Are they too good to be true? Are you hearing you're the one I've looked for my entire life? Basically very much just throwing all of this in as much as they can and trying to get as much emotional energy.

It's really if I can, with a narcissist. I won't say me. If a narcissist can, I'm sorry, keeping you off your intellectual center. That is the entirety of the trick, positive or negative, insults or compliments. Whatever it is. Keeping you off of that emotional center. That's why friends are so important. Let somebody meet your friends before things travel too far because they will get the vibe. They're not emotionally involved in the situation.

Dr. Crockett: So they can see. They also may not be as emotionally dysregulated as you, truthfully.

Jim: Yes.

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Dr. Crockett: Maybe some of your friends have a normal sympathetic autonomic nervous system.

Jim: Not going to throw my friends under the bus, but it's a pretty big bus. Okay, so blaming others. This is, again, the narcissist cannot comprehend, cannot even fathom the idea that they are wrong. So if there is something wrong in the world, something happens. So for everything in their life circumstance why they're late for a date, does not accept responsibility for anything, calls their, every ex is crazy.

Dr. Crockett: That's a big red flag.

Jim: Yeah.

Dr. Crockett: Yeah. Even I knew that one. I use that one in the office. Yeah.

Jim: Jealousy. Jealousy is a big one. Because you are becoming property. I liked the phrase human resource. A narcissist will see everybody as a human resource literally. Yeah. You are a resource of whatever the thing happens to be.

So whenever I hear, if I'm doing couples counseling, and one of the other would say well if there's infidelity, she stole my husband. It's not a tried and true. It's not her, but it's one of those things that kind of perks my ears up.

Dr. Crockett: Yeah.

Jim: It's like stole. That's an interesting choice of words. But it also implies she, this other woman stole my husband.

Dr. Crockett: She did and that the husband didn't have responsibility.

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Jim: Well, and the husband didn't choose to leave the wife. Because that would imply that the wife.

Dr. Crockett: Had a defect and was oh, wow.

Jim: Yeah.

Dr. Crockett: So wow, that was a great little.

Jim: Yeah, so it all falls together. They admit on spying on their ex on social media or worse. This is a sign. I mean, anything that smells like stalking.

Dr. Crockett: Big red flag.

Jim: That one's pretty low hanging fruit. Disrespect of normal boundaries, coming over without notice, reading private mail, going through your phone, taking things from your house, getting into your purse or wallet, using your computer or phone without first getting permission, not taking no for an answer. It's a very big one. Moving the relationship forward fast, pushing for early sex, professing I love you within the first couple of months, proposing marriage right away, etc.

There's one on here that I didn't list that is huge. It's really for the young ladies. I see it over and over again. They want to impregnate women as quickly as possible.

Dr. Crockett: Wow. Wow.

Jim: Over and over I see the pattern. It's as soon as, I mean.

Dr. Crockett: That's interesting because we, from my point of view, from the GYN point of view, we're always, and from the mother of boys point of view, I'm always telling my boys watch out. They're going to trap you. They're

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going to get pregnant so that they can trap you because you're good. I never thought of it from the other direction.

Jim: I don't know how many times I've heard women in their 30s or 40s, when they finally realized I was baby trapped.

Dr. Crockett: Oh, my God.

Jim: Because everybody looks at it from that perspective. They look at the woman's trying to.

Dr. Crockett: Trying to baby trap the man. That's a great phrase by the way. I've never used that before.

Jim: But it is. I mean, if there is one pattern I see over and over again, it is the guy finds a girl that is probably just a touch out of his league. She doesn't know it yet. So he has got to get some kind of anchor in there as quickly as possible, and that's the best one.

Dr. Crockett: Wow, wow, it blew my mind.

Jim: So yeah, that was a very big one. That's really just girls in your teens and 20s, just be careful.

Dr. Crockett: Come to my office and get birth control.

Jim: Yes, do that.

Dr. Crockett: Virtuosa GYN San Antonio, drcrockett.com. We could take care of you.

Jim: Demonstrating a sense of ownership over you. So if they demonstrate a sense of ownership, it's like just if you get the, that's the trust your

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intuition. Like that was a weird thing. Just don't ignore it. Run it by your friends. Run it by somebody who's not in the midst of it. During one of my trainings, I heard they talked about the distortion field, like in a Star Trek or Star Wars episode. You have these distortion fields in space.

Dr. Crockett: Oh yeah. Yeah.

Jim: The narcissist has a distortion field around them. The closer you are to them, the more reality gets distorted.

Dr. Crockett: Oh, that's a, I've never heard that

Jim: I know. I was like I can relate to that. I'm a geek. Rudeness to others and waitstaff, like waitstaff as an example.

Dr. Crockett: I always pay attention to that.

Jim: Yeah, that one's a big one. It was the kindness is being, or integrity is being kind to somebody who can do nothing for you.

Dr. Crockett: Yeah.

Jim: It's just that, again, they're the narcissist is putting forth an act or a facade. But the person who's the waitstaff or the valet or the whoever it is, they're not on stage for them.

Dr. Crockett: They're not useful. They're not a narcissistic supply.

Jim: Right. So you've got nothing to offer me. I don't have to be nice to you. So that's a huge one. Low self-esteem, especially with evidence that they put others down to make themselves feel adequate. Everybody's stupid. Everybody's an idiot. Everybody's like, you know, and not taking blame for anything.

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Lack of empathy. It says this can be faked, especially in the beginning. But please take note, they don't have feelings about other people, animals being hurt, or if they seem just interested, puzzled, irritated, or critical when you express they have hurt your feelings. Lack of empathy is not really, they don't understand the concept.

Dr. Crockett: They don't know what it is.

Jim: It's completely foreign.

Dr. Crockett: So they can fake compassion if somebody's watching them, and they want to look good.

Jim: Right.

Dr. Crockett: But they don't really understand empathy and looking at another human being, and being able to understand what they're feeling or thinking at the moment.

Jim: No.

Dr. Crockett: Because that would require the other person to be separate from themselves.

Jim: Yeah. I just don't like the phrase lack of empathy because it implies at some point they can acquire it, and they can't. There's different articles on different parts of the brain that have just a blindness to it. The real irony is, I mean, you can, like if I'm the narcissistic person and I do something negative to another person, I don't feel the empathy. But if you do it to me. It really is a blindness. The interesting, do I have the time to tell the story of Narcissus.

Dr. Crockett: Of course. Oh, yeah.

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Jim: Okay, so, the story of Narcissus is Narcissus was the most beautiful human being ever. Like if you looked upon this man, you fell in love with him immediately. So he had, everybody would come around his house trying to gaze at Narcissus. Narcissus was like well, I'm more beautiful than anybody in the world. So I have no partner. I have no equal.

Well, his best friend Ameinias, he in his friend Ameinias went hunting, and they came back, and Ameinias fell under the spell. Oh, and tells Narcissus. If I can't have you, I have to die. So Narcissus was like okay, here's my sword. Go on my porch. Don't make a mess in my house. So Ameinias goes on the porch and, yeah.

Dr. Crockett: I have never heard this story before.

Jim: So Nemesis is the Greek god or goddess of karma. So Nemesis sees this. She's like oh, no, this ain't happening. So she goes to Narcissus and removes his ability to recognize himself in the mirror.

Dr. Crockett: Oh, that's what it is.

Jim: So he goes to a pool, looks down, sees himself, falls in love, can't drag himself away from his own reflection, and dies of starvation right there. But the blindness is really what, they are blind to their own reflection. They are blind to their own actions. They are blind. So there's no combination of words. There's no spreadsheets or videos. You can't show them a video of their own behavior and have them comprehend how it affects another person.

Dr. Crockett: Yeah. So did we get through the list?

Jim: Oh, sorry, I've got a couple more.

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Dr. Crockett: That's okay. I don't want to rush you at that time. But I do want to make sure that we don't forget to talk about what our viewers should do if they find themselves in this type of relationship.

Jim: Signs that they think they are better than everybody else. People are morons. Most people are idiots, that kind of thing. Bored easily or impulsive. If they're not interested in it, then it's wrong. So if I don't like bowling, well then why do you like bowling? That makes no sense to me. It's just that rather than oh, we're in a cooperative relationship where I don't like bowling, but you like bowling. So we'll go bowl and have a good time. They can't do that. So that just that broad spectrum inability to empathize. Then lack of close friendships. This is one, if you want a red flag.

Dr. Crockett: The biggest one.

Jim: Biggest orange because there's introverts out there, but a very bright orange red flag is that one because they have no equals. In order to have close friendships, you have to be vulnerable. Vulnerability breeds the possibility of rejection. They can't handle rejection. So they just wipe it out.

Dr. Crockett: Wow.

Jim: So they don't have close interpersonal friendships. They don't have people. They don't have a crew and never have.

Dr. Crockett: Yeah, interesting.

Jim: Again, that's one. Again, it's just these are all little things just if it doesn't make sense, it doesn't make sense for a reason. They can, I mean, they're great. They've had a lifetime of coming up with excuses and rationalizations. That's where people get stuck. Okay, that makes sense.

Dr. Crockett: Is that all of them?

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Jim: No, one more. Just the withholding information about finances.

Dr. Crockett: Oh, the money one. This doesn't surprise me.

Jim: But demonstrating strong curiosity about your, shaming you when you're not ready to answer their questions about finances. You are a human resource. Finances are a resource.

Dr. Crockett: Oh my gosh.

Jim: You control them. So, yeah. They really view other people as human resources. You are a source of money or drugs or what.

Dr. Crockett: Sex or whatever.

Jim: Sex, whatever it happens to be. You are a source of all of those things.

Dr. Crockett: Okay. So if I'm in a relationship, if I'm one of my viewers, and I find myself looking at huge orange flags on here, I should probably go find a therapist to see if they can try to fix the narcissist, right? No, that's not the right answer.

Jim: No is a complete sentence.

Dr. Crockett: No is a complete sentence.

Jim: It really, and it's really probably the hardest part of my job is wonderful people who come in and are immersed in this for 10, 20, 30 years. They are so emotionally enslaved. They have no sense of self, no sense of identity, no self-confidence. Their entire identity is structured in. I mean, I've heard the phrase why am I not enough? Why am I not enough? Why am I

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not enough so many times? It's defined by the person who has a very vested interest in keeping them in not being enough.

Dr. Crockett: So this is interesting. So the point I wanted to make is that you cannot hope to change the narcissist. Even a narcissist who, on the rare occasion recognizes that they see themselves in these red flags and seeks therapy, can change behaviorally to manage the relationships. But if you're the person that's on the other side of the relationship, you can't think that they're going to change or get better.

So your choices are to either figure out how to start becoming healthy yourself within the relationship, find good counseling, like the Denning Center in San Antonio, or your counselor that's near you to start working on these, well our listeners are the Dr. Crockett Show. We're going to be going through these seeds. But the development of yourself autonomy and understanding yourself as a whole human being is the first step.

Jim: It is. I mean, the real problem is, again, is if they, it's funny when a couple comes to me, and it's one of the couple is a narcissist. I never see them again because I'll point out these things, and I become a threat to that constructed reality.

Dr. Crockett: The narcissist.

Jim: So the narcissist is very committed to keeping that. So there's something called an extinction burst. An extinction burst is when somebody starts losing control, when a narcissist starts losing control of the partner, they escalate everything. When all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail. So you want a therapist who understands that this is not something that can be, there's no combination of words you can tell the narcissist where the narcissist is like oh I didn't realize I was doing that.

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Dr. Crockett: I get it. I am that. Yeah, well, and we also want our listeners to be safe if they're starting to realize this is what's going on. Because like we talked about before abuse and the narcissism run, like overlap each other very strongly. So you never want to just go confront them to their face. You want to make sure you have, if you're in an abusive situation, we want to make sure that you have the availability to get to a hotline or safe place. I don't want to go into a whole abuse discussion right now, but start taking care of yourself is when I'm encouraging you to do.

Jim: Be very careful. They can be. I mean, there is no limit to what they can and will do during that extinction burst. It is you think you know what the limits are. But so yeah, just be incredibly careful with all of this.

Dr. Crockett: So it can be really hard for women, I am going to say this much about abuse. It can be really hard for them to get to a place where their controller is not controlling them. So I want the listeners to know that in most doctor's office, specifically most GYN offices, in the bathrooms on the back of the door, there are numbers listed for hotlines and help because I see it in my office.

The partner will come in with a woman to control her and make sure she doesn't say something in the exam room, even with me. But the bathroom is the one place where they can get alone. So we usually keep resources there for women's shelters and hotlines and figuring out how to be safe. So please be safe.

For those of you that are dealing with this on starting to date and getting into that world and you start recognizing these flags, run. Just run. Don't try to fix it. Like recognize, get better at recognizing these things faster. That's the best advice I can give. Get used to seeing different kinds of personalities in people and get to see what these are and then start to identify the people that don't have these red flags and start leaning into those relationships.

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Jim: One of the great things I think about the modern world is people are so much better at talking about their feelings and how they feel about things. So those conversations aren't as weird as they used to be.

Dr. Crockett: Yeah, yeah.

Jim: Yeah. Just really developing that sense of autonomy and understanding who you are and what you're willing to do and knowing your worth.

Dr. Crockett: Yeah, exactly. Right?

Jim: Yeah.

Dr. Crockett: Well, thank you for being here today. Thank you for being so worthy. This was an awesome discussion. It's great.

Jim: Well, so many times when I'll tell somebody, it's like all you're asking is what you're offering.

Dr. Crockett: Right?

Jim: Because people are like oh, yeah.

Dr. Crockett: I love that. All you're asking is what you're offering. Why wouldn't you expect to get reciprocity?

Jim: Yeah.

Dr. Crockett: Yeah, well, that's a great way to end the show. Thank you so much. Do you want to tell our audience where they can find you?

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Jim: Yeah, the denningcenter.com and then there's links to the book on Amazon.

Dr. Crockett: Yep. So book's on Amazon. We have links below in the notes. The book is called *Make it to Midnight*. Jim, thank you so much.

Jim: Absolutely.

Jim: It's such a great conversation and very meaningful for our audience. Thanks for tuning in, and we will see you next time. Remember to like, share, and subscribe, and I'll see you next Tuesday. Have a great week.

Thanks for listening to this episode of *Becoming Virtuosa*. To learn more, come visit us at DrCrockett.com, or find us on YouTube for the Dr. Crockett Show. If you found this episode helpful or think it might help someone else, please like, subscribe, and share. This is how we grow together. Thanks, and I'll see you next week. Love always, Sue.