

# Narcissism or Healthy Identity?

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Los Angeles, 16.08.2019

[www.franz-ruppert.de](http://www.franz-ruppert.de)

# Agenda

What does "Narcissism" mean?

"Narcissistic Personality Disorder" (NPD)

Rivalry and Competition

"Dependent Personality Disorder" (DPD)

Identity and development of a healthy I

Trauma of Identity

Case Study A.B. Breivik

Identity oriented Psychotraumatheapy (IoPT)

- In Greek mythology, **Narcissus** was the son of a water-nymph named **Leirópe**, who was raped by the water-god **Kephissos**. Narcissus became a hunter in Boeotia, known for his beauty.
- Narcissus was so proud, that he disdained anyone who loved him, causing some to commit suicide so as to prove their unrelenting devotion to his striking beauty.
- When he came to a water source he fell in love with his reflection, tried to kiss himself and drowned in the water.
- Narcissus is the origin of the term **narcissism**, a fixation with oneself and one's physical appearance or public perception.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narcissus\\_\(mythology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narcissus_(mythology)), 06.08.2019



*Narcissus*, Painting **Caravaggio**,  
1594–1596, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte  
Antica, Rome

# Narcissism as Concept for

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- Selfishness
- Egoism
- But sometimes also: necessary Self-love
  
- What is a toxic form of Egoism and what does healthy self-love mean?
- How do both develop?

# Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD)

The DSM-5 indicates that persons with NPD usually display some or all of the following symptoms, typically without the commensurate qualities or accomplishments:

- **Grandiosity** with expectations of superior treatment from others
- Fixation on **fantasies of power**, success, intelligence, attractiveness, etc.
- Self-perception of being **unique, superior**, and associated with high-status people and institutions
- Need for continual **admiration** from others
- Sense of entitlement to **special treatment** and to **obedience** from others
- **Exploitation** of others to achieve personal gain
- **Unwillingness to empathize** with the feelings, wishes, and needs of other people
- Intense **envy** of others, and the belief that others are equally envious of them
- Constantly demeans, belittles and **bullies** others

# Psychoanalytical concepts to explain the development of NPD

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- Parents over pamper their child and do not set appropriate borders (**adaptation of parents to their child**)
- Children try to cope with the demands and narcissistic ideals of their parents (**adaptation of children to their parents**)

# Understanding NPD from the perspective of Trauma

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- Cold, merciless, punishing parents traumatize their children whom they do not want or love.
- Unbearable feelings of pain and shame of parents are transferred from parents onto their children who then transfer their rage and hate onto others.

# Rivalry and Competition as breeding ground for NPD



I am better, faster, more important ... than you!

(in games, sports, in school grades, in technology, in developing products etc.)

Others love me more than you!

(rivalry between siblings, struggle for sexual attraction by women and men, hunt for likes on social media)

Together we block and defeat you!

(sport teams, cartels of business firms, national states with their financial and military power)

# Ideologies of Competition

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- There are high-quality and low-quality people and races!
- Belonging to a certain race or nation determines your quality!
- The “weak ones” are a constant threat to the “strong ones”.
- There are enemies everywhere!
- War is necessary!
- Sacrifices for your tribe/race/nation are necessary!
- “Morality“, “Bad Conscience“, “Humanity“, “Empathy“ „Feelings“ are signs of weakness.
- “We the people“ need the greatest leaders possible!

# Costs of Rivalry and Competition

- Permanent anxieties, constant stress and time pressure, frustration, jealousy, envy, shame, wearing down the body
- Distrust, lying, cheating, robbing, violating, killing
- Recklessness, opportunism, “burnout”, “Narcissism”
- Waste of resources, images of enemies, constant production of weapons, wars
- Destruction of the earth as a living eco-system



# Dependent Personality Disorder

In the DSM-5, the disorder is indicated by at least five of the following factors:

- 1.Has difficulty making everyday decisions without an excessive amount of advice and reassurance from others.
- 2.Needs others to assume responsibility for most major areas of their life.
- 3.Has difficulty expressing disagreement with others because of fear of loss of support or approval.
- 4.Has difficulty initiating projects or doing things on their own (because of a lack of self confidence in judgment or abilities rather than a lack of motivation or energy).
- 5.Goes to excessive lengths to obtain nurturance and support from others, to the point of volunteering to do things that are unpleasant.
- 6.Feels uncomfortable or helpless when alone because of exaggerated fears of being unable to care for themselves.
- 7.Urgently seeks another relationship as a source of care and support when a close relationship ends.
- 8.Is unrealistically preoccupied with fears of being left to take care of themselves.

What are the  
**benefits** of  
rivalry and  
competition  
in comparison to  
cooperation?

# Differences between

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## MALE NARCISSISM

Strong, powerful, dominant

Hyper-sexuality

Sees himself as the savior of the community

Sadism

## FEMALE NARCISSISM

Content, caring, submissive

Inhibited sexual desire

Sees herself as the servant of the community

Masochism

# Definition of Identity

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I am the sum of all my conscious and unconscious life experiences.

This includes all my pleasurable and all my traumatizing events.

If I exclude and deny them, I am not whole.

## Important to clarify:

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- Identity:  $I = I$
- Identification:  $I = \text{You}$
- Attribution:  $\text{You} = I$

# Development of being I

- Every child exists before birth as a unique subject with her psyche.
- The child exists in his own body and develops himself at his own pace.
- She is an individuum (not divided), as long as she does not get traumatized.
- The child learns with his own actions that 'I' can influence things.
- Being unconsciously 'I' changes slowly, step by step, becoming increasingly self aware, even before birth.



# Development of I-awareness

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- If a child can develop healthily, after two years he will already have a distinct self-concept.
- When the child is four years old, she is able to use personal pronouns like 'me', 'mine' correctly.
- Initially the 'I' develops in relation to the 'I' of his mother.
- If the 'I' of mother is not clearly present for the child, this will cause identity disorders for the child.



# Healthy Identity means: I = I

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- A healthy 'I'
- With a free will
- With all available senses
- With all of one's own feelings
- In contact with the body
- With one's own thoughts and words
- In constructive relationships

## ‘Healthy I’ means ...

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- Being in the age the person really is
- Being present, but not dominating
- Being flexible to altering situations
- Being realistic about what is possible and what is not
- Being able to deal with surviving parts and traumatized parts
- Taking responsibility for a healthy Identity-development
- Having a free will on his/her side



# Psychotraumas ...

Are unbearable realities for a human psyche.

The psyche needs to split into parts in order to survive the situation.

Trauma-Surviving-strategies work hard to keep the unbearable realities out of consciousness.

Psychotrauma disrupts the development of a healthy identity.



**Trauma of being a Perpetrator**



**Trauma of Sexuality**



**Trauma of Love**



**Trauma of Identity**

# **The Psychotrauma Biography**

# Trauma of Identity

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I exist and I am dependent on another person that does not want me to exist.

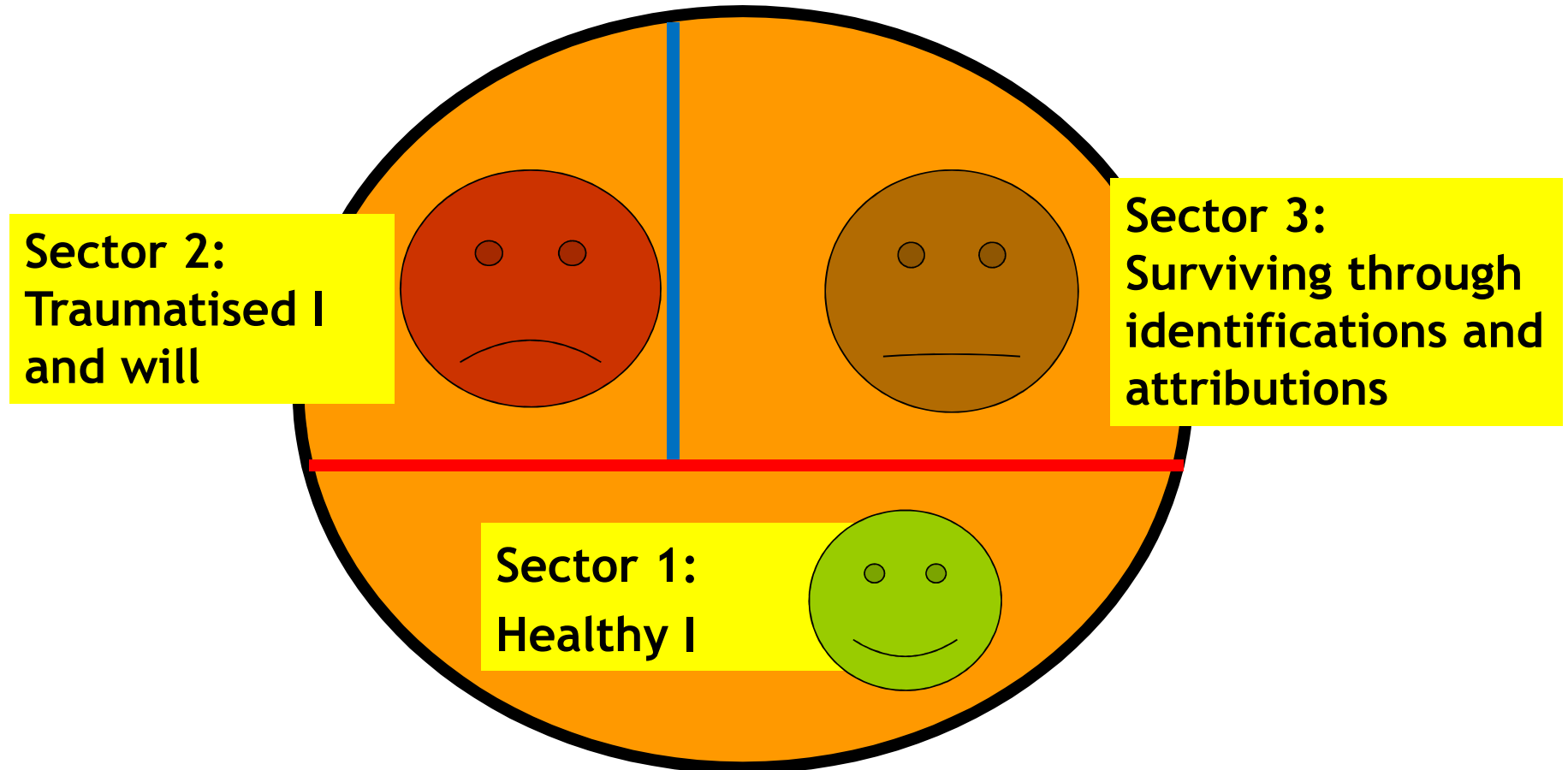
My needs and the needs of the other person cannot co-exist.

I have to give up my I and my own will in order to survive and serve the purposes of this other person.



# Splits in the Identity

## Structure after a traumatic Experience



# Surviving strategies for a Trauma of Identity

Identifying completely with other people, institutions, religions, nations, countries, roles ...

Identification with perpetrators

I = am part of ...

I = am different in comparison to ...

Accepting attributions with no doubt (diagnoses, values ...)

Forcing attributions on others: You = are ...

Objectifying oneself and others



# The more extreme the Psychotrauma, the more urgent is the need for...

re-defining oneself (e.g. 'It didn't affect me!')

self-denial (e.g. 'I was not beaten / sexually abused!')

disengaging the 'I' from the body (e.g. 'My body is sick!' 'My body is already dead!')

dissolving the 'I' (e.g. through drug usage or withdrawing into a state of confusion)



# “Personality Disorders” are

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- the listing of Victim- and Perpetrator-Attitudes.
- a strategy for not naming the reality of the psychotrauma behind the “disorder”.



# Trauma Trio for a Child

I am not wanted

I am not loved

I am not protected

# Case Study of Anders B. Brevik from Norway who killed 77 youths and children in the massacre of Utoya

Franz Ruppert (2019). Who am I  
in a Traumatized and Traumatizing  
Society? pp.123-129



# Differences between

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## NARCISSISM

Others are the point of reference

Living in a stress-fight-flight-mode

Victim- and Perpetrator-Attitudes in order to avoid the fact of being victim and perpetrator

Idealization of one's biography

Unrealistic desires and goals

## HEALTHY IDENTITY

The healthy I is the point of reference

Living in an open mode for feelings

Being a victim and being a perpetrator is an emotionally accepted fact

Realistic view on one's biography

Wanting what is possible

# Identity oriented Psychotraumatheapy (IoPT)

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Supports you to become conscious of your trauma-biography.

Strengthens your healthy I and your free will.

Makes you aware of your trauma-surviving-strategies.

Helps you find your own truth.

Supports you to leave entangled relationships.

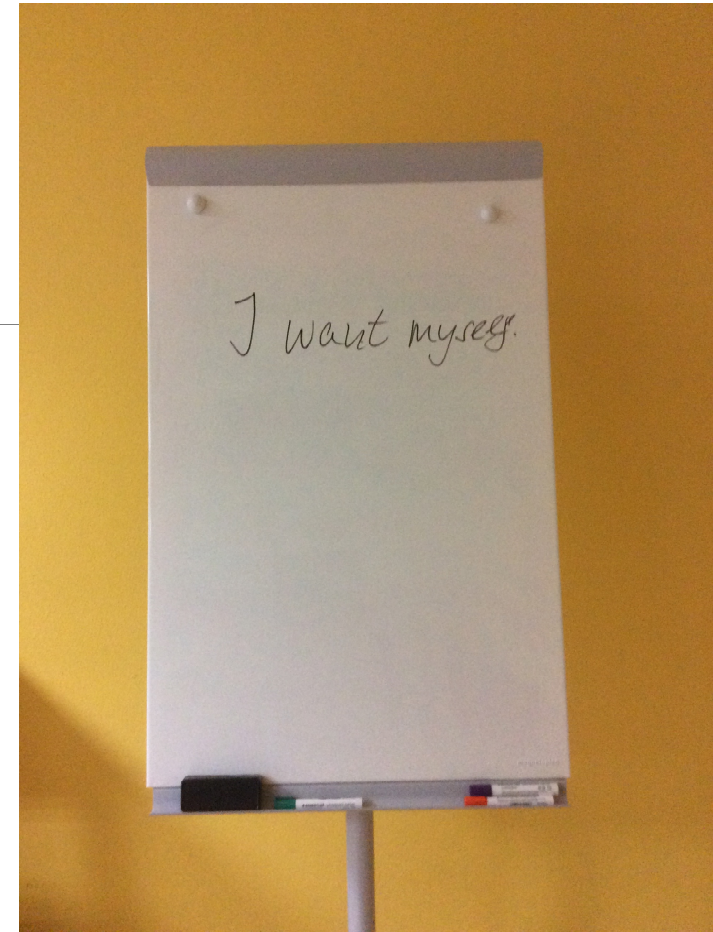
Transforms your pain, anxieties and blinding rage into compassion for yourself.

Leads you back into the wholeness of your healthy identity.

# Intention Method of Identity oriented Psychotraumatheapy (IoPT) creates ...

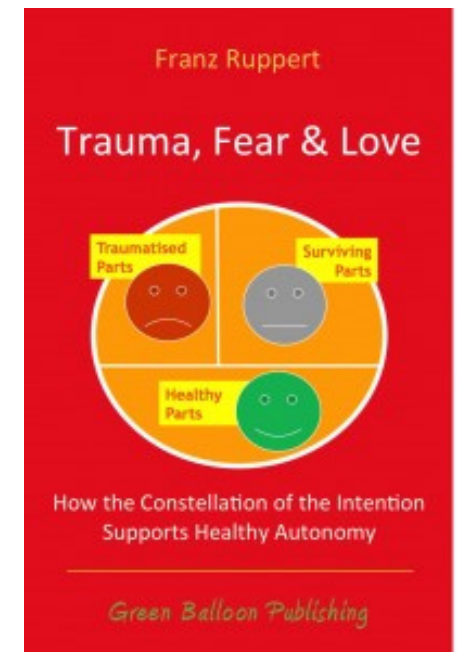
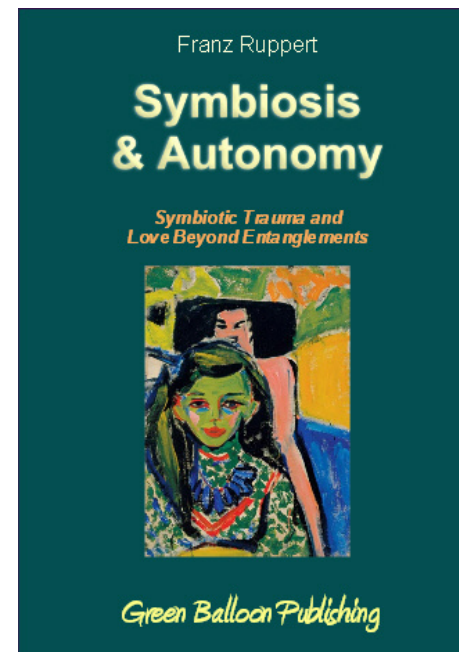
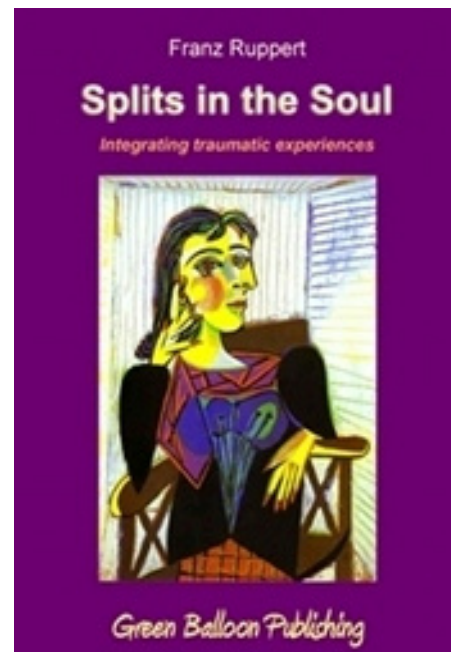
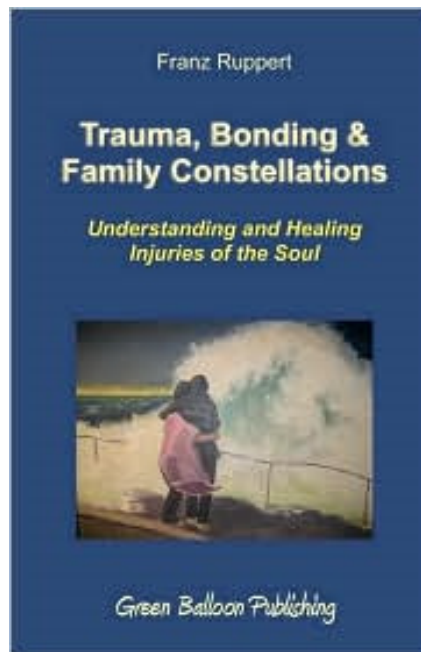
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- a free space for Self Encounter
- by exploring the sentence/picture of intention word by word
- with the help of points of resonance from the outside in groups (other people) or in individual sessions (floor markers).



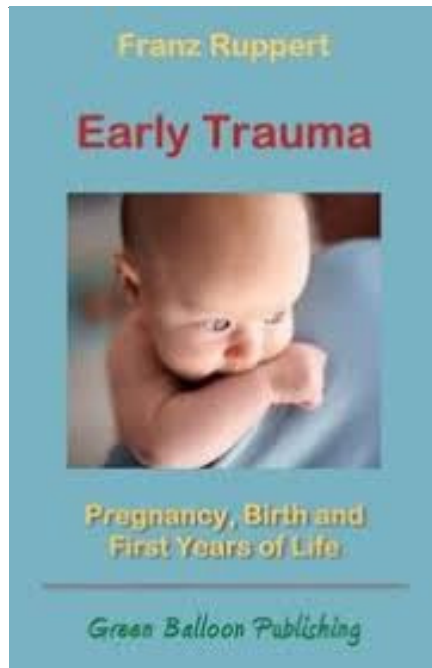
# My books in English

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# My books in English



Franz Ruppert & Harald Benzhaf

## MY BODY MY TRAUMA MY I

Setting up Intentions  
Exiting our Traumabiography

*Green Balloon Publishing*



[https://www.  
greenballoon  
books.co.uk/](https://www.greenballoonbooks.co.uk/)

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# Invitation

- 5th International Congress
- 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> of October 2020 in Munich
- [www.healthy-autonomy.de](http://www.healthy-autonomy.de)

# What Do I Want:

## To Live or To survive?

CONSTELLATING  
OUR INTENTIONS  
– EXITING OUR  
TRAUMABIOGRAPHY  
5th International  
Congress  
16th to 18th of October 2020  
Munich/Germany

# Literature

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