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*“The little girl jumped on her little red bike. It was going to be the start of a new life. She was going to the big school. The first day today. When she arrived at the school, she was surprised by all the parents that were there....I grew up with a narcissistic mother—a mother who let her six-year-old daughter find her way to school on that very first day. A mother that kept domineering my thoughts, actions and life. A mother who shut my mouth, closed my heart, put me down and made me feel the most worthless person in the universe.*

*Narcissists are continuously campaigning to get their needs met through other people. They are self-centred, manipulative, cold, cruel and don't give a damn about what they do to others. When you grow up with a narcissistic parent, you will believe, like all children do, that what happens in your family is the norm. You will be told that your family is the best and if things are not right that it is your fault.*



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**T**he thing I wanted most in my life was the love from my mother, and I went to great length to create it. I went to therapy for years to work on myself. After all, it was my fault that the relationship didn't work. I left home when I was 18, and 40 years later, I realized that I would never have a healthy relationship with her. When I gave up hope and cut the cords, my healing journey, and my recovery started.

Narcissists are two-faced. They present themselves to the outside world as the opposite of how they behave when they are with their victim. If their victim wants to discuss their issues with others, the others 'don't get it' as they know the narc as a different person. And when it is a mother, like in my case, people wouldn't like me being nasty about her. Many times I heard 'she doesn't mean it' and 'she loves you dearly' from people who didn't want to believe me. I ploughed on for four decades. Therapy helped me to become self-aware, but not one therapist pointed me in the direction that my mother might be the cause of the dysfunctional relationship; that maybe it wasn't me who was the culprit.

I had been working in a corporate environment till my first baby was born. I couldn't combine my job with a baby and started to work freelance and retrained as a therapist and coach. I loved every bit of the study and knew that I had arrived professionally. Helping clients heal from abuse seemed the right thing to do. It also helped me to make sense of my experiences, and I think deep down, I was hoping to find the solution for my situation with my mother. At that moment I didn't know that there was still a lot to come.

I was 55 when I came across narcissism, and that changed my outlook completely. The checklist I went through showed my mother as the blueprint of a narcissist, and I started to understand what had happened to me, how I was brainwashed into feeling bad about myself, trained to put my mother in the centre of my universe and how her condition had affected me, my siblings and my father. It took another three years to conclude that I was better off without her in my life, and I went no-contact. I broke the no-contact rule once, to visit my father,

who was terminally ill. This visit confirmed that I made the right decision and I haven't been in touch since.

My father died in July 2019, and this gave me the freedom to write my self-help book on narcissism 'From Victim to Victor' – Narcissism Survival Guide. It included my personal experiences and professional knowledge and is aimed to help other victims of narcissistic abuse to free themselves and become who they are.

The first chapter of the book is about the dysfunctional family and describes the situations I experienced in my parental home. Even though I had processed my experiences, it was cathartic and added to my healing.

## **'From Victim to Victor' Narcissism Survival Guide.**

Other topics covered in the book are the romantic relationship, a 50 point checklist with exercises, which will help readers to recognize their narcissist and how they are affected. Then, of course, tools and techniques, helping to deal with the abusers.

When I started writing in August 2019, I invited anyone who had experiences with a narcissist to get in touch and share stories. I had no idea that so many people were affected and this was the first validation for my book.