

NARCISSISM IN THE WORKPLACE: RESEARCH, OPINION AND PRACTICE. By: Andrew J Dubrin. Publisher: Edward Elgar Publishing. 2012. Pages: 288. ISBN: 9781781001356

Andrew DuBrin's "Narcissism in the Workplace" provides an insightful examination of how narcissistic behaviors impact organizational dynamics and individual careers. As a seminar on the subject, the book offers a thorough analysis of the manifestations of narcissism in professional settings, its effects on both individuals and organizations, and practical strategies for managing such behaviors. This review delves into the book's key themes, theoretical underpinnings, practical applications, and its contribution to the broader discourse on workplace psychology.

DuBrin's book is structured to offer a comprehensive view of narcissism within organizational contexts. It begins with a definition of narcissism, moves through its manifestations in workplace behavior, and concludes with strategies for dealing with narcissistic individuals. The book is divided into several sections that cover theoretical frameworks, case studies, and practical advice, making it a valuable resource for managers, human resources professionals, and scholars alike.

DuBrin starts by defining narcissism from a psychological perspective. He describes narcissism as a personality disorder characterized by grandiosity, a need for admiration, and a lack of empathy. In the workplace, these traits can manifest in various detrimental ways, such as exploitation of others, lack of team collaboration, and inflated self-importance.

The book meticulously explores how narcissistic individuals operate within organizational structures. DuBrin identifies key behaviors associated with workplace narcissism, including manipulative tactics, a propensity for conflict, and a tendency to undermine colleagues. He provides numerous examples and case studies that illustrate how these behaviors affect team dynamics and overall productivity.

One of the book's significant contributions is its examination of the broader impact of narcissistic behavior. DuBrin discusses how narcissists can disrupt team cohesion, foster a toxic work environment, and impede organizational goals. The analysis extends to leadership roles, where narcissists often seek high visibility positions, potentially leading to detrimental consequences for organizational health.

A substantial portion of the book is dedicated to offering practical strategies for managing narcissistic individuals. DuBrin suggests various approaches, including setting clear boundaries, providing regular feedback, and fostering a culture of accountability. These strategies are aimed at mitigating the negative effects of narcissistic behavior and promoting a more harmonious workplace.

DuBrin integrates multiple theoretical perspectives to provide a nuanced understanding of narcissism. He draws from psychoanalytic theory, personality psychology, and organizational behavior studies to offer a well-rounded view of how narcissistic traits develop and function in professional settings.

DuBrin's work is rooted in a robust theoretical framework that incorporates both classical and contemporary perspectives on narcissism. His integration of psychoanalytic theory helps explain the underlying psychological motivations behind narcissistic behavior, such as unmet needs for validation and self-worth. Additionally, his application of organizational behavior theory sheds light on how these individual traits manifest in professional environments and affect team dynamics.

The book also touches on recent research in personality psychology, emphasizing how narcissistic traits can vary in intensity and impact. This discussion helps to differentiate between pathological narcissism and more benign forms of narcissistic behavior, offering a more nuanced view of the spectrum of narcissism in the workplace.

One of the strengths of DuBrin's book is its focus on practical applications. The strategies outlined for managing narcissistic individuals are actionable and based on real-world scenarios. For example, DuBrin's advice on setting boundaries and providing structured feedback is grounded in empirical research and is designed to help managers and HR professionals address narcissistic behaviors effectively.

The book also offers insights into creating a work environment that minimizes the impact of narcissism. By promoting transparency, encouraging collaboration, and fostering a culture of respect, organizations can mitigate the disruptive effects of narcissistic behavior. DuBrin's recommendations are practical and adaptable to various organizational contexts, making them valuable for a wide range of readers.

"Narcissism in the Workplace" makes a significant contribution to the field of workplace psychology by highlighting the often-overlooked impact of narcissistic behavior. DuBrin's work fills a critical gap in understanding how personality disorders affect professional environments and provides a solid foundation for future research and practice.

The book's comprehensive approach to narcissism—from theoretical insights to practical strategies—offers valuable resources for both scholars and practitioners. It encourages a deeper examination of how narcissistic traits influence organizational behavior and provides concrete tools for managing these challenges.

While DuBrin's book is thorough and well-researched, there are a few areas where it could be enhanced. The discussion of narcissism could benefit from a more in-depth exploration of how cultural and organizational contexts influence the expression of narcissistic behavior. Additionally, the book could include more case studies from diverse industries to provide a broader perspective on how narcissism affects different types of organizations.

Another potential area for improvement is the inclusion of more empirical data to support the proposed management strategies. While the recommendations are practical, additional research findings would strengthen the case for their effectiveness and provide further validation for readers.

Andrew DuBrin's "Narcissism in the Workplace" is a seminal work that provides a comprehensive analysis of narcissistic behavior within professional settings. Its detailed exploration of narcissism, combined with practical management strategies, makes it a valuable resource for understanding and addressing this complex issue. While there are areas for further exploration and enhancement, the book's contributions to workplace psychology are substantial and impactful. For anyone interested in the dynamics of personality disorders in organizational contexts, DuBrin's work offers essential insights and practical tools for creating healthier and more effective work environments.

References:

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