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EATING DISORDERS AND PERSONALITY DISORDERS

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Eating disorders indicate the strong combined activity of an underlying sense of lack of personal autonomy and an underlying sense of lack of self-control. The patient feels inordinately, paralyzingly helpless and ineffective. His eating disorders are an effort to exert and reassert mastery over his own life. At this early stage, the patient is unable to differentiate his own feelings and needs from those of others. His cognitive and perceptual distortions and deficits (for instance, regarding his body image— known as a somatoform disorder) only increase his feeling of personal ineffectualness and his need to exercise even more self-control (by way of his diet). The patient does not trust himself in the slightest. He rightly considers himself to be his worst enemy, a mortal adversary. Therefore, any effort to collaborate with the patient against his own disorder is perceived by the patient as self-destructive. The patient is emotionally invested in his disorder- his vestigial mode of self-control.

BIOGRAPHY

Sam Vaknin is the author of "MALIGNANT SELF-LOVE: NARCISSISM REVISITED" and other books about personality disorders. His work is cited in hundreds of books and dozens of academic papers. He is Visiting Professor of Psychology, Southern Federal University, Russia and Professor of Finance and Psychology in CIAPS (Centre for International Advanced and Professional Studies). He spent the past six years developing a treatment modality for Narcissistic personality disorder (NPD). Over the years, with volunteers, it was found to be effective with clients suffering from a major depressive episode as well.

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