

Reader Letters #1, Part 4

Posted By [T. AKA Ricky Raw](#) On February 29, 2012 @ 3:51 PM In [Uncategorized](#) | [No Comments](#)

INTRO

This is part 4 in a series. Here are the links to [Part 1](#) ^[4], [Part 2](#) ^[5], and [Part 3](#) ^[6]. You need to read all three parts before proceeding, because I am going to repeatedly refer to concepts from those first three parts. If you don't read them beforehand you'll end up lost.

One of the things Bill asked me about in his original set of emails was about whether the world of [pickup artists](#) ^[7] like [Neil Strauss](#) ^[8] and [Mystery](#) ^[9] were a solution to his problems.

Here are the relevant portions of his emails:

On a total side-note, I would also like to ask your opinion of the PUA community as discussed in the book *The Game* by Neil Strauss. And made famous by the peacocking Mystery...

I also meant to ask about the validity of NLP neuro linguistic programming. And it's uses by the PUA community. In specific I'd like more information about the 'forbidden patterns' I have done some reading about the October Man Sequence, and have also read it. I do believe it could work, my real concern is the possible effects these tools could have on someone.

This installment took me way longer than I originally planned because the more research I did to answer this aspect of Bill's question, the more interesting meaty stuff I found to analyze. I just kept finding more and more information on the web and on Youtube and I got fascinated by how deep the dynamics going on were.

I originally read the book [The Game](#) ^[10] years ago. I found it to have interesting observations and it was also a great read just on a story level. The trainwreck quality was enjoyable, plus I was already big into psychology and evolutionary psychology, so I viewed pickup as another good source of information to throw into the mix to make my human nature research more well-rounded. I've read some pickup books, but I wasn't

that crazy about them. I much preferred to read relationship books like those by [Tariq Nasheed](#) ^[11], [Mode One](#) ^[12] by Alan Roger Currie and [Manhood 101's e-book](#) ^[13]. I sampled a lot of blogs about game to see what insights I could get, but I ended up settling on blogs by [Roosh](#) ^[14] and [VK](#) ^[15] as the ones I still like to read, because they're funny and come off in their writing like relatable guys you'd want to have a drink with.

I never really liked the hardcore pickup though. That stuff that directly descended from Neil Strauss and Mystery. I felt Mystery's book was great for dumbing down basics in evolutionary psychology, but I was g turned off by the ways he would use it to rationalize things he shouldn't be rationalizing, so I returned to reading real evolutionary psychology books instead. The main thing that turned me off from those books is that they didn't talk about guiding principles and empowering mindsets, just loads and loads of tactics.

When I talk about good game, I mean strong principles and good mindframes with a sprinkling of tactics. I hate talking about pickup though, which to me means some weak or shady principles and faulty mindframes and a huge concentration on tactics to the exclusion of almost everything else. I'm not against game as defined in the classic sense. I'm against it as defined specifically by PUAs, where one focuses more on tactics and being [outcome-dependent](#) ^[16] over core principles and focusing on self-respect.

However I get a lot of emails asking for advice. And it really ramped up after [I actively solicited emails asking for advice recently](#) ^[17]. And a large chunk of those emails has fallen into three categories of codependent guys: (1) those writing to me asking Bill's question about whether they should try to become pickup artists, (2) those writing me to tell me they've already tried to become pickup artists and feel psychologically worse for doing so and wonder if that means they're even more defective and bigger failures than they originally thought, or (3) those who are currently pickup artists and writing me to ask a million, neurotic tactical questions about if a woman does A, should I do B, C, or D, and if a woman does E, should I do F, G, or H. Even though to me my blog is pretty well-rounded, it seems like pickup has become enough of a recurring theme over the past few years in the comments and emails I receive that I figured it was time to clarify my position.

In preparation for this post, I decided to do a quick refresher reread of *The Game*, then go online and try to read as much dirt on the participants of the book as possible. So I read up on what happened to Neil Strauss since the book was published, I read up on the life of Mystery, Neil Strauss's wingman and one of the main characters of the book, and I looked up the blogs of many prominent PUAs who had personal, firsthand experience with the events of the book or personally knew the big-name PUAs from the book.

Putting it altogether, I think I got a pretty good psychological picture of what was going on, which I wrote up

here. The problem is, it ended up becoming so psychologically meaty it ballooned into over 20,000 words. Yes, I'm fully aware that that's insane for a blog post and no one likes blog posts that long. Feel free to enter "tl; dr" in the comments section to your heart's content, although I won't publish those comments. Yes, I know that's like the size of a novella. Tough break. It's not like you're paying for this service. So while I could have broken it up into smaller installments, fuck it. It's a worthwhile read, so I'll leave it as one installment. To make it easier to read, [you can click here](#) ^[18] or at the top of the post to get the printable view. You may even want to print out the printable view as a hard copy and read it that way if that makes it easier for you. I've also included this as a PDF so you can read it on a tablet like Ipad if that more your speed (click here for the PDF link).

Now that that's out of the way, I want to write about the reasons why I think PUA is a bad idea for codependent men, and explain the type of men I think PUA can be helpful to.

I.

CODEPENDENTS AND PICKUP

What I want to stress is that this post is specifically for codependent men who are looking to the pickup artist world as a life solution. For codependent men, the PUA world is the worst solution they can fathom for fixing their issues. If you are a fairly [self-actualized](#) ^[19] person without a lot of codependency issues and a solid [self-esteem](#) ^[20], you can possibly read about pickup artists, pick out the information and tips that work, and discard the majority of stuff that's damaging. However, self-actualized guys tend to already have a lot of dating success and are the last people who would look into that stuff. So the people who would be damaged the least by PUA principles won't gravitate toward it, while the people who would be damaged the most, codependents, gravitate to it the hardest. Quite the paradox.

I think about 10-20% of what's discussed in the PUA philosophy is useful, but most of it is damaging and puts you in a horrible mental frame. I think if you're not in the right mindframe and don't know how to separate the good advice from the bad, the seduction community will do you more harm than good, which is why I don't recommend those books to a lot of people. I'm not saying they're worthless and don't have occasional good information, just that they have so much bad information and principles in the mix that unless you're wise enough to recognize and extract the good and throw out the bad, you're better off avoiding it altogether.

A major problem with the PUA stuff is that it attacks the symptoms of one's disease and not the actual

disease itself. Most of the solutions are surface solutions. So you feel better in the short run and get some quick results, but ultimately you do worse in the long run. Here's an analogy: say you have a pneumonia. It makes you cough, feel tired, you sneeze, your nose is stuffed. Say your solution is to just attack the symptoms. You take a medicine that makes you stop coughing and sneezing, you take caffeine and energy drinks and ginseng to stop feeling tired, and you use a nasal spray to unstuff your nose. Even though you can't feel the symptoms anymore, that doesn't mean you're not sick anymore and that the sickness isn't tearing you apart and killing you anymore. The sickness is still working on you underneath the surface.

In fact, not feeling the symptoms can make you worse because now you can no longer feel how sick you are, which then makes you think you're healthier than you really are. Because you can't feel just how sick you are anymore, you aren't resting, you aren't drinking liquids, you aren't doing the things that will cure your disease, which is the true source of your problems. This gives your pneumonia free reign to keep growing worse and worse below your conscious level of awareness. Eventually the sickness grows to the point where even treating the symptoms isn't enough anymore and the old tactics like cold medicine, caffeine, energy drinks, ginseng and nasal spray stop working.

At this point you hit a crucial point. You hit a wall with the old symptom-treating medicines and tactics. Now what? You can either use this wakeup call to finally getting around to treating the source of your problems, the disease, or you can commit harder to your dysfunctional strategy by looking for more powerful symptom-treating medicines and tactics.

If you succeed and manage to find better symptom-treating medicines and tactics, you will feel better for a while until your sickness grows to the point where even those no longer work, at which point you hit that same crucial point again, where you have to choose between long-term and short-term solutions. Some people can live their whole lives stuck in this cycle without ever attacking their disease, the source of their problems.

In this case the pneumonia represents low self-esteem and people-pleasing and insecurity and unresolved childhood issues that people develop while growing up. The symptoms include the inability to hook up with girls and get laid, the inability to assert oneself, the inability to have happy relationships, shyness, hypersensitivity, social anxiety, bad nerves, and other bad behaviors. PUA stuff gets you obsessed with fixing the symptoms (superficial behavioral tics) and not attacking the real sickness (low self-esteem, unresolved core issues from childhood traumas, faulty thinking patterns inherited from authority figures, etc.). The pickup artist prescription feels good at first, but it doesn't attack the real self-esteem and insecurity issues and allows them to keep growing underneath the surface, so the moment you get some form of ego bruising or a setback, all the old feelings of low self-esteem and ego-bruising come rushing back to the forefront of your

awareness.

Another major problem is that even when pickup does recommend inner core work, which it terms “inner game,” it recommends it filtered through an outcome-dependent external validation mindframe, which causes the advice to undermine itself. I’ll go more into this later in the section on David DeAngelo, but the shorthand version is that it recommends for you to do all this inner work, but trains you to do it primarily for the outcome of getting validation from women.

I’m not 100% against the PUA stuff, as I think it does have some very good insight, just like I’m not against taking cold medicine that treats symptoms either. I just don’t support it as the main method of self-improvement at the expense of the harder self-work of attacking the roots of your specific low self-worth.

The Game actually gives examples of how PUA stuff doesn’t attack the root of problems. Look at how Mystery despite all his success still had a mental meltdown and almost attempted suicide in the book. That’s because he never fixed his core emotional problems, he just superficially covered them up with fake external behaviors and the short-term rush that comes from sexual conquests. So when he felt a profound rejection, all those deep emotional wounds and profound feelings of inadequacy came rushing back to the surface and he almost died as a result.

II.

FROM CODEPENDENT TO NARCISSIST

In the [first installment of this advice column series](#) ^[4], I described codependents and narcissists. [In part 2 of the series](#) ^[5], I described how codependents develop. In [part 3 of the series](#) ^[6], I described how and why codependents and narcissists tend to generate intense chemistry, and the ways in which they’re similar and different. Codependents and narcissists both have a lot of self-loathing issues, but there is a key difference. Codependents keep their self-loathing closer to their conscious level of awareness. Their strategy for dealing with their low self-worth is to surrender to it. The act of surrender causes them to form an armor of people pleasing. Narcissists on the other hand deeply repress their self-loathing using a bunch of defense mechanisms like denial, projection, intellectualization and rationalization. Their strategy for dealing with their low self-worth is to overcompensate against it. This overcompensation causes them to form an armor of [grandiosity](#) ^[21].

Narcissists, without their armor of grandiosity, will fall apart. They reach a point where their armor is the only thing holding them together. Narcissists become what I like to call “grandiosity sharks.” Have you heard how

a shark has to keep moving through water to breathe by pumping, and if the shark stops moving, he sinks to the bottom and dies? This is because sharks can't pump water across their gills on their own like other fish can, so they have to constantly swim through water to externally move the water across their gills. If they stop swimming, sharks not only stop breathing, they sink to the bottom and die.

Well grandiosity sharks are people who have to keep swimming through a sea of external validation in order to breathe and stay afloat, because much like the shark can't breathe internally, they can't generate validation and self-esteem internally. If they stop moving through the sea of validation for a given amount of time, or their swimming is temporarily disrupted due to a blow to their ego, they figuratively suffocate, sink to the bottom and die.

As I've said in the previous installments, I believe the codependent is actually better off than the narcissist. Because codependents are more in touch with their feelings of self-worth, they have a better idea of what's wrong with them. Also, because they are more aware that they have low self-worth issues, you don't have to waste a lot of time convincing them they have low self-worth issues. They're often the first people to admit they have low self-worth!

This gives codependents more self-awareness than the narcissist. The narcissist has blocked access to his own feelings of low self-worth thanks to the layers upon layers of defense mechanisms that make up his armor of grandiosity. You have to break down this grandiosity in order to get him to even admit to himself how low his self-worth is, and the worst narcissists would rather die than admit to themselves that they loathe themselves. And how can you go about fixing your problem when you can't even admit to yourself much less others that you have a problem to begin with? This desperation to avoid accessing their own feelings of self-hatred helps explain why narcissists always blame others for everything but never themselves.

That's why codependency is widely considered curable by mental health professionals but narcissism isn't. To a narcissist, the payoff of remaining a narcissist is the ability to continue to lie to himself about how much he hates himself deep down. According to the narcissist's warped logic, this ability to continue to lie to himself about the extent of his self-loathing is a better payoff than any potential benefit he would derive from curing his narcissism, because a cure would require him to access his feelings of self-loathing in order to deal with them. That's why narcissists often have to hit rockbottom before they can seek help, because it's only at rockbottom that their self-loathing becomes so bad the old defense mechanisms no longer work and they can't suppress the self-loathing anymore or deny to themselves the true extent of their self-hatred. It's only at rockbottom that their old strategy for dealing with ego setbacks, which was to replace old defense mechanisms with new, improved stronger defense mechanisms, no longer works.

Codependents and narcissists are often drawn to each other because they complement each other in a dysfunctional way, as I explained in the previous installments. Codependents always blame themselves for things that go wrong and narcissists always blame others. Codependents love to give without talking, narcissists love to take without giving. Codependents feel they don't have a right to say what they feel, while narcissists feel entitled to say whatever they feel whenever they want. Codependents have too much of a conscience and are always thinking of others in a relationship, while narcissists have no conscience and are always thinking of themselves in a relationship.

Codependents often become that way because they had one or two narcissistic parents. These narcissistic parents trained the codependent from childhood to put their own feelings and needs on the backburner and focus on the needs of the parents first and foremost. This caused them to grow up believing that their job in relationships is to please others at their own expense. Codependents tend to have extreme chemistry with narcissist lovers because these narcissistic, hard-to-please lovers subconsciously remind them of their narcissistic, hard-to-please parents, and often push the same emotional hot buttons. They view these narcissistic lovers as a second chance to get their childhood right.

Some examples of the types of guys who get drawn to learning pickup are guys with the following problems: white knights with caretaker values; codependents; [guys who chronically put women on pedestals](#) [22]; guys who had emotional incest and enmeshment issues with their mothers (mama's boys); guys with fathers who were weak, distant or narcissistic; guys who grew up as parentified children. What all these guys have in common are that they have feelings of low self-worth and inferiority and they deal with these feelings through the faulty coping strategy of surrendering to them, meaning they unquestioningly accept them as true.

The right thing for these guys to do would be to deal with these core issues of low self-worth feelings and their inferiority feelings so that they can fix them once and for all. What pickup teaches them to do however is not to fix feelings but instead to switch from their current faulty coping strategy, which is surrender, to another faulty coping strategy of overcompensation. Using overcompensation, they [repress](#) [23] these unwanted feelings with defense mechanisms so that they end up blocking themselves from consciously accessing this self-hatred. They learn to [rationalize](#) [24] away and [deny](#) [25] their feelings of low self-worth. They learn to [project](#) [26] away their feelings of inferiority and self-hatred onto others. (Ever wonder why pickup artists develop this fanatical hatred of beta males? It's their hatred of the beta traits they fear still exist within themselves, so they try to destroy these unwanted traits by first projecting them onto other male targets and then destroying those other targets.) They also learn to use another defense mechanism of [intellectualization](#) [27] to cope with these low self-worth feelings, which is where all the mental masturbation and books on evolutionary psychology, animal behavior, persuasion, sales, New Age thinking and success

literature like Tony Robbins comes in (not that there's anything inherently wrong with any of this literature but rather in the way they are being used in this speak instance as a way to avoid fixing core issues).

Remember what I said before. Codependents are people who have surrendered to their low self-worth feeling and have constant conscious access to them. Narcissists are people who have overcompensated and rebelled against their low self-worth feelings and constantly block their conscious access to these feelings using defense mechanisms like rationalization, denial, projection and intellectualization. **These are the very same tools that pickup artistry encourages a codependent to use in order to deal with his low self-worth.** Do you see the issue now? **Pickup artistry does not fix the codependent; it just changes him from a codependent into a narcissist by ignoring the core issues and instead training him to switch from the faulty coping strategy of surrender to the preferred faulty coping strategy of the narcissist, which is overcompensation. It's just trading one toxic personality dysfunction for a worse, harder-to-cure toxic personality dysfunction.**

In [part 2](#) ^[5] I talked about false, idealized selves, the unattainable image of perfection one believes they have to become in order to be worthy of being loved by others. The codependent's false, idealized self is that of the white knight, the nice guy, the person so good and giving that people will have no choice but to love him. This is a dysfunctional way to live of course, and just attracts the wrong people and opens him up to being used. The correct solution is peel away his false self and to find out who his true self is, and strive to be true to that instead of striving to live up to his false, idealized self. This will give him true self-esteem.

What the PUA philosophy does, however, is replace the codependent's old false, idealized self with a new false, idealized self that's just as dysfunctional and unattainable: that of the unflappable mythical alpha male, the ultimate man, the paragon of masculinity that always has a cocky and funny answer to anything, the guy with the cocky swagger, that leader of men that makes women swoon with just a gaze and is the life of the party. Trading one false self with another is not progress; it's just a more socially acceptable form of the same problem: intense self-loathing.

Part of the reason why it's so easy for codependents to turn into narcissists with the right incentive and for narcissists to turn into codependents with enough ego-crushing life setbacks is because there is a little bit of a narcissist in every codependent and a little bit of a codependent in every narcissist.

Think about it, if you are a codependent you believe that you have the power to fix some of the most chronically fucked up people known to man with your self-sacrificing nice guy act, despite the fact this person has been fucked up for decades and many before you have tried to fix them and failed. You assume for some reason that you have some type of power or insight this person's family, friends, and past lovers all lacked that will allow you to make everything in their life right. If you think about it, that's kind of narcissistic, right?

And the narcissist, for all his insufferable arrogance and grandiosity, despite his claims of superiority, withers and dies without attention from others, doesn't he? For all his supposed superiority, he still has an uncontrollable need to seek approval from everyone around him, even though they're supposedly inferior. Isn't that a type of codependency? Even the worst narcissists will suddenly beg and cajole and plead and promise to change if their codependent partners finally get fed up and grow backbones and threaten to leave. Of course once the codependent decides to stay, narcissists go right back to their old disgusting, evil selves, but the point is, for those moments in time you can see that bit of needy codependence in them, can't you?

The collection of defense mechanisms the formerly codependent/newly narcissistic pickup artist uses to overcompensate and rebel against his self-loathing create an armor of grandiosity that he now uses to interact with the world. But remember what I said about narcissists and grandiosity: grandiosity becomes the glue holding the narcissist together, and without it the narcissist utterly falls apart. They now become grandiosity sharks, and the sea of validation they choose to swim in is female sexual conquests.

If you don't believe me, remember certain parts of *The Game*: When Mystery lost his stripper girlfriend to another pickup artist, he totally had a meltdown and attempted suicide. Another example is how messed up Neil Strauss became when he couldn't get that final girl Lisa using his pickup tricks. He talks about how suddenly all his old feelings of inadequacy and low self-worth rushed back into his conscious awareness. Both of them faced setbacks that caused lapses in their grandiosity, and since their grandiosity was the only thing holding them together they fell apart and regressed to codependent thoughts and behavior.

[Dances between wounded souls](#) ^[28] tend to take place between codependents and emotional vampires like narcissists and borderlines. PUA, instead of teaching you how to opt out of the dance of wounded souls by no longer being a wounded soul, instead teaches you how to continue to participate in the dance between wounded souls, except now as an emotional vampire instead of as a codependent.

I bet if you gave most pickup artists a test for codependency before they became pickup artists, their codependency levels would be off the chart. I bet if you tested most pickup artists for narcissistic personality disorder after becoming PUAs, I bet they would now be off the charts for that. This is hardly healthy progress.

III.

PURE NARCISSISTS VS. COMPENSATORY NARCISSISTS

At this point it's important to clarify that there are two different types of narcissists. There is the **pure narcissist (or pure vampire)** and the **compensatory narcissist (or compensatory vampire)**. The pure

narcissist is the narcissist who has grown up as a narcissist, and is well-versed in using the defense mechanisms necessary to maintain the grandiosity holding him together. He has spent his whole life overcompensating and blocking conscious access to his feelings of self-worth and acting grandiose and feeling entitled. He probably grew up spoiled or without proper limits set for him. Narcissism is his natural state. If narcissism was a sport, he'd be at the NBA All-Star level. His grandiosity armor is battle-tested and is one of the best models on the market.

The compensatory narcissist is someone who didn't grow up as a narcissist and is newer to it. He was formerly a codependent and grew up very much in touch with his feelings of low self-worth. He used to surrender to his feelings of low self-worth and is relatively new to using the faulty coping strategy of overcompensation. Like all narcissists, he blocks these feelings of self-loathing and acts grandiose and feels entitled, but he does none of these as strongly and consistently as the pure narcissist, and despite the fact that there is a bit of a codependent in every narcissist, it's much closer to the surface of the compensatory narcissist than the pure narcissist. The compensatory narcissist is playing at the high school or NCAA level, or if he gets good enough to play at the NBA level it's because he's had to work extra hard at it like Jeremy Lin, not because he's a natural like a Kobe. His grandiosity armor isn't as battle-tested yet and is a lower-end model.

Here's one way of looking at it: In the movie "Blade" with Wesley Snipes, there were two classes of vampires. There was the "pureblood" class who were born vampires as a result of two vampires mating, and there was the "turned" vampire class, meaning they were living a human existence until a bite from a vampire made them into vampires also. The purebloods considered themselves higher status than the turned vampires, and were always trying to dominate the turned vampires by making them into lackeys and lieutenants. The pureblood vampires were more powerful than the turned vampires. Also, although it was extremely difficult to do so, turned vampires could be reverted back to humans. Purebloods, however, could not be turned into humans because they were more powerful and were never were human to begin with.

Think of pure narcissists as the "pureblood" vampires from "Blade" and the compensatory narcissists as the "turned" vampires from the same movie. Pure narcissists have stronger vampire energy, they were vampires from birth and no one can remember a time when they weren't vampires, they consider compensatory narcissists as their inferiors, and while all narcissists are extremely difficult to treat, pure narcissists are more likely to be deemed incurable.

The PUA lifestyle turns a codependent man into a compensatory narcissist. He continues engaging in dances of wounded souls, except as a narcissist now rather than as a codependent. ***I mentioned earlier that all narcissists have a bit of codependency in them. However compensatory narcissists have far more***

codependency in them than pure narcissists, due to their former lives as codependents. You see, compensatory narcissism is more like a blend of narcissism and codependency. You can think of it either as a more transparent, less sophisticated form of narcissism or a less transparent, more sophisticated form of codependency.

When the compensatory narcissist was just a codependent, he was drawn to all types of narcissists, from compensatory up to pure. This is because a codependent can only feel chemistry with people more narcissistic than he is, and for a codependent that includes almost anyone with narcissistic traits.

Now that he's a compensatory narcissist and has a blend of both narcissism and codependency to deal with, the two types of partners he's currently drawn to are now codependents, because they now appeal to his newly found sense of narcissism, and pure narcissists, because he still has a strong, leftover codependent need to feel chemistry with someone more narcissistic than himself, and pure narcissists are now the only types of people left who are more narcissistic than him.

If you reread the book *The Game*, you will notice that every girl the PUAs get involved with is either a codependent or a pure narcissist. Like all narcissists, they enjoy codependents because they are the easiest source of narcissistic supply. They also hate and disdain the codependents for a complex variety of reasons. First, because they used to be codependent and now recognize and hate that side of themselves thanks to what they learned in the seduction community, they see another codependent as a great opportunity for projection. By mistreating her and hurting a codependent woman, they can feel like they are further killing that weakness in themselves they no longer want to consciously access. By using and crushing a codependent, it affirms to them they are no longer codependent themselves. They must therefore be strong. They are now on the winning team. Another reason they hate codependents is because even though they pride themselves on being superior to the codependent, they still need this supposedly weak's person's attentions and validation to feel good about themselves. If this person is weak, yet the compensatory narcissist still depends on this weak person to prop up his own self-esteem, how strong can the compensatory narcissist really be? His strength must actually be a farce. On some level the compensatory narcissist realizes this contradiction and how it pokes a hole in his false, idealized self, so over time the codependent will be resented for being a constant, unwitting reminder of this flaw in their false, idealized self.

However because the PUA still have a lot of codependent traits (after all, until recently they were full-blown codependents themselves and they still have recent memories of their self-loathing) and they still never resolved their core issues and primary inferiorities from growing up, they can only have really intense chemistry with people more narcissistic than themselves. Remember, codependents grew up trying to please someone more narcissistic than themselves, usually their parents, and were trained to put the needs of

others before themselves. Codependents are people pleasers, and when they find hard-to-please, demanding people with perfectionistic standards, they are reminded of their childhood dynamic with their parents and this creates a feeling of intense chemistry in them because they feel the same emotional buttons being pushed from childhood and they feel this is a second chance to get it right and win that affection from their parents they failed to get the first time around.

They need someone more narcissistic and selfish and emotionally manipulative than themselves in order to generate intense chemistry thanks to their childhood issues with their parents. When they were codependents it was especially easy to find people more selfish than themselves, so they could find chemistry all levels of narcissists, from the mildly narcissistic to the pure narcissists. However now that they are compensatory narcissists and higher up the narcissistic ladder themselves, the only people who can now generate chemistry for them are **pure narcissists**.

The problem is, compensatory narcissists are rookies and pure narcissists are vicious professionals. The pure narcissist will eat the compensatory narcissist alive, bones and all. The compensatory narcissist is no match for the pure narcissist, as he soon finds out. So the pattern a PUA seems to go through seems consistent: Alternate between finding a string of codependents to be the narcissist to until you get tired of and disgusted by their codependency or suck them dry of narcissistic supply, and finding the occasional pure narcissists to be the codependent to, until the pure narcissist gets tired of them and disgusted by their codependency or sucks them dry of narcissistic supply. I defy you to read the book and still deny that this pattern is not repeated throughout it.

Recall what I said in [part 2](#) ^[5] about the core issues caused by primary inferiorities, final, fictional goals, and how failing at these final, fictional goals bring about secondary inferiorities that not only cause new pain and narcissistic injury but also reopen old emotional wounds and cause us to feel all our old core issues and primary inferiorities from childhood in full as well. When the compensatory narcissist in the form of the PUA meets the pure narcissist (or pure borderline or pure histrionic, etc.), he has the new secondary inferiority feeling that comes from failing at his current final, fictional goal of becoming the ultimate alpha male and master of all women. This secondary inferiority feeling in turn reactivates all the previous secondary inferiority feelings that caused him to become a PUA in the first place, including all the old failed relationships, all the rejections by women he had crushes on, all the mistreatments and all the infidelities that were inflicted on him. Reliving those previous secondary inferiority feelings in turn reactivate his primary inferiority, the one that is the parent of his core issues and all the secondary inferiorities he's suffered: his emotional rejection by his parental figures.

So the PUA, who thought he finally figured it all out and had finally found the final fictional goal that would

wipe out all his past failures and most importantly his fix his core issues and reverse his primary inferiority feeling now realizes that at his core, nothing really changed. Suddenly he loses his grandiosity, and like I said, for a narcissist, even a compensatory one, grandiosity is all that holds him together. The new defense mechanisms he developed to create this grandiosity now start to fail him and he can't project, can't rationalize, can't intellectualize and can't deny, which causes him to re-access all those feelings of self-loathing he had been religiously blocking since he became a compensatory narcissist. He starts to feel his newest secondary inferiority feeling of failing as a PUA, then he starts to re-feel all his previous secondary inferiority feelings that drove him to become a PUA in the first place, then ultimately he re-feels the original primary inferiority that caused his deepest core issues to begin with.

Picture all these inferiority feelings rushing at you at once. Is it any wonder why Mystery turned suicidal and totally lost it when his stripper girlfriend chose another PUA over him (many strippers are narcissistic Cluster B emotional vampires)? Is it any wonder why Neil Strauss became obsessed with that woman Lisa once he realized his pickup tricks didn't work on her? I have no proof and it's pure speculation, but reading how he described their courtship I think it's very possible she may have been a pure narcissist.

(By the way, I want to point out that stripping and sex work in general are profession that attracts a HUGELY disproportionate amount of narcissists and borderline personality disorder sufferers, which lends credence to my theory that becoming a PUA often just makes one into a sophisticated form of codependent, because why else would these guys keep being drawn to strippers and pornstars, who can be some of the most severely personality-disordered people out there?)

I want to take this opportunity to point out an article from the website Gettinbetter.com called "[Haven't We Met Before: The Borderline/Narcissist Couple](#).^[29]" Even though it's supposed to be about borderlines and narcissists, I think it actually works very well for describing relationships between pure narcissists and compensatory narcissists. If you read key sections of this piece and replace the word "borderline" with "pure narcissist" and think of that as high-maintenance drama queens the PUAs usually get broken by, then replace the word "narcissist" with "compensatory narcissist" and think of that as the PUA, you'll see what I mean. Below I take excerpts from the article and perform that substitution:

It's critical to understand that both [compensatory narcissist PUAs] and [pure narcissist drama queens] incurred similar types of wounds to their developing sense of Self, and isn't it simply natural to be drawn to someone with whom you have things in common, or who echoes personality aspects in yourself? Well, this attraction is a lot like that—it feels as if you've found your 'soul mate.' There's a similar vibration/frequency you two share, due to childhood abandonment issues. While the nature of those early difficulties were alike, they've played out in

different ways for each of you—but the scars from that time remain, unless there's been some serious core-focused intervention.

[Compensatory narcissist PUAs] are frequently 'super-givers,' but authentic intimacy/closeness is often avoided, given their engulfment fears. Caregiver types can be drawn to [pure narcissist drama queens] who match their own attachment issues, so that 'safe' emotional proximity becomes a non-issue.

Do not presume that a [compensatory narcissist PUA] and [pure narcissist drama queen] can construct a successful marriage. If they haven't resolved their respective childhood traumas, they'll continually trample on each other's emotional land mines, and trigger highly explosive episodes, while remaining hopelessly enmeshed.

In truth, the [compensatory narcissist PUA] is no match for the [pure narcissist drama queen]. It doesn't matter how smart or powerful he is, she'll turn his world upside-down to where he could lose his entire fortune, acquire a serious disease, and become a shadow of his former self. The [compensatory narcissist PUA's] grandiosity works against him in this type of coupling, because he has an unquenchable need to win, due to self-worth issues. He won't let himself be one-upped by anyone, but the [pure narcissist drama queen] is always better at this game than he is. As he cannot tolerate this loss of control, he'll literally fight to the death to maintain it—never realizing what he's losing/giving up, while highly focused on surmounting this challenge.

A [compensatory narcissist PUA] relentlessly tries to 'crack the code' with his [pure narcissist drama queen] lover, due to long-standing, faulty assumptions about himself he adopted as a boy, when his parents required him to be the perfect child. If he succeeded, he might have received praise. If he failed, their disappointment was palpable, which triggered feelings of shame. This child enters adulthood shaming himself, if ever he senses that he's performed less than perfectly! But what constitutes "perfection," and isn't it always a subjective state of mind?

A [compensatory narcissist PUA] perfectionist believes; "If I feel bad in a relationship, it must be my fault." The [pure narcissist drama queen] believes; "If I feel bad in a relationship, it has to be your fault." This sets up an endless cycle, within which the [pure narcissist drama queen] rages or retreats—and the [compensatory narcissist PUA] attempts to fix it by cajoling, pursuing, rescuing, etc., to flee his (childhood) shame of feeling unlovable/neglected...

Both [pure narcissist drama queens] and [compensatory narcissist PUAs] associate love with painful longing. This is the crux of all those come here/go away (push/pull) cycles with this couple,

and a whole lotta country western songs! Love equals pain, and vice-versa.

When their intense craving for love is met, painful sensations they've come to interpret as loving feelings, evaporate. At this point, the [pure narcissist drama queen] feels bored or annoyed, and pushes away. With healthy/whole partners who need continuity of loving feelings, the [pure narcissist drama queen] feels emotional claustrophobia, which compels her to disrupt episodes of authentic intimacy between them. The [compensatory narcissist PUA] responds to his need for distance and autonomy, by selecting unavailable [pure narcissist drama queen] lovers who won't trigger his engulfment fears.

When closeness or engulfment fears become heightened, both [compensatory narcissist PUA] and [pure narcissist drama queen] partners can experience anxiety, which prompts their need to draw back. The distance between them eases tension, but a [compensatory narcissist PUA] perfectionist makes it his fault, and experiences shame. This catalyzes his frantic efforts to win-her-over again. It isn't that he's needing her—he's needing reprieve from his toxic sense of unlovability/unworthiness (shameful remnants from boyhood)...

Early wounds to one's narcissism, [can] breed [compensatory narcissistic PUA] adults. If a child had to shut down his needs and difficult feelings in order to survive the rigors of his painful childhood experiences, he may have acquired a sense of invincibility, and assumed he could handle anything that came up. This was his defense against feeling vulnerable or fragile. These 'weaker' sensations can often lay dormant for many years, until he joins with a [pure narcissist drama queen] who reawakens the excruciating anguish he learned to put aside or adjust to as a little kid.

The core shame that's invoked in him during these times, is monumental. He remembers how powerful, in-control and popular he was before he started up with the [pure narcissist drama queen] and his world began to collapse. He cannot reconcile his current (despicable) frailty with the entrenched Superman persona he erected in [the seduction community]—and it causes him a deep sense of despair, embarrassment and frustration. Self-worth repair within core trauma work can help him, but it's like 'boot camp' for the soul. Few will make the effort to heal and grow...

[Compensatory narcissist PUAs] are frequently People Pleasers ***[remember, in every narcissist there s a little codependent, and compensatory narcissists especially have a lot more codependent in them than other purer types of narcissists]***, which means they're passive-aggressive. They're more comfortable giving rather than receiving in relationships, which is part of

a control issue they adopted during childhood, in response to parental neglect. In couplings, the one who needs the least, is always the one in power—and the Borderline's needs usually far outweigh those of her partner. The Borderline is like a little child when it comes to impulse control and asserting wants/needs, so she's the active partner in this dynamic. The Narcissist has never really felt worthy of having needs, so he suppresses them; he's the passive partner. Somebody must be willing to carry the emotions for this relationship, so that typically falls to the active partner—or the Borderline. She'll keep pushing the envelope until she gets a rise out of her partner. She literally thrives on drama and chaos, but rebels like a three year old, when he takes a stand—even though she requires the containment and comfort that boundaries and limits provide...

When a Borderline encounters a successful, charismatic Narcissist, she sees power in him, and security/comfort for herself. Since she has never really felt protected in her world, this male is perceived as her ticket to safety. He may never have felt especially attractive or worthy of attention from a girl who's a real 'traffic stopper'—so he's flattered out of his pants by the Borderline's seductive pursuit. His grandiose false-self has craved this type of attention his whole life—even though he's never felt deserving of it. Thus begins their dance, which replicates an intoxicating pattern that neither can resist.

Based on a [pure narcissist drama queen's] level of emotional desperation, she may not choose men who've attained significant acclaim, stability or success. Abandonment fears always influence partner selection, and are key to these attractions. Essentially, the greater your need is for this female (sexually, emotionally, psychologically or financially), the more easily she can keep the upper-hand and control you—and it's always about control for the [pure narcissist drama queen]...

The narcissistically injured [PUA] continually seeks females who can perfectly mirror his attributes and qualities—and whom in some manner, need him. He then gets to assuage his abandonment concerns—but the flip-side of being needed, is being engulfed. The Borderline can initially smother/suffocate her prey with attention that causes him to retreat or distance, because while it's flattering, and mitigates his abandonment fears—it triggers vaguely familiar sensations of engulfment he had to endure in boyhood, with Mother.

IV.

THE NARCISSISTIC SIDE OF THE PUA

Here is a definition of narcissism [as described on Wikipedia](#) ^[30]:

A pervasive pattern of [grandiosity](#) ^[21] (in fantasy or behavior), need for [admiration](#) ^[31], and lack of empathy, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by five (or more) of the following:

1. Has a grandiose sense of self-importance (e.g., [exaggerates](#) ^[32] achievements and talents, expects to be recognized as superior without commensurate achievements)
2. Is preoccupied with [fantasies](#) ^[33] of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love
3. Believes that he or she is “special” and unique and can only be understood by, or should associate with, other special or high-status people (or institutions)
4. Requires excessive admiration
5. Has a sense of [entitlement](#) ^[34], i.e., unreasonable expectations of especially favorable treatment or automatic compliance with his or her expectations
6. Is interpersonally [exploitative](#) ^[35], i.e., takes advantage of others to achieve his or her own ends
7. Lacks [empathy](#) ^[36]: is unwilling to recognize or identify with the feelings and needs of others
8. Is often [envious](#) ^[37] of others or believes others are envious of him or her
9. Shows [arrogant](#) ^[38], haughty behaviors or attitudes

When you read the book *The Game*, Strauss and his PUA friends totally fall into these traps. The exploits and accomplishments he describes and the superpowers he claims these PUAs have definitely fall into “exaggerating achievements and talents.” In the book, Strauss is presenting himself as an expert and teaching bootcamps to strangers for money before ever even getting laid! And apparently it’s very common for guys who barely get laid to teach bootcamps. Isn’t that an example of “expecting to be recognized as superior without commensurate achievements?”

Strauss discusses how pickup artists after a while always tend to distance themselves from or even dump their old friends who don’t follow PUA. Soon most of their friends are PUAs, because they believe those are the only people left that are worthy enough of associating with. They form organizations called “lairs,” rent houses and apartments and give them names like “Project Hollywood” and fill it with other PUAs as roommates. Isn’t this a perfect example of “believing he is ‘special’ and unique and can only be understood

by, or should associate with, other special high-status people?”

Part of giving up their old non-PUA friends is that they believe they are holding them back because they won't become PUAs too. The PUA has “swallowed the red pill” and his friends are now haters who can't appreciate his success and his self-improvement. Now that he is improving, they can't be happy and even start appearing envious to him. Strauss discusses similar dynamics in his book. Isn't this an example of “believes others are envious of him?”

One big thing with narcissists is that they always blame others for things that go wrong in their relationships and fail to fully appreciate how their own “arrogant, haughty behaviors or attitudes” as described in the above definition of narcissism actually create these behaviors from others they are interpreting as envy or “hating.” I suspect reaction to their bad behavior and attitudes is actually what causing much of this friction with their old friends and ends up making them tolerable only to codependents and other narcissists.

There are plenty of stories, both within the book *The Game* and in lots of internet gossip surrounding the setting of the game, “Project Hollywood,” about the guys all trying to cockblock each other. One guy would be hitting on a girl, then the next guy would try to hit on the same girl behind his back, etc. They would call it “stealing sets.” At one point the PUA Herbal stole the girlfriend of Mystery from him, which caused Mystery to have a total mental breakdown. Doesn't that describe a lack of empathy, an inability to “recognize or identify with the feelings and needs of others?”

As for the rest of the elements of the narcissism definition like being preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited power, brilliance, success, beauty or ideal love, needing excessive admiration, having a sense of entitlement and being interpersonally exploitative, I believe when you read the book and read gossip from other sources regarding the people and events described in the book, all those aspects of narcissism are described in numerous, obvious examples, too many to recite here in this blog post.

V.

THE CODEPENDENT SIDE OF THE PUA

Now you may notice there are parts of the article that describe the compensatory narcissist PUA as a people pleaser. To many people that may sound a bit off. How can a PUA be a people pleaser? Isn't a PUA the opposite? Isn't pickup about not being codependent? And my answer is...it's complicated.

Like I said, compensatory narcissism can either be seen as a conscious, more transparent, less sophisticated version of pure narcissism or as an unconscious, less obvious, more sophisticated form of codependency. I

described in the previous section the way PUAs are consciously narcissistic. In this section, I'll show you how the world of pickup can be unconsciously codependent.

For this section, let's begin with an overview of a definition of codependency, straight from the website of [Codependents Anonymous](#) [39]:

Denial Patterns:

I have difficulty identifying what I am feeling.

I minimize, alter, or deny how I truly feel.

I perceive myself as completely unselfish and dedicated to the well-being of others.

I lack empathy for the feelings and needs of others.

I label others with my negative traits.

I can take care of myself without any help from others.

I mask my pain in various ways such as anger, humor, or isolation.

I express negativity or aggression in indirect and passive ways.

I do not recognize the unavailability of those people to whom I am attracted.

Low Self Esteem Patterns:

I have difficulty making decisions.

I judge what I think, say, or do harshly, as never good enough.

I am embarrassed to receive recognition, praise, or gifts.

I value others' approval of my thinking, feelings, and behavior over my own.

I do not perceive myself as a lovable or worthwhile person.

I constantly seek recognition that I think I deserve.

I have difficulty admitting that I made a mistake.

I need to appear to be right in the eyes of others and will even lie to look good.

I am unable to ask others to meet my needs or desires.

I perceive myself as superior to others.

I look to others to provide my sense of safety.

I have difficulty getting started, meeting deadlines, and completing projects.

I have trouble setting healthy priorities.

Compliance Patterns:

I am extremely loyal, remaining in harmful situations too long.

I compromise my own values and integrity to avoid rejection or anger.
I put aside my own interests in order to do what others want.
I am hypervigilant regarding the feelings of others and take on those feelings.
I am afraid to express my beliefs, opinions, and feelings when they differ from those of others.
I accept sexual attention when I want love.
I make decisions without regard to the consequences.
I give up my truth to gain the approval of others or to avoid change.

Control Patterns:

I believe most people are incapable of taking care of themselves.
I attempt to convince others what to think, do, or feel.
I freely offer advice and direction to others without being asked.
I become resentful when others decline my help or reject my advice.
I lavish gifts and favors on those I want to influence.
I use sexual attention to gain approval and acceptance.
I have to be needed in order to have a relationship with others.
I demand that my needs be met by others.
I use charm and charisma to convince others of my capacity to be caring and compassionate.
I use blame and shame to emotionally exploit others.
I refuse to cooperate, compromise, or negotiate.
I adopt an attitude of indifference, helplessness, authority, or rage to manipulate outcomes.
I use terms of recovery in an attempt to control the behavior of others.
I pretend to agree with others to get what I want.

Avoidance Patterns:

I act in ways that invite others to reject, shame, or express anger toward me.
I judge harshly what others think, say, or do.
I avoid emotional, physical, or sexual intimacy as a means of maintaining distance.
I allow my addictions to people, places, and things to distract me from achieving intimacy in relationships.
I use indirect and evasive communication to avoid conflict or confrontation.
I diminish my capacity to have healthy relationships by declining to use all the tools of recovery.
I suppress my feelings or needs to avoid feeling vulnerable.
I pull people toward me, but when they get close, I push them away.

I refuse to give up my self-will to avoid surrendering to a power that is greater than myself.
I believe displays of emotion are a sign of weakness.
I withhold expressions of appreciation.

I admit it's not a perfect fit, but you can see many codependent patterns in the pickup artist's mindset, many are more obvious but many others are masked thanks to the grandiosity armor provided by the PUA's compensatory narcissism. After reading the rest of this article, I suggest you reread these patterns to see if any of them that didn't seem to apply to the PUA before suddenly apply to the PUA now.

One of the first things that struck me when I read the book *The Game* was a concept called "Fool's Mate." Fool's mate is described on a PUA glossary site as follows:

Quick Definition:

An easy [sexual conquest] that happens without really gaming the [woman].

Full Definition:

In chess, a [fool's mate](#) ^[40] is when one places an opponent in checkmate in just 2 moves. The [fool's mate](#) ^[40] is thus named aptly because it only occurs if the opponent plays extraordinarily weakly. In chess, this rarely happens, even amongst beginners.

In [pickup](#) ^[41], it is possible to obtain a [fool's mate](#) ^[40] via drunk [targets](#) ^[42] who are alone, horny and desperate girls, etc. However the [community](#) ^[43] does not consider this real [game](#) ^[44]. A lay is a lay, but sleeping with a girl because of [fool's mate](#) ^[40] will not improve a PUA's skill level. Also, the girl will likely be mad, or embarrassed at her own bad decision making. This guarantees that the sexual relationship does not last for more than 1 night. Masters are in this for the long run, or aim to develop multiple long term sexual and intimate relationships.

[Fool's mate](#) ^[40] is what typical [AFCs](#) ^[45] refer to as "getting lucky".

In *The Game*, Neil Strauss mentions fool's game as follows:

Waiting seven hours or more is what Mystery calls solid game. But occasionally a woman either goes out with the specific intention of taking someone home, or can be easily led to sex in a shorter amount of time. Mystery calls this fool's mate.

This about this dynamic for a second...if a woman likes you too soon, something must be wrong with her. For a woman to be worth it, there has to be a certain amount of difficulty involved. If she likes you too much, surely there must be something defective about her. She must be drunk. She must have low self-esteem. She must be a slut who sleeps with everyone if she sleeps with me that easily. It brings to mind the old Groucho Marx quote "I wouldn't want to be part of any club that would have me as a member."

This is codependent thinking. A partner doesn't excite you unless she makes you jump through enough hoops. You have to spend a lot of time figuring out what will piss her off and won't piss her off and walk on eggshells. You're just walking on different eggshells. A regular codependent thinks "I must not say anything that isn't nice or supplicating or it might displease her and she'll reject me." A PUA, which is sophisticated codependent/compensatory narcissist, thinks "I must not say anything that isn't super-alpha or it might displease her off and she'll reject me."

PUA intellectualizes and rationalizes away bad behavior by women using evolutionary psychology. Women have the right to act like bitches, because evolution makes them that way. They have more to lose by getting pregnant, and they have more people approaching them than guys do, so they have to act like bitches when they reject you. Women need a protector, so they have to "shit test" you, that is, to test you by giving you an inordinate amount of childish, shitty treatment to see if you're "good enough" to be with them. It basically sells you on the idea that women have a genetic basis for being shitty, bratty entitled cunts and it's your job to work around this evolutionarily created reality. Shitty behavior becomes just a fact of life, and it's up to you to overcome it.

You have to "plow through" when a woman is giving you shit while you're hitting on her. Or you have to act unfazed and be "unreactive" when a girl tries to insult you. You have to act like you're not taking their shit when they misbehave and occasionally turn your back on them, not because you really plan to leave and don't care, but because you want to turn her on by seeming alpha and get her approval. You're pretending to punish her to turn her on, but it's not really a punishment if it's being done to turn her on, is it? It's giving her what she wants. You're rewarding bad behavior. You're being just alpha enough to sexually turn her on, while simultaneously acting codependent enough on a subtle level to satisfy the nasty Cluster B vampire in her. What you don't get is no matter how many times you "punish" her, the moment you try to close the deal by getting laid by her, you've given her the ultimate reward, which is flattering sexual attention. She may at that point give you the sex or she may withhold it, but either way the attention whore drama queen wins.

Sure a lot of women's shitty behavior is stuff they're evolutionarily predisposed to. I'm not saying evolutionary psychology is wrong about that. But there are tons of things evolution makes us predisposed to, yet we don't condone it in society, do we? There are evolutionary explanations for the male drive to rape, cheat, commit

murder, beat up people who mistreat us, etc., but we have several thousand years of something called civilization that has trained us to restrain all of these evolutionary compulsions. These same women the PUA is making excuses for somehow manage to go to work, hold steady employment, and postpone pregnancies, don't they? So obviously when they have to because the stakes are high enough, they are perfectly capable of restraining their negative impulses, whether the impulses have an evolutionary basis or not.

If women are going to be feminists and expect to be considered equal, they need to be held accountable for curbing their evolutionary impulses and conforming to civilized behavior. After all, these same women whose shitty behavior the PUA is excusing using evolutionary psychology likely won't give their boyfriend or husband a pass for cheating, even though the male urge to cheat has a strong evolutionary component to it also, right? If she expects men to curb their evolutionary impulses in order to act how she wants, men have the right to expect the same from her.

The answer isn't finding workarounds for the evolutionary impulses you don't like. The answer is to demand that people act like adults and curb their evolutionary impulses that will needlessly hurt others. The answer isn't finding ways to pass shit tests. The purpose of recognizing shit tests should be so that you can walk away from them. Not walk away disingenuously with the hope she'll chase after you and with the intent of getting into her pants via reverse psychology. That defeats the purpose. It's not to pretend you don't care in order to get sexual affection. Because that means you actually do care and it means you are seeking approval in the form of her vagina. No, the point is to really not care. If she comes around, fine; if she doesn't, you're better off because you haven't wasted your time.

Passing shit-tests is another form of codependent behavior. [Click this link](#) ^[46] for an example of what shit tests are. Taking tests of any kind equals seeking approval. The very act of taking a test and attempting to pass it confers authority on the test giver. Think about it, if you were walking down the street and some dirty, tweaked out homeless methhead approached you and started saying prove to me how smart you are and arrogantly started testing you with academic questions, would you stop and respond? What if he said, if you answer my questions and prove yourself smart enough, I'll allow you to give me money. You'd be like "fuck you, who are you to test me?" You don't recognize any authority that person has over you. You feel in that interaction that you are the prize. He should be begging you for change, not asking you to beg for the chance to give change.

Now picture you are going to school and the teacher gives you a pop quiz. You are ambitious and want to get an A. You want to go a great college and be very successful. Would you tell the teacher "Who the fuck are you to test me?" No, you'd shut up and take the test and pray you scored well on it. Because you recognize the teacher's authority over you. Agreeing to take the test and doing your best to excel at the test is an

affirmation of that authority. Of course the teacher wants you to do great on the test because it reflects well on him. And he may as a result give you extra good treatment if you're a good student. But most students aren't delusional enough to believe that these gold stars and teacher's pet perks mean that he has a position of authority over the teacher. The student won't turn around and say "I'm 'gaming' the teacher." The teacher is the one really holding all the card.

Agreeing to take tests is an implicit admission of the testgiver's authority over you, regardless of whether you pass or fail them. Cluster B personality disordered vampires love to give tests. It's one of the big signs of a narcissist, borderline, or histrionic. They are power hungry and controlling, and testing people is a way for them to exercise those traits and establish superiority over people. Pursuing the school analogy, a teacher likes when students are obedient and work hard to study for and pass their tests, but they will get frustrated if the students keep failing the tests. There is an ego boost from getting people to recognize your authority by agreeing to your tests, but there's an even bigger ego boosts from having students who excel at getting an A on your tests. It makes you feel like a great teacher, you feel like you are grooming them to give you the answers you want, you are being surrounded with people who excel at parroting your beliefs back at you and are being properly socialized into your worldview. Getting an "A" isn't a sign that the student is "beating" the teacher, it's a sign of success to the teacher. Similarly, since PUA trains you to pass shit-tests, you are just becoming an A-student to dysfunctional shitty women's curriculum.

Now what happens to be the best students in a school? The ones who excel the most at passing tests? They get the privileged of joining the "honors program." They get the right to get more challenging curriculums, to get taught by the most advanced expert teachers, and to compete against the best of the best fellow students. By making you an expert at passing narcissistic, spoiled women's tests, PUA puts you in the "narcissistic, spoiled women honors program" where you get to compete against other sophisticated codependents/compensatory narcissists who have also mastered taking their tests. And your classes are now taught by the best of the best of personality-disordered women: the pure narcissists. Now you get the anorexic models, the strippers, the "hired guns" from nightclubs and bars, the party girls, the socialites, the rich, pampered princesses, the daddy's girls, the porn stars, and the high powered lawyers (law in my experience seems to attract a lot of status hungry personality disordered control freaks of both genders in my experience).

When you give a shitty manipulative woman countermanipulation to get her approval, you are not "gaming" her any more than a student is gaming the teacher by giving the teacher the correct test answer. You're just showing that you are the ideal codependent. Just like a teacher gets sick of students always failing her tests, even if they are obedient and well-behaved and eager to please, a narcissistic woman gets sick of codependent men always failing her tests, even if she gets minor ego-boosts from the codependent's

eagerness to please. Such ego boosts are not enough to keep her happy. Like the teacher who'd rather obedient, well-performing students who also excel at giving her the responses she wants, the narcissistic woman wants a man acts self-confident enough so that she can feel she can bask in some of his reflected glory, but still codependent enough that her dysfunctional, narcissistic needs still get met. These are the traits she's testing for. If you fail these tests, you're a codependent. If you pass these tests, you're a compensatory narcissist who may or may not get laid by a damaged, waste of time woman who's not worth the headache. And if you refuse to take these tests at all because you value your time and dignity to validate such women with attention or defer to their authority, congratulation. You are now a renaissance man.

Think about the types of students your average teacher hates. They hate incompetent students who won't behave and conform. They are disruptive, refuse to accept her authority, refuse to study, refuse to take the curriculum seriously, skip classes altogether and display that they have no desire to conform to the system. But they also hate the other extreme, the student who is so together that he doesn't take school for the opposite reason. Maybe his family is rich and he has a strong independent streak and he feels he's set in life no matter how he performs in school. He just has to inherit his family's business. Maybe he's so smart and ahead of future trends that he realizes school has absolutely nothing important to teach him, and that it's for suckers and the risk-averse. Instead he focuses on being an entrepreneur and getting rich in the real world. Think of the pro athletes that skip college and go straight to the NBA and all the hand-wringing they caused when the trend started. How dare they not take the tests and jump through the hoops society demands? Think of the Bill Gates of the world who drop out of college and become among the world's richest men? How many teachers are secure enough and mature enough to promote this path of focusing on real world success over testtaking success for a student? After all, if enough people undertake this path, it undermines their own authority and the validity of their belief system.

So what does this tell you? The average teacher wants someone driven and talented enough to excel at the curriculum and testtaking system, but not so talented and driven that they totally transcend the curriculum and testtaking system. The person who gives up on the testtaking system either because he deems it not worth the effort and gives up on trying to be a winner in the eyes of society, or the person who gives up on the testtaking system because he finds a way to transcend the socially accepted route to greatness both totally crushes the testtaker's ego by making them feel like their authority is not being deferred to and their expertise is not needed and it ruins their belief system because it undermines the worldview they've committed so much time and effort to. All this makes them feel threatened by this. A good, worthwhile teacher would encourage you to find the best path to success even if doing so doesn't make you beholden to them and their tests. These are the types of people you need in your life.

In the mating market, you can see these equivalent of the "bad students" in the dating market. On the low

end, think of the [Japanese herbivore men](#) ^[47] who refuse to play the dating game at all and instead would rather just play video games all day because they think modern women are too narcissistic and selfish and just not worth it. Think of the ["man up" movement led by pundits like Kay Hymowitz](#) ^[48] revolving around the supposed crisis in America about men who aren't willing to rush out there and commit to the current crop of spoiled, entitled bratty North American women, and how desperate they are to shame these men into getting with society's prescribed program. They're refusing to conform to the shitty woman curriculum, and the school board AKA First World society, is getting alarmed.

Consider the mating market equivalent of the Bill Gates student: the rich, supersuccessful man who refuses to settle down with a Western woman. He either just keeps dating whoever he wants and offers commitments to none of them, and if they crowd him he just gives them the boot. Think how obsessive Western women were with George Clooney and his insistence on remaining a bachelor and not getting married or even engaged. How dare he! How can he amass all that fortune and fame and status and not turn around and give it to a woman for the privilege of her approval and a monogamous relationship to her? He was refusing to conform to the curriculum. He was not deferring to its authority and passing its tests. Look at how society heaps vitriol at that Russian billionaire who'd rather use his vast fortune to bang prostitutes until the end of time rather than jump through hoops and get married and fuck one woman for the rest of his life and have a family. Men like these threaten the curriculum of First World society by refusing to recognize its authority and take its tests. Just like school administrators and teachers don't want a lot of students going the Bill Gates route because such students are harder to control and make them and their jobs irrelevant, the administrators of First World society don't like super successful men who refuse to use their vast resources to pander to Western women and their approval. That's why on the red carpet of the Oscar's this year the E! commentators couldn't stop gushing about George Clooney's girlfriend Stacy Kiebler. They're rooting for her to tackle and tie down an alpha who's gone rogue from the system.

Do you think George Clooney goes around acting aloof and like he doesn't care because he wants to pass the tests of women and get their approval? No, he doesn't even take the tests. That's why anyone who tells you to act like George Clooney to get laid is outcome-driven and totally misses the point.

This is why reality seems to keep confirming the worst of PUA's beliefs about women. They grew up codependent because of their childhood and as a result have been bred to seek out narcissists, put up with their testing and bad behavior and try to work around them. However, they failed miserably at passing these tests and got bitter and frustrated. Having been burned enough times, instead of fixing their core issues and learn how to deal with non-damaged women, they instead learned to become compensatory narcissists. As a result of being more sophisticated codependents, they end up becoming A-students in the school of damaged, spoiled women and got good enough for the "honors program," attracting the attention of even bigger, more

sophisticated A-grade pure narcissists. This is why the better a man gets at game, the worse his beliefs about women get. It doesn't help that he's also gotten better at screening out healthy women thanks to some of his new habits and beliefs, like fool's mate, plowing through rejection, and shit-test passing.

Your ultimate goal should be your dignity and self-respect, not passing the tests of damaged women, which is a redundant phrase anyway because only damaged women test that excessively anyway. If she's doing bitch-shields and consistently shit-testing, she is by definition damaged anyway. When you pass the tests and jump through the hoops and it gets you laid, you may feel okay with it, but when you don't get the sex, you'll totally hate yourself for compromising your integrity and dignity for nothing. I think that's another reason why PUAs seem to take rejection in Strauss's book so much harder than normal guys do. Selling out your dignity and integrity for superficial goals is soul-crushing in general, even when it works, but when you sell out yourself and still fail, it's downright traumatizing because you crushed your own soul for nothing.

VI.

SOCIETY DOESN'T CARE IF YOU PASS OR FAIL WOMEN'S TESTS, JUST THAT YOU AGREE THAT IT'S YOUR DUTY TO TAKE THEM

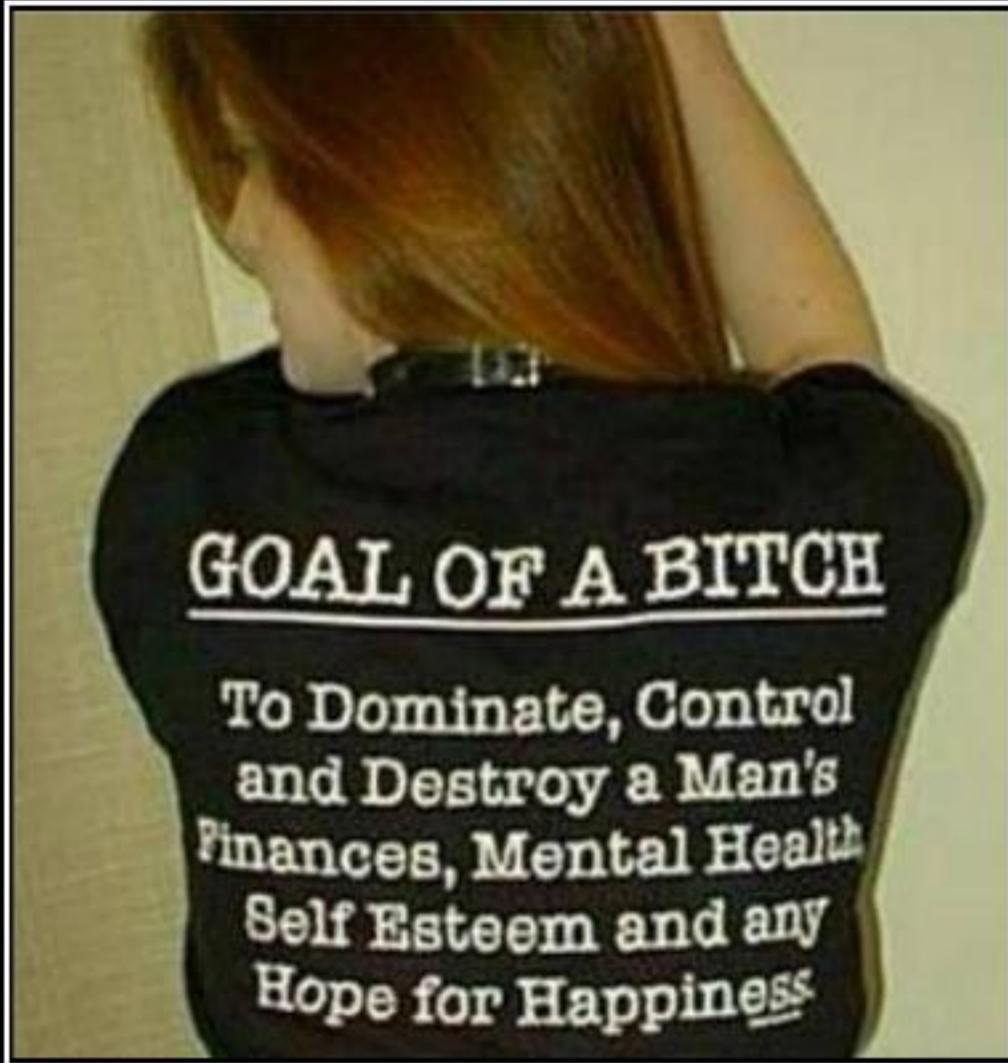
As I've said in previous installments, what sexual affection conquests are to a man, flattering attention and ego boosts are to woman. Society teaches women this from very young, and as a result women realize early the power they wield by strategically denying and granting men access to their vaginas, or even just the potential for access to their vaginas. Society however doesn't teach men about the fact that flattering attention and ego boosts to a woman are as important as sexual conquests are to men, and that the best weapon men have against women and their way of leveling the playing field is to strategically deny and grant women access to their flattering attention, or even just the potential for access to their flattering attention. Women are told to respect themselves and their bodies, but men aren't similarly taught to respect themselves and their time.

Why doesn't society teach this? Because capitalist society runs and thrives on men who remain ignorant of this dynamic! Do you ever realize how many times a day our society takes advantage of a man's need for sexual affection conquests and his willingness to give away his flattering attention to a woman for absolutely nothing in return? Just look at the advertising industry if you want proof. Capitalist society gets absolutely no benefit from the reverse situation of women surrendering sexual affection willy-nilly the way men currently give away their flattering attention, and it gets no benefit from the reverse situation of men strategically hoarding and rationing their flattering attention in the same way women currently strategically hoard and ration out sexual affection.

Notice I use the term "sexual affection conquests" rather than "pussy" or just "sex." This is very deliberate. People think men are driven by pussy, and they're just chasing sex. They aren't. Sex matters to men less than the validation they get from sexual combined with conquests and affection (by affection I mean just any type of friendly, warm approving treatment). If it was really about sex in a vacuum rather than the ego validation that comes from the combination of sex, conquest and affection, most men would be happy with prostitutes and find them interchangeable with one night stands they meet in clubs. However they don't. So it's not really about the sex. It's about knowing that they somehow earned a woman's approval and affection along with the sex. She found them worthy. They like the sex not just because of how good it feels but because of what it stands for: female approval and affection. That is what guys really are driven by, not sex by itself.

Think about it, if men could live under the bridge in a cardboard box and still get sexual conquests and sexual affection, how could you sell them anything? If men became stingy with flattering attention, how could you sell them anything? Think of how much marketing and moneymaking revolves around the implicit promise to men "Do this and you will get sexual conquests." Think of how much marketing and moneymaking revolves around the implicit requirement of men "It's your job to provide flattering attention to women and seek their approval." Think of how much government control revolves around making sure society revolves around those same principles. It prevents anarchy and keeps men under control in their eyes. That's why it's important to keep prostitution stigmatized and illegal. Otherwise, men may start finding sex without the added ego validation of conquest and affection to be almost as worthwhile as the socially accepted practice of jumping through hoops for so-called "free" sex, and at that point the social dynamic that is the engine of capitalism and civilization is fucked up.

If you look at this image below, it's a perfect example of the warped mindset of the simp who manages to get laid by jumping through hoops for sexual affection validation:



DOESN'T MATTER

Had sex.

VERY DEMOTIVATIONAL .com

Basically, access to a woman's pussy is so valuable, it's worth you putting up with all the stuff written on that woman's shirt. And as long as she has a pussy and gives you access to it, her good behavior is irrelevant, she can dominate, control and destroy your finances, mental health, self-esteem and any hope for your happiness. To him, somehow getting sex from this type of woman is less demeaning than paying for a prostitute. I'm not promoting prostitution for people, but I'm just trying to point out that if you think exchanging sex for money and going your separate ways is somehow less demeaning than trying to game damaged, destructive chicks just because they gave you pussy for "free," you're insane. Because it wasn't free at all. You sacrificed everything written on the back of her shirt for it, which to me is way more expensive than whatever the prostitute was charging. The fact that most guys would rather bang the bitch in the shirt for "free" and brag about that but would be ashamed to admit paying for a prostitute proves that most guys actually value the ego validation of female affection more than the physical enjoyment from sex, to the point they'd pay with their very soul for the former.

Which brings us back to why pickup is sophisticated codependency. Pickup tells a man if he pays for sex, he's a total beta. Never mind the fact that there are many high status men who use prostitutes. The only way sex is acceptable for a PUA is if it comes with the ego-boosting approval of a female attached to it.

That's why PUAs are not sex addicts. Sex addicts just want sex, period. They are addicted more to the act of sex, and it doesn't matter if the sex comes from a wife, a girlfriend or a hooker. PUAs however are female approval addicts. A PUA will respect a man who got phone numbers and dates and makeouts with no sex over a man who got sex without working to get female approval in the form of numbers, dates and makeouts beforehand.

Now some may argue that PUA doesn't teach you to reward the bad behavior of bitches like the one in the t-shirt above. They may claim that pickup instead teaches you to pump and dump, which actually punishes a bitch. It teaches you to outmanipulate her by not jumping through her hoops. And so on and so on. And all of this is part of the solution in the mating market rather than part of the problem. I disagree.

First off, let's define pump and dump. It's when you have sex with a woman who wants and expects it will lead to a relationship, then proceed to disappoint her by dumping her after sex. *If both parties agree to a sex without strings beforehand with no expectations of a relationship, then having sex and moving on afterward doesn't count as a pump and dump. It's just a one night stand.* No harm, no foul. Remember, for a pump and dump, there has to be an expectation of a relationship from the dumped party.

Here's the problem: emotionally unregulated drama queens, manipulators, stimulation seekers, and attention

whores are rewarded and validated simply with drama and ego-boosting attention, regardless of whether you pump and dump them or give them a relationship. Their goal is just drama and attention, hence what I described in the [means-end paradox](#) ^[49]. The only real way to punish a Cluster B is to ignore her and opt out of the game. Why do you think so many damaged women get pumped and dumped by alpha males, yet still never take it as a lesson to become better people? Instead, once they get old enough, they just marry a beta male provider, yet remain damaged people. They never actually become better people from the pumping and dumping.

It's because to a damaged drama queen, pumping and dumping isn't the punishment people think it is, even if she goes psycho, melts down, cries in the fetal position, or whatever. Her goals are intense emotions, drama and dysfunction, and she got that. The pumping and dumping was a reward, not a punishment, so that's why she doesn't change. Instead her bad personality gets reinforced.

The only women who view pumping and dumping as a true punishment are decent, trusting women who got sucked in by manipulation. Because to these women the pumping and dumping *is* an actual punishment, these women actually do change, from it but for the worse. They become less trusting, more manipulative, and more narcissistic. They've been bitten by an [emotional] vampire and start to turn into one too.

Remember, rewards reinforce behavior and punishments change behavior. Since a pump and dump is a reward to a damaged woman, doing it to her encourages her to remain damaged. Since a pump and dump is a punishment to a trusting, nonmanipulative woman, it encourages her to change. So pumping and dumping encourages damaged women to remain damaged and manipulative and encourages good, trusting women to change into damaged and manipulative women. So even if the individual PUA wins, society is filled with more and more damaged women.

It's a fucked up sexual tragedy of the commons that infects all of society. It's like learning to navigate a broken system instead of fixing it, or rearranging the chairs on the deck of the Titanic while it's sinking. If you want to knowingly be a free rider and profit from the overall decline of the dating pool, that's fine so long as you're aware of what you're doing and know the truth. I don't judge. I just want the people who mistakenly think they're helping the dating pool somehow with pumping and dumping to be set straight and do what they do with full awareness.

Besides, pickup doesn't even really guarantee you sex with the damaged bitch in the t-shirt shown above. All it guarantees you is a loner audition and more hoops to jump through. The guy without PUA game may get dissed by the super-Cluster B hottie within minutes after he fails his first test, because he's not sophisticated enough a codependent to figure out how to pass her tests. The guy with PUA game responds to test after

test with “amused mastery” and “cocky, funny banter” and “backturns” and all the other stuff Neil Strauss and Mystery recommend and he gets phone numbers, makeouts, dates, conversations, and at the end he still often gets no sex, because she was more interested in gameplaying even down to the wire. At this point, Neil Strauss’s advice according to his book is to use his “anti-slut defense” tactics, which are just passive aggressive as hell and require even more hoop-jumping and time-wasting., and still may lead to no sex He put up with all this bad conversation and mental masturbating and overthinking and hoop jumping just to get no sex. At least the so-called beta got no sex after just investing 5 minutes rather than day, weeks or months. It’s a lesson every man needs to learn, value access to your time, flattering attention and ego boosts you dole out as much as women or more than value access to their vaginas.

Oftentimes the interest you observe when passing brutal shit tests isn’t sexual interest. It’s the interest of a cat that likes playing with her food before killing it. A damaged narcissistic woman sees your ability to pass her shit tests as evidence that you may be more fun to fuck with for her own amusement over the long run than a codependent, who offers much less challenge and drama. As soon as she feels she’s drawn the last drop of narcissistic supply and emotional stimulation from you, she’ll move on to the next source of narcissistic supply. Sometimes it will be before you get to have sex with her, and you wasted your time. Other times she will bail after you had sex with her, and guess what? You still wasted your time. The point of passing a test should be to earn something that improved your life from before you took the test. What did you get from passing her shit tests? The right to east time taking more shit tests, and if you’re “lucky,” having sex with a damaged girl.

Another problem with pickup is the concept of the DHV, or what is called “displaying higher value.” In *The Game*, Strauss describes it as

a routine in which the pickup artist displays a skill or attribute that raises his worth or appeal in the estimation of a woman or group; it is intended to make him stand out from the other, less interesting men in the club.

So you walk in with the assumption that a woman is automatically of higher value than you and that you have to proactively prove your higher value by saying or doing something impressive before you know anything about her? Do you even know if she’s bringing anything to the table that makes her even worth impressing? The DHV comes down to bragging and humblebragging, and once you do either you give the other person authority over you because you are affirming that they are worth impressing and auditioning for, before they’ve even done anything to demonstrate they bring anything of value themselves. It’s another form of taking a test, except you’re volunteering on your own for a test that hasn’t even been offered yet!

Another problem with pickup that makes it sophisticated codependency is the damaging belief that the

outcome is always in your control when you're a true alpha. It takes the codependent's natural urge to blame himself and masks it as positive traits, like accountability, persistence, and social intelligence. See, everything that goes wrong with a woman is the man's fault. He wasn't alpha enough. He was too reactive. He didn't give the right response. He didn't stand at a 45 degree angle. He didn't peacock enough. He didn't "neg" her at the right level. He held his drink at his waist. He showed too much enthusiasm. He passed her first two shit tests, but caved at her third one. He didn't properly build comfort before going for sex. He didn't do the right things to create attraction. And so on and so on.

Meanwhile thanks to evolutionary psychology rationalizing, less things than ever are the woman's fault. The PUA actually blames women for less of their crappy behavior than a normal codependent. She's now not just badly socialized, she's genetically incapable of not behaving crappy unless she's gamed by an alpha. When her problems are now genetically determined, it's a lot harder to hold them accountable even in your own mind. Their social shortcomings become now viewed as evolutionary strengths.

A trait of codependents is that they are very loathe to declare a woman damaged goods and move on. With the sophisticated codependency of PUAs, they are even more loathe to declare a woman damaged goods and move on, because now the woman is just following her genetics and protecting herself and to declare her damaged goods and move on is to declare yourself a non-man genetically unfit to even reproduce by evolutionary standards. Alpha men don't quit, and non alpha men lose in life, right? If you lose at picking up this woman, you lose at having the right to even call yourself a man.

I would go as far as to say that PUAs actually blame themselves for what goes wrong in social interactions far more than regular guys and even regular codependents. Every bad occurrence comes down to the problem of not living up to their idealized, false self, that mythical super-alpha male. Remember what I said in previous installments, codependents tend to blame themselves for the problems in their relationships while narcissists love to blame others for the problems in their relationships, and I said this is why narcissists are attracted to codependents so much. Since PUAs blame themselves to a much higher degree by being social control freaks that believe every outcome in a social interaction should be under their control and good interactions are solely the responsibility of the man, they attract super drama queens who have zero accountability and believe no outcomes in a social interaction are their fault and that good interactions are solely the responsibility of the man. To put it another way, by becoming a guy who blames himself even more than your average codependent, the PUA attracts the type of woman who blames others more than your average narcissist and has even less accountability: the pure narcissist.

I want to take this time to address one more question Bill asked about: NLP, also known as Neurolinguistic Programming, a form of conversational hypnosis, and whether it was the answer for him. There is an old Sufi

proverb that says "The sage tries to control his own ego. The fool tries to control the egos of others." That pretty much sums up my attitude about trying to use NLP to seduce people and make them behave as you want as a way to fix your life.

This is the problem with any of that stuff, and why it shouldn't be a priority for you: Right now you can't control your ego and your own emotions, as shown by your jealousy. If you can't control yourself and your own reactions yet, why would you focus on controlling other people, which is even harder and more unpredictable a challenge? It's just another form of attacking symptoms instead of the actual sickness. How people are reacting to you is a symptom of a deeper problem, not the actual cause of the problem.

Which brings me to another dangerous aspect of pickup: control freakery. You become obsessed with imagining, predicting and controlling every last outcome. You imagine hypnotizing people. You imagine having a perfect answer ready for every possible question. You imagine having some kind of hypnotic pattern you can run that will lead the interaction wherever you want. You imagine working out the angle at which to stand, the proper amount to tilt your head, a long, complicated system to follow where even your contingency plans have contingency plan and so on. Or you decide to learn as many manipulation techniques as humanly possible by reading a ton of strategy books like those of Machiavelli, Sun Tzu and Robert Greene. What this all boils down to is one thing: fear of rejection and trying to protect one's ego by mastering the outcome in your head beforehand.

This is why there's so much mental masturbation going on. Everyone's afraid to get hurt and wants to minimize the risk to their ego. This is especially true for guys whose think their egos are too weak to withstand the amount of rejections that come from playing a numbers game. They gravitate toward the control freakery of hypermanipulation because they think with enough tactics, blueprints, and algorithms they'll crack the code to human interaction so well that they won't need to do a numbers game. They'll just get the system down so pat that on their first ever approach they'll get a girlfriend and boom! game over. They win and they never even had to get a rejection.

I wrote post last year about [why men fear a numbers game](#) ^[50], and it got some heated responses. And I can guarantee you that the biggest opponents to that post are also some of the most overthinking hyperintellectual living-in-their-heads rejection-fearing mental masturbators you can find. They prefer the neat, ego-saving fantasy of perfect control over the mess, ego-brutalizing reality of the real world.

Becoming a manipulation-obsessed control freak in social situations is sort of like having [Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder](#) ^[51] except with living, breathing people and social interactions rather than inanimate objects:

Obsessive–compulsive personality disorder (OCPD) is a [personality disorder](#) ^[52] characterized by a pervasive pattern of preoccupation with orderliness, [perfectionism](#) ^[53], and mental and interpersonal control at the expense of flexibility, openness, and efficiency...

The primary symptoms of OCPD can include preoccupation with remembering and paying attention to minute details and facts, following rules and regulations, compulsion to make lists and schedules, as well as rigidity/inflexibility of beliefs and/or exhibition of perfectionism that interferes with task-completion. Symptoms may cause extreme distress and interfere with a person's occupational and social functioning.

Hypermanipulation is what I like to call an offense mechanism rather than a defense mechanism. A defense mechanism is something you do in response to a psychic threat, in order to protect your ego. It's reactive. An offense mechanism is something you do proactively in order to control the situation and prevent a ego-threatening psychic occurrence from coming about in the first place. It's the psychological equivalent of the old saying, "The best defense is a good offense."

Remember, one of the control patterns listed above in the list of Codependency traits is "I attempt to convince others what to think, do, or feel." This is why NLP hypnotic patterns, tightly scripted routines and excessive steps and contingency plans that PUAs like Neil Strauss and Mystery do so much of are even more signs of codependent thinking.

You learn filter out sane, whole, emotionally healthy people with enthusiasm for you in exchange for learning how to better filter in the worst women, the ones you have to strategically game to death. You have to pass the tests of bitchy girls who need to be gamed and have their "attraction switches flipped" in order to bang hot women, and ignore or devalue the women who are naturally attracted to you and willing to validate you without being gamed. And you have to assume from the beginning they have higher value than you do and make it your mission to display your value to her by bragging and humblebragging. And if after all that you still don't get the girl, it's all your fault because if you were a true alpha that met her unconscious evolutionary womanly needs, you'd have made her attracted to you and had sex with her. Thus you obsess over doing whatever you have to do to control what others think, do or feel at all times to save your ego from more bruising. You may want to reread that list of codependency patterns again right about now.

VII.

MYSTERY

By equating a partner's worth with their level of difficulty and their requirements for excessive hoop-jumping, you are screening for entitled, demanding people, especially Cluster B vampires. Why does this idea appeal to so many pickup artists? It ties into a dynamic I described in earlier installments in this series about codependents with caretaker values. Remember how I described that people who grow up in families where they have to cater to their parents' needs instead of the other way around become codependents? And how they have to dedicate a lot of time figuring out their parents' needs and moods and catering to them in order to avoid their rages or to get their attention? And how as a result, they can only feel chemistry with people who reactivate that dynamic in them? How even though they consciously know it's dysfunctional, it feels comfortable on a deep level because it's how they grew up and what they're used to and it's firmly imprinted on their psyche?

Well, observe how Neil Strauss describes an interaction with Mystery:

"I don't like it when someone tells me what to do. My dad used to tell me what to do. And I hate him."

"Well, I'm not your dad," I said.

"Thank God for that. He ruined my life and my mom's life." He pulled his hat up. Tears lay over his eyes like contact lenses, unable to escape on their own. "I used to lie in bed at night, thinking of ways to kill my dad. When I got really depressed, I'd imagine going to his bedroom with a shovel, smashing his head in, and then killing myself."

He paused and wiped his eyes with the back of his gloved hand. "When I think of my father, I think of violence," he continued. "I remember seeing him punch people in the face when I was really young. When we had to kill our dog, he took a gun out and blew his head off right in front of me."...

His father, he said, was an alcoholic German immigrant who verbally and physically abused him. His brother, who was fourteen years older than him, was gay. And his mother blamed herself for smothering his brother with love to make up for her husband's abuse. So, to compensate, she was emotionally distant from Mystery. When he was still a virgin at age twenty-one, he began to worry that maybe he was gay. So, in a bout of depression, he began formulating what would become the Mystery Method, dedicating his life to pursuing the love he never received from his parents.

Think about how this exchange relates to all I've described in this series. His dad was probably a Cluster B

vampire or worse. He had a narcissistic family structure. He grew up having to become hypervigilant about catering to his parents' moods and needs. His dad was physically and verbally abusive, so he probably spent a large amount of time analyzing him every second to figure out what things made him mad and what things made him happy, so that he could behave accordingly. Using a child's logic, he probably thought he was responsible for his father's moods and rages, and thought his father was acting out in response to things he did wrong.

In his mind his mom is a victim, which create caretaker values in him. Even now, he claims that his dad ruined his mom's life, when in reality she was a willing co-conspirator in ruining her own life. This is why I say there is a big codependent element in compensatory narcissism, underneath the surface. He still in a way puts his mother on a pedestal, even though she's almost as guilty of neglecting his needs and contributing to his abuse as his dad, by remaining with his dad, not adequately protecting him from his dad's physical abuse, for not making efforts to let Mystery know that he was not at all responsible for his dad's abuse, and for becoming emotionally distant from him during the years he was being abused by his dad, for fear of smothering him and turning him gay.

So what can we say about Mystery? He probably became super obsessed with deconstructing people because he felt if he could "crack the code" with his father, he could avoid abuse. If he could say and do the right thing, he imagined he could avoid abuse. Of course he couldn't predictably predict his father's mood, so sometimes it would work and sometimes it wouldn't, creating what behaviorists call a random reinforcement situation which made him even more addicted to the decoding process. He probably also got a strange form of Stockholm Syndrome, where he became was forced to develop a form of warped attachment to his abuser. Children are approval-seeking machines, and even when abused by a parent, there is always a part of them that wants to seek that abusive parent's approval. However he had lots of fantasies of doing violence to his dad if he just gained enough power to do it. Of course he couldn't do it because he was a child and in a physically weak and emotionally dependent position, but he still fantasized about being able to do it if only he had the means. Thus he had to walk on eggshells and analyze his dad in order to placate him, but if he felt he had the means he would definitely extract revenge on him, which created a weird mix of approval-seeking combined with revenge-seeking.

Meanwhile he has caretaker codependent values because he wants to rescue his mother from his father. Yet even if he can't fully access it consciously, he probably hates his mother to a degree because on some level he realizes that she let him down and chose his abusive father over her abused child by staying with him and distancing himself from her. So he wants to rescue her yet he also resents her and blames her for helping to make him weak and powerless.

So he relives this dynamic in his adult life. He tries to find adult Cluster B vampire women who represent to his subconscious his Cluster B vampire father. He tries to crack the code of these narcissists, borderlines, histrionics and sociopaths in the form of strippers and party girls all day and all night because he wants a second chance at figuring out and winning over his dad. He specifically needs to win over these types or the victory doesn't count. That's why he disdains fool's mates and people who will approve of him readily. His parents were never like this, and it's analogues of his parents that he needs to conquer. Because his upbringing trained him to think of himself as inherently unlovable for his true self, he thinks he needs a false, idealized self.

Although he wants a second chance to seek approval from his dad, he also had dreams of getting revenge on his dad if only he was strong enough. So now that he thinks he is equipped with the tools to level the playing field in the form of pickup, and he has the illusion of superiority that comes with being a compensatory narcissist rather than the feeling of total weakness that comes with being purely codependent, he feels he's now also in a place where he can finally wreak that revenge rather than just fantasize about it.

He has a white knight, rescuer compulsion due to his "victim" mom, yet he also has unresolved resentment toward her because he realizes on some level she's not as innocent a victim as he's rationalized her consciously to be, so he simultaneously wants to rescue women, yet he also hates women for being a contributing source of his emasculation, just like his mom was. (This is why some "nice guys" with either smothering or distant codependent moms can have a surprising amount of misogyny in them beneath the surface, even though their moms never overtly abused them).

He needs to win approval from women who are personality-disordered and/or emotionally distant women like his dad and mom were, yet he also has resentment and revenge issues involving those exact same kinds of women because he grew up dreaming of punishing his dad and subconsciously resented his mother. Thus, whenever he's in a position of weakness that brings him back to childhood, he responds by regressing to childhood weakness and breaks down and becomes a blubbering baby with revenge fantasies. When he's in a position of power in a relationship dynamic, he tries to emotionally live out the revenge fantasies he had from childhood that he was never in a powerful enough position to act on back then. Bouncing between all these conflicting emotions, beliefs, and mental states and trying to reconcile all that cognitive dissonance is what causes his behavior to be so erratic and is probably why he got diagnosed as bipolar.

His older brother turning out gay and the doubts that gave him about his own sexuality probably contribute to the excessive amount of pussy he feels he needs. He feels he has to keep banging women to affirm his heterosexuality as well. His mother didn't want him to be gay, and by banging all these women he's "pleasing" a mental image of his mother by showing her he's not.

Now you can see why I say PUA just treats symptoms, not the disease. This man needs intense therapy to fix all his simultaneous narcissistic and codependent issues. Instead he just treats the symptoms and gets the illusion of improvement which just gives the disease free reign to run rampant beneath the surface until it reaches the point where his old methods of treating the symptoms no longer works for him. The psychological treatment he received in the past unfortunately didn't help because it too focused on treating his symptoms. It diagnosed him as bipolar and prescribed him drugs for treating his bipolar behavior instead of treating the emotional core issues and primary inferiority feelings that was causing him to act in a bipolar way.

In [part 3 of this series](#) ^[6], I described how codependents feel the most chemistry when they find narcissistic people who remind them of their parents and the childhood traumas they had with them. Consider this: Mystery falls incredibly hard for a stripper named Katya and has so much chemistry with her that he wants to marry her after only 3 weeks. She's an alcoholic, immigrant, Cluster B vampire who is abusive to Mystery, just like his alcoholic, immigrant, Cluster B vampire father was to him as a kid. When people scoff that Mystery nearly killed himself "just because" a girl rejected him, they miss the point and trivialize what happened. Katya wasn't just some girl. She was his abusive dad he hated yet desperately wanted to please, back from the grave to kick his ass and emotionally annihilate him one last time. This reawakened his secondary and primary inferiorities, making him relive all the abuse from his past along with whatever new pain he was undergoing.

Pickup can't fix core issues like that.

VIII.

NEIL STRAUSS

Neil Strauss is an interesting case. One thing that struck me about The Game was that he showed a lot of signs of compensatory narcissism in the way it was written. Very narcissistic and grandiose at some times, countered by the codependent tactic of some calculated self-deprecation and admissions of self-loathing to win cool points at other times.

One thing I realized is that no matter how bad he would make himself look, he always made sure to make everyone else look worse. He shit-talked his friends as well as his enemies almost equally. I mean, he basically backhanded compliments or outright insults everyone in the book from front to back. Mystery was his best friend and he says things like:

Our destination was the Hollywood Mental Health Center on Vine Street. It was an ugly slab of concrete surrounded day and night by homeless men who screamed at lampposts, transvestites who lived out of shopping carts, and other remaindered human beings who set up camp where

free social services could be found. Mystery, I realized, was one of them. He just happened to have charisma and talent, which drew others to him and prevented him from ever being left alone in the world. He possessed two traits I'd noticed in nearly every rock star I'd ever interviewed: a crazy, driven gleam in his eyes and an absolute inability to do anything for himself.

and

He was clearly more of a geek than I had ever been. His greatest illusion was transforming himself into a good-looking player every night he went out.

He also has these gems:

Tyler and Papa were merely the New York Dolls: They were brash, they were loud, and everyone thought they were gay.

And he just goes on and on backhand compliments or outright dissing various PUAs throughout the book, especially Papa and Tyler Durden.

The more of this I saw in the book, and the more I read between the lines, I started realizing that maybe his descriptions of Mystery and a narcissist and Tyler as a sociopath were just him projecting and recognizing his traits onto others. That is not to say he was wrong in his assessments of them, but rather than even if they were truly those things, one thing narcissists and sociopaths hate in others is when those others reflect their faulty traits back at them and remind them of everything they hate about themselves.

This puts excerpts like the following in different light. Re: Mystery's narcissism:

The guy was a narcissist. He was a flower that bloomed with attention—be it positive or negative—and wilted when ignored. Peacock theory wasn't just to attract girls. It existed first and foremost to attract attention. Even picking a fight with me was just another plea for attention, because I'd been ignoring him for the past hundred miles

You are needy and like a black hole sucking in attention. You can't handle not being the center of attention for even one minute.

Re: Tyler Durden (too much bashing to list exhaustively):

After an hour of blather, I started to understand Tyler Durden. Human interaction to him was a program. Behavior was determined by frames and congruence and state and validation and other

big-chunk psychological principles. And he wanted to be the Wizard of Oz: the little guy behind the

curtain, pulling the strings that made everyone around him think he was a big and powerful master of the realm.

I thought about how Tyler Durden had constantly pestered Vision for routines and material. Now I understood why Vision had kicked him out of the house. He didn't seem to see the humanity in us. He didn't care about what we did for work; where we were from; or what our thoughts on culture, politics, and the world were.

There was a distinction he didn't seem to understand: We weren't just PUAs. We were people."

Tyler Durden did like to eliminate competition. But not before he'd squeezed every piece of useful information out of them.

I watched Tyler Durden as he spoke. For all his talk about women, I rarely saw him in the company of one.

That's when I realized that Tyler Durden wasn't in the community to get laid. He wasn't motivated by sex. He was motivated by power.

I hadn't trusted either Papa or Tyler Durden when I'd first met them. I found Papa spoiled and robotic, and Tyler Durden soulless and manipulative.

He spends a lot of time assigning Cluster B traits to all these people, yet the more you read between the lines, the more you wonder how much of his accusations apply to him. After all, one thing Cluster Bs love to do is projection and smear campaigns, especially of traits about themselves they want to deny having.

I don't know if Neil Strauss is a narcissist or sociopath. I don't know the man personally. All I'm saying is that based on the activities he does in the book, as well as research I've done about him for this piece about his life before and after this book, I definitely wouldn't rule it out.

First off, in my Google research I found a disturbing amount of PUAs hate the guy and criticize him mercilessly. And they often accuse him of being robotic, narcissistic and a manipulative sociopath user, which are the same accusations Strauss levies against Mystery, Papa, Tyler and others.

You can find two examples of these accusations below, but trust me there were lots more:

- [Some site written by a guy](#) ^[54] who claims to know Neil Strauss and was his student
- [This blog post](#) ^[55] by another professional pickup artist called Sinn, that has a video describing Neil trying and failing at a cockblock technique where he tries to steal a girl Sinn and Mystery are fighting over. When Sinn calls him out on it, Style uses the excuse that he was just trying to game her to teach his friends a lesson to his friends that she was a “whore” and wasn’t really interested in either of them. If you know anything about personality disorders, that type of weaselly response is such textbook maneuver for a narcissist. If you watch all of Sinn’s anti-Strauss videos, they describe textbook narcissism and sociopathy.

So I thought maybe this is all just baseless hearsay. I mean these guys are competitors and maybe have a personal beef against him as well. However then I saw the following video when doing my research:

In it, Strauss basically verifies Sinn’s story! He uses almost word for word the exact same example of how to

cockblock that Sinn described was used on him. I thought maybe Sinn saw this video first and used it to fabricate the story about Neil, but when checking the dates Sinn's video was uploaded April 11 and Strauss's was uploaded April 29, more than 2 weeks later. It does lend a lot more credibility to Sinn's story. Also, when you look at the body language and facial expressions going on when he describes the technique, he's subtly smirking and snickering, even as he claims to advise not to use the technique and calling it bad.

Also in the book *The Game* Neil complains about Tyler Durden coining a term called *Stylemogging*, which is basically accuses Neil of always looking to passively assert dominance and raise status in conversations by using backhanded compliments and assuming a frame of passing judgment on others. This is a textbook narcissistic maneuver as well. Almost every narcissist I know is great at this maneuver. I call it "top-down compliment" as opposed to a "bottom-up." It basically comes off like a compliment, but from a superior, judging frame, like "I, the ultimate authority, from my lofty perch, casually deem you acceptable. If you keep at it, one day you may end up as good as me." as opposed to a compliment from a lower-status frame that says "Wow, you are awesome. I wish I could be like you." It's a compliment that is disguised as an attempt to be nice to the recipient, but in actuality raises the status of the compliment giver over the status of the compliment receiver.

In the book this really seemed to piss Strauss off. It seemed like a sore point for him. And one thing about narcissists is that they are thin-skinned about criticism, but they are especially thin-skinned about criticism that hits the mark. I think being called out for this narcissistic behavior by Durden may have caused him to become especially obsessed about projecting worse narcissistic and sociopathic behavior onto Tyler Durden.

But again, maybe Strauss was justified in being so pissed off because the accusation was untrue. But over and over in my online research I found pickup artists who verified this subtly undermining passive aggressive behavior of Strauss's. Google "Stylemogging" and you'll see what I mean.

But then I found a truly incredible document from 1998. It was called "The Rock Critical List" and [you can find a description of it here](#) ^[56] and [you can find the actual manifesto here](#) ^[57]. It was an infamous anonymous manifesto that caused a lot of buzz in the rock criticism industry and offered scathing criticism of rock critics. One section of it described the top ten worst rock critics and listed Neil Strauss as the #1 worst rock critic in the whole industry and described him thusly:

...Strauss once got over on enthusiasm and pluckiness...But these virtues only get you so far, so your ol' pal Neil decided to develop some vices—namely a taste for schmoozy self-mythology, including dumb wigs, a stand-up comedy "act," and an open flaunting of his female "friends," (which [sic] he wasn't really fucking, but hey, who can be sure?) His writing quickly abandoned

any pretense to reporting or insight, turning to the more pressing question of how the artist really felt about NEIL! Was Neil bright, cute or witty? Had the artist heard about the rare vinyl that Neil just discovered on the press junket to [fill in the city]? Did the artist know Neil breakdances? But trying to snicker under your breath 24 hours a day is a grueling job...

Ok, so he was accused of snickering under his breath 24 hours a day, a lesser form of Stylemogging, even back in 1998, from people outside the PUA industry. And the rest of the description of him also fits into textbook narcissism, from constructing false selves to impress people to flaunting the right associates in order to impress others to making everything about him.

Like I said, still hearsay, but the evidence is mounting.

Finally there's this video:

Neil Strauss appears on Dutch TV and is asked to demonstrate his pickup technique on the female TV host. He gets super nervous, can't do it, and he crashes and burns, explaining he can't perform his pickup routine on

her because she's too nice and he spent time talking to her beforehand during the interview and likes her too much.

Think about this for a second: he can't do his routine on women if they're nice and he likes them? So what does that mean? That he specifically approaches women he dislikes on some level? That he can't perform and gets nervous when he likes the girl and if he can somehow humanize her? That he needs to have no empathy for them in order to perform his pickup, which seems to depend primarily on insulting her first? Think about what this says given all I've explained about codependents and narcissists and how they interact with each other. When he doesn't like the girl and he doesn't have any connection with her, he can do his pickup routine, which revolves around devaluing and manipulating her the way a narcissist devalues and manipulates a codependent. And when he does like her and feels any connection or empathy toward her, he regresses back into codependent behavior because he now feels he's not in a position of power. This blend of switching erratically back and forth between narcissistic and codependent behavior depending on context is very indicative of compensatory narcissism.

IX.

TRUE SELF AND FALSE, IDEALIZED SELF

To review, pickup does give some good advice, but it still ends up damaging because it reinforces a very subtle codependent frame. It's even worse than the average codependent frame, which is much easier to snap someone out of, because this new one is much more subtle, insidious, and sophisticated, and on the surface even looks and feels like the opposite of codependency, and that hinders your ability to be self-aware.

An example of the right mindframe is what I advocated last year when I outlined "[The Laws of Enlightened Superiority](#)"^[58] versus the "Laws of Ego-Driven superiority." I decided to rename the laws, for the purposes of this article, and maybe permanently (I haven't decided yet), to "The Laws of the True Self" and "The Laws of the False, Idealized Self." If you are taking any of the advice, no matter how good it seems, but applying it from the ego-driven frame of the false, idealized self, you have just fallen into the [ego trap](#)^[59]. And doing good advice with the wrong frame, which is the external validation seeking ego-driven frame, is much harder to fix because it appears to be an enlightened goal and the self-deception involved is much more sophisticated.

The Laws of the False, Idealized Self (or Ego-Driven Superiority) are as follows (it's grown from the original list):

1. ***The False Self is more concerned about appearing superior than actually being superior.***

2. ***The False Self specifically wants to be better than other people, rather than pursue excellence and greatness for their own sake.***
3. ***The False Self not only wants everyone else to be inferior and remain inferior, and will do whatever it takes to keep them from improving themselves significantly.***
4. ***The False Self not only needs to appear better than other people, it needs the world to know about the apparent superiority and acknowledge it.***
5. ***The False Self not only needs the world to know about the superiority and acknowledge it, but it also needs people to be envious.***
6. ***The False Self wants to convert people and make them followers, but never let them become independent of, equal to or greater than the master.***
7. ***The False Self is always looking for individual and collective "others" to label enemies, so that it can raise its own status by devaluing and attacking these others.***
8. ***The False Self is always looking for individual and collective "similar" to label as allies so that it can raise its own status through praising these others and proving them superior thereby basking in the reflected glory.***
9. ***The False Self is always looking for acolytes and true believers who will buy into the image the false self is trying to convey and treat it like it was the real self.***
10. ***The False Self is always looking for other false selves to idealize, look up to and hero worship***

The Laws of the True Self (or Enlightened Superiority) are as follows (it too has grown from the original list):

1. ***The True Self is more concerned with doing its best than simply appearing superior.***
2. ***The True Self is more concerned with pursuing greatness for its own sake rather than pursuing images of greatness primarily to ensure others are inferior.***
3. ***The True Self doesn't mind sharing its creative tools with others and giving them the means to improve themselves in similar ways.***
4. ***The True Self doesn't mind having others know about and acknowledge its accomplishments, but is perfectly fine if such acknowledgment is never received.*** Such people generate their own validation internally rather than relying on external validation for their self-esteem.
5. ***The True Self has no desire to inspire envy and jealousy in others.***
6. ***The True Self, even if it converts others and makes them followers, ultimately aims to help them become their own gurus in time, and is secure enough to even encourages them to someday surpass the master.***
7. ***The True Self realizes that it can't and shouldn't attempt to raise its own status simply by labeling individual and collective "others" as enemies and then devaluing and attacking these***

others.

8. ***The True Self derive its self-worth from its personal attributes and accomplishments rather than by basking in the reflected glory of similar individuals, cultures or organizations.***
9. ***The True Self is always looking for others who are mature enough to appreciate and prefer the true self as it is rather than encourage and buy into the image of the false self for what it pretends to be.***
10. ***The True Self is always looking for other true selves to take on as gurus and learn from.***

For example, take a product that I found when researching for this piece. It's called David DeAngelo's 77 Laws for Success With Women and Dating. Mind you, I haven't listened to this product, so I don't know what it teaches in detail. I found it because I was looking to see if there were some PUAs specializing in laws and principles over tactics, and thereby avoiding the "hypertacticality" trap. This came close, but it totally falls into the ego trap I mentioned earlier of being in some ways even more dangerous than the usual PUA bad advice on account of the bad mindframe being more subtle.

See, if it was just called 77 Laws for Self-Respect or 77 Laws for Self-Esteem or 77 Laws for Self-Actualization or 77 Laws for Inner Peace I'd have been happy with it, as it would be congruent with the true self mindframe. But by adding "for success with women and dating" to the title, now all 77 laws become framed as a tool for external validation and as a result now fall into tools for reinforcing your false, idealized self rather of promoting your true self. Your goal becomes getting better at receiving validation rather than learning to become independent of any need for validation.

That means some of the potentially good advice in this product like "work on yourself," "evict your inner wussy," "know your purpose," and stop apologizing" now carries a subtext that turns it into "work on yourself so you can get external validation from women," "evict your inner wussy so that you can get external validation from women," and "stop apologizing so that you can get external validation from women." This puts it in alignment with the laws of the false self. A better frame would be "work on yourself to gain self-respect, because doing so is its own reward in and of itself," "evict your inner wussy to gain self-respect, because doing so is its own reward in an of itself," and "stop apologizing to gain self-respect, because doing so is its own reward in and of itself." This frame, which is regrettably absent, would put the advice in alignment with the laws of the true self.

All you've done is ditch the wuss behavior but keep the wuss core. In fact, you've made the wuss core harder to fix because you disguised it under a alpha male Halloween costume and script.

Also, thanks to the damaging frame, a lot of the advice in this product ends up being downright contradictory.

For example, the advice "stop seeking approval," "stop idealizing women," and "stop trying to impress" becomes "stop seeking approval so that you can get external validation from women," (if you're doing this course for external validation from women, how can you claim you're not seeking approval?) "stop idealizing women so that you can get external validation from women," (if you're doing this course to get external validation from women, how can you say you're not idealizing them?) and "stop trying to impress women so that you can get external validation from women." (if you're doing this course to get external validation from women, how can you claim you've stopped trying to impress them?) The explicit advice is inherently unreconcilable with the implicit frame.

Now if you are a guy who is enlightened enough and has done enough inner work to internalize the Laws of the True Self (or Enlightened Superiority), you could go through the list of laws DeAngelo has listed, picking out the good ones and reinterpreting them into the right frame, or eliminating the bad ones because they're incapable of being put into the right frame, and moving on like that.

So that's why I say PUA advice isn't totally useless with the right mindframe. However codependents don't have the right mindframe, so they are better off not touching the PUA stuff until they do get the right mindframe. And getting the right mindframe consists of finding a path that will help them shed any false, idealized self they have and get them in touch with their true self. It's up to them to choose what path works before them in this goal, whether it's Buddhism, psychoanalysis, Christianity, Kabbalah, hypnosis, whatever.

Some people think embracing your true self means resolving yourself to beta-hood. This isn't true and is a false choice. The choice is not between either embracing the false, idealized self of the alpha male versus your true self of a beta male, because if you think your true self is a contemptible beta male, you will always feel like an impostor and wracked with self-hatred, because the real you is supposedly a loser, and the winner you pretend to be is false. The choice is not about replacing your old true self of beta male with a new true self of alpha male. This is because it is literally impossible to make the idealized, false self into a true self. Idealized, false selves represent perfection, and by definition perfection doesn't exist and is not achievable. Even the greatest supposed alphas of history had moments of chumhood. Read the histories of Caesar and Marc Anthony and how they died due to getting strung over Cleopatra if you don't believe me.

The key is realizing that the idea that your beta male codependent identity is just as much a false, idealized self as your alpha male compensatory narcissist identity was. Your mistake was that you spent all this time thinking your only options were two false, idealized selves: one false self that told you that you were only worthy of love if you were a white knight, a problem fixer, a "nice guy" who puts the needs of others over himself and another false self that is a mythical alpha male superman with an aloof, unreactive, the prize, but who still secretly had a lot of the leftover validation-seeking pathologies of the white knight. That's the crisis

that underlies the whole PUA movement, and you can see it in *The Game* over and over.

Next is part 5, the finale. Advice to Bill of where to go from here.

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