



Together,  
*with* Trust and Creativity

**engage** is about ideas, the influences and behaviours that impact on all of us. For business growth, ideas need to be shared but by combining expertise, a partnership can become more specialised and successful.

Get in touch to see how our ideas can help bring out the best in your business.

Forbes Low

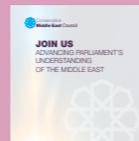


# engage

It's all about me!!!

## Design and brand specialists

- + annual reviews
- + branding
- + event marketing
- + logo design
- + infographics
- + website design



“ Whether working on a quick and simple job or a high quality prestigious project, I am always relaxed, safe in the knowledge that Forbes always achieves the agreed deadlines and maintains good communication throughout each job.”

Gary Crozier, Production Co-ordination Director, Marstan Press

- engage** with us by calling: **+44 780 110 2809**
- engage** with us by emailing: **forbes@forbesdesign.co.uk**
- engage** with us by viewing our work at: **www.forbesdesign.co.uk**
- engage** with us by watching our vlogs at: **www.forbesdesign.co.uk/expertise**

Member, Director and President of the Kingston Chamber of Commerce

**engage** It's all about me!!

**Editorial:** Forbes Low  
**Images:** Various, Getty Images, Shutterstock  
**Sources:** Psychology Today, The Guardian, The Independent  
**Printed and distributed by:** V3

While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, Forbes Design Associates does not accept liability for any errors or omissions in **engage**.



culture / 2018

## engage

culture / 2018

# It's all about me!!!

**The subject of narcissism has intrigued people for centuries, but social scientists now claim that it has become a modern "epidemic".**

**In this edition of engage, we take a brief look at what it is, what has led to its increase, and is there anything we can do about it?**



## The origins

The term narcissism originated more than 2,000 years ago, when Ovid wrote the legend of Narcissus.

He tells the story of a beautiful Greek hunter who, one day, happens to see his reflection in a pool of water and falls in love with it. He becomes obsessed with its beauty, and is unable to leave his reflected image until he dies. After his death, the flower narcissus grew where he lay.

Healthy narcissism is part of normal human functioning. It can represent healthy self-love and confidence that is based on real achievement, the ability to overcome setbacks and derive the support needed from social ties.

The problem however comes when the individual becomes preoccupied with the self, needing excessive admiration and approval from others, while showing disregard for other people's sensitivities.

There are examples everywhere. Donald Trump epitomises the lack of empathy, the self-regard and, critically, the radical overestimation of his own talents and likability. Katie Hopkins (left) personifies the perverse pride the narcissist takes in not caring for others. Terrible tragedies, such as the attacks on Paris, are appropriated by people thousands of miles away and used as a backdrop to showcase their sensitivity.



## Money, image and fame

**In a world where primetime television is dominated by a "reality" as false as the Kardashians' lashes, the rise in narcissism will not come as a surprise.**

It has become routine for celebrities to broadcast banal information and fill Instagram with the "moments" that constitute their day, nothing is mundane anymore. This delusion has spilt out to the non-celebrity; recording the most basic of events have become proof of importance. The dramatic rise in cosmetic surgery is part of the same effect; the celebrity fixates on his or her appearance to meet the fame game.

Much has been written about the rise of narcissism amongst millennials, the generation born in the 1980s and 1990s. What is more troubling though is that a few new studies show that millennials are more likely to value money, image and fame over community and self-acceptance.

The compelling evidence comes from *The Narcissism Epidemic*, in which the American academics Jean Twenge and Keith Campbell, found that narcissistic personality traits rose just as fast as obesity from the 1980s to the present, with the shift in women particularly marked.

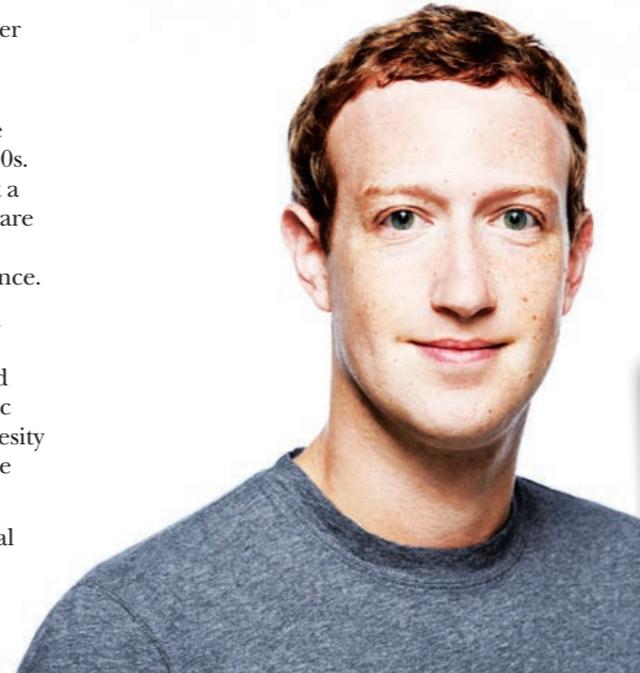
So who's to blame for this generational increase in narcissism?

## It's all Facebook's fault?

Can we pin all of this on to Mark Zuckerberg and the advent of Facebook? Over the last couple years, a plethora of research has been pouring in that makes connections between Facebook and narcissism.

In general, social media websites encourage self-promotion, as users generate all of the content. People often utilize Facebook to look important, look special and to gain attention and status and self-esteem. The trouble with this aspect of social networking is that nearly everyone presents an unrealistic portrait of themselves.

Recent studies of undergraduates across the country have shown that "students who were more involved with Facebook were more likely to think other people's lives were happier and better." Heavy Facebook users were also more likely to negatively compare themselves to others and feel worse about themselves.



## Indulgence at home

While Facebook is certainly a platform for narcissists, it is a mistake to assume that Facebook alone has caused this spike in narcissism.

As researcher Shawn Bergman pointed out, "There is a significant amount of psychological research that shows that one's personality is fairly well-established by age 7," given that Facebook's policy doesn't allow users to register until age 13 "the personality traits of typical users are fairly well-ingrained by the time they get on a social network."

The truth is the rise in narcissism among millennials may have less to do with our social networks online and more to do with lax and indulgent parenting.

Throughout the last few decades, there has been an increase in parental coddling and the so-called "self-esteem" movement. Parents and teachers trying to instill a healthy sense of self-esteem in children by praising them lavishly often do more harm than good.

In fact, studies show that children offered compliments for a skill they have not mastered or talents that they do not have are left feeling emptier and more insecure. Only when children are praised for real accomplishments are they able to build actual self-esteem.



## What next?

**While it is certain that online forms of communication and social networks do affect individual's mental health, the solutions mainly lie elsewhere.**

Only by being less self-obsessed and placing more value on personal relating can we impart these values to the next generation. The interesting thing, as their prevalence increases, will be seeing whether society rebels against or accommodates narcissistic traits.

"There's a natural human tendency to think that things are getting worse, or at least they're not getting better, and you have to fight that tendency," says American academic Jean Twenge. "But you also have to fight the tendency to stick your head in the sand and say: 'The kids are great and there's nothing wrong.'"