

Are Psychopaths Ill or Evil?

The Psychopath is Emotionally Disturbed, With No Conscience

Sep 2, 2009 [Paula Marie Deubel](#)

A psychopath is someone unable to feel remorse and therefore has no conscience.

Psychopaths suffer from major emotional deficits and do not experience real love or empathy. They may appear to be sensitive, but are only concerned with their own selfish needs. Capable of basic drives and moods (frustration, rage, lust), they are easily bored and recklessly seek ways to escape their emptiness. Yet they can be personable, disarming, and strangely electric. Driven by passionless intensity burning within a hollow core, their staged acts continually defy and confuse people.

Psychopaths Appear Normal

The world imagines psychopaths as crazed killers within horror stories, but most are not murderers. They are, however, capable of killing the spirit and can literally destroy the sanity of those involved with them.

Psychopaths can and do kill without remorse depending on individual natures and personal taste, yet most do not resort to that (if they don't have to). Most are not in prison, although prisons are full of psychopaths. The psychopath, according to latest research, is just as likely to be the neighbor.

Psychopaths Abound?

Dr. Martha Stout, author of *The Sociopath Next Door* (2005), claims one in every twenty-five Americans is a psychopath (though how such frightful data was confirmed is not thoroughly explained), meaning it's very difficult to go through life without meeting at least one. One might encounter a psychopath during a long flight home from somewhere (they usually make very interesting conversationalists) or at a bus stop on a lonely night.

Psychopaths can appear absolutely anywhere, on any continent, even within the family, or perhaps materialize as a magnetic stranger who is perceptive and a very good listener. Who would not be initially attracted? One might love a psychopath (usually with anguish), but they never love back. Some are world leaders who secretly desire the exhilaration of power. Found in every epoch and culture, a psychopath is someone hard to detect and sometimes fools the best detectives.

Personality is not Character

The psychopath proves judging strangers by personality is misleading and that true character is often difficult to know.

Many psychopaths have wonderful personalities, though all lack in character. This is not immediately obvious. For example, Ann Rule was close friend of serial killer, Ted Bundy for years before she could bring herself to admit he was guilty of horrendous crimes. She described him as one of the nicest men she knew.

The Dangerous Allure/Relationships with Psychopaths

Lacking anxiety (the low levels arise from emotional deficits, and the reason why some pass lie detector tests), the psychopath is very smooth. His/her innate narcissism bestows the natural confidence that attracts people. Underneath is an expert of deception, mind games, and manipulation who can easily explode into rage without provocation; their blood is hot; the heart, icy cold. Though generally lacking in fear, their tendency to put their own safety first can make them cowardly.

Substance abuse or sexual addiction is symptomatic of this disorder, though may also be carefully hidden. A psychopath is grand master of disguise. He must not reveal himself, otherwise who would tolerate him (and he requires others to gratify insatiable needs). It's always disaster for him to come out of the closet, so there's really no other social choice.

Psychopaths are handicapped people but have unique compensatory advantages. They don't feel the "wasted" pain of emotion any more than love's significance. What is evil to others is neutral to him.

Superstitions/Misconceptions

Psychopaths are frequently described as soulless and empty. Conversely, they're also described as dark, demonic entities, or lurking vampires who suck a victim dry in the dank graveyard of their souls.

But is this description true?

Evil is not a mental illness, nor is psychopathy per se, yet history's favorite deviants (such as schizophrenics) were traditionally considered demon-possessed. They were chained and treated cruelly because of chemical imbalances within the brain that are successfully treated today. Contemporary psychology reports treating psychopathy is basically hopeless and yields very poor results (but the same was once said of mental illness).

Many psychopaths had normal childhoods, others were victims of unbelievable trauma or suffered early head injuries making it likely psychopathy is at least partially organic, or genetic, in nature. Neurology may hold the key to future treatment. Indeed, increased neurological research regarding this disorder is on the horizon, and its treatment could prove the greatest leap forward in the evolution of human society.

Psychopaths endanger civilization and see nothing wrong with their amoral acts, yet did not (consciously) choose this disorder. The psychopath is innately blinded. Presenting as mentally healthy, the emotional part of his being – for whatever reasons – is dying, or dead. A psychopath is not complete and cannot help who he is (or isn't), although still can be accountable for his actions.

Society's scariest ogre, he's nevertheless a human capable of knowing loneliness and pain. He must live either clandestinely, or as a hated pariah, depending on how well he cloaks the awful secret of who he is. Bereft of any meaningful emotional life, he functions inwardly with great limits.

"The current picture of the psychopath, which is reflected in the leading diagnostic criteria of psychopathy offered by Checkley (1982) and Hare et al. (1990), is incomplete because emotional suffering and loneliness are ignored. When these aspects are considered, our conception of the psychopath goes beyond the heartless and becomes more human," according to *The Hidden Suffering of the Psychopath*, by Willem H.J. Martens, M.D., Ph.D.

Ironically, the psychopath can inspire others to better appreciate a gift he, sadly, cannot steal or possess - love - perhaps if he had been given a choice, he would covet the richness of conscience.

Confusing Definitions

Psychopathy falls within the range of personality disorders. Definitions (and symptoms) remain very conflicted, confused, and blurred, perhaps because no individual falls narrowly within any clear-cut label. Narcissism has been theorized (although not proven) to be a milder form.

Debate continues whether psychopathy is absolute and clear cut, or exists on a spectrum (with varying degrees of individual pathology). Psychopathy, sociopathy and anti-personality disorder have been used interchangeably, but all three describe somebody without conscience. Obviously, full data is unknown and remains a mystery.

Sources:

- *Without Conscience*, Robert D. Hare, 1993.
- *The Stranger Beside Me*, Ann Rule, 1980.
- *The Hidden Suffering of the Psychopath*, Willem H.J. Martens, M.D., Ph.D.
- *The Sociopath Next Door*, Dr. Martha Stout, 2005

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