

The light triad



PROGRESS
PSYCHOTHERAPY

Compassion for humanity is important as it gives us hope, reduces anxiety and improves mood. But if you have had negative experiences your view of humanity may be different, influenced by those events. There are two models of traits and considering which is more common in humans will be a useful reflection.

The dark triad are the 3 personality traits most associated with negative or abusive behaviour. They are-

Psychopathy- that people do not usually emotionally value/ empathise with you. They see you in practical terms like what they can get from you.

Narcissism- People have different value and tend to compete for status so may be abusive to get status or control. If some are better than others you may see yourself as having low value (or think others see you this way).

Machiavianism- People play games. You need to be wary of manipulation or exploitation.

Believing the darkest parts of humanity are common enough to worry about rather than exceptions to the rule has been associated with a number of poor mental health outcomes. This includes anxiety, fear of relationships, poor self-esteem (thinking you are that way) and depression. But there is a more compassionate way to consider people.

The light triad



PROGRESS
PSYCHOTHERAPY

More recent research has tried to define the traits most associated with prosocial or altruistic behaviour. The light triad is made up of-

Kantianism- The idea that relationships are "ends in themselves". This means that people value each other simply because of their emotional connections. While they may like getting a favor the connection is their primary motivation.

Humanism- the idea that humans have value just because they exist. This doesn't ignore that some have higher social status than others. It just recognises that everyone has something valueable about them.

Belief in humanity- the idea that people generally want to be good, kind or empathetic. They won't always be (potentially due to their own issues) but we aspire to be this way and most people usually are.

Reflect on this concept- people who you have encountered that show more dark triad traits tend to take up a lot of space in your mind. But are they the majority? What do people generally tend to be like? How many people display the dark triad by comparison to the light? Can dark triad behaviours be explained by that persons practical or psychological context rather than thinking that's what people are like? If these reflections can improve your anxiety, mood, self-esteem and relationships then this is a method to increase compassion for humanity and gain