

**Do Ask, Do Tell?
Narcissistic Need as a Determinant of Analyst Self-Disclosure**

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Abstract

Over the course of the past twenty years, psychoanalysis has gradually been evolving from a one to two person psychology that examines not just the mind of the patient but that of the analyst as well. In large part as a result of this more expansive way of thinking, we find ourselves holding on to a more flexible, less fixed frame. With this freedom comes greater opportunity for efficacy, but also uncertainty, anxiety and greater responsibility. With the advent of Relational theory and as part of this newer way of thinking about clinical work, there is a growing body of literature on the technical considerations of analyst self-disclosure. Related and also still innovative is an expanding discussion of the analyst's subjectivity and how this affects the treatment. Sometimes these threads inform each other, and we have some quite excellent, usually first person writing on countertransference and other personality factors that affect the decision to disclose. Largely missing from this conversation though is an examination of particular aspects of the clinician's psychology that prevent self-disclosure where it might otherwise be indicated. More specifically, we're missing a discussion of the analyst's "normal" narcissistic needs, issues, and self regulatory functions that can either lead to ill advised disclosures or, conversely, inhibit sharing that might be needed. Referring to the classical literature but with an emphasis on more contemporary perspectives, this paper will explore theoretical and clinical material in order to gain a better understanding of the analyst's psychology, how this affects the tendency to disclose or refrain, and what this may teach us about our work with patients.

For a copy of the complete paper, please write to StevenKuchuck@aol.com.

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