

## **Open Your Class With This Tomorrow- *When Men Behave Badly: The Hidden Roots of Sexual Deception, Harassment, and Assault***

### **The Dark Versus the Light Triad**

David Buss explains that the Dark Triad is a set of characteristics that lead to manipulative and unhealthy relationships. Learn more about the Dark Triad below.

### **Characteristics of the Dark Triad**



#### **Machiavellianism**

Machiavellianism is the personality trait of being unprincipled and manipulative, cynical, and an acceptance of "by whatever means necessary." It is named after the Italian Renaissance political philosopher Niccolò Machiavelli who argued that it was good for politicians to be deceitful because it made them more effective.

#### **Narcissism**

Narcissism is the personality trait of vanity, self-superiority, entitlement, dominance, and a craving for admiration and submission from others. People high in narcissism believe that they deserve more than anybody else because they are better than everybody else. The trait is named after a character from Roman poetry who fell in love with his own reflection.

#### **Psychopathy**

Psychopathy is the personality trait of having low levels of empathy and high levels of impulsivity. It is a persistent pattern of deviant behavior and a disregard for others. Psychopathy is the trait most closely connected to criminal behavior.

Video on explaining how to neutralize the characteristics of the Dark Triad:  
<https://www.mindtools.com/au5148p/understanding-the-dark-triad>

### **Characteristics of the Light Triad**

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The Light Triad was developed by Scott Barry Kaufman, David Yaden, Elizabeth Hyde, and Eli Tsukayama (2019). The Light Triad represent three different trait dimensions that serve as a counterpoint to the Dark Triad of personality. Kaufman and his team describe four studies that included more than 1,500 participants. Their analyses revealed three strong and distinct “factors” among the 12 items they included in their scale to assess traits on the Light Triad. This essentially means that these items comprise three subscales.

**Faith in Humanity:** The belief that generally speaking, humans are good.

**Humanism:** The belief that humans across all backgrounds are deserving of respect and appreciation.

**Kantianism:** The belief that others should be treated as ends in and of themselves and not as pawns in one’s own game.

One might think that the Light Triad would be the opposite of the Dark Triad, corresponding to scoring low on the Dark Triad. Interestingly, this is not exactly the case. Research indicates the total Dark Triad and Light Triad scores demonstrated a correlation of  $-.48$ . This is what we call a “moderate, negative correlation.” This pretty much means that these variables are negatively correlated to each other, as we’d expect, but they are not fully the converse of one another.

The Light Triad was associated with being older, being female, having less childhood unpredictability, as well as higher levels of religiosity, spirituality, life satisfaction, acceptance of others, belief that others are good, belief that one’s self is good, compassion, empathy, openness to experience, conscientiousness and positive enthusiasm. Individuals scoring higher on the Light Triad Scale also reported more satisfaction with their relationships, competence and autonomy and higher levels of secure attachment style. In general, the Light Triad was related to being primarily

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motivated by intimacy and self-transcendent values. Many character strengths correlated with the Light Triad, including curiosity, perspective, zest, love, kindness, teamwork, forgiveness and gratitude.

## **Case Studies**

**Directions:** Read the following case studies and explain the specific characteristics of the Light Triad the individuals displayed in their actions.

### **The Dali Lama**

The Dalai Lama has repeatedly emphasized the importance of empathy and compassion in human life. He has also written extensively on the need for religious tolerance and has worked to promote interfaith dialog between different religions. In addition, the Dalai Lama has advocated for gender equality and has spoken out against violence against women.

## **Characteristics of the Light Triad**

### **Mahatma Gandhi**

Gandhi was a political leader in India who fought for India's independence from British rule. He is best known for his philosophy of nonviolent resistance, which he used to great effect in leading protests against British policies in India. Gandhi was also a committed advocate for religious tolerance and worked to promote Hindu-Muslim unity. In addition, Gandhi was a strong supporter of women's rights and spoke out against the practice of child marriage.

## **Characteristics of the Light Triad**

### **Nelson Mandela**

Mandela was a political leader in South Africa who fought against the country's system of apartheid and the separation and oppression of black South Africans. After spending 27 years in prison, Mandela was released and went on to lead the country as its first black president. During his time in office, Mandela worked to promote racial reconciliation and forgiveness. He also spoke out against gender violence and worked to promote women's rights. Mandela's work ending apartheid can be said to have embodied faith in humanity as well as humanism.

## **Characteristics of the Light Triad**

## **Your Turn.....**

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Create a story about a fictional character (or a character from television or movies) that demonstrates all three characteristics of the Light Triad.

If you want to learn more, you can click on this link to take the Light Triad Test.

<https://www.idrlabs.com/light-triad/test.php>

### **Sources**

<https://www.discovermagazine.com/mind/the-light-triad-psychologists-outline-the-personality-traits-of-everyday-saints>

<https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/beautiful-minds/the-light-triad-vs-dark-triad-of-personality/>

<https://www.simplypsychology.org/light-triad-personality.html>

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