



“Why is it that simply looking different from others is such a challenge?”

Nathaniel Lambert, Ph.D.

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Startling behavioral science.

by Rebecca Coffey



Rebecca Coffey is a science journalist and broadcast commentator with Vermont Public Radio. [more...](#)

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It's narcissists who are also perfectionists.

Published on May 2, 2014 by Rebecca Coffey in The Bejeezus Out of Me

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Call it their own Snopes.com sleuthing. But hearing again and again that narcissistic self-absorption and perfectionistic striving fuel the current boom in cosmetic surgery, researchers at Canada's Dalhousie University decided to poke around a bit in the assumptions. To do so, they recruited 305 undergraduate women, and had each one complete tried-and-true diagnostic questionnaires returning measures of narcissism and perfectionism, along with one measuring interest in cosmetic surgery.

The researchers discovered that neither narcissism nor perfectionism predicted interest in cosmetic surgery. However, women scoring high on measures for both diagnoses showed the strongest interest in cosmetic surgery of any women in the study.

The implications of this study may be profound—for plastic surgeons. The authors speculate that cosmetic surgeons' patients may be grandiose and demanding to a fault—and, by diagnosis, "nearly impossible to satisfy," no matter how objectively successful their cosmetic surgery was.

Next up: How would 305 cosmetic surgeons perform on measures of depression, anger, and desire for a new career?

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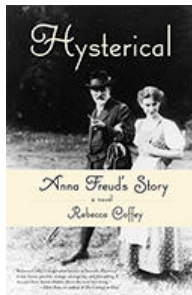
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By day Rebecca Coffey is a science journalist, contributing to *Scientific American*, *Discover*, and Vermont Public Radio. She also presents a weekly radio spot, Family Friendly Science, on the nationally syndicated show, Daybreak USA. By night she is a novelist and humorist. *Hysterical: Anna Freud's Story* is due out in May 2014 from She Writes Press. *Nietzsche's Angel Food Cake: And Other "Recipes" for the Intellectually Famished* was published in October 2013 by Beck & Branch.

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