

The dangers of being led by Psychopaths

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Wikipedia defines a psychopath as “traditionally a personality disorder characterized by persistent antisocial behaviour, impaired empathy and remorse, and bold, disinhibited, and egotistical traits. It is sometimes considered synonymous with sociopathy.” Psychopaths are causing a lot of havoc in organisations due to their style of management. They often rise to leadership roles because they have a chameleon character that allows them to wiggle past interview and manoeuvres within the corporate career paths.

What are the signs of a psychopathic personality?

Robert Hare developed the Psychopath checklist mainly for clinical settings. Here are some of the characteristics of a psychopath as per his checklist:

- Glibness/superficial charm, Egocentricity/grandiose sense of self-worth, Proneness to boredom/low frustration tolerance, Pathological lying and deception, Conning/lack of sincerity, lack of remorse or guilt, lack of affect and emotional depth, Callous/lack of empathy, Parasitic lifestyle, Short-tempered/poor behavioural controls, Promiscuous sexual relations, Lack of realistic long-term plans, Impulsivity, Irresponsible behaviour as a parent, Frequent marital relationships, failure to accept responsibility for own actions

What percentage of people are psychopaths?

Wikipedia reports that Robert Hare found “that about 1 per cent of the general population meets the clinical criteria for psychopathy. Hare further claims that the prevalence of psychopaths is higher in the business world than in the general population. Figures of around 3–4% have been cited for more senior positions in business. A 2011 study of Australian white-collar managers found that 5.76 per cent could be classed as psychopathic and another 10.42 per cent dysfunctional with psychopathic characteristics”

What the prevalence of psychopaths among politicians?

A study published in the Social Science Research Network showed that 99.9% of all politicians in the USA are actual psychopaths. If that is true, that is a disaster. What could be the prevalence of this personality disorder among politicians from other countries?

What Percentage of CEOs are psychopaths?

Research numbers point to a varying number. A study in the USA shows that the prevalence of psychopath among CEOs could be as high as 20%. The prevalence in other executives besides the CEO ranges from 8% to 12%. There is, however, no consensus on these stats as more research is being done

to establish stable estimates

What are the characteristics of psychopathic leadership?

When psychopaths get into leadership roles, they can cause havoc. Such people do not care about other people. They rejoice when other people are suffering. The fact that they are not capable of empathy and guiltiness makes them worse. Do not expect a change from them, they will never see themselves as wrong. They are cunning and ruthless. They set people against each other as long it serves their purpose. They crush everyone blocking what they want to do.

The tragedy, especially for the corporate world, is that their charismatic demeanour makes them favourites for leadership roles. They are often perceived as very clever because the majority of them are articulate. In job interviews, they get higher ratings because often they know how to sell themselves.

Research has shown that all psychopathic leaders also have narcissistic traits. They only think about themselves and how to advance their interests. They crave for attention and they will do everything to show off their power and other possessions. Their offices are decorated with personal memorabilia, to show off who they are.

When leading others they do not brook anyone challenging their authority. Should that happen they will make life difficult for that challenger. They accuse opponents of various misdemeanours in order to get rid of them. When they communicate they use more “I’s” than “We”.

It is important to note that psychopaths in the business world are drawn to organisations by the desire for power, prestige and money. Psychopaths are a big threat to business, especially its long term survival because they put their interest ahead of that of the organisation. They are more interested in building an internal empire within the business rather than looking at the long term benefits to the business.

What profession has the most psychopaths?

Professions with the most psychopaths
CEO.
Lawyer.
Media (TV/radio)
Salesperson.
Surgeon.
Journalist.

Police officer.

Clergy.

What causes someone to become a psychopath?

Psychopathy is a personality disorder. As you may be aware, personality is a permanent disposition, it is largely hereditary and partly childhood experience. This makes it impossible to correct. The best way to avoid having psychopaths in your organisation is to screen them at entry.

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