I’m a narcissistic personality,” Steven Huprich, president-elect of the International Society for the Study of Personality Disorders, is quoted as saying.

Are narcissists made or born? Both, Webber’s experts say. Narcissism begins in the genes but it is developed — or controlled — by influences including parenting styles and formative relationships.

The general culture is also part of the mix. Lifetime rates of NPD are four times as high in famously competitive New York than in Iowa. Parents should not be afraid to help their kids develop a healthy sense of self-esteem, but rather than encouraging them to be “the best,” it’s preferable that they be “the best that they can be.”

And what about those supposedly narcissistic millennials? Nah. People are always more narcissistic when they’re young: “It’s a self-absorbed stage of life,” says Emily Bianchi, a professor at Emory University. Her research indicates that people who face difficult issues during their youth develop a healthy sense of their limitations that fends off narcissism later in life. Which would mean that millennials, “still struggling to establish themselves during a slowly recovering economy,” might end up less narcissistic than their elders in the long run.

Finally, what about that narcissistic ex-boyfriend? Don’t be so quick to use the label. “Whenever couples are in high conflict, they become more self-centered,” Malkin says. “Rage makes narcissists of us all.”

This reading had a lot of interesting though difficult vocabulary. Let’s try to guess the vocabulary in bold using synonyms. Check your answer with a partner.

1. But is narcissism really more prevalent than before? Psychologists’ consensus, she says, is no. The condition called narcissistic personality disorder, or NPD, affects only about 1 percent of the population, a figure that has remained about the same since the term was established in 1968.

2. They are normal individuals with healthy egos who may also happen to indulge in the occasional selfie and talk about their accomplishments.

3. But while we’re diagnosing friends, relatives, and our kids’ classmates, true pathological narcissists may be evading detection.

4. For example, some true narcissists are obsessed with helping other people — kind of self-aggrandizement through martyrdom.

5. Other narcissists might have so damaged a sense of self that they cannot handle criticism and become highly introverted.

6. When faced with a setback such as job loss or divorce, the true narcissist — rather than being buoyed by a strong ego — is often devastated by fear of being weak and vulnerable.
7. But such people rarely understand the root of their problem. “I’ve never heard anyone say, ‘I think I’m a narcissistic personality...’”

8. And what about those supposedly narcissistic millennials? Nah. People are always more narcissistic when they’re young...

9. Narcissism begins in the genes but it is developed — or controlled — by influences including parenting styles and formative relationships.

10. “Most (but not all) putative narcissists today are innocent victims of an overused label,” she writes.

11. Her research indicates that people who face difficult issues during their youth develop a healthy sense of their limitations that fends off narcissism later in life.

12. Which would mean that millennials, “still struggling to establish themselves during a slowly recovering economy,” might end up less narcissistic than their elders in the long run.

13. Finally, what about that narcissistic ex-boyfriend? Don’t be so quick to use the label.

### 2.2 Comprehension Questions

**Answer the questions according to the article. Paraphrase your answer.**

1. Why can overuse of the term “narcissist” be a problem?

2. Can NPD be treated?

3. What would a true narcissist do if they were criticized?

4. How is narcissism created?
5. Why do narcissists love helping other people?

6. Are millennials narcissistic? Why / why not?

7. What can make a significant other seem narcissistic?