

**Shrink Rap Radio #654, August 14, 2019, Why We Elect Narcissists and Sociopaths**

**David Van Nuys, Ph.D., aka “Dr. Dave” interviews Bill Eddy, LCSW**

(transcribed from [www.ShrinkRapRadio.com](http://www.ShrinkRapRadio.com) by Susan Rosenbaum)

**Introduction:** My guest today, Bill Eddy, LCSW, JD, is a lawyer, therapist, and author of the 2019 book *Why We Elect Narcissists and Sociopaths—and How We Can Stop*. For more information about Bill Eddy, please see our show notes at [ShrinkRapRadio.com](http://ShrinkRapRadio.com). Today’s episode is brought to you by [BetterHelp.com](http://BetterHelp.com), the premier site for online therapy. Now, here’s the interview.

**Dr. Dave:** Billy Eddy, welcome to Shrink Rap Radio.

**Bill Eddy:** Thank you so much, glad to be on.

**Dr. Dave:** Well we’re going to be discussing your 2019 book *Why We Elect Narcissists and Sociopaths—and How We Can Stop*. But before we get into that, you’re both an attorney and you have a degree in social work, and another in psychology. That’s a lot of degrees. What was the order that those came in?

**Eddy:** Well, I got my bachelor’s majoring in psychology, so that’s where I started, always fascinated with psychology. Now ten years later, I got a master’s in social work which I used primarily to do child and family counseling. And then about ten years later, I decided that I really like conflict resolution and so I got a law degree so that I could really help families as well as other types of disputes get resolved—hopefully out of court—but solving legal problems, so that’s the order. So, I like to say my formative years were in mental health and social work.

**Dr. Dave:** Well, I noticed those ten-year intervals and so in a sense it feels like you’re maybe a late bloomer.

**Eddy:** Well, it’s interesting, it wasn’t a planned path, but each step of the way kind of eventually led to the next step. And it actually all built on each other. So, I feel pretty good about it looking back.

**Dr. Dave:** Well how did a nice guy like you become interested in narcissists and sociopaths?

**Eddy:** Well, what’s interesting is I was studying and getting my master’s in social work to do child and family counseling in 1980, that’s when my training was, and that’s when

the DSM-3 came out, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, and where I was working they had some of the people involved with developing that come and give us a training. And so, personality disorders always particularly got my attention, especially when some of the children I was working with had parents with personality disorders. So that kind of set me on that path of awareness.

**Dr. Dave:** So, you identified a personality type of your own, I guess, and you labeled it the high-conflict personality or HCP for short, so how did that come about?

**Eddy:** Well, it's very interesting, because that's really the core of what I've become, I think, is working with focusing on that. When I made the transition from therapist-social worker to lawyer, I focused on family law and also family mediation because I really like helping people stay out of court. And what I realized is in doing my mediations, people are solving problems, parenting schedules, child support, spousal support, all of that, but I'd go to court it was the exact same issues but people would be fighting like it was a life or death issue: half an hour of parenting time or 20 dollars of child support. And what I realized is I was seeing what I saw as a mental health professional in legal disputes, but all the lawyers, judges, mediators, didn't recognize that, and it really either was personality disorders or people with traits of personality disorders. And so, the key aspects I noticed are: they were preoccupied with blaming others, they took zero responsibility, and that's what I'd seen with personality disorders in a psychiatric hospital outpatient clinic. I said, wait a minute; this is a problem we're familiar as mental health professionals. We need to educate legal professionals and I started talking about it to legal professionals. They said, what the heck is personality disorder and how is that relevant? But at the same time, there was the term high-conflict families that was starting to be talked about in family law cases, and I said, well it's not so much high-conflict families as there may be an individual, like it may be mom or it may be dad, has a high-conflict personality and that's driving the whole family dispute. So, I started recognizing this pattern and found it much easier to talk about as high-conflict personalities or HCPs. The legal profession really took to that, and the mental health profession seemed to like it because I wasn't diagnosing people with a personality disorder or other mental health disorder; it's just a pattern of conflict behavior. It's not a diagnosis; it's just descriptive.

**Dr. Dave:** So, I imagine that in your approach to family therapy that you learned about the phenomenon of the identified patient and that often there's a tendency to want to blame one person, but that it's later thinking sort of said, wait a second there's a whole system here that needs to be looked at. So, it seems like your HCP might be in conflict with that.

**Eddy:** Well, it's a very good point you're making, and the resolution to me is to really approach this similarly to alcoholism and addiction, where you have an individual in a family whose alcoholism or addiction is really driving a lot of family problems, but the whole family's reinforcing it and the whole family has to change to help this person get

clean and sober. And it's not judgmental; it's a treatment approach. And so I've tried to take a family systems approach in dealing with high-conflict personalities and I take this to court and I say, Your Honor, whenever there's a high-conflict situation, one person says the other is just a terrible person acting really badly, you have to have three theories: maybe that's true, maybe it's not true and it's the person saying that, or maybe it's both parents. And so, we need to take a whole big picture approach and teach the whole family skills to manage better these problems. So, whether they have a high-conflict personality or they don't, they need to learn the same skills and practice the same methods, so that's influenced my thinking a lot. I developed a method called New Ways for Families based on a systems approach to individuals with high-conflict behavior.

**Dr. Dave:** And I suppose you never identified the person with that label; you never said Jane is an HCP.

**Eddy:** No, and I write that at the front of my books. I say, don't use this information to publicly label someone. You can have a private working theory and it's a working theory because you want to adapt your approach. If you're dealing with a high-conflict person, then you need to try not to push for insight, but to look at choices. You don't want to focus on the past and arguing who did what when, focus on your choices going forward, not to have emotional confrontations, and not to tell them you're a high-conflict person or have a personality disorder. I call it the four forget-about-its.

**Dr. Dave:** And so, while your theory initially received some resistance from the legal profession and from the mental health profession, there were some obstacles you had to overcome, eventually your HCP theory began to gain enough acceptance that you've built a whole consulting company around it. Tell us about that. It looks like a very large and successful company, tell us about that if you will.

**Eddy:** Well it actually sprang out of after I wrote my first book, *High Conflict People in Legal Disputes*, I started getting requests from lawyers' associations, from judges for trainings; they said, what do we do with these cases? And so, I was giving these trainings and I was giving one in Arizona, and the organizer said, well, you know, I've been working with family law administratively for 15 years and I really want to promote training; why don't we develop a partnership? And so, we did. And in January of 2008, we founded High Conflict Institute as a partnership to really train legal professionals in dealing with high-conflict disputes and all the nuances: how to have empathy for people, how to not be judgmental, how to solve a lot of this out of court. We've trained hundreds of mediators, thousands of lawyers, probably thousands of judges by now. And so, we've got a dozen speakers and we do trainings all over the world actually, mostly in the U.S. and Canada. But we don't really promote ourselves. People find us and ask us, will you come and talk to us and explain this?

**Dr. Dave:** That's great, that's the kind of business to have.  
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**Eddy:** Yeah, so we're 12 years old now and really going strong and the need for this knowledge is so wide. Now we're talking to businesses, human resources, government agencies, volunteer organizations, churches, and political groups; they now want to understand this. So, it's really a widespread problem and people are just slowly kind of becoming aware of it.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, so your book targets narcissists and sociopaths and I'm wondering how do those two categories relate to the HCP. Are they one and the same? Is there overlap? What's the relationship?

**Eddy:** Yeah, there's overlap. People are really familiar with the idea of narcissists today but often, pretty superficially. They think, well, a narcissist is self-centered, whenever we have a conversation, they're going to want to talk about themselves. Okay, and that tends to be true, but there's a lot of complications that come with that when it reaches an extreme level. And so, some key characteristics: most narcissists want nothing to do with running the world, they just want to run their work group, or their neighborhood, or their family. But some want to be on top in the world. And so those are driven—and some of them are driven into business and some are driven into politics, but I think it's important to think of narcissists as a dysfunctional behavior. In other words, some people talk about healthy narcissism. I think it confuses things. I think it's better to say there's healthy confidence, healthy drive, but when it becomes narcissistic it means there's a problem: the person doesn't learn, they don't adapt, and they really lack empathy for others, and that's key when they become political leaders. They also have these grandiose ideas which may not be based in reality at all but they can be very persuasive with these. So, they lack empathy, grandiose ideas, they want to be on top, they want to be seen as superior, and they have fantasies of unlimited power. And that's part of where they become dangerous.

Now, HCPs, high-conflict personalities, there are four characteristics: they're preoccupied with blaming others—they don't take responsibility, they have lots of all or nothing thinking and solutions, they have unmanaged emotions which often throw them way off track, and extreme behaviors—they tend to do some things that 90% of people would never do. When you combine that with a drive for unlimited power, that can become potentially dangerous because of their targets of blame. But if you add that overlap with sociopath, or anti-social personalities, that personality is highly aggressive, highly deceitful, lying and conning people, driven to dominate other people—push them around, move them around, separate them from each other, and a lack of remorse, so they really don't care. So, you put together these three—some people have this overlap of all three—that becomes dangerous because they target people; they're very aggressive and they want unlimited power.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, you're already moving into the political arena. I'm wondering if HCPs tend to gravitate towards certain professions, so clearly politics is one. Are there others where they tend to crop up?

**Eddy:** Well, I would say in business we see this combination—especially Wall Street—where you see people. They loving blaming other people, we're going to destroy that company and replace them with our company, and you hear that kind of language. I think politics and business appeals to this combination. But I do want to caution, HCPs itself, high conflict personalities, pop up everywhere. They're in families, neighborhoods, work groups, and they often are dangerous in the sense that people with political power are dangerous, but they lack empathy, lack remorse so that they may not, you know, say in a family, they may be the people that sometimes engage in domestic violence, maybe spread rumors, lie, etc. So, HCP is very common, just people haven't put the dots together, but I'm trying to teach that.

But there's a combination of HCP, narcissist and sociopath, that wants power—that's much, much less common. But I would say we see some of that in places where people can have power. So, there's a sprinkling of that in the mental health professions, certainly a sprinkling of that in legal professions. We see that in Hollywood, some people make or break other people's careers. The whole #MeToo movement, I think is a response to people like this that wanted to have unlimited power over women in the field. We see this a little bit, a sprinkling of this, in the military and the police, anywhere where people can have power over other people attracts these folks. We're seeing them in churches, we're seeing them in new age movements. There's a sprinkling of these folks in many places, most people aren't like that in these groups and that's why they get so far, they catch people by surprise.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, you know an example, some names came to mind, in relationship to industry leaders such as Steve Jobs, Jeff Bezos, Mark Zuckerberg, Elon Musk. Now these I would think would be recognized as high-conflict personalities. I wouldn't think they'd be—well, we know that they're not they're not easy to get along with. But on the other hand, they've made huge—most people would say—positive contributions. So, how about that, the flip side?

**Eddy:** It's confusing. One of my favorites is Steve Jobs because he had such a terrible reputation throughout Silicon Valley. He would fire people in a meeting, humiliate people, he would burst into tears. He was just like a three-year-old at times. And what's interesting is I'm comfortable saying that someone like that is an HCP. I don't say whether someone has a personality disorder or not. As a mental health professional, I shouldn't diagnose someone I've never met. But I can say it's clearly observable conflict behavior, HCP. Was he also narcissistic? Maybe some traits—that's not a mental health diagnosis, just some traits. I think what you see is there's some people who are kind of on the edge, and the biggest difference – and I've really been studying this a lot the last 10 years – is who's around that person? And Steve Jobs actually put together people to be around him who kept him from going too far. They would take him out of the building for a walk—he wanted to eliminate a whole division when something didn't work out and they'd say, Steve, we need to go for a walk. And they'd come back from the walk and go okay, I'm not going to eliminate that division. But we see that with some of the behavior of these other high-tech leaders. Keep in mind the

sociopathic piece is the highly aggressive, and when there's a new arena the first people that dive into it often are highly aggressive and maybe on the edge of sociopathic behavior, but certainly HCPs.

**Dr. Dave:** Well let's get into your book. Part one of your book deals with how narcissists and sociopaths get elected. Take us through that dynamic as you understand it.

**Eddy:** Okay, well there's really several parts to this. The first is the high-conflict personality. When people want to be powerful and they have these traits of narcissists and sociopaths as well—and I looked at eleven different examples in the last hundred years—one piece is they're highly aggressive, and they really want attention. They have a drive to get attention and, interestingly enough, they are constantly talking. People don't realize how important it is that they're constantly talking because as they constantly talk, they're shaping the thinking of the people around them. Even the people that don't like them absorb—it's like advertising—so they're like walking advertisements for themselves.

Now you take that, and that's where I start the book, high-conflict politicians. Then they have a dynamic, high conflict emotional warfare. Unlike most people in groups, you don't attack people in your group, you criticize people far away, you criticize the other team. High conflict people attack the people in their group and they gain power by doing that. And in families that shocks people, in the workplace that shocks people. But even in politics—Ronald Reagan famously said Republicans shouldn't attack Republicans. Well, that went out the window certainly over the last few years. But the idea is they attack the people in their group; they gain power by doing that.

Then, they have this pattern—I call it the fantasy crisis triad—that they have to have a crisis because they don't have problem solving skills. So, what they have to do is get people into crisis mode. If there's a crisis, people don't think as logically in a crisis, they absorb emotions. There's a lot of research on the brain and anxiety. The more anxious you are, the more you absorb emotions and the most emotional person dominates the group. So, they say there's a terrible crisis—usually it's not a real crisis, maybe it's a problem, but not a crisis—and they say it's a terrible crisis and there's an evil villain, and every one of these eleven leaders has an evil villain that they attack with their high verbal outflow and people start thinking, oh that's an evil villain. And they say, but it's okay folks because I'm a superhero; I will save you from the villain. I will fix the crisis and everything will be wonderful. And so, they have this pattern of using the fantasy crisis triad to persuade people to follow them.

Now there's one more piece, so we've already got three pieces here: their personality, they attack people within their group and that terrifies and gives them power, the fantasy crisis triad. The other big piece that's the change in the last few years is high-emotion media. And by high-emotion media I especially mean television, I mean Facebook, Twitter, YouTube all of that—it's very visual, and frankly, the first people that got into using some of these new media like Twitter are high-conflict people. And so, you only hear their point of view and it shapes your thinking and it shapes a whole community's thinking because it has a viral capacity to reach

everybody repetitively, over and over again. And because they talk 10 times as much as other politicians, they get 10 times as much attention and they get 10 times deeper in your brain.

Now, some people might say why don't we all follow someone like that? But we also have our own personalities and we tend to fall into four different groups. Some people just love a leader like that and they just follow that leader, they repeat what he says and they're in love. And that's one warning sign, high-conflict people want people to fall in love with them. I don't know about you but I've never particularly loved politicians.

**Dr. Dave:** (Laughs) No.

**Eddy:** I don't particularly hate them, I just think it's like a business decision, who's going to be good, who's going to be bad? But for these folks, they want you to love them because if you love them you will do their bidding. And so, that's kind of how we see high-conflict personalities take over a community. They get elected at all kinds of levels: mayors, governors, presidents, congresspeople...so that's kind of how they get there but they have to have this viral media in order to then take over a really large community and that's really only started in the last hundred years. You know, first radio, then television, then cable news 24/7, then Twitter. Every time there's a new media, HCPs get there first and mislead a lot of people. But the rest of us react; some of us get discouraged and drop out and don't vote. Some of us become riled up resisters and have protests and say this is terrible. And probably a majority of people are what I call mild-moderates, they go look, just tune this out, it's just politics, don't get so excited, I don't why you have to be so emotional about it all.

**Eddy:** Yeah, so well there's one example that comes to mind right now, but you mention that there are 11 examples that you refer to, not all from this country. Just drop a few names here of some of the examples.

**Dr. Dave:** And these, it really is a sampling, because I've been able to put together a list almost a hundred people that fit this pattern. But in the book, I start out with Hitler, Stalin, and Mao. And a lot of people just think about Hitler and think he was a one-time and he's an exception, fortunately that'll never happen again. And I say no, no, no, he was in many ways the first. What he was the first to use was the viral capacity of radio, and he had radio in many people's homes. He was the first politician because radio was new, and so he really used it in people's homes. And there's a phrase I'd like to mention for mental health types and that is emotional repetition in isolation. And that's what they use. So, he repeated, and if you listen to his speeches or ever see him on a video he is constantly talking in intense emotions. But it's in isolation because he was the only one talking like that on the radio. There wasn't another point of view getting to play afterwards. It's like when the President gives a speech now like the State of the Union, the other point of view gets to say, well here's how we see it. Hitler got there first. And he had it in isolation so he drummed into people's heads his way of thinking.

So Stalin and Mao, same thing. With Mao, not as many people had radios, but he had public speakers posted on polls, and so as people walked around in the village or the cities, they would hear him speaking. His picture was everywhere. His picture is still in the center of Beijing where his tomb is, Tiananmen Square, there's still a big picture of Mao Zedong. Anyway, so they used this and they got there first and they used media in a viral way that no one else was using and once they got control, they got control of media which is essential to them staying in power. Then I looked at today, looked in Europe, of course, Putin. Putin's an example of how high-conflict personalities in politics aren't all on one political point of view. There on the left, they're on the right. Stalin in Russia was on the Left. He basically dominated the government until 1989-1990; even though he'd been dead for thirty years, his policies still controlled. Then they had some beginning democracy for 10 years. Then Putin got in, and he's over on the right. And now he's a dictator there, he can overrule governors, judges, etc. So, they like unlimited power on the left or the right. We have Orbán in Hungary. I give the example of Berlusconi in Italy. Now he's from a few years ago, but he's a good example of the rise and fall of a billionaire media real-estate person in politics. Then Maduro in Venezuela, he's on the left and also has unlimited power. He replaced the legislature, he didn't like the legislature, so he changed the constitution and got his own people in.

**Dr. Dave:** What can we do about these characters, particularly given that we tend to be divided, as you say, into four groups: the true believers, the resisters that kind of go along and take things in stride because they'll eventually change. So, given that we tend to be divided in that way, how do we come together and what do we do?

**Eddy:** Well, I believe really in educating people and that's why I wrote the book and that's been my life the last 20 years is educating people about high-conflict personalities, how to deal with them, but also how to recognize them. So, to me first, is really educating people. There's a personality type that should not be given power over your life, whether it's mayor, governor, president, whatever. Not only do they not have conflict resolution skills, they do have harmful skills: good skills at dividing people, starting wars, harming economies, etc. So just educating people about that pattern existing.

**Dr. Dave:** Let me just cut in—I'm remembering the authoritarian personality which somehow has some overlap, I think, with what you've been talking about and I think a lot of us heard about that so there has been some education, but maybe not enough.

**Eddy:** I think what people don't realize is the steps; it's a step-by-step-process. So, you go, authoritarian leaders are terrible, no one wants an authoritarian leader. Oh, but wait a minute, we want a strong man leader who will speak for us, fight the bureaucrats, the elites, each country has a different name for it—the establishment. And so, what people don't realize is it's step by step. People look at Hitler, Hitler got started around 1920 and he was spewing his way of thinking in southern German for about 10 years before he really got into the national media, the national network. People say, well you can't

compare anybody today to Hitler, and I say yes you can, but to earlier Hitler, not later Hitler, earlier Hitler. So, it's the same for earlier Stalin—all these people, you know, just got in to power. Stalin was elected as Secretary General of the Communist Party. It was supposed to be Secretary, he was supposed to be an administrator. Within in five years of being appointed he had taken over the country. And so, people didn't realize—and he was really good at killing the people that helped him get into power—he killed just about all his friends. In his old age, he regretted—he'd have friends over they'd watch movies—and he regretted, you know whatever happened to so-and-so? Oh, that's right, I ordered him killed. So anyway, it's a step-by-step process. And they don't start as authoritarian leaders, but they want to be. I call them, wannabe kings. And that's where I say see the HCP signs early on. And you might say, okay I have a friend whose an HCP, I can cope, we have one interest in common, we share that. But with politics, you see warning signs—a lot of blaming others. That's going to be someone who wants unlimited power.

**Dr. Dave:** Okay, now when I interrupted you were about to go somewhere else. Do you remember where that was?

**Eddy:** Well, I was just going to mention the last third of the book is how to avoid electing high-conflict people as politicians: understand the warning signs, tell people about the warning signs, say I'm concerned. In the appendix is a high-conflict politician score card with eight key characteristics to watch for, which at first you wouldn't think oh, that person could become dangerous, but all of the high-conflict people started with these characteristics, so you can kind of avoid some trouble there. But I also talk about how politicians who are running against HCPs should talk. I talk about how their staff, their volunteers, should talk about things. Not in this emotional repetition, but factual repetition. And what a lot of politicians do is they talk about policies, they talk about big long words; they need simple stuff to convey key concepts and if they don't have simple words, no one remembers them. I talk about that, how you need to use emotional repetition in your favor. But don't do it in isolation; say, check other sources, listen to other people, don't just listen to meet. The high-conflict person says don't listen to anybody else but me. I'm the only one that you should listen to. So, I give a lot of examples of how to talk to people and I think next year that politicians at all levels—for president, for Senate, for Congress, for mayor, for state governors, house legislatures—need to start learning because I think we're going to be seeing more of this. And it's not just on the left or just on the right; it's both. It tends to be the extremes but it's going to pop up in every party.

**Dr. Dave:** I wish everybody would read your book because then we would all have a common vocabulary where we could say, hey, this person's got this characteristic, that characteristic, we know where this is headed.

**Eddy:** I agree. And really, I hope people read it this year to get ready for next year.

**Dr. Dave:** What would be some examples on the positive side, I guess I would say, of those short, emotional, but fact-based kind of statements?

**Eddy:** Well, I think some that I put in here—because immigrants have been a popular target of blame around the world last five or six years—and in Europe they were a big target of blame, and in the U.S. certainly on the southern border. I think that they are very much unfairly described. And I think that they're one of the easiest targets of blame for HCPs because they're a vulnerable group, they don't have resources, they don't have an organization, etc. So, what happens is you say, oh, they're terrible people. The example I give in the book is there's a lot of research that shows that immigrants work hard. They'll take hours that people don't want—evenings and weekends, they'll take jobs picking strawberries that nobody wants to do, in construction, etc. And if you look at today's employment, we've got the fullest employment we've had in a decade and they're not taking jobs that people that live here want. They're looking at taking jobs that nobody wants. And so, immigrants work hard. I think that's a statement that could be repeated many, many times. But there's also research that shows that communities with a lot of immigrants have a lower crime rate, and so immigrants work hard and cause less crime. I think if politicians really want to get their policies across, they need to use short phrases like that.

**Dr. Dave:** That's a great example. And I think it's just a couple days ago one of the lead stories in the *New York Times* was about the concerted efforts by the Russian propaganda machine and their allies to specifically sow discord by targeting immigrants, and they mentioned Sweden as a prime example. Sweden is a wonderful country that I love and one that's had a history of—a very egalitarian sort of history; now they're being put at each other's throats around the immigration thing.

**Eddy:** Yes, and every country in Europe. But the question I always raise—with people once they're educated about HCPs—that we look and we say how much of this is a real problem? Because immigration is a real problem, there needs to be some kind of boundaries for countries' control, some kind of screening process. But, is it a crisis or not? And if it's an HCP it's described as a crisis. And if the people who aren't HCPs say yeah, we've got to work on our policies and decide how to deal with this, that's problem solving, that's what governments are elected to do. So, when I heard about problems—even in Sweden—I was in Sweden about eight years ago (I think I was speaking in Sweden), and I already heard that there was some trouble with a minority group that was new, and the people I talked to said, I don't know about any problems. And so, if presented as a crisis I'm always suspicious right at the start. And I even put a chapter in the book for dealing with fake news. There are 10 questions and the first question is, is this really a crisis? And if people don't ask that, they'll get swept off their feet. Most of these high-conflict people are talking in crisis language and that's highly contagious, and we have to become immune to that.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, it's very easy to get stirred up I notice in myself; you know? To get all emotionally riled up by something I read in the newspaper or encounter on the web. You mention the eight identifying characteristics that people should be attentive to in the appendix, would you have time to run through those?

**Eddy:** Sure, it's Appendix B, it's the "High-Conflict Politician's Score Card." And sometime next year I'm going to put this—I do a blog for Psychology Today—and sometime next year I'll put this down on the blog a couple months before the election. And this, like I said, can apply to any candidate for any office. So, here's the things—and I have a scale from zero to eight—and it's not scientific but the maximum score someone would get would be eight if they have all these characteristics to the extreme. First, are personal attacks. Do they engage in personal attacks? Never, mild, moderate, often, or very often. Personal attacks—not, this is a bad policy—it's, that's a bad person, that person is evil or that group is evil. Second, is crisis emotions—that they're always talking at a crisis level. That their emotions are often the emotions associated with a crisis. They're yelling or pointing fingers, etc. Third, is all-or-nothing solutions and one of the things you need in government is people with the ability to advocate strongly, but to also compromise. People talk about the Constitution, which has been a wonderful document for about 230 years...there's a lot of compromise in there and that's really worked. Fourth, is self-absorbed. Are they always talking about themselves and not about the people they're trying to help, or the organization they're working for or the community? Are they talking about the community or themselves more? Fifth is lacks empathy; they really don't care about people, that when there's a problem they want to solve it with harsh solutions that don't show any empathy. Sixth is misjudges others. One thing about high-conflict people is they're constantly wrong about what they think about other people. They think people are their friends who aren't, they think people aren't their friends who are. They misjudge people lying to them—even though they may lie a lot—people lie to them, and they go, oh my goodness! Next is sees self as a big hero. And by the way, I want to tell you this list is from another book I wrote earlier in 2012 with Don Saposnek, a psychologist, and that book was called *Splitting America*, when we anticipated a lot of what we've seen since then. So, I didn't come up with this after the 2016 election, I came up with this before the 2012 election.

**Dr. Dave:** So even though it would seem to describe Trump perfectly, you actually came up with these notions before he was a big figure on the national scene.

**Eddy:** Yeah, this is 2012 and he announced his candidacy, I think in June of 2015, so we had no idea. But we did say in here, here come the narcissistic HCPs into politics, and we were predicting that. The last one I want to mention, number eight, is doesn't play well with others. And that's a warning sign that you can see pretty early on. So those eight things, and I've tried this with several different elections and I've had some where people got a 64, where they had all of these to the maximum. I haven't had any with all zeros, so politicians—some of them—are self-absorbed. Some of them see themselves as a big hero, but not at the level of the others. So, when you're voting, you might not have anybody that's all zeros but you might want to vote for the one that's got a low score on that score card.

**Dr. Dave:** Well, I think this is so important, clearly, and I think that this is great work that you have done and are doing. I wonder if you have any other last thoughts before we wrap things up?

**Eddy:** Well, just real briefly, that I think high-conflict personalities are increasing in society. Now we're seeing them in leadership roles, but they really are in families, in the workplace, neighborhoods, communities, and we need to not take a judgmental approach but really learn about them. We need to learn how to work with them, how to manage relationships with them, how not to give them power, but also how to have empathy for them. I feel bad for these people because they end up being a mess. And so, a lot of them get thrown out of office. We had a mayor thrown out of office here, some states have governors thrown out of office. But the last thing I want to say is we have a lot of resources on our website, [HighConflictInstitute.com](http://HighConflictInstitute.com). We've been going for 12 years, we've got a lot of videos, books, articles, consultations, and so we mostly are dealing with interpersonal disputes. We're certainly a resource that anybody can use.

**Dr. Dave:** Well, Bill Eddy, I really want to thank you for being my guest today on Shrink Rap Radio.

**Eddy:** Thank you so much, David, my pleasure.