


Confessions of a Sociopath: A Life Spent Hiding in Plain Sight

By M.E. Thomas

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A PUBLISHERS WEEKLY BEST OF 2013 STAFF PICK

As M.E. Thomas says of her fellow sociopaths, “We are your neighbors, your coworkers, and quite possibly the people closest to you: lovers, family, friends. Our risk-seeking behavior and general fearlessness are thrilling, our glibness and charm alluring. Our often quick wit and outside-the-box thinking make us appear intelligent—even brilliant. We climb the corporate ladder faster than the rest, and appear to have limitless self-confidence. Who are we? We are highly successful, noncriminal sociopaths and we comprise 4 percent of the American population.”

Confessions of a Sociopath—part confessional memoir, part primer for the curious—takes readers on a journey into the mind of a sociopath, revealing what makes them tick while debunking myths about sociopathy and offering a road map for dealing with the sociopaths in your life. M. E. Thomas draws from her own experiences as a diagnosed sociopath; her popular blog, Sociopathworld.com; and scientific literature to unveil for the very first time these men and women who are “hiding in plain sight.”

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Q&A with M. E. Thomas

Q. Were you always aware that you were different?

A. Yes, though when I was young, I thought maybe it was just because I was smarter than everyone else. I saw things that other children did not see, was aware of the adult world in a way that even my smart siblings were not—awkward interactions from the end of an affair, why my grandpa treated my dad differently from his other children (he was adopted), and so on. I knew other people did not see these things because I would reference them and get blank stares in return. I learned to keep things to myself, even to pretend I didn't see them. Those were probably some of my first attempts to wear a mask of normalcy.

Q. What are the common characteristics/behaviors shared by most sociopaths? Do they describe you, too?

A. Lack of remorse or concern for hurting or stealing; being deceitful, manipulative, impulsive, irritable, aggressive, and consistently irresponsible; failure to conform to social norms; and being unconcerned about people's safety, including their own. You need to have at least three of these to be a sociopath. I have them all, to varying degrees.

Q. You believe that sociopaths have a natural competitive advantage. Why?

A. Sociopaths have several skills that lend themselves to success in areas such as politics and business: charm, an ability to see and exploit weaknesses/flaws (which in politics is called "power-broking" and in business, "arbitrage"), confidence, unflagging optimism, an ability to think outside the box and come up with original ideas, and a lack of squeamishness about doing what it takes to get ahead.

Q. If you don't have a sense of morality, or feel the emotions that most people do, how are you able to operate in the world without being detected?

A. I think everyone learns to lie about his or her emotions to a certain extent; I just take it a step farther. People ask, "How are you?" and you respond, "fine," even though you had a fight with your spouse that morning, have a sick child, or any multitude of things that make it hard for you to feel fine about almost anything in your life. You could honestly answer the question, but you don't because overt displays of strong emotion in ordinary social interactions are not accepted. Most of the time I don't need to show any emotion at all, and I try to limit the times that I do by begging off attending funerals, weddings, etc. When I do show up to these functions, I try to mimic the other attendees. If I'm dealing with a person one-on-one, I just try to reflect their emotions; usually they're distracted enough by their own overflowing emotions not to notice my lack of them.

Q. Research shows that one in twenty-five people is a sociopath, yet most of us believe we've never met one. Are we just kidding ourselves? Are you able to spot them?

A. Statistically, everyone has met at least one sociopath; in fact, most people will have a close encounter with a sociopath at some point in their lives, either as a friend, family member, or lover. Sometimes I can tell who they are. I find that many successful sociopaths will leave deliberate clues as to what they are, the thought being that only other sociopaths would recognize them. I think sociopaths, like serial killers, often have a yearning to be acknowledged for who they are. They want people to admire their exploits, and that is hard to get when they are completely hidden, so they make small compromises.

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Thomas (a pseudonym) is a young white female who has all the classic character traits of a sociopath. She is a thrill seeker with excessive self-esteem and a pronounced lack of empathy. She does not conform to social norms and has a penchant for deceit. "I may have a disorder," she writes, "but I am not crazy." In fact, she has excelled as an attorney and law professor who regularly writes for law journals and teaches Sunday school every week as a practicing Mormon. She is, she says, intelligent and charming. "You would like me if you met me," she insists. She also describes what she is not. She is not a murderer nor was she ever a victim of child abuse. Recent studies, she maintains, report that 1-to-4-percent, or one in every 25 people, is a sociopath. Like her, most live normal lives. She describes her upbringing as the daughter of a violent father and an indifferent and at times hysterical mother and her genetic propensity toward her condition. Fascinating and compelling as well as chilling, Thomas' memoir offers a window into the mind of a portion of the population that usually remains shrouded in mystery and fear. --June Sawyers

Review

Praise for *Confessions of a Sociopath*

"[A] gripping and important book...revelatory...quite the memorable roller coaster ride."—*New York Times Book Review*

"[F]ascinating...part memoir, part psychological treatise, and entirely not to be trusted."—*Boston Globe*

"The goal of *Confessions* is to redefine sociopathy—or at least to shake off the stigma associated with it. And Thomas accomplishes both. Through her honest portrayal of herself as a highly capable yet deeply flawed individual, she demystifies her disorder."—*Scientific American*

"[F]ascinating stuff, and Thomas delivers...riveting...chilling....Her incisive observations about human nature can be breathtakingly pointed."—*Cleveland Plain Dealer*

"An essential, unprecedented memoir...intelligent, measured...[H]er arguments against using the diagnosis as an indicator of evil or a pre-emptive reason to imprison are a slam-dunk. This is a critical addition to narratives of mental illness, deepened by the awareness that we're reading someone whose most intense motivation is 'acquisition, retention, and exploitation of power'."—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

"Fascinating and compelling as well as chilling, Thomas' memoir offers a window into the mind of a portion of the population that usually remains shrouded in mystery and fear."—*Booklist*, starred review

"[Thomas] invites us into her courtroom, classroom and bedroom to witness how her behavior has stunted her work life and made her love life difficult....Much here is chilling, but there are also cracks that make you ache for her....A work of advocacy for greater awareness of sociopathy's reach and conduct."—*Kirkus Reviews*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Nathan Kelly:

Information is provisions for people to get better life, information presently can get by anyone from everywhere. The information can be a know-how or any news even a problem. What people must be consider whenever those information which is inside the former life are difficult to be find than now's taking seriously which one works to believe or which one the particular resource are convinced. If you have the unstable resource then you have it as your main information you will see huge disadvantage for you. All of those possibilities will not happen throughout you if you take Confessions of a Sociopath: A Life Spent Hiding in Plain Sight as your daily resource information.

Odis Hillyard:

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John Malcolm:

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Rebecca Moreno:

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