




Entertainment

# How to Spot a Brocialist: The Guys With Righteous Politics but a Dodgy Attitude to Girls

By Sasha Borissenko April 7, 2016, 8:00pm

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Brocialist: a guy so in love with his own progressiveness or radicalness he is convinced he can do no wrong. This extends to being a sexist jerk.

I befriended my first **brocialist** at the tender age of 18. He was staunchly left-wing, creative, charming, and articulate—all of which drove the ladies wild. I was the only female in our hall of residence debating team. Challenging, yes, but I suppose I was a wannabe hipster Helen Clark at the time. We would argue constantly. His argument was that he wasn't a brocialist, I was simply misguided. When I pointed out that he regularly patronised and undermined women, he would dismiss it as banter and argue I was hung up on something less important to “real issues,” such as climate change.

Master Brocialist eventually kicked me out of the debating team. In his defence, I'd told him a day earlier that I took issue with most facets of his personality. Or rather it wasn't his personality that bugged me, but his total contradiction in values. So that was the end of my political career.

In an article in the *New Statesmen*, **Penny Laurie** singles out Russell Brand as a classic brocialist in the way he uses his celebrity status (with irony and comedy as his weapon) to educate the masses about worthy causes. In Brand's web-series *The Trews* he waxes lyrical about the perils of **capitalism**, **same-sex marriage**, and **gender politics**. All the while he has a long, swaggering record of objectifying women. And then there's the untouchable Leo DiCaprio who used his long awaited academy award **speech** as a platform to bat for “the voices that've been drowned out by the politics of greed.” This sits pretty awkwardly alongside his bias towards young bikini models and his alleged tendency to **brag about his conquests**.

But Hollywood is a long way from New Zealand. We were the first country in the world to give women the vote and we prided ourselves on female empowerment ever since. But I beg to differ. Since my first bruising rub up against brocialism, I've developed a radar for guys hiding sexism beneath a progressive smokescreen. Like the time my friend told me about a great guy she had met. He was in a band and worked in the left-wing political arena, but he wasn't a hipster robot type. He was a *nice guy*. He even trolled misogynists on social media. Despite this it soon came to light that he had a girl in every port. Then, not long after that discovery, his workplace had to introduce a new anti-sexism policy simply because of the guy's questionable behaviour around the office.

In my experience there are two kinds of brocialists. Type one uses their outwardly progressive values to woo women, particularly in the public realm of social media, while secretly maintaining their non-progressive values. Type two views women as expendable objects and treats them poorly to hide their insecurities. By pretending to the world, and probably themselves, that they're all about liberating the underdog, they get an angelic reputation while staying snuggled into dominant patriarchal structures. In both cases it's the combination of arrogance, yet empathy for everyone and everything—on their terms—that's the true signifier of brocialism.

Brocialists might sport Dr Martens, Vans, or boat shoes sans socks, and they're partial to skinny jeans. They're drawn to quality over grunge, thus Scandinavian brands such as Fjallraven, Acne Studios, and Cheap Monday Jeans are the flavour of choice, which is suitable seeing as the Nordic countries align with their egalitarian values. It's no surprise, therefore, that they cycle and enjoy public transportation over anything that might be considered a carbon-emitting abomination.

Music preferences are self explanatory, but brocialists are drawn to broody emotional tunes and local music so as to present a down-to-earth, enthusiastic disposition. Furthermore, they have no qualms with ironic beats from the 90s, as they can freely make fun of themselves.


Their palate is an interesting one. While they're inclined to exercise vegetarianism, they don't indulge in veganism for fear of coming off as too hardcore or opinionated. And they're into Kiwiana motifs so mince pies without meat or cheese rolls might be the plat du jour, alongside a breakfast of black coffee and organic bircher with fruit from their local community garden, for example. They refuse to conform to gender roles so they'll cook these dishes and complete the clean-up with gusto. After dinner, they drink whisky and craft beer in excess. Brocialists smoke socially but would never reveal this to their doctor. They're anti smoking, if anything. Instead, they smoke after a good political debate once they're convinced they've enlightened their ignorant company. A millennial's after-sex smoke, if you will.

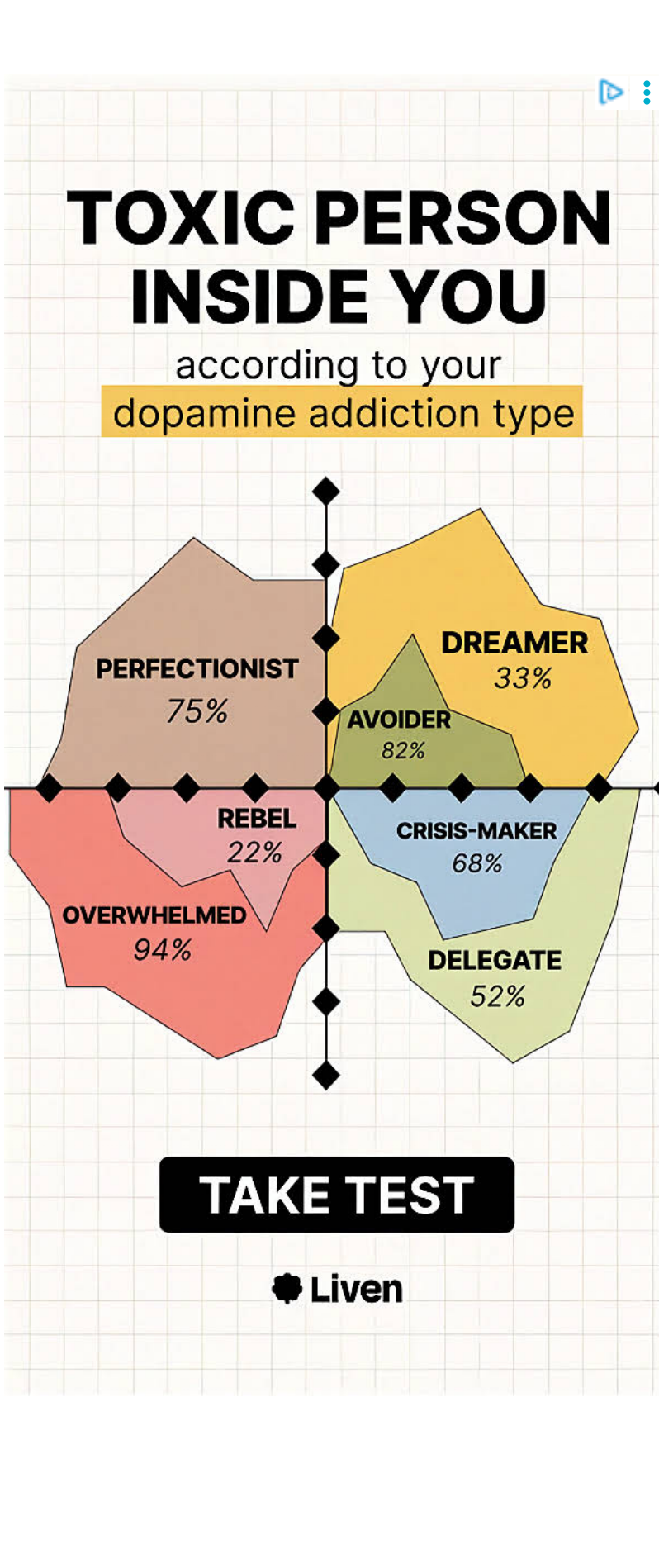
On a broader level, these often educated individuals work in the public or non-for-profit sector. For the creative brocialist, you'll find them crafting beautiful Scandinavian-style furniture, designing charity-focussed advertising campaigns or launching a startup. While they're into technology over cars and sports, they're not your traditional “cos-play” “world of warcraft” types. Rather, they geek out by way of social media. They're insufferably vocal about their beliefs, more so than your everyday feminist. They're the first on your feed to post about International Women's Day.

There's no denying they're out there, yet of all the women I asked to comment on their experiences with brocialists, all were worried about coming across as disgruntled, crazy, or tragic. It's hard to target a guy who outwardly appears to have such noble intentions. As one young woman told me, “no [brocialist] is going to be convinced to check their sexism, or even acknowledge the fact that they or their behaviour is sexist. For guys that think their politics are in order, this gives them free reign with their dicks.”

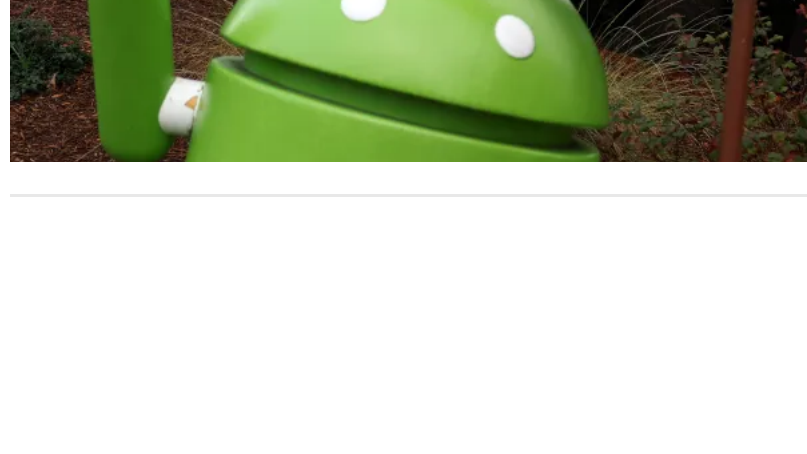
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