

The “Dreaded Drama Triangle”

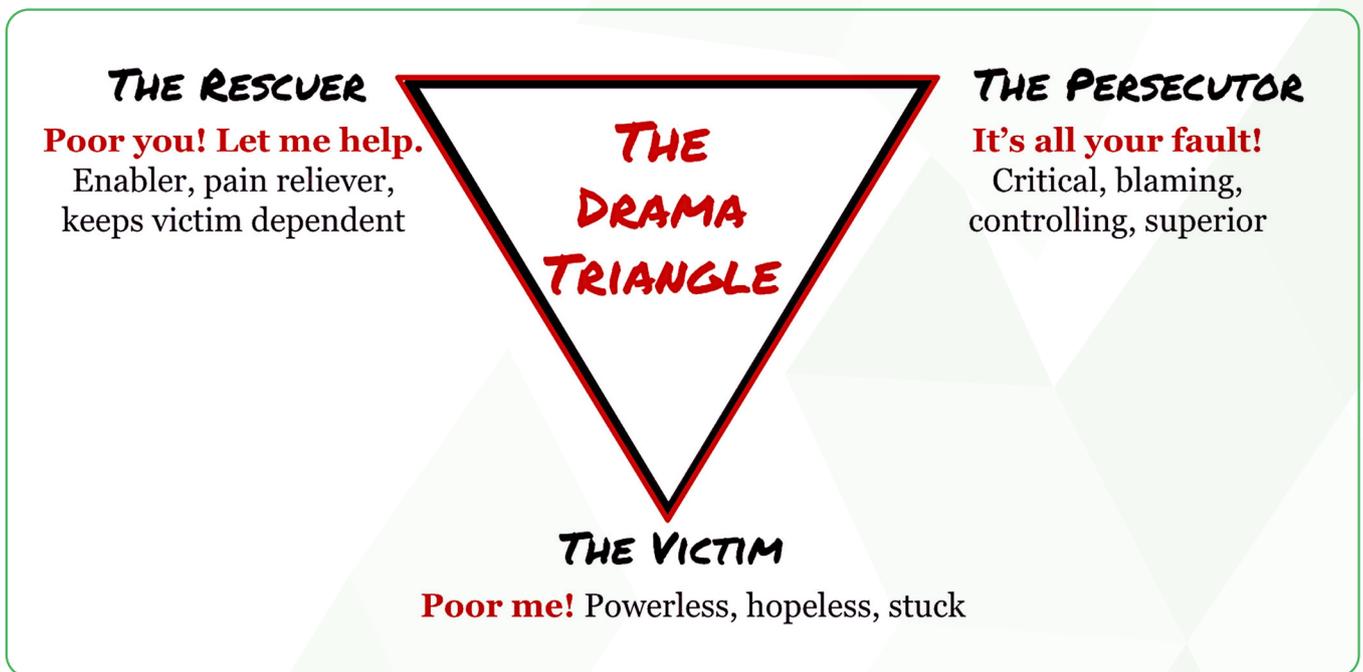


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The “Dreaded Drama Triangle”

Psychologist Dr Stephen Karpman coined the term in 60s to describe the interplay of the three dysfunctional roles: the Victim (damsel in distress), Persecutor (villain), and Rescuer (hero) (Berry, 2015).



The Rescuer

A big ball of guilt, who needs someone to help, because when you're the hero to others then you don't have to deal with your own feelings of anxiety or displacement. The Rescuer appears to be The Victim's savior from The Persecutor, but actually cements the others in their negative behaviors - almost giving them permission to stay as the bully or the bullied as it makes everyone feel that they have a purpose (Freeman, 2015).

“Givers have to set limits because takers rarely do.”
-Irma Kurtz

The Persecutor

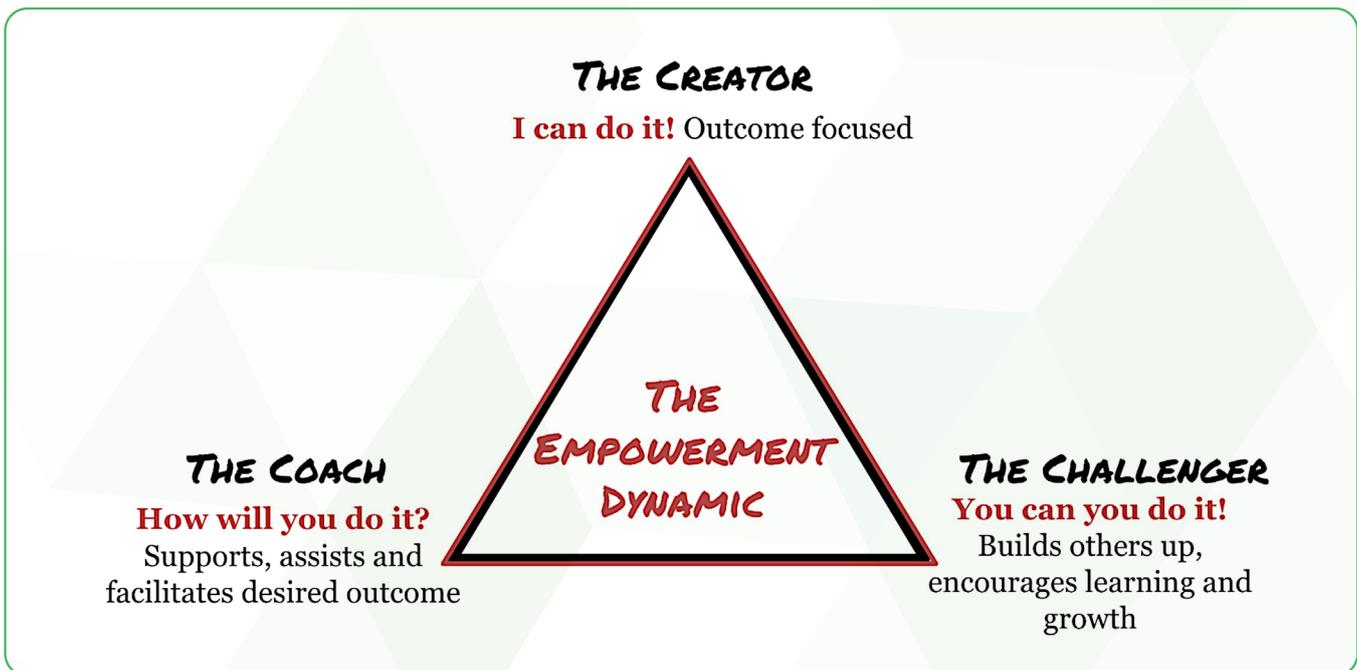
Happy to allocate blame and to ensure that other players know they are in the wrong. They are probably angry, accusative, inflexible and feeling very righteous. In order to have their needs met, they require The Victim; someone onto whom they can project their irritation (Freeman, 2015).

The Victim

The Victim takes the brunt of The Persecutor's wrath. The Victim feels hard-done-by, got-at, powerless, ashamed, unable to do anything. This is obviously a position of anxiety for most, but psychologically it can actually often bring some comfort. You know where you are when you are The Victim, and it's easy to seek the pity of others. If The Victim role feels natural to you, then you need to seek out The Persecutor (if you haven't already got one) but also The Rescuer (Freeman, 2015).

HOW WE CAN DITCH THE VICTIM MENTALITY AND BECOME EMPOWERED...

The antidote to David Emerald's Drama Triangle is called The Empowerment Dynamic. Where Victims focus on problems, Creators get clear on what they want, and become empowered to create outcomes for their own lives. Persecutors become Challengers, who help them learn and grow in their journey of self exploration. And finally, Rescuers act as Coaches—someone supportive who helps the creator move toward their desired outcome (Casper, 2016).



Creator

"A Creator's responses are based on thoughtful evaluation of the situation and then choosing appropriate steps toward an outcome, rather than reacting from a problem-focused orientation," he writes, noting that whenever we are complaining we are playing the Victim.

"In doing so, a Creator works toward desired outcomes instead of reacting to avoiding/fixing problems...

"Stuff happens in life and work," Emerald adds. "As a Creator, one is always at choice as to how they respond (though, at times, the range of choices is narrow) (Berry, 2015)."

Challenger

"The Challenger is focused on learning and growth, holding a Creator accountable while encouraging learning, action, and next steps," Emerald explains. "A Challenger consciously builds others up, as a positive alternative to putting someone down by criticizing, blaming, or controlling..."

"Challengers ask themselves, 'What is my intention—to look good or to further learning and growth?' A Challenger approaches life and relationships with a learning intent and 'builds up' rather than 'puts down' (Berry, 2015)."

Coach

"The Coach uses compassion and questions to help a Creator develop a vision and action plan," Emerald says.

"A Coach provides encouragement and support, in place of 'rescuing' actions..."

"Despite having helpful intentions, the Rescuer as a person reinforces the Victim's 'poor me' self-identity and reinforces the Victim's sense of powerlessness.

"This renders the Victim dependent upon the Rescuer for a sense of safety – a bond forged by the Victim's shame for needing to be rescued and cemented by the Rescuer's own fear of abandonment or loss of purpose.

"A Coach supports yet keeps the 'power' with the other and encourages independence and interdependence on those they serve (Berry, 2015).

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STOICISM

Stoicism is based on the idea that we can't control what happens to us, but we can control how we react to it.

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