

Life Script Counseling Services

"Helping You Reclaim Your Life"

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The Drama Triangle

by Steve Karpman

The Drama Triangle consists of 3 positions or roles. The roles or psychological game characters are the **PERSECUTOR**, the **VICTIM** and the **RESCUER**. As long as we are on the triangle, we will rotate through the positions, however, we have a favorite role that we play most often. The Drama Triangle exists as part of the life script and the game. It's purpose is to support and promote the existence of the life script and serves as a training ground for powerlessness. The Drama prevents psychological equality in relationships.. The Drama will continue as long as someone is willing to be victimized. There are specific ways to stop playing the game and get off the triangle, as you will see.

Characteristics of the **PERSECUTOR**:

- ⇒ Says "It's all your fault!"
- ⇒ Sets strict limits unnecessarily.
- ⇒ Blames & Criticizes & Minimizes.
- ⇒ Keeps **VICTIM** oppressed.
- ⇒ Is mobilized by **ANGER**.
- ⇒ Rigid, authoritative stance.
- ⇒ Operates from **CRITICAL PARENT**.

To avoid being a **PERSECUTOR**:

- ⇒ Take a time-out.
- ⇒ Do anger release work.
- ⇒ Operate from your **ADULT**, and set clear structure by expressing your limits and boundaries.

If you find yourself being a **PERSECUTOR**:

- ⇒ Stop the game now and move to clear structure.
- ⇒ Take a time-out.
- ⇒ Do anger release work.
- ⇒ Operate from your **ADULT**, and set clear structure by expressing your limits and boundaries.



To invite the **PERSECUTOR** off the Drama Triangle, ask the following questions:

- ⇒ What is your purpose/intention here?
- ⇒ What are you feeling?
- ⇒ What can you do with your feelings?
- ⇒ What are your limits and/or boundaries?
- ⇒ What will you do if your limits/boundaries are challenged or violated?
- ⇒ What would clear structure look like in this situation?
- ⇒ What can you do if the victim stays on the triangle?

Characteristics of the **RESCUER**:

- ⇒ Says “Let me help you!”
- ⇒ Over Adapts
- ⇒ Rescues when they really don’t want to.
- ⇒ Helps when they have not been asked.
- ⇒ Feels guilty if they don’t rescue.
- ⇒ Keeps **VICTIM** dependent.
- ⇒ Thinks for others and gives permission to fail.
- ⇒ Expects to fail in rescue attempts.
- ⇒ Operates from “**Marshmallow**” **Parent**: Over adapted nurturing; over protective.

To avoid being a **RESCUER**:

- ⇒ Don’t do what you have not been asked to do.
- ⇒ If you want to do something for someone, make the offer, and don’t act without a clear agreement or contract!
- ⇒ Do not take responsibility for people’s feelings or try to change them.
- ⇒ Tell the other person that you love and care for them.
- ⇒ Ask the other person, from your **ADULT**, for what you need from them in a direct manner.

If you find yourself being a **RESCUER**:

- ⇒ Stop the game and move to clear nurturing.
- ⇒ Take a time-out if you need it.
- ⇒ Communicate to the other person, from your **ADULT**, that you recognize that you have been rescuing and that in the future, you will wait for them to ask for assistance or you will ask before acting.

To invite the **RESCUER** off the Drama Triangle, ask the following questions:

- ⇒ What is your purpose/intent here?
- ⇒ Were you asked?

- ⇒ What can you do with your feelings?
- ⇒ What are your limits and/or boundaries?
- ⇒ What would clear nurture look like in this situation?
- ⇒ What can you do if the victim stays on the triangle?

Characteristics of the **VICTIM**:

- ⇒ Says “Poor Me!”
- ⇒ Feels victimized, oppressed, helpless, unloved, blamed, powerless & ashamed.
- ⇒ Looks for Rescuer that will perpetuate their negative feelings.
- ⇒ Stays in **VICTIM** position to block self from making decisions, solving problems, having pleasure and self-understanding.
- ⇒ Dejected stance

To avoid being a **VICTIM**:

- ⇒ Affirm your power, thinking and problem solving abilities.
- ⇒ Ask others to affirm the above in/for you.
- ⇒ Operate from your **ADULT**, list problem solving options and do at least one.

If you find yourself being a **VICTIM**:

- ⇒ Stop the game now and move to clear problem solving.
- ⇒ Do anger or scare release work
- ⇒ Affirm your power, thinking and problem solving abilities.
- ⇒ Ask others to affirm the above in/for you.
- ⇒ Operate from your **ADULT**, list problem solving options and do at least one.

To invite the **VICTIM** off the Drama Triangle, ask the following questions:

- ⇒ How long have you been in this situation?
- ⇒ What have you tried to do about it?
- ⇒ Has this happened to you before?
- ⇒ How did you resolve the situation then?
- ⇒ What are three things you can do about this problem?
- ⇒ What is the worst thing you can do about this problem?
- ⇒ What is the best thing you can do about this problem?
- ⇒ What is one thing you are willing to do?
- ⇒ Will you let me know when you want some more problem solving support?

The Drama Triangle

During the Drama, we move back and forth along the sides of the triangle, switching places!

