

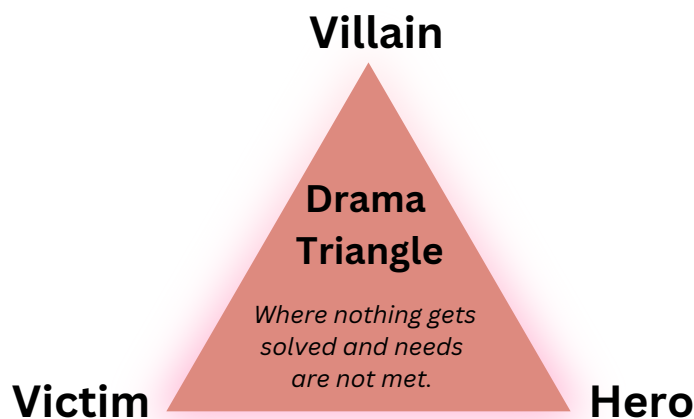
# Curiosity Corner

Grow your awareness and open doors to an inspired life!

## STOP THE DRAMA!

**Get out of the drama triangle where nothing gets solved!**

Time: 20 minutes or more... you choose!



Conflicts in relationships typically begin when language being used blames, judges, criticizes, or bullies. Often met with defensiveness, rationalizing, justifying, or counter-attacks, the Drama Triangle plays out with nothing getting solved and needs not being met. In fact, things often get worse! Harmony and connection in the relationships are severely compromised, and will be completely destroyed if the Drama Triangle gets repeatedly practiced.

The Drama Triangle is driven by unmet needs and other unconscious messaging and payoffs. The triangle has three positions that each play a role: The **Villain**, the **Victim**, and the **Hero**. See page three for profiles of each role.

## DRAMA TRIANGLE EXAMPLE

**The Players:** Jackson, a 13 year old boy. William, the father. Roxanne, the mother.

**The Scenario:** Jackson has repeatedly failed to take out the trash, which is one of his chores.

- **William - Villain** (but likely perceives himself as the Victim): "Jackson, you didn't take out the trash again (blame)! I am sick and tired of how lazy you are (criticism) and how you don't care about anyone but yourself (judgment)."
- **Jackson - Victim:** "I didn't have time, and that trash can is too hard for me to move. Plus, I got home late from the skate park and then had to do my homework (justifying). Anyway... why do I have to be the one to always take out the trash (defensiveness)? Why can't Sam do it sometimes?"
- **William - Villain:** "I don't want to hear your excuses, especially about coming home late from the skate park (judging). I think we'll just take the skate park off the table... you don't get to go there again (bullying)."
- **Jackson - Victim:** "That's not fair (defensiveness). You're always picking on me and Sam gets to do whatever he wants (counter-attack)."
- **Roxanne - Hero:** "Now William, Jackson is doing the best he can and really has a lot of pressure with his homework and everything going on at school (rationalizing). Taking away the skate park from him is unreasonable (judging) and he needs to be able to have some fun and physical activity." (William, now perceives Roxanne as the Villain.)
- **William - Villain:** "Roxanne, since you refuse to quit babying him (blaming), then you can just take out the trash yourself (bullying)."
- **Roxanne - Victim** (but William likely perceives her as the Villain): "Oh perfect, as if I don't already have way too much to do. You know, William, when it comes to doing your fair share, you aren't exactly a great role model (counter-attack, blame, and criticism)."

And this could go on-and-on with nothing getting solved. All the while everyone is feeling bad and the relationships are being compromised. Connection has certainly gone by the wayside in favor of conflict.

# GET OUT OF THE DRAMA TRIANGLE

The best way is to get out of the Drama Triangle is to avoid getting into it in the first place! And, this takes a great deal of self-awareness and willingness to be 100% responsible for your experience (thoughts, feelings, and actions) rather than blaming other people or situations. We encourage you to be very gentle with yourself as you learn this HUGE skill. It will take time and lots of practice.

**Step One:** Recognize you are on the drama triangle (or wanting to go in) and be willing to pause, get centered, and change course.

**Step Two:** Take five deep breaths placing all of your attention on your breath. Keep breathing as this will help calm your emotions.

**Step Three:** If you are already on the triangle, call a timeout in a respectful way, e.g., *"I'm afraid this conversation is headed in a direction that might cause our relationship harm. I'd like to pause and come back to this later. Are you okay with that?"* Agree on when you will come back. This will help avoid further drama.

**Step Four:** Explore your unmet needs and what you really want. Rather than looking at what the other person is doing (or saying) or not doing (or not saying), look at what is going on with YOU at a deeper level. Learn how with the activity.

*"Taking 100% responsibility for your thoughts, feelings, and actions aligns you with your own deep levels of personal integrity, standing powerfully in your own authority, and loving yourself. Personal responsibility puts you in control and creates fertile ground for you to manifest what you truly desire."*

*~ Excerpt from our course, Imagination Made Real... a Path to Reliable and Sustainable Manifestion (the Law of Personal Responsibility)*

## **Activity**

Recall a recent conversation that turned into conflict. **Ask yourself...**

- **Feelings:** What was I feeling (angry, frustrated, sad, disappointed, scared, etc.). Avoid, adding why you felt that way as that only perpetuates the drama.
- **Your Personal Desire:** What did I really want that has nothing to do with the other person? Ask three times going to deeper levels within yourself. Note: *Thoughts may occur about what you wanted the other to do. Ask yourself... "If s/he did what I want them to do, what would I get?"* (Connection, peace, feel valued). *Be curious... are you taking care of yourself and giving yourself what you want from the other person?*
- **Responsibility:** How did I add to, make worse, create. or keep the drama going? What do I regret doing or not doing? How does my behavior mirror the other person, even if it looks a bit different?
- **Desire for Your Relationship:** What do I really want this relationship to be like? How can I show up as my best self?
- **Love and Appreciation:** What do I love and appreciate about myself, the other, and our relationship?
- **Action:** Do I need to apologize? When we resume the conversation, how can I show up as my best self? What do I want to say when we resume this conversation? *Hint:* Reveal some of what you discovered in this exploration and avoid remarks that blame, criticize or judge, even if delivered in a subtle way. In your communication try to avoid using the word "YOU," which can easily imply blame and judgment. Stay in your responsibility and desire.

# PROFILES OF THE DRAMA

## TRIANGLE PLAYERS

### THE VILLAIN

**Possible Unmet Needs:**

The need to set a boundary, to ask for what they really want, to say no, to protect themselves, or to sever a connection.

**Feelings and Expression:**

The Villain may feel burdened and self-righteous. There is blame, criticism, and a desire to control. The Villain might seek revenge and use aggression or be passive aggressive. The Villain uses language like “why can’t you ever” or “what were you thinking?” The Villain, however, can come across as polite and nice, but the characteristics are the same, they simply look different.

**Underneath the Drama:**

The bigger the Villain’s energy gets (adrenaline up), the more powerful they feel. They can get a sense of pseudo self-esteem and a feeling of being in control.

### THE VICTIM

**Possible Unmet Needs:**

The need to ask for support, for role modeling, or to be independent.

**Feelings and Expression:**

The Victim may feel helpless, powerless, confused, wounded or dependent. The Victim believes that someone or something else is in control. They get a lot of social affirmation. The Victim uses passive communication like “nothing I ever do works,” “why me,” or “I try so hard, but ...”

**Underneath the Drama:**

Whether conscious or unconscious it is easier to stay stuck than it is to step into responsibility for their lives. They get a sense of low self-esteem and being out of control.

### THE HERO

**Possible Unmet Needs:**

To maintain a connection, to help, nurture, or be useful.

**Feelings and Expression:**

The Hero (also known as the rescuer or enabler), after repeatedly going to the rescue of others often feels exhausted, resentful, or numbed out. They may habitually express pity or apologize for the situation the other person is in. The Hero is overly responsible, they help without being asked, use passive and aggressive communication like: “Let me do that for you.” “I know what you should do...” The Hero can easily disempower the Victim by doing things for them that the Victim should do for themselves... in doing so, the Victim would feel more capable and powerful.

**Underneath the Drama:** They help because they see others (consciously or unconsciously) as incapable, and often feel superior or prideful because of it. Often the Hero is avoiding looking at themselves and the problems in their own life. They get a sense of pseudo self-esteem and being in control. Note: There is not always someone in the Hero role in a given drama.

\*The original Drama Triangle was introduced by Dr. Stephen Karpman. He called the positions on the triangle Victim, Persecutor and Rescuer. Later, Drs. Gay and Kathlyn Hendricks of the Hendricks Institute offered the new, more playful language of “Victim, Villain, and Hero.”