



The Karpman Drama Triangle Overview

The Karpman Drama Triangle assumes that at times we exhibit less-than-fantastic versions of ourselves, triggered by a situation in which we create a role we play with the people with whom we interact.

When this happens, we move among three distinct roles: Victim, Persecutor, and Rescuer, each one as dysfunctional as the other.

In any given situation, these labels are not descriptions of who we are, they are descriptions of how we are behaving. No one is inherently a Victim or a Persecutor or a Rescuer.

Drama Triangle Roles:

Victim

The Core Belief: "My life is so hard; my life is so unfair. 'Poor me'."

The Dynamic: "It's not my fault, it's theirs."

The Benefits of Playing the Role: You have no responsibility for fixing anything; you get to complain; you attract Rescuers.

The Price Paid for Playing the Role: You have no sense of being able to change anything. Any change is outside your control. You're known to be ineffective. And no one likes a whiner.

Stuck Is: "I feel stuck because I have no power and no influence. I feel useless."

Persecutor

The Core Belief: "I'm surrounded by fools, idiots or just people not as good as me."

The Dynamic: "It's not my fault, it's yours."

The Benefits of Playing the Role: You feel superior and have a sense of power and control.

The Price Paid for Playing the Role: You end up being responsible for everything. You create Victims. You're known as a micro-manager. People do the minimum for you and no more. And no one likes a bully.

Stuck Is: "I feel stuck because I don't trust anyone. I feel alone."

Rescuer

The Core Belief: "Don't fight, don't worry, let me jump in and take it on and fix it."

The Dynamic: "It's my fault/responsibility, not yours."

The Benefits of Playing the Role: You feel morally superior. You believe you're indispensable.

The Price Paid for Playing the Role: People reject your help. You create Victims and perpetuate the Drama Triangle. And no one likes a meddler.

Stuck Is: "I feel stuck because my rescuing doesn't work. I feel hardened."

Seeing the pattern of the Drama Triangle is a strong first step in breaking the pattern. Once you understand the triggers, you can start to reshape the habit.

The bad news is that you are in fact destined to keep falling into the Drama Triangle for the rest of your life. The good news is that you'll get better and better at recognizing it and breaking the pattern faster and more often.

Go On Failing, Go On, only next time try to fail better.



The Karpman Drama Triangle Exercise

The purpose of this exercise is to bring awareness of an individual's or a team's behavior, based on the perception of others, during a given project or period.

The facilitator initiating the exercise will provide each team member with The Karpman Drama Triangle Worksheet, which will include the names of all team members. Each team member will specify their perception of the Drama Triangle characteristic of each of the other team members on the worksheet.

Upon completion, the exercise facilitator will summarize the results of the entire team. The feedback will be reviewed with the entire team or each individual team member to discuss and understand the behavior triggers and how to start to reshape the habit.

This exercise can be executed for individual team member(s) or an entire team.

Team Member Instructions:

- Place your name and date in the top boxes
- For each of the other team members, place an "X" in column P, R, or V based on your perception of the individual's Drama Triangle Characteristic during the time period being reviewed

Example (Team Leader & 4 Team Members)

Individual	Date
Member 1	MM/DD/YY

Name	P	R	V
Leader		X	
Member 1			
Member 2	X		
Member 3			X
Member 4		X	

Individual	Date
Member 3	MM/DD/YY

Name	P	R	V
Leader		X	
Member 1		X	
Member 2	X		
Member 3			
Member 4			X

Individual	Date
Leader	MM/DD/YY

Name	P	R	V
Leader			
Member 1		X	
Member 2	X		
Member 3			X
Member 4		X	

Individual	Date
Member 2	MM/DD/YY

Name	P	R	V
Leader	X		
Member 1			X
Member 2			
Member 3			X
Member 4			X

Individual	Date
Member 4	MM/DD/YY

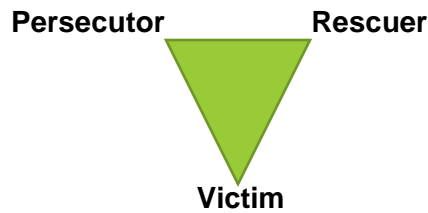
Name	P	R	V
Leader		X	
Member 1		X	
Member 2	X		
Member 3			X
Member 4			

Team	Date
Team A	MM/DD/YY

Name	P	R	V
Leader	1	3	
Member 1		3	1
Member 2	4		
Member 3			4
Member 4		2	2



The Karpman Drama Triangle Worksheet



P - Persecutor: The Persecutor insists, *"It's all your fault."* The Persecutor is controlling, blaming, critical, oppressive, angry, authoritarian, rigid, and superior.

R - Rescuer: The rescuer's line is "Let me help you." A classic enabler, the Rescuer feels guilty if they don't go to the rescue. Yet their rescuing has negative effects: It keeps the Victim dependent and gives the Victim permission to fail.

V - Victim: The Victim's stance is *"Poor me!"* The Victim feels victimized, oppressed, helpless, hopeless, powerless, ashamed, and seems unable to make decisions, solve problems, take pleasure in life, or achieve insight.

Individual or Team

Date

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	Name / Role	P	R	V
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				