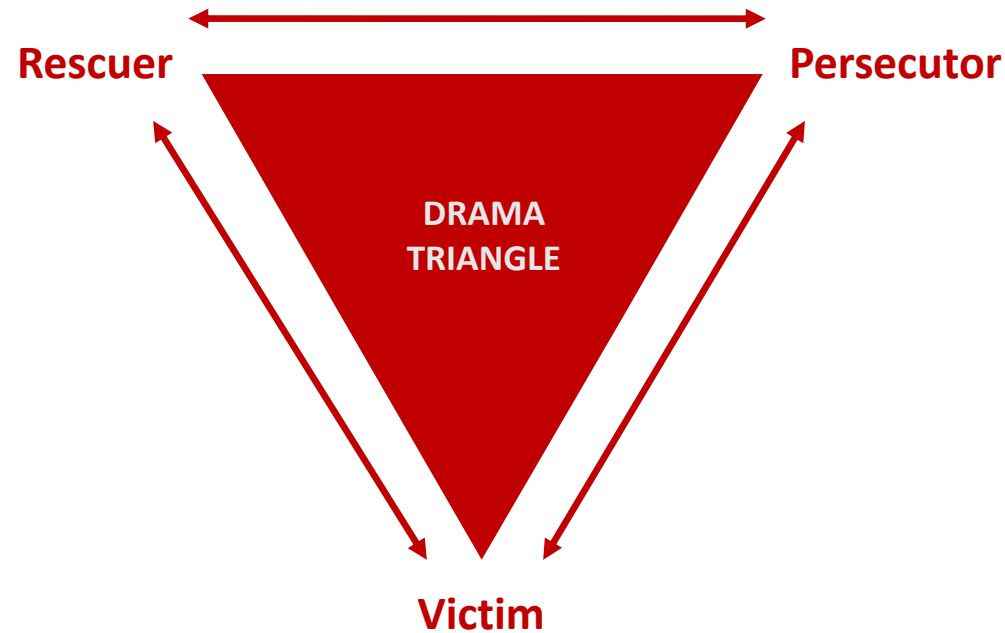




Drama Triangle

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The Drama Triangle was first described by Stephen Karpman in the 1960s.

It is a model of dysfunctional social interactions and illustrates a power game that involve three roles: Victim, Rescuer, and Persecutor.

Each role represents a common and ineffective response to conflict.

The journey round the triangle can be done with self or another.

Drama Triangle - Victim

In the Drama Triangle, each player in the particular mind game begins by assuming one of the three typical roles:

- **Victim – “Poor me.”**

Victims often feel victimised, trapped, helpless and hopeless. They think they are at the mercy of life, and are unwilling to take responsibility for their undesirable circumstances. They blame on Persecutors (can be other people or a particular situation), and always seek for Rescuers to solve the problem for them.

If the Victims continue to stay in the ‘dejected’ stance, it will prevent them from making decisions, solving problems, changing the current state, or sensing any satisfaction.

Drama Triangle - Rescuer

- **Rescuer – “Let me help you.”**

Rescuers constantly intervene on behalf of the Victims and try to save Victims from perceived harm. They feel guilty of standing by and ‘watching people drown’.

Rescuers may have all the good intention and strive to ‘help’ others as they see necessary. They fail to realise that by offering short-term fixes to Victims, they keep Victims dependent and neglect their own needs.

This is why Rescuers often find themselves pressured, tired, and may not have time to finish their own tasks, as they are busy fire-fighting the Victims’ problems as they arise!

Drama Triangle - Persecutor

- **Persecutor – “It’s all your fault.”**

Persecutors are like ‘Critical Parents’ who are strict and firm and set boundaries. They tend to think that they must win at any cost.

They blame the Victims and criticize the behaviour of Rescuers, without providing appropriate guidance, assistance or a solution to the problem.

They are critical and good at finding fault, and control with order and rigidity. They keep the Victims oppressed and sometimes can be a bully.

Are you a Victim, Rescuer, or Persecutor?

Now you are aware of the Drama Triangle and the roles in the triangular setting.

So are you a victim, a rescuer, or a persecutor?

If you're human, chances are you may see yourself, or being seen by others, as all three in different scenarios.

Note that players in the Drama Triangle may switch roles during the course of a mind game, and if anyone in this triangle changes roles, the other two roles change as well.

An example of Drama Triangle in motion is listed below.

Example: Drama Triangle in Motion

Mark: Alex, the Programme Status Report is due at 12pm today. Could you please send it over to me as soon as possible? (P)

Alex: Doh! I haven't done it yet, I wasn't sure what is required, and I have been overwhelmed with the other priorities for my programme. (V)

Mark: The request and report template were sent to you last week. If you were not sure about the requirement, why didn't you ask? (P)

Alex: I was overwhelmed and didn't have the capacity. (V)

Mark: It is already 10am now, can you pull something up for your programme quickly? (P)

Kate: Mark, what information do you need from our programme? (R)

Example: Drama Triangle in Motion (con'd)

Mark: The standard – programme RAG status, programme highlights, key risks and issues, milestones and dependencies. (R)

Kate: We produce quite a few programme reports for the portfolio already. Can't you just tweak the information to get what you need? (P)

Mark: Do you know how many programme updates I have to collate for the portfolio updates? (V)

Alex: Honestly, I think the status report is an overkill! (P)

Kate: Never mind, give me half an hour. I will update the status report and send it over. (R)

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Inquire Our Services

Phone: UK +44 (0)207 096 0346 | US +1 332 220 3995 | IN +91 97390 22490

Email: hello@leadership-tribe.com



For more information about Leadership Tribe or to get in touch, visit us at:

www.leadership-tribe.com

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