

THE BIG IDEAS

Dreaded Drama Triangle
It's poisoning us!

The Victim
Requires a Persecutor.

The Persecutor
Requires a Victim.

The Rescuer
Saves the Victim!

The Antidote to DDT
The Empowerment Dynamic (TED)*!

The Creator
What do I want?

The Challenger
Catalyzes a Creator.

The Coach
Facilitates a Creator.

Shift Happens
Victim --> Creator
Rescuer --> Coach
Persecutor --> Challenger

Rubber Bands
And your ideals.

Baby Steps
Your path to your ideal.

Souls & Compromises
What are you investing in?



The Power of TED*

*The Empowerment Dynamic

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“Your life is a kind of laboratory where you’re constantly experimenting with your own higher knowing, always increasing your capacity to design the life you choose. Human beings must create; it’s hardwired. The question is, are you consciously creating or only sleepwalking through your human life?”

~ David Emerald, Author of *The Power of TED**

TED’s your friend.

Seriously.

[David Emerald](#)’s simple, powerful fable, *The Power of TED**, (featuring his uber-wise character, TED) is a life changing kinda book.

In this overview I’ll introduce you to two (very) different orientations from which we can choose to live: Victim and Creator. One’ll land you in the Dreaded Drama Triangle (DDT) and the other’ll place you squarely where you want to be: in The Empowerment Dynamic (TED).

Ready?

Let’s jump in!

THE DREADED DRAMA TRIANGLE

“When you inhabit any of these three roles, you’re reacting to fear of victimhood, loss of control, or loss of purpose. You’re always looking outside yourself, to the people and circumstances of life, for a sense of safety, security, and sanity.”

DDT is poisoning our world.

No, not that kind of DDT. We’re talking about the “Dreaded Drama Triangle” here.

Adapted from Dr. Stephen Karpman’s Drama Triangle created in the 1960’s, the Dreaded Drama Triangle is the toxic mess we find ourselves in too often in our lives.

As with any good triangle, the Dreaded Drama Triangle has three points. In this case: Victim, Persecutor, and Rescuer.

Here’s a quick look at ‘em:

THE VICTIM

“Every Victim requires a Persecutor. But the Persecutor isn’t always necessarily a person. The Persecutor could also be a condition or a circumstance. A persecuting condition might be a disease or a heart attack, or an injury. A persecuting circumstance could be a natural disaster, like a hurricane or an earthquake or a house burning down.”

So, that’s pretty straight-forward, eh?

As we look at the DDT, we'll see that each of three positions can't exist without the others. For someone to be a Victim, someone (or something) else must be a Persecutor.

It's also interesting to note: "All victims have experienced a loss—a thwarted desire or aspiration—even if they're not aware of it."

And: "Frozen in fear, you avoid responsibility because you think your experience is beyond your control. This stance keeps you from making decisions, solving problems, or going after what you want in life."

Finally, remember: "Victims may be defensive, submissive, over-accommodating to others, passive-aggressive in conflict, dependent on others for self-worth, overly sensitive, even manipulative. They're often angry, resentful, and envious, feeling unworthy or ashamed about their circumstances. Have you ever felt or acted this way?"

Question: Can you think of a time or two when you might have embodied the Victim?!?

THE PERSECUTOR

"These people are often authoritarian and rigid in their views, exerting power over others in an effort to keep others from having power over them. Persecutors may act grandiose and self-righteous to mask their own insecurity."

Persecutors. The most easy-to-spot villain in the DDT drama!

Although they act tough, keep in mind [Emerald's](#) wisdom: "Persecutors, like Victims, act out of fear. They may seem fearless, but actually Persecutors are almost always former Victims."

Question: Can you think of a time or two when you might have embodied the Persecutor?!

THE RESCUER

"A Rescuer isn't always a person. Addictions to alcohol or drugs, sexual addiction, workaholism—all the ways we numb out—can rescue the Victim from feeling his or her own feelings."

Good ol' Rescuers.

I think it's cool how Emerald points out the fact that we can look to things outside of ourselves like alcohol or sex or even TV—anything to "rescue" us from the feelings of victimhood.

"Persecutors fear loss of control. Rescuers fear loss of purpose. Rescuers need Victims—someone to protect or fix—to bolster their self-esteem."

Question: Can you think of a time or two when you might have embodied the Rescuer?!

THE ANTIDOTE TO DDT

"TED—The Empowerment Dynamic—counteracts the poison of DDT, the Dreaded Drama Triangle. TED is the antidote for DDT."

So now that we've taken a quick look at the three orientations of the Dreaded Drama Triangle, let's take a quick peak at the main characters in its antidote: The Empowerment Dynamic.

Whereas the Victim has a Persecutor and a Rescuer in DDT, TED's triad features a Creator with a Challenger and a Coach.

Here's more:

THE CREATOR

“One of the fundamental differences between the Victim Orientation and this one [Creator] is where you put your focus of attention... For Victims, the focus is always on what they don’t want: the problems that seem constantly to multiply in their lives. They don’t want the person, condition, or circumstance they consider their Persecutor, and they don’t want the fear that leads to fight, flee or freeze reactions, either. Creators, on the other hand, place their focus on what they do want. Doing this, Creators still face and solve problems in the course of creating outcomes they want, but their focus remains fixed on their ultimate vision.”

Brilliant.

So, the thing to remember about being a Creator is: “The focus in the Creator Orientation is on a Vision or an Outcome. You orient your thoughts and actions toward creating what you most deeply want to see or experience in life.”

And: “A Creator is vision-focused and passion-motivated. To really live into your Creator self, you are called to do the inner work necessary to find your own sense of purpose—whatever touches your heart and holds meaning for you.”

THE CHALLENGER

“All of life’s experiences are teachers in some sense, challenging us to grow and evolve. Although the Persecutor certainly provokes a reaction, the Challenger elicits a response by encouraging the Creator to acquire new knowledge, skill, or insight. Both roles provoke change, but in different ways.”

See the difference between the Persecutor and the Challenger?

Powerful stuff.

We’ll go into more detail on how to make the shift between the two soon.

THE COACH

“The Coach is the antidote to the Victim’s Rescuer in the DDT... Mainly, a Coach supports, assists, and facilitates the Creator in manifesting a desired outcome. A Coach holds others to be whole, resourceful, and creative... They help you dig deep inside yourself to gain clarity about what you want to create in your life.”

To stress the big difference between the Rescuer and the Coach:

The rescuer sees a person as a Victim—incapable of getting by without his/her support.

The Coach, on the other hand, sees the individual they’re supporting as a Creator—totally capable of rockin’ it on their own.

BIG distinction.

SHIFT HAPPENS

“The way you talk about yourself and your life—your story—has a great deal to do with what shows up in your day-to-day experience. Your thoughts create filters through which you view your life. If you think of yourself as a Victim, you filter all that happens to you through the lens of DDT, and you find plenty of evidence to support that viewpoint. That’s why the orientation you adopt is so important: it exerts a powerful influence on your life direction.”

All that’s brilliant, but how do we shift from one of the DDT roles and get into the empowered roles when we get stuck?

The simple (but not easy!) solution?

Ask the right question.

“Living from the Creator Orientation is actually more challenging. In the Victim Orientation, I didn’t have to exercise conscious choice; I just reacted to my circumstances.”

VICTIM—>CREATOR

If you find yourself showing up as Victim, ask: “What do I want?!?”

Robert Kegan once said that behind every complaint is a deeper commitment. Meaning: If you’re complaining about something (i.e., being a Victim), the complaint simply points to a deeper commitment you have for yourself that is currently being thwarted.

For example, if I’m complaining about not having the freedom to pursue my creative ideas and putting someone or something in the position of Persecutor, I need to recognize that I’m falling into Victim-mode and ask myself: “*What do I want?*” In this case, the answer would be something like: “*I want more freedom to create.*”

The moment we ask that question, we’ve shifted our focus from the problem to the vision/solution. We’re no longer helpless Victims in the clutches of some Persecutor but Creators dealing with a Challenger (or challenging situation).

That’s a powerful shift.

PERSECUTOR—>CHALLENGER

(My personal favorite when I fall into DDT. Ahem. :)

I tend to challenge myself and others. I find that when I’m not living up to my own ideals, I can (frighteningly easily!) fall into the Persecutor role.

The question to ask when I witness this? “What is my intention?”

If I’m in Persecutor-mode, I tend to be unconsciously asserting my power and trying to prove that I’m right.

To shift to Challenger, I need to make sure I’m grounded in the intention of love and the desire to support the individual’s growth.

So, try it!

The next time you find yourself persecuting someone, ask yourself the question: “*What is my intention?*” and shift yourself from Persecutor to Challenger!

RESCUER—>COACH

You’re in Rescuer-mode.

Remember, the problem with a Rescuer orientation is that you don’t think the person with whom you’re interacting is capable of doing fine without your help. You’re putting them into a Victim role.

To shift to Coach, ask yourself this question: “Do I believe the person I’m serving is whole without me?”

A Coach treats everyone as a Creator—totally whole and capable of solving their own problems. With that mindset, no one needs to be rescued, eh?

“The man who removes a mountain begins by carrying away small stones.”

~ William Faulkner

“I knew it was unrealistic to think I could build an institution overnight. But if I took baby steps, eventually it would happen.”

~ Russell Simmons from *Do You!*

RUBBER BANDS & YOUR IDEALS

“The way you create any outcome in your life is to hold the vision of your deepest desires. At the same time, though, you must honestly and accurately assess your current situation and how it relates to your greater vision. By doing this, you engage tension between what is and what can be. This tension is the primary creative force behind the manifestation of any outcome. It’s as natural and powerful as the force of gravity.”

Pick up a rubber band. (Imagining it will be fine. :)

Put it between the biggest finger on each of your hands.

Pull your fingers apart, stretching the rubber band.

Now, imagine that your right hand is your ideal, pulling away from your left hand, that represents your current reality.

Feel the tension?

Nice.

That tension between your fingers is the same type of tension that exists when you dare to dream and envision your ideal life. The moment we do that, we create what TED calls “Dynamic Tension” between our ideal and our current reality.

Here’s the challenge: What do we want to do when we feel that tension between our fingers and between our ideal and where we are? Relieve it, right?

As TED advises: “In the case of dynamic tension, you can resolve the tension in either direction. You can let go of your vision and snap back toward your current reality, or you can move from your current situation toward your vision.”

As Victims, we compromise our ideal vision and then bitch that someone’s persecuting us.

As Creators?

As Creators, we know: “It’s impossible to invest your soul in a compromise.”

So, we hold that tension and take what TED calls “Baby Steps” toward our goal.

BABY STEPS

“It is the Baby Steps you take, the everyday things you do, that eventually lead to the manifestation of your outcome.”

It’s so easy to throw up our hands and walk away when we feel stressed or overwhelmed—turning to the nearest “Rescuer” (TV, a drink, sex) to numb ourselves from the pain of holding the tension.

As you know, that’s not a good idea.

We’ve gotta remember to put ourselves into Creator-mode, ask ourselves: “*What do I want?*” and then figure out what the next thing is that we need to do.

I love the way [Byron Katie](#) describes it (see Notes on [Loving What Is](#)). She calls it “Doing the dishes.” :)

She says: “*What I call ‘doing the dishes’ is the practice of loving the task in front of you. Your inner voice guides you all day long to do simple things such as brush your teeth, drive to work, call your friend, or do the dishes. Even though it’s just another story, it’s a very short story, and when you follow the direction of the voice, the story ends. We are really alive when we live as simply as that—open, waiting, trusting, and loving to do what appears in front of us now... What we need to do unfolds before us, always—doing the dishes, paying the bills, picking up*

the children's socks, brushing our teeth. We never receive more than we can handle, and there is always just one thing to do. Whether you have ten dollars or ten million dollars, life never gets more difficult than that."

Brilliant.

The fact is we pretty much *always* know what we need to do next. The problem is that we often ignore that inner guidance system.

As Katie says: "*When a thought appears such as 'Do the dishes' and you don't do them, notice how an internal war breaks out... The stress and weariness you feel are really mental combat fatigue.*"

So, what's your next baby step?

... And, as you start rockin' those baby steps, remember: "Some of the steps you take may end up being detours or out-and-out mistakes. By staying focused on your vision, though, you'll find even those steps useful in the creating process."

SOULS & COMPROMISES

"It's impossible to invest your soul in a compromise."

Powerful.

No matter how hard we may try, it's simply impossible to invest our souls in a compromise!

My final questions for you: What's your ideal?

What are you investing your soul in?!?

... And, of course: What's your next baby step?

Here's to living these questions and Creating our ideal lives,

B

Brian Johnson,
Chief Philosopher

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About the Author of "The Power of TED"

DAVID EMERALD



David Emerald is a confirmed creator who once viewed life through the eyes of a Victim. He makes his home on a peaceful island in the Pacific Northwest U.S., where he liked to walk the beach and imagine the best of all possible futures. (From the book) Check out all things TED* at **PowerOfTed.com**

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Brian Johnson loves helping people optimize their lives as he studies, embodies and teaches the fundamentals of optimal living—integrating ancient wisdom + modern science + common sense + virtue + mastery + fun. Learn more and optimize your life at brianjohnson.me.