



SETTING THE GOALS BY MEANS OF COACHING

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SELF-COACHING

EXERCISE 1

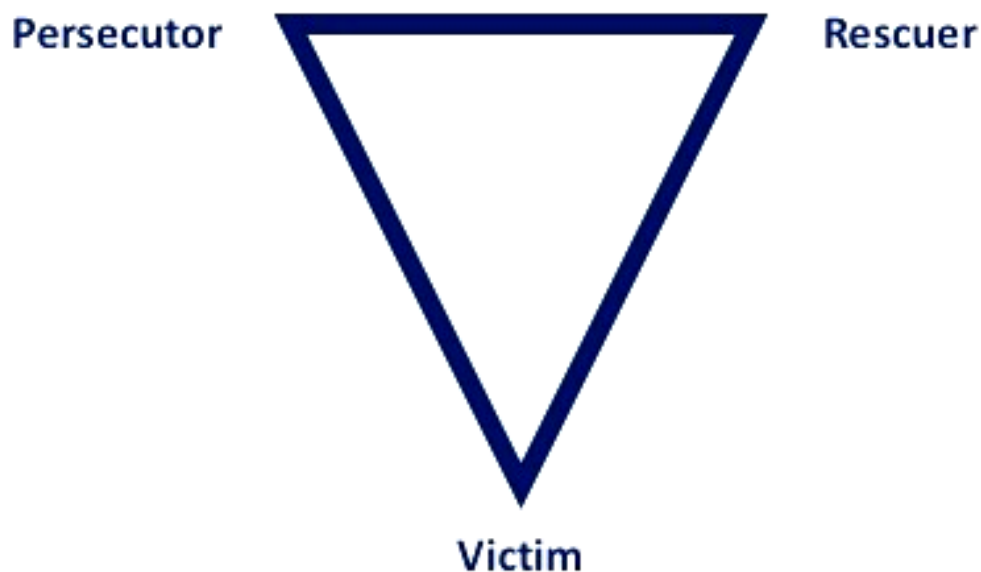
THE DRAMA TRIANGLE

Introduction

Many of us at times act like we are being victims in our lives. Every time when we refuse to take responsibility for ourselves, we are unconsciously choosing to act like victims.

The drama triangle is a dynamic model of social interaction and conflict developed by Dr. Karpman. He specifies that “victim, rescuer and persecutor” refer to roles people unconsciously play, or try to manipulate others to play, and not the real circumstances in life, such as victims of crime or abuse, etc.

The three roles of the drama triangle are typical and easily recognizable in their extreme versions.



- **V = victim.** Victims usually feel helpless, oppressed and powerless. Their typical attitude is “Poor me!” Victims are unable to make decisions, solve problems, take responsibilities for their own lives. Being powerless, victims constantly seek for rescuers to save them and solve their problems.
- **R = rescuer.** The stance of a rescuer is “Let me help you.” Rescuers can feel guilty if they do not ‘save’ someone. Although rescuers have positive intentions, their attitude at times has negative impact. It keeps the Victim dependent and gives the Victim permission to fail. The role of rescuer, in reality, is an avoidance of dealing with their own issues.
- **P = persecutor.** Persecutors are controlling, authoritative and unpleasant to deal with. They usually criticize and blame the victim, set strict limits, but they don’t actually solve any problems or help anyone else. They make the victim feeling ‘small’ through threats and bullying. On the other hand, persecutors are scared of being a victim themselves.

Now: Divide into groups of 4-6 students and read the following two fictional stories. After reading these stories:

- 1) Discuss in the groups who from these 4 fictional characters is right and who is wrong?
- 2) Distribute roles of: V = victim; R = rescuer and P = persecutor for each speaker. Note, one speaker can keep switching roles during the conversation.

A. Story

The first situation is happening between Richard and Ann, a married couple with children.

Richard: You burned dinner again! That’s not the first time this month, Ann!

Ann: Well, little Johnny fell and skinned his elbow, poor thing. I was busy getting him a bandage and the dinner accidentally burnt.

Richard: You baby that kid too much!

Ann: I do not think you would want him to get an infection. I’d end up taking care of him while he’s sick.

Richard: He’s big enough to be able to get his own bandage.

Ann: I just didn’t want leave our son bleeding all over the carpet.

Richard: You know, that’s the problem with these kids? They expect you to do everything for them

Ann: That’s natural, they are just children.

Richard: I work like a dog all day at a job I hate...

Ann: Yes, you do work very hard, dear.

Richard: And I can’t even have a good dinner home!

Ann: I can cook something else, it won’t take too long.

Richard: A waste of an expensive steak!

Ann: Well maybe if you could have stood up out of your chair for a minute while I was busy, it wouldn’t have gotten burned!

Richard: You didn’t say anything! How was I supposed to know?

Ann: As if you couldn’t hear Johnny crying? You always ignore the kids!

Richard: I do not. I just need time to sit and relax and unwind after working all day! You don’t

know what it's like...

Ann: Sure, as if taking care of the house and kids isn't work!

B. Story

The second fictional argument is happening between David and Kathy, a young couple.

David: Kathy, why are you late again? I am sick of it, you are always late!

Kathy: I'm sorry, I just did not hear my alarm ringing. Please don't be mad at me.

David: Well, you have absolutely no respect for my time. I've no idea why I still put up with you!

Kathy: But you are not perfect yourself. Stop yelling at me otherwise you will regret it!

David: OK, OK. Calm down. I didn't mean to upset you.

Kathy: Well you never help me with my lateness so what do you expect?

David: OK, so from now on I will make sure you get out of the house on time.

After compiling the exercise, discuss in the groups: who could be a missing person in the given situations?

Conclusion

'The only way to "escape" the drama triangle is to function as an "adult" and not participate in the game.'

– John Goulet, MFT, Breaking the Drama Triangle

Each role of the drama triangle has its own outcomes. Rescuers take care of Victims and feel good about it. Victims are usually convinced that they are powerless or defective and needing rescue. This way have someone to blame for their failures and to solve their problems for them. In of these circumstances, Persecutors get a feeling of being more powerful and 'higher' than both victim and rescuer.

The biggest cost of this 'role-play' is to keep going a dysfunctional social dynamic and to miss out on the possibilities of healthy and strong relationships.

In fact, if every participant of the drama triangle starts making decisions for themselves and taking responsibility for their own life, the triangle will no longer 'poison' the interpersonal relationship.

EXERCISE 2

POWERFUL QUESTIONS

Introduction

Most people think of coaching as giving advice and instructions. In reality, coaching is an art of questioning. Good coaching questions are often complex but powerful and there is more than one right answer. Powerful coaching questions help a coachee to think and uncover what's really important for them.

This exercise helps to learn the importance of asking the 'right' questions in order to get a powerful answer.

- 1) Divide into groups of 4-6 students.
- 2) Choose 1 person among you, who plays role of the "Client".
- 3) The "Client" formulates to a group a request or a goal, which the Client wants to accomplish in the nearest future. For instance "I want to write and publish a novel".
- 4) The rest of the group members perform a team coaching.
- 5) The Client announces his/her request, and the team of coaches start questioning clockwise.
- 6) The Client gives one answer to each question.
- 7) There should be 2 or 3 rounds, so every coach has a chance to ask 2-3 questions, one at a time.
- 8) After each question asked, everybody in the group (Client and coaches) should rate the question in their evaluation sheet (*see attachment 1*), where 1 is the lowest (the weakest question) and 10 is the highest (the strongest question). Everyone should write the questions down in order to give a constructive feedback when the exercise is done.

The principles of Powerful Questions:

1. Open-ended questions. Open-ended questions help to uncover the real issue and show a variety of options without limitations. For example: "What your novel will be about?"
2. Future-oriented. Focussing on the future often brings positive emotions as let us dream.
3. Solution-oriented. Usually, there is no point to search for the cause of a problem as it already exists. It is more effective to search for the right solution to overcome the problem.
4. Timely asked. It is extremely important to ask the right questions at the right time so they become powerful. Some questions require more rapport from a coachee than others and should be asked at the right moment to reach their target.
5. Lead to action. In order to make a change there should be an action. Even a small action is already the first step towards the new direction. Without action there is no point in coaching.
6. Direct. The powerful questions are easy to understand and simply constructed.
7. Contain positive assumption. In powerful coaching questions, there is no judgement, over-generalisation, pressure or any kind of presupposition, especially negative.
8. No 'why' questions. Questions beginning with 'why' tend to be judging, evoke details and justifications of the situation. Understanding the situation in detail does not necessarily help to resolve it. It is much more effective to look for solutions and focus on the future. Questions starting with "What" are usually stronger.

Examples:

Weak questions	Powerful questions
What should you do?	What do you want?
Whose fault is this?	What is the solution?
Why is this happening to you?	What can you learn from this?

Example of the evaluation sheet

The client's request (shortly formulated):

Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<p>Coach 1</p> <p>Q1: _____</p> <p>Q2: _____</p> <p>Q3: _____</p>										
<p>Coach 2</p> <p>Q1: _____</p> <p>Q2: _____</p> <p>Q3: _____</p>										

