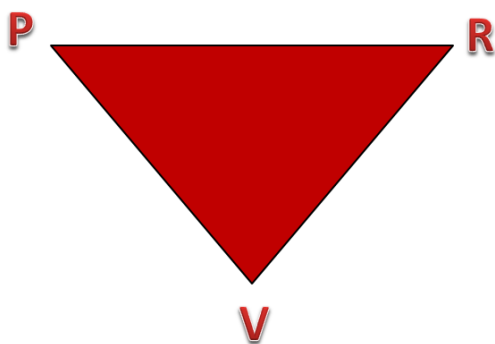


The Truth About Relationship Drama

Most of us buy into the illusion that workplace relationships are different than personal relationships. Whether it's disruptive behavior in the workplace, drama in your family-owned business or the secret issues that threaten your marriage, all relationship drama has common patterns. I dedicated a whole chapter in my book [Stop Workplace Drama](#), to the issue of relationship drama where I introduced the Karpman Drama Triangle.



The dynamics on the triangle include three distinct orientations: The Persecutor, Rescuer, and Victim. In this article you get a snapshot of the mindsets and thinking patterns of each orientation. (See the red triangle).

Persecutor: I'm right and you are wrong. You should do as I say and if you would just listen to me and do what I say, we wouldn't be having these problems. **I have the right to tell it like it is because...**

- He's an idiot
- I know what is best
- I don't have time for the excuses
- That's just the way I am
- At least I am honest

Rescuer: If I can just say or do the right things, I could fix the problem. I must get agreement, keep the peace and make sure everyone agrees and is happy. **I won't speak up because...**

- It would hurt their feelings
- They might blow up
- They didn't really mean it
- It would cause more trouble than it's worth
- I already know what she will say

Victim: I have no choices. I'm stuck. No one cares. Because of _____. I'm in this situation. This always happens to me.

I try to speak but...

- No one hears me
- No one respects me
- You just don't understand
- It doesn't do any good anyway
- That's just how it is

Identifying others on the triangle is easy. Identifying yourself is the hardest part, because it always seems like the answer is about what someone else is doing or not doing. Below are some points to ponder. Answering these questions can help you gain clarity about the next right steps.

Points to Ponder

1. Can you identify the roles currently being played out in a difficult relationship?
2. What is not working for you in this relationship?
3. What is it that you want from this relationship that you are not getting?
4. What skills do you need to develop in order to be more authentic in your truth?
5. What kind of boundary do you need to set immediately?