

The Drama Triangle

One of the ways that we can explain peoples' behaviour is by understanding how the drama triangle operates. At times this can be seen playing out across the whole organisations. At other times we can do this all by ourselves



with our own internal dialogue.

When we are unclear of what we want or how to achieve it, we can easily fall into what is often referred to as 'the blame culture'. **We** have a problem but it is preferable to off-load it. To do so, we can take up any of these three roles:

1. Victim: poor me!

I do not like the situation. If only it were not for my "wooden leg", I could achieve great things. Someone should take care of me and help me achieve something better. If they don't, I'll start to kick up a fuss so that they have to take notice and help me. They had better hurry up and change their behaviour.

2. Persecutor: it's his/her fault!

I do not like the situation. Somebody has let me down, how dare they?! I shall put my energy and my anger into finding someone who is around whom I can vent my anger on. When I find him/her, he or she had better get ready to change his/her behaviour.

3. Rescuer: they cannot cope without me!

I do not like the situation. It isn't fair. The victim isn't strong enough to sort it out and the persecutor is being really mean. I'd better have a word with him/her, then he/she can change his/her behaviour.

Each of the three roles looks to what they do not want and how someone else should change his/her behaviour. The drama triangle is a powerful force with an inevitability about it ('here we go again'). We can switch roles but often have a preferred one (note the rescuer is often perceived by the persecutor as a persecutor themselves who is victimising the original persecutor!)

Helping your coachee to stay off the Drama Triangle

Be clear about your outcome.

Have a look at what needs to be achieved, or look for the positive intention behind what someone else is trying to achieve, and get a clear outcome. Questions like "what is it you want to happen here?" "What's important about this situation?" .

Be prepared to give clear and fair feedback. Referred to the feedback models you are learning on this course. Remember your three legged stool of:- outcome; sensory acuity; flexibility and rapport. Make sure you engage your curiosity rather than your pre-judgements to find a different way to resolve this issue.

Check the knock-on-effect

What will happen if the outcome can be achieved? Will this have integrity for the organisation and for your customers? What the long-term impact here of creating a better outcome? What would you be proud of if it could happen? What will happen if the current situation is allowed to continue without comment?

Believe that you can make a difference

Even when things are difficult, remember that you can make a difference that can create an improvement in a scenario. Don't join any of the aspects of the drama triangle and remember that if you play one part you will soon play them all. Believe that your colleagues are capable too of adapting their behaviour. Remember to be clear and ask for different behaviours to the one that is

currently happening. Focus on what you do want rather than what you don't want.

Generate alternative solutions

Remember that there is more than one way to achieve something. If you always do what you have always done you will always get what you have always got. And if that currently isn't working, then with the other people involved look at how things could be different so that the drama triangle can disappear.

Having an "adult to adult" conversation you will be able to learn to start changing situations, and in particular by changing your own behaviour first. Every change begins with the change we make from within.

OK Corral

I'm OK You are NOT OK (Rescuer/Persecutor)	I'm OK You are OK (Adult/Adult)
I'm NOT OK You are NOT OK (Despair Square)	I'm NOT OK You are OK (Victim)

<p style="text-align: center;">I'm OK You are NOT OK</p> <p>Dominant Arrogant Aggressive Condescending Patronising Put downs</p> <p>(Lack of self esteem often runs underneath this behaviour) Can manifest as Rescuer or Persecutor</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">I'm OK You are OK</p> <p>Empathy Trust Goodwill Integrity Honesty OK to say what you think</p> <p>(High self esteem)</p> <p>Adult to adult interactions</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">I'm NOT OK You are NOT OK</p> <p>Low or no achievement Very negative De-motivating Depression No hope for me (or you)</p> <p>(Low self esteem. Can be very contagious. Looks for negative hooks)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">You are OK I'm NOT OK</p> <p>Subservient behaviour I'm not very good at this Can you do this for me? Easily swayed or influenced Timid Frightened</p> <p>(Can be used in a very manipulative way. Gets other people to do your work for you. Upward delegation)</p>