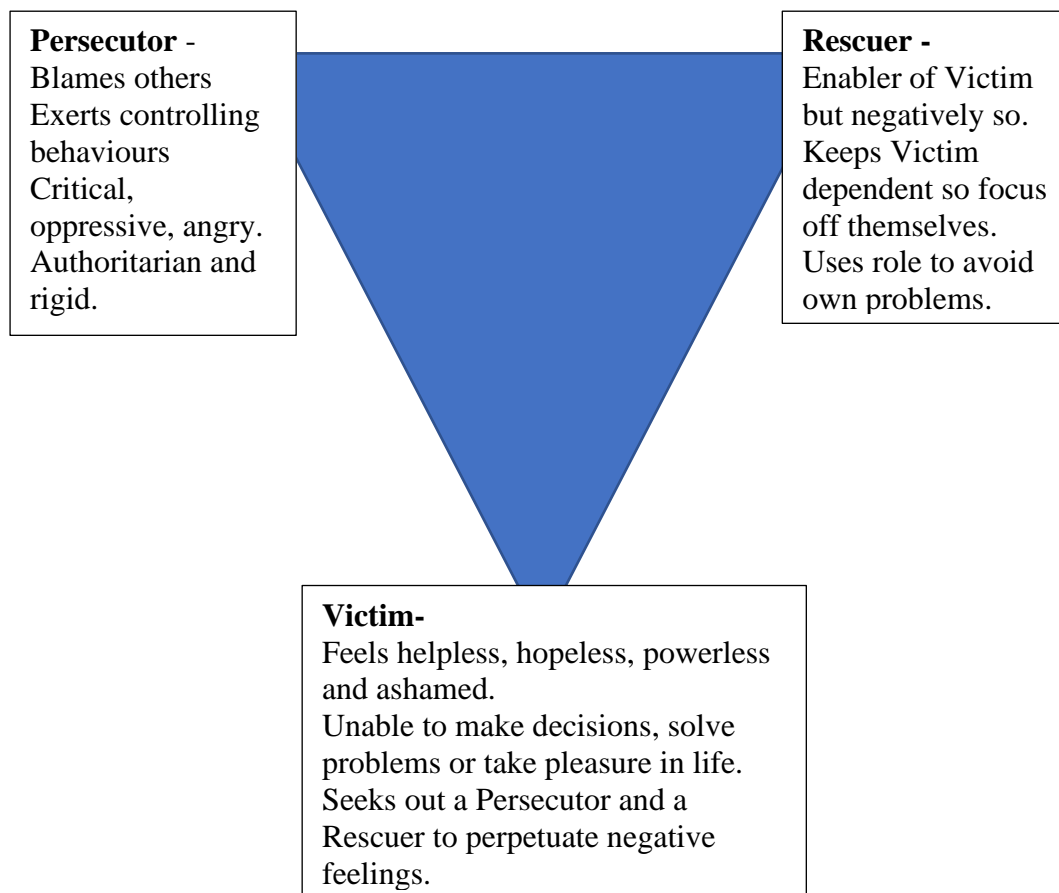




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## The Dreaded Drama Triangle – Stephen Karpman

This is a social model first developed by Stephen Karpman in 1968 and used in Transactional Analysis. The triangle is used to map out dysfunctional and drama-intense relationship transactions. In such transactions, once individuals begin to “take on” the different roles within the triangle, the motivations for each participant to engage in these roles and in any enduring situation is as a result of individuals having their unconscious psychological needs met. However, as the situation and relationships continue, it can lead to greater harm to the wellbeing of individuals within the triangle where conflict and anxiety fuel transactions.



The roles are not static and it can happen that someone who identifies as a “victim” can be perceived by others as a “persecutor”, or a “persecutor” may perceive themselves as a “rescuer.” Roles are certainly interchangeable. It is also possible that the “persecutor” could be a condition, a group/organisation or a situation, and not solely a person. The relationships within the triangle are sustained by an unhealthy focus on problems and the anxiety which perpetuates the drama.

To transform from being involved or in playing a role within a Drama Triangle, it requires an individual to consciously reflect on the following questions:



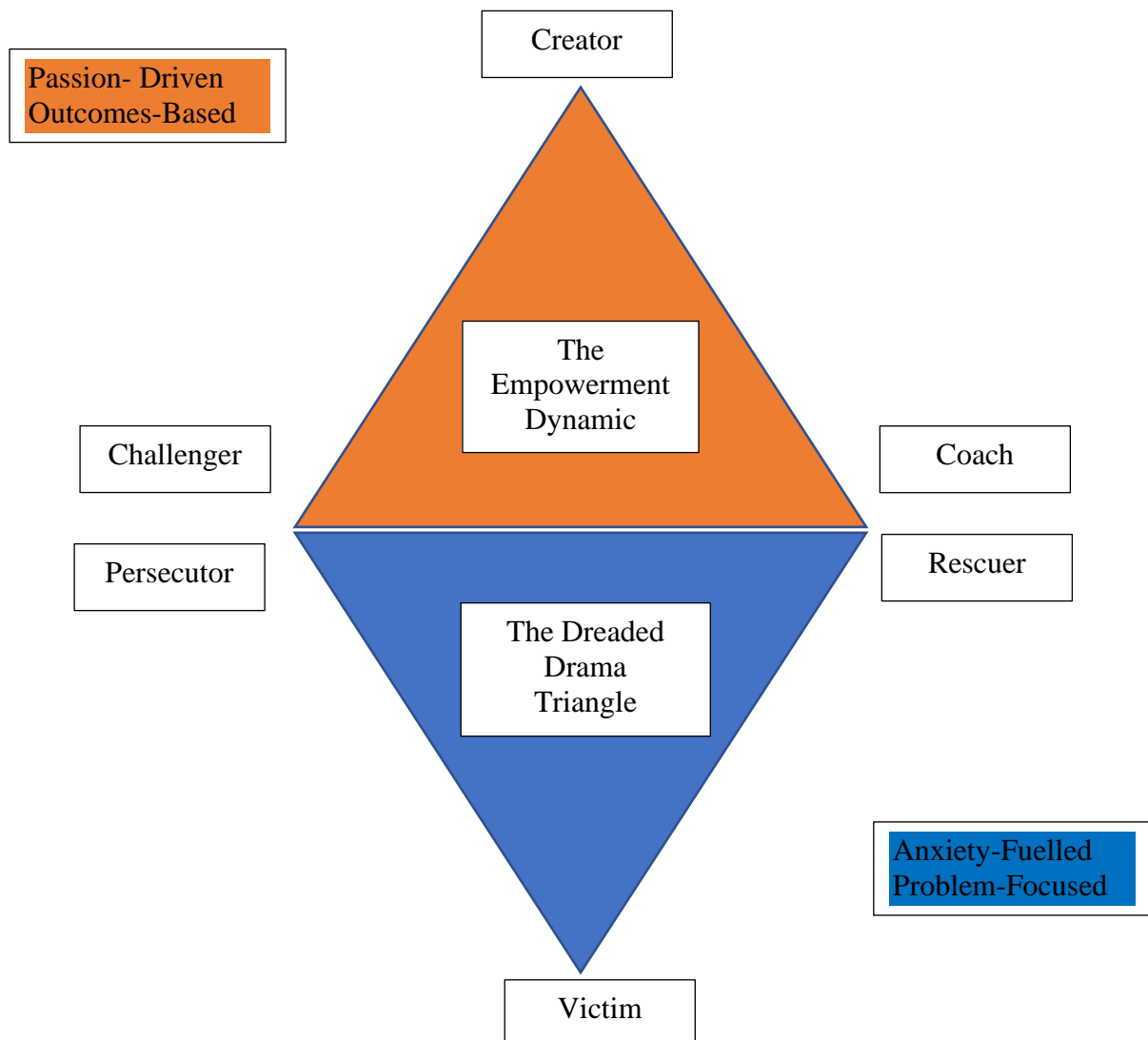
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- What is it that I want? When I do not achieve this, how do I respond?
- When others ask me to support them, how do I respond? Do I “jump in”? Try to “fix” situations for others to the detriment of my own needs or issues?
- When problems or challenges arise, do I blame others for their shortcomings? Do I step in to try to needlessly *control* the situation and fix it for others or for the organisation?

Consciously recognising where our roles and responses may not be resourceful is a first step.

## The Empowerment Dynamic – David Emerald

The Empowerment Dynamic is an example of a social model in direct opposition to the Drama Triangle and a resourceful reflective tool. It provides a means to improve communication and ensure that relationships are in a place of greater resourcefulness with healthier dynamics for individuals and teams.





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## **The Roles within The Empowerment Dynamic**

### Role of Creator:

- Driven by passion, learning, growth
- Life stance – we have choices
- Envision outcomes

### Role of Challenger:

- Person, Circumstance, Condition
- Ignites learning, growth, development
- Conscious constructive challenges from a place of sparking learning

### Role of Coach:

- Assess current reality and how Creator is responding
- Facilitate the Creator's creation and realising of outcomes

In this dynamic, individuals assess their resourcefulness and consider how they can become Creators in their social situations, interactions and relationships. Again, it is not always the case that it concerns people – it may be that being a Creator in how you wish to relate differently to work is just as valid as how you may wish to relate differently to your boss! What is deeply empowering about this process is being able to think from a place of having choices in all that you do, including how you respond to daily situations or challenges.

“Persecutors” become “Challengers” in allowing us opportunities to grow, learn and develop and to be free from guilt or blame.

“Rescuers” become “Coaches” who support us in achieving successful outcomes but who recognise our own need to learn through our experiences and to remain independent.

“Victims” become “Creators” who recognise our own autonomy and personal agency to change our circumstances by changing our mindset and resulting actions and behaviours.

## **Questions to reflect on in moving from Victim to Creator and in identifying other roles:**

- 1. Reflect on the times when you might have been in the Victim Orientation. What kinds of situations or people did you focus on that triggered you to “react” in this way? What emotions did you experience? (inner state)**
- 2. Reflect on the times when you have been passionate about an outcome that you created. How did your passion feel in this situation? How did you address problems when they came up?**
- 3. What might support you to “shift” from Victim Orientation to Creator Orientation?**
- 4. When have you perhaps been in the Rescuer Orientation? Describe the feelings that you had in that situation. What was the outcome of this situation and impact on you?**
- 5. What might support you to “shift” from Rescuer Orientation to Coach Orientation?**
- 6. When have you perhaps been in the Persecutor Orientation? Describe the feelings that you had in that situation. What was the outcome of this situation and outcome on you?**
- 7. What might support you to “shift” from Persecutor Orientation to Challenger Orientation?**