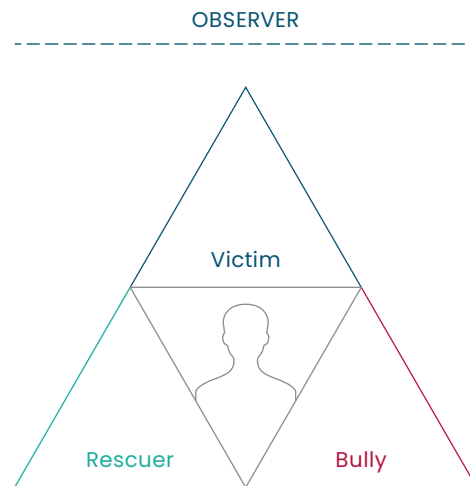




Triangle of Disempowerment



What is it?

The Triangle of Disempowerment is a quick and easy tool you can use to figure out where you are in frustrating and disempowering situations and how to get out of them quickly so that you're able to lead yourself and others more effectively.

Challenging relationships start with challenges in our own minds. Before we place blame to someone else, we need to accurately determine where we are in the chaos. Chances are, if you are feeling frustrated and angry with someone, you may be in the triangle. Being **IN** the triangle means you are giving up your power and thus your ability to think and process clearly. This frame of mind diminishes your ability to lead yourself and others. To go a level deeper, you may be taking on the role of one or more of these roles (victim, rescuer or bully). Depending on the context you can be in all three in a matter of moments.

How to use it?

STEP 1

Think about - how you are feeling?
If you are feeling:

- Attacked, done-un-to, blamed, less than, shame, sadness, fear, anxious, then there is a good chance you may be taking on the **victim** role
- Exhausted because you have to take care of everyone else, defend others, coming to the rescue, always having to be the protector, you may be in the **rescuer** corner
- Angry, fed up, aggressive, short-tempered focus at a person or group, you're likely in the **bully** role.

STEP 2

Identify which role you may be in. Accurately labelling yourself gives you power to see if you are outside of the Triangle in the observer role, your



Ultimately, work on self is inseparable from work in the world. Each mirrors the other; each is a vehicle for the other. When we change ourselves, our values and actions change as well.



— Charles Eisenstein, *Sacred Economics*

powerful, centered mind, or if you're weakened by being in one of the three roles (victim, rescuer or bully). Disclaimer: we all get into this Triangle of Disempowerment at some point. The real question is not how to avoid falling into the Triangle, but how to recognize when you are in it. Realize which corner, then decide to rise above it.

STEP 3

Once you know which corner(s) you may be in, try to see all the roles unfolding from the **observer** position above the triangle. First, TAKE 3 DEEP BREATHS.

Then and only then, ask yourself the following questions to help you see the conflict or challenge from a more objective and powerful position:

- 1 What role(s) were you in and why?
- 2 What might be the point of view from the other roles? (a.k.a. put yourself in their shoes, what do you see now?)
- 3 What can you see now that you're *outside* of the triangle?

STEP 4

What insights are surfacing now that you have new perspective from outside the Triangle?

Becoming aware about where you are and where you're wanting to be are the first steps to leading yourself in order to lead others more effectively.

Resources:

Adapted from Stephen Karpman, Drama Triangle in 1968.

In 1972, Karpman received the Eric Berne Memorial Scientific Award for this work.