



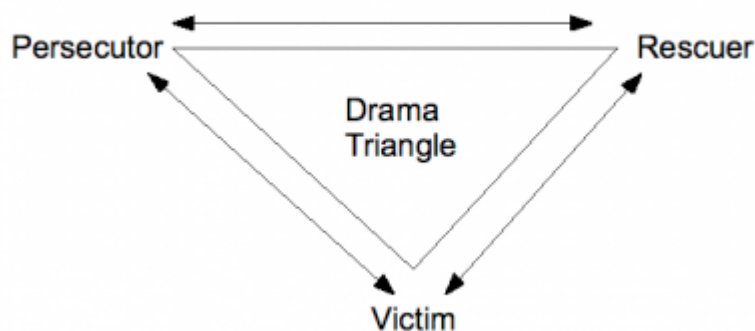
CHANGE YOUR VIBE

## The Drama Triangle and the Healthy Triangle

The Drama Triangle was originally developed in 1968 by Stephen Karpman, a Transactional Analysis trainer, as a way of explaining the dynamic that occurs whenever we make someone else responsible for how we feel. According to Karpman, any time we don't take responsibility for our feelings we are acting in a part of the Drama Triangle. The Drama Triangle can be a simple yet powerful mechanism for understanding relationships.

The roles of the drama triangle are: **Victim**, **Persecutor** and **Rescuer**. Karpman shows the relationship between these three roles by putting them on an upside down triangle. This shows the **Persecutor** and **Rescuer** in the one-up position that they take to the **Victim**.

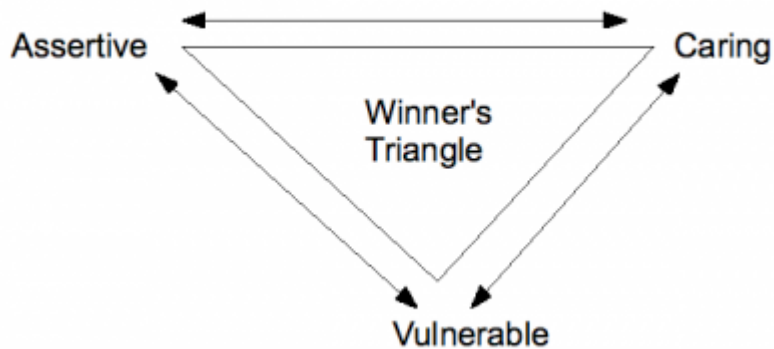
- A **Persecutor** is someone who puts other people down and therefore goes one-up. They can act actively aggressive or passive-aggressive in response to the Victim.
- A **Rescuer** also goes one-up. They do more than their share and often do things they don't really want to do.
- **Victims** don't take responsibility for themselves. They will often feel overwhelmed with their feelings or even numb to them. They go one-down.



The arrows on the triangle indicate the direction of the transactions, but the drama in the Triangle comes from the switching of roles. As the drama triangle is played out, people change roles or tactics. Others in the triangle will then switch to match this. Sooner or later the **Victim**, sick of the one-down position, turns on the **Rescuer**. Or the

**Rescuer** becomes fed up with a lack response or any appreciation of their efforts, becomes persecuting.

The Drama Triangle role names are part of our everyday language. Most people will be familiar with being called a **Rescuer** when they are perceived as helping too much. A person who feels overwhelmed, oppressed or depressed can be labeled a **Victim**. While the Drama Triangle illustrates the problem quite clearly, it's not always that easy to get out when you are in the middle of the drama. That's why I like the Healthy Triangle. The Drama Triangle has been around long enough for there to be many derivatives and modifications. The Healthy Triangle uses the same structure as the Drama Triangle but uses adult roles to replace the parent/child roles of the Drama Triangle. I first came across the Healthy Triangle in an article written by Acey Choy.



The roles of the Drama Triangle each have their equivalent role in the Healthy Triangle. Each of the three roles in the Healthy Triangle is an 'OK' role and requires the development of a different set of skills (see table below).

<b>Drama Triangle Role</b>	<b>Healthy Triangle Role</b>	<b>Skill to be Developed</b>
Victim	Vulnerable	Problem solving
Rescuer	Caring	Listening
Persecutor	Assertive	Assertiveness

Any technique that the **Vulnerable** person can use to get themselves thinking about options and consequences is valuable. In the **Caring** role the development of listening skills that involve empathising with the **Vulnerable** person is required. Listening is frequently the only **Caring** response needed. Caring people do not give advice or help that is not asked for directly. **Assertiveness** is about getting your needs met without punishing. Self awareness is essential in all three roles.