

Codependent Triangle

PERSECUTOR

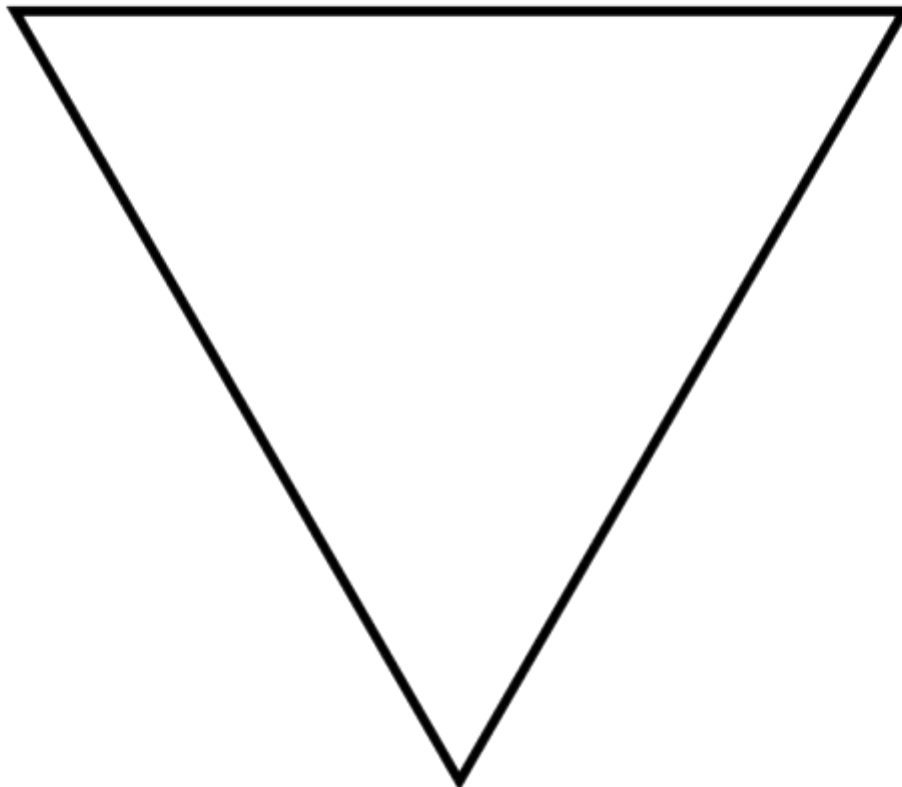
"It's All Your Fault"

Power Role

RESCUER

"Let me help you"

Enabling Role



VICTIM

"Poor Me"

Safe Role

The Codependent Triangle is usually represented as a triangle with its point facing downward, with the persecutor and rescuer at the top and the victim at the bottom. This shows that the Persecutor and Rescuer both assume a position of power over the Victim.

- *A person shifts from one role to another freely according to their desires of the moment.*
- *This is a learned style of relating, therefore it can be unlearned and new functional style can be learned and implemented.*

Victim Role

Victims are helpless and hopeless. They deny responsibility for their negative consequences of their actions, negative circumstances and deny possession of the power to change them. They do less than 50%, won't take a stand, act "super-sensitive", wanting kid glove treatment, and pretend impotence and incompetence.

It's the person who is always complaining about how he's being wronged and how terrible circumstances are but never taking the initiative to change things. The victim conveys a message of helplessness, whether it is spoken or implied. Someone playing the victim role believes things are done to him or her, not because of him or her.

- Feels victimized, oppressed, helpless, hopeless, powerless, ashamed
- Looks for a Rescuer that will perpetuate their negative feelings.
- If stays in Victim position, will block self from making decisions, solving problems, experiencing pleasure and self-understanding.
- "Dejected" stance.

Rescuer Role

Rescuers are constantly applying short-term repairs to a Victim's problems, while neglecting their own needs. They are always working hard to "help" other people. They are harried, tired, and often have physical complaints. They are usually angry underneath and may be a loud or quiet martyr in style. They use guilt to get their way.

The rescuer thinks he or she is the hero. Rather than support others, the rescuer tries to save others. The rescuer's help seems to come with an agenda, whether it is a condescending tone or a martyr mentality. Someone who is playing this role finds it much easier, safer and more interesting and safe to focus on other people's issues than their own. What's worse is that this attitude engenders a condescending attitude, that is often a big turn off to others.

- Rescues when really doesn't want to.
- Feels guilty if doesn't rescue.
- Keeps victim dependent.
- Gives permission to fail.
- Expects to fail in rescue attempts.
- "Marshmallow" Parent

Persecutor Role

Blame the Victims and criticize the enabling behavior of Rescuers, without providing guidance, assistance or a solution to the underlying problem. They are critical and unpleasant and good at finding fault. They often feel inadequate underneath. They control with threats, order, and rigidity. They can be loud or quiet in style and sometimes be a bully.

The persecutor is the person walking around with a chip on their shoulder. Where the victim whines and complains about what is going wrong, the persecutor takes matters into his or her

own hands and strikes back. This isn't always in a full-frontal attack though. Persecutors often harm others by withholding or being passive-aggressive. You can cause just as much harm (sometimes more) by withdrawing and being inactive as you can by attacking them directly.

- Sets strict limits unnecessarily
- Blames
- Criticizes
- Keeps Victim oppressed
- Is mobilized by anger
- Rigid, authoritative stance
- "Critical" Parent

Codependence Is an Addiction

We often, as Americans, are unaware that we are addicts at all. We live and thrive in an addict society. Yet few really know it. We are raised in that environment. Even our TVs tell us to be so. This is a great disservice to our psyche.

Let us define the dynamics of codependent thinking. We process all of life through a filter which says we must either be in the *VICTIM*, *RESCUER* or *PERSECUTOR* role to function. That's all there is. The problem is that there are ramifications if we always stay in that role cycle; we NEVER experience REAL love, intimacy, honesty or truly treasure anyone. We don't trust, plain and simple. So we try to control and manipulate our way through life.

We and everyone with us is miserable, but no one knows it, for everyone is BLAMING everyone and everything else, never themselves. Not that we as individuals can cause the totality of anything, but we CERTAINLY have a contribution to all that goes on around us, including the outcomes of our actions. We are not responsible for other's feelings, thoughts/attitudes, actions, beliefs/values, desires, choices; but we are most certainly responsible for those in ourselves.

We become behaviorally addicted to this cycle of insanity because we were raised in this dynamic, so to us it is utterly comfortable; so comfortable that anything different, as far as a style of relating to others and to life in general, seems strange if not abusive at times. Out of our fear we stay entrenched in a society which is utterly miserable.

Be alive. Fight the addiction to SAMENESS. Confront yourself and eventually find yourself, after work and dedication, to be a most wonderful person. Your joy in life will increase 10 if not 100 fold. So embrace the reality that you really are a beautiful person under the guise of control and manipulation. You have been trying to control your reality to look the same as you were raised in. Don't buy it. Follow a new path. Sing a new song: your own.

“That which is not acted upon is not learned”