

## Painful to Respectful Communication

**PERSECUTOR**  
(Bully)



"This is your fault."  
"You're not OK but I am  
so do what I tell you."

- Critical
- Keeps victim down
- Driven by anger or resentment
- Rigid
- Bossy
- Dominating

Move to **Clear Structure**

**State Boundaries:** "I am willing to listen to your story for ten minutes."

**Active Listen:** "I am willing to listen to *your problem* without making it mine to solve."

**Make expectations clear:** "I want you to keep your agreement. Please have it done by Tuesday."

**Provide choices:** "You can either keep your agreement or I will no longer be involved. You choose."

### The Drama Triangle

**RESCUER**  
(Saviour)



"You need my help."  
"You're not OK but I am nice  
and will fix you."

- Provides support when doesn't want to.
- Feels guilty and anxious if doesn't rescue.
- Feels connected when *victim* is dependent.
- Rescuing creates feeling of *better than*, at least more capable.
- Often expects to fail in *rescue mission*.

Move to **Clear Support**

**Give the message:** "I care about you and know you are capable."

**Do nothing that *the victim* can do for him or herself.** "I know you can do this."

**Active Listen:** "I am willing to listen to your problem without making it mine to solve."

**State boundaries:** "I am willing to listen for twenty minutes."

**Provide Choices:** "I will listen for fifteen minutes now or you may call back next Tuesday. You choose."

We move around  
**The Drama Triangle**  
until one of us moves  
out and into a clear  
and healthy  
communication pattern.

Be **THE ONE**.  
Be the change you want  
in the conversation.

**VICTIM**  
(Helpless)



"Poor me. I give up."  
"I'm not OK and everybody else is."

- Feels oppressed, hopeless, ashamed, powerless, incapable and misunderstood.
- Seeks to hook up with a rescuer to validate the above feelings.
- Refuses to make decisions, solve problems, get professional help, do self-care or change.

Move to **Problem Solving**

**Take Adult Responsibility.** Decide what you really want and take action.

**Keep Agreements:** If someone helps, do your part by following through.

**Ask Yourself:** "How can I get what I really want in a healthy way?"

**Count Your Blessings:** Acknowledge your strengths and what is going well.

**Remember *you make you*:** Minimize self pity and take action.

### Notes:

- 1) Adapted from *The Drama Triangle* by Stephen Karpman
- 2) For more details read the article, *Painful to Respectful Communication*, at [http://www.solutionsforresilience.com/free\\_articles.html](http://www.solutionsforresilience.com/free_articles.html)