

SHIFTING OUT OF THE DRAMA TRIANGLE

VICTIM VS CREATOR MINDSETS

By Donna Zajonc, PCC

In one of my recent speaking engagements I told the story of two young twin brothers who walked into a barn with their grandfather. One boy complained about the foul smelling manure and ran out of the barn while yelling about getting manure on his shoes. The other boy raced through the barn with excitement and shouted to his grandfather, "With all this manure, there must be a pony somewhere!"

The first boy saw himself as a victim of the manure and smell. The second boy saw the manure and linked it to greater possibilities. Which boy do you identify with?

Do you constantly complain about life's bumps, or do you see challenging issues as a way to innovate and create new possibilities? Tough times magnify our view of situations. If we see difficult issues through the eyes of a victim we might say: "The budget has been slashed so there's no way we can accomplish our goals" or "my boss is a tyrant" or "our products are out of date" or "our citizens won't approve that idea."

The victim mentality sucks the life out of innovative energy and has an excuse for every situation. Victims are addicted to the drama triangle and complaining. They spread negative energy and want others to take on the same victim mentality that they are attached to.

The creator/innovator, on the other hand, clarifies what they want and goes after that outcome. (Where's the pony and how do we find it among the manure?) Not brought down by the situation, they ask themselves, "What do I want and what actions are mine to take to create that vision?"

The fundamental difference between the victim mindset and the creator/innovator mindset is where they place their attention. ***For victims the focus is on what they don't want.*** Problems constantly preoccupy their lives and they fear the loss of control or loss of purpose.

Creators place their focus on ***what they do want.*** They keep their eyes on what they want rather than focusing on setbacks or obstacles. Often it is two steps forward and sometimes one step back. With each step the creator gets closer to and clearer about what they most want.

David Emerald's book, ***The Power of TED**** (****The Empowerment Dynamic***) explains the difference between victim and creator mindset better than anyone I know. Okay, many of you know that David is my husband and I AM biased! It is also very fulfilling to hear the



THE
POWER
OF TED*

stories that David receives after people read his book. The shift in identify and way of thinking is truly life-changing.

It is no secret that now, more than ever, people feel victimized by circumstances. They feel victimized by the economy, not having enough time, circumstances like an illness, toxic politics, their bad childhood or a boss who persecutes them. On and on and on.

The creator mindset sees the manure and looks for positive news behind the initial failure. **In fact, failure becomes an opportunity to grow and learn for the creator/innovator.** They view every situation as an opportunity to adjust, re-evaluate, learn, grow and innovate.

Michael Maddock, founding partner of his Chicago-based branding and marketing company says this about a creator; "Creators see the obstacles as springboards for new thinking, not as an excuse to throw up their hands and give up."

People who see themselves as victims are rarely asked to rise to new heights in their organization. Complaining and negative energy get old fast and most successful leaders have looked in the mirror and shifted their mindset to that of a creator and innovator.

Victims cannot innovate! The only thing victims create is more victimhood and more complaining and more misery for those around them.

If you feel twinges of victim feelings, begin making the shift to a creator and innovator by asking: "What's the outcome I want here?" Focusing on what you want will begin the shift from victim to creator. Now the conversation has an opportunity to shift from complaints and problems to a clear destination. When you begin to do this, others will ask you to join their conversation and share your gifts with them.

This is a powerful shift, but no one can make this shift for you. Your boss or spouse can point the way or make suggestions to you. Reading books can give you a few tips. **The fact is, only you can do the heavy lifting and shift the lens in which you view the world. It's your choice.**