

THE TED* LETTER™

By David Emerald

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What People are Saying

Addicted to Drama: Part II

"In the end... we're talking about choice... You also choose your response to what shows up in your life-either as a conscious response or an unconscious reaction. When you simply react, it means you are choosing the way of the Victim. If, on the other hand, you stay mindful of current reality and determine how best to respond, you've entered The Empowerment Dynamic."

From Chapter 9 "Shift Happens" ([The Power of TED* - Revised & Updated](#))

In last month's "[TED* Letter](#)," we explored addiction to drama from the perspective of being in relationship - personal or professional - with someone else who is the addict. This month we turn our attention to an even tougher challenge: when we are the one who is addicted to drama.

Admitting an addiction is the first step to transforming your relationship to the addictive behavior - as anyone who is familiar with the 12-step recovery process well knows. Addiction is part of the human experience and we all - at least to some extent - have addictions.

All addiction pulls us into - and perpetuates - the [Dreaded Drama Triangle](#) (DDT). Each of the roles - Victim, Persecutor and Rescuer - has their own ways of fanning the flames and keeping the drama alive. The addiction to drama is fueled by the adrenaline rush of anxiety (or even fear) and results in reactivity in a variety of forms.

So, when you "go reactive" (and we all do), which of the DDT role(s) do you gravitate toward? You may have one primary role or you may play all of them, depending on the situation. As you read the following descriptions of how each role plays out their drama addiction, pay attention to where discomfort arises. That may be the very place(s) to look!

- Victim as Drama Addict - On the surface it may seem improbable that a person in the Victim role would "want" to perpetuate the drama. However, if one has adopted Victimhood as a way of being and a self-identity, there are a number of payoffs. (For more on Victimhood, see the February, 2006 and May, 2008 issues of "The TED* Letter" in the [archives](#).)

One primary payoff is the abdication of responsibility and accountability. "It's not my fault," is the song of the Victim and blaming a Persecutor for their powerlessness is the refrain. Another is that the Victim then can look for and become dependent on a Rescuer - be it a person or a thing, such as alcohol, drugs or some other way of numbing out from the feelings of powerlessness. A Victim may feel justified in lashing back at

about TED*:

"I found a colorful "TED" bookmark while crossing the street about 2 weeks ago. Something told me to hang on to it until I could get to a computer. I liked what it said about the 7 steps, although I still have yet to make them a daily habit. "

S.M.

"I came away from last Wednesday and Thursday's meetings so pumped! You have brought an immense amount of expertise and 'common sense' together, in such a 'Creative' and simple way, that speaks to everyone, no matter where they are on their journey. You brought me to heights I needed to be! "

Blessings...

Sabrina R. Porter, LNFA, SML
V.P. of Resident and Community Relations
Presbyterian Communities & Services

"I can't express how much I learned from your 2 days with us! This is the beginning of a journey for me and our organization that will open doors of opportunity! I am already using the 'postcards' that I have created from your diagrams. I have shared the principles of 'shifting' with my own Executive Coach. Thank you again for the gift of your time with us last week! "

Blessings,

Brenda Terry, MS
Vice President of Rehabilitation & Wellness
Presbyterian Communities and Services

"I started reading your book a couple of weeks ago and at the same time I was going through some changes in my job. These were changes that I was not really ready for as I had to start working with a different group of people. I believe that The Power of TED* helped me recover more quickly from 'the news'...

Thank you for helping me through this with your wonderful book! "

P.H.

"I just want to say thank you...as a survivor of child abuse - I find that reading your book is bringing me the clarity I needed to become a "creator" instead of continuing as a "victim". Today I am feeling a little better about my journey into the future I am creating for myself... "

With Gratitude,
P.H.

"Powerful and timely message in (the February) issue of TED*. I am in awe of the gift that your work extends to a world crying out for relief from fear and scarcity. May you be blessed with a significant increase in global awareness about this beautiful gift you have to offer a world starving for its wisdom." "

Love,
Jim A.

"I read your book as soon as it

the Persecutor ("an eye for an eye") and, in so doing, become a Persecutor themselves and add fuel to the flames of the drama.

- Persecutor as Drama Addict - Persecutors are pivotal to the DDT. The Persecutor often gets the ball rolling or keeps it in play. There are a variety of ways in which this can happen, all of which stem from the Persecutor's need to be "one up" and/or to dominate the Victim.

The need to be right; the show of superiority; the blaming of the Victim for their circumstances are all ways the Perpetrator can ignite the drama. Arrogance, criticizing, finger-pointing, fault-finding and controlling may be ways in which the Persecutor's personality expresses itself. Such behavior sometimes is conscious and purposeful, but many times it stems from the Persecutor's own reactivity and fear of their own Victimhood. In either case, there can be the addictive "rush" that comes from the sense of righteousness that characterizes a Persecutor.

- Rescuer as Drama Addict - A Rescuer loves to be the hero, rushing in to "save the day." When they do, they enjoy the satisfaction - the "high" - of righting the wrong or putting out the "fire." Only, in so doing, they reinforce the powerlessness of the Victim and perpetuate the drama (even if it seems to alleviate the "pain" of the moment).

A Rescuer may even be so addicted to their role that they create the very situation into which they can later insert themselves as the hero (for example, "Savior Sam" mentioned in last month's issue). What a drama-addicted Rescuer most fears is not being needed. When they do not feel needed, they then feel rejected or abandoned and move into the Victim role. Of course this only serves to keep drama alive.

Which of the brief descriptions above elicited the most response from you? Do you see glimpses of yourself in any one - or all three?

I do. Here is an example from my own life - a "true confession" to illustrate both a previous addiction and the way I have transformed my relationship to it:

Because of some early childhood experiences, I was "wired" to be hypersensitive to the possibility of abandonment in my relationships with "significant others." The fear of becoming a Victim of such rejection drove the drama addiction. If I began to suspect any form of abandonment, I would react in one of two ways: Either by saying something harsh or cynical - thereby stepping into the role of Persecutor to get her to react and engage with me - or by withdrawing or pouting in hopes that she would react by becoming the Rescuer and making me feel better. Either reaction on my part perpetuated the drama and fed my addiction to it!

As I came to identify the pattern, I looked for the "dream that was denied or thwarted" - what it was that I was *really* after. In [The Power of TED*](#), Ted points out that "All Victims have experienced a loss - a thwarted dream or aspiration..." (page 17, second edition). What I came to see is that both reactive strategies were dysfunctional attempts to create connection. As a Persecutor, I could get her to react and interact with me (though not

arrived and so appreciated your story. It is dynamic and such a profound approach to life. For the next few days, I observed my interactions with friends and my husband... How empowering to have this tool! ”
Judy M.

“ I absolutely love and deeply appreciate this little gem of a book. It shares such a powerful and empowering message, with a loving, gentle, concise flow that keeps you wanting to learn more and more. Thank you. ”
Erica B.

“ The Empowerment Triangle is a highly original and effective escape from the Drama Triangle. ”
Stephen Karpman, M.D., originator of the Karpman Drama Triangle

“ When practical advice meets profound, yet simple, explanations for human behavior, we can learn, change, and grow. The Power of TED* does just this, and beautifully. ”
Annie McKee
Founder, Teleos Leadership Institute and co author *Becoming a Resonant Leader*, *Resonant Leadership*, and *Primal Leadership*

“ Conscious relationships begin with conscious individuals. Being a Creator in one’s own life is the heart and soul of The Power of TED*. This powerful little book points the way toward a hugely fulfilling life of empowering relationships - at work, at home, in the whole of your life. ”
Gay Hendricks, Ph.D. and Kathlyn Hendricks, Ph.D.
Authors of *Conscious Loving* (among many books) and co-founders of The Hendricks Institute

“ Knowing the characteristics of the Dreaded Drama Triangle (DDT) and its creative alternative, The Empowerment Dynamic (TED*) is remarkably transformative. It’s impossible for me to overstate my enthusiasm for this book! ”
Brian Johnson
Founder of PhilosophersNotes & Zaadz/Gaia.com

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pleasantly!) and playing the Victim so that she would be my Rescuer only served to reinforce the underlying sense of powerlessness and neediness.

As a result, I now ask for what I want or need in my relationship with my wife and, if twinges of the old pattern emerge, I speak directly about the feelings so that we can process the situation as co-Creators.

As this brief example illustrates, there are several simple (though not always easy!) steps you can take to break your own cycle of addiction to drama:

1. Identify and own your default drama role(s) - In what ways do you initiate and/or perpetuate drama in your personal and professional life? When you "go reactive" and enter the drama, which role(s) do you default to? As you take on the role of Victim, Persecutor and/or Rescuer, what is a typical way in which the drama plays out? What are the "payoffs" for you in the role(s)? What are the most common unintended consequences that come from continuing the drama?
2. Discern the "dream or desire" behind the behavior - What is it you *really want*? If a Victim, what is the dream or desire that has been denied or thwarted? If a Persecutor, is your behavior to prove your worth; to be right; to be superior - or is it to urge growth and development? If a Rescuer, are you wanting to be the "hero" and save the day and fix the other person or situation - or is to be of support in helping others find their own solutions?
3. Make the shift from DDT to [TED*](#) ([*The Empowerment Dynamic](#)) roles - As a Victim, shift your focus from reacting to what you don't want or like to focusing on what you *do* want and take baby steps to move in that direction as a Creator. If a Persecutor, by shifting from an intention to look good/be right into a "learning intention" for yourself and others, you can become a Challenger that sparks growth and development. If a Rescuer, by shifting from seeing the other as a problem to fix into holding them as inherently capable and resourceful, you can support them by helping them clarify their own outcomes and create their own solutions. (Much more on how to make the shift between roles can be found in [The Power of TED*](#).)

As human beings we will always be challenged by the push and pull of drama in our lives. By increasing our awareness of those ways in which we may be addicted to drama and how we initiate and/or perpetuate the toxic DDT, we can claim our capacity as a Creator to transform those old, outdated and habitual patterns into new, empowered, more resourceful - and more rewarding - ways of thinking, being and taking action.

Putting TED* into Practice: Breaking the Cycle

This practice is best done as a journal exercise.

Use the three steps above to identify and explore your own drama addiction patterns; discern your true intention, dream and/or desire; and commit to the making the shift in your roles and relationships.



TED* Sightings

This section features links to people and places where TED* is showing up on the internet and in the world.

- Check out my [guest column in the July issue of "iShift."](#) the monthly ezine of Institute of Noetic Sciences (IONS).
- Come join us on the new [Power of TED* Fan Page on Facebook!](#) The purpose of the Facebook page is to build an on-line community of those committed to putting TED* into practice. Join a discussion. Start a discussion. Share your thoughts and questions. Keep up on the latest news and developments about the spread of TED*.
- Just launched: the ["TED* Thoughts™" Blog!](#) "TED* Thoughts" is another channel for a growing "collaborative learning community" in which subscribers share their insights and what they are learning through their practice; a place to ask questions of how others are applying TED* in their lives; and a place where we nurture one another in the lifelong process of growth and development. New thought-starters will be added several times each week.

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To the Creator in you!

David Emerald

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