

THE TED* LETTER

By David Emerald



June/July 2008

Welcome

Welcome to the “Jun-ly” (pronounced “Jun-lie”) newsletter! June was an extremely hectic month and the June newsletter is coming out closer to mid July. Hence, it is the “Jun-ly” issue, which should not be confused with the July edition, which will be out by the end of the month!

In any case, “The TED* Letter” is designed for those who are committed to adopting a Creator Orientation and cultivating TED* (*The Empowerment Dynamic) in their personal and professional lives.

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Freeze-Frame

Do you ever find yourself experiencing the Dreaded Drama Triangle (DDT) while in a meeting or in a group conversation? It is an all too common experience, isn't it? What can you do when you realize your predicament and want to make “shift happen” into The Empowerment Dynamic (TED*)? Perhaps calling for a “freeze-frame” will do the trick!

At one point during the hectic month of June, I had the opportunity to share a brief overview of TED* (*The Empowerment Dynamic) with the leadership team of a Chicago-based advertising firm. We were exploring the DDT and its roles of Victim, Persecutor and Rescuer.

One of the team members then rightly observed that the DDT model makes the relationship dynamics seem somewhat simple and straightforward, while reality is much more complex – especially when there are multiple people interacting. “Sitting in a meeting like this,” he said, “there can be layers and layers of this dynamic going on with different people playing different roles in relation to different people.” This is true whether the “group” is a work team, a family, a volunteer committee, or any other kind of gathering of two or more people.

I responded to him by pointing out that **a good model is always “a static depiction of a dynamic reality.” The value of the DDT is that it allows us to “freeze-frame” what is going on in the moment.** (A freeze-frame is a single frame of a film or video recording viewed as a static image.) Using the Freeze-Frame is particularly useful when we see that the DDT is playing out in the interactions that we are either a part of or that we are observing.

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We can call for a Freeze-Frame when in a conversation with others, which then allows us to pause and diagnose how the roles are showing up. Once we identify the role(s) we are playing, we can then initiate a shift to a more resourceful and empowered role in The Empowerment Dynamic (TED^{*}). For the Freeze-Frame to work effectively, there are three “simple” (but not always easy!) steps:

1. **Request a Freeze-Frame** by simply saying, “I need to call for a Freeze-Frame here for a moment. I think it might be helpful to step back and look at what is going on.” This initiates the process and brings everyone to an awareness of what is going on in the group process.
2. **Identify and own your DDT role and invite others’ observations.** It is very important to acknowledge the role that you see *yourself* playing: Victim, Persecutor or Rescuer. For example I might say, “I just realized how I might be coming across as a Persecutor, Barry, because I have a different opinion on how to move forward on this agenda item.”
3. **Caution: do not label others’ DDT roles for them!** To do so runs the risk of perpetuating the drama as others may get defensive. Instead, you might invite others in the group to offer observations of the roles that they see themselves playing.
4. **Shift into an appropriate TED role.** The shift may be into the DDT role’s “antidote,” as described in *The Power of TED^{*}*. If this is the case, I might shift into the role of Challenger by saying something like, “Barry, I can see why you want to go in the direction you are advocating. I have a different opinion. Let’s make sure we both understand one another’s point of view and then, as a group, determine the best approach.”

An alternative is to shift into another TED^{*} role. For instance, I might move into the role of a Creator and say, “Let’s step back and refocus on the outcome we are going after here,” or as a Coach ask, “What are the points we agree on and where do we disagree? Maybe that will give us a clue as to how to come together on this.”

The above presupposes that the group shares the frameworks and language of TED^{*}. If you are part of a group that is not familiar with TED^{*}, you can still use the same process within yourself. Instead of requesting the Freeze-Frame, just notice what is going on and what role you are playing. Then, you can shift your language and how you are interacting with others into a TED^{*} role. For instance, I might realize that I am



defending Debbie from Bill's disagreeing with her. Instead of being a Rescuer, I might shift into the Coach role and say something like, "Bill, would you restate what you hear Debbie saying? And, Debbie, would you do the same for Bill?"

Regardless of whether a group that you are a member of knows of TED* or not, you can use the "freeze-frame" technique to **notice the drama, name your DDT role, and shift to a more resourceful and empowered TED* role**. By doing so, you will influence the group as a Creator and contribute to its working more effectively and, in the long run, efficiently in creating outcomes.

Putting TED* into Practice

Normally, this section of "The TED* Letter" contains an exercise or process for applying the concepts covered in the newsletter. In this case, the Freeze-Frame concept IS a process, so begin putting it into practice in the groups you are a part of!

The Spread of TED*

TED* continues to spread in and through a variety of sectors of our societies. More and more organizations and professionals are incorporating the frameworks and tools that TED* (*The Empowerment Dynamic) provides.

If you are actively using or participating in TED* related processes, I'd love to hear about it. Please share your experiences with me by emailing me: David@powerofTED.com.

Fall is just around the corner and the calendar is beginning to fill! The following are some of the private and public offerings of TED*:

September 24: (Public) **["Introducing The Power of TED*"](#)**; Fresno, CA; Fresno Pacific University; 9:30 – 4:00

October 8-9: (Private) **Empowerment & Personal Accountability in Nonprofits: Shifting the Culture from a Problem Focus to an Outcome Focus**; Richmond, VA.



October 10: (Members and Guests) Richmond Area Coaches Association

October 11: (Public) ["Introducing The Power of TED*"](#); Richmond, VA; Virginia Commonwealth University; 9:00 – 4:00

October 14 & 16: (Private) **"The Empowerment Dynamic (TED*): How to Create Results and Lead from an Empowered Mindset"**; Fortune 50 Company; Dallas, TX and Atlanta, GA

October 30: (Private) Governor's Executive Development Program; University of Texas LBJ School of Public Affairs; Dallas TX

To learn about upcoming events, visit www.powerofTED.com for the latest developments. **If you would like to schedule a TED* Event for your organization or community, please contact me!**

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