



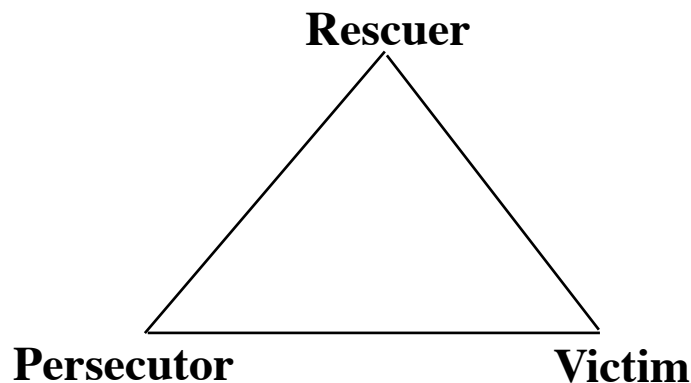
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PROBLEM GENERATORS 7.2

Rescuer/Victim/Persecutor



Often when we try to help people, in the long term it would seem that they don't appreciate the help we give them. We act from the best of intentions and can see clearly that our help will solve their problem. But sometimes we end up feeling hurt, we feel they have overlooked how we helped them and in fact, they may even blame us for a future result. It almost seems like they are trying to punish us for our attempts at helping them.

Let's look at the game we get pulled into. When someone has a problem, the only way they will solve it, is to take responsibility for creating the problem and take steps towards fixing it. They may see that the solution is simply removing themselves from their situation.

However, if we jump in and rescue them, while the problem may be temporarily fixed, really nothing has changed. Whatever they did to get themselves into that situation is still in place and, if they continue with the same behaviour, they'll eventually end up in the same situation. They'll end up facing the same problem all over again.

By rescuing them, your actions are saying "You're not capable of solving this problem yourself, I'll support you as an incapable being and fix it for you." Having shown them how much you "love and support" them, you might even admit to yourself that maybe it would be nice for them to show some gratitude or even 'love' you more. But have you ever noticed that it never seems to quite work that way?

So often you find that they didn't appreciate your help. They may even blame you when the next problem comes along. Have you ever heard "It's all your fault" when you were only trying to help? You end up feeling like a victim of your own good deeds, feeling like the bad guy.

Look at what you now think about the person you tried to help. (After all you did for them, this is how they thank you.)

When you look back on it, you'll see how you found some way to get your own back. Whether it was sarcasm, "I told you so",

proving them wrong, sacking them or, as in a relationship, with-holding yourself from them for a while. Has your help strengthened or weakened the relationship?

The game in its most basic form goes like this. If you feel something is being done to you (victim), you will want to punish (persecute) the doer. You'll want to make them feel as bad as you do. Then you can rescue them and make it all okay again. Until the next time.

Rescuer — Victim — Persecutor

**The bad news is:
If you play one role,
you will play all three.**

Rescue — The dictionary definition is to save. By it's very meaning it implies that the other person is helpless. And you may feel they are. But ask yourself, how is what you've done help them if they have to face this problem again?

How do you help an alcoholic, an addict or a co-dependant person? Not by preventing the next drink or the next fix, not by nagging them and telling them what they already know, but by getting them to admit they have a problem. If they won't admit they have a problem, then my friend, the problem is all yours. What are you going to do about it?

How do you identify if you're in the role of rescuer? Look for a strong sense of doing the right thing for someone. Maybe we believe we know best what is good for them, or we know exactly what they should do. We may even believe that we make better decisions than they do.

Victim — The dictionary definition is a person who suffers harm from another, a person who is tricked or swindled. To victimise is to punish or discriminate against unfairly. And feeling that something's unfair is the key indicator which tells you that you're in this game.

Persecutor — The dictionary definition is to oppress, harass or maltreat. Nagging would come under this definition also. We nag people to do what we know is the best thing for them to do.

How do you stay out of this game once you have spotted which role you're playing? If you take full responsibility for supporting others to become more able, you need to confront the emotion thrown up by the other person's problem.

What feeling led you into the trap? Stop and think, what feeling would have kicked in if you'd said "No. I won't do this for you."?

Why would it be a problem for you to say "But I will help you do it yourself."? They don't think the problem is as bad as you say? They can't be bothered? They think they can't do it themselves?

Either way, to do it for them is to support them as an incapable being. The ethical thing to do is to support them as a capable being and encourage them to take responsibility for the consequences of their actions. Once they have done that, only then can you guide them through the steps they need to take to solve their problem.

Unfortunately, we can't live other people's lives for them however well-meaning our intentions.