



Are You a Victim or Martyr?

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Published

July 27th, 2015

Deep-down every person has a hurt. No matter how wonderful you think that your childhood was, there were times when you probably felt abused or neglected. You see, parents cannot always be there to protect their children and sometimes parents are actually the ones who cause the trauma for their children.

Bullying has been a problem in society for centuries. Small children can be very mean to each other and often, adolescents shun or make it extremely difficult for their peers. Unhealthy relationships from youth can leave scars that carry over into adulthood and haunt individuals for the rest of their lives.

Adults who experience divorce, career problems, financial issues, major losses, illness or death of a loved one can also be significantly traumatized. They often make their situation worse by trying to hide behind substances or activities that lead to addictions.

A person who has been seriously harmed or injured might be referred to as a victim or as a martyr. Those who are disappointed because their expectations weren't met may also feel that they are victims. And individuals who are experiencing or complain that they have suffered a great deal are known as martyrs.

Unhealthy thoughts and feelings can trap both victims and martyrs so that they remain in their vulnerable situations. Depression, hopelessness, fear and pain often lead them into passivity and immobility. Sometimes they continue to be dominated by another person or situation that controls or hurts them. Many allow their own insecurity, lack of skills and fear to hold them prisoner. Their anger is stuffed and suggestions about change are answered with defensiveness and a list of reasons as to why it isn't worth the effort to even try.

The saddest thing is that the person who feels and acts like a victim is usually horribly unhappy and exasperating to those around them. They often make their own situation worse because their negativity repels others who could otherwise have had a positive influence on them or become a support. Investing energy into "pity parties" instead of into learning how to make positive changes doesn't help anyone.

If you are feeling like a victim or martyr there are several things that you can do to improve your life:

1. Make a decision to take responsibility for yourself rather than waiting for other people or time to intervene.
2. Clearly identify the areas where you are weak or vulnerable. Learning skills such as assertiveness, conflict resolution, or communication would likely help you move forward with confidence but you need to be willing to learn them.
3. List your assets and strengths. (We often tend to forget about the positives in our lives).
4. Set an appointment with a psychologist who will help you to set goals, develop a plan to achieve them and get on track.

And, if you are involved with someone who is a martyr or victim, do not slide into a role where you are expected (by them or yourself) to be the solution to all their problems. Instead, encourage them to get help from a professional.

Remember, you are only responsible for your own life and choices - not theirs!