



## Getting Healthy Again

By Dr. Linda Hancock

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drlindahancock.com](mailto:office@drlindahancock.com)

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For the past few weeks I have been writing about the three unhealthy roles that people assume when they have experienced serious hurts in their lives. The Karpman's Triangle identifies Victim/Martyr; Perpetrator/Offender and Rescuer/Enabler behaviours. It also describes how these inter-relate with one another and the positive antidotes.

1. The Victim or Martyr - This role has unmet expectations and feels taken advantage of. Because the person was hurt, however, s/he might feel "entitled" to hurt back. If so, then the person moves from victim or martyr into the role of perpetrator or offender. Sometimes the person experiences feelings of guilt and neediness. Because of this, s/he slides into the rescuer or enabler role. None of these roles are healthy and, if the victim or martyr truly does want things to improve, s/he will need to take responsibility for his/her own life and not depend on others or circumstances to do that for them.

2. The Perpetrator or Offender - In this role, hurt fuels the desire to hurt self or others. There is little regard or respect for anyone. Acting out or acting in behaviours can initially lead to resentment and the individual moves into the role of victim or martyr. If the perpetrator or offender feels guilty, then s/he can easily move into the role of rescuer or enabler. What could they do differently? Well, the way for the perpetrator or offender to become healthy is for them to consider options and choose one that will not cause further hurt.

3. The Rescuer or Enabler - This person is usually focused on the needs of other people rather than on their own needs. The individual might give inappropriately or manipulate in hopes of fixing another person so that they can feel good about themselves. When remorse occurs, however, they then move into a perpetrator or offender role. On the other hand, resentment and entitlement can move them into the victim or martyr role. When they learn to negotiate in a healthy manner they get better results for themselves and for others.

The Karpman Triangle is a very interesting way to identify the negative behaviours that people who have been hurt might use. It also, however, offers healthy solutions for each of the three roles that a person who has been traumatized might adopt.

The best recovery from past hurts involves good self-care practices and being relational with other people. Most people don't get into trouble overnight and getting out of trouble doesn't happen overnight either. That's okay. One step at a time.

Perhaps you are struggling in your life and really don't know how to get out of one of the negative roles described. Most psychologists are trained to help you assess your situation, lay out options and help you to work towards positive goals.

It all starts with just one phone call. Why not make it today?