



Are you above or below the line?

A guide to understanding your threat systems and shifting into trust

To explore how you go below the line, we're going to work with a relationship issue or persistent complaint. Ideally this would be something you've struggled with for some time and has "juice" for you.

Name the person and your core complaint about them, or the issue.

My biggest complaint is about _____ is _____.
(name)

Example: My biggest complaint about Sarah is that she doesn't listen to me
My biggest complaint about the sales team is they don't value our work
My biggest complaint about customers is they're rude and ungrateful

Step 2

As you think about this issue, "Where are you?"

Above the line ____ or below the line ____?

Step 3

What do you do when you go below the line on this issue?

___ I gossip / vent with others

___ I withdraw and / or avoid the person or avoid confronting the issue

___ I blame this person / believe they are wrong and I am right

___ I become critical

___ I become angry / become aggressive / anxious

Other:

Step 4

Acknowledge the payoffs that you are getting from keeping this issue going below the line.

___ I get to avoid my core feelings, especially the feelings of (fear, sadness, anger)

___ I get to stay connected

___ I get enlivened by adrenaline

___ I get to stay in the familiar and avoid the unknown

___ It gives me something to do or a compelling story to tell

___ I get to avoid taking responsibility for my issues

___ I get to be right about the following:

Step 5

Can you accept yourself for being just where you are? Yes _____ No _____

Step 6

Are you willing to shift? Ask yourself these willingness questions to find out. Your learning moment comes from the questions you answer 'no' and the questions that are hard to answer 'yes'. These will reveal how you go below the line.

Are you willing to end all blame regarding this issue?	Yes	No	___	___
Are you willing to let go of being right about?	Yes	No	___	___
Are you willing to feel your (sadness, anger, fear) related to this issue?	Yes	No	___	___
Are you willing to see that the opposite of your story is as true?	Yes	No	___	___
Are you willing to reveal anything you're withholding about this issue?	Yes	No	___	___
Are you willing to stop all gossip about this issue?	Yes	No	___	___
Are you willing to clean up all broken agreements related to this issue?	Yes	No	___	___
Are you willing to shift from entitlement to appreciation about this issue?	Yes	No	___	___
Are you willing to let go of taking this issue seriously?	Yes	No	___	___

Based on your responses above, are you willing to shift? (any No above is a No)

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, move on to step 6 and 7. For most of us, getting above the line on relationship conflict takes further work. Head to the deep dive section to keep going, then revisit if you're willing to shift.

Step 6

Based on your current commitment in this moment regarding this issue, complete this sentence.

Today is _____ and I am committed to _____.

Step 7

If you are willing to shift, "How will you shift?" What is one action step you can take and by when will you take it?

My measurable action is: _____

I will do it by: _____ at _____
(Date) (Time)

Unpacking your drama triangles

Unpacking your drama triangles provides rich insights for your inner game. Owning your drama and shifting to presence is how we let go of being right and end all blame.

Almost all conflict, including inner conflict, arises out of drama where well-worn scripts of victims, villains and heroes drag us below the line. I invite you to map out your drama triangle for this relationship issue / persistent complaint. Refer to your drama cards for inspiration. I encourage you to be as dramatic as you can be!

My personas

Shift moves

My victim personas are

From victim to creator

My villain personas are

From villain to challenger

My hero personas are

From hero to coach

Persona interview

Chose a persona that you think is running the issue. Take on the posture, voice and attitude of this persona, and give it a name. Then answer the following:

[Persona name], What is the most important thing to you?

[Persona name], What are you most proud of in how you served (person's name) in his/her life?

[Persona name], When did you make your first appearance in (person's name)'s life?

[Persona name], who did you learn your style from?

[Persona name], what are you most afraid of?

[Persona name], in your heart of hearts, what do you MOST want?

[Persona name], What is your gift?

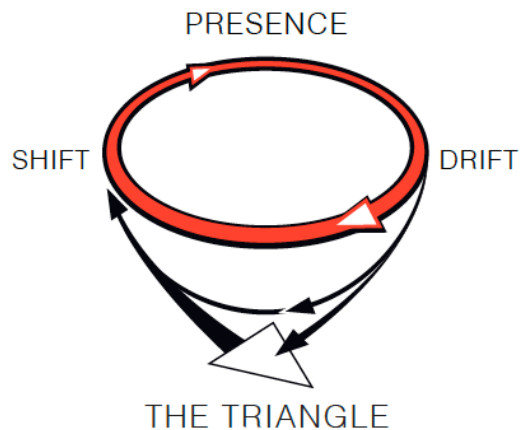
Shifting to presence

Presence is a state of conscious awareness, fuelled by non-judgemental curiosity instead of blame and righteousness. Presence is interested in understanding the dynamics at play behind events, and your own role in them. When in presence, the veil of drama is lifted.

Presence welcomes all authentic feelings and is possible at any time.

You will drift from presence to the drama triangle routinely. The invitation is to see that drift and choose to shift.

To move into presence we need to first see the role we're playing in our drama triangle. Referring to your drama cards, map out the [drama triangle](#) that underpins your current behaviours. Remember, we usually play all three roles in the drama triangle and so we need to shift in each role first, before we can support others to shift.



From victim to creator

My victim personas are:

Creators are empowered to bring forth the life they want. They claim personal power to create a desired outcome. A creator is vision-focused and passion-motivated. Creators get curious as they take responsibility for everything that happens in their life. Creator is the foundation of all three roles (Coach, Challenger, Creator) because they are all committed to personal empowerment and taking 100% responsibility.

What can you take 100% responsibility for with respect to this drama or issue?

What fears do you need to face? What other feelings need to be fully faced?

What possibilities could you create from this drama or issue?

What is the opposite of your story? What new perspective could you become curious about?

What is this situation here to teach you?

From villain to challenger

My villain personas are:

Challengers provoke others to act; they call forth something new to be learned or experienced. A Challenger might be an event, situation, or person – any catalyst for learning, change and growth. Challengers have the courage to be with discomfort-theirs and others. They use confrontation and compassion to help Creators wake up and take action. Challengers provide authentic unarguable feedback so that people in the triangle can locate themselves as being below the line and in drama. The Challenger notices the person's receptivity to feedback and if there is no receptivity the challenger stops giving feedback. The Challenger also invites the Victim into responsibility by supporting them to clarify whether they are willing to shift into Creator or choose rather to stay in Victim.

What authentic, unarguable feedback conversation do you need to have?

What loving pressure could you provide?

Who or what do you need to stop making wrong / bad?

What can you take 100% responsibility for?

What anger can you authentically feel to clarify your desire and take action?

How else can you support victims to become creators?

From hero to coach

My hero personas are:

Coaches provide encouragement and invites self-empowerment; facilitate progress. They trust that life is providing learning opportunities that do not need to be controlled or resisted. Coaches know that everyone has their own power and ability to create. A Coach supports a Creator in taking ownership for his or her life's circumstances. Coaches facilitate, guide and encourage, while leaving the power with the person creating. A Coach is focused on present learning and future creation. Coaches let other people own their outcomes. When needed, a Coach can consciously shift into the role of a constructive Challenger.

How can you support others in claiming 100% responsibility?

What stories do you need to drop about others being 'less than' / needing fixing?

What value can you appreciate about another's pain and suffering?

What questions can you ask? How can you listen deeply, without a filter (ie attitude or bias)?

How can you shift into the role of constructive challenger as part of coaching others?

Shifting to presence to achieve your adaptive challenge

How can these shift moves support you to make progress with your adaptive challenge?

Teaching your drama class

In the exercise above, you've mapped out your drama triangle and you might have started to see your role in the relationship conflict you're experiencing. Now we're going to bring that to life with a fun exercise by pretending you have been hired by a university to teach a class on how to create the EXACT same issue that you are having in your life.

Your students need you to give them very specific instructions that they can follow to create the outcome you are currently experiencing. Using the questions below as prompts, define the five or so steps they would need to take to recreate your issue in their life.

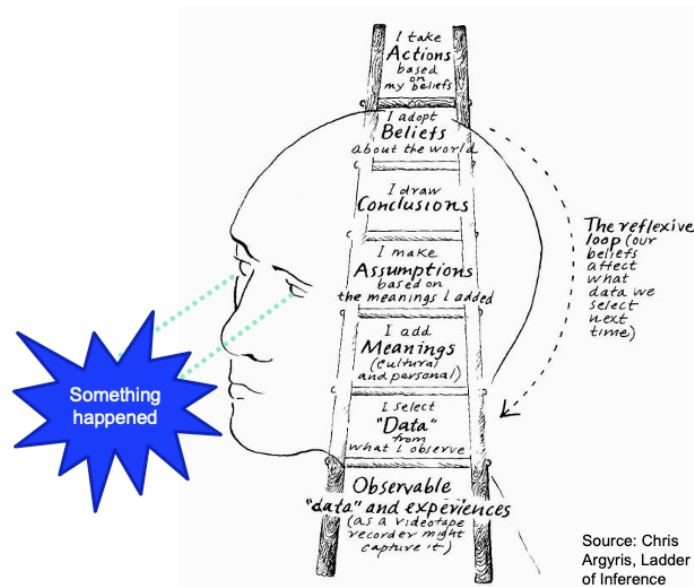
Questions to answer to help you create your drama:

- | | |
|---|---|
| What actions do you take or not take? | What "shoulds" do you have to believe? |
| What do you have to believe about yourself, others and the world? | To what do you feel entitled? |
| What feelings do you repress/conceal? | What do you believe you do not have enough of? |
| What are you trying to control that is NOT in your control? | What either/or story do you have to hold about this issue? |
| What do you have to be right about? | Who do you blame? |
| What do you withhold and from whom? | How do you fix it, but only temporarily? |
| What do you not face? | Who do you have to be better/less than? |
| How do you numb yourself from the discomfort? | What agreements do you have to make and/or break with yourself or others? |
| | What do you have to be afraid of? |

Course title

Example: How to have a dissatisfying relationship with your boss 101

Seeing the opposite of your story



Believing our stories are true is one of the most common ways we go below the line, stay stuck in drama and impede our development. Indeed, it's the source of most human suffering. That's a big call! Let me explain.

Neuroscientists and developmental psychologists have shown that the human brain adopts beliefs or stories about the world by applying their personal and cultural meanings to the data they select from what's observed. We then take action and tend to collect more data that confirms our beliefs. This is how confirmation bias occurs.

Suffering and conflict occurs when the stories we tell ourselves are critical and negative – about ourselves, others or our environment. The tighter we hold onto those

stories, the more suffering and conflict created.

You might be asking: What if those stories are objectively or morally true? Like people shouldn't be racist? Or bullying is bad? Or that manager really is incompetent (insert list of evidence)?

The problem arises when we tightly hold onto these beliefs and so engage with that person or issue from a place of being right, setting ourselves up for a war that no-one wins. In the process we shut down our ability to learn and be curious, and achieve a win for all outcomes. Our ability to influence is diminished.

If we have these conversations from above the line, we invite a shared understanding that is more likely to create outcomes where everyone learns and grows.

Fact vs story

Let's apply this concept now to the issue you're working with by following the steps below.

Step 1 Define a recurring issue that you are willing to shift

Step 2 Write down all the facts related to the issue. Facts are what a video camera would record (without music and interpretation of tone)

Step 3 Write down all the stories you have about the facts. These are what you make up about the facts. Look for 'shoulds', judgments, interpretations and emotions.

The issue is _____

Facts

What a video camera records

Stories

What you make up about the facts

The next step follows [The Work of Byron Katie](#). Katie (as she is known), encourages a meditative approach where we reflect on a limiting belief we're currently holding onto.

Pick one of the stories above that resonates the most and write it down here:

Close your eyes, take a few deep breaths and contemplate that statement. Then ask yourself four questions:

Is it true?

Can you absolutely know it's true?

How do you react, what happens when you believe that thought?

Who would you be if I could erase that thought from your mind?

Once you connect with how much being right is costing you, it becomes easier to see how a whole range of opposites might be equally as true, not necessarily more true, but equally as true. This is where the turnaround comes in. Here's how turnarounds work:

Current belief: Jill is unkind to me. **Alternate stories:** I am unkind to Jill. Jill is kind to me. I am unkind to me.

Write down all of the opposites of your story and any evidence you can find that supports these alternate views. There won't always be four opposites and sometimes there may be more than four.

Alternate stories

Evidence of alternate stories

This exercise helps us let go of limiting beliefs by constructing a range of new ones, which in turn dissolves our commitment to being right, helping us to shift above the line.