

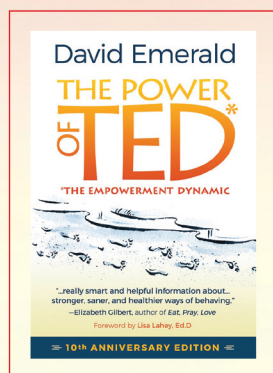


BY: DAVID EMERALD
AUTHOR OF 'THE POWER OF TED'

About *TED**:

A TALE OF EMPOWERMENT

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THE POWER OF TED*

It was time to make the call this writer had been dreading. Not because my friend wasn't knowledgeable about the topic at hand—the preferred destination of a daughter's college trip abroad—but because she was so good at playing the victim. And after so many years of playing the rescuer, I knew the friendship had become difficult to sustain. Let's call my friend Vicki, as in Vicki-the-Victim.

"Hi Vicki," I started. "How are things going?" I asked innocently enough. "Just trying to survive," she responded wearily. It was the same old story about the same old difficulties. Vicki had immigrated to the United States in her early twenties, leaving behind the country soon to be the destination of my daughter's trip. For years—decades really—Vicki had claimed to be unable to get a job because of her foreign accent and inability to speak English fluently, and as a result, was living in near poverty and struggling. Vicki began her tale of woe once again, and I listened patiently and volunteered my well-worn advice—take an English class, move to a less expensive home, accept a position she thought was beneath her—before finally asking Vicki which city she'd recommend for my daughter's stay in her home country.

Perhaps we all have a Vicki in our lives or have acted as one ourselves, but there are proven ways to escape a life devoid of the optimism and joy that every person deserves. For those who want to commit to change, or suggest change to a friend, reading *The Power of TED** by David Emerald is a great place to start. Unrelated to the popular TED Talks series (but coined long before them), Emerald's TED* is an acronym for The Empowerment Dynamic, a self-empowerment model that describes how to build a better life by escaping the victimhood mentality and converting to a more productive "creator" way of thinking.

THE CREATION OF TED

Emerald—whose full name is David Emerald Womeldorff—developed his TED* model to resurrect his own spirit following a series of personal setbacks, including the loss of his father, the discovery of his infertility, and the dissolution of his first marriage. He even applied TED* to his personal crusade against the destructive potential of his diabetes diagnosis, which he chronicles in his book *TED for Diabetes*, cowritten with Scott Conard, MD.

While wallowing in despair one morning during his period of reflection, or "quiet time," Emerald

pointedly made the decision to relinquish his victimhood in return for becoming a "creator." It was an "utterly unexpected personal epiphany," he says, that would transform his mission in life from that point forward to help himself and others participate in life from a vantage point of strength.

Based on research developed by the psychotherapist Stephen Karpman, MD, in the 1960s, Emerald's TED* describes how the destructive roles of Victim, Persecutor, and Rescuer can be reconstructed into the more dynamic roles of Creator, Challenger, and Coach (See Figure 1 on page 19). Karpman's research described the "drama triangle," which "models the connection between personal responsibility and power in conflicts, and the destructive and shifting roles people play." These were the ideas that Emerald sought to challenge.

In his own example of despair, Emerald was able to realize that he had been living his life through the eyes of a victim, wondering why everything bad had happened to him. As he explains in his book, the Victim feels as though other people or situations are acting upon the Victim who feels powerless to change them. The Persecutor is the cause of the Victim's woes, while the Rescuer intervenes to save the Victim.

Victims, according to Emerald, operate from a position of fear or weakness, reacting to difficult situations by learning to fight, flee, or freeze. The Victim may become pessimistic in life, always expecting another disappointment to emerge right around the corner. The Persecutor, on the other hand, has the mentality that he or she must win rather than risk stumbling and becoming a Victim. Meanwhile, the Rescuer is determined to assist others lest becoming unneeded and also falling into the role of Victim.

CHOOSING POSITIVITY

From this dysfunctional model, Emerald drew up a new model that he called The Empowerment Dynamic, which allows all three points of the "drama triangle" to experience growth and maturity in overcoming adverse situations. Under the TED* paradigm, the Victim transitions into the role of Creator, seeking to choose a future of hope and resiliency rather than one that is trapped in misfortune and does not allow for change. The Persecutor evolves from a mindset of domination to one of self-awareness and empowerment (the Challenger). And the Rescuer no longer must save others, but as a Coach, can simply encourage them and provide positive >

< reinforcement throughout their journeys. The trick is to eventually be able to answer the following three questions in a productive manner:

1. Where are you putting your focus? Do you create the outcomes you want or are you overwhelmed with problems?
2. How are you relating to others, your experience, and yourself? Do you act in ways that perpetuate drama or empower others?
3. What actions are you taking? Are you simply reacting to problems thrown at you, or are you proactively trying to create healthier outcomes?

Many observers have come to swear by Emerald's message, helping to spur his modest fable of self-empowerment into a mini-empire of books, workbooks, courses, and leadership training programs. Participants in his programs tell stories of dramatically turning their lives around or freeing their workplace from unnecessary drama and conflict. Others tell of buying dozens of copies of his books for staff and colleagues and even registering to become TED* trainers themselves. Today, Emerald's TED* has influenced giant corporate leaders like Google and IBM as well as dozens of municipalities, hospitals, associations, and financial institutions. Emerald, along with his wife, Donna Zajonc, now heads the Bainbridge Leadership Center, coaching companies on leadership issues. He is also a business facilitator, public speaker, and author.

TED IN THE WORKPLACE

The beauty of bringing TED* into the workplace, says client Steve Hall, CEO of driversselect.com, is that it can transform both your personal and professional life simultaneously into models of excellence. Sure enough, upon landing at the driversselect website, one is immediately struck by an A+ rating by the Better Business Bureau as well as a "Best Places to Work 2016" citation by the Dallas Business Journal, both of which symbolize a commitment to fostering the type of positivity that TED* embodies. The company touts its purpose is "to infect the world with highly contagious C.A.R.E.

(Caring Acts Randomly Expressed)."

Hall first met Emerald at a business event some years ago and grew to embrace the TED* model which, he says, has become part of his company's very DNA. "People bring a certain amount of energy to their work each day, and as leaders, we have very little influence over that. But what we do have influence on is how they direct their energy," says Hall. "Do they choose to show up as Victims, Creators, Persecutors, Challengers, Rescuers, or Coaches? If they choose to become a Coach, a Challenger, or a Creator, their confidence will rise and they will be a better performer and better person all around."

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Hall has parlayed his strong belief in Emerald's leadership philosophy into a boon for his company, growing revenue from \$38 million to \$140 million since implementing TED* two and a half years ago. Nearly 60 percent of his 100-person workforce have completed some sort of TED* training, and he raves about the transformation. The Power of TED* website quotes Hall: "A big part is [that] the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual energy people bring to work today is not being wasted on internal drama and building silos but rather focused on growing the business and taking on the challenges of the marketplace....We have measurable results in turnover, absenteeism, and revenue per

employee that blows our industry out of the water."

Another TED* client, David Knoch, praises Emerald for often being able to see a client's issues more clearly than the client itself. A professional certified financial planner, Knoch talks about the period in 2008 when his clients' portfolios nosedived—along with practically everyone else's—during the Great Recession. "In this type of scenario," he says, "it's easy to fall into a cycle of victimhood." He describes how in times of falling markets, the client often feels like the Victim and the advisor is seen as the Persecutor for not implementing a more profitable investment strategy. What Knoch learned from his TED* work is how essential it is to make clients impassioned about their investment strategy, in effect, feeling some ownership of it, so they can have a majority stake in achieving their financial hopes and dreams in both good times and bad.

"We aim for enabling intentional living—the empowerment dynamic," says Knoch. "Helping people make promises and have them come true by taking action." When an employee survey revealed that employees would prefer to slow down the pace of change at their company, Knoch and his team helped them better embrace change by creating a 10-week program, which included classroom discussions and group work, to help them adapt to their new work model. "We have no choice but to move quickly in our marketplace," he said, "but we could arm employees with information that would allow them to feel empowered." The company is now even more TED* focused than before, with TED*-themed forums, discussion groups, and small-group work designed to dive into leadership topics even further.

GETTING STARTED

One easy way for a company to get started with TED*, according to Emerald, is to shift management's philosophy to one of "Ask first, tell second" rather than the reverse. This means that when an employee presents a question to the boss, rather than jump in with the answer, the boss asks the employee

what he or she would do first and then adds to the employee's suggestions. The manager's real role, Emerald says, is to coach employees into finding their own solutions to problems and then support the employees in implementing them.

When a manager encounters a truly entrenched Victim who is hard to counsel, the best approach is to acknowledge the difficulty the employee is facing and then ask how the employee chooses to solve this problem, given the employee's current reality. "It's a matter of redirecting the ones stuck in victimhood and showing them how to create something great," he says. To instill a more positive mentality in team members, Emerald recommends leading by example, showing rather than merely telling people the path to a more fulfilling life.

Another useful tenet of TED*, according to Emerald, is the notion of baby steps as comically illustrated in the movie *What About Bob?* In which Bill Murray's character learns to take baby steps toward growth as coached by his psychotherapist, played by Richard Dreyfuss. In actuality, small changes often are necessary in order to achieve a bigger long-term goal. Change does not happen overnight, which is why both individuals and companies invest endless time and energy to reach significant milestones.

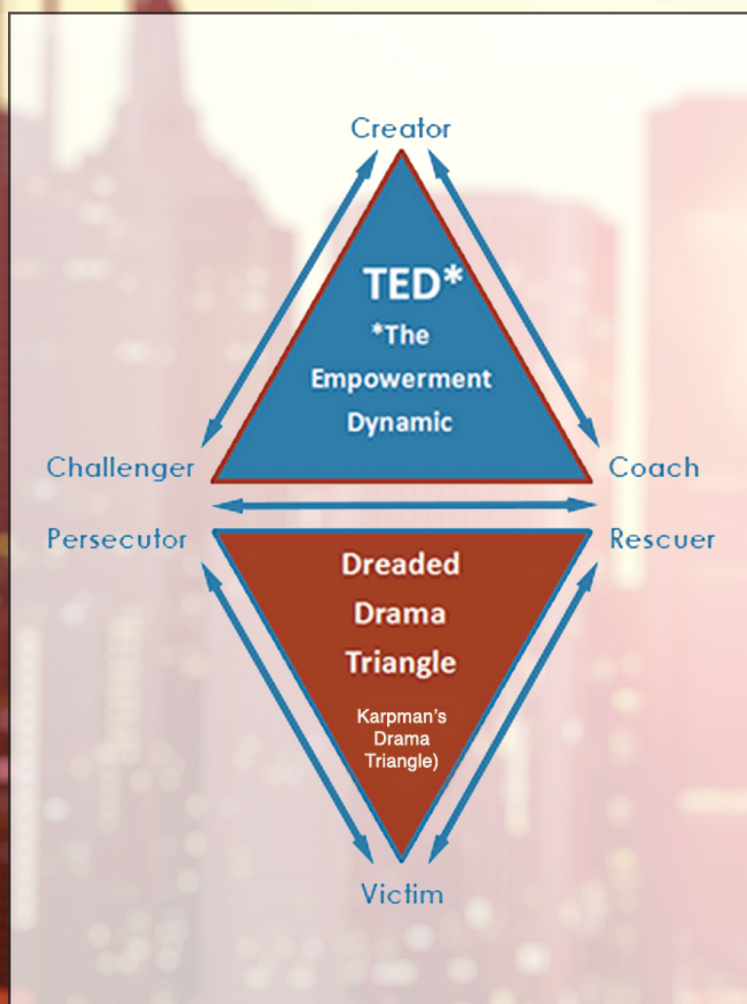
Once the TED* framework has permeated a corporate culture, it becomes much easier to indoctrinate new employees into how things are done at a particular company. If applicants are not good cultural fits for a company organized around this framework, they simply will not get the job no matter how good they look on paper.

On an individual level, personal change may be more difficult to achieve. You can tell someone repeatedly that there is a path to a happier and more productive life, but if a paycheck isn't attached, the effort required to change is often lacking. Those who do want to change—and I hope my friend Vicki becomes one of them—should recognize that the power to change lies right at their feet. Then, all they need to do is to take their first baby step forward. +



FIGURE 1

**TED* THE EMPOWERMENT
DYNAMIC**



*David Emerald Womeldorff is cofounder of the Bainbridge Leadership Center (Bainbridge Island, WA) and author (as David Emerald) of *The Power of TED** (*The Empowerment Dynamic), a best-selling teaching story about Self Leadership. His latest work is on the 3 Vital Questions™: Applying the Power of TED* to Work and Life for use in organizations. David is a frequent presenter and facilitator on leadership topics, building collaboration and various applications of the 3 Vital Questions™ and TED* (*The Empowerment Dynamic)™ frameworks drawn from on his 30 years of experience in leadership and organization development. Visit his website at: Powerofted.com*