

Chapter 16: Many of Us Live Our Lives As Victims, Perpetrators and Rescuers:

Our world, in many people's views, is made up of innocent victims of wrongdoing and guilty perpetrators of those perceived wrongs. In other words, *the good people and the bad people*. In addition, there is another group which are not spoken of quite as often whom we could call rescuers. Rescuers are sometimes seen as a group of selfless good people who help the victims and may also be seen to work to stop the wrong doers. Those of us who hold to these simple views of the world, life and relationships are not fully aware of the limiting implications of holding these beliefs about the world as a whole. Nor are we aware of their detrimental effects on humanity's development and evolution and processes of learning from our experiences and interactions with others. The dualistic belief that there are victims automatically assumes that there must be perpetrators and vice versa. If there are victims there must be someone to rescue them. This approach to life is in its essence incredibly limiting, polarizing, blinding and misleading. This distorted set of projections onto our reality creates confusion, conflict, misunderstanding, pain and a tendency to judge ourselves and each other constantly. I am not suggesting that good and evil do not exist in the world; I am only suggesting that these particular ways of attempting to categorize life are too simplistic and thus detrimental. I will explain in the paragraphs below what I mean by these statements.

A great deal of work has been developed on the victim/perpetrator/rescuer model (V/P/R model) of human interaction in the past. The information in this book is based upon personal practice with clients rather than research into existing articles on this topic. It is important to give credit to the developer of the original model, (see the original 1968 article on the "Drama Triangle" by Stephen Karpman, M.D. entitled: "Fairy Tales and Script Drama Analysis" <http://www.karpmamdramatriangle.com/pdf/DramaTriangle.pdf>). In this article the three basic roles of victim, *persecutor* and rescuer are described. Since that time many derivative works and further deeper analysis have been developed and are of course well worth studying.

The descriptions of the roles in the following paragraphs are meant to explain the basics of an emotional and mental process and mindset that starts with "victimhood", as well as the victim/perpetrator/rescuer model overall. These descriptions are also meant to define the relationship between victimhood and our core fears, our desire for safety and control, and how we use our judgmentalness and punishment of self and others to *try* to achieve safety. Safety is seen here not always as actual physical safety, often it is simply the feeling of being safe or being "safer" than we would otherwise be if we did not function within the role of victim or rescuer, etc.. These descriptions are also designed to show how judgmentalness of self and others is the key support mechanism to the victim/perpetrator/rescuer model and system of dynamics.

In this discussion I am not judging any of the V/P/R roles as bad or saying that anyone is wrong to operate from any of them. Humans could not do without these roles in our current level of social and emotional development and evolution as a species. We have not yet learned how to unconditionally love and accept one another and how to immediately forgive each other for anything and everything, which is the most optimal mode of interpersonal function. We *have* previously needed a simple set of "rules of the road" for interpreting reality, social situations and interpersonal dynamics to support our decision-making. These roles have previously been a key part of our process of social learning as individuals and a core element of the process of our species learning to evolve its social systems. However life and the world

have both lately and rapidly become too complex for these simple roles to be applicable, and we have now out grown their usefulness. Therefore, they have become an encumbrance for us as individuals and as a species. We cannot continue functioning from the vantage point of the victim/perpetrator/rescuer model if we want to continue to have a functioning society in the future and good quality relationships. Our relationships are too complex, our society is too complex, our technology is too complex, our world is too complex, our problems are too complex and change is happening far too rapidly for such simplistic interpretive mechanisms to be constructive applied to our lives. We need new ways of attaining *conscious discernment* and operating from vantage points of discerning decision-making which do not involve being judgmental and which are not fear based. We must become willing to change, to learn and to grow and to adopt new and more sophisticated ways of interpreting ourselves, our interactions with others and the larger world. This means being willing to reevaluate ourselves, our mental functions, emotional functions and decision-making functions at every level of granularity and in every area of life and relationship. Until we are willing to throw away these old worn out social and interpersonal roles and methods we will not be willing to design and utilize new ones. If we attempt to build our world's future social systems and systems of interpersonal relationship dynamics upon a foundation of these distorted misunderstandings of ourselves and each other, and the very poor values of fear, judgmentalness and the V/P/R roles we can only create more problems than solutions.

The V/P/R model creates many dysfunctional social and interpersonal dynamics which may appear on the surface to have benefit. However, in reality these roles, especially that of victim, tend to poison our relationships and our emotional process. I am not in any way denigrating those who have gone through war, or who have experienced personal trauma or abuse of any kind. I am especially not diminishing the experience of women or children who have experienced trauma or abuse of various kinds, including sexual abuse. In this discussion if we are speaking of victims then we are speaking of a person who is living in or who has bought into a "victim mindset", not simply a person who has experienced abuse or trauma. There is a significant difference.

Any of us, after experiencing a trauma could for a time feel ourselves to be a victim; almost no one is immune to this type of experiential interpretation. It could be said that it is even *necessary* for us to go through this disempowered state or feeling for a period of time in order to heal or to eventually make full sense of the experience of trauma. We may have no other way of coping with the experience and this initial interpretation is simply one step on the path to eventual healing. I am not judging the mindset or saying that it is wrong to be in it. I am saying that we can learn not to fall into it in the first place and train our children not to, if we choose to. I am saying that there are more advantageous interpretations of difficult or even traumatic life experience that we can make than victimhood. If we make this choice to learn a different way to interpret difficult situations, we can change our lives and the world for the better. This is simply an optimal choice. Victimhood and feeling victimized is not wrong or bad, it is simply a choice that we can make. We all have the opportunity, with enough information and attained understanding to make better choices.

My intention in this writing is ultimately to *reduce human suffering* by helping people transcend the whole process of interpreting themselves or others in the limiting and disempowering roles of victims, perpetrators or rescuers. An additional intention of this writing is to help people learn that judging each other for any reason is ultimately a detrimental process of control seeking that is doomed to failure, and that here there are also better alternatives.

Trauma and abuse of all kinds are real and terrible and their affects are also real, and often last a lifetime. The wars, genocides and acts of slavery of our world are real and have happened. How we choose to

emotionally deal with past and present difficult events and experiences, as we gradually heal over the course of our lives, is up to each of us. Learning to reinterpret our painful experiences and *our perceived roles* in those experiences is a key to learning to heal from our past experiences and regain our personal power. In effect we become empowered when we learn how to *change how we remember and interpret our past* and thus to change it and grow from it. When we change how the past happened to us in our memory we then literally change the pain that we hold in relation to it. We also potentially change how powerful we feel in relation to our past experiences and thus how powerful we feel in the present moment. This process is not mere “mind games”, it is real, meaningful and is powerful and brings with it true insight and deep understanding of ourselves, our relationships, the world and our lives.

In my view the labels of victim, perpetrator and rescuer that we apply to ourselves and others are in the long term detrimental to our process of healing and learning from life experience in general. They keep us from forgiving ourselves and others, and of letting go of our limiting expectations of self and others, and by doing so freeing ourselves to move on from the past. They can leave us feeling disempowered and believing that life is unfair, as in situations where we have given up our lives and health for our families, or those we love, in our attempt to “rescue” them and keep them safe.

In simple terms we may in past situations have seen ourselves in the positive role of a rescuer and have seen others in the negative role as perpetrators. We may have even looked at detrimental *situations* as the “perpetrators” we are saving those we love from, as in mothers or fathers working endlessly to make ends meet to support their families. In these situations parents can feel that painful and limiting situations they feel trapped in are the perpetrators of their lives that they feel victimized by. This can be so when we are trapped in conditions of poverty or where there are no available jobs, while we are trying to support a family.

In some cases it can happen that in the end, after having given all we can to protect and support those we love, that we are left with nothing, and thus we then feel victimized and empty, and without perceived solution to our detrimental feelings. This can happen in cases of divorce after many years of having tried to make a relationship work for the sake of our children. It can also happen in situations of caretaking those we love who are sick for long periods of time, only to have them die, leaving us feeling lost, grieving and abandoned. In these situations, life can seem totally unfair and wrong, and we can feel lost and alone in our fear of the perceived wrongness of it all. Trying to make sense of life from the victim/perpetrator/rescuer model of life is too simple a process to apply to the far more complex social and emotional world we actually live in. When we try to use this model, we become limited, stuck, confused, dejected, depressed, angry and resentful. We also tend to judge ourselves and others and get stuck in negative emotional dynamics without seeing any positive ways to achieve resolution, aside from playing “either the victim or the rescuer” again.

Using the V/P/R labels and roles disempowers us. Using these labels and their associated roles ends up creating more fear, pain and misunderstanding, and limits our ability to constructively process our past pain and trauma. Using these roles requires us to *hold onto our pain*, rather than leaving it behind, so that we can then heal and move forward with our lives and emotionally live in the present. When we interpret life from any of the three roles of the V/P/R model we are *trying to empower* ourselves, *disempower* others and *control* life situations by applying the victim/perpetrator/rescuer process. Not realizing that it will in the end take us nowhere, and that in effect it is a “skipping record dynamic” that goes on and on.

We want to see ourselves as good; we want to see perpetrators or perpetrator situations as “bad” so that we can rationalize working against perpetrators without guilt, shame, emotional conflict or remorse. This is how we get over our internal conflict; an extreme example of this is found in war and in even in other kinds of battle, such as business, politics and divorces. This is why it is so important for us to harshly judge and even “demonize” the enemy when we go to and fight a war, rather than to see the enemy’s humanity. How else could one bring oneself to kill another person without hesitation and without reacting with deep feelings of guilt, shame and remorse?

Sometimes we find ourselves in the perpetrator role, convinced that we have the right to harshly affect or even punish others because we have previously been wronged. Sometimes we feel we have to rescue a perceived victim from someone who is unfairly abusing them, and in the process, we risk our own security. If we lose our security because of having risked it to save someone else we may then feel victimized ourselves. Where does the cyclic process end?

The V/P/R process is neither real nor true, it is only something we project onto relationships and situations; it is however believed in and emotionally bought into by many people, especially when we feel that life has not been fair to us or those we love. Perceived unfairness and other forms of comparison, as well as our own pain and fear, are our key rationalizations for applying the V/P/R model in a judgmental way.

The V/P/R model is, at its foundation, driven by fear and is based upon and driven by a judgmental mindset. The basic desire of this judgmental mindset is to achieve control and thereby to achieve safety, although it never really does achieve this goal. Meaning that we want to *feel* we are in control of our lives, ourselves and others, even though we cannot be. Therefore, we judge ourselves, and our lives and we judge others constantly, and continue to do so, as we fail to achieve our goals of attaining control. We continue doing it, despite the havoc it creates in our lives and in the world. In effect we are saying that if I just believe enough in the V/P/R model then I can supposedly control my life, control others and thus will be safe. It is a form of denial of reality and the results of our actions and decisions in order to achieve a false *feeling* of safety.

In our day-to-day life, though we rarely realize it, most of us shift and cycle through the three roles, moving from victim to perpetrator to rescuer and back again, throughout the day. Continually rationalizing and justifying when, where, how and why it is necessary for *us* to do so, and why others are either right or wrong for being in the particular V/P/R roles they choose to be in. As stated earlier these dynamics are all driven by the process of fear driven judgmentalness. The process of judgmentalness is driven by the simple desire to control ourselves and other’s choices, emotions, thoughts, behaviors and situational results.

What I am illustrating in this section is that although we can inadvertently become lost in any of the three roles for extended periods of time, the victim mindset is often the start of, and the root of, the whole three part dynamic and problem. The victim mindset can even become a *way of life* for some of us without our realizing it has happened. In this way we rationalize disempowering ourselves and rationalize not taking constructive empowered decisive action in our lives or in our self-healing process on a consistent basis. The other two roles, (rescuer and perpetrator) can also become lifestyles; however, they could to a degree be considered more empowered states, although in a maladaptive way. All three roles actually have the potential to rationalize taking punitive action against someone. (i.e. The victim may take righteous vengeance on the perpetrator. The perpetrator may harm the victim, often motivated by their own fear and pain. The rescuer is often societally supported or allowed to punish the perpetrator in order

to rescue the victim.) None of the three roles is suggested as either a lifestyle choice or as a useful role at any time. In the end all three roles are driven at their foundation by the emotion of fear.

To perceive and *fully identify* oneself as a victim can be to embrace, consciously or subconsciously, many other erroneous and disempowering beliefs about life, oneself and about perceived perpetrators, for example:

Some people who are heavily identified with the victim mindset feel themselves to be *completely innocent*, and feel that they have been wounded or wronged, and therefore may see themselves to have *no responsibility* for their situation or their woundedness or abuse. Whereas the perceived perpetrator or wrong doer is often seen by them as *fully responsible*, as not innocent, and any harm that may have been done *to the perpetrator* in the situation has less meaning or no real meaning at all. This occurs because the situation and its results were supposedly the perpetrator's fault to begin with. This is a polarized and unbalanced interpretation of events, power dynamics, relationships and situations, which ultimately inhibits resolution and self-healing, and keeps old fear, pain and trauma in place. These interpretations also undermine the potential for achieving forgiveness of the perpetrator, social or relationship healing, reconciliation, and even negotiation for compensation for the pain caused to humans by other humans. If we cannot at some point take some appropriate responsibility for managing our woundedness how can we ultimately take responsibility for our process of self-healing? These statements are not designed to "blame the victim". They are only designed to suggest that at some point in our healing process it helps us to make the shift into a state of empowered consciousness for our own benefit.

The perpetrator may be perceived to be the *sole cause* of the negatively perceived situation. If so then the person who defines themselves as the victim may feel entitled to compensation of some sort for the perceived problem or wrong doing. In addition, the victim may feel that the perpetrator(s) deserve punishment and/or to supply the compensation. I am not suggesting that people who have been abused or traumatized do not deserve reparation. I am simply suggesting that if those who have been abused can *only* see the situation from a polarized vantage point then their view cannot be *completely balanced* or accurate. Therefore they cannot optimize their views *for their own highest interest or that of society*. Meaning that if the information that they are using to interpret their situation is not *completely accurate*, it is not optimally useful in helping them heal themselves and learn from their life experiences. This could be true whether we are speaking of victims of abuse or *perpetrators of abuse* who have, due to having experienced prior abusive situations themselves, turned to expressing themselves in abusive ways.

People who feel victimized *may be* so focused on their pain and their judgments of the perpetrator that they feel no responsibility to change themselves or their emotional process. In these situations they become unable to change their behaviors, their emotional processes, their mindsets, their situational interpretations or beliefs in regard to their feelings of woundedness, or how the situation of perceived abuse occurred. This interpretation is not facilitative of constructive, positive and proactive self-healing as it does not require a person who feels themselves to have been victimized to learn anything empowering or constructive from their experiences. In this situation I am simply suggesting that if we can at some point in our healing process choose to learn whatever we can from it, we will then be empowered by it to some degree, and made stronger by doing so. Again, I am suggesting that all life experiences, as terrible as they can be, can also be sources of strength and empowerment and of greater understanding and wisdom.

In *victim / perpetrator / rescuer* think there must always someone at fault, to be blamed and / or to be punished. This statement applies to the mindset of all three roles. Meaning that nothing ever just “happens” in the world of V/P/R and everything that happens is attributed to the states or processes of victimhood/perpetration and rescuing. Therefore, we can’t just move on with life after a traumatic or devastating occurrence, because there is *always the fear of further victimization or the potential for need for rescue*. In addition, the perceived requirement of blame and punishment dynamics must supposedly be met *before we can move on*; this dynamic tends to create more perpetrators as righteous victims become vengeful perpetrators. Therefore, we become stuck in in the V/P/R process, rather than rapidly releasing fear and pain of the past and *forgiving*, and thereby healing ourselves, and leaving the past behind and living in the present. Many people in spousal relationships become stuck in a repetitive judgmental cycle of bitter criticism. This leads to ongoing poisonous animosity and resentment, and this then becomes a cycle of inability to forgive and move on. This *choice to hold onto fear, judgmentalness, pain and resentment* undermines their capacity to create joy in their own lives and deprives them of future relationship happiness.

Situations of perceived abuse are in some way inherently interpreted to be *unfair* to the victim mindset or in principle *wrong*. If we choose to interpret and label situations in black and white terms as “either right or wrong and fair or unfair” and ourselves as the victim of such dynamics we are again stuck. This occurs when we fear we could supposedly *again become the victim* of such dynamics, or when we feel we are still “owed something” by the perpetrator, or the world, for our pain. Life is not black and white, it is neither fair nor unfair, neither right nor wrong. Again we must first release the fear (even if it is just the fear of missing out on the “just rewards of our perceived victimhood”), before we feel safe moving forward in life. Victims can receive many rewards for being victims, (i.e. attention, energy, public focus, money, support, less expectation by others of being self-responsible, not being required to deal directly with their unresolved pain, etc.) Who in their “right mind” would want to give up this preferred status in our tremendously difficult and demanding world? Consciously recognizing and disengaging from these dynamics is essential if we want to quickly heal ourselves, center ourselves in our own sovereign power and move on with our lives.

When we feel victimized, we tend to inherently see ourselves as *good*, and the perpetrator is usually inherently and unquestionably seen as *bad or wrong*. This too is a very black and white interpretation; life has far more gray areas than this interpretation tends to reveal. Victims often feel they have the right to blame perpetrators and even the duty to do so, if only because “they are the victim”. We can fear letting the perpetrators off “scot-free” and moving on with our lives. Doing so can feel unjust or even wrong as if by doing so that we ourselves would in some way become perpetrators. We can even fear our own guilt, shame or self-judgment or the judgment of others for doing so. If we cannot release these fears we are again stuck in the past, due to unresolved fear without realizing it.

There are people today who feel they have been victimized by other individuals. They may then *also* feel victimized by either the lack of support or of the *expectations* of their families. They could also feel victimized in this same way by their chosen social groups, the companies they work for, their governments, the world in general, or even in their relationships with their chosen religion. It is often not an option to find justice or the support that we need for our self-healing process in the world around us. Therefore, it is necessary to learn to self-reliantly release our past pain through some independent process that we manage for ourselves, so that we can at least find self-empowered inner peace for our own sake. That is in part what this book is about.

“Perpetrators deserve punishment and to be *controlled* so that they cannot hurt us or others again, and victims cannot be safe unless perpetrators are controlled and punished”. In this situation we fear not being in control of perpetrators. Of course, *complete control* of anyone is an illusion and cannot happen, although we all do have some degree of *power and influence*. Our fear wants us to try to be “in complete control”. Therefore we often become stuck in trying repeatedly to affect control over perceived perpetrators in order to bring them “completely into line with our expectations” so that we can feel safe.

Some people call their personal expectations “justice” whereas others see that this is just a rationalization for control driven by fear or an expression of their personal preferences on the world. I am not suggesting letting oneself be abused. I am suggesting using your personal power and influence to assure that you are as safe and emotionally whole as you *practically and realistically* can be. If you come from fear you will try to control unrealistically. If you give up your fear you will apply all your power and influence wisely and consciously and in a balanced manner, and will not waste your time or energy with fear. You cannot optimize your application of your power until you give up your fear because you will always try too hard, and you will always try to control, rather than to wisely influence the world in a balanced manner. Fear is in effect an inefficient and ineffective waste of time and energy, which can be better spent elsewhere.

This attempted control dynamic is often seen in marriage relationships as well as in parental relationships when we try to attain our expectations or specific desired results due to subconscious fear. We can become consumed in the unbalanced process of trying to control the behavior of those we “love”, either out of fear for them, or fear of the results of their choices or fear of their abandonment. Fear driven decisions are not decisions driven by love, it is important to discern the difference. Whatever the reasons for our fears, if we do not first release our fear of *not being in control* of the other person, then we will continue to try to control them. This means we will continue to be in conflict with them that is *irreconcilable*, because people simply do not want to be controlled and all of us have free-will. For many people the closest they have ever come to loving someone else is trying to control them.

We try to control our children to keep them safe and to keep ourselves safe from their potentially unwise decisions. Not even very young children can be completely controlled, as any experienced parent will tell you. It is a paradox that the people we love the most are often the ones we feel most motivated to control, to our detriment as well as theirs. The only solution to this ongoing conflict of interests is to first release our subconscious fears and then to develop conscious ways to positively negotiate with those we are in relationship with from a place of fearless peaceful and loving conscious understanding.

When we feel we have been victimized we may feel that we have been sensitive, feeling and functioning in a *socially acceptable and humane manner* and that the perpetrator is not or has not. We may see anyone we love that is resisting our control as a perpetrator by the way, and we may fully rationalize our judgmentalness and criticisms of them as just or “justice”. If we hold this perspective our fear is filtering our interpretations and we are not able to empathize with the other person’s situation and motivations. If this is the case then we are not making decisions based upon the *whole reality of the situation* and will be unable to clearly see anyone else’s point of view. So we will make decisions that are unwise and uninformed and which are neither discerning nor insightful. These kinds of decisions can only result in conflict, problems, misunderstandings, miscommunications and repeatedly unresolved disputes. This is not a recipe for peaceful relationship negotiation.

Demonization of perpetrators can feel good and empowering in the moment and can help us feel better about ourselves, yet it does not help us heal ourselves or relationships, or help us move on from emotional

trauma. In reality the V/P/R model is only an ego self-defense mechanism human beings have created to try to understand and control social situations and relationships and we can dispense with it completely. In order to do so we must give up our fear, our illusions of safety, our willingness to judge ourselves and each other and choose not to participate in the V/P/R roles to any degree.

When we feel victimized we tend to feel powerless and to feel that perpetrators are more powerful than we are. This misinterpretation leads to a misperception of our own power and creates a significant re-triggering of our fear when we look back upon the situation. When our fear is re-triggered, we feel disempowered in making decisions in the present. It also limits our feelings of empowerment when we envision our future. The interpretation of victimhood is to a degree a false and covert process of *trying to empower ourselves* by feeling good about ourselves. (i.e. Seeing ourselves as innocent, powerless, right, just and worthy of the support of others as well as entitled to the support of others in our process of seeking retribution or compensation). It is necessary to realize this *potentially* dark side of victimhood, as it can be seductive. It can also become a subconscious motivation to hold onto the role of victim, which is ultimately a disempowered state and a distorted point from which to interpret relationships and reality.

Again the solution is to first release the fear we feel, through whatever means you choose, and then to see the truth of the situation more clearly for what it is. The truth is that we always have some degree of power and the capacity to influence our relationships at every moment of our lives, as well as some *participation* in any relationship problem or conflict that exists. It is important that you fully realize your personal power, and through doing so find greater peace and joy in your life and relationships. We never completely lose our power of choice, and all of the roles in the V/P/R model are only based upon an illusion that we project onto life and our relationships.

Certainly our choices can be *extremely diminished* in many life situations and relationships, and when we are afraid our perspective can make our free-will appear to be non-existent. That is how fear affects our consciousness, it is blinding and diminishing and leads us to falsely perceive ourselves as weak and powerless, even if that is not truly the case at all. Fear creates a sort of limiting tunnel vision effect on life and our choices. Some life situations can be so dire as to push us to the point where it may appear that the only choice left to us is how we choose to interpret what is happening in the moment, and how we choose to feel about it. Still this small choice is a choice that no one can take away from us.

Many people may at this point speak of situations of child abuse and ask what power of choice do children have? I would respond and say that at the time of their abuse they had *very little* if any awareness, understanding or choice at all. This is so in part because of their lack of conscious awareness and knowledge, and in part their ignorance due to their youth and lack of development and in part due to society's ignorance of the terrible pervasiveness of child abuse and lack of adequate preventative support to these abused children. I would *then say* that from the point in their lives after they have been abused and begun to grow up that their power of choice *increases* and that they often begin to have more and more ability to change their lives for the better and to learn from their past. I base this perspective upon years of working with many adults who were the victims of early life child abuse. They, like all of us, will likely at some point in their lives have the ability to change their emotional history by releasing their negative trapped emotions and thereby free themselves from their past. Over the years I have seen the immense courage that it takes for these people to transcend their past experiences and face their fears. I have both watched and helped them do so. I have facilitated them in conquering their fears and seen them become far more powerful in the process by realizing the strength they truly have. In the process of their self-healing they tend to leave behind their illusions of their own powerlessness and embrace

their power to create their own lives. Some of them are the strongest and most loving people I know. A big part of the healing process for these people is learning to re-interpret their early life experiences in a more conscious, astute, mature, knowledgeable way.

Everyone has the choice to determine their emotional process and to manage it from moment-to-moment, though we may not have previously realized this. We only need the tools and in some cases support and facilitation in learning to do so. Many people believe that others “make them feel” what they feel or that they have no choice as to how they feel about anything in life. They may also believe that they cannot change how they felt in the past about what they experienced, and I assure you that this is not true at all. If you learn to release your fears with the methods included in this book, or through other methods, which are available from many other sources, you can prove this belief untrue. You can prove that you are the determiner of whether you fear or do not fear. If you determine whether or not you *choose to fear*, no one can ever fully control your choices or your life experience. If you choose to give up this power to determine how you feel, then you will be choosing to live in a process of only reacting to what happens around you. I would suggest that this is not all that life can be and that you deserve much better.

Some people who feel victimized feel that if others “knew” the perpetrator as they do, that they would or should probably judge them and feel as negatively about them as the victim does. “If others do not agree with me it is probably because they do not understand the situation and my experience as I do”. It is simply a fact that there are many damaged, dangerous and even terribly dysfunctional people in this world who do cause great harm, and who do abuse others. (i.e. Perpetrators, who themselves are often prior victims of abuse for example). In spite of this fact, if we want to heal ourselves and create better lives, it is crucial for us to learn to focus on some other way of interpreting life and relationships that is more empowering and positive. We must release our fear and pain that has kept us imprisoned by keeping us focused on the negative, on our perceived limitations, on limited interpretations of others, and on the past.

We can shift our conscious focus onto the loving, kind aspects of life and loving people in the world and even choose to see the pure soul given to each of us by God in those who have harmed us. When we make this conscious choice to do so, we can find it within ourselves to forgive, to heal the past and to move on. The phrase, “there but for the grace of God go I” may help in this regard. I am not suggesting living a “Pollyanna” type of life and ignoring the negative aspects of life or hiding from abusive people. I am not suggesting being impractical or being unwilling to defend oneself when and where appropriate. I am suggesting that fearing anything in life is a maladaptive and ineffective way of dealing with it. I am also suggesting that managing your focus of consciousness in an empowered positive way helps one become capable of attaining a consistent level of inner peace while remaining effectively able to achieve one’s life goals.

Due to their focus on their unresolved pain or trauma some people who feel victimized feel unable to see the part their own decisions and ways of making decisions may have played in the abuse or trauma they have endured. Others tend to see the opposite view of the situation as if everything they endured was “all their fault” and blame everything on themselves. They may also arrive at a conclusion that they *only make mistakes* or that they just don’t know how to make good decisions at all. Both kinds of interpretations are unbalanced and therefore inaccurate. Neither is optimally supportive or constructive in regard to self-healing, because both views are judgmental in nature and focused on finding fault with self or a fault with a perpetrator in the situation. Judgmentalness in any form is not supportive of healing.

Focusing only on a perpetrator's actions to the exclusion of our own actions disempowers us in our process of learning from our experiences. Focusing only on our own actions does the same thing. It is best for us to become willing at some point to look deeply and discerningly at what part we and our decision-making processes, behaviors, thoughts, ways of interpreting situations, beliefs and emotions have played in the results of the past. Then we can become willing to learn from them and to change any or all of these for the better. Again, I do not believe in blaming victims of abuse for their situations and this set of statements is not designed to do so. I do not believe in blame at all as a constructive process of dealing with social or emotional situations or ills. I also do not believe in blaming perpetrators or rescuers as this is simply a process of judgment and is also a waste of time. I do believe in teaching everyone how to transcend all of these detrimental dynamics. My statements are meant to optimally empower victims of abuse, *as well as to help perpetrators in need of healing so that they will no longer abuse others, and to help rescuers cease to mindlessly rescue victims and judgmentally punish perpetrators.* I am interested in *informing rescuers* who tend to inadvertently harm themselves by giving of themselves in an unbalanced manner in hopes of being redeemed, avoiding abandonment or avoiding some other subconscious fear they do not even realize they have.

Another vantage point to look at the mindsets and roles of victimhood and rescuing from is that both can be a method of seeking to find an external solution to an internal emotional state. Of course perpetrators are also doing the same thing. Victims may seek external punishment for perpetrators in order to find closure. Rescuers may seek recognition, self-worth, self-esteem or some form of self-justification via their rescuing efforts. I am not denigrating the efforts of those who lovingly give of themselves to protect or serve others. What I am seeking to illuminate is that some of us are in some part of ourselves subconsciously holding detrimental emotional issues or extremely negative feelings about ourselves that can only be resolved through internal work, and that it is vital to understand that this is the case. If we are emotionally wounded and do not realize it we may seek to sooth our wounds through external means without understanding that this is the strategy of managing our own pain that we are employing. These strategies are generally not very effective and in a way are an addiction, meant to distract us from our own underlying and unresolved pain or woundedness. The flip side of the situation is that for a time the V/P/R roles can be seen as a helpful buffer of sorts in that they keep us unaware of underlying pain we are not yet ready to deal with. In essence we may need to become stronger and to learn more about ourselves before we feel that we are ready to tackle our internal problems or wounds. This can be especially necessary if we do not have adequate healing support from our family, medical system or our society to help us with our problematic life issues.

We can spend a lifetime rescuing others and giving of ourselves without really getting to a point of self-acceptance, self-forgiveness, healing feelings of shame or guilt, attaining authentic feelings of self-worth or attaining comprehensive feelings of unconditional self-love. These positive and conscious internal emotional and mental states can only be fully arrived at *in a lasting way* through *internal work* and attainments of *self-awareness*. The V/P/R roles can sometimes give us emotional boosts and support along the way and help us to see ourselves in a better light. This process can be a stepping stone to our being willing to then go deeper in our internal self-forgiveness work and self-love development work. However, they are not a substitute for it and they cannot directly lead to these states.

Unfortunately, society has not developed to the point where it teaches this type of self-developmental and self-healing process to all world citizens in a standardized manner. Therefore people go through the same process of learning NOT to function fearfully and judgmentally, in the V/P/R roles, by going through the experiential school of hard knocks. We can as a species no longer afford this degree of evolutionary

inefficiency and ineffectiveness in our process of social and individual development. As people become more *empowered technologically*, and as world population pressures increase, there is now too much potential for people to act out in detrimental ways, as terrorists do. It is because of this evolving situation and growing social and technological dynamic that fear is the most dangerous force in our world. Therefore, we need to quickly teach people not to function this way any longer on a global scale. In our current world situation the V/P/R model has become the *perfect and endless justification and excuse* for terrorists to terrorize, for governments to wage war, for police to abuse criminals, for abusers to abuse victims, and for victims to seek vengeance on abusers. It is also a built in excuse for the global system and individuals *not to significantly learn* from their own past ignorant series of unwise decisions. It is a cycle that the world has become stuck in, to its detriment. Where does it all end? How does the situation get better if we do not change the fundamental emotional dynamics and decision-making strategies that are creating the situation at every level of relationship and society?

I would say that whatever has happened in our lives can be learned from, and can thus empower us to change for the better. I suggest that victims, perpetrators and rescuers can all learn from the review their prior experiences, and from the vantage point of each role. If you choose to do so you will learn something worthwhile. Even if the learning appears to be small or inconsequential in the moment it can pay off in big ways in the future. In this way we may learn to keep whatever negative experiences that have occurred in the past from happening again. At the very least we may simply better inform some other area of our lives, our minds or our emotional processes through our experiential learning.

Some people who feel victimized feel they have no responsibility for management of their *personal power* or freewill choices in their situation of victimhood or abuse. We all have freewill at all times and if we choose to be accountable for the application of our personal power and our choices at all times then we are more likely to remain conscious and thus able to make wise decisions. This is the essence of learning to be more discerning. Choosing to be self-accountable does not mean we “made our victimhood or abuse happen”. It means that we can choose to be self-accountable for digging ourselves out of our perceived situation of victimhood as soon as we possibly can, and to re-empower ourselves sooner, whenever we are emotionally ready to do so.

Some people who feel victimized feel it is necessary to judge and even hate perpetrators for their perceived actions without feeling guilty for their judgmentalness and with assumed social and emotional impunity. I would say that although the victim/perpetrator/rescuer model is heavily bought into by society at all levels, it does not mean that this model and its implications are actually good for us as individuals or as a society. Even if hating appears to be for a “good or necessary reason” such as in fighting the war on terrorism. Holding onto hatred poisons us, even while we are hoping that it will poison those we hate.

Attacking and punishing hatred for hatred sake shows a poor understanding of hatred in general and what its roots are and it shows a lack of willingness on the part of society to deal with what creates the fundamental emotional states of hatred in the first place. It is our own indifference to the needs of our own citizenry that initially breeds hatred. It is far better to preemptively and proactively deal with the roots of fear. We need to heal fear and hatred in our society by investing in the people who are stressed, disempowered, disenfranchised, and afraid. Rather than by punishing hatred after the fact of our indifference to each other’s developmental needs, when it comes out as social expressions of fear driven resentment, hatred and violence.

Sometimes people who feel victimized believe or rationalize that since they have been abused that they have the right to be insensitive to or even to abuse others. They may even abuse others who were not involved in their original wounding, without guilt and with assumed impunity, due to their wounded or impaired status. This can occur when the victims of child abuse in turn *sometimes* become abusers of their own children. We might refer to these prior victims as perpetrators. Violence is never the solution to any problem; it is almost always the source of problems.

Wounded people may bully others in order to feel safe from potentially being abused by others and in order to prove to themselves that they are safe from potential perpetrators. They may also act to preemptively criticize attack or intimidate others to keep those others from judging, abandoning or punishing them. They may even feel it is okay to actually openly seek revenge on those they perceived harmed them, (again without guilt, remorse or responsibility). In these cases the perceived victim becomes an active “perpetrator” without realizing it. Oddly enough many of what we might see as the worst perpetrators are simply people who have, at a subconscious level, rationalized their most negative behaviors through interpreting themselves as victims of past events or relationships. The *freedom of their perpetration* is part of the “reward” they feel they are owed for their victimhood.

I perceive much of the dynamic of the bullying problems that are being seen in schools these days to be the acting out of emotionally fearful or wounded children who see themselves as victims rationalizing their bullying, (i.e. perpetration). Oddly enough in my work I have even seen teachers bullying children, due to fear of the children “attacking or embarrassing” them; this is just how conflicted and misunderstood the situation has become.

Some people who feel victimized feel they have the right to demand punishment of the perpetrator from those who love them, from society at large, or via the judicial system. Some of us cannot let go of the past and our focus on our pain until we feel that others have *literally* experienced our pain. This tendency keeps us from healing ourselves and moving on. This dynamic is also driven by the fear of not having the power to affect those whom we have been profoundly negatively affected or hurt by. This fear, like all fears, can be released. This process of wanting others to feel our pain can be seen merely as revenge seeking, or it can be seen as necessary for the victim to prove to themselves they do have personal power. However in some cases I also see it as a way for the victim to try to feel safe and sure that others really do understand their pain, they desire this result so that they will not be hurt again and so that they can feel that others really do care. Only then can they *feel safe releasing their fear*. If those of us who have been wounded by life can find the courage to skip the necessity for others to feel our pain and simply choose to directly release our fear we can attain relief from our pain. Yet we often don't feel safe operating in this direct and bold a manner.

Of course, in our world it is not often feasible and it is obviously not socially acceptable (though many of us do try) to control other people in order to *cause them* the pain we have felt. Trying to do so actually results in our re-wounding our emotions and our own souls in a different way. This pain infliction dynamic is often seen in divorce proceedings that go on and on. In these cases, spouses may be trying to variously prove themselves right, innocent or “the victim”. In these situations, one or both spouses may just want to punish the other. The end result is not positive for either spouse, whether emotionally or financially. The long-term cost to any children involved is often even higher. It is possible to simply skip to the end of the process and release the fear and pain and save ourselves and those we love so much unnecessary difficulty. Understanding that this is possible, feasible in the short term, and very worthwhile is the key to making it happen.

People who feel victimized can become so focused on their pain that they *forget how to heal* themselves and grow in a sovereign and independent manner. Again I am not pointing at this as a “fault”. When we are wounded it is natural for us to focus on our pain and to seek help from others in dealing with it, and it is often necessary for us to be supported in our healing process. This is normal and there are many situations we could not recover from without this support. Still, in our healing process there comes a point where we must choose to independently work with our emotions and to become *internally motivated* to self-heal, if we are to successfully and fully transcend the pain of the past. If we choose to leave accountability for our lives or emotional process or our life results with anyone other than ourselves we only disempower ourselves. If we choose to place *all accountability* upon ourselves at some point in our healing journey (again *I am not suggesting blaming ourselves for the situation in any way*) then we optimally empower ourselves. I am suggesting empowering oneself by assuming that we all have the power to change anything in our lives for the better. Whether it be associated with our past, present or future, (*without any process of self-judgment or self-punishment through guilt or shame at all*). In this way we can fully empower ourselves and place all of the options for action on our own table, and all of the decisions in our own hands. This is an example of self-mastery and all of us have the potential to attain it at some point.

“It is my right to feel the way I do and to identify myself as a victim for as long as I choose to because of all of the pain that I have been through”. Of course, we all have free-will, and we can choose to feel any way that we choose to feel for as long as we choose to. It is a necessary part of our healing process for us to feel wounded and even to *temporarily* feel victimized. That said if victimhood or pain becomes an *identity* then it becomes a limitation on our capacity to heal, make conscious empowered decisions and to move on with our lives. Therefore it inhibits our ability to become who and what we want to become. In effect, in the long term, overt identification with victimhood robs us of our ability to find *inner peace*. This truth is not always apparent when we are at the beginning of the process of our trauma or woundedness. It may take years to get to the point where we can shift to another way of seeing past painful events, relationships, ourselves and life. I am not suggesting that anyone rush their process of healing. Like the process of grieving, all self-healing takes whatever time it takes. Child abuse, the most afflicting trauma I am aware of, may take much of a lifetime to work through. I am suggesting that with the application of tools of emotional release that the process may be shortened, and thereby that our time of pain can be reduced. Therefore, our time of self-empowerment and joy can be hastened. This is my intention and my hope for the readers of this book.

By making all of the previous statements in this chapter I do not in any way excuse those who are perceived to be perpetrators for their choices, actions, beliefs or motivations, and I obviously do not condone negative or abusive behaviors or interactions between people in general. I am simply saying that if we hold any of the polarized perspectives of the V/P/R model or view of life to be true without deeper questioning then we can fall into a very large trap. This emotional reactive trap snares not only individuals; it also entangles families, groups, corporations, cultures, religions and whole nations. If we cannot extricate ourselves from the trap then we cannot heal, and we cannot make constructive decisions and take constructive actions.

Right now for example there are terrorist attacks occurring around the world, creating tremendous fear, pain and trauma and leaving many wounded, frightened and disillusioned people in their wake. Helping the world’s people heal from these events rapidly, while effectively dealing with the problem of terrorism is important to the resolution of the problem. If we lose ourselves in fear, victimhood or hatred of the terrorists, or any other aspect of the Victim/Perpetrator/Rescuer dynamic, we will be less optimally capable of making wise decisions.

The latest understandings from experts are saying that we must intervene *socially* and ensure that the people who could someday become terrorists never get to the point where they actually want to take this life path. *Children from all over the world, including from the United States* are making decisions to become terrorists and join factions such as the ISIS / ISIL terrorist group. Should we hate and want to destroy these lost children who are simply unwise, ignorant and buying into terrorist rhetoric or should we willfully and wisely choose to love them so much that we learn how to quickly help them to make more discerning decisions than to destroy themselves and others?

All terrorists were once children. Helping them means truly understanding what motivates them, helping them heal whatever is within them that could drive them to function as perpetrators/terrorists (usually some aspect of subconscious fear and thus their desire to be in control or more empowered in their lives) and then to help them to understand and clear this fear. This is a very different solution than simply making sure they have a good job, good economic conditions and an education. In today's increasingly complex and technologized world more people are becoming fearful, feeling disempowered, confused, disillusioned and angry. This is the source of terrorism, *its roots are fear*. Working with our children in this way is necessary so that their subconscious fears do not create a situation of vulnerability to their becoming entrained in terrorist rhetoric, negative emotional states, culture, identity and social dynamics. Again, if we only hate and attack terrorists we will only make more hateful terrorists. If terrorists hate and kill us they will only motivate us to hate and kill them. Even terrorism, as extreme as it is, is not a black and white situation. Attempting to interpret terrorism as anything other than a *human situation* (no matter how barbarically it is acted out) keeps us from fully understanding it and effectively dealing with it.

Oddly enough it is even possible for us to see and feel ourselves to be victims of ourselves. This can be seen when we see ourselves as victims of our addictions, our desires, our negative emotions, our self-destructive actions, our fears of our own power, or our fears of the pain of our past choices that we cannot change. In these situations we can fear *our own power to cause ourselves pain without even realizing it*. It is necessary that we transcend our fear of our own capacity to hurt ourselves and to leave this tendency to fear ourselves behind permanently, if we want to feel confident and empowered in building joyful prosperous lives.

People who perceive themselves as victims may unwittingly become *perpetual victims* in various areas of their lives, as they project their past experiences as *future negative expectations* in regard to social interactions and relationships. In this case victimhood can become the underlying model for their whole way viewing of life, and this view's necessity is constantly re-rationalized and re-validated and is thus rarely questioned. This need not be the case, the cycle of victimhood in individuals can be broken permanently and the larger V/P/R cycle in all of the world's cultures can be broken permanently. In order for this to occur our fear, our desire for control, and our tendency to judge ourselves and others must be given up. Fear is not a necessary part of life; it can be transcended with consciousness, wisdom, discernment and willful intention. If we choose to love ourselves and others unconditionally there will be no room for judgmentalness, fear, control or hatred.

So far, we have shown how fear directly creates or supports all of the following detrimental situations:

- Negative emotions including hatred
- Relationship conflict and violence

- Judgmentalness and related punishment tendencies
- Prejudice, stereotyping and bias
- Addictions (in order to escape or manage the emotions of fear)
- Negative or limiting beliefs about ourselves, others, our relationships or the world, that result from fearful imaginings
- Expectations (fear creates fearful expectations of the future and fear is the resulting emotion of any of our expectations that are not met)
- Control seeking behavior in all relationships and situations
- Feelings of victimhood

Now we have added the V/P/R Model to the list of what fear creates and supports in terms of detrimental human conditions, dynamics, interactions and situations.