

ASSERTIVE AND CONNECTING COMMUNICATION

RESPECT AT FACE VALUE DON'T TAKE THE BAIT

ALLOWING OTHERS 100% RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR WORDS

Taking what others say at 'face value' even if you believe what they are saying is wrong, disordered, mean or manipulative, allows you to remain out of codependency and the Drama Triangle. Instead of 'taking the bait' and jumping into the Triangle by arguing, critiquing, shaming or trying to mindread the 'meaning' between their words, simply take their words at face value. This also ensures other adults experience 100% responsibility for their words.



Respect at Face Value is a skill that can combine well with other skills such as Curious Listening (see Curious Listening worksheet) that allow for mutually beneficial communication, caring connection and respect.

A woman with curly hair is smiling and holding a clipboard and pen. She is sitting in a meeting with other people. The background is blurred.

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**We are the
source of what
we are feeling.**

**Anyone
gets to feel
anything for
any reason.**

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Julia Colwell, PhD

RESPECT AT FACE VALUE



staying out of triangle

- ✓ **Take what others say at 'face value'** even if you feel what they are saying is not genuine, disordered, mean or even manipulative.
 - ✓ **Believe them so they may experience the responsibility** of their words, along with the realistic consequences for their words.
 - ✓ **Allow others to have emotions, perceptions, complaints, etc.,** rather than 'rescue,' 'fix,' blame or criticize them.
 - ✓ **Remain on solid ground, allow others to be in the Triangle alone,** rather than jumping in. This does not make you the 'bad guy.'
 - ✓ **Don't take the bait. Resist the urge to mindread or jump in the Triangle to rescue,** defend, argue or explain. Stay out of the Triangle.
- Here are ways to Respect at Face Value:**

- "This deserves time for me to think about."
- "Ok, good to know."
- "I hear what you are saying."
- "I need time to process this."
- "Tell me more."
- "Thank you for being honest."
- "I appreciate you letting me know."
- "Ok, I do not fully agree but now I know how you feel."
- "This is a big deal and I'm going to take a day to think about this."

If you are feeling calm and able, you can ask about giving advice or support. Make sure you don't give unsolicited criticism or help (unless someone is in real immediate danger).

- Do you want my support or ideas on how to help you through this? Or help us get through this?

RESPECT AT FACE VALUE



staying out of triangle

I'm not ready for a relationship right now.

Responses:

RESCUING But, you're amazing and deserve a relationship. I really like you.

Let's keep dating anyways.

PERSECUTING I've wasted six months with you! You're terrible.

DEFENDING/VICTIM But you said you were ready before. You hurt me.

RESPECT AT FACE VALUE Thank you for letting me know. I need to leave and take time to process this.

You hurt my feelings.

Responses:

RESCUING Oh no! I'm so sorry I hurt your feelings. I feel awful.

PERSECUTING You hurt my feelings all the time. Toughen up.

TAKE AT FACE VALUE Thank you for letting me know. Tell me more.

I can never trust you again.

Responses:

RESCUING I'm so sorry you feel that way. This is awful! What have I done?

PERSECUTING You shouldn't say things like that.

DEFENDING/VICTIM You make me not trust you either. Because you're controlling, I feel bad and stressed.

FACE VALUE Ok, this is definitely good to know.

I screwed up my relationship/diet/project! I'm the worst.

Responses:

RESCUING You aren't the worst! You're amazing. People screw up all the time.

PERSECUTING You shouldn't be so mean to yourself.

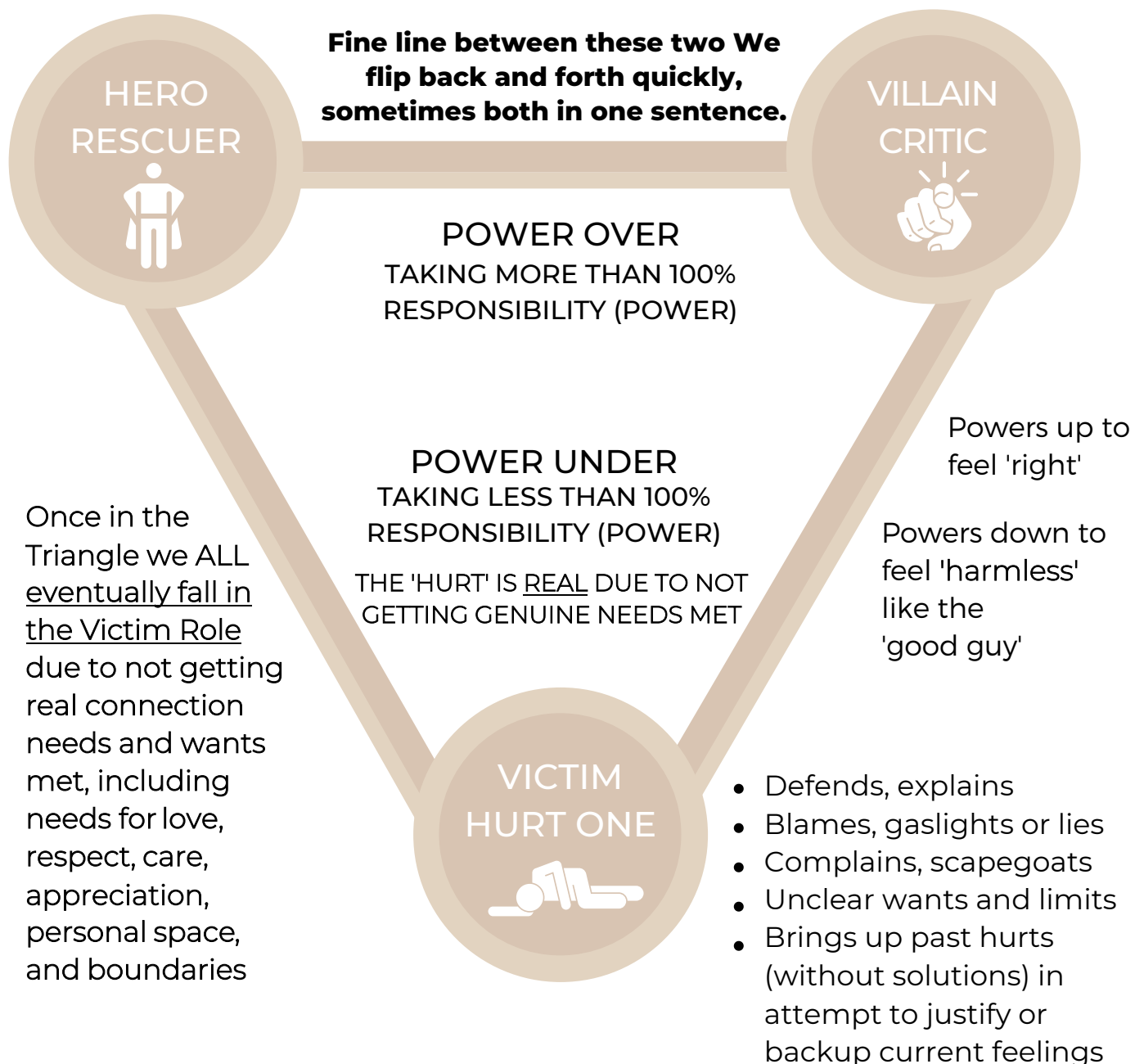
DEFENDING/VICTIM It makes me sad when you talk about yourself like that.

TAKE AT FACE VALUE Thank you for being honest about what you're going through and how you're feeling. Do you want my support or ideas on how to help you through this?

TRAUMA DREADED DRAMA TRIANGLE

Once in, we quickly swap roles, looping in conflict trying to 'win our case explaining how hurt, good, helpful, harmless or right we are. Without awareness, we get stuck in the Triangle, repeating patterns causing severe distress and dysfunction. How do we stay out of the Triangle? Take 100% Responsibility to communicate your genuine wants and needs and allow other adults 100% Responsibility to communicate theirs.

- Unsolicited advice
- Enabling rather than supportive
- People-pleasing or passive aggressive
- Apologizes even when not at fault
- Needs to feel 'helpful' or responsible for other adults
- Unsolicited criticism
- Shames 'should's'
- Persecutes, judges
- Unsolicited opinions
- Needs to feel 'right'



HOW TO STAY OUT OF THE DRAMA TRIANGLE

DON'T TAKE THE BAIT

FROM RESCUING TO DRAMA AND POWER-STRUGGLE

"I'm hungry."

"You want me to make you something?"

"Naw, I'm fine"

"Come on, you need to eat something! What should I make?"
POWER-OVER/RESCUING

"I said I'm fine. I'll eat later."

"But you said you were hungry!"
POWER-OVER/CRITIC

"I said I'm fine! Why can't you let me be?"
POWER-UNDER/VICTIM

"Sorry... but wow, your anger is ridiculous."
POWER-OVER/CRITIC

TAKING 100% RESPONSIBILITY: NOT MORE -OR- LESS

"I'm hungry."

"You want me to make you something?"

"Naw, I'm fine"

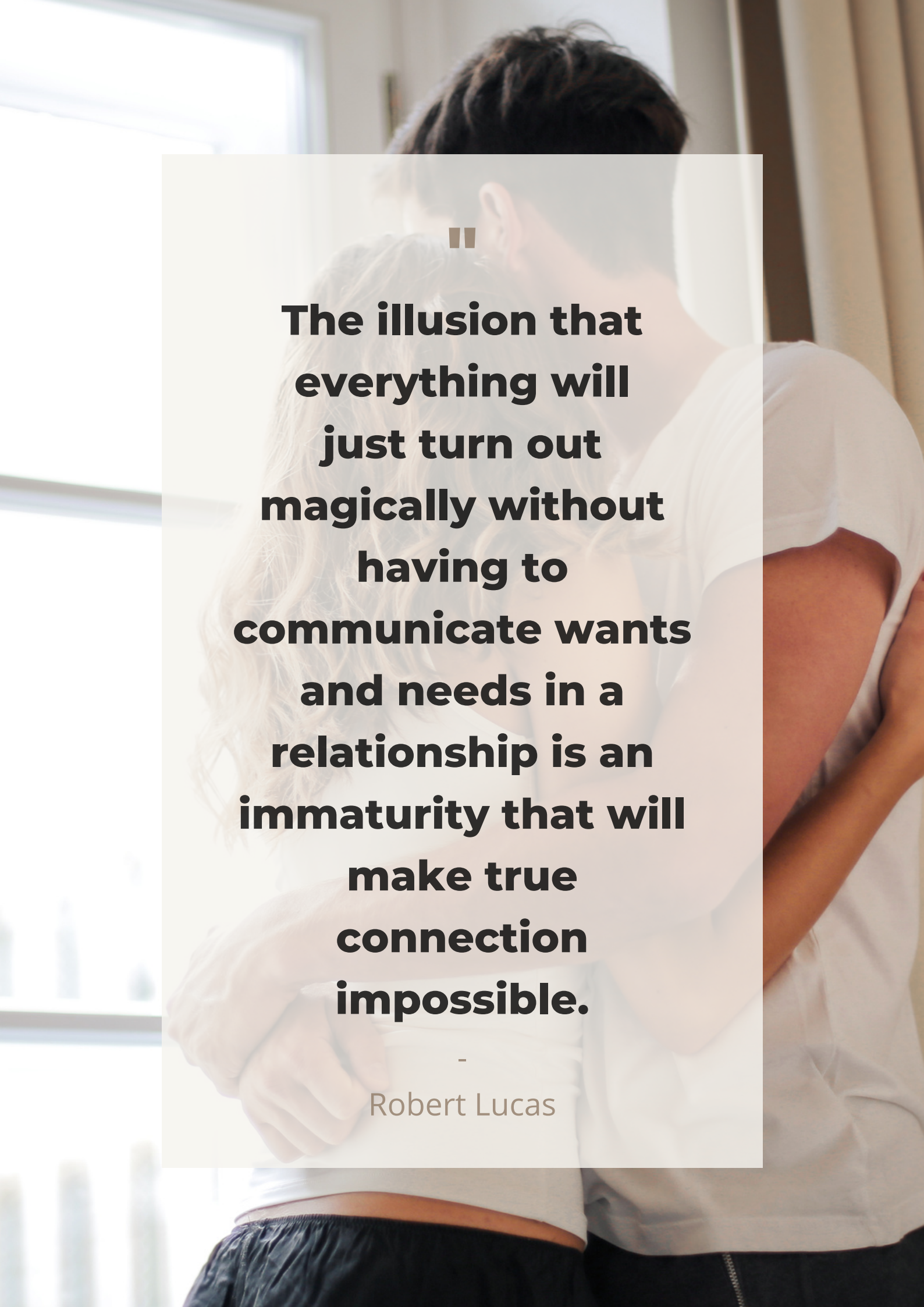
"Ok, let me know if you change your mind."
RESPECTING AT FACE VALUE

"I might get grumpy now though but whatever."
POWER-UNDER/VICTIM

"Ok, thanks for letting me know."
RESPECTING AT FACE VALUE

Note: If they get 'grumpy' and you don't want to be around them, simply take the time and space you need away. Allow your partner to have their emotions without jumping into the Drama Triangle.

**ALLOWS PARTNER 100%
RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR OWN
EMOTIONS AND FOR
COMMUNICATING THEIR OWN
NEEDS, WANTS AND LIMITS**

A photograph of a man and a woman embracing in a room. The man is on the right, wearing a white t-shirt, and the woman is on the left, wearing a white t-shirt and dark shorts. They are both looking down and smiling. The background shows a window with light coming through. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent white rectangle in the center of the image.

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The illusion that everything will just turn out magically without having to communicate wants and needs in a relationship is an immaturity that will make true connection impossible.

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Robert Lucas



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If you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency, in danger of hurting yourself or others, feeling suicidal, overwhelmed, or in crisis, you can access the following resources to find help.

If you are experiencing an emergency dial 911

Crisis Text Line www.crisistextline.org

Suicide Prevention 988lifeline.org

National Domestic Hotline www.thehotline.org