

Playing the Victim

by Robert Elias Najemy

The role of Victim (poor me) is a favorite for many of us. There are so many benefits we can ascertain by playing the role of the victim.

1. We automatically gain self-worth. Follow this reasoning closely. As a victim, we are the one to whom injustice is being done, thus the others are unjust, incorrect, not okay, and wrong in what they do. Consequently, we are just, okay, good and right. We are worthy and they are not. Many of us who do not have sufficient self-esteem find this as the only way we can establish our self-worth, by being the victims of others' wrong doings.

2. As victims, we can play on the others' pity and guilt. When they are angry with us, we can diminish their rage and aggression by playing the weak, abused person. When we want something from someone, we can play on their guilt by making them believe they are at fault for our unhappiness or our problems.

3. As victims, we are not responsible for our reality, and thus not to blame if we or our lives are not in good condition. We have an excuse for not being okay or manifesting our potential.

As a result, we gain what we want from the others by making them feel responsible for our reality, and by making ourselves seem weak, incapable and in need of help.

When confronted with loved ones who are playing the role of victim, we need to free ourselves from the illusion that they are weak and incapable, and that we are responsible for their reality or can create their happiness, health or success in life. We need to express our love to them in ways they can perceive, without getting caught up in feeling responsible or guilty for their reality. This requires a combination of love, effective communication and clarity of mind. We need to help them find another way of getting what they need that is free from self-pity and unnecessary suffering.

The victim "needs" to be unhappy, thus he or she will find daily reasons not to be happy. Those reasons also frequently imply that the others around them are to blame. The victim finds it difficult to say, "What a wonderful day it is," or "How happy I am," or "Thank you for being such a nice person to me" (unless you are new in their lives and "different from all the insensitive people" already in their lives).

How I would like to react to a Victim.

I would like to keep clear in my mind that I cannot create the other's health, happiness, success or satisfaction.

I want to remember that she needs my love and attention, and will give it freely whenever she is not in the role of the victim.

When she does get into the role of victim I will explain that I love and care for her and want her to be happy, but that that I cannot create that. I am willing to help her if she wants to take responsibility and work towards her happiness. I can ask her questions that might help her realize what she needs to do to create her happiness. I can also ask questions, which may help her see how blessed she already is, and also what powers lie within her that she can use to create the reality she desires.

Throughout this process I will remain very clear that I am not responsible for what she is feeling. If she accuses me of not doing enough, I will check with my conscience and if I decided that she is right, I will start doing more. If I judge that she is wrong, then I will peacefully tell her so and explain that I am not going to do more and if she wants to discuss finding other solutions, I will be happy to.

I will also explain that I will no longer feel guilty about her unhappiness and as I am clear about doing whatever I can, and that playing the victim will not help her get more from me.

A possible honest communication with a Victim might go something like this.

I-message to a Victim

"Dear, I want you to know that I love and care for you, and want very much for you to be happy, healthy and satisfied in your life. I want that very much. However, I am beginning to realize that I cannot create that for you. I realize now that I have been feeling responsible for your reality and some times guilty because you are not as happy and satisfied as we would both like you to be."

"I now understand that I do not help you by feeling responsible or guilty. These feelings just make me angry with you because you do not do what you could be doing to create a happier life for yourself. Also, when you focus on what you do not have, rather than all the wonderful things you do have, you do not see how wonderful your life really is."

"Thus, I will no longer try to create your happiness or get your approval through your expression of satisfaction. I am going to love you and offer you whatever I can without doing more than I believe I should and without getting angry with you because you are not satisfied."

"Is there something you would like to share with me concerning this?"