

THE EMPOWERMENT TRIANGLE

As a practitioner



WanderKind

BY GABRIELLE RANGIHOEA

THE DIS/EMPOWERMENT TRIANGLE

We are not rescuers

Many of us who are drawn to healing work are deeply empathic, we care for our human family. We will usually see the best parts of the person in front of us.

There are many ways this empathetic energy plays out in our lives. Sometimes it's in the role of helper, peace-maker, voice of reason and healer.

When we are in our healthy expression of self as a healer we are uplifting. We know that every person is capable of healing and growing. We provide an environment for them to explore this possibility.

In the shadow expression, we can quieten our truth or power because we place their wellbeing and need to heal above our balance, or we can make them wrong for not "healing" in the way, or at the speed, we desire.

In our role it is helpful to meet people where they are, rather than where we see they can be. We aim to neutrally hold a vision for the things people want and for their higher self to express, we also need to hold space for people's pain and where they are right now.

One conceptual tool I use to monitor how I am engaging with clients is the empowerment & dis-empowerment triangles. These relational triangles emerge from family dynamics and continues to play out into our adult relationships.

Although "in theory" our relationships with our clients are distinct from our personal relationships, we carry our patterns of relating into different spaces and that includes our therapeutic relationships.

This sacred work will often demand that you grow in the areas you need to strengthen. You will need to set boundaries, own your worth and exchange energy with others so you may attract clients where you need to be aware of these dynamics.

It is also helpful to remember that our clients will be carrying their patterns of relating and understanding of your role from their own history, understanding and relationship to personal growth.

Additionally, in the healing work we do we may be excavating different ages, which will occasionally mean that while a client is physically presenting as one age, emotionally they are operating at another. This requires agility, compassion, and self-awareness.

THE DISEMPOWERMENT TRIANGLE

The mantra of this triangle is "I'm not ok...you're not ok..." "I'm right and you are wrong, or I'm wrong and you are right..."

In this way of thinking one person must be above another. When we are expressing this energy, we often bounce around this triangle with other people. There are weak boundaries between us and others. This process is largely reactionary and can be addictive as the drama fuels and feeds our base needs.

Hawene ~ The Perpetrator

Traits: Blaming, resentful, angry. This can take a lot of different forms. Punishing energy. Passive aggressive, aggressive.

Perpetrators takes energy through their frustration, anger and aggression yet will later feel remorse or sorry for their actions.

Internal dialogue: "You hurt me, so I will do this to you." "You deserve this." "With everything I do for them."

"I'll show them..." "They deserve this..."

Kaupēhepēhe ~ The Victim

Traits: Feelings of being at the mercy of others, the world. Shame, lack of trust for oneself.

There is a perception that one's position is caused by a "perpetrator" and energy is taken by needing help that is often fulfilled by the "rescuer".

Energy is taken when people pay attention to one's plight, assist, solve their problems or feel sorry for them.

Internal dialogue: "I can't believe this is happening to me!" "How could they do this?" "These things are always happening to me..." "Nothing ever goes right in my life..."

Tāngangenga ~ The Rescuer

Traits: Highly perceptive of others needs and the environment. Yet not always perceptive of their own needs. Will do anything to make the situation better. Place other's desires above their own. Jump into finding solutions, rather than sitting in uncomfortable spaces. (Common with healers, counsellors, helping professions). Can become bitter, burnt out and overwhelmed when this archetype is dominant.

Energy is exchanged through a feeling of being helpful, capable, knowing and helping others.

Internal dialogue: "What can I do for you?" "How can I fix this." "Don't worry, I'll take care if it..."

The relationship between:

Victim & Rescuer: Co-Dependent

Perpetrator & Victim: Dominant & Dominated

SAFETY, BOUNDARIES & EXPECTATIONS

Sometimes we may want something more for someone else than they do...

Sometimes we may be attached to pleasing our clients, or we may be nervous about addressing something, or calling them out. Co-creators can feel our confidence (or lack of it). They can also feel if we are attached to them coming to a specific insight.

We may begin encouraging them to make changes, when in that moment they need comfort. While we won't always get this perfect it can be helpful to remember that we are merely a space holder, our clients need to be ready to commit to the changes in their lives.

Huritao Whaiaro ~ Self-reflection

Can you think of a time in which you confided in or sought advice from someone and felt that they were really listening to you?
In what ways did they show you that they were listening?

Other times our clients may believe we can solve all their problems

Māori Healing is really powerful and yet people only get out what they put in. We are not "working on" people, we are "working with" them. This work is a co-creation.

Occasionally clients may place us on a pedestal or repeat the attachment patterns with their parents in their relationship with us.

It can help to reassert that this is a co-creation, that we are working and co-creating with the client, their kaitiaki ~ guides, tīpuna ~ ancestors, māreikura & whatukura ~ celestial beings. Even if it's not suitable to say so, remind people with your energy at all times that they have the ability to choose their experience

BREATH SIGNALS

Using these triangles with Māori Healing

As you progress along your path you will begin to hear different types of breath emerging from your clients, and your own body during sessions.

In our teachings, the sound of our breath will often show us the energy we are working with.

Hā is the sound of empowerment, in this instance we are moving and using our energy with love, care and uplifting wairua ~ spirit. This energy is expansive and replicates itself and is open to receiving insight.

Hē is the sound of dis-empowerment. In this instance, we are intentionally, or unintentionally out of alignment and taking mauri ~ life force from the client. There is a low portal of energy exchange.

Hē energy is often the energy we are surrounded with in the world and that we engage with in many social interactions.

Hē ~ the breath of disempowerment

The disempowerment triangle can also be referred to as the Victim triangle or Karpmann Drama triangle. In essence, this model is a way of interrelating that is at its core dysfunctional and dis-empowering in nature.

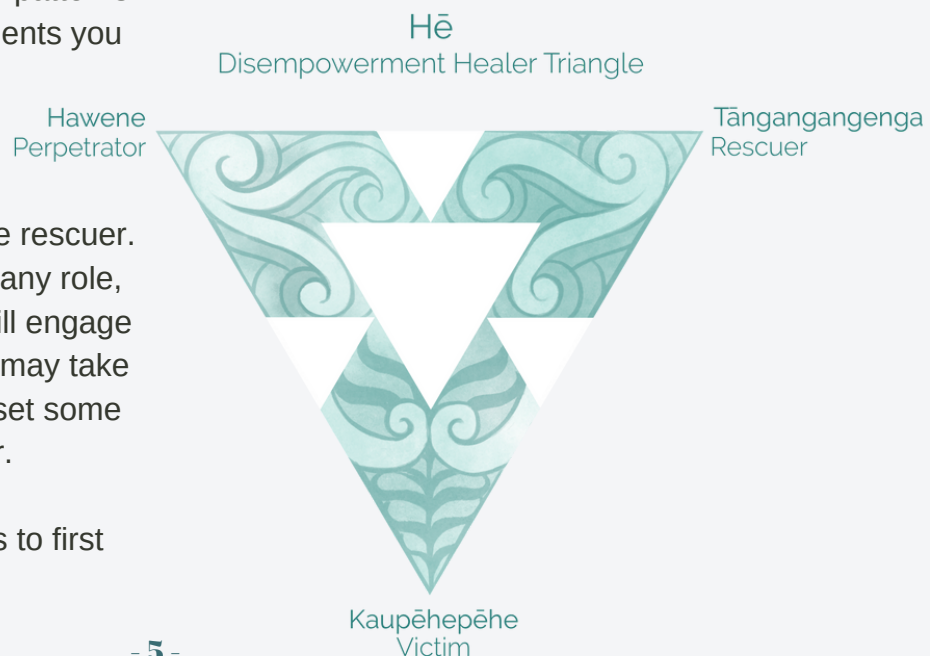
The model below shows three ways that we take or demand energy from others in social groups and family systems.

When we are locked into this triangle, we cycle around the different roles. We live our life on the triangle. We will have a role that we play predominantly, yet to keep the peace, we tend to cycle throughout as the energies and dynamics change between the other individuals.

This triangle is useful to understand some patterns that relate to common dynamics of the clients you call in.

For healers, our prominent role is often the rescuer. However, when we are on the triangle in any role, there is only a matter of time before we will engage in one of the other archetypes. Someone may take our kindness too far, or we may need to set some boundaries and put up our armour.

We can exit these dynamics, yet it helps to first understand them.



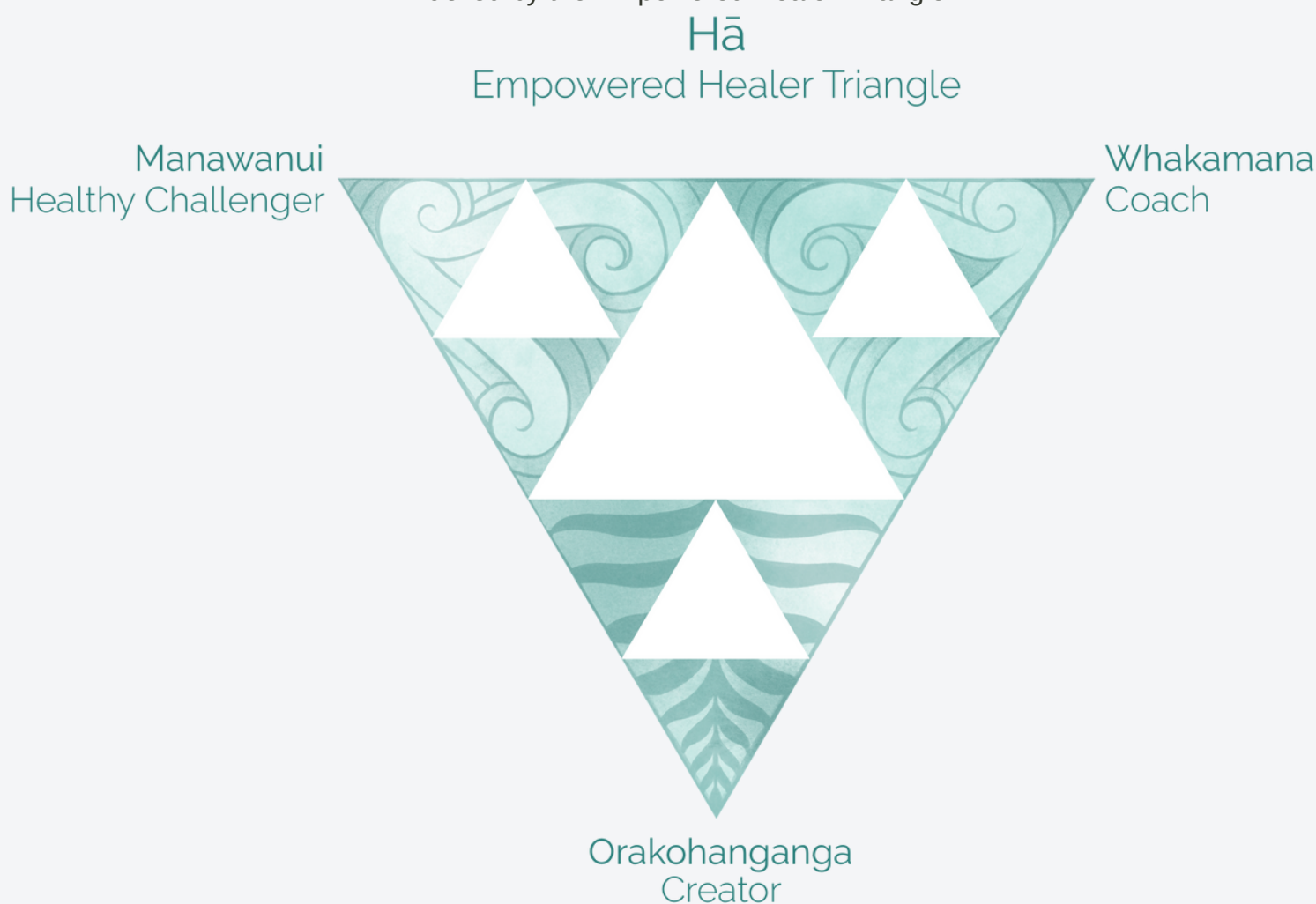
MOVING TOWARDS THE EMPOWERED HEALER TRIANGLE

Hā ~ the breath of empowerment

The good news is that we are not destined to a life seeking energy using our unconscious patterns in the dis-empowerment triangle. As healers, when we are in an empowered space, the sound of our breath is Hā. This sound shows we are willingly gifting power to others (via spirit) and raising them to be sovereign.

The Empowered Healer triangle is akin to the concept of *Whakanoa*~ being neutral or arising. When we are empowered, the energy and learning we show when we are activated does not rely on where others are sitting. We stand in our own energy field and draw on healthy archetypes. Being consciously with and in our emotions takes more work than unconsciously responding (as on the Victim Triangle).

This triangle may also feel more "boring" than the drama associated with being triggered or activated. As our needs are not being met as they usually are, it may take us some time to learn how to feel fuelled by the Empowered Healer Triangle.



EMPOWERED HEALER TRIANGLE

The mantra of empowered relationships are "I'm OK, you're OK...." "I see the best in you...." "I want to support you to shine..." Everyone takes responsibility for their actions, feelings and thoughts, leans on others when needed and supports others when they are able.

Manawanui ~ Healthy Challenger

The healthier expression of the perpetrator is the role of the healthy challenger. This is a warrior-like archetype and can be helpful when someone has energetically dropped into their story.

Traits: Strong, steady, calls forth learning and growth, provokes action, conscious & construction, challenging people when they drop into the Victim triangle if this is a suitable response.

Internal dialogue: *"It would seem you're feeling helpless about this, it's your choice, yet here's another way you may be able to look at that...." "You can do it!"*

Orakohanganga ~ Creator

The healthier expression of the victim is the role of the creator. The varieties of experiences that may previously have turned inwards towards feeling that life is happening "to" you, are transmuted towards creating for others. This is akin to the sense that life is happening "for" you.

Traits: Owns ones power to choose and respond to emotions and feelings, focuses on transforming feelings of pain and hurt.

Internal dialogue: *"I can do this..." "I feel [angry / sad] yet I am sitting with that."*

Whakamana ~ Coach

The healthier expression of the rescuer is the role of the Coach. A coach is someone who wants another person to realise their own innate power. A coach is aware that this is their role and has clear boundaries and is caring, like a rescuer. However, will not go out of their way to solve problems for others from habit, rather they will encourage them to take their own actions when they are able to do so.

Traits: A questioner, totally in someone's corner - without doing much, more of an energetic support and assistance. They are there for others when they are able. Supporting others when they need or asks, yet not keen on manipulation. Facilitates clarity through asking questions.

Internal dialogue: *"You've got this!" , "How will you do it!"*

The relationship between:

Creator & Coach: Co-Creation, co-regulation

Healthy challenger & creator: Learning boundaries, learning healthy relationships

DURING A SESSION

Neutrality

As you have been practicing, you will have noticed that some days it is easier to remain neutral than others.

There are a range of factors that may influence our ability to enter the space of neutrality including:

- What may be happening outside the healing room in your own life
- A client's expectation about how their session may go
- Expectations we have about how a client should respond (e.g. expecting or wanting their tears, releasing or sound)
- Expectations of yourself
- Questions people ask
- The way they release to the energies
- Having male clients if you are a female
- Having female clients if you are a male
- A client being direct
- A client not wanting to speak
- Many other things....



Know that anything that comes up is completely normal. It is also normal that outside thoughts, judgements or feelings will occasionally influence you. The next step is learning how to work with and moving any energy presenting in the healing field, returning to your still point to the best of your ability.

Know that it is completely normal if your clients do influence how you are feeling, yet we can work on changing or transferring this energy towards a healing focus. Every single client will bring their own different perceptions and understandings into these healing practices and each person will respond differently to this work. Questions people ask, the way they release to the energies or ways of being. It is completely normal that these *will* occasionally influence you.

It can take some time to remain neutral, regardless of what is happening in your life, it can take some practice, although like a muscle, the more we use it the more it grows. The more you practice, the more you will begin to sense if you are in alignment. Being neutral does not always mean that you won't be triggered.



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HEALING, BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS



An adaption drawn from the Japanese concept of *Ikigai* model that has been written about by Ken Mogi and Héctor García & Francesc Miralles.

The model above is based on the *Ikigai* framework, a Japanese term meaning, "reason for being". I love this framework as it represents the energy of business in a holistic way that recognises our human needs, our desire for fulfilment, our desire to support and our desire to empower others. This model may help you to be aware when you are in each dimension, or when you are placing more energy into one area over another.

It also acknowledges that you may not be at the phase of wanting to put your energy into creating a healing business. If you have other work, it may not matter to you how much you charge, or the exchange of energy may not need to be monetary for you. This can change depending on time, context and how long you have been practicing.

Or you may prefer to leave your healing as an activity that you LOVE!

There are no hard and fast rules about what makes us want to practice, share or create a healing business.