

Episode #13: Don't Should on Yourself

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Welcome to Allowed. I'm your host, Caneel Joyce.

When you hear the word villain, who comes to mind? The Joker, Al Capone, Darth Vader, Hannibal Lecter or Cruella Deville.

Actually, we are all villains at times. As human beings, sometimes people, systems or circumstances even ourselves, can get in our way. We end up blaming, criticizing, judging and critiquing these things.

In this episode, we will learn to better recognize when we are in Villain mode. When we recognize it, we can realize that we are in drama, a concept that we talked about in episodes [6](#) and [7](#). If you haven't listened to those episodes, they are foundational.

So when we're in Villain mode, we're telling ourselves a story that we should or shouldn't be doing something or they should or shouldn't be doing something that they're doing.

I like to call this 'shoulding' on ourselves.

When we recognize that we're in that mode, we can start to question the stories that we're telling ourselves about what should and shouldn't be. And through this we can become empowered to resolve issues and conflicts with ourselves and others permanently.

Even if you are in Villain mode, you are allowed to be a human who from time to time is going to fall into blame. You're allowed to stop judging yourself and others. You are allowed to shift out of blame and into a powerful way of leading in your own life. Welcome to Allowed.

You are on your own journey of self-discovery and exploration and that's why you were drawn here. I'd like to take a minute to send some appreciation to one of our listeners and I don't know who this is, but I suspect that they know me personally from what they say. I really appreciate you taking the time to write a review because these reviews help me to shape the show and give me a sense of

what you as listeners are wanting to learn and hear and the kinds of topics that you're wanting me to cover.

So these are always very valuable for me in creating the experience that you want.

So green meme wrote, "Brilliant. I think Caneel is a brilliant mind, committed, professional, and an incredible person. She's been a guiding light for me since I met her and I think the work she does in the world is invaluable. I love her work on this podcast series."

Green meme, I don't know who you are, but I am so grateful for you for writing this. It's really sweet. Whoever you are, I suspect that you're someone I've seen in the last couple months and maybe I'll see you again soon. Please reveal your identity and let me give you a nice big hug.

I'm so touched by what you have written and to see that anybody thinks I'm a committed professional. My mind is exploding. Wow. Because I'm barefoot right now.

Thanks for writing and yeah, all of you listeners, please do take the time to be seen as one who grows. Share your story of growth, share what you're learning, share what is moving you, share what's transforming for you and you can share questions, get feedback, offer ideas and support. All of that is happening right now in our [Facebook group](#) for the Allowed podcast. You can find a link at Caneel.com/podcast

Trust me this is a couple minutes that will really deepen your ability to be resilient and to grow. Receiving support and being seen as one who grows is a game changer so it gives you a lot more leverage in the work that you are doing here with me. I hope I see you there.

In previous episodes, we have explored something called the Drama Triangle. Today we're going to be diving even deeper into that concept. It is the most amazing concept I think I've ever learned and I really encourage you to go back and listen to episode [6](#) and [7](#) if you haven't yet.

So wherever you are on your journey, you may find yourself occasionally dropping into self-blame, self-judgment, self-criticism, having stories like I'm not enough or I should do more. We all experience this sometimes and here on my team, of course, we experienced that and we coach each other through it.

Showing up here every week is really helpful in helping you build self-awareness. Now self awareness itself is the beginning of a solution that is going to give you the results that you want to be free, to be joyful, to be fully alive, creative, living on purpose authentically and in a way that serves you and those around you.

I'm really happy that you are back and engaged here with the show and with our community.

Today we're going to focus on one of the modes in the Drama Triangle. One of my favorites called the Villain.

I'm briefly gonna recap what the Drama Triangle is. In short, we go into drama anytime that we're convinced that we are right about something. We call this going below the line.

When we're pretty sure we're right about something we begin to experience suffering. There are three distinct modes of this suffering or this drama that we might play. These are architectural roles that you would recognize from any TV show, any movie, any book that are going to be very familiar because all humans play them all of the time.

Most of us are in drama a lot of the time.

Being drama is okay. It's totally normal and human. It just means that the issues that we are facing, the challenges that we're facing, the struggles, the suffering.

We're not going to really be equipped to resolve those permanently and instead what's going to happen is those issues are going to recycle. What do I mean when I say issues recycle?

Well, have you ever dated the same person three times even though it was always a different person each time.

Have you ever had this same job? Multiple times in a row and you can't figure out how even though it's a different title in a different company and a different boss. The job is playing out in just the same way. We keep having the same bad boss again and again and again. Like no matter what, they never trust us or they always give us too much work or they're never clear enough.

No matter what party we get invited to, we end up always feeling like we were left out of every conversation or why is it always me who ends up staying late to help clean up and no one else ever helps to clean up.

That is issues recycling. That is drama.

We all have patterns like this which tend to indicate that we are in drama in some way around something and we haven't yet woken up to our role and our own power in helping to create those situations. I believe that we tend to seek out the recycling of issues because deep down our essence really does want to learn how we play a part in creating our own suffering.

The first goal is self-awareness. Where am I? Am I above or below the line? Am I in drama or not?

That's why I really wanted to go in deep into each of the three roles in the Drama Triangle, today focusing on Villain.

The other two roles are the Hero role and the Victim role. In short, the Villain is convinced that somebody is to blame somebody or something is to blame. Maybe myself, maybe someone else the hero when we're in hero mode, which honestly might happen one second after we're in Villain mode,

We move through these positions really quickly. In hero mode, we're trying to find temporary relief. Usually by fixing, saving, helping or solving something. We also might do it by avoiding thinking about something kind of drifting from consciousness, distracting ourselves.

The third role and the most prototypical of victimhood is the Victim. The Victim is the one who needs something. If they need help, they say, help me. I can't. I had to. She made me, I need to. I don't have enough and that's the Victim.

Now what's interesting here is not only do we dance around this triangle very, very quickly, but we tend to have our own unique dance that we will do in almost any situation where we are in drama.

Regardless of the content of the drama itself. We may favor playing the Hero role. As soon as something goes wrong, we get really busy trying to fix and save and solve and prevent any further harm.

Some of us are going to be more quick to go into Victim mode like it happened to me. I don't have any power, I don't have any choice.

Some of us are going to go into Villain mode more of the time. Villain mode is that one in us who loves to blame. They love to critique. It's their sport. I want to be clear that all of us have all three of these roles within us, accessible to us. These three roles all need each other.

So I can't be a Victim without a Villain, without something that's bringing me down. And I certainly can't be a hero unless there is a victim to defend.

So all three of these roles need each other. You probably recognize all three in yourself. It's not like you have only one role that you'd like to play. You may favor one more than another, but probably the most important thing is just knowing that you're in that dance on the drama triangle.

If you didn't get to listen to episodes [6](#) and [7](#) on the drama triangle and how to shift out of drama, I recommend actually going back and check those out because there is a lot of important concepts there.

This work is not my own. I pass this along. We're all standing on the shoulders of giants, right? So I originally learned about this work from the [conscious leadership group](#). You can find them at [conscious.is](#) They have some fantastic videos there that also illustrate these concepts.

They base this work on [The Hendricks Institute](#). I know that also, there's a fabulous book by David Emerald called [The Power of Ted](#), which goes really deep into drama and how to shift out of drama. I will link to all of that in the show notes at [caneel.com/podcast](#) so never fear, all of your notes are there right now.

If you're feeling ready, let's dive in and get to know the Villain.

The Villain loves to blame. They will blame themselves. They will blame others. They'll blame the system, the man's society, science, nature. They'll blame the universe. They'll blame God.

They'll blame love because they're trying to diminish our awareness, our awareness of our own creativity by focusing on a single convenient answer to why there's a problem here.

And you know it's really never that simple.

So you will know when you are in the villain position, villain mode, when you feel like your opinion about who's right and wrong is absolutely correct.

You can feel this. I want you to try this exercise out with me and think about someone or something that you are currently blaming or criticizing or judging as wrong as you do this.

I want you to take your hands and hold them together like balls like fists, wrap them around each other, like you're squeezing on a ball of clay and squeeze them together as hard as you possibly can. Like pressing your arms against each other. Like my hands are even shaking right now as I did this.

This is what it feels like to be right now. Let go and open them up. Almost like you're asking a question. They're open to the side of you. Ah, I don't know. This is what it feels like to not be right, to not think that there is a right and a wrong.

This is the feeling of surrender or trust.

So the villain is very convinced that they are right.

They might do this because they're righteous. They have a set of principles and somebody has violated these principles. Often we're coming from a place of very good intention.

When we hop into Villain mode, one of the issues is that when we're in this mode, we only search for facts and stories that support us in being right. This is where a lot of our cognitive biases kick in and we tend to ignore the data and the reality that there are many sides to the story.

There are usually complex causes behind any phenomenon. Villains play out this role by claiming that they know what's right and wrong. Even if it's something as simple as it's wrong to eat three bananas or it's wrong to only exercise for 15 minutes a week.

Are you starting to recognize now how this is something that's part of our lives?

When we do this right and wrong thing and we're really sure that we know, then we begin to stifle any kind of creative discussion, any kind of debate, including with ourselves.

Our thinking becomes simplified and we begin losing the ability to solve the problem because we need to have creativity and debate in order to create solutions, right?

We keep our attention on the problem when we are in villain mode and when we're only focused on the problem those manifestors out there know that we're going to continue to manifest problems.

There is a whole other angle to this. The villains are really motivated by looking for control, looking for sources of control. How can I control things? And one of the ways they like to do this is blaming.

Who can I blame? What can I blame?

They might perceive that blame is coming at them. We can equally be in Villain mode when we are perceiving blame, perceiving judgment, perceiving criticism.

When my husband and I get in little tiffs, we like to say, why are you blaming me? It's a little joke that lightens the mood because we're in that Villain mode, right?

Villains like to seek out enemies to conquer, people or institutions to criticize, and they're in search of the one right way. The righteous path.

When we're in any position on the drama triangle, we're not in presence. We're not going to be in flow. We will not be as connected to love. We're not going to trust the unfolding of whatever happens. We're going to be really feeling a big sense of threat.

This even shows up in our body when we're in this mode of threat, we often villain because it helps give us a sense of control and it helps us drift from presence. It helps us to avoid the reality that we're not liking at that moment.

The favorite ways of the villain from drifting from presence are policing others. My kids like to police each other sometimes. We have a little chalkboard in our kitchen. There are two sides of it. And one side says curiosity points that they get a little gold star there if they're being curious with each other. And the other side says police points. And that's where if they're in Villain mode and they're policing each other and calling each other out and tattling and blaming, they get a police point.

It's not because they're wrong for policing, although it does bug me a lot sometimes, it is for their self-awareness. Policing is one of the big things that we do. We go looking for who's doing what wrong.

They also like to intellectualize and analyze. They create theories or explain away responsibility. Villains love to compare. They might compare themselves to others. They might compare the good and the bad team. They're also very interested in dismissing, ignoring or interrupting anybody who does not share their point of view, because remember, they're out to continue to prove that they are right.

They're very, very righteous. They might even get up on the soapbox and begin lecturing the world about how they are right. How there's a right way and a wrong way.

Finally, you might notice that somebody is in Villain mode, say in a meeting, in a corporate setting because they suddenly seem really, really bored. You know? I do a lot of trainings for different kinds of organizations. I was just at a big entertainment company today doing a training and whenever I noticed somebody in the audience looking bored, which hardly ever happens cause I'm a very entertaining trainer, I know instantly that there's some kind of tuning out they're doing, there's some "shoulding", they're "shoulding" in some way and it may have nothing at all to do with me.

Probably it doesn't, but I'm interested in bringing them back to presence and getting them out of boredom so that they can engage and hopefully unpack the story that they have about what's right and wrong.

Okay, we'll get more into that later.

I want to give you a flavor because there are lots of different ways that you might show up as a villain. You also might recognize others in your life showing up as a villain in different ways.

This is kind of fun and I want to just remind you as I've already said, it is not wrong to be in Villain mode. In fact, the second that we believe that it's wrong to be in Villain mode guess who is being a villain. We are.

If we're interested in shifting out of drama, it's important that we recognize ourselves and others in Villain mode as lovable, whole, resourceful and capable of growth and change.

I want to give you a flavor of some of these personas and I want to credit the Conscious Leadership Group and the Hendricks Institute for defining some of these personas. I'm sharing with you some of the personas that they've developed because they're really fun.

This is not my stuff. I'm just sharing it with you.

One of the personas is the critic. The critic likes to point out how you're doing it wrong. This is the backseat driver. This is the one with road rage saying, "ah, people just don't get it. They don't know how to drive" or, I remember my husband and me, our first fight we ever got into was, we both had really different philosophies about how to cut bell peppers. So, you're doing it wrong.

Second persona is the rebel. The rebel is the one who says, "I don't care." I don't care about anything. What they need in order to keep going is they need authority figures or rules to rebel against.

The cynic persona is the one who's saying it just won't work. So this is the wet blanket in your tech team meetings, who's always pointing out how there's flawed logic here. Something's not going to work. "Oh, that'll never work. We can never implement that." What they need to keep going are overly idealistic people. So they need to perceive that everyone here just has their head in the clouds and is overly idealistic. Now, trust me, in my line of work, I run into this persona a lot.

Another persona here is the debater. The debater claims that their perspective is best and all they need to get triggered into debating mode is anybody who does not agree with them.

If we're being a control freak villain, then we're interested in making sure that everybody stays in line with our plans. Don't deviate from my plan. They say, so this, in an extreme form, could look like fascism. It also looks like really tightly orchestrated organizational routines around how we have to fill out X, Y, Z boxes. Like a lot of bureaucracy is kind of this way. Don't deviate from the plan. When people just go along with our plan, we get to continue being in control freak mode. So this is how when you see a coworker being a control freak and you want them to calm down, you might be

inclined to just go along with it and not name it and not upset them in any way. And that is going to only perpetuate the cycle of them being a control freak.

Now that's your choice to make how you want to play it. That's totally fine, but we can support each other staying in Villain mode by how we respond. That's why this persona thing is really helpful.

Villains also often are in a gossiping persona that likes to talk to others about who's being bad, who's being good.

A bulldozer persona who says my way or the highway and everybody else's a wimp.

You know, one of my favorites is the Puritan, the Puritan who believes there's only one true way to do anything and they get kicked into high gear when they see anybody who's a rebel or a nonbeliever. And that's when you might hear them preaching a lot. For instance, you may recognize a person in your life who believes there's really only one true way to eat right. There's only one true healthy diet out there. And that diet may change over time as new diet trends come and go. It could also be that, you know, there's only one good kind of music only you know, only rap music is good or only classical music is good. So that's the Puritan.

The drill Sergeant loves to find people who are irresponsible and let 'em have it like shape up or ship out. You need to get your act together. You are so irresponsible. They might even just perceive people as being irresponsible because they're in that mode.

There are lots of other personas here, we can be a narcissist who believes they are the most important. Mr. Sarcasm, who says, I'm just trying to be funny. I'm not trying to hurt anybody. And the more people get hurt, the more sarcastic they are.

So these are, these are the different flavors.

And you may recognize yourself in some of these personas. We will have a download, a PDF that flushes out these different personas available on the show notes, and also a quiz where you can identify which of these personas you love to play the most. Think about it.

Now, which of these personas do you recognize in yourself? Are you a bulldozer or are you a gossip control freak, a cynic or rebel? Do you recognize these in others that you love?

Now, why is it so important to learn to recognize when you are in villain mode? It's because villains make drama contagious. The villain needs there to be a victim in their room. They need to see is in the proverbial room. They need to see somebody as a victim who's not powerful or not capable.

Someone also has to be the hero. They have to be the one to fix or save or solve. And fix the problem that the villain is pointing to.

None of this is written in stone. You might have your own flavor of persona when you're in villain, when you're in shooting mode. And it may be that when you're in villain mode, you're mixing up at different elements of these personas or you may have created an entirely different way to criticize and blame.

I used to be in academia and we villain a lot in academia. We blame other researchers for interpreting the data incorrectly, for missing the point, for measuring the wrong thing, for the wrong problem and it's something that you become trained to do.

It's also very possible to be critical in a critical thinking sense from above the line and not in drama when you're motivated by learning, not by being right and you're more curious.

I just want to be clear that you can be critical as a critical thinker, either above or below the line, but when you're associating judgment, like blame or criticism of the entity, of the person, of the organization and there's a different energy to it. When you're in that mode and it's that energy of I'm right and you are wrong and that's a problem.

If you are interested in finding out which personas you like to play the most when you're in Villain mode, please come to caneel.com/podcast and find the show notes for this episode.

That is where you can get access to this quiz and find out which of these personas do you love to play the most. You could also take it on behalf of somebody else in your life and see if you can identify the persona they like to play the most. That can actually really help you to stop perpetuating the cycle unconsciously.

Now we understand the Drama Triangle. We understand what it means to be in Villain mode and we know that we can be in Villain mode whether we're seeing ourselves or others as villains, and we know that there are different personas or flavors of being a villain.

We also know that the villain has favorite ways to drift from presence. And the villain is seeking out control, where to place blame, people to criticize, enemies to conquer and the right way of doing things.

You might be in villain mode right now saying, "Hey Caneel when are you going to tell me what to do about this? I don't want you to just sit here telling me that I'm a villain" and what I'm here to tell you is, the first thing you need to do is become self-aware.

Now that part is not always easy and that's why we do this together.

We have our [Facebook group](#) and, and no one is judging you here, you are a human. The only way that you can actually shift out of villain mode is when you can love the part of you that is in Villain mode.

The part of you that wants to be right is also lovable. That part is scared. That part does not want to let go of control.

Is there anything wrong with that? Can't blame you at all for that.

You are a human being and this is a big part of the human experience. It may not be a pleasant part and often may not be a productive part. It can even be a very destructive part. I know for me, when I'm in villain, it feels like poison in my body and I've spent so long blaming, criticizing myself.

I really don't want to keep doing that anymore. I don't want to blame and criticize others. That just gives me this very toxic feeling. So personally, I'm interested in shifting out of villain mode.

I do that by saying, you know what, the part of me that really wanted to be super skinny when I was in my twenties and was always dieting and always blaming myself, all these things that part of me that wanted, that person that wanted to be loved. That part was scared and that part's okay.

I love that part. So now I can relax a little bit. I'm not making it wrong. I'm not making myself wrong. I'm not making anybody else wrong. I'm just recognizing that it's human. It's Human.

When I do that, now I can begin to actually shift out of villain mode and I can ask myself questions like, what do I want?

I can even look at my villain behavior as a way to discover what I want. Whatever that villain in me is standing for and thinks is really important, that might be a good indication of what I want.

But that villain mode is not empowered to get what I want. Only when I can become creative and challenge can I really get what I want.

Only when you can truly love that part of yourself that is in villain, can you be free of the drama of being in villain?

The second you are blaming yourself for being a villain or you're blaming someone else for being a villain. Congratulations. You are being a villain. Blame is what the villain does.

So let's drop the blame. See that you recognize you're in villain mode.

What do you do next? Well, congratulations. You completed the most important first step.

You found out where you are. Okay, you're in villain.

How did you get here? When we're in villain, there's always a should. There's always a story about how things should be and how things are not right now.

So your job is to discover what is that story that I'm telling myself about how things should be and how things should not be. After you've found out what that story is, then you can begin to let it loosen its grip.

I'm going to talk you through this.

First think about somebody or something that you are blaming. It's causing you some suffering. Could you loosen up a little bit and find what's lovable about them and perhaps even what's lovable about the suffering and what you're learning in that process.

Let's say that I went out to grab a burger and I asked for them to not put any onions on the burger.

I'm about to go to a meeting and I don't want to be stinky. So I say, no onions on the burger, please. Then I get the burger five minutes later and guess what? It has onions.

And not only are they onions, but they're grilled onions. So it's like all over the bun, all over the burger, and there's no way I can avoid having onions in my mouth, but I don't have time to stay for another burger to be made. I've got to eat this and get on the road and I'm starving.

I'm in villain mode big time right now, right? So I'm saying this burger should not have onions that that cook should not have put onions. That person who took my order should have listened better or written my order down differently and my breath should not smell like onions. I should not eat onions.

So there's so many "should's" here.

Now you find an example like that in your life. Just take a moment. It can be anything. Seriously. It can be the most casual thing or something very important.

All right, you've got it.

Now, what are the shifts? What are the stories you're telling yourself about how things should be and shouldn't be? Can you identify some?

It's usually pretty obvious stuff. So now you've found your stories.

Here's the flip. Pick one of those stories. I'm going to pick. This burger should not have onions and find what would be the opposite story to tell myself.

So in this simple example I'm using, it would be this burger should have onions. Think about what would the opposite of your story be? Give you a couple more examples just to make it easier. Other opposites of my story might be my breath should taste like onions or I should eat whatever I want to or that cook shouldn't listen to me.

When I say no onions, I can pick any opposite that's part of this story. You do the same.

Now ask yourself, would I be willing to see how the opposite of my story is at least as true as my story itself.

For example, my burger should have onions on it. Can I see all that's at least as true as my initial story that it shouldn't?

Okay, well let me see.

Why should it have onions? It should have onions because onions are delicious. Onions are very good for you. Adding more flavor to my burger is going to help me be more satiated and stay full longer. And that's going to be better for my health and it will actually save me time this evening because I won't have time to stop for dinner before I go to the airport.

I can also see how the cook should put onions on the burger because he should do things as efficiently as possible and he should get our food out quickly. And I can see how getting a fresh burger made in five minutes is actually a great thing. I was lucky that I got to do that.

So I know this is like a very mundane example. It can be much more challenging to use an example where there's a lot of heat in it where we're really deeply angry and very hurt and very scared.

So such as I never feel this way about my own mother, but I know a lot of people who do.

My mother shouldn't criticize me. Like, would I be willing to see that my mother should criticize me? How could that be just as true? Well, maybe it's my mother knows what I'm capable of or my mother is trying to teach me how to draw boundaries and not spend so much time with her or my mother should be criticizing me because she wants me to learn to be better or my mother should be criticizing me because I keep asking her to in some way. I keep showing her that I'm not satisfied with a certain area of my life.

Now I realize the sensitivity of this. This is powerful stuff. That's why it's called transformational coaching is because we are really, if you are willing, interested in dismantling the stories that are keeping you in drama, that are keeping you in suffering.

If this is not something you have an appetite for, there's absolutely nothing wrong with that. Absolutely nothing wrong, but I invite you to test this out on an example where you don't have a lot of emotional heat just to see if it can loosen you up a little bit and you can get a taste of what it might be.

So do your best not to be in villain mode. Just about this particular episode because this is really powerful.

I'm very aware of how sensitive it is and I've seen the results of how this transforms lives and relationships and people's wellbeing and health and wellness and certainly for me, I don't walk around with a lot of "should's" anymore and my nervous system is better for it.

My sleep is better for it, my stomach is better for it, my back, my marriage, my relationship with my kids, my job, everything in my life is transformed because I stopped "should-ing", so it's big stuff.

Please try and go for it. The purpose of looking at how the opposite of your story is, at least as true as your current story, is to help you to recognize that it's just a story. It's not truth. It's not right. It's not a fact, it's an interpretation.

It's one story, it has some validity to it, but so do a lot of other stories and this helps to loosen the grip of that story on you so that the story is no longer controlling you.

Another thing it helps you do is it helps you to recognize that you are the creator of the story. Who's the one who wrote the story? You did. Or you're the one that bought into the story.

Either way, you are the director of your own perception around this, which means that you can choose alternate perspectives, ones that serve you better, ones that are more empowering and they help you realize where you have any ability to control anything at all because the villain really tries to control a lot of stuff that's out of the villain's control.

That keeps them very stressed and busy and agitated and angry. And of course they're always going to feel because they're controlling things that are out of their own control. So when we can loosen the grip of these stories, seeing how the opposite is true, we can get re-grounded in the facts, not the stories.

When we're grounded in facts, we can begin to make choices better, or we're creating solutions on our own in the real world.

It's not easy to let go of the idea that there's a right way and a wrong way to do something. And I encourage you to find as many opportunities as you can to let that go.

I hope this exercise was helpful and it's something that you can learn to do pretty quickly. If this is interesting to you, share this episode with a trusted friend, somebody that you might have an opportunity to see on a semi-regular basis or even check-in with at work and tell them about this method.

See if you guys could be practice partners for each other and Hey, I've got this story running. I'm in a lot of blame right now. I'm totally in villain mode. I can't even think of an opposite of this story. It just seems so right.

Like Becky definitely should have refilled the paper in the printer and I am super mad. I need to cool myself down because I can't stop thinking about this printer paper thing and it's getting in my way. Okay. Let's see how the opposite of that story is just as true. Now you've got your thought partner.

You can also do this in our Facebook group. We want to hear these stories. All of us tell, no shame at all. Let 'er rip.

We want to become aware of where we are. That's the most important thing.

Now, let's say that you are not in villain mode. You're feeling very present. You are feeling quite above the line, creative, open to learning, and somebody enters your space who clearly is, focused on blame and they seem to be in villain mode to you. What can you do about it?

First thing is to recognize that's their drama, not my drama. Second thing, that's not in my control, I can't control them. I can't control their drama.

Notice if you start thinking that you're right, that they shouldn't be in villain mode. Look out because you can easily get sucked into drama when you're in the presence of another person who is in drama.

Leaders this is why it's so important for you to know where you are because you can choose your words and your actions and where you show up and much more skillfully when you can be aware of when you're in drama and not, it's contagious. So watch out.

All right, so we've got this coworker, they're in drama. Most important thing here is just not to get triggered yourself. If they seem at all open to it and you feel that you can stay present with them, you may be able to begin grounding them in facts.

So I wouldn't go straight for dismantling their story. That's probably not going to be friendly to that person. It probably will shut them down because in that mode they're very convinced that they're right. And unless you have kind of a coaching agreement with them and you're in a personal development kind of a relationship with them, you may not have a container that can support that dramatic of a call out.

So I would instead just say, let's look at the facts here. Start helping them to distinguish between the facts and the stories. And again, this is if you want to, it's not like you have to do this, but a lot of managers will ask me, what can I do when my team is in drama?

So that's one thing. Another thing you can begin doing is trying to infect them with curiosity, creative curiosity. And one of my favorite tools for doing this is it's called open honest questions.

So an open honest question is a question where you are genuinely, authentically curious about something about this person and you really don't know what the answer to this question might be.

You don't even have a preference for what the answer might be. So it's not a question that's intending to send a message or to teach something. It's a question that is intended to open a conversation so that you can learn about the person. Lastly, these are open-ended questions so people can take them to the answer anywhere they want to. It's not just a yes, no black, white kind of an answer.

You ask a person in villain mode some open, honest questions. If you're really genuinely feeling that curiosity, they are going to begin to get curious themselves often. Now you can't control them, of course, but I found that this is pretty effective.

And then lastly, let them go through their process of none of this is working. It's okay for them to be in drama. You may not like it and it may be time for you to draw some limits or set some boundaries or create new agreements or leave that space or just practice self-regulating and not getting triggered yourself.

Usually, that's the biggest piece of work to be done here. Most important thing is don't try to control what's out of your control.

I've talked a lot about some things that you can do to shift out of villain mode, but let's just say that you're not willing to shift. You're not willing to see how the opposite of your story is at least is true. You're not willing to slow down and pause and get grounded in the facts and the realities.

You really are convinced that there is a person out there to blame.

There may be a huge variety of reasons why you're not willing to shift. You might be in a scarcity mindset. If I'm not willing to shift, it might be because I'm believing that there has to be a winner and a loser in everything or I might just not be willing to feel all of my feelings around this issue.

It might be much easier to blame and to focus on how someone else is wrong than to feel the sadness of, Hey, I helped create this or the sadness of I have no control over this. I might also be unwilling to let other people have their own feelings.

A few episodes ago I talked about when my son had colic and was crying all of the time and how hard it is for me to witness my kids in their suffering.

I feel like I've gotten a lot better at this, but it can be hard to let other people have their own feelings in particular when it feels like those feelings are coming at you. This can be really triggering when it feels like someone is blaming or judging you.

I know for me, this is definitely been one of the hardest patterns of my own to unwind and I'm very sensitive to that, and I have to do a lot of self-regulation and breathing and grounding to sit there when someone's actively blaming or criticizing me, but it's doable.

Finally, a little bit sometimes.

Lastly, I might be unwilling to take responsibility for the current state of things. So if I'm in villain mode, I might not want to shift because that would mean I need to see how I am partly responsible. I'm responsible for my part of things.

I'm responsible for the parts that I could control, the choices that I made, the actions that I took, the words that I said, the things I didn't do. If I'm not willing to take responsibility for those things, I'm not going to shift out of villain mode. I might hop over into a different form of drama. I might go into hero, I might go into victim, but I'm going to be still stuck in drama.

I want to give you a real-world example of moving from being in villain mode to seeing how I have personal responsibility in a situation I didn't like.

Imagine this. So in my house we have this little breakfast nook and I've covered the walls of this breakfast nook with my daughter's paintings and my son's drawings. And so it's just art like up and down the walls. And there's a really old table in the middle, which you know, gets spilled on all the time. That's where we eat breakfast and that's where we do our artwork.

Let's say that I'm painting with my daughter one night as I like to do. And then if I'm really tired and she gets kind of cranky and so I take her straight upstairs and we don't put the paints away together.

I leave the paints out on the coffee table, then I get up there and she's been kind of cranky still and she's crying and I'm just feeling so beat and tired. It's a long week and I decide I'm just gonna leave it, and clean it later.

Later the next morning, I get up and I go downstairs. My son and my daughter have already woken up and they went downstairs together and I see that she has been playing with the paints and guess what?

She's three years old and like what all three-year-olds do is they see what's there and if they like it, they start getting curious and they start touching it and now there's paint all over the table and all over the walls and there's even some in her hair.

I know that's going to be a big pain because it's going to get sticky and then she's going to cry while I brush her hair and I don't like that.

So I am just overwhelmed by this because I have a busy morning - scarcity mindset. Right. And I blame her. So I'm being in villain mode. I have a big story.

She should not have put paint all over the table and the walls. That's my "should". I probably also have underneath that a story, I should have taught her to do something different than this. I'm blaming myself too.

Now if I want to take responsibility, I'm going to look at what did I have control over or what did I have in my control that I could have done differently so I can take responsibility for those parts, right?

I can't control her, but I can control me. So I had a part to play. I'm going to look back through the situation. So one thing I did is I decided that it was more important to bring her up to bed right away than to put away the paints away, and if I'm really honest with myself, I recognize I didn't want to put the paints away and I thought I could just put it off and it would all be fine.

So I made that choice. I also realize that I never really taught her that if mommy's not there, we don't touch the paints. I also was ignoring the fact that a three-year-old is always going to touch, almost always going to touch what they see and they're going to do something with it.

If I really wanted the walls to be clean in the morning and I wanted to be personally responsible for that, I would've just gone back downstairs and put the paints away at night.

I've got all these blaming projections I have about her, right? I'm saying, Oh, she's messy now. Question, is it her who's messy? What's the opposite of that story? I'm messy. How is that at least is true. Well, that's pretty easy to see. I'm the one that left the paints out. I'm the one that didn't clean them up. I'm the one that lets them spill on the table all of the time.

And maybe it doesn't always teach them to clean up right away. So who is messy? Is it her or is it me? Well, it's me. It's both of us. Well, now guess what?

Here's the big transformative move. Could I love the messy part of myself and could I love the messy part of her? Does this make sense?

So to move out of villain mode, I'm going to find what's there to love. This is related to shadow, which is a concept that's come up in other episodes. If you go back to [episode 2](#), you can learn a lot about that when I had Luke Entrup as a guest on the show, it's a great episode.

So there are unloved parts of myself and when I see those in others, I get triggered into drama and I began to point the finger and blame almost.

Anytime I'm blaming someone else for something, it's probably something I think about myself on the subconscious level. Does that make sense?

If I want to point a finger over there, I'm probably also pointing it back at me. What's cool about this approach is they're usually lots of different opposites to any given story.

So if my first story is she shouldn't have made a mess, one opposite might be, she should have made a mess. Another one might be, everything should be a mess. And another one might be, I shouldn't have made the mess or, or it could be, I should have made the mess. I should have been the one to make a mess. Or you know, she should be rewarded for making a mess. All of these are potential opposites and it's really fun to see how many you can find.

The more you can find different opposites of your story, the more freedom and space you can give yourself. The more you can move above the line.

What I want everyone on this show to remember from this example about my daughter painting, is it's a lovely thing to be grateful for having a child in your home who likes to touch paint. I just want to appreciate you Arrow for that.

So what I want everyone here to remember is that there's always a wake-up call available when you find yourself in villain mode. There's always a part of yourself that you don't yet love or a part of humanity that you don't yet love or a part of an institution that you don't like yet.

Love the who's to say that any of those parts are wrong. You might indeed have a preference for things to be a different way, but it doesn't mean that you're right about it.

When you can let go of the idea that there's a right and a wrong, the world becomes a much freer, beautiful, more open space where we can all be personally accountable for ourselves.

I would love to hear examples of when you found yourself in villain. And what I thought would be really fun is those of you out there who are dramatic types or who are daredevils, if you'd be willing to record a short little video clip telling us the story of when you were in drama and then posting it on our [Facebook group](#).

This is just fun stuff and it's hilarious, right? It's hilarious how often we are so convinced that we are right and how dramatic we make everything and when we can laugh we can shift altogether.

So I would love to hear those stories. Video is for bonus points.

Also, I want you to remember to come over to caneel.com/podcast where you can find a quiz to help you identify which villain personas you have been playing lately. Which ones are your favorites?

Again you can also fill this out pretending that you are another person in your life to identify which villain personas they tend to play.

This can give you a lot of leverage in helping to shift conversations.

Again, you can't control them. You can control you and there's a lot under your control that you may not be aware of right now.

Thank you, fearless listeners and fellow villains, sometimes.

Thank you for being here today and for creating this space for yourself to learn and to stretch and to grow in your self-awareness, power and presence.

I hope that you will join us in our podcast Facebook group where you can begin to connect with the community that's here in Allowed. Thank you so much for being here. We'll see you next week.