



The path of the Warrior

“From Victim to Victorious”

How many poor choices do we make when we feel disempowered? How easy is it to blame and finger-point others when we are feeling trapped and without recourse? At certain moments in our life, especially when facing a crisis or a challenge that feels overwhelming, we may unconsciously play the victim. The victim waits for anyone who does not want to face reality as they perceive themselves as tiny and incompetent to deal with it. They are convinced that any effort will lead them to failure and terrible consequences, longing and looking for someone else to take the load from them and for them to become accountable for what is our duty.

Learning to frustrate the victim archetype and move it to travel the road of empowerment is a path where we need to call upon our courage and stamina to challenge ourselves to act on whatever is in our hands.

When our team plays victim, it is because this survival strategy has frequently proven effective; thus, it becomes part of the culture (the way we do things here). Our direct reports have often seen us playing victim very effectively, and they are more than willing to follow our lead.

The path of the Warrior is a proposal to facilitate a process to help those under the spell of their victim archetype to act on the light side of the Warrior archetype, empowering themselves and moving towards

victory. Following are some techniques I frequently use that have proven outstanding results. You may want to use them with your workforce or even better with yourself, especially when the victim archetype has stolen your day:

- **Focus on what is in your hands:** List all that is not in your hands to step out of a given situation or solve a problem, and where you are tight to someone else's power to move, and read it once; now, list all that is in your hands and only in yours, and that you could start doing right now. Put your name as responsible on each action plan with due dates for completion and do it.
- **Always take 50% of the problem and you will own 50% of the solution too:** Allow yourself to put the blame on something or someone external for that you are being pointed as accountable and that you feel it is unfair. Please write it down. Now, if you were to be co-responsible for 50% of what is going on, not more, nor less, what would that 50% would be? Most of the time, we co-create our challenges, and if we recognize this truth, we may choose to eliminate our 50%. Let us be part of the solution and stop being part of the problem.
- **Search for inspiration and act:** Look for other people who have gone through a similar situation or challenge and ask them what they did to overcome their obstacles. What can you reapply from their experience to face your problems? How can you use them as a source of inspiration and wisdom?
- **Explore your catastrophic fantasy:** Identify all the worst things that might happen to you when moving on and facing the challenge of the situation that surpasses your competencies. If everything goes wrong, and it is not likely that it will, list all the potential next steps you could still take to keep yourself moving forward. There are always options ahead for those who dare.
- **Support Network:** Get a support network, be in touch with them to share your experiences, and ask for support and motivation when things get complicated. Remember that isolation during a crisis leads to desolation.

The best way to apply all these techniques is through a coaching process. As a reference, *there is a complete and detailed step-by-step*

example of a Victim to Victorious coaching process described in chapters three and four of my book “Exponential Engagement” (How to ignite passion and productivity in the workplace with the wisdom of archetypes).

Business Case:

Let’s move on and talk about how to face a team or an entire organization that usually plays the victim in how they work. The path of the Warrior can also be used on a bigger scale.

Glaxo Smith Kline Panama production site recognized that a significant amount of their workforce played victim every time they were confronted for not meeting their targets or fulfilling their commitments. Managers did not know how to effectively approach their teams when they exhibited victim behaviors such as blaming and finger-pointing, feeling helpless, freezing, and becoming expert manipulators to pass the ball to someone else. They decided that as leaders, they needed to do something about it.

The first thing they agreed on was to map the current culture and how they wanted it to look.

What was happening in the GSK site is that every time a worker or a team played victim, the leadership team rescued them and solved their problems, thus unconsciously reinforcing the victim’s behaviors. Not only do cruel tyrants (the shadow of the King archetype) promote victimhood, but heroes and rescuers who never allow others to deal with chaos and crisis create total dependency on their presence; they end up promoting the same negative effect.

Leadership team members agreed they needed to stop rescuing and overprotecting their workforce. They decided to systemically follow the coaching process of the warrior’s path every time a worker or a team exhibited a victim’s behavior. They wanted to provoke a positive change: empowering them to move from victim to victorious.

Following is a table that summarizes their plan:

Current Behavior	Coaching Questions & Insights	Desired Behavior
<p>BLAMING AND FINGER POINTING:</p> <p>The team or the individual consistently answers when confronted with an unsatisfactory result:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "I did what I understood is my part, so now it's their problem." ▪ "The fault is on someone else (you name it), but not me." ▪ "This could work; if only they could change" <p>They genuinely believe they are not part of the problem.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What did you do or avoid doing that caused this to happen? ▪ How are you somehow accountable for the outcome? What's your part (50%)? 	<p>ACCOUNTABLE:</p> <p>The team or the individual consistently answers when confronted with an unsatisfactory result:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "I realize that I contributed to this outcome by..." ▪ "What I missed to do was..." ▪ "My part in all this was..." <p>They acknowledge they are part of the problem.</p>
<p>DISEMPOWERED:</p> <p>The team or the individual consistently answers to any challenge they are facing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "There is nothing we can do; we are trapped in a dead end." ▪ "It is the way it always has been, and there is no other way." ▪ "We have to live with it." ▪ "Whatever I can do will not have a significant impact." <p>They always underestimate the positive impact they can</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When facing the challenge, what is in your hands that does not depend on anyone else that you could do to be successful? ▪ You already told me all you can't do (the Nos) to face the challenge; now tell me all you could try doing (The Yeses). 	<p>EMPOWERED:</p> <p>The team or the individual consistently answers to any challenge they are facing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "What depends on me (it is in my hands), and I can move forward with it now is..." ▪ "Something we can try in the face of this challenge is..." ▪ "Let us search for others' experience when facing this challenge and see what we can reapply." <p>They always look for options to increase their influence in achieving the</p>

have on the outcome.		goal.
IMMOBILIZE (FREEZE): The team or the individual consistently becomes immobile and waits for someone else to do something about an issue or opportunity in front of their nose. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "It was never clear to me that..." ▪ "It is not my role, responsibility, priority, etc." ▪ "I'll just make things worse, so I let someone else take on this one." ▪ "This decision must be escalated." They always excuse themselves from acting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What would you do differently if this were your company? ▪ What is the cost of doing nothing and waiting for someone else to act? Would you be willing to pay it from your salary? 	TAKING THE INITIATIVE: The team or the individual consistently acts with initiative in the face of a problem or situation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "I looked for information and past experiences related to..." ▪ "I involved those that I think could help solve the problem..." ▪ "I've already taken a calculated risk, and my learning is..." They always move proactively towards solving all sorts of problems.
MANIPULATIVE: The team or the individual consistently uses drama and exaggeration to get others to be accountable for them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "I can't deal with him, her, or them anymore. He, she, or they don't like me, please..." ▪ "We've tried so hard, but it is just beyond our capabilities, we need more... (their requests never end)", ▪ "They make me feel so frustrated that I can't give it another 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What were the facts? Do you have hard data backing up your perception? ▪ Beyond your emotion (anger, sadness, frustration), what do you need to do to achieve it? 	ASSERTIVE: They consistently use facts, data, and their emotional intelligence to get what they need to achieve results: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "The facts around this situation were a, b, c,..." ▪ "I touched frustration, anger, or sadness when you..." ▪ "What we need based on continuous observations is..." They are the first to be

try..."		accountable, and they act with emotional intelligence.
They always look for others to do the things they are accountable for.		

The leadership team orchestrates a behavioral observation system (BOS) to systematically track victim behaviors, especially during their meetings (Tier 2 and Tier 3). They recorded how often they found these survival behaviors and the actions taken to transform them into opportunities as they provided coaching and empowerment.

They noticed that some people played victim occasionally when they felt overwhelmed by a situation or challenge and named them *victim by threat*. *Victims by threat* responded well to the powerful questions and the coaching process stated above and were the easiest ones to empower and encourage towards taking the initiative and being accountable (the expected behaviors); however, some people constantly were playing victims as it was part of the way they usually work and are named *recurrent victims*. With *recurrent victims*, the team had to continually confront them in as many situations as possible, making them aware of their recurrent survival strategy and its negative consequences; sometimes, they even escalated the case to human resources when needed.

The GSK leadership team was able to reduce by 80% the negative behaviors caused for people frequently playing the victim on the site and spot those situations that were perceived as a threat, creating anxiety and inducing people to play the victim as they felt overwhelmed.

Today, they keep proactively empowering people in those situations where they feel they can't deal with what is going on, "neutralizing" victims when they spot them out, and role modeling how to be accountable and take the initiative. They also provide positive feedback to reinforce the desired behaviors when others do the same. Culture has positively shifted and is being sustained, and results are improving. There is a minimum (less than 3%) of expired plans on the control boards at the Tiers meetings, and they got a 10% increase in OOE

(Overall Equipment Effectiveness). The warrior's path is one of the most precious tools they now have for their managerial role as people developers.

Do you want to know how to implement the warrior path with yourself, your team, or your organization? Let's talk.

Warm regards

Hector Cerbón