Triangles

A triangle is a relationship involving three people. At the most basic level, relationships involve only two people; however, relationships naturally gravitate toward triangles. The reason for this is stability: with two people it is much more difficult to withstand anxiety, stress, and conflict. Picture a teepee with two poles versus a teepee with three.

The function of a triangle is to reduce stress and anxiety. And to a degree, anxiety is reduced; but there are costs to this: *nothing gets resolved.* It’s really just a way to avoid the actual source of conflict. In this way, triangles are sort of like games. In a triangle, two people are always on the “inside” and one is on “the outside.” This is the fundamental rule of Monkey in the Middle.

Triangles are present in nearly all our social interaction, including family, work, and friends. They’re not always unhealthy, but they can be problematic or even unhealthy and destructive. In the end, it’s most important to recognize when a triangle has formed, who’s the “monkey in the middle,” and how it’s happened. Only then can the real problem be addressed.

For more information on Triangles and other related concepts see:

https://www.thebowencenter.org/pages/concepttri.html