

Matt Kramer - Predatory Leadership Biography

Matt Kramer is an author, mediator, and photographer. His career includes over 25 years as a producer in the music industry and 25 years as a professional mediator. As a mediator, he helps people develop their own solutions to resolve conflict.

His first book, "Conversations Before A Marriage", helps people share and understand the unexamined territory in their relationship in order to be more successful as they move forward in their marriages or partnerships.

Matt's second book, co-written with Stuart Yahm, (former V.P. of Capitol Records) "And The Band Broke Up", is a tool to help artists of any discipline use conflict to improve, not destroy, their professional and private relationships. His most recent book, "Understanding Predatory Leadership: The First Step Toward a World Free of War, Corruption and Poverty" reveals hidden forces that are responsible for the perpetuation of war, corruption, human trafficking and other inhumane practices that continue to plague humanity.

I was born in San Diego, California in 1949. My parents were both veterans who served in World War II. My father was a radio engineer in the navy; my mother traveled with General Douglas MacArthur during his campaign in the Pacific theatre.

My childhood was fairly conventional. Looking back, I now understand that my mother did not know how to display love; she fulfilled her duty as a mother but I never experienced any expression of love from her. This may have contributed to my introspective nature and the empathy I feel toward others.

Fifty-four years ago, at the age of 14, I asked myself a question that changed the course of my life. I had graduated myself from the comic pages to the front page of the Los Angeles Times. The first story I read was about the plight of Palestinian refugees from the 1947 war with Israel. Thousands of those refugees were never allowed to assimilate into Israeli society; they were kept in camps in which many were unemployed and unable to improve their lives. I didn't learn until years later that the PLO, the resistance element among the Palestinians, to allow Palestinians to take advantage of

offers from the Israelis to receive their own homes. Presumably this would make it easier to incite the Palestinians to revolt against Israeli domination over their territories.

The question I asked that day was, “Don’t the leaders know that these limitations will eventually cause big problems?” I didn’t know what the problems would be but even in my fourteen year old mind, I could see that eventually new conflicts would emerge. I began to keep an unofficial tally of leaders whose actions and agendas resulted in harm to others and often to their own people.

In my mid-forties, I started a new career as a professional mediator. The majority of my cases were divorce cases; sometimes it was revealed in the mediation that domestic violence had occurred during the marriage. I asked a new question: given that there had been a wedding day in which these two people were presumably in love with each other, what happened that led to physical or emotional violence occurring in the marriage? Now, in addition to bad leadership, I had a new ongoing question to research. For the next fifteen years I researched both sets of questions simultaneously. Then, around 2001, another news story helped me make a breakthrough in my research.

I learned something very important as I studied domestic violence: in the mind of the abuser, *he is the only victim*. He shows this by saying to his wife, “You made me hurt you. It is your fault.” By the time the relationship gets to this stage, the wife is so brainwashed that she believes him; she believes she did not meet expectations and deserved to get hurt.

In 2001 Slobodan Milosevic was on trial in the Hague for war crimes. The story reported that, as an attorney, Milosevic acted as his own defense counsel. When a witness was on the stand, Milosevic was a bully, accusing the witnesses of lying and employing other tactics to intimidate them. In other words, he was the abuser. But when he was on the stand being questioned by the prosecutor, he changed his behavior. He said things like, “It wasn’t my fault. I was only following orders. I didn’t have a choice.” In other words, he was saying, *“I was the victim.”*

A light went on in my brain: The abuse of world leaders when they send their soldiers into war equates to the abuse in domestic violence when the husband beats the wife. The neurological mechanisms are exactly the same in both cases. This also applies in the corporate and industrial arenas when top managers initiate policies that create pollution in the community or create economic conditions that increase unemployment and degrade the quality of life for people who lack many resources for supporting their families. In all cases, they see themselves as victims. If they do not reduce costs; if they do not keep payroll low, they will suffer consequences. Therefore, as victims in their own minds, they rationalize or ignore the harm they cause to others.

I have given a name to this condition in which people feel justified causing harm to others. The condition is called Predatory Leadership, a somewhat complex formula that explains how, for thousands of years, those who are the least suited for collaborative and compassionate leadership tend to prevail in the competition for positions of power and control. As a consequence, many people take humanity's greatest problems for granted and presume they are unsolvable. I know that with education and commitment, we can eliminate war, poverty, famine, corruption and other evils from the human experience. It is my hope that my hypotheses will provide information and insights that will enable people to make better choices about whom they follow, promote, elect and marry. The eventual result will be a more humane economy and society in which no child will be denied the opportunity to achieve her or his greatest potential. You can learn more at <http://impada.org>

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