Choosing Empathy

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Choosing Empathy

"Empathy."

You keep using that word.
I do not think it means what you think it means.

–Inigo Montoya,
The Princess Bride

EMPATHY

SHARING

experience sharing
emotional empathy
personal distress

THINKING ABOUT

mentalizing
cognitive empathy
theory of mind

CARING ABOUT

empathic concern
motivational empathy
compassion

Assumptions for Choosing Empathy in Equity Conversations:

- Assumes the relationship is important
- Assumes a shared, common goal
- Assumes power dynamics mediate this tool
- Assumes it is *not* a replacement for accountability
- Assumes there can be downsides to using empathy

Understanding Intent & Impact

Believe Intent & Name Impact

"It's not about intent. It's about impact."

- Is it possible to create space for multiple truths?

- Can we speak our truth *and* seek understanding of truths that differ from mine? (with awareness of power dynamics)

- Do our perceptions of intent influence our perceptions of impact?

- If it's not about intent, how do we balance risk & safety in conversations?

- If you have the mental, emotional energy, can it be helpful to clarify?
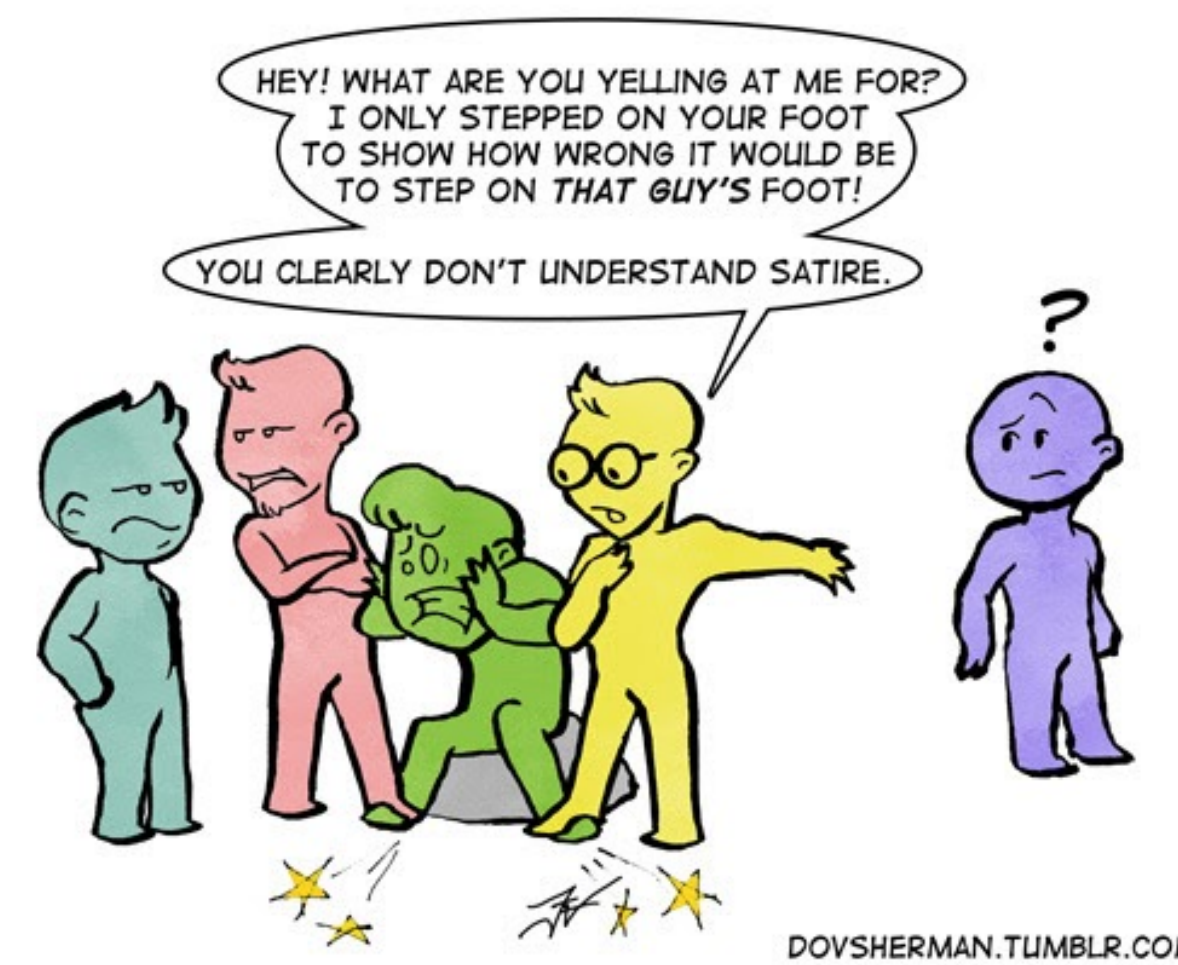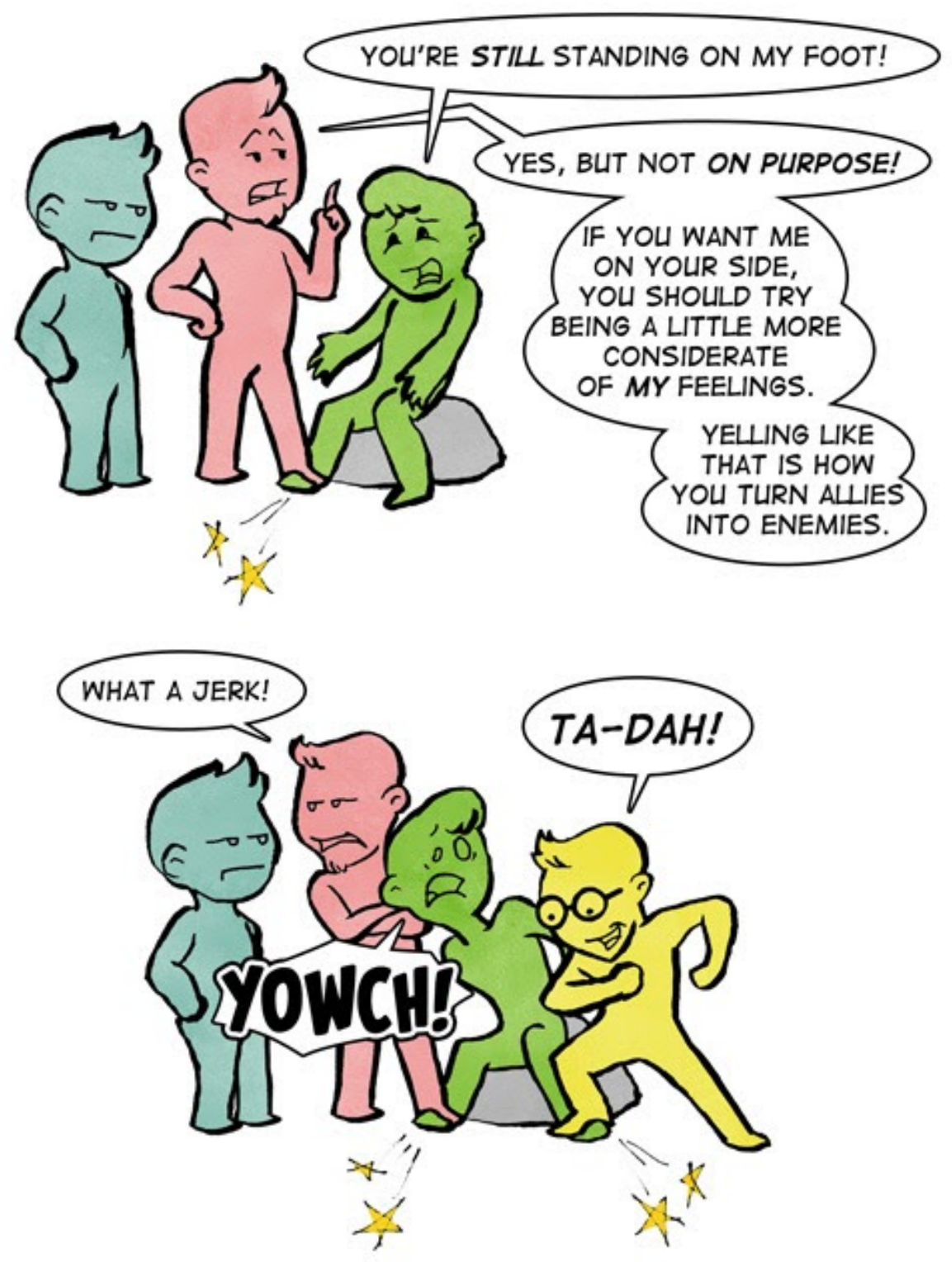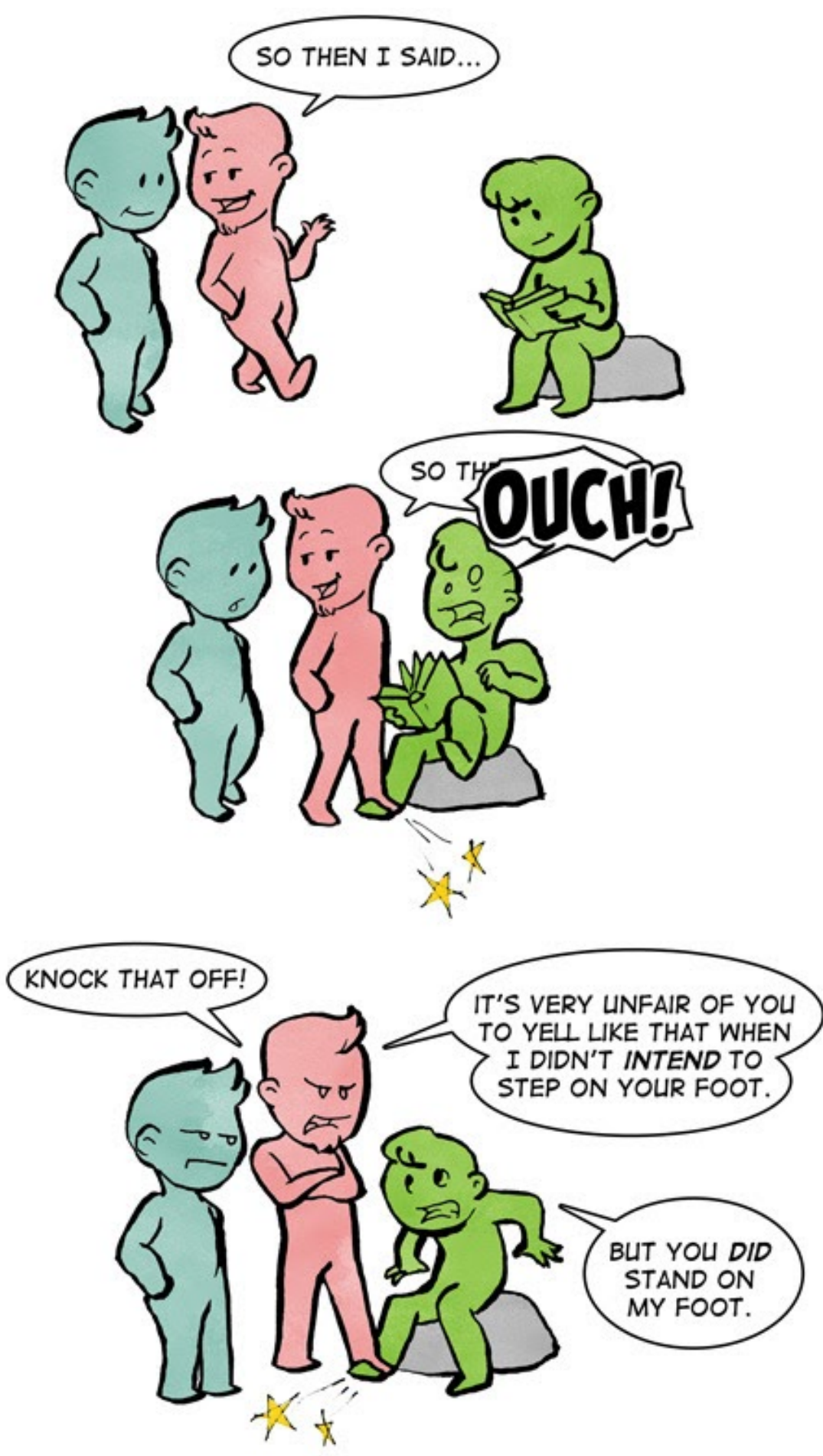
DYLAN
MARRON

EMPATHY

Choosing Empathy for *Intent*:

- "Hold on. I need to process what you just said…"
- "Help me understand your thinking behind that."
- "Can you tell me what you mean by that?"
- "What's underneath your comment/question?"
- "What was your intended outcome with that?"
- "Let's slow down the conversation and talk about what just happened."

Choosing Empathy for *Impact*:

- "Before we go any further, I'd like to ask how the group was impacted by what you had to say…"
- "How were you impacted? What came up for you?"
- "What angered you about what was just said?"
- "What hurt about that comment/statement?"
- "What is familiar about what just happened?"
- "What would it take to make you feel safe in this space?"

Bringing the Gym to Law School

1. A leadership & cultural competency

2. Responsibility to BE and to CREATE empathic environments

3. Intellectual humility (scientific mindset)

4. Decrease unconscious bias

5. Fuel commitment to justice

LEADING WITH EMPATHY.

I AGREE TO PRACTICE EMPATHY, SCREW IT UP, CIRCLE BACK, CLEAN IT UP AND TRY AGAIN.