

Using Psychology to Create Memorable Characters

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What is Psychology and why is it important to writers?

According to the APA, Psychology is the study of the human mind and behaviors. The study of Psychology is important to fiction writers because, as writers, we are in charge of creating the thoughts, emotions and behaviors of our characters.

Creating your Character's Personality

- Getting to the heart of your character's personality is important for writers because your character's personality will determine how your character reacts to the various situations he/she/they encounter throughout your novel.
- Personality is formed through lived experiences. You must create that lived experience for your character.
 - Nature vs. Nurture: personality is a combination of a person's innate instincts and their environment. (As writers we have the most control over our character's environment).
- Backstory. A character is made up of everything that has happened to them up until page one of your story. As a writer, having a firm understanding of your character's backstory will help you to form your character's personality.
 - Create backstory through free writing
 - Use character interviews to help form your character's personality.

Personality Deep Dive (Archetypes, Keirsej & MBTI)

Archetypes

In *The Complete Writer's Guide to Heroes & Heroines*, Cowden, LaFever and Vider list the sixteen master archetypes where most characters will fit when writing fiction.

HERO ARCHETYPES	HEROINE ARCHETYPES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The CHIEF• The BAD BOY• The BEST FRIEND• The CHARMER• The LOST SOUL• The PROFESSOR• The SWASHBUCKLER• The WARRIOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The BOSS• The SEDUCTRESS• The SPUNKY KID• The FREE SPIRIT• The WAIF• The LIBRARIAN• The CRUSADER• The NURTURER

Source: Cowden, T., LaFever, C., Vider, S., *The Complete Writer's Guide to Heroes & Heroines: Sixteen Master Archetypes*, Archetype Press, Oct. 2013

Keirsey Temperament Sorter

The Keirsey Temperament Sorter is a widely used tool that can help writers discover their character's personality type. It is based on four key temperaments:

Idealists

Enthusiastic, Intuitive
Values meaning, integrity & involvement
Sees the world as it *should* be

Rationals

Calm, Logical
Value knowledge, reason & achievement
Sees the world as it *could* be

Guardians

Concerned, Authoritative
Value experience, security, & responsibility
Does whatever is right

Artisans

Excited, Impulsive
Value generosity, creativity & adaptability
Does whatever works

Source: www.Keirsey.com

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is the most widely known personality inventory tool. It asserts that there are four dichotomies in which humans perceive the world, that when combined, make up sixteen different personality types.

MYERS-BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR

ISTJ

ISFJ

INFJ

INTJ

ISTP

ISFP

INFP

INTP

ESTP

ESFP

ENFP

ENTP

ESTJ

ESFJ

ENFJ

ENTJ

Favorite World: Extraversion (E) or Introversion (I)

Information: Sensing (S) or Intuition (N)

Decisions: Thinking (T) or Feeling (F)

Structure: Judging (J) or Perceiving (P)

Favorite MBTI Sites:

www.16personalities.com

www.humanmetrics.com

www.opp.com