# **Using Psychology to Create Memorable Characters Farrah Rochon**

## 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
  - o Use character interviews to help form your character's personality.

## Personality Deep Dive (Archetypes, Keirsey & 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
•	The CHIEF	•	The BOSS
•	The BAD BOY	•	The SEDUCTRESS
•	The BEST FRIEND	•	The SPUNKY KID
•	The CHARMER	•	The FREE SPIRIT
•	The LOST SOUL	•	The WAIF
•	The PROFESSOR	•	The LIBRARIAN
•	The SWASHBUCKLER	•	The CRUSADER
•	The WARRIOR	•	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

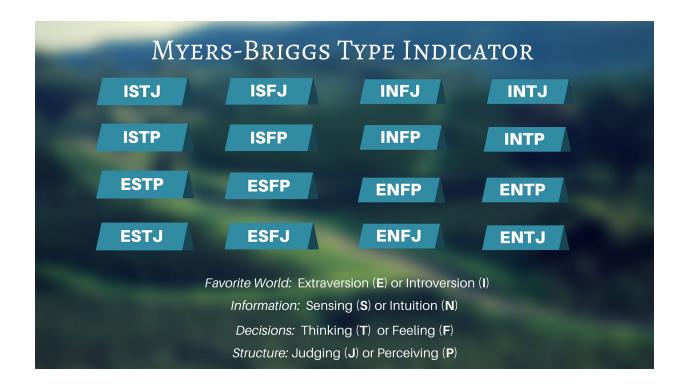
#### **Artisans**

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.



## Favorite MBTI Sites:

www.16personalities.com

www.humanmetrics.com

www.opp.com