

Effective character development is not absolutely essential. If you read Greek mythology, those characters are minimally developed. We hardly know anything about them they. Don't stand out as individuals. Someone can create a great story without working too much on exactly who their characters are and make them resemble as much as they can, real life, breathing, walking human beings.

But there is a great percentage of a potential audience that is interested in what is called three-dimensional characters. So there is a character that is described as flat, or there is a character that is described as three-dimensional, and we could spend a lifetime studying psychology - psychology, psychiatry and sociology, writing down everything that we overhear people say, looking at them, trying to figure out why they do what they do, and it's a fascinating journey.

There is no end to that exploration and anyone who embarks on studying people, and who they are, and why their inner workings, and why they do what they do, will discover things that no one else has discovered. As writers improving our character portrayals, it is a fascinating journey. Put yourself in the place of the fiction writer: you're sitting down, you're making up a new character and you have your story, and before you is a character not developed at all.

You have a name. You know what they're going to do in the story. What can you do to bring that character from flat to three dimensional, besides, you know, brainstorming on their history, their family, their economic situation, their class, how they're raised, how much money they have and their general opinions about the world - brainstorming on all those kind of things.

Here is a technique that I find just works works magic on developing a character. I have this written down and I have it by my monitor. It is the difference between how they intentionally present themselves and how others see them. I found that when working this out, it is very different for each character that I work on.

The reason I like using this technique is that it takes the vague problem of trying to flush out a three-dimensional character, to this puzzle that I can work out, and by working with this puzzle with each character, it really makes a lot of things fall into place. It flushes the character out and at the same time makes the character really fit in the story.

So I've learned when using this technique it is really helpful to decide ahead of time that we're not we're not going to stick with with the ideas that we brainstorm. Along these lines but they give us a stronger idea about who that character is. So if I try out the idea that the character dyes their hair, I may only be half into that idea but I'll go ahead and brainstorm and write that down because it describes to me exactly what kind of character they are, in terms of how they would attempt to present themselves to others.

Here's an example. I have a character who preys on other people, and not only that, her tactics, the way that that she does that, is to present herself as vulnerable. So the way that this describes is way that she intentionally presents herself. She presents herself as helpless but she wants to really make sure that others see her that way, and so she would present herself, make it much more obvious than most people would actually appear when they are in a situation where they're helpless.

But they're not intending to appear helpless, so this character will say and and do things that that are a little too obvious, or are a little, you know, for the characters in the story who read more into people, they definitely it would register with them. Maybe she's just putting on an act. At the same time, it's very important for her to get ready to to to take advantage of people in certain ways.

So I'm just going to make up some stuff, to give you an idea what I'm talking about, even though it isn't what I'm actually doing with this character. She could have a gun hidden in her suitcase. The reader sees this but as you continue to present this character to the reader, there are, you know it, it seems like she sure does go out of her way to present herself as helpless, to a point where some of the readers will start to wonder about what her true intention is.

There's a contradiction between those two. There's a definite difference between these two. If you

make a definite difference between how your character presents herself and who they actually are, making that difference distinct, there's something about that that really appeals to the reader.

Exactly how you work out this formula really depends on the effect you want that character to have on the reader. In the example I gave I wanted to know if this is an antagonist, so I wanted to up the level of feeling of this character, you know, the potential harm to the protagonist. In real life we feel very engaged when we meet people and can notice the separation between the things they do to present themselves as a certain kind of person and we have evidence of who they really are.

The difference between these two compels us in society. This is one of those things that captures our attention and makes us interested in our socializing, and we can have the same effect with our characters.

In fiction creative choices, we can decide how artificial this presentation is or how authentic seeming it is. How obnoxious it is or how subtle it is. Everyone works on the social mask. Everyone develops their social identity that is kind of there on the surface of the deeper levels of who they are. There's no escaping it and there's nothing wrong about it either.

It's just kind of another reality of being human. If you wear clothes, you're putting on some kind of uniform. You're putting on some kind of identity, and it's not a falsehood. You know, think about it. You know, if you're going to go work in an office, you'll put on office clothes. It's a way of communicating with people, so that they know how to relate to you.

If you're going to work in an art gallery, you're going to wear clothes that are expressive, so that when you meet people, they get an idea about how are you, how they want to see, how you're going to talk with them, what kind of things you and they are going to talk about, what kind of life you want to live, so there is a lot of necessity and sincerity in your your social mask.

But this is this is also something that plays into who we want to be and who we actually are, where we want to go, and and where we come from, and so this is one of those kernels of the human condition that can make for compelling characters.

As an exercise you can find one person each day or each week to journal about, and write down what are they intentionally doing, what are they consciously doing to present themselves in a certain way, and who is it that they want to define for the onlooker. Who they are, what title are they giving themselves, what what kind of character do they want to be treated as, and then from there creatively come up with things that are distinct that are definitely different.

If you're ever concerned about your characters being too flat, try it with each of your characters. Only spend an hour on each character. Find your favorite character in your story and write down 'how did they consciously present themselves?' How does the world see them and make sure that you do it creatively.

Whatever first comes to your mind. It doesn't have to be what you stay with, but it'll trigger your creative thinking, and it'll flush out your character. Remember - the goal is to find creative and fun ways to flush out your character. You don't need to do an exhaustive study of each character and really give the character as much flushing out time for for the time that they actually appear in the story.

For four characters that she'll want to say one thing, and then they're gone. In the next, they can be totally flat characters. They can be 'here is the baker', 'here is the the bus driver' and move on from there. Now try to work with this technique in a way so that you're having fun. Don't make it such a big deal.

Just try it out. Say 'I'll try this for 10 minutes and brainstorm', and if you're having fun, your reader will be more engaged in your writing in the long run, because if you're having fun that means that you might discover a new interesting contrast between these two points of character.

Your reader will be interested in that contrast. Now I guarantee you, if you come up with with one

of these that really works, well, the contrast between intended impression and actual impression it is going to be something that is going to give you a lot of power over how you can present that character, and and the way they're going to react him in all the different situations that you put them, in so again this turns out to be a very effective tool.

An example - it could be how they feel they should act and how they actually want to act. It could be presenting themselves because of the social situations that there is about. People don't just write what they say and do, and leave it in that. Fine, this is a lens through which to study them and find the formulas of their behavior.

This is a great way to look at the people around you, and you can really get an idea about about what the true trajectory of their life will be like. You can get a good sense of how they'll react in different situations and really understand why they say things that could seem totally random otherwise.

So I hope this is helpful for your fiction writing. Please take the time to check out the story I'm working on at [solonation.com](http://solonation.com) and also vote to get me to make more of these tutorials, by hitting the like button. Leave a comment. Let the other viewers know if this triggered an idea that you thought is along the lines of what the video discussed.

Leave a comment so that other viewers can read. Subscribe please. Tell other writers that you know about about these videos, if you find them helpful. I hope you're writing goes very well and I hope you have a good day. This is a quick side note because as an artist, we can all use more motivation to get into doing our artwork. However you're going to spend your day today will send ripples into your future, so no matter what you're doing recognize that you're not just doing that activity in the moment, you're also sending these ripples out about the way the rest of your life is going to be.

Through your action, you are determining what the rest of your life will be like, and if you have a great day, you send out only a few ripples but if you pile them up, if you do this on a daily basis you can continue to reinforce it and it has a greater and greater and greater effect that builds up.

Humans are the most the most highly adaptive animals. We are able to rapidly and very effectively adapt to any environment. The environment you're at, the activity or engaged in, is a big part of your environment. When you sit down to do your artwork, you begin adapting to that activity, so in the future you're going to find it easier to do artwork. You're going to find yourself getting better and better at it.