



# Characters: Making Them Unique

Cara C Putman, JD MBA  
[Http://caraputman.com](http://caraputman.com)

Think about the last book you read...

1

Did the characters stand out?

2

Or are they forgettable?

# Multi-Dimensional Characters

Define the arc...

Who is the character now?

Who will they be at the end of the story?

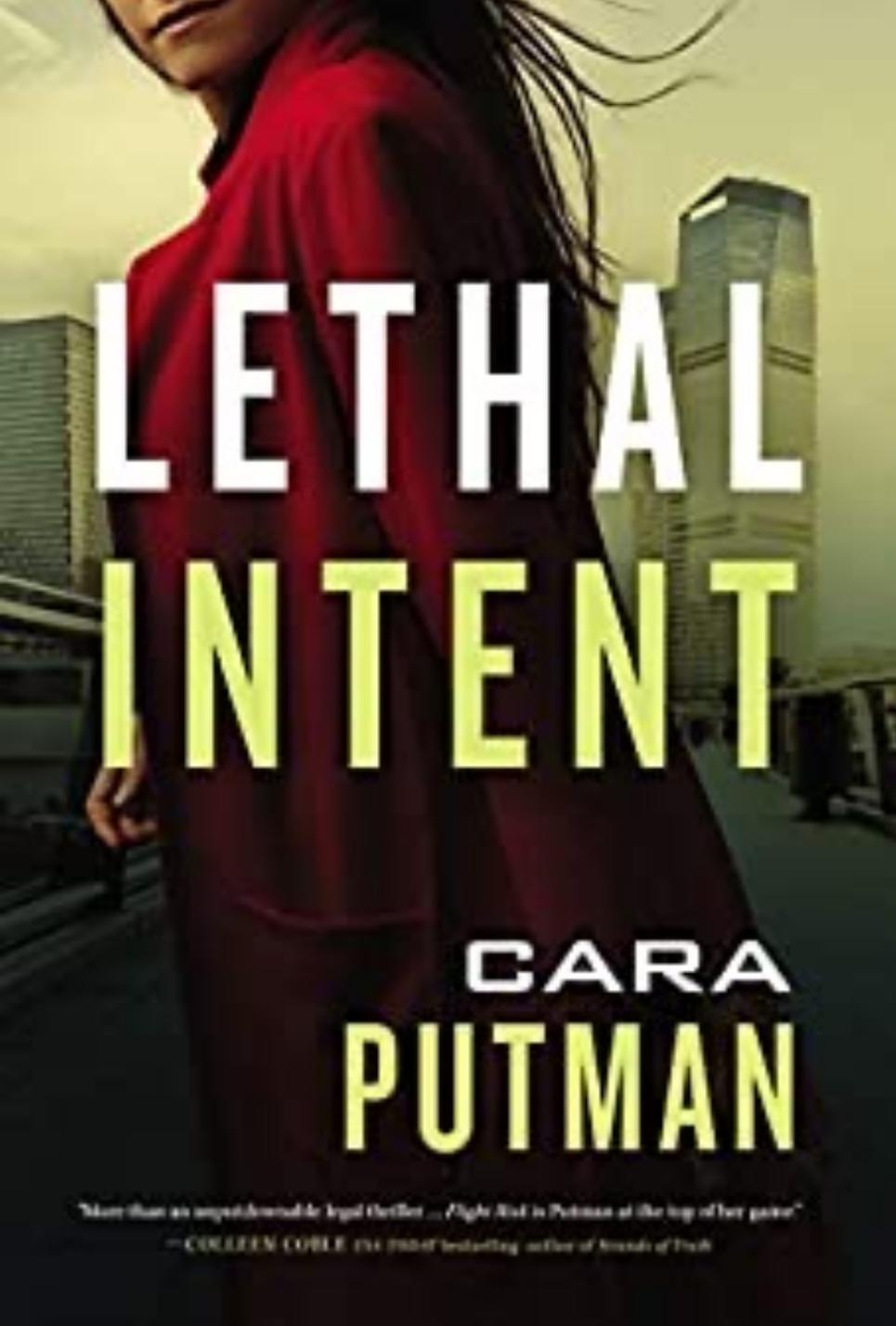


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What do you know  
about your hero  
and heroine?





## My Characters

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- The two I'll use as examples come from my last full-length novel, Lethal Intent.
- Caroline had already appeared in four books, one as the very strong secondary character with lots of pages.
- Brandon had a smaller role but had been in several books, too.
- I thought I knew them...
  - Famous last words!



# Caroline Bragg

- **The Nurturer:** She's a professional clerk for a DC Circuit Judge. She nurtures the judge and takes care of him even though it's past time to move on
- 4 inch heels
- Can't really cook though Brandon thinks she can
- Saying good-bye to Caroline wasn't for those on a tight schedule.
- Lived with Jaime in Delayed Justice

# Caroline Bragg

- Her southern accent warmed the words. Caroline looked ready for a pleasant afternoon outside in a perfect sundress that showed off her slim figure with a wide-brimmed hat that would shield her from any hint of sun that snuck inside.
- Drives a classic Mustang
- Walked around the law school with a perpetual can of Dr Pepper



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# Brandon Lancaster

- Recluse
- Played professional football
- Was a linebacker with the Indianapolis Colts
- Runs Safe Haven



# Brandon Lancaster

“The burly man had his Indianapolis Colt’s hat slung on his head backwards and his typical gym gear of workout shorts and an under armor shirt.”

Has a cat named **Frodo**

“Brandon frowned and fisted his hands on his hips.  
“I don’t take advantage of friendships.””

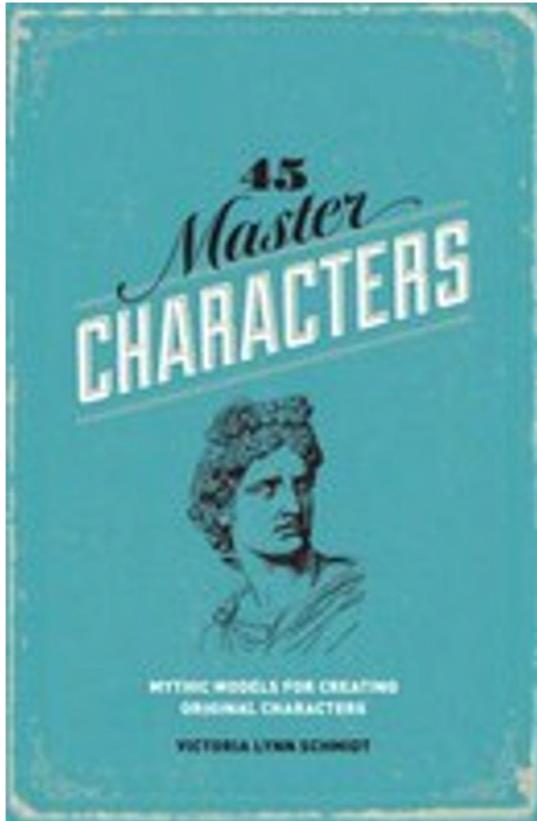
THIS IS A POINT OF PRIDE FOR HIM AND  
WILL NEED TO BE ADDRESSED IN HIS BOOK.





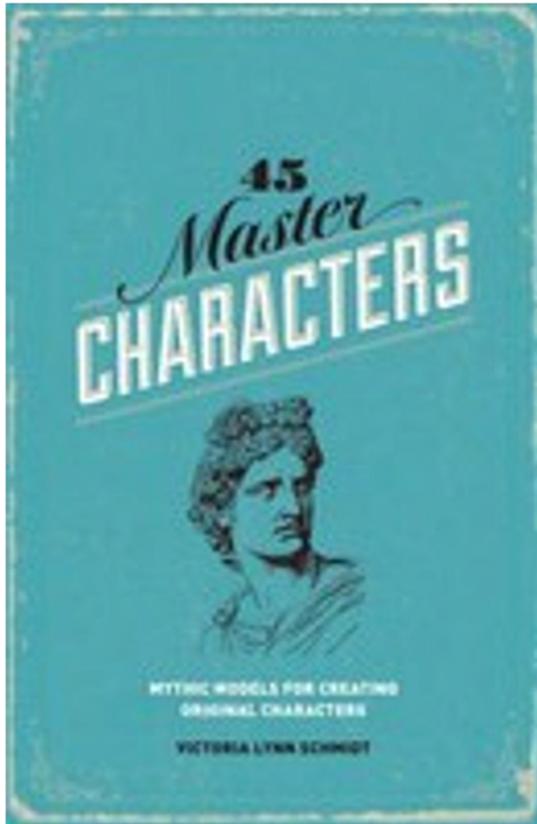
# Let's Add a Layer

Greek Archetypes



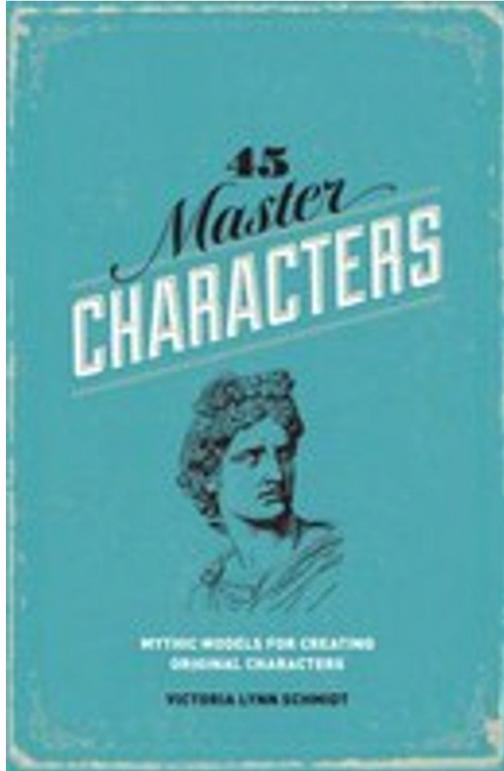
# Recluse/Hades

- Fears large groups of people
- He needs to be known and understood
  
- NO this isn't right...



# The Protector/Ares

- Lives in his body rather than head.
- Wants to win the fight
- Cares about friends and family and will jump at any chance to defend them.
- FEARS: not being able to protect those he cares about.
- MOTIVATOR: Survival



# Nurturer/Demeter

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- Sense of duty to help others.
- Puts others ahead of herself
- Cares about providing for entire group and bestowing gifts
- FEARS: her emotions and losing someone in her care.
- MOTIVATOR: Love and Belonging

# Application: Take One of Your Characters

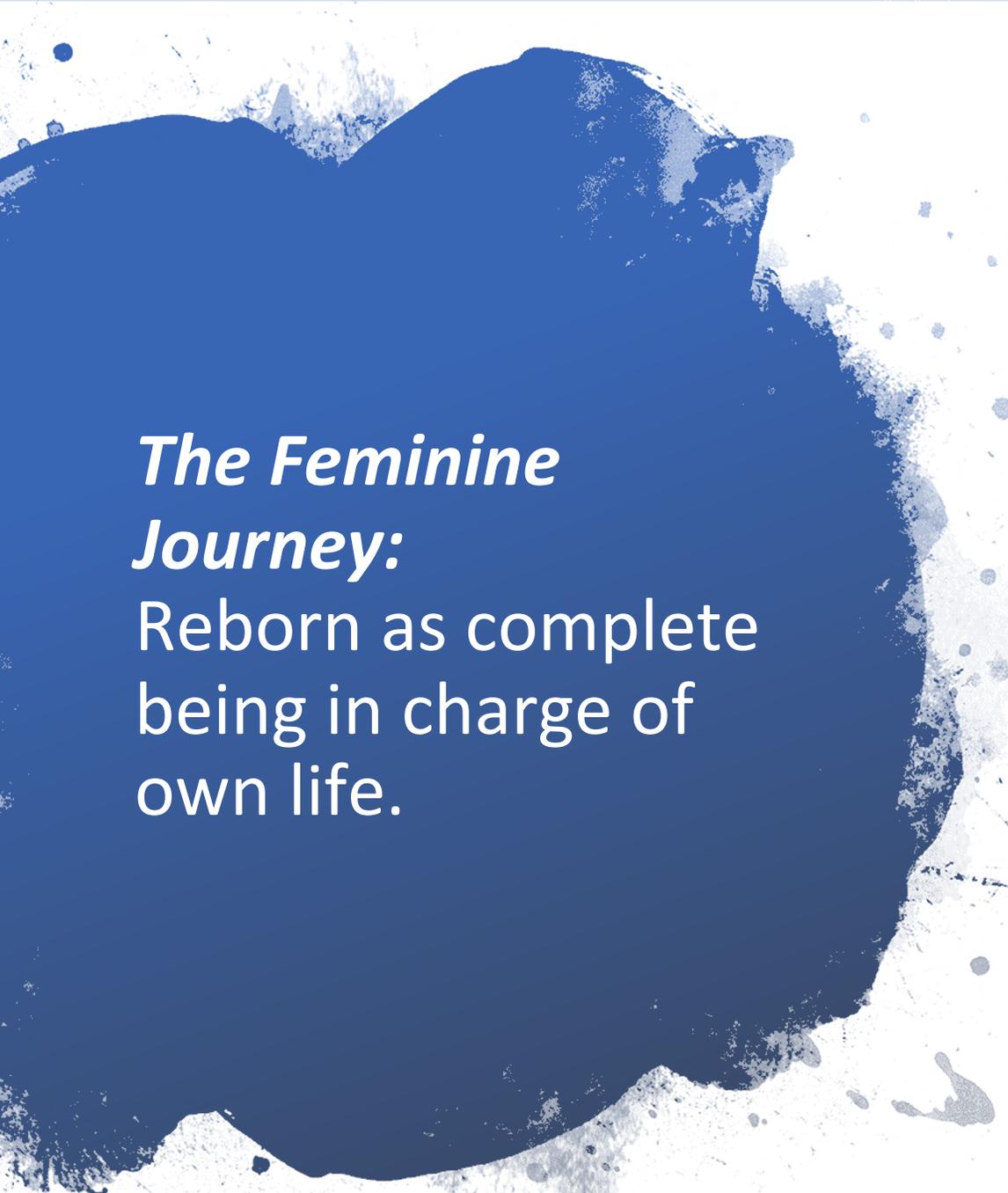
What archetype might they  
be?

<https://knowyourarchetypes.com/mythological-archetypes/>



*The  
Masculine  
Journey:*  
Gathers allies  
and tools  
toward a goal.

- **Act I: Challenge**
  - Perfect World
  - Friends & Enemies
  - The Call
- **Act II: Obstacles**
  - Small Success
  - Invitations
  - Trials
- **Act III**
  - Death: A Fork in the Road
  - Awaken or Rebel
  - Victory or Failure



## *The Feminine Journey:*

Reborn as complete  
being in charge of  
own life.

- **Act I: Containment**
  - The Illusion of a Perfect World
  - The Betrayal or Realization
  - The Awakening: preparing for Journey
- **Act II: Transformation**
  - Descent: passing Gates of Judgment
  - Eye of the Storm
  - Death: All is Lost
- **Act III**
  - Support
  - Rebirth: Moment of Truth
  - Full Circle: Return to Perfect World



# Next Layer: Emotions

# Emotional Development

How do your characters approach their emotions?



Other people's emotions?



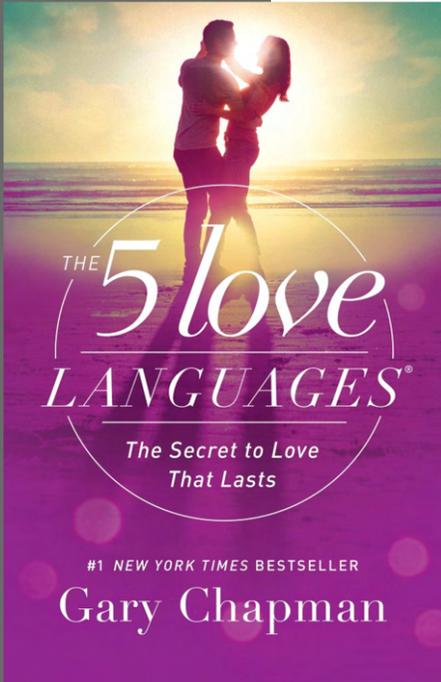
What happened in their childhood to make them who they are today?



What triggers them? Why?

# Emotional Development

Caroline	Brandon
Mother is an alcoholic	Mother was sick
Father was largely absent; judge has been like a father; makes it hard to move on by taking next job.	Father was a soldier who didn't come home from a training exercise. A real man's man. Football star
Had to raise herself and little sister	Lived on couches as teenager, slipped through cracks
Lives in fear of being alone forever, keeps a light on at night	Lives in fear that he won't be good enough, that he'll fail those in his care



Let's Dig Deeper...

## Love Languages



# How can you use love languages to add conflict?

Caroline – Quality Time	Brandon – Acts of Service
She longs for time with the people who matter most to her. She wants the time to be focused...not spent doing something else.	He gives time by doing. The only problem is she wants to be the focus, not the project.
Her time evaporates as her sister needs her, so she can't get the time she needs with Brandon.	A crisis with one of his foster placements throws everything into chaos, and that leaves little time for quality time or acts of service.

# Application: Take One of Your Characters

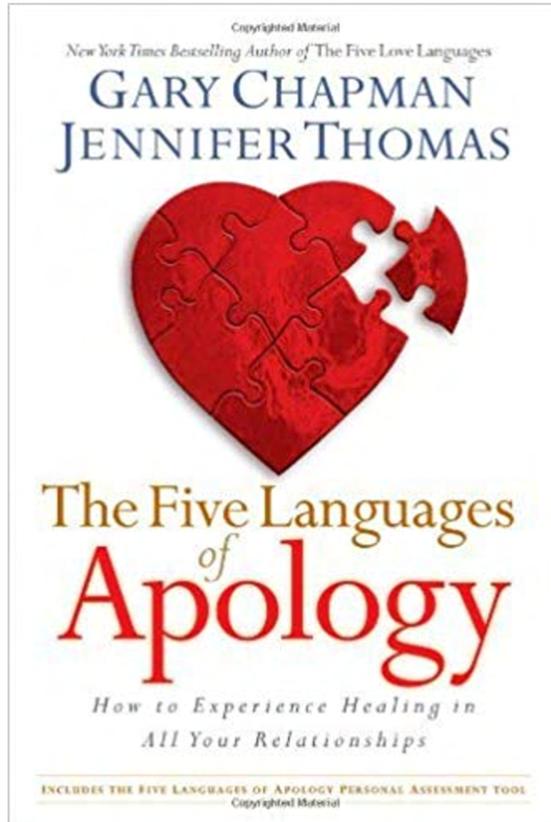
Think about the Love  
Languages.

- What Love Language can you give them?
- How can they use that love language?
- How could they use several?





Spiritual



- Expressing Regret
- Accepting Responsibility
- Making Restitution
- Genuinely Repenting
- Requesting Forgiveness
- Take the quiz here:

<https://www.5lovelanguages.com/profile/apology/>

# How can you use the languages of apology to add conflict?

## Caroline – Genuine Repentance

She wants to know the person who hurt her really gets it; that they validate her pain.

She thinks that saying she really is sorry is enough to convey the depths of her remorse.

## Brandon – Making Restitution

He wants to make it right by making the person whole. That should be enough to let her know

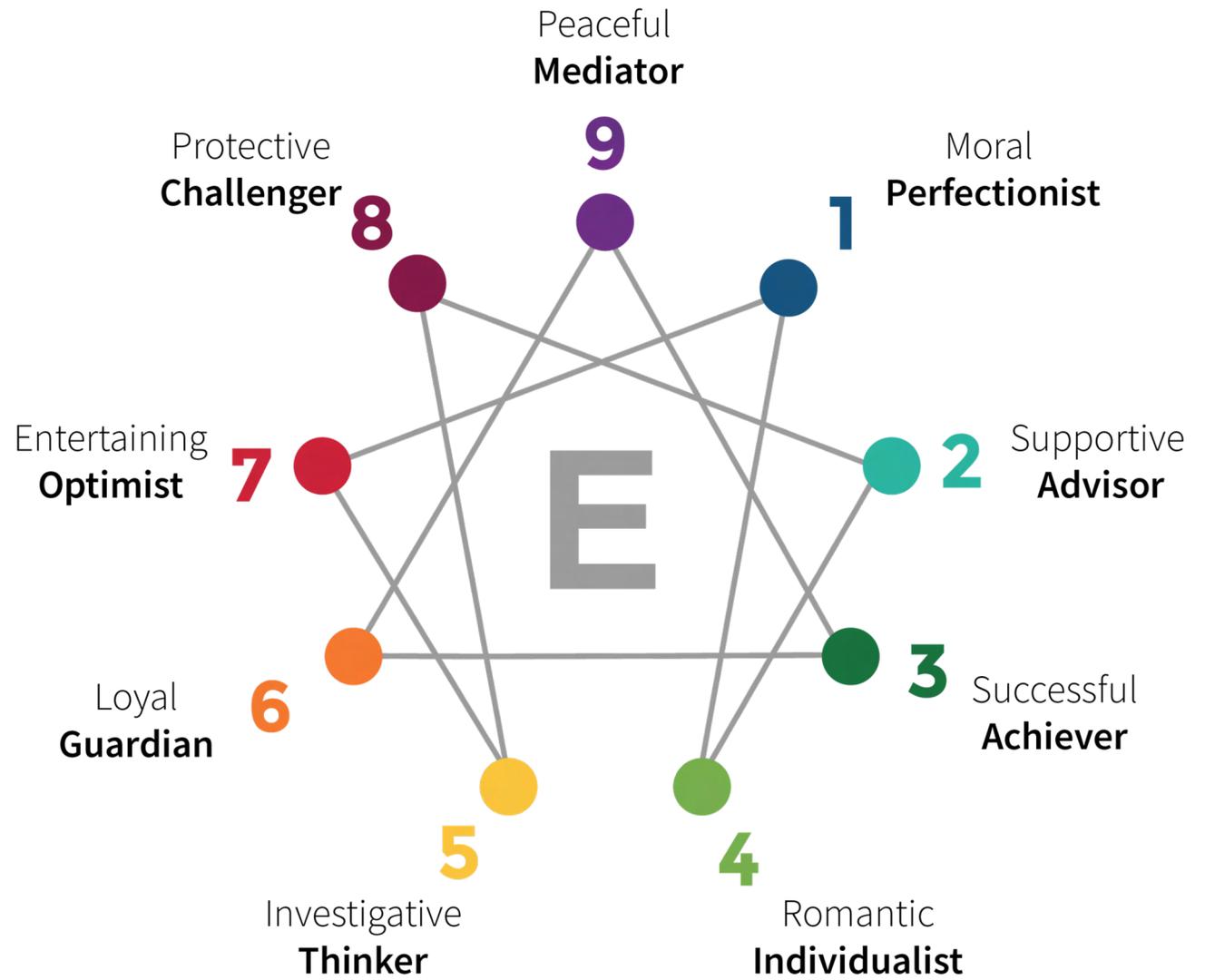
He wants to see tangible symbols of the person's regret. That means making restitution.

# Application: Take One of Your Characters

- What Language of Forgiveness can you give your character?
- How can that create conflict?



# Enneagram



# What the Enneagram Gives Writers



Core fear



Core Desire



Self-Image



Core Weakness



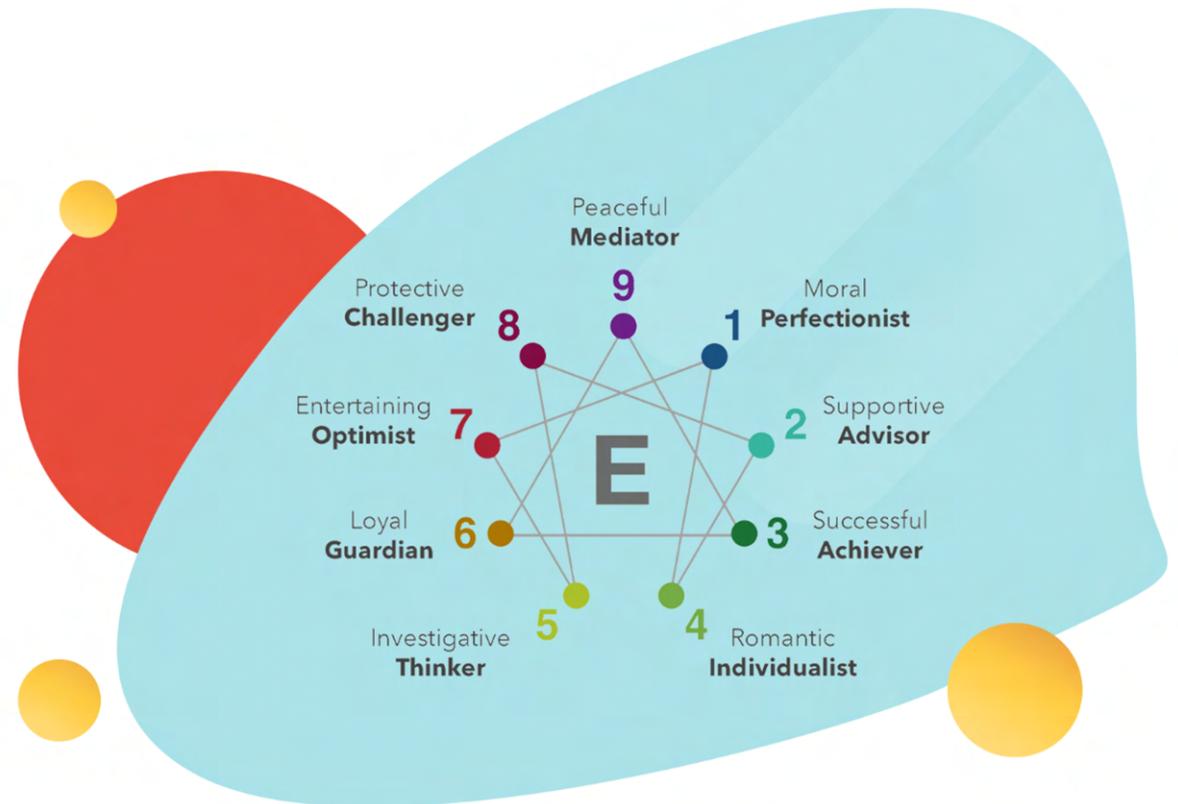
Message your  
heart longs to  
hear

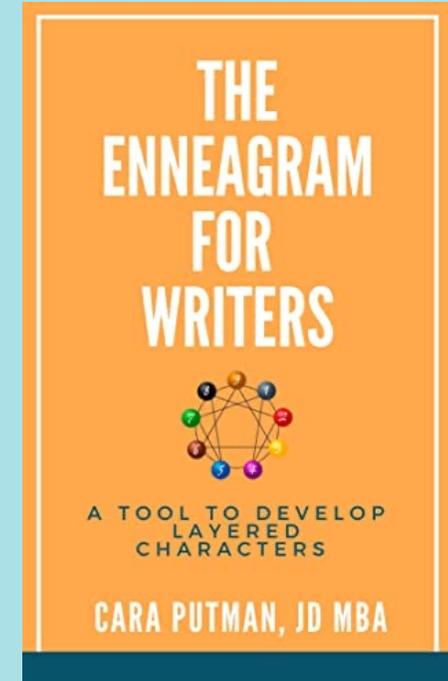
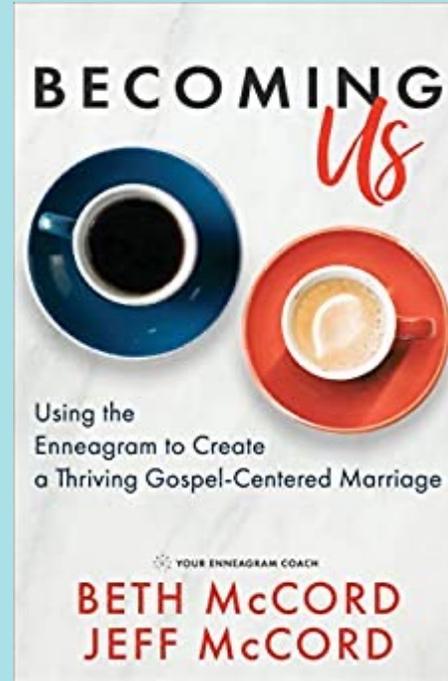
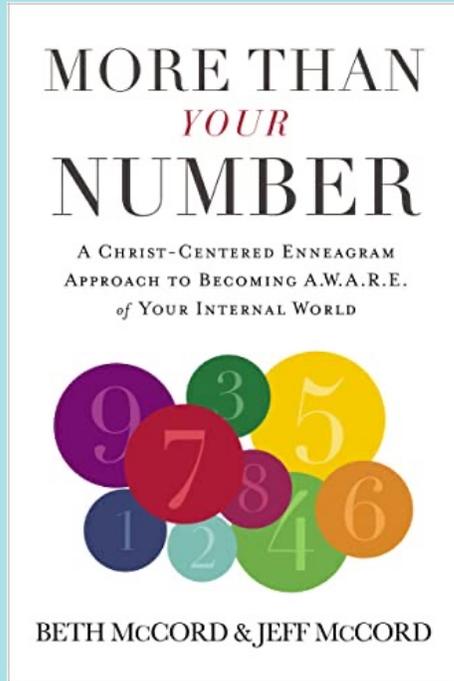
# How can you use the Enneagram to add conflict?

	<b>Caroline – 6 Loyal Guardian</b>	<b>Brandon – 8 Protective Challenger</b>
Fear	Fear itself, being alone, blamed, targeted, abandoned	Being weak, powerless, controlled, at the mercy of injustice
Desire	To have security, support	Protect himself
Self image	I am prepared, dedicated, dutiful, hard-working, loyal	I am outspoken, direct, bold, tough, compassionate
Weakness	Anxiety: preparing for worst	Intensity, excess, control
Message needs to hear	You are safe.	You will not be betrayed.

# Enneagram Resources

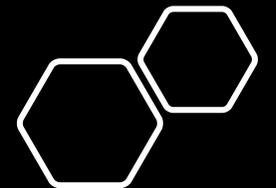
- <https://www.youenneagramcoach.com/> and <https://www.youenneagramcoach.com/coremotivations> and
- <https://www.instagram.com/youenneagramcoach/>
- <https://www.enneagraminstitute.com/type-descriptions>
- Some more on Instagram:
  - <https://www.instagram.com/simplywholehearted/>
  - <https://www.instagram.com/justmyenneatype/>

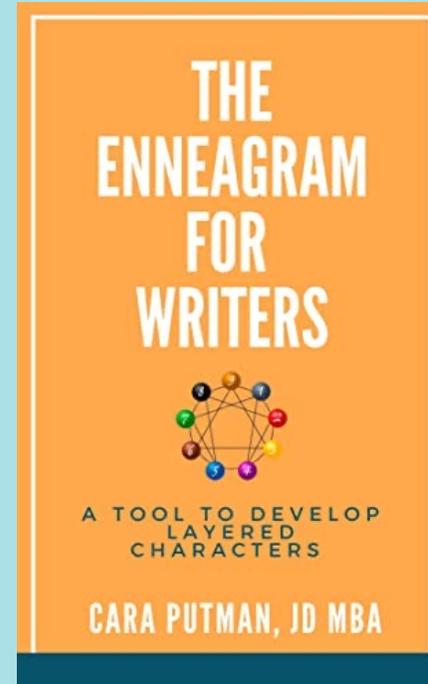
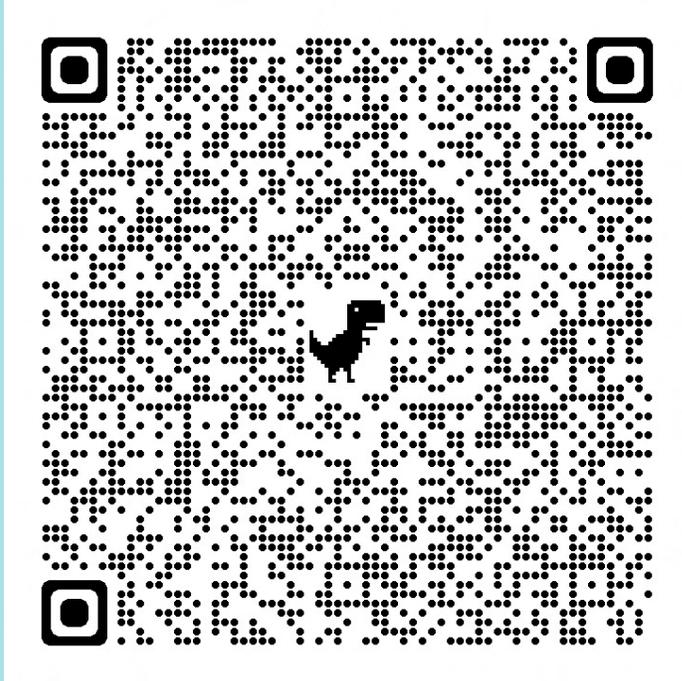




## Enneagram Resources

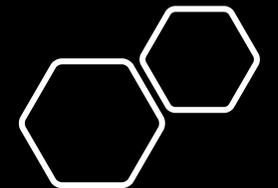
These are some books that will help you quickly integrate the core of the Enneagram into your writing and characters.





## Enneagram Resources

These are some books that will help you quickly integrate the core of the Enneagram into your writing and characters.





# Application: Take One of Your Characters

- What is that character's core fear?
- What is their core lie?
- What is their core belief?

This is a good start to identifying their enneagram number.



# Career

# What Advice?

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1

What did they dream of becoming as a 5 year old? 10 year old? Junior in high school?

2

Who's advice did they ignore? Are they glad? Did they blow it?

3

What would they do if money was no object?

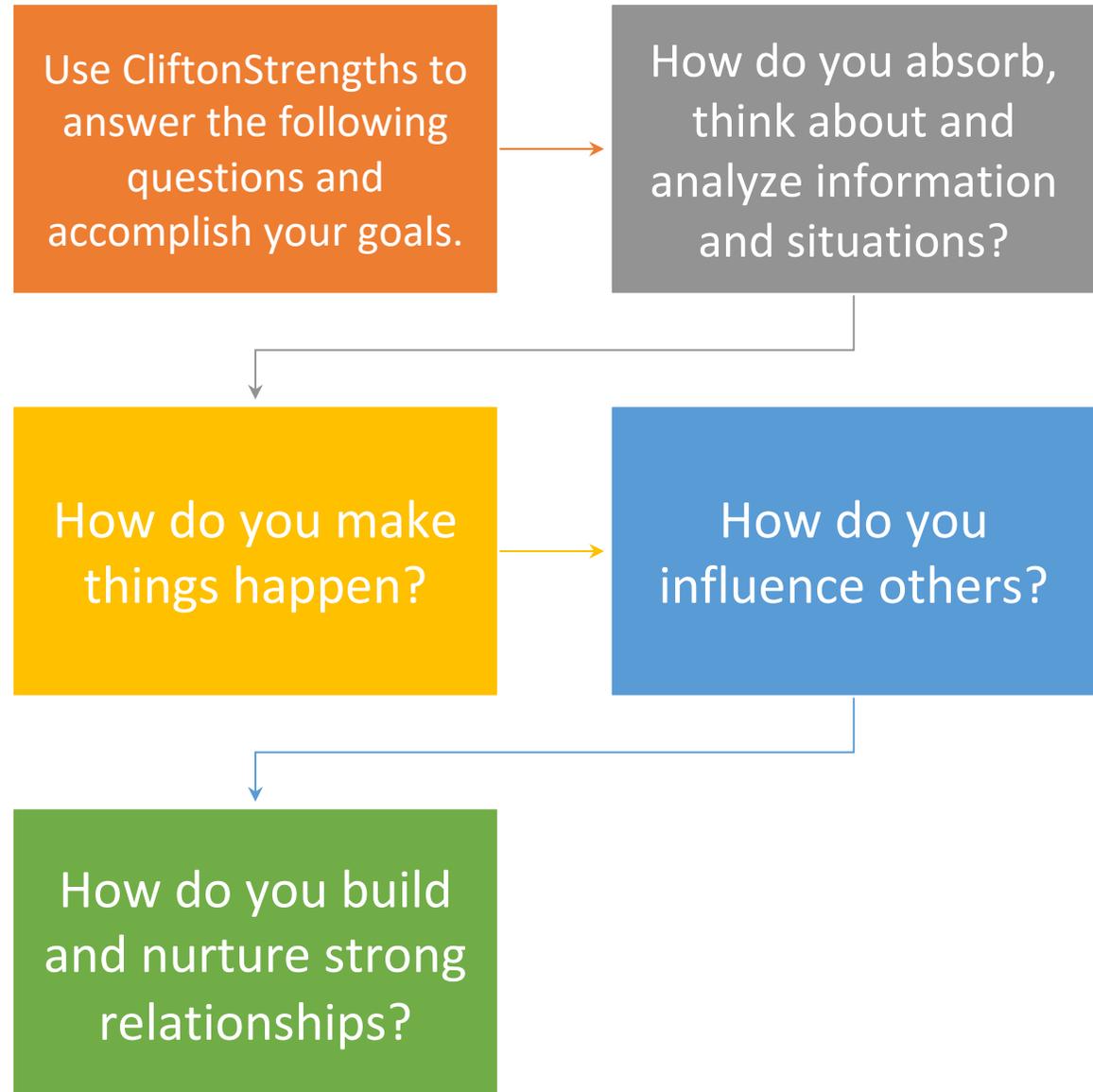
# Strength Finders

## Four Domains of Team Strength

EXECUTING	INFLUENCING	RELATIONSHIP BUILDING	STRATEGIC THINKING
<i>People with dominant Executing themes know how to make things happen.</i>	<i>People with dominant Influencing themes know how to take charge, speak up, and make sure the team is heard.</i>	<i>People with dominant Relationship Building themes have the ability to build strong relationships that can hold a team together and make the team greater than the sum of its parts.</i>	<i>People with dominant Strategic Thinking themes help teams consider what could be. They absorb and analyze information that can inform better decisions.</i>
Achiever Arranger Belief Consistency Deliberative Discipline Focus Responsibility Restorative	Activator Command Communication Competition Maximizer Self-Assurance Significance Woo	Adaptability Connectedness Developer Empathy Harmony Includer Individualization Positivity Relator	Analytical Context Futuristic Ideation Input Intellection Learner Strategic



# Strength Finders



# Input (example)

The key question to discovering whether a person is being strongly engaged is: "at work, do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day?"

## ❖ Action Items

Look for jobs in which you are charged with acquiring new information each day, such as teaching, research, or journalism.

Identify your areas of specialization and actively seek more information about them.

Make time to read books and articles that stimulate you. Schedule the times.

Deliberately increase your vocabulary. Intentionally collect new words and learn the meaning of each.

## Myers Briggs

- Take this test as your character:  
<https://www.16personalities.com>
- Then look up the results in Please Understand Me II.
  - Explores what it means in love, work, parenting, etc.
- When you have one for your hero or heroine, pick a conflicting one for the other...instant conflict and tension.

## Myers Briggs

- Type is more than just the sum of the four preferences. The four-letter MBTI<sup>®</sup> type formula is a shorthand way of telling you about the interaction of your four mental functions and which ones you prefer to use first. This is called type dynamics, and it is an important part of understanding your MBTI<sup>®</sup> results.

# Physical Attributes

# Additional Resources

- <https://www.humbleisd.net/cms/lib2/TX01001414/Centricity/Domain/3492/Archetypes%20-%20Notes%20Handout.pdf>



**BONUS:**  
How to Read  
to Improve  
Your Writing

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# Listen to Audiobooks



# Low-Cost Ways to Access Audiobooks

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01

[Hoopla Digital](#):  
Listen to TONS of  
fiction through this  
site

02

[Libby](#): Between  
Hoopla and Libby I  
can find most  
books I want

03

[Chirp](#): I purchased  
six nonfiction for  
\$21 this morning.  
Get much fiction  
for \$4.99 or less,  
too.

# Pay Attention to the Details

- With Ebooks or Audiobooks Note:
  - When do big shifts occur?
    - 10%
    - 25%
    - 50%
    - Etc.
- Pay attention to plot layers
  - How many layers of pain is a character going through?
- Study the best-sellers in your genre
  - Do this periodically

# Read outside your genre

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- Don't get stuck in your pocket of the landscape
- Read NYT Bestsellers
  - Why are they the books every bookclub is reading?
  - What themes can you pick up?
  - What does that tell you about readers right now?





# Thank you!

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- Cara Putman
- [caraputman@gmail.com](mailto:caraputman@gmail.com)
- [Http://CaraPutman.com/books](http://CaraPutman.com/books)