How to Make a Great Character

Avalon Games

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How to Make a Great Character

So you want to learn how to make a great role playing character? This takes a lot more than a few pages of reading, actually it takes more than most people are willing to devote to the institution, but most importantly you need time and practice. This guide can teach you the basics, but they won't mean a thing unless you can apply the ten steps whenever you make a character for role playing.

You need to understand before you read too far in that this guide will show you how to make a well thought out character with real depth. This is not a walkthrough for the casual gamer and is not meant for putting a character together in ten minutes. To make a character with more than the standard two-dimensional cardboard cut-out elements you need to think a little deeper than normal and be ready to crumple up a lot of used scrap paper. People are more than yes and no answers on a multiple choice survey and if you want to really role play, you need to show that in your characters and develop it properly when creating them.

Ten steps through this manual and you'll have an idea of what to do to make a really great character. Ten steps and you'll understand how some people can flip through an emotional and historical rolodex in their heads and draft a character that steals the show away and is hard for anyone to forget. Using these steps you can make something great, add some experience and personal touches and you'll make something that will change your gaming experience forever.

Step 1: Concept
Get ready for the whole process by figuring out the kind of character you are going to make. The concept you choose will help you to make sound decisions about the rest of your great role playing character.

Step 2: Origins
With your concept at the ready, you're going to figure out where your character came from and what exactly makes them tick. This won't tell you everything, but it's a great start.

Step 3: History
This is the part of the creation process where you will want to determine a few things about your character's past that may or may not be relevant to their future.

Step 4: Education
With the basics behind you, the next step will be to figure out what kind of education your character has had.

Step 5: Nature
Now that the surface elements of your character are complete and ready, the inner parts need to be developed so that you can say something more than the physical parts of your character.

Step 6: Attitude
The surface feelings and thought of your character are next. This will help you to figure out how your character acts and thinks.

Step 7: Appearance
One of the final steps of your character creation is what he or she looks like.

Step 8: Goals
Now you're going to want to decide what the short and long term goals of your character are. These goals are what your character wants for the future and what they'll look for in life.

Step 9: System
If you're already a role player and know how to make a basic character, then you're already playing a system, but do you know what the impact of that system really is on your character and how you play?

Step 10: Finishing Touches
Nothing is finished until its finished right? Figure out some of the finer details of your character and flesh them out.

Step 1: Concept
Creating concepts for characters is simple; all you need is a basic idea. The idea can be direct to the point like saying you want to play a grungy cop who lives on the edge or something as simple as playing a "dynamic" character. The concept itself doesn't really matter; it's just going to be a guide for you to follow as you continue with character creation.

Realistically, there are only about twelve core concepts to draw from when making a role playing character. This isn't to say that humans can be narrowed down to twelve archetypes, but at our cores, we only have a dozen true individual archetypes. Simplifying these psychological cores we can then create concepts from which to build on.

As follows, you will find the base twelve core concepts with some examples of more detailed approaches to each of them. Remember that these concepts are only suggestions and if you can think of anything different, use them.

Dramatic
The dramatic character is one that feels with every fiber of their being. These people will be defined not only by their emotions, but by the impact those emotions have on their lives and the lives of those around them. The dramatic character has a meaningful role to play in life and everything they do is for a reason. This kind of character will find him or herself at the center of both tragedy and greatness and often for the same reason.

Playing a dramatic character will be intense and often unforgiving. You will find yourself defining your character's worth by your actions and more importantly, the results of those actions. Few people truly live like dramatic characters do and those that do live hard.

Refined Concepts: preacher, thespian, counselor, movie director, private detective, soldier, professional athlete, missionary, drama queen, inspirational speaker