

Character Development

Maryland Writers Association
Annapolis Chapter

16 October 2019

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Why are characters important?

- Stories are about people (or other beings that are relatable).
- “Great characters are the key to great fiction. A high-octane plot is nothing without credible, larger-than-life, highly developed enactors to make it meaningful.”
 - Donald Maass
- The reader must care about your protagonist.

Memorable characters

- **Characters should seem real, like someone you know well.**
- **Characters should be memorable:**
 - Unpredictable (can sometimes surprise the reader with their actions)
 - Passionate about something
 - Carry a “ghost” or “wound” from their past
 - Inner conflict
 - Resourceful
 - Courageous
 - Fight for a just cause

Character roles in a story

- **Protagonist**
- **Antagonist** (not necessarily a villain, just opposed to the protagonist)
- **Other major characters**
- **Minor characters**
- **Extras**

Your protagonist

- **Desire** (What does your character want?)
- **Ambition** (His/her vision for the future)
- **Story goal** (Concrete, immediate goal)
- **Stakes** (for character and for others)
- **External conflict**
- **Internal conflict**



What's Your Personality Type?

Use the questions on the outside of the chart to determine the four letters of your Myers-Briggs type. For each pair of letters, choose the side that seems most natural to you, even if you don't agree with every description.

1. Are you outwardly or inwardly focused? If you:

- Could be described as talkative, outgoing
- Like to be in a fast-paced environment
- Tend to work out ideas with others, think out loud
- Enjoy being the center of attention

then you prefer
E
Extraversion

- Could be described as reserved, private
- Prefer a slower pace with time for contemplation
- Tend to think things through inside your head
- Would rather observe than be the center of attention

then you prefer
I
Introversion

2. How do you prefer to take in information? If you:

- Focus on the reality of how things are
- Pay attention to concrete facts and details
- Prefer ideas that have practical applications
- Like to describe things in a specific, literal way

then you prefer
S
Sensing

- Imagine the possibilities of how things could be
- Notice the big picture, see how everything connects
- Enjoy ideas and concepts for their own sake
- Like to describe things in a figurative, poetic way

then you prefer
N
Intuition

ISTJ
Responsible, sincere, analytical, reserved, realistic, systematic. Hardworking and trustworthy with sound practical judgment.

ISFJ
Warm, considerate, gentle, responsible, pragmatic, thorough. Devoted caretakers who enjoy being helpful to others.

INFJ
Idealistic, organized, insightful, dependable, compassionate, gentle. Seek harmony and cooperation, enjoy intellectual stimulation.

INTJ
Innovative, independent, strategic, logical, reserved, insightful. Driven by their own original ideas to achieve improvements.

ISTP
Action-oriented, logical, analytical, spontaneous, reserved, independent. Enjoy adventure, skilled at understanding how mechanical things work.

ISFP
Gentle, sensitive, nurturing, helpful, flexible, realistic. Seek to create a personal environment that is both beautiful and practical.

INFP
Sensitive, creative, idealistic, perceptive, caring, loyal. Value inner harmony and personal growth, focus on dreams and possibilities.

INTP
Intellectual, logical, precise, reserved, flexible, imaginative. Original thinkers who enjoy speculation and creative problem solving.

ESTP
Outgoing, realistic, action-oriented, curious, versatile, spontaneous. Pragmatic problem solvers and skillful negotiators.

ESFP
Playful, enthusiastic, friendly, spontaneous, tactful, flexible. Have strong common sense, enjoy helping people in tangible ways.

ENFP
Enthusiastic, creative, spontaneous, optimistic, supportive, playful. Value inspiration, enjoy starting new projects, see potential in others.

ENTP
Inventive, enthusiastic, strategic, enterprising, inquisitive, versatile. Enjoy new ideas and challenges, value inspiration.

ESTJ
Efficient, outgoing, analytical, systematic, dependable, realistic. Like to run the show and get things done in an orderly fashion.

ESFJ
Friendly, outgoing, reliable, conscientious, organized, practical. Seek to be helpful and please others, enjoy being active and productive.

ENFJ
Caring, enthusiastic, idealistic, organized, diplomatic, responsible. Skilled communicators who value connection with people.

ENTJ
Strategic, logical, efficient, outgoing, ambitious, independent. Effective organizers of people and long-range planners.

3. How do you prefer to make decisions? If you:

- Make decisions in an impersonal way, using logical reasoning
- Value justice, fairness
- Enjoy finding the flaws in an argument
- Could be described as reasonable, level-headed

then you prefer
T
Thinking

- Base your decisions on personal values and how your actions affect others
- Value harmony, forgiveness
- Like to please others and point out the best in people
- Could be described as warm, empathetic

then you prefer
F
Feeling

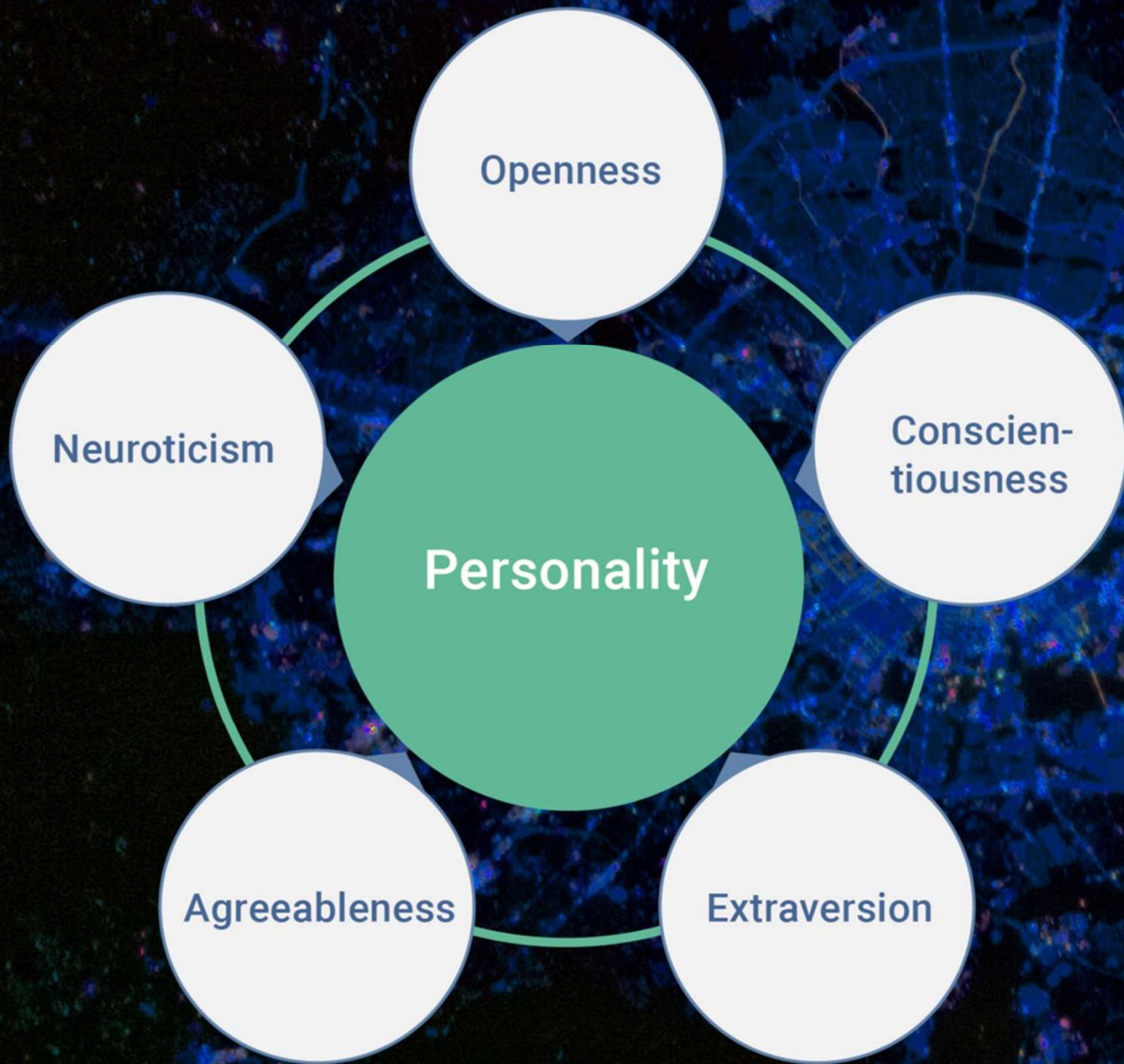
4. How do you prefer to live your outer life? If you:

- Prefer to have matters settled
- Think rules and deadlines should be respected
- Prefer to have detailed, step-by-step instructions
- Make plans, want to know what you're getting into

then you prefer
J
Judging

- Prefer to leave your options open
- See rules and deadlines as flexible
- Like to improvise and make things up as you go
- Are spontaneous, enjoy surprises and new situations

then you prefer
P
Perceiving



extrovert



introvert



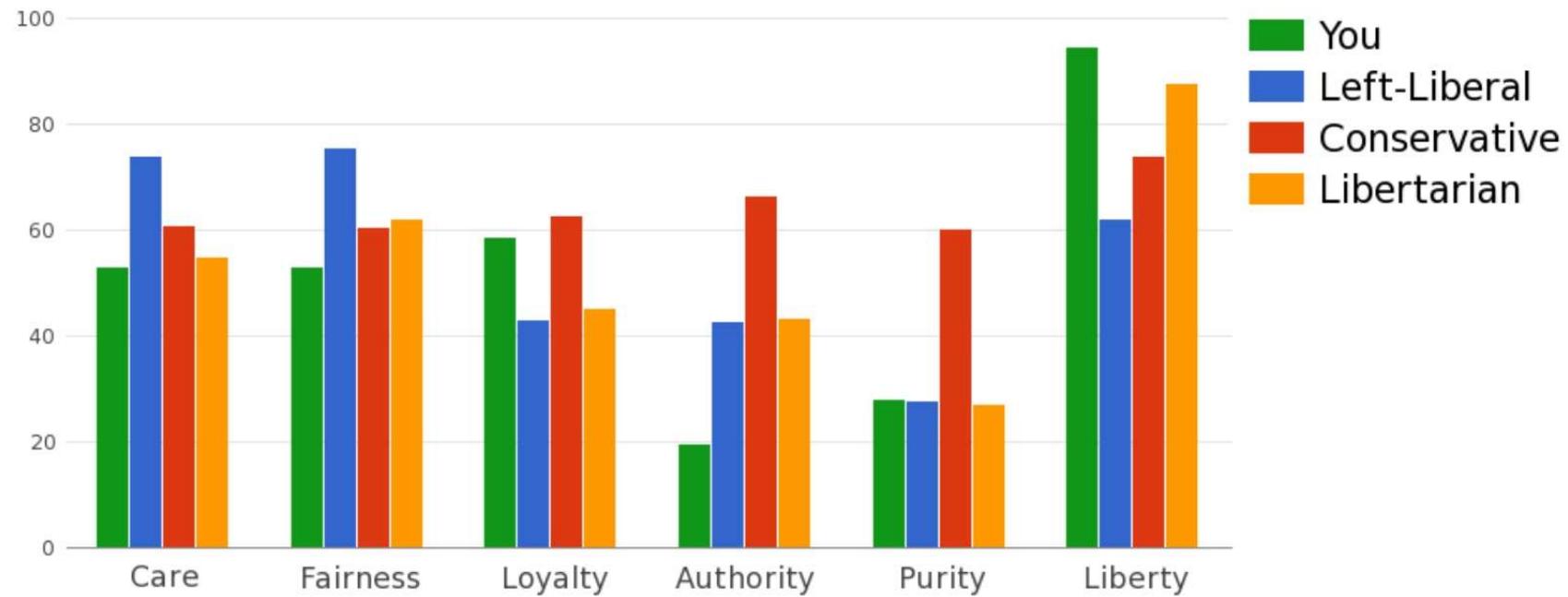
Core Values

Accomplishment	Cooperation	Freedom	Knowledge	Prosperity	Solving Problems
Accountability	Coordination	Friendship	Leadership	Punctuality	Speed
Accuracy	Creativity	Fun	Love	Quality of work	Spirit in life
Adventure	Decisiveness	Global view	Loyalty	Regularity	Stability
Beauty	Democracy	Good will	Maximum utilization	Reliability	Standardization
Calm	Discipline	Goodness	Meaning	Resourcefulness	Status
Challenge	Discovery	Gratitude	Merit	Respect for others	Strength
Change	Diversity	Hard work	Money	Responsiveness	Succeed
Cleanliness,	Ease of Use	Harmony	Openness	Results-oriented	Systemization
Collaboration	Efficiency	Honesty	Patriotism	Rule of Law	Teamwork
Commitment	Equality	Honor	Peace	Safety	Timeliness
Communication	Excellence	Improvement	Perfection	Satisfying others	Tolerance
Community	Fairness	Independence	Personal Growth	Security	Tradition
Competence	Faith	Individuality	Pleasure	Self-giving	Tranquility
Competition	Faithfulness	Inner peace	Power	Self-reliance	Trust
Connection	Family	Innovation	Practicality	Self-thinking	Truth
Content over form	Family feeling	Integrity	Preservation	Service	Unity
Continued improvement	Flair	Intensity	Privacy	Simplicity	Variety

NSA	Leadership	Integrity/ Honor	Teamwork	Respect	Responsibility	Equity/ Justice	Perseverance
5.0 <i>Leading</i>	Leads by example, implements new programs, AND helps others through mentoring and teaching in order to fulfill the mission of the school.	Lives by a consistent set of morals AND inspires others through actions and humility.	Embraces and promotes positive group dynamics AND models the value of teamwork.	Demonstrates deep concern and caring for each person's worth as a human being AND commits to enabling the growth of all.	Demonstrates accountability to oneself and the school AND encourages honesty, communication, and ownership.	Believes in AND compassionately promotes openness to ideas, cultures, viewpoints and individual differences.	Exudes an unwavering spirit, even when challenged, AND inspires others.
4.0 <i>Contributing</i>	Involves self in school, seeks opportunities to contribute to the mission of the school, AND implements those opportunities.	Believes in and practices a consistent set of morals AND is open to other values.	Involves self as a positive member of school AND seeks opportunities to engage in effective teamwork.	Shows sincere care and concern for others AND seeks ways to make others feel valued.	Shows accountability to oneself AND models honesty, communication, and ownership.	Believes in AND embraces an openness to ideas, cultures, viewpoints and individual differences.	Sustains motivation towards personal goals AND seeks ways to overcome obstacles.
3.0 <i>Participating</i>	Assumes role as a member of the school through active participation.	Follows the rules of the community and is informed by a developing set of morals.	Engages in school activities in a positive manner.	Expresses concern for others but inconsistently displays respect.	Aspires to consistent accountability for self.	Aspires to full understanding and acceptance of ideas, cultures, viewpoints and individual differences.	Aspires to persevere and sustain consistent motivation.
2.0 <i>Observing</i>	Involves self with school objectives ONLY when directed and ONLY to promote self-interests.	Follows the rules of the community ONLY when explicitly guided.	Attends school activities ONLY when directed.	Shows occasional thought for the feelings of others and acts with respect to promote self-interest.	Assumes responsibility ONLY when directed.	Complies publicly with rules of equity and justice with guidance.	Perseveres and works hard ONLY when directed or encouraged by others.
1.0 <i>Detracting</i>	Detracts from school and undermines the leadership and/or involvement of others.	Undermines self and others through dishonesty and duplicity.	Undermines cohesiveness of school activities with minimal regard for others.	Displays a lack of respect and actively undermines a respectful school atmosphere.	Evades personal responsibility and accountability to the school community.	Rejects and undermines ideals of equity and justice in the school community and resists guidance.	Evades expectations and gives up easily.

Moral Foundations Test

Result: Your Moral Foundations Are:



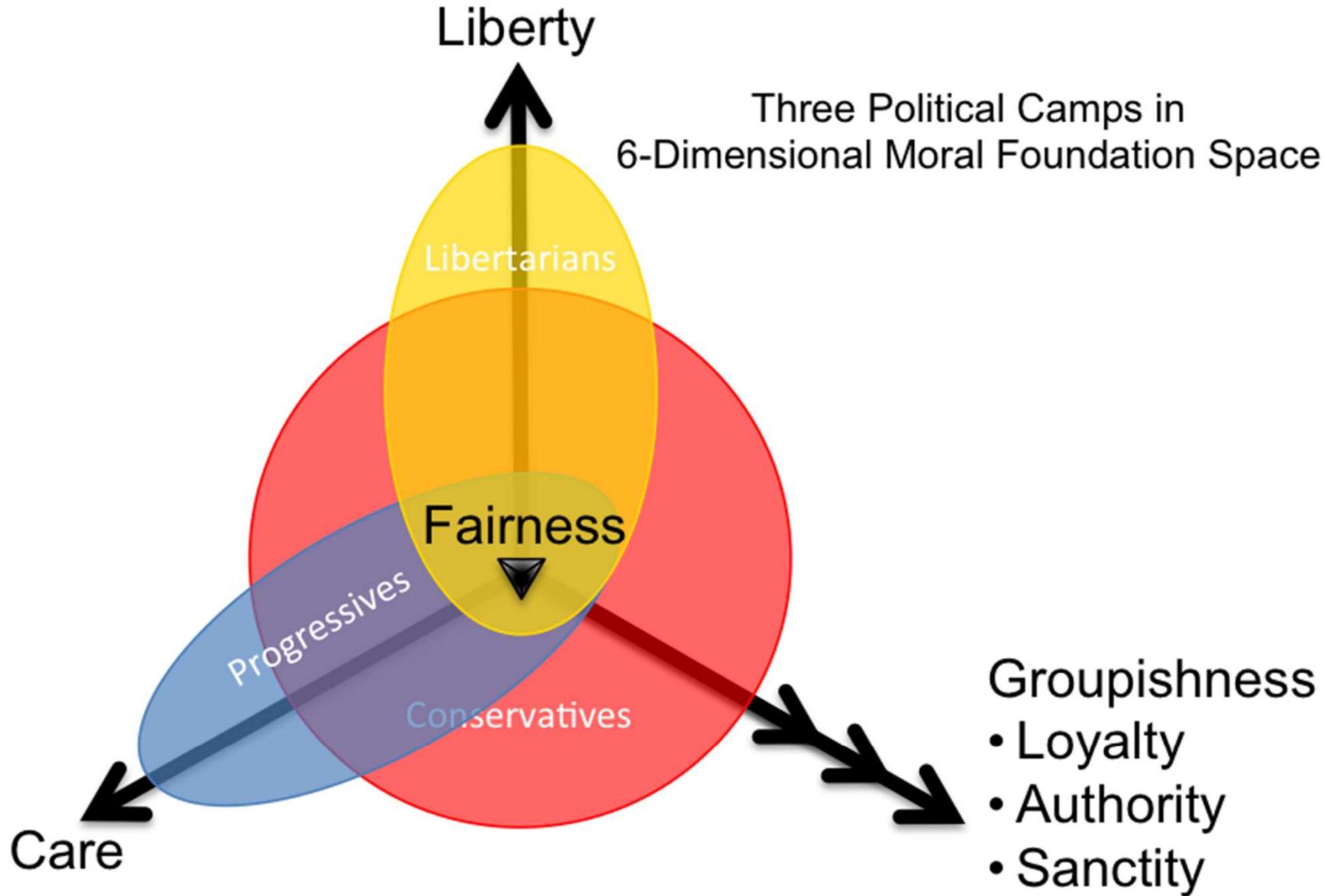
Your scores are:

- Care 52.8%
- Fairness 52.8%
- Loyalty 58.3%
- Authority 19.4%
- Purity 27.8%
- Liberty 94.4%

Your strongest moral foundation is **Liberty**.

Your morality is closest to that of a **Libertarian**.

Three Political Camps in
6-Dimensional Moral Foundation Space



More inner characteristics

- **Philosophy of life**
- **Strongest character trait(s)**
- **Weakest character trait(s)**
- **Greatest hope**
- **Deepest fear**
- **Sense of humor**
- **How character sees self**
- **How others see character**



Exterior characteristics

- Height
- Weight
- Age
- Ethnic heritage
- Style of dressing
- Color of eyes
- Color of hair
- Physical description



Backstory



Backstory

- **Best childhood memory**
- **Worst childhood memory**
- **Family**
- **Best friend**
- **Female friends**
- **Male friends**
- **Enemies**
- **Religion**
- **Political party**
- **Educational background**
- **Work experience**
- **Favorite music**
- **Favorite books**
- **Favorite movies**
- **Hobbies**
- **Favorite colors**
- **Description of home**
- **Contents of purse or wallet**

Character Profile

Waylee



Waylee Freid is an intense young woman who works as a nightlife journalist for the Baltimore Herald until her nemesis, MediaCorp, buys the paper's parent corporation. She has tried to raise awareness of MediaCorp's secret deals with the government during the Internet upgrade, their relentless march to monopolize information, their suppression of critical thought, and their empowerment of an international plutocracy, but has thus far been unable to reach a significant audience.

Waylee seethes with inner anger, which arose from a violent childhood, poverty, and a hatred of injustice. She was sixteen, and her sister only seven, when they fled Philadelphia and the drunken fists of her stepfather and mother. Baltimore was as far as the contents of her mother's purse could take them. Waylee vents most of her anger now through music and community organizing. She leads an electro-punk band called Dwarf Eats Hippo that is locally popular but financially unsuccessful. Influenced by authors like Goldman, Chomsky, and Klein, she is active in the local anarchist scene and with a grassroots social/political movement called the People's Party.

Waylee is outgoing and charismatic, and has a large circle of friends and acquaintances. She is extremely creative, resourceful, and intelligent, and has a quick wit. She struggles with cyclothymia (a type of manic-depressive disorder), but can't afford medicine (which doesn't help anyway) or therapy. She embraces her hypomanic phase, which increases her creativity and energy. Other times, she fears her life is pointless and the world is hopeless.

Settled now after years of moving from place to place, Waylee lives in a refurbished house in West Baltimore ("The Band House") with her boyfriend, sister, and a shifting set of roommates. She's willing to risk everything, though, to bring down MediaCorp and their political allies.



Character arcs

- **Positive change**
- **No change**
- **Negative change**

Wants vs. Needs

- **The Lie the character believes**
- **Symptoms of the Lie**
- **The character's "ghost" or "wound"**
- **What the character wants**
- **What the character needs**
- **Suffering comes from clinging**

The Normal World

- **Character is often (but not always) complacent and takes their life for granted**
- **No reason for the character to question their Lie**
- **Might be a good place, a bad place, or in between**
- **Show the character's flaws, what they have to overcome**
- **But also show their good points**

Inciting Event

- An event that could change the character's life, or a request from another character (like a mentor)
- In the hero's journey, this is the "call to adventure." Typically, the protagonist wants to, or feels they have to, keep on with their normal daily life, and refuses the call to adventure.
- But it's already woken something inside the character.

First Plot Point

- **Something big happens to the protagonist 20-25% into novel or screenplay**
- **The character must react, and is forced out of their normal world (or chooses to leave).**
- **Door of no return.**

Mirror Moment

- A scene in the midpoint, typically after a defeat
- The character is forced to look within and reflect on who he/she is and who he/she must become in order to achieve his goal.
- If he/she decides to continue on as he always has, he/she will surely fail (tragedy).
- If the story is not a tragedy, the hero realizes he/she must either a) become stronger to overcome the odds or b) transform, shedding his biggest flaws and become more open-minded to new ideas and beliefs.

Third Plot Point

- A reversal and/or revelation forces a crisis in the plot and the character's arc
- The character must choose between the Thing He Wants and the Thing He Needs—between the Lie and the Truth. Throughout the Second Half of the Second Act, he convinced himself he could have both. Now, he realizes that's impossible.
- Whatever the protagonist decides here, he will lose something vital.
- The protagonist casts aside their old self and embraces the Truth he/she needs to overcome the antagonist.

Climax

- **Final confrontation**
- **Protagonist completes their arc.**



How will your character change?

- Ex.: Luke accepts The Force.
- Ex.: Scrooge becomes generous and unselfish.
- **Epiphany**

Fitting plot and character together

(exercise)

- **Write a one-sentence summary of the plot from each major character's perspective**

Ex.: Frustrated by MediaCorp's near-total control of information and power, Waylee takes action to bring down the company and its political allies.

Ex.: Charles puts his skills to the test to pull off the greatest hack ever.

Ex.: Going along with Waylee's plan to take down MediaCorp, Pel quickly finds himself over his head.

- **Expand this to a long paragraph, how the character interacts with each major plot point**

Some Resources

- **K. M. Weiland, *Creating Character Arcs***
- **Donald Maass, *Writing the Breakout Novel***
- **Donald Maass, *The Emotional Craft of Fiction***
- **James Scott Bell, *Elements of Fiction Writing: Conflict and Suspense***



Questions?

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