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## How to Create Incredible Characters Easily

By **Caterina Christakos**

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Creating incredible characters can be easy if you know of a few simple rules:

Each character should have his own voice. If your character is from Brooklyn, give him brooklyn accent and mannerisms.

Before you write, decide on his or her background and outline it thoroughly. If she is supposed to be from a high profile Georgia family, know what her parents do for a living. Is she trying to live up to their standards or does she move to California in rebellion? Why?

Know your character's motivations. If he is a serial killer, what about his upbringing or his mind created him into the pathological criminal that he is.

The lesson is know your characters. Know what makes them tick. Know what drives them wild and what drives them crazy. Know them as well as you know yourself otherwise your audience never will.

By creating a thorough outline on each characters before you begin writing, the decisions are made for you. You will know your characters well enough to know what they would and wouldn't say and how they would say it. More importantly, your readers will believe in them and in you.

Caterina Christakos is the author of How to Write a Children's Book in 30 Days or Less. For more writing tips go to:

How to design, plan, and install your landscape project.

### **Learn From The Characters**

**By Matthias Reightman**

Your life is shaped and influenced by the people that you live with, work with, and hang out with. People are definitely the single biggest source of influence in each other's lives. If you think of your life as a story, the people in your life are the characters in the story. Just like you can learn from characters in any good novel, you can learn many things from the characters in your own story.

I met a woman once that kept a journal specifically about things she was learning from the people, or characters, in her life. She had just spent a summer backpacking in Europe and the pages of her journal were filled with biographies of the characters that she met that summer. Some were more influential than others, of course, but she was intentional about learning from even characters that showed up in her story for just a few minutes. I was so impressed by her commitment to learning from living and I was inspired to create a similar journal just for the characters in my own life.

Since starting my own characters journal, I have learned more from people than I ever thought possible. I began the journal by listing the main characters that were frequently a part of my days. These included my family members, closest friends, and co-workers that I interacted with often. I wanted to make this list of main characters because sometimes the people we are closest to are the hardest ones to be intentional about learning from. By having a list in the front of my journal I was reminded of them often.

My journey of learning from the characters in my life has been simple and yet profound. I take a few minutes at the end of each day to record things I have observed or learned from others. Sometimes I see characteristics in other characters that I want to make a part of my own character. Other times I see things in people that I want to warn myself against ever becoming. Whatever the case, I am careful to observe the world around me for anything I might learn about living better. For example, a few months ago I met a woman that had the loveliest ability to tell engaging stories. I recorded her talent in my characters journal that night with a special note that I want to learn how to tell stories better. One day my father told me a story about his childhood. My characters journal that night told of a newfound respect I had gained for my father by learning more about his life. Some of the best lessons of my life have come from the main characters in my life. I would never have learned or remembered many of these lessons without keeping track of them in a characters journal.

Consider starting a journal of the characters that are a part of your story. You'll be glad you did.

Matthias Reightman has been advising people to learn from the characters in their lives for years. Check out more at

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