

The Five Dimensions of Character

<https://scriptmag.com/screenplays/using-psychology-to-create-memorable-characters>

Memorable characters are the ones who rate more extremely on one or two personality dimensions.

- They may be memorable because they're so introverted.
- They may be memorable because they're so open to experience.
- They may be memorable because they're highly disagreeable and emotionally unstable.
- They may be memorable because they're unusually conscientious, introverted and open to experience.

Extroversion / Introversion

One of the first dimensions we become aware of when we meet new people is the degree to which they engage with the world. While extroverts are outward-facing and gain energy from their social interactions, introverts draw energy instead from spending time alone. They tend to be more serious than upbeat and energetic extroverts and have fewer but closer friendships.

Agreeableness / Disagreeableness

Another dimension that we pick up very quickly when first meeting someone, is the degree to which they're agreeable, cooperative and thoughtful with others. While agreeable characters are generally likeable and sympathetic, strong characters are often selfish, opinionated and highly disagreeable.

Neuroticism / Emotional Stability

This dimension describes how people experience the world emotionally. Emotionally stable protagonists are great for stories filled with plenty of external conflict, while characters who are more emotionally sensitive are best for more inwardly focused dramas in which the character's internal journey is central.

Conscientious / Unconscientious

Conscientious characters are driven by a sense of duty and responsibility towards their jobs, friends and/or family. They are typically goal driven – a useful trait for many protagonists – and abide by social expectations. By contrast, unconscientious characters lack this sense of responsibility and tend to be far more spontaneous and free-spirited as a result.

Openness to Experience / Closed to Experience

Openness to experience relates to the degree to which characters are open or closed-minded to new ideas, beliefs, experiences or even arts and culture. Characters who are open to experience will generally love meeting new people, travelling, and trying out new things, while characters who are closed to experience tend to prefer the more familiar and be more conservative. Put an open-minded character together with a closed-minded character and you have plenty of potential for conflict!