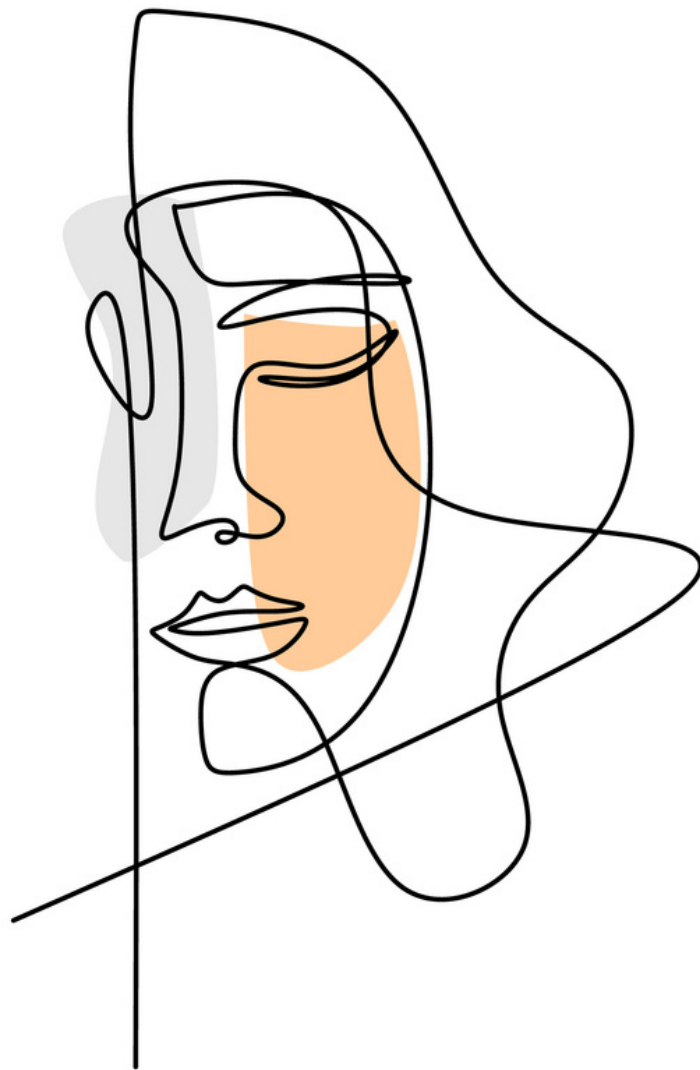


Coach Your Characters

For Pantsers



Life Manifesto
Coaching & EFT 

Welcome

Welcome to Coach Your Characters: For Pantsers. If you're reading this, you've probably got a partial draft of a novel and a cast of characters. Congratulations! Now it's time to flesh out your characters to make your story work even better. You didn't plan your characters before you wrote because you find it challenging to describe them until you've met them and watched how they behave and interact with each other.

As a fellow pantsler, I feel the same way. I also understand the challenge of having a first draft full of characters that don't quite move the story along and don't provide enough tension. I've noted down something that has helped me flesh out my characters in the hope that this may help you too. But what works for me, may not work for you exactly the way I've described it, so please adapt this as you find your own rewriting process.

I remember struggling to create protagonists whose motivations, personality traits and behaviours created a story that people would care enough about. And the supporting characters' interactions were not doing the best job of building tension. At the same time, I was training to be a coach. When I coached people, I got to understand them well, so why wasn't this the same for my fictional characters? That's when I came up with the idea of coaching my characters. Once I did this, my writing improved and my characters came to life.



The Coaching Session

Choose which of your characters you will send to a coach. Save a version of this workbook for each character.

When answering the coach's questions in character, don't try to limit their responses. Allow each character to come alive as the coach digs deeper into their thoughts, feelings and desires.

During this process, your characters may gain a new awareness of their situation and themselves. This awareness doesn't need to show up in your story; it's an awareness that will help you understand them better.

Name of character:

1. What three things are most important to you?

2. What are you happiest doing?

The Coaching Session

3. What are you good at and what qualities do people admire in you?

4. What do you most like about your closest friends?

5. Which of your friends' character traits would you most like? Why?

6. What do you most dislike about your enemies?

The Coaching Session

7. Which of your enemies' character traits would you most like? Why?

8. What do you most want?

9. What's important about having what you want?

10. What impact does not having what you want have on you? And how has it impacted you in the past?

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11. What is stopping you from getting what you want?

12. What one thing could you do this week to get closer to having what you want? Will you do it?

13. How could you behave differently to get what you want?

14. How could you think differently to get what you want?

The Coaching Session

15. What would you never do to get what you want?

16. What haunts you from your past?

17. What are you most scared of?

18. What impact does this fear have on you and your life?

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19. Thinking about everything we've discussed today, what are your biggest takeaways/learnings?

Notes

Basic description of the character, their family and friends:

What the character wants (which will drive the story):

Notes

Character's bad habits, vulnerabilities and flaws:

Character's needs:

Key backstory:

Notes

Key obstacles to the protagonist getting what they want:

What the changed protagonist looks like (at the end of the story):

The Commitment

I know you didn't want to plan your characters, but by taking them to see a coach you will probably have a deeper understanding of how they might behave in your next draft. You may want to allow your thoughts to settle, and you may receive sparks of inspiration over the coming days.

What would you like to do next? You could make character profiles using the questions and answers in this workbook as a starting point. You could turn these profiles into a character web, showing how each character interacts with the others. You may even want to make notes of how your story might change because of these changed characters. Or you may just want to start your next draft. Every writer is different, so choose what works best for you.

Imagine it's twelve months from now and you haven't finished your book because your characters aren't yet fully developed. How do you feel? Now imagine it's twelve months from now and you are holding your finished book in your hands. How do you feel now?

What will keep you progressing towards your goal? Do you need to change your habits? Perhaps there's a voice inside your head telling you something that keeps you stuck. What changes will you make to allow yourself to create the story you want people to read?



If you would like more support fleshing out your characters, untangling your story, working through blocks or carving out time to finish your book, please get in touch. As a writer and a creativity coach, I'm always happy to help.

Clare Bunting

www.lifemanifesto.co.uk/coaching-eft-tapping/

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