

The 46th Character Archetype

THE GAME CHANGER

by Victoria Lynn Schmidt

As many of you know, I am the author of *45 Master Characters: Mythic Models for Creating Original Characters*. This is a bonus 46th character handout to compliment that book. When I developed and researched the archetype of the Messiah I could see another modern character growing out of that archetype and wanted to share my thoughts with you. While you may see a bit of some other archetypes within this 46th character, I felt it was worth mentioning. For a list of book with Writers Digest Books see my site www.VictoriaLynnSchmidt.com

This character has a need to contribute something to the world, to effect society as whole, to create a legacy. But this is not about self-sacrifice as with the Messiah archetypes, there is ego involved here as his drive comes from a desire to be larger than life ever though he is usually helping others in some way. You may see some elements of him in other archetypes because this is a newer character type born of the classic types.

Perhaps he was ignored as a child or his father is an over achiever and now he is trying to live up to his example. It's easy for him to be a workaholic.

What does the Game Changer care about?

The Game Changer cares about trophies, medals, and awards because he wants to be recognized and honored for the work he does. He never does anything in secret. He may outwardly proclaim that such awards are nonsense but deep down he wants them, desperately. Immortalizing himself is his life goal. He would hire a biographer in a heartbeat but would rather have someone else do an unauthorized biography. Others need to recognize him so he can feel important in their life, like he matters. He just wants to belong and be accepted.

He cares what other people think about him but more importantly he just wants to be thought about for good or bad. He wants the power of taking up people's thoughts and time. He wants to be the center of attention in a classy way and he wants to do it for his creative business sense. He does not want scandal; he does not want just 15 minutes of fame. He wants respect as well; to be a person people go to for help and advice on a grand scale.

He also wants to be first when ever possible, he doesn't want to copy others or follow in their footsteps. Unfortunately this can lead to him preferring to be a big fish in a small pond if he's not careful.

What does the Game Changer fear?

He fears Being forgotten, meaningless, normal, or powerless.

He fears others will see through the façade and realize he is a trickster, a fake. He doesn't feel he deserves much, which motivates him to be at the top and to prove himself, and anyone else who made him feel bad about himself in his past, wrong.

He fears his ideas will be stolen and he won't be recognized. He may ruin a deal because he rushes to get out there too soon. His colleagues don't understand this impulsive behavior.

What motivates the Game Changer?

He has a desire to be larger than life, to be important and to make a difference that will get him recognized. He does want to help others but mostly he wants to effect people on a grand scale so they know and remember him.

He has to be unique and different, to stand out – which often means being first. It also means taking risks, something he needs to work on.

How do others see the Game Changer?

Others see him as an innovator, many young people in his field look up to him and want to be around him even if he is a bit on edge most of the time and very specific about what he wants and expects. They see him as powerful and in control, like he knows something no one else knows, or has a magic key to something they will never have. He makes success seem easy.

Others imagine the best of him and idealize him. This is something he fears he may never live up to. He always has to pretend that he has the answers and that he can overcome any challenge – usually he can, which surprises him. He is a great person deep down and he has to learn to see that.

A few see behind the curtain and know his world could come crashing down around him at any time, especially if any of his top

employees leave him. They know it takes more than one man to get a job done or to create a solid company.

He dresses in either the best suits money can buy or dresses for his business image. He may even allow someone else to handle his wardrobe or will just wear the same kind of thing every day so he doesn't have to waste much time on this. (like Einstein with the closet full of the same exact suit)

He often feels like an extra in his own life growing up, and years for the power and prestige to make that go away.

Developing the Character ARC:

Look at your character's main goal in the story and then at the fears you selected to use against him. What does he need to learn to help him overcome this fear?

Does he need to learn how to work in a group and trust others to do their job well? Does he need to find self-esteem & self worth just in being alive and therefore deserving to be 'here' without having to prove anything?

To grow he may best be paired with:

The Fool—to learn how to let go and trust that everything will work out ok. To learn how to take risks and be himself.

The Matriarch—to be with someone who can take control from him so he can relax a bit.

The Amazon—to learn how to work with others in a group and do what is best for all, dropping perfectionism.

THE DARK SIDE OF THE GAME CHANGER: THE MANIPULATOR

One thing this guy could be great at is advertising/marketing. While most in these fields are great at what they do and want to help the public, this character loves to manipulate people for good or bad, he doesn't care, and will say anything to get what he wants. He is somewhat of a sociopath in that he sees others in terms of what they can do for him. Everyone and everything exists for his pleasure and to serve his needs. He does not have empathy or compassion.

He feels no remorse or second thoughts when faced with harsh decisions. If he does have a shred of consciousness, he will find a way to justify his actions "he is doing it for the good of all".

Nothing will stop him. Whatever he is doing it has to be on a large scale, it has to be big, worldly. More people who discuss him and his actions, the better. He is willing to make life and death decisions—for others. He is god like in that way (in his eyes)

Don't try to hold him accountable for anything. He will rage at 'injustice' done to him & will never forget it. He takes responsibility for nothing. If his company goes under, it's everyone else's fault.

Oddly, the only character who can really go up against him is the Game Changer. They truly are a lot alike and the Game Changer will understand his psyche.

Examples: again, this is a modern character built off of the more classic types.

Game Changer

TV/Movie Characters

Bud Fox (Charlie Sheen) in *Wallstreet*

Harry Stamper (Bruce Willis) in *Armageddon*

Austin Powers (Mike Myers) in *Austin Powers*

King Leonidas (Gerard Butler) in *300*

Historical/Cultural Figures

Cesar

Alexander the Great

Leonardo Da Vinci

Oprah Winfrey

Manipulator

TV/Movie/Literary Characters

Gordon Gekko (Michael Douglass) in *Wallstreet*

Howard Payne (Dennis Hopper) in *Speed*

Dr. Evil (Mike Myers) in *Austin Powers*

Xerxes (Rodrigo Santoro) in *300*

Ebenezer Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens

Victoria Lynn Schmidt (www.VictoriaLynnSchmidt.com) is the author of *Advanced Writing Techniques*, *Book in a Month*, *Story Structure Architect* and *45 Master Characters*. She graduated from the film program at UCLA, holds a master's degree in writing from Loyola Marymount University, and holds a doctorate in psychology. She is recognized internationally as a journey & archetype guru for the creative writer and is now becoming known as the voice for the adventurous soul, offering journey maps for all areas of life. When her writing schedule allows it, she teaches at several universities.