



**SEVEN DAYS  
TO**

*intense*

**INTERNAL  
CONFLICT**



DAY ONE: INTRODUCTION

The one thing that sells a novel is a GREAT STORY. But, how do you keep your readers turning the page?

Plenty of writing courses talk about 'obstacles' on the 'hero's journey' and that's part of what makes a story. But what makes a great story is INNER CONFLICT.

What's INNER CONFLICT?

Simply put, it's your character's struggle with themselves. It's the emotional stuff that they have to work through. It's what makes them identifiable. It's what makes the reader CARE.

1) There are TWO types of conflict we need in a romance novel (or any novel, for that matter):

- Inner conflict (romance conflict) – your character's 'inner fight' to overcome their demons so that they can be in a relationship
- External conflict (plot conflict) – obstacles in the character's way/reasons why the couple can't be together

2) Why INNER CONFLICT?

You know what's easier to write—external conflict. Things that get in the way, rather than wrestling with your own demons (I've even named mine).

But internal conflict is way more compelling. A few reasons:

- Inner conflict gives your **character depth**. There's always (almost always) a reason why someone behaves the way they do. No-one exists in a vacuum, and for that reason it also leads to...
- Inner conflict making your character **empathetic**. In a romance novel, you want to root for both sides to make it. And for them to make it together.
- Inner conflict is something **they can (hopefully) overcome**. The orphan who feels safe around animals? What if he meets a comely vet? And he learns that he can feel safe around humans, too? Aah, now that's rewarding to read...
- Because inner conflict is something **we can relate to** and we want to see how other people handle their inner demons and make it work. We CARE about the characters as they work through their emotional arc.

Why do we need inner conflict with our love interest?

- Our wounds create **beliefs** about the world.
- Beliefs are what drive our **behaviour**
- Beliefs = behaviour
- These beliefs are probably subconscious

- To protect themselves, your character and their love interest have probably built up some **defence mechanisms** along the way. This stops them from getting hurt again.
- Although these defence mechanisms are highly efficient at keeping intimacy at bay, our character will have to break them to get what they want

## EXERCISES

**Activity 1:** If you're writing (or have written) a novel, what are/were the inner conflicts that your characters are/were facing?

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**Activity 2:** What are some of the struggles you have in writing up inner conflict?

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