

**SEVEN DAYS  
TO**

*intense*

**INTERNAL  
CONFLICT**



DAY SIX: LINKING YOUR INTERNAL &  
EXTERNAL CONFLICTS

How do you add your internal conflict to your external conflict to drive the plot?

(THE \$1,000,000 question)

Here's what we know so far:

- Your character's trauma (emotional wound, cataclysmic event, etc)
- Their beliefs/fears because of this trauma
- The beliefs they've absorbed from their primary caregivers
- Their defence mechanisms or armour that they've built up to prevent trauma happening again

We also have a love interest who has an **opposing** inner conflict.

### **Next Steps:**

At its simplest, we can use **tropes**. Remember these guys? Tropes are commonly used plot devices, for example:

- *Secret baby*
- *Fake relationship*
- *Second chance*
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Potential TROPE external obstacles for Bo and Cherry (from your Day 3 and Day 4 exercises):

- Cherry and Bo pretend to be in a relationship to go on a reality TV series to win a ranch in Colorado (fake relationship)
- Cherry's an ace drag racer who's already been in trouble for disrupting the public

- Bo's the local heartthrob after he's been featured as rodeo cowboy of the year

Can you see how the choice of hobby **forces each to deal with their issues?**

(To recap: Bo lost his wife in a car crash [Cherry's a drag racer],

Cherry's gorgeous father left their family [Bo's a local heartthrob).

BUT they want to win, so they HAVE to see their BELIEFS

differently.

### What's your character's motivation?

Your character's motivation has to be strongly rooted in emotion – it has to be believable and it has to be something that will require work to get it.

- Cherry wants to win the ranch because she secretly wants to start her own business and this will be her foot through the door AND it's an opportunity to redeem herself
- Bo wants to win the ranch because he needs to prove to himself that he's more than just a rodeo cowboy

Can you see why motivation or STAKES are so important? For your character to change how they see the world, they have to want the external goal BADLY.

### Escalating obstacles

What external situations can you think of that would prevent your character

from achieving her goal because of his/her/their beliefs/fears? How does their love interest represent their belief/fear that they have to overcome?

- For example, if Bo thinks the only way to do anything is alone, independently, force him into a situation where he has to rely on others, i.e. Cherry.
- And if Cherry thinks Bo is an untrustworthy charmer, force her into situations to see him as a guy who's worth her trust

## EXERCISES

### Activity 1: What's your character's MOTIVATIONS?

Your character's motivation has to be strongly rooted in emotion – it has to be believable and it has to be something that will require work to reach their goal.

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### Activity 2: Tropes

Is there/are there tropes that can be used to help with the plot?

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### Activity 3: Facing the fear

What situations can you think of that would prevent your character from achieving her goal because of his/her/their beliefs/fears?

For example, if she thinks the only way to do anything is alone, independently, force her into a situation where she has to rely on others. She has to keep having her beliefs challenged, and the person who must be challenging them needs to be the **love interest**.

This is why that goal has to be something really BIG and IMPORTANT. Your character has to be motivated enough to keep facing her fears.

Brainstorm as many situations that you can think of...

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#### Activity 4: P L O T

Choose three of these situations where your character has to face their fear, each increasing in level of fear (your first turning point, midpoint and third turning point).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

#### Activity 5: Bad decisions make the best stories

How your character responds to the fear-facing situation in situation 1 must be the worst possible way of handling that particular decision, and each decision after that must get progressively worse. This often creates more conflict.

What are your characters bad decisions?

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