



**SEVEN DAYS
TO**

intense

**INTERNAL
CONFLICT**



DAY TWO: EMOTIONAL WOUNDS

Maybe you were one of those lucky people who was brought up by two loving parents in a stable and loving home and absolutely nothing happened to convince you that you were unlovable, unworthy or undesirable in any way. But, for most of us, THINGS happened.

Somewhere along the line, you probably picked up an emotional wound.

Some wounds are small and need a band-aid:

- You failed your English test again and it was open book
- You got to your favorite restaurant on your birthday and it was closed
- Your cat Spotty ran away from home and later that month, you found him four houses down with his new chosen family

Some wounds are bigger and need a bit of stitching:

- Your high school boyfriend dumped you because you wouldn't let him copy your (still crap) English homework
- Your friends forgot your 17th birthday – all of them
- Your cat got run over so you got another and he got run over too.

Damn, why do you live so close to the highway?

Some wounds might require surgery:

- Your English teacher told you your writing was crap and you would never ever be a writer or editor or publisher or even a troll on FB

- Your best friend made out with your boyfriend on your birthday and then took off to Vegas with him — in your car
- Your beloved cat of many years has cancer and no matter how many pills you give him, he's going to kitty heaven

Other wounds are life-threatening and require major surgical and other medical interventions:

- Your mother, who has never liked you anyway, agrees with your English teacher – you're crap – and could you fill up her wine glass while you're at it?
- You have no friends and you never have because your mother left when you were a baby and your father likes you to be his best bud/stand in/needy child but you're in control, you're a grown man...
- You're an orphan and the only time you ever felt safe is around animals — they're so much easier than dealing with humans

Those life-threatening wounds? Those are the kind of **emotional wounds** that should drive your character's behavior, even if it's on a subconscious level. And let's face it, plenty is on that subconscious level driving our actions, beliefs, thoughts, words and deeds.

Emotional wounds include parental abuse, neglect, childhood bullying, injustice, hardship. There's a long list, and most can be found in Emotional Wound Thesaurus's or the DSM-V classification.

Some examples include:

- Physical challenges, such as debilitating skin conditions or birth defects or disabilities
- Neglectful family set ups including growing up in a cult or with an alcoholic parent
- Prejudice as a result of poverty, race, country of origin, or religion

Can you think of some emotional wounds?

(Draw from your own life, if need be, in fact, this is where the 'write about what you know' theory comes from. The best starting point is to mine your own 'stuff'. I often have commitment-phobic characters with narcissistic mothers, why?, because that's part of my story. I know what that feels like on a visceral level so the writing is more 'real'.)

EXERCISES

Activity 1: Honest Tinder

We tend to absorb the beliefs of those around as we're growing up. Write up your **character's** primary caregiver's* Tinder/dating profile. Don't leave anything out!

Now, write up a psychologist's profile of your character's primary caregiver.

*By primary caregiver, I mean parent, step-parent, grandparent, guardian, whoever was responsible for your character's childhood care

Read the two profiles. How do they differ? **The primary caregiver probably thinks they're acting one way but in fact they're acting another.**

Activity 2: Opening up old wounds

How did your **character's** primary caregivers rip a hole in your character? (Sure, they didn't mean to, but they did, to misquote a Philip Larkin poem.)

Write that scene.

Activity 3: What you see and think, you believe

What does your character think about the world because of the behaviour exhibited by the primary caregiver?

