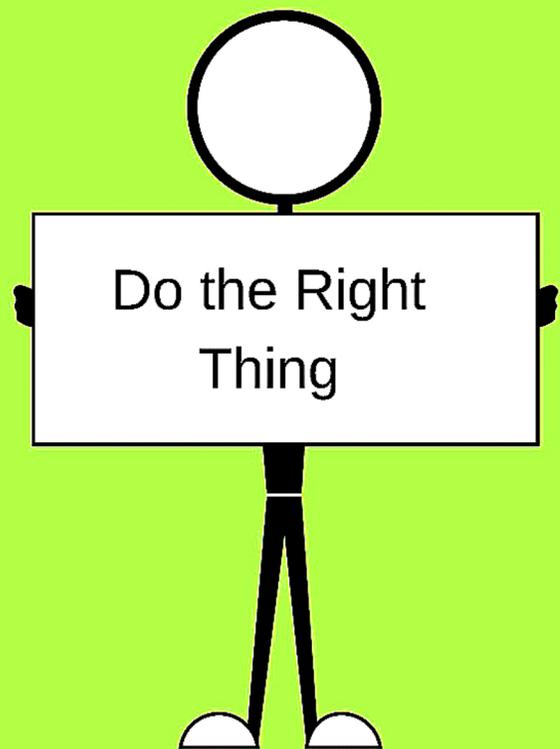


CHARACTER MOTTO WORKBOOK

by *USA Today* Bestselling Author

Susan Gable

A Writer's Tool for Creating 3-D
Characters & Enhancing Plot, Setting
& Conflict





YOUR PROTAGONIST

In this section, you'll work through creating important details about your protagonist - your main character.

Main Character's motto:

Tip: Use the Big List of Mottos to help you choose. Don't forget this motto will play into the conflict of your book. This corresponds to Chapter One of the *Character Motto* book. If you have a kernel of a plot, make sure the motto works with it. If your book has an antagonist, consider how this motto could conflict with him/her.

Backstory

What happened to your protagonist to make him/her view the world this way? To review, see Chapter Two of the *Character Motto* book.

SHOW the MOTTO

What are details you can use to SHOW the motto? Think about setting details. Where and how your protagonist lives. What s/he drives. How s/he dresses. What behaviors might s/he engage in as a result of this motto? For help, see Chapter Three of the *Character Motto* book.



Conflict Within

How does your protagonist's motto created conflict within him/her? Internally, what's s/he struggling with/against? Externally, what plot point(s) will you throw at your character that will conflict with their motto? Chapter Four of the *Character Motto* book will provide guidance.



Conflict With Others

Now that you've established your protagonist, come up with several mottos for other characters who will inhabit your story that will provide instant conflict between your main character and the others. This will help you choose the motto for your antagonist, as well as others in the story to create rich, interesting interactions.



YOUR ANTAGONIST

In this section, you'll work through important details for your antagonist, the foil to your main character.

Antagonist's Motto:

Tip: Use the Big List of Mottos to help you choose. Don't forget this motto will play into the conflict of your book. This corresponds to Chapter One of the *Character Motto* book. If you have a kernel of a plot, make sure the motto works with it. Be sure to consider how this motto conflicts with your protagonist.

Backstory

What happened to your antagonist to make them view the world this way? For guidance, refer to Chapter Two of the *Character Motto* book.

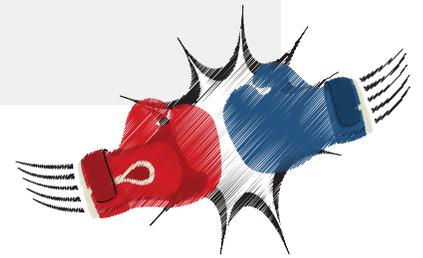
SHOW the Motto



What are details you can use to SHOW your antagonists's motto? about setting details. Where and how lives. What s/he drives. How s/he dressed. What behaviors might they engage in as a result of this motto. For help, see Chapter Three of the *Character Motto* book. Keep conflict in mind. How will these details be in conflict (possibly! They don't all have to be. Sometimes blue drapes were just on sale! Although if everything is bought on sale, even though they HATE blue drapes, that tells you something about your character - and SHOWS your reader something, too.) with your protagonists's motto?

Conflict with Protagonist's Motto

How does your antagonist's motto conflict with your protagonist's motto? How does it create conflict between her/him and other characters in your story? (i.e. best friend, mother, boss, etc.)

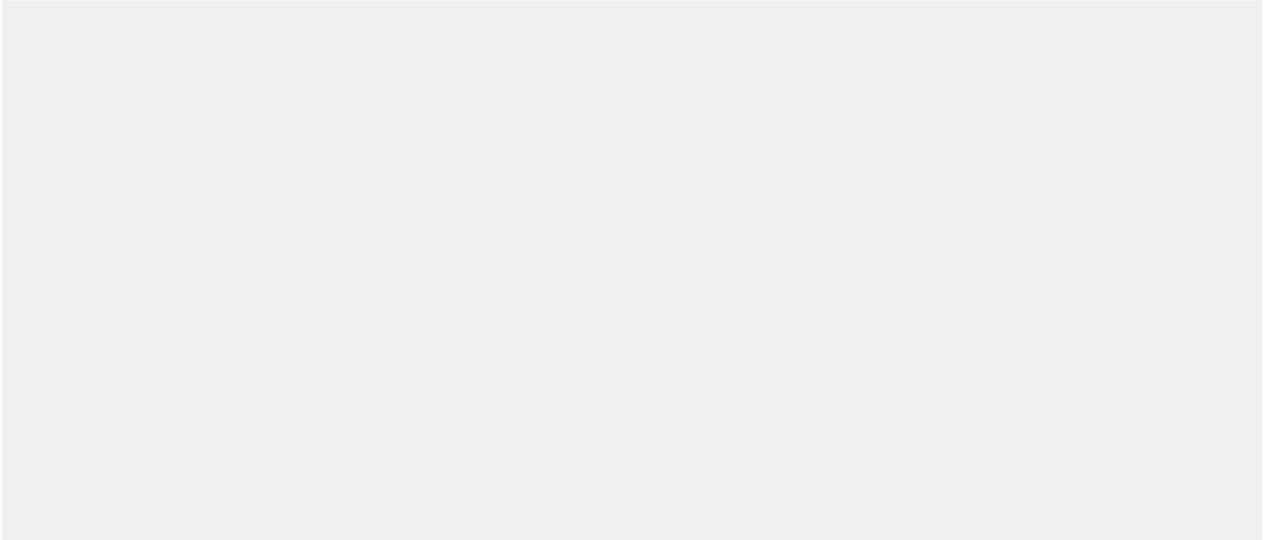


Conflict Within

How does your antagonist's motto create conflict within her/him? Internally, what is s/he struggling against? Externally, what plot points will you throw at him/her that will conflict with their motto? Chapter Four of the *Character Motto* book will provide guidance.

Your Book

Your book's motto is another way of asking for the theme of your book. You don't have to know this going in, but it can help. So what's your book's motto? For help, see Chapter Five in the *Character Motto* book.



A few examples:

Good triumphs over evil.

Enjoy life while you can because you don't know how long you have.

Sometimes you get second changes.

Sometimes you have to fight for what you love.

The grass is always greener...

The grass isn't always greener...

Love yourself for who you are.

PLOTTING

What are your characters' greatest fears? This fear is related to their motto, and will give insight to what they need to learn over the course of their character arc. See Chapter Six of the Character Motto book for more details. Examples are below.

Motto	Greatest Fear	Needs to Learn
Life is a Catch & Release Program	Losing what she loves	Some things are worth fighting for
Success is the best revenge	Not measuring up	What is the "right" definition of success?
Do the right thing	Doing the wrong thing, being immoral, not being perfect	Not everything is black/white, right/wrong. There are shades of grey, no one is perfect
Life's short, eat dessert first	Losing the joy in life, rigid structure	Sometimes you have to do the "right" thing instead of what you want (eat the veggies first)
What's in it for me?	Not having enough, getting the short end of the stick	Put others first. Sacrifice for the greater good.
I'll do it myself	Losing independence	Sometimes it's okay to ask for help, rely on others
One strike and you're out	Being betrayed	Sometimes people deserve a second chance
Life's fatal	Afraid of fully living	Life is to be lived, shared, embraced
Love 'em and leave 'em wanting more	Losing someone he loves	Tis better to have loved deeply and lost than never to have loved (or only superficially) at all

Now chart out your own characters' greatest fears, and the lessons they need to learn. This will help you plot your story. I've left an additional space here for to plan another character's arc as well.

	Motto	Greatest Fear	Needs to Learn
Protagonist			
Antagonist			
Other			

Based on your protagonist's fear and lesson they need to learn, you can likely figure out your black moment. How are you going to pull the rug out from under him/her? What are some plot points you'll need to move your character from the opening to that black moment?