



The Writer's Guide to Character Traits: Includes Profiles of Human Behaviors and Personality Types

Linda N. Edelstein

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'The Writer's Guide to Character Traits' profiles the mental, emotional and physical qualities of dozens of different personality types. The guide also includes a section on child personality types.

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From Reader Review The Writer's Guide to Character Traits: Includes Profiles of Human Behaviors and Personality Types for online ebook

Robert Day says

This could prove to be an invaluable tool to use when developing characters for more involved pieces of fiction. In addition to that it's pretty useful for giving an insight into the characters of the people around you and yourself. Of particular interest is the table on page 340 that shows the different traits of men and women when they are speaking to each other. This could well be the key to a happily married life for me - now and in the future.

Evalyn says

A psychological reference book that lists the traits, behaviors, and what influenced them in every type from "soccer moms to serial killers" - tool for writers creating characters and for anyone interested in human behavior. Thorough, clear, and concise - by Linda N. Edelstein, a Psychologist and professor of psychology. Re-read.

Hunter says

Good reference tool for creating more indepth characters, giving the writer the ability to think about the character's childhood influences and personality traits which define their actions and reactions today. Bullet-pointed and indexed to help with selection.

Naturally, there could be 200, 300 maybe 500% more careers, traits or disorders that could have been listed here, but these are good starter subjects for pointing you to where you may like to explore.

My copy was borrowed from the local library, or I perhaps mightn't have discovered this book. Having explored it, I thought to get myself a copy permanently, but unfortunately Amazon has currently pulled the Kindle edition due to some reader comments - perhaps formatting troubles? Will wait for this.

Rachel says

Stereotypes exist for a reason; usually, because there's an element of truth to them. With The Writer's Guide to Character Traits, psychologist-professor Linda Edelstein has created a kind of Psych 101 for Writers. Her goal is a "friendly reference" for writers who want "to create believable characters and need accurate information about personality and behavior." Sure, disparage it if you like. But wouldn't you like to know which of your protagonist's offspring is most predisposed to warming up to their new stepfather? What kind of criminal is likely to have a religious mother? The traits of people who commit suicide? Edelstein has included more than 400 lists: of traits associated with child development, psychological disorders, criminal

styles, sexual styles, love and marriage, life-changing events, physical problems, career, and so on. "Even when a writer's imagination soars to places more fascinating than reality," says Edelstein, "characters must possess an internal cohesiveness; they must make sense." And let's face it: "People," she adds, "are more consistent than not." (With real-life character anecdotes from Edelstein's own work and a huge character-trait cross-referencing index at book's end.) --Jane Steinberg --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Tom Bane says

Invaluable book for writers, I'll write a full review later...

Kathy Davie says

Edelstein calls this "a crash course in psychology for writers with information about personality and behavior to create believable and authentic characters".

My Take

I liked the differentiation Edelstein offers between character and traits. A good difference to keep in mind when creating your character while reminding the reader, er, I mean, the writer---you, that these groupings are not set in stone.

"Dorothy Parker was right: 'People are more fun than anybody.'"

While Edelstein remembers once in awhile to point out the ways in which a writer can use this information, it's mostly a psychological analysis of individuals in all sorts of situations from babyhood to adults; the effects of illnesses and all sorts of disorders along with deviations from the norm; types of criminality, romantic partners, age, maturation, group dynamics, sexual behaviors, family inter-relationships, how people cope, and occupational and group types.

It includes a chapter on physical appearances and nonverbal/verbal communication, i.e., body language and facial expressions as well as a short bit on the difference between male and female traits of communication. But I don't know why Edelstein bothered to include this. There really isn't much in this particular chapter.

My favorite chapters are the first and second as they have the most useful information in helping a writer create a sense of real people whom your readers can accept, believe in---whether for good or ill! How roles, situations, and relationships influence traits and vice versa. She notes the differences between adults and children whose "personalities are not yet fully formed"---a good distinction to keep in mind. And Edelstein reminds us---just often enough---that the categories are not exclusive nor inclusive.

Chapter four is rather terrifying---parents might consider reading this chapter just to help themselves keep an eye on their own behaviors!

There's an interesting section on using recovered or false memories to create conflict.

About halfway through *Writer's Guide to Character Traits*, I was getting rather skeptical about *how* to use this mass of information. I thought I'd have to be flipping back and forth hunting for how to pull the bits in the various chapters together to create my character, but then I got to chapter 14 and my prayers were answered. Edelstein has an index of traits and the types of disorders or situations in which you could expect to find it. It still involves flipping back and forth, but at least this chapter tells you where to flip!

Overall it's an interesting book, but I'm not sure it's worth buying. Check it out at the library first.

The Cover

The cover is a colonial blue with black text and a slash of white puzzle pieces across the background with an eye in black.

The title indicates for whom the book is written and its contents: a *Writer's Guide to Character Traits*.

Melannie says

Wow, for a book published in 2004 it's certainly out of date and disgusting.

The section about mental disorders (and the questionably separate section about eating disorders) perpetuate basic stereotypes, and the paragraph-list on the habits of homosexual teenagers left many an eyebrow quirked.

In addition, the information is not synthesized or nicely put into a paragraph format for easy digestion. Instead it leaves bare-bones lists with little elaboration on the topics mentioned, as well as no exceptions to the plain and sometimes incorrect rules they put forth.

Minimal information could be gained from this, except that much has changed in eleven years and Edelstein is stuck in the past.

Theodora says

This book really stunk.

Rae says

This book is more of a quick reference or jumping off point than an in-depth look. There's many lists and charts which make looking up aspects of a condition or disorder easy. Childhood and adolescence are covered as well as adulthood. In addition to various disorders and conditions the book covers group dynamics as well as body language and nonverbal cues. These sections make handy cheat sheets for any writer.

While many conditions and disorders are covered, none are covered in depth. However they're useful for getting an initial understanding for further research or as a way of deciding what to inflict upon your cast of characters.

Josette says

I've read only portions of this book, but it's not exactly the type of book you can read cover-to-cover. This book is good as a reference tool for writers, because it lists personality traits and disorders that various classifications of people have, which can help writers make their characters more believable. So far I've been disappointed with the amount of information the author lists. I'm sure there's only so much a journeyed psychiatrist can include in a book that covers character traits of just about anyone a writer could possibly want to write about, but I guess I was looking for more than just a list of traits a person has; I want to know the "why" behind all the "whats" she lists.

I expect this book to be on my "currently reading" list for awhile, since, as I said, it will be something I refer to as I need it rather than something to read front to back.

Hey_jude says

This book is perfect for any writer, and is by far the best character reference book I have stumbled upon. Inside are detailed chapters of all types of character traits plus numerous writing exercises that will help get into the mind of said character. I've never been so engrossed! A definite read for anyone who wants to create well rounded, eccentric characters instead of cardboard cutouts.

A. Roy King says

This "Writer's Guide to Character Traits" is a useful reference created by professional psychologist Linda N. Edelstein. Much food for thought here to help the fiction author add depth to characters.

Particularly useful is Chapter 2, "Adult Personality Types," which outlines the traits and interpersonal attributes of 23 personality types, such as the Adventurer, the Boss, the Conformist, the Dependent, the Eccentric, the Fall Guy or Girl, the Loner, the Man's Man, and the Ultra-Feminine.

I read many books for writers. Most end up for sale used on Amazon or in a donation box. But this one gets a permanent place on my writer's reference shelf.

ARK

Kelly H. (Maybedog) says

This was a good idea but completely useless. Nothing went into enough depth to be useful, but the biggest problem is that although it was written in 1999, most of the sources used were already out of date and obsolete then. She uses Masters & Johnson from the 60's for information about homosexuality. Info about BDSM comes from a book written in 1964 when it was still considered a bizarre thing only freaks did. Seriously? Research as shown that as many as 70% of women claim to participate in BDSM play such as

spanking. One of the sources was from 1937! With the amount of research into how the brain works and advances in psychology and sociology, such information is less than useless; it's often completely wrong.

1.5 stars rounded up because it was a good idea.

April Brown says

Several stereotypes, not all correct.

A few good points in some places.

Looking forward to the publication of The Bookshelf Muse.

Ms. Nikki says

Not to be read as a fiction read in just 2 sittings. Helps build character profiles using certain stereotypes: the divorcee, the mentally ill, the abuser, and so on.
