

Many thanks to all the visitors to The Guide and for the fantastic feedback it has earned since its inception. The test of such a project is if it is actually used, and by all accounts The Guide is becoming an established tool in RPG character creation. Role playing games have been a source of great fun in my life, so I'm pleased to be able to give back in a tangible way. Now rock on and roll a double 20 for me!

Welcome to the Guide!

In my experience, what makes role playing games so fun is the role playing! Yes, high pitched battles are a blast, but can get stale when that's the meat of the experience. Developing and running a character that, over time, really comes to life makes gaming rewarding because eventually you get to know and care about this creation that is, ultimately, an extension of yourself. And so, this guide was developed for gamers like me that enjoy playing complex characters with a unique personality and background.

Chances are, outlining everything in this guide in detail would be time-consuming and unwieldy. At the beginning of a new game, few players want to spend a lot of time creating a personality and backstory profile—they want to start gaming! The good news is that this guide was designed to be modular. It is possible to start off with only a few items and build on them as you go.

Let me repeat: The Guide does not require that every variable be assigned. It is very possible to start off with a minimal profile and see how the character develops, even if you only begin with the Primary Motivator. It could be that certain questions start coming up that you want an answer for—like style of humor or religious background—but that you don't need to get started playing. However you use this guide, either piecemeal or developing everything all at once, I hope that you find it useful for enriching your gaming experience.

Part I

## PERSONALITY

When we talk about personality in a gaming context, what we want to know are things like a character's motivations, emotional states, worldview, and how she behaves in given situations. Alignment often doesn't go far enough in answering these questions. Richness in a campaign often comes in the form of small details, quirky events, and surprising action, all of which are more possible when the characters (including the NPCs) have personality elements that make for non-general play. For example, a thief can certainly be played to pickpocket anyone indiscriminately, but it is more interesting if she, say, loves to learn and goes out of her way to steal books. It is this kind of knowledge about what makes the character tick that allows for really fun and engaging adventures.

Although there are a number of personality tables below and a lot of options, in the end the output is not all that overwhelming. Naturally, you can choose to detail only those traits that you find useful and interesting. With all of them assigned, the final result would look something like this:

<b>PRIMARY MOTIVATOR</b>	RECOGNITION	<b>SENSE OF HUMOR</b>	CYNICAL
<b>EMOTIONAL DISPOSITION</b>	Contemptuous	<b>SEXUALITY</b>	
<b>MOODINESS</b>	Labile	<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	Hetero
<b>CORE TRAITS</b>		<b>Libido</b>	Lascivious
<b>OUTLOOK</b>	Pessimistic	<b>Sexual Expressiveness</b>	Flirtatious
<b>INTEGRITY</b>	Unscrupulous	<b>Sexual Expressive Style</b>	Seductive

<b>IMPULSIVENESS</b>	s Controlled	<b>Openness to sexual experience</b>	Narrow
<b>BOLDNESS</b>	Intrepid	<b>Promiscuousness</b>	High
<b>FLEXIBILITY</b>	Stubborn	<b>RELIGION &amp; SPIRITUALITY</b>	
<b>AFFINITY</b>	Cold	<b>Adherence</b>	Agnostic
<b>COMPORTMENT</b>	Discordant	<b>Tolerance</b>	Intolerant
<b>INTERACTIVITY</b>	Reserved	<b>Expression of beliefs</b>	Occasional
<b>DISCLOSURE</b>	Secretive	<b>Converting others</b>	Never
<b>CONFORMITY</b>	Conventional	<b>Attitude</b>	Irreverent
<b>TOPICS OF CONVERSATION</b>	Himself; current events; politics		
<b>QUIRKS, HABITS, &amp; ODDITIES</b>	Eavesdropping, pacing, constant grooming		
<b>HOBBIES &amp; ENJOYMENTS</b>	Gardening, woodworking		

One glance at this paints an immediate picture of what this person is like in a way that informs how he acts. What makes this process interesting is when there are items that don't quite go together. In the above example, this character's cynical, contemptuous, and unkind demeanor is somewhat at odds with his also being conventional and enjoying gardening. By coming up with an explanation for such small discordancies, you instantly tap into a richness that is fun and challenging to play. This is where background development becomes relevant, which we'll explore in Part II of this guide.

Check out several examples on the [personality profiles samples page](#).

Note: the percentages in this Guide are there for those who want random development, which might be good for NPCs. For player characters, gamers are encouraged to pick and choose the traits as they see fit.

### Step 1: Primary Motivators

In the broadest sense, the Primary Motivator is the underlying goal in your character's life, forms the basic theme of his worldview, and is what drives him to action. While one motivator is completely sufficient, multiple motivators can make for interesting patterns (although some motivators clearly cannot coincide, such as Chaos and Order). The Primary Motivator should influence all your choices in Core Traits.

Please note, you are certainly not limited to the choices below—but if you create your own, be sure to make it generalizable and not based on a single goal. For example, you might choose *Competition*, the motivation to turn events into rule-based win/lose scenarios, but it wouldn't be general enough to say that the motivation was to become, say, the best possible chess player (which would fit nicely under the Quests section in your Background). The Primary Motivator needs to be something that affects decision making in nearly all situations; it is a global trait.

#### PRIMARY MOTIVATORS

**1-5% Achievement** To overcome obstacles and succeed; to become the best

**6-10 Acquisition** To obtain possessions/wealth

%		
11-1	<b>Balance/Peace</b>	To bring all things into harmony and equilibrium
5%		
16-2	<b>Beneficence</b>	To protect the helpless, heal the sick, feed the hungry, etc.
0%		
21-2	<b>Chaos</b>	To disrupt, to cause confusion and discord
5%		
26-3	<b>Creation</b>	To build or make new, such as art, culture, invention, design, etc.
0%		
31-3	<b>Destruction</b>	To annihilate, exterminate, unmake, and bring to ruin
5%		
36-4	<b>Discovery/Adventure</b>	To explore, uncover mysteries, and pioneer
0%		
41-4	<b>Education</b>	To provide information, teach, enlighten, or train
5%		
46-5	<b>Enslavement</b>	To force others into servitude
0%		
51-5	<b>Hedonism</b>	To enjoy all things sensuous
5%		
56-6	<b>Liberation</b>	To free the self and/or others from perceived captivity or enslavement
0%		
61-6	<b>Nobility/Honor</b>	To exalt ideals such as generosity, honesty, bravery, and courtliness
5%		
66-7	<b>Order</b>	To arrange, organize, and reduce chaos
0%		
71-7	<b>Play</b>	To have fun, to enjoy life
5%		
76-8	<b>Power</b>	To control and lead others
0%		
81-8	<b>Recognition</b>	To gain approval, social status, or fame
5%		
86-9	<b>Service</b>	To follow a person, government, order, religion, etc.
0%		
91-9	<b>Torment</b>	To inflict pain and suffering, on others and/or the self
5%		
91-1	<b>Understanding</b>	To seek knowledge or wisdom (spiritual, scientific, magical, etc)
00		

As mentioned, these aren't the only possible Primary Motivators, although they seem well suited to regular game play. But for more ideas, here are other potential Motivators:

- \* Domesticity: to get married, have children, and live a family life
- \* Tranquility: to live a life with minimal conflict or disturbance
- \* Rebellion: to act out against or contrary to any and all forms of authority
- \* Competition: to enter into or create zero-sum opportunities to win over others

You can also choose a more narrow version of the above options. For example, Invention rather than the more general Creation; Rebellion can also be seen as a sub-motivation of Chaos; or try Popularity rather than Recognition. Just be careful not to make it too narrow. And if you do pick a narrow Motivator, you are encouraged to pick at least one other category, just to keep your character from a too-restricted range of action.

## Step 2: Core Traits

The traits in the tables below outline the elements that make up a character's core personality. They help define how a character sees the world and how he moves within it. While all such traits in reality have a wide spectrum of expression, for the sake of gaming simplicity, they have been divided into black and white categories. Even so, this should not stop you from finding the shades of grey during gameplay.

**For players who don't need much personality detail, picking out a Primary Motivator and the key emotional disposition should be enough to give any character a distinct flavor.**

### **EMOTIONAL DISPOSITION**—*The general emotional set; the default mood*

<b>1-10%</b>	<b>Joyful</b>	<b>51-60</b>	<b>Angry</b>
<b>11-20</b>	<b>Anxious</b>	<b>61-70</b>	<b>Contemptuous</b>
<b>21-30</b>	<b>Melancholy</b>	<b>71-80</b>	<b>Excited</b>
<b>31-40</b>	<b>Curious</b>	<b>81-90</b>	<b>Apathetic</b>
<b>41-50</b>	<b>Calm</b>	<b>91-100</b>	<b>Ashamed</b>

### **MOODINESS**—*Emotional stability*

**1-33%** labile; **34-66** even-tempered;  
**67-100** phlegmatic

<b>OUTLOOK</b> <i>General worldview</i>	<b>Optimistic</b> idealistic, confident, trusting, hopeful, upbeat <b>Pessimistic</b> cynical, bleak, distrustful, foreboding, resigned
<b>INTEGRITY</b> <i>Basic values regarding work and social interactions</i>	<b>Conscientious</b> industrious, honest, responsible, meticulous, pragmatic <b>Unscrupulous</b> lazy, deceitful, unreliable, manipulative, slipshod, impractical
<b>IMPULSIVENESS</b> <i>Distractibility and steadiness</i>	<b>Controlled</b> deliberate, focused, steady, thoughtful <b>Spontaneous</b> capricious, flighty, hyperactive, rash
<b>BOLDNESS</b> <i>Willingness to enter into battle or to face danger</i>	<b>Intrepid</b> daring, reckless, chivalrous <b>Cautious</b> timid, paranoid, vigilant
<b>FLEXIBILITY</b> <i>Handling new situations, tough choices, and disagreement</i>	<b>Flexible</b> nonchalant, tolerant, forgiving, open-minded, adaptable <b>Stubborn</b> rigid, tense, relentless, intractable,

<b>AFFINITY</b> <i>Emotional attitude towards other people</i>	<b>narrow-minded</b>  <b>Warm</b> altruistic, nurturing, empathic, supportive  <b>Cold</b> self absorbed, needy, greedy, stingy, uncaring
<b>COMPORTMENT</b> <i>General style of social interaction</i>	<b>Agreeable</b> courteous, cultured, modest, charming, humorous <b>Discordant</b> gruff, critical, arrogant, crude, defensive, sanctimonious
<b>INTERACTIVITY</b> <i>Degree to which your character interacts with others</i>	<b>Engaging</b> talkative, listener, entertaining, touchy  <b>Reserved</b> shy, loner, taciturn
<b>DISCLOSURE</b> <i>Degree to which your character reveals personal information</i>	<b>Candid</b> open book, unreserved, frank  <b>Secretive</b> closed, mysterious, evasive, cryptic
<b>CONFORMITY</b> <i>Basic relationship with cultural norms</i>	<b>Conventional</b> orthodox, formal, down-to-earth, mainstream, traditional <b>Heterodox</b> rebellious, arty, shocking, freethinking, exotic

### Step 3: Secondary Traits

These are aspects of a character that might be relevant and fun to play, but aren't necessary to determine most motivations for action. These offer a player more options for motivations and behavior.

#### SENSE OF HUMOR

1-10 %	<b>Crude</b>	51-60	<b>Pranks</b>
11-20	<b>Dry</b>	61-70	<b>Mean-spirited</b>
21-30	<b>Slaps</b>	71-80	<b>Gleeful</b>
31-40	<b>Jokey</b>	81-90	<b>Surreal</b>
41-50	<b>Cynical</b>	91-100	<b>None</b>

## Sexuality

**ORIENTATION**—*Determines to which gender your character is sexually attracted. For extra spiciness, you can also choose to add various races that are included.*

**1-50% heterosexual; 51-85 bisexual; 86-100 homosexual**

**LIBIDO**—*The strength of your character's sex drive*

**0-25% anemic; 25-75 healthy; 76-100 lascivious**

**SEXUAL DEMEANOR**—*How your character tends to act when, um, inspired. It can also be useful to take experience and Charisma into consideration.*

**Expressiveness: 0-33% Modest; 34-66 Flirtatious; 67-100 Brazen**

**Style: 0-33% Crude; 34-66 Seductive; 67-100 Romantic**

**Openness to experience: 0-33% Narrow; 34-66 Moderate; 67-100 Adventurous**

**Promiscuousness: 0-33% Low/Monogamous; 34-66 Medium/Polyamorous; 67-100 High/Noncommittal**

**Tastes: 1-10% Bondage; 11-20 Cross-dressing; 21-30 Role-playing; 31-40 Spanking; 41-50 Massaging; 51-60 Masochism; 61-70 Exhibitionism; 71-80 Orgies; 81-90 Voyeurism; 91-100 Think of your own**

## Religion & Spirituality

**ADHERENCE**—*Strength of belief or association with a belief system*

**1-25% atheist; 26-50 agnostic; 51-75 casual adherent; 86-100 orthodox adherent**

**TOLERANCE**—*Willingness to accept differences of belief in others*

**0-33% inclusive; 34-66 tolerant; 67-100 intolerant**

**RELIGIOUS DEMEANOR**—*How your character tends to act in regards to religious beliefs*

**Expression of beliefs: 0-33% none; 34-66 occasional; 67-100 constant**

**Converting others: 0-33% never; 34-66 casual; 67-100 aggressive**

**Attitude: 0-20% irreverent; 21-40 fearful; 41-60 judgmental; 61-80 humble; 81-100 ecstatic**

### RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATION

**1-20 Church** Generally an established, hierarchical organization

**21-40 Cult** A large or small group usually attached to a single charismatic leader

**41-60 Fellowship** Small group(s) that lack formal organization and a charismatic leader

**61-80 Solitary** When a character either has unique beliefs or chooses not to affiliate religiously with others

**81-100 Indigenous** Religious traditions within a cultural group, such as a family or village

### RELIGIOUS ROLES—*(Also useful for background information in Part II)*

**1-7% Abbot/Ab  
bess** Leader of a monastery or convent.

**8-13% Cult  
Leader** Usually a charismatic head of a small group of highly devoted followers

**14-20% Disciple** Dedicated follower of a religious teacher or leader

**21-26% Guru** Spiritual teacher

**27-33% Hermit** One who follows a solitary and isolated spiritual path

**34-40% Inquisitor** An official tasked with finding and "correcting" people who have broken religious rules

**41-46% Jihadist** A religious warrior

<b>47-53%</b>	<b>Missionary</b>	Dedicated to converting others, usually in distant geographic areas
<b>54-59%</b>	<b>Monk/Nun</b>	Belongs to a monastery or convent
<b>60-66%</b>	<b>Patriarch/Matriarch</b>	Leader of an organized religion, such as a pope
<b>67-73%</b>	<b>Pilgrim</b>	One traveling to a holy site or landmark
<b>74-79%</b>	<b>Priest/Priestess</b>	Someone authorized to administer sacraments as an ordained member of a church
<b>80-86%</b>	<b>Prophet</b>	One inspired to utter revelations or predictions, often in service to a specific deity
<b>87-93%</b>	<b>Sacred Courtesan</b>	Has sex, often with strangers, in service to a religion and for a symbolic price
<b>94-100%</b>	<b>Shaman</b>	A medium between the material and spirit world who practices healing and divination

## Habits and Hobbies

### QUIRKS, HABITS, & ODDITIES

<b>1-2%</b>	Humming	51-52% Constant eating
<b>3-4%</b>	Dancing	53-54% Pacing
<b>5-6%</b>	Sleepwalking	55-56% Blade sharpening
<b>7-8%</b>	Facial tics	57-58% Counting
<b>9-10%</b>	Exhibitionism	59-60% Hair pulling
<b>11-12%</b>	Fingernail biting	61-62% Snoring
<b>13-14%</b>	Eavesdropping	63-64% Walking backwards
<b>15-16%</b>	Daydreaming	65-66% Teeth sucking
<b>17-18%</b>	Talking in sleep	67-68% Excessively touching others
<b>19-20%</b>	Stuttering	69-70% Substance use (non-addicted)
<b>21-22%</b>	Compulsive lying	71-72% Hair pulling
<b>23-24%</b>	Whistling	73-74% Animal hater
<b>25-26%</b>	Name dropping	75-76% Insomnia
<b>27-28%</b>	Self-inflict pain/injury	77-78% Beard/hair stroking
<b>29-30%</b>	Mumbling	79-80% Nose picking
<b>31-32%</b>	Constant grooming	81-82% Needless



		2	apologizing
<b>33-34</b>	Foot tapping	83-8	Exaggeration
		4	
<b>35-36</b>	Lip biting/licking	85-8	Superstitious
		6	(omens, luck, etc.)
<b>37-38</b>	Coin flipping	87-8	Belching
		8	
<b>39-40</b>	Chewing (e.g. sticks, small bones)	89-9	Sleeping in odd places
		0	
<b>41-42</b>	Knuckle cracking	91-9	Repeating others
		2	
<b>43-44</b>	Collects odd things	93-9	Smelling things
		4	
<b>45-46</b>	Singing	95-9	Teeth picking
		6	
<b>47-48</b>	Snacking (nuts, seeds, etc.)	97-9	Stealing
		8	
<b>49-50</b>	Reciting poetry	99-1	Tree climbing
		00	

## HOBBIES & ENJOYMENTS

<b>1-2%</b>	Acrobatics	51-5	Glassmaking
		2%	
<b>3-4</b>	Acting	53-5	Animal racing
		4	
<b>5-6</b>	Astrology	55-5	Horse riding
		6	
<b>7-8</b>	Music appreciation	57-5	Hunting
		8	
<b>9-10</b>	Theatre	59-6	Invention
		0	
<b>11-12</b>	Gaming (e.g. chess)	61-6	Jewelry making
		2	
<b>13-14</b>	Boating/Sailing	63-6	Jousting
		4	
<b>15-16</b>	Brewing	65-6	Juggling
		6	
<b>17-18</b>	Calligraphy	67-6	Metalwork
		8	
<b>19-20</b>	Cards	69-7	Painting
		0	
<b>21-22</b>	Carving	71-7	Philosophizing
		2	
<b>23-24</b>	Combat competition	73-7	Reading
		4	
<b>25-26</b>	Cooking	75-7	Research
		6	
<b>27-28</b>	Dancing	77-7	Riddles
		8	



<b>29-30</b>	Dicing	79-8	Sewing
		0	
<b>31-32</b>	Animal fighting	81-8	Sports (Wrestling, racing, etc)
		2	
<b>33-34</b>	Eating	83-8	Storytelling
		4	
<b>35-36</b>	Drinking	85-8	Swimming
		6	
<b>37-38</b>	Embroidery	87-8	Art appreciation
		8	
<b>39-40</b>	Falconry	89-9	Weaving
		0	
<b>41-42</b>	Fishing	91-9	Woodworking
		2	
<b>43-44</b>	Fortune-telling	93-9	Writing
		4	
<b>45-46</b>	Singing	95-9	Playing an instrument
		6	
<b>47-48</b>	Gambling	97-9	Pipe smoking
		8	
<b>49-50</b>	Gardening	99-1	Bird watching
		00	

### Favorite Topics of Conversation

What does your character like to talk about? It can be helpful to list out three or four topics that your character defaults to in casual social situations. The basic rule of thumb is that people like to talk about what they are good at and things they find interesting. So, look at your character's skills, hobbies, training, and background to see what he might be into. It's a good idea to come up with specifics, but some general topic areas to consider include:

- Politics
- Religion
- Sex/Relationships
- Work/profession/money
- Entertainment—music, art, dance, games
- Hobbies and pastimes
- Current events
- Philosophy
- Science
- Humor

### Group Affiliation

An optional component might be adding groups that your character identifies with. Affiliation plays an important role in how people actually act, and this can add another role-playing dimension as well. Quite simply, this comes down to deciding which general groups your character fits into and whose members he accepts as "one of his own."

For example, if your character enjoys playing dice, this can mean more than just the activity, it can also mean identifying with dicers as a general group. Of course, it's easy to pick groups based on class or race, but choosing non-obvious groups can make for more interesting play. A good place to start might be to look at your hobbies, any past professions, or religion. Also, after you finish your background, come back to this section and see if any groups pop out from your character's unique history.

## Mental & Emotional Disorders

These are common (modern) human mental/emotional disorders. It seems unlikely that most players would want their character to have a debilitating problem, although it could certainly make for interesting play. This option might be better suited to NPCs, giving the GM something other than flat characters to play. This list can also be used as ideas for hideous curses or divine punishment. This list is by no means complete and gives only cursory descriptions.

### MENTAL & EMOTIONAL DISORDERS

<b>1-4</b> Addiction <b>%</b> (This is just a brief list. Anything can become an addiction as long as there is a destructive need to engage in it.)	1-10%	Mood-altering substances (e.g. alcohol)
	11-20%	Food
	21-30%	Gambling
	31-40%	Money
	41-50%	Tobacco
	51-60%	Power
	61-70%	Risk-taking
	71-80%	Sex
	81-90%	Battle
<b>5-8</b> Amnesia <b>%</b>	91-100	Work
	Severe memory loss; can be loss before a certain point (retrograde) or after (anterograde).	
<b>9-1</b> Anxiety <b>2%</b>	Restlessness; being on edge; easily fatigued; difficulty concentrating or mind going blank; irritability; sleep disturbance	
<b>13-16</b> Bipolar Disorder <b>%</b>	Erratic swings from periods of mania to severe depression.	
<b>17-20</b> Borderline Personality Disorder <b>%</b>	Recurrent suicidal behavior, gestures, or threats, or self-mutilating behavior; emotional instability; transient, stress-related paranoid delusions.	
<b>21-24</b> Dementia <b>%</b>	Impaired memory, intellect, abstract thinking, and judgment; usually accompanied by a severe personality change.	
<b>25-28</b> Dependent Personality Disorder <b>%</b>	Goes to excessive lengths to obtain nurturance and support from others; needs reassurance from others and for them to assume responsibility for most major areas of life; difficulty expressing disagreement; unrealistically preoccupied with fears of being left to take care of him or herself.	

<b>29- Depersonalization 32 Disorder %</b>	Feelings of unreality, that your body does not belong to you, or that you are constantly in a dreamlike state.
<b>33- Depression 36 %</b>	Impaired physical functions (e.g., sleep, appetite); loss of interest and pleasure; low energy & motivation; possibly accompanied by severe pessimism, hopelessness, guilt, and suicidal thoughts/intent.
<b>37- Fugue 40 %</b>	Abrupt travel away from home, an inability to remember important aspects of one's life, and the partial or complete adoption of a new identity.
<b>41- Histrionic Personality 44 Disorder %</b>	Must be center of attention; sexually seductive or provocative behavior; shows self-dramatization, theatricality, and exaggerated expression of emotion; suggestible, i.e., easily influenced by others or circumstances; considers relationships to be more intimate than they actually are.
<b>45- Hypochondria 48 %</b>	Preoccupation with fears of having a serious disease or physical problem based on little or no real evidence.
<b>49- Kleptomania 52 %</b>	An overpowering compulsion to steal.
<b>53- Mania 56 %</b>	Inflated self-esteem or grandiosity; decreased need for sleep; talkative; racing thoughts; distractibility; increase in goal-directed activity; excessive involvement in pleasurable activities that have a high potential for painful consequences.
<b>57- Masochism 60 %</b>	Powerful need to be humiliated, beaten, bound, or made to suffer in some way.
<b>61- Multiple Personalities 64 %</b>	Existence of more than one distinct identity or personality within the same individual. The identities will "take control" of the person at different times, with important information about the other identities out of conscious awareness.
<b>65- Narcissism 68 %</b>	Grandiose sense of self-importance; preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love; believes that he or she is "special" and unique and can only be understood by, or should associate with, other special or high-status people; requires excessive admiration; has a sense of entitlement; takes advantage of others; lacks empathy; arrogant, haughty behavior.
<b>69- Nymphomania 72 %</b>	Powerful compulsion to engage in sexual behavior with others (does not include forcefulness, i.e. likelihood of rape).
<b>73- Obsessive-Compulsive 76 Disorder %</b>	Existence of both regular compulsions (overwhelming need to engage in a ritualized behavior) and obsessions (persistent, often irrational, and seemingly uncontrollable thoughts).
<b>77- Panic attacks 80 %</b>	Pounding heart; sweating; shaking; shortness of breath and choking; feeling dizzy or faint; feelings of unreality or being detached from oneself; fear of losing control or going crazy; fear of dying.

<b>81- Paranoia</b> <b>84</b> <b>%</b>	Suspects, without basis, that others are exploiting, harming, or deceiving him; preoccupied with unjustified doubts about the loyalty or trustworthiness of friends; reads hidden threatening meanings into benign remarks or events; persistently bears grudges, i.e., is unforgiving of insults, injuries, or slights.
<b>85- Phobia</b> <b>88</b> <b>%</b>	1-10% Darkness
Extreme anxiety and fear associated with an object or situation. (This is only a tiny list of phobias. Anything can be a phobia, such as cats, crowds, the sun, travel, storms, fog, loud noises, elves, or string.)	
	11-20% Insects
	21-30% Enclosed spaces
	31-40% Fire
	41-50% Heights
	51-60% Magic
	61-70% Monsters (general or specific)
	71-80% Open spaces
	81-90% Water
	91-100 Weapons (general or specific)
<b>89- Pyromania</b> <b>92</b> <b>%</b>	Obsession with fire, or an overpowering compulsion to set fires.
<b>93- Sadism</b> <b>96</b> <b>%</b>	Powerful need to cause the humiliation or physical suffering of others.
<b>97- Schizophrenia</b> <b>100</b> <b>%</b>	Delusions (unreal beliefs, e.g. savior complex or assigning unusual significance or meaning to normal events); hallucinations (unreal sensations, usually auditory, i.e. "voices"); disorganized speech; grossly disorganized or catatonic behavior; paranoia.

## Part II

### BACKGROUND

There are of course no hard and fast rules about background development. Much can depend on the world the GM presents and any limitations imposed. However, to help you get started, this section presents a detailed list of background elements that can really flesh out your character. Of course you aren't required to address every issue here, and it's certainly possible to build on your narrative over time, filling in details as you go.

As a general rule, try to be dramatic but not over the top. In the long run, it is more interesting to have weaknesses, barriers to overcome, and difficult goals to fulfill than to have abundance, power, or effortless strength (this last note is just as, if not more important for Game Masters). Ideally, you want to address four domains in your background:

- 1) conflict (who or what does your character fight or fight for?)
- 2) challenges (what limits your character?)

3) mystery (what doesn't your character know?) and

4) passion (what drives your character?)

If you already have your personality traits worked out from Part I, use the background to develop why your character is the way he or she is. If you don't have Part I done yet, you can start with your background and then develop personality traits that fit the narrative.

### Brief Background

Perhaps you just want a few verses, not the whole book. Okay, here is a suggested list of items that should be enough to give your character a good brushstroke background.

- Birthplace: name, size, location
- At least one mystery, conflict, or significant past event
- Your adventure trigger
- A quest

### Birthplace

- Name
- Location
- Size
- Geography (e.g. desert, plains, tropical, mountainous, tundra, forest, island, etc)
- Weather
- Industry
- Local government/nobility
- General character, what it was like (e.g. hospitable, communal, ugly, sleepy, dangerous, educated, commercial, pious, stuffy, fun, historical, youthful, political, upscale, transient, depressing, laborious, etc.)
- Or were you born isolated from a population center or in a group/family that travelled?

### Family

- Father, mother, siblings, other relatives in your household growing up. If you didn't have a "traditional" family, what did it look like—explain what was different. E.g. maybe you grew up with a gaggle of urchins learning how to pick pockets for a local gang.
- What did your family do to earn a living? (See Professions & Crafts below)
- Socioeconomic class (e.g. nobility, gentry, merchant, peasant, serf, slave, etc.) Compared to average, how wealthy was your family? What kind of influence did it have? What kind of connections to power centers did it have? Did this change over time, and if so why?
- What was your family's reputation?
- Any family myths, curses, or legends?
- Did any members have a mental illness? (see the list above—remember, your character likely wouldn't know these terms, and might instead think a supernatural cause was the explanation)
- Were you raised by someone other than your biological parents?
- Do you know anything about your extended family and your relationship with them?

## Professions & Crafts

Before we go on, here is a handy list of possible professions and crafts, which can be applied to your character, various NPCs, and people from your character's past. A way to differentiate them is to think of a craft as something a character can do or make whereas a profession is how one earns a living. As an example, one person can know the craft of brewing ale, whereas another has the training to engage in the profession of being a Brewer. This list can come in handy when filling out the personal and family sections below.

Most player characters are adventurers of one sort or another by profession. Giving up a home life to go around trudging through ancient dungeons and fighting dangerous creatures is a full time job (and takes a certain kind of unusual personality). So, as a rule of thumb, many characters will have learned something of a craft or profession well before they hit the adventuring trail. At the same time, some professions can make for interesting adventuring motivations. Is your character a scrivener or natural philosopher, adventuring to get material to write a book or publish an essay? Is he a spy under the guise of a hapless sorcerer? How about a storyteller who makes a living going from town to town? There are many possibilities, and this list is far from complete. In such a case, there's a lot to consider:

- What level did you achieve (apprentice, journeyman, or master)?
- Where did you train, and who did you work with—the family or someone else?
- Being a journeyman can require a contract with a master—did you break it to go adventuring?
- Were you part of a professional guild (or still)?
- Did you own a business?
- What drove you to leave the profession?
- Was your profession a family business?
- How successful were you in business?

Also, don't forget the list of religious roles in the table above.

## PROFESSIONS & CRAFTS

<b>Actor</b>		Jeweler	
<b>Apothecary</b>	Chemist, druggist, pharmacist	Joiner	Cabinet or furniture maker
<b>Arbiter</b>		Judge	
<b>Architect</b>		Lady in Waiting	Noble woman who waits upon higher nobility
<b>Archivist</b>		Landlord	
<b>Armorer</b>		Leather worker	
<b>Assassin</b>		Limner	Paints signs and heraldic devices
<b>Astrologer</b>		Locksmith	
<b>Bailiff</b>	Serves writs and makes arrests	Lumberjack	
<b>Baker</b>		Maid servant	
<b>Banker</b>		Manservant	
<b>Barber</b>		Marbler	Worker in marble or stone
<b>Barkeep</b>		Mariner	
<b>Barrister</b>	Lawyer	Mason	Builder in stone

<b>Beekeeper</b>		Mendicant	
<b>Bellfounder</b>	Bell maker	Mercer	Dealer in textile fabrics
<b>Blacksmith</b>		Merchant	
<b>Bonder</b>	One who keeps slaves	Messenger	
<b>Bookbinder</b>		Metalworker	Silver, gold, bronze, iron, etc.
<b>Bookkeeper</b>		Midshipman	Officer in training
<b>Bookseller</b>		Midwife	
<b>Bowyer</b>	Bow maker	Miller	
<b>Breeder</b>	Dogs, cats, horses, donkeys, etc.	Miner	
<b>Brewer</b>		Minstrel	
<b>Brewing</b>	Maker of ales, beers, or meads	Moneylender	
<b>Butcher</b>		Musician	
<b>Butler</b>		Navigator	
<b>Calligrapher</b>		Page	Noble child in service to another noble
<b>Candlemaker</b>		Painter	
<b>Carpenter</b>		Papermaker	
<b>Cartographer</b>	Map or chart maker	Parchment maker	
<b>Cartwright</b>		Performer	Juggler, tumbler, acrobat, fire-eater, etc.
<b>Clerk</b>		Perfumer	
<b>Clockmaker</b>		Philosopher	Law, ethics, or the natural sciences
<b>Coachman</b>		Physicist	
<b>Cobbler</b>	Shoe maker	Playwright	
<b>Coiner</b>		Poet	
<b>Composer</b>		Politician	
<b>Confectioner</b>	Maker of candies	Potter	Makes pottery
<b>Cook</b>		Prostitute	Can be noble, religious, or criminal
<b>Cooper</b>	Barrel maker	Puppeteer	
<b>Coper</b>	A horse dealer	Quarrier	One who cuts stone from natural deposits
<b>Coppersmith</b>		Quartermaster	Military provisioner
<b>Costumer</b>		Rancher	Horses, cattle, or other livestock
<b>Courier</b>		Recruiter	
<b>Cryptographer</b>	Writes and breaks codes	Scribe	
<b>Dairyman</b>		Scrivener	Writer, author
<b>Dancer</b>		Scullion	One who cleans in the kitchen



<b>Dentist</b>		Sculptor	
<b>Draper</b>	Deals in cloth, clothing and dry goods	Seamstress	
<b>Dressmaker</b>		Shepherd	
<b>Dyer</b>	Dyes cloth into various colors	Ships Captain	
<b>Embroiderer</b>		Shipwright	One who makes ships and boats
<b>Emissary</b>		Slaver	
<b>Engineer</b>	Designs public works, like bridges	Soap maker	
<b>Engraver</b>		Soldier	Rank and file or officer class
<b>Executioner</b>		Songwriter	
<b>Falconer</b>	Trainer of hawks for gaming	Soothsayer	A fortune-teller
<b>Farmer</b>		Spinner	One who spins into wool
<b>Ferrier</b>	Horseshoe-maker	Spy	
<b>First mate</b>		Stableman	
<b>Fisherman</b>		Steward	Servant that oversees the running of a household
<b>Fishmonger</b>	A dealer in cheap and imitation goods	Storyteller	
<b>Fletcher</b>		Tailor	
<b>Florist</b>		Tanner	Tans animal skins to make leather
<b>Forester</b>	Manages forestland	Taxidermist	
<b>Furrier</b>	Dealer in furs; trapper	Teacher	
<b>Gem cutter</b>		Teamster	
<b>Glassblower</b>		Thatcher	One who thatches roofs
<b>Groom</b>	Horse keeper	Tinker	A maker in small devices for common use
<b>Groundskeeper</b>		Toolmaker	A smith who makes metal tools
<b>Harrier</b>	Trainer of hunting hounds	Torturer	
<b>Hatter</b>	Maker and repairer of hats	Toymaker	
<b>Hawker</b>	Sells goods by yelling in the street	Tracker	
<b>Headmaster</b>	Head of a school	Trader	
<b>Healer</b>	With or without magic	Trainer	
<b>Herald</b>		Trapper	
<b>Herbalist</b>	For healing or hurting	Treasurer	
<b>Herder</b>		Undertaker	
<b>Historian</b>		Vintner	Wine maker
<b>Hoyer</b>	Animal driver	Wainwright	Maker and repairer of wagons
<b>Iceman</b>	Keeper of the ice house	Watchman	
<b>Importer</b>		Weaponsmith	
<b>Innkeeper</b>		Weaver	

### Significant past events

Anything, even something small, can change you in major ways and lead to interesting game play. You can always look at your personality traits and come up with reasons why you're that way (an example: your Primary Motivator is Liberation because you were sold into slavery until you managed to kill your owner in the night, swearing that you would forever help free anyone in bondage). The possibilities are endless.

### Family-related events

- Did your father tell you a dark family secret?
- Any unusual problems, deaths, illnesses, or trauma? E.g. did the landlord throw your family into the street? Were your parents or yourself taken into slavery?
- Or did something of great fortune happen?
- Were you taken far away from your family for some reason?
- Were there any interesting traditions, celebrations, or holidays in your family?
- Did you ever fall in love or have a serious relationship?
- Do you have a spouse or any children of your own? Where are they now?

### Personal events

- Were you ever really sick or injured?
- What kind of education did you have, if any?
- Were you ever betrayed?
- Did you find a magic item buried in the woods? Or did a rabbit suddenly start talking to you?
- Were you ever dirt poor or filthy rich for a brief time?
- Did you ever commit any crimes, or be falsely accused of one?
- Did something happen that revealed an unusual talent?
- Did you do anything interesting, like travel with a performing troupe, join the military, serve the local nobility, or jump a trading ship for a year?
- Were you ever active in a church, religion, cult, or secret order?
- Did you ever have a chance to show leadership, such as leading a local rebellion, founding a school or animal sanctuary, being elected mayor of your small village, etc.
- Did anything really funny ever happen to you? Embarrassing stories can make for great tavern entertainment.

### Notable individuals

- Any strangers come through town that gave you an unusual gift?
- Did a fortune teller predict something strange and unlikely?
- Was there a nearby hermit that taught you about herbs or other lore?
- Any local clergy to influence your religion?
- Did you ever have any mentors or patrons before adventuring?
- Did you form any close friendships while growing up or in early adulthood? Is there anyone out there that you can really trust or look to for help?

## Mysteries

Mysteries are great opportunities for role-playing and help keep your character interesting. They can provide the GM with ideas for sub-plots or even whole adventures, so be sure to let her know what you come up with. The ol' amnesia hook is discouraged unless you can come up with a really good story to support it. Some good mysteries could be:

- Who murdered my best friend?
- Who is my real mother?
- I had a strange vision when I was ten—what did it mean?
- Why do I keep having recurring nightmares about a flaming sword?
- One morning I woke up with this strange mark on my chest
- Why does the full moon fill me with dread?
- What did that cryptic prophesy given by an oracle mean?
- Why did the king grant 100 acres of land to my father 20 years ago without an explanation?
- Every now and then I think I see strange creatures out of the corner of my eye—what are they?
- Just before he disappeared, my father gave me a magical box that I can't open.
- A black cloak appeared one day in my room; I don't know who put it there or what it's about
- I was drinking one night at the local tavern and the next thing I remember I was alone, naked, and lying on a stone altar in an outdoor temple dozens of miles away

## Existing Conflicts

It is possible to have ongoing conflicts in your character's life. Such conflicts are often between individuals, but they can also be between groups and institutions (such as another village, church, guild, school, family, or the law). You can add other details, like if you are mainly out to get them, or they you, or if the antagonism is mutual. If you choose to have a pre-existing or ongoing conflict, create the circumstances surrounding it:

- Who exactly is the conflict with?
- Why does the conflict exist? What happened?
- Why can't it be worked out?
- How do you think it will end?
- What are the emotions surrounding it—hate, jealousy, vengefulness, grief, bitterness, regret, fear?

## What triggered adventuring?

Even if you don't answer many other questions about your background, this is a good one to know. Again, look to your personality traits from Part I to get ideas for your triggers, especially the Primary Motivator. Also, any of the background items above can also be your adventuring trigger. But if you're still not sure, here are some ways to explore the essential question—how did you happen to take up a sword, lockpick, or spell book and go looking for trouble?

- Was it a thoughtful decision to go adventuring or did circumstances compel you? Why did you make that decision or what circumstances pushed you into it?
- If you left home, what set you off? Are you looking for something? Or...
- trying to accomplish anything? Or...
- was it wanderlust? Or...

- seeking fame and fortune? Or...
- trying to walk in a parent's or sibling's footsteps?
- If you are a fighter, you must have some minimal training with a sword—where did you get it and how did you learn to use it (friend, a job, parent, military)? Or if you have a knack for picking pockets, how did you learn the ropes? If you are a cleric, did you get "the call" from a deity, or were you indoctrinated into a religion?

Think about it this way—if the very first place you get to on your adventure is a pub and someone asks "so, what brings you here?" an honest answer to this hypothetical question would be based on your trigger.

#### Initial possessions

Do you own anything other than what you are wearing and what's in your backpack? Do you have a family home, or own land? Also, don't just think about adventuring equipment—look at your hobbies, quirks, and craft skills above and think if you might have items related to those things.

#### Bound duties

Are there any outstanding obligations or oaths that you need to fulfill? Any unusual debts? Is anyone looking for you for deserting service or a contract, or for some other reason? Did you make a promise to your family or friends?

#### Quests

Like the adventure trigger, this is the other background area that should be known for a well-played character. If you have filled out a good portion of the other background areas, then it is likely your quests are already known—they can come from anything in the Events, Mysteries, or Conflicts sections, for example (your trigger can also be a quest). You should add more quests as you continue to adventure. Having short and long term quests is a good idea—developing both can allow you to accomplish things sooner rather than later while still retaining something that drives you.

When working on your quests, think in terms of clearly defined goals—e.g. to become rich is a motivation, not a quest, but to obtain Brad's Chest of Neverending Gold from the Cave of Certain Death is. Here are some basic ideas—remember, it works best if you can develop quests that collaborate with your personality traits:

- Revenge
- Solve a mystery
- Resolve a conflict
- Fulfill an oath
- Deliver a message or package
- Find or save someone or something that was lost or taken
- Discover a mythical place
- Solve a crime
- Remove a curse
- Provide a suitable person as a physical vehicle for your deity
- Earn membership in an exclusive organization
- Kill every last troll in the Brashduk Clan
- Open the portal to the Fifth Dimension

- Depose the local baron
- Fix the terrible mistake I made long ago
- Obtain Brad's Chest of Neverending Gold from the Cave of Certain Death

Again, the possibilities are endless. It might be worthwhile to work with the DM on coming up with quests that fit within the game world.