Character Motivation Cards

Each card defines a core driving force that shapes character decisions, actions, and story arcs. These motivations can be combined with archetypes and backgrounds to create complex, nuanced characters.

## **Workshop Usage Guidelines**

* Consider combining multiple motivations for complexity
* Think about how motivations conflict
* Use motivations to drive story choices
* Consider how motivations affect relationships
* Think about how motivations might change
* Use motivations to create character arcs
* Consider how game mechanics express motivations

## **1. Legacy Protection**

* Primary Drive: Preserving or restoring family/organizational legacy
* Internal Conflict: Tradition vs. progress
* External Conflict: Modern threats to legacy
* Story Impact: Long-term consequences of choices
* Character Traits: Dutiful, protective, sometimes rigid
* Gameplay Expression: Heritage-based choices, tradition mechanics
* Key Relationships: Family members, rivals claiming legacy

## **2. Truth Seeker**

* Primary Drive: Uncovering hidden truths at any cost
* Internal Conflict: Truth vs. relationships
* External Conflict: Those hiding truth
* Story Impact: Revelations changing story direction
* Character Traits: Persistent, analytical, sometimes obsessive
* Gameplay Expression: Investigation mechanics, truth/lie choices
* Key Relationships: Informants, opposing forces

## **3. Redemption Hunter**

* Primary Drive: Making amends for past mistakes
* Internal Conflict: Self-forgiveness vs. punishment
* External Conflict: Those affected by past actions
* Story Impact: Past consequences affecting present
* Character Traits: Determined, guilt-ridden, hopeful
* Gameplay Expression: Moral choice systems, reputation recovery
* Key Relationships: Victims, mentors, judges

## **4. Power Accumulator**

* Primary Drive: Gaining and maintaining control
* Internal Conflict: Power vs. connection
* External Conflict: Rival power seekers
* Story Impact: Power dynamics shifting
* Character Traits: Ambitious, strategic, sometimes ruthless
* Gameplay Expression: Influence mechanics, resource control
* Key Relationships: Allies, competitors, subordinates

## **5. Freedom Fighter**

* Primary Drive: Breaking free from constraints
* Internal Conflict: Freedom vs. responsibility
* External Conflict: Systems of control
* Story Impact: System disruption
* Character Traits: Independent, rebellious, passionate
* Gameplay Expression: Resistance mechanics, alliance building
* Key Relationships: Fellow rebels, oppressors, bystanders

## **6. Protector**

* Primary Drive: Safeguarding others
* Internal Conflict: Protection vs. enabling
* External Conflict: Threats to protected
* Story Impact: Consequences of protection choices
* Character Traits: Loyal, self-sacrificing, sometimes controlling
* Gameplay Expression: Defense mechanics, relationship management
* Key Relationships: Protected individuals, threats, fellow guardians

## **7. Identity Seeker**

* Primary Drive: Discovering/creating true self
* Internal Conflict: Authenticity vs. acceptance
* External Conflict: Societal expectations
* Story Impact: Personal transformation
* Character Traits: Questioning, adaptive, sometimes unstable
* Gameplay Expression: Identity choice systems, role-playing
* Key Relationships: Mentors, conformists, fellow seekers

## **8. Justice Bringer**

* Primary Drive: Establishing fairness and justice
* Internal Conflict: Justice vs. mercy
* External Conflict: Corrupt systems
* Story Impact: Moral consequences
* Character Traits: Principled, determined, sometimes rigid
* Gameplay Expression: Justice mechanics, moral choices
* Key Relationships: Victims, perpetrators, law enforcement

## **9. Connection Builder**

* Primary Drive: Creating meaningful relationships
* Internal Conflict: Vulnerability vs. protection
* External Conflict: Trust barriers
* Story Impact: Relationship consequences
* Character Traits: Empathetic, caring, sometimes dependent
* Gameplay Expression: Relationship systems, trust building
* Key Relationships: Friends, family, community

## **10. Survival Expert**

* Primary Drive: Ensuring continued existence
* Internal Conflict: Survival vs. ethics
* External Conflict: Threats to survival
* Story Impact: Cost of survival choices
* Character Traits: Resourceful, pragmatic, sometimes ruthless
* Gameplay Expression: Resource management, survival choices
* Key Relationships: Allies, competitors for resources

## **11. Knowledge Pursuer**

* Primary Drive: Understanding the unknown
* Internal Conflict: Knowledge vs. wisdom
* External Conflict: Knowledge gatekeepers
* Story Impact: Discovery consequences
* Character Traits: Curious, persistent, sometimes obsessive
* Gameplay Expression: Research mechanics, discovery systems
* Key Relationships: Teachers, subjects of study, fellow researchers

## **12. Order Maintainer**

* Primary Drive: Preserving/restoring stability
* Internal Conflict: Order vs. growth
* External Conflict: Chaos agents
* Story Impact: Stability consequences
* Character Traits: Organized, reliable, sometimes inflexible
* Gameplay Expression: System management, order maintenance
* Key Relationships: Authority figures, rebels, community members

## **13. Creative Force**

* Primary Drive: Creating something meaningful
* Internal Conflict: Vision vs. reality
* External Conflict: Creative barriers
* Story Impact: Creation consequences
* Character Traits: Innovative, passionate, sometimes unrealistic
* Gameplay Expression: Creation systems, artistic choice
* Key Relationships: Collaborators, critics, audience

## **14. Balance Seeker**

* Primary Drive: Finding harmony between opposites
* Internal Conflict: Compromise vs. principle
* External Conflict: Extreme forces
* Story Impact: Balance consequences
* Character Traits: Diplomatic, thoughtful, sometimes indecisive
* Gameplay Expression: Negotiation mechanics, balance choices
* Key Relationships: Opposing parties, moderators

## **15. Adventure Pursuer**

* Primary Drive: Seeking new experiences
* Internal Conflict: Adventure vs. stability
* External Conflict: Routine forces
* Story Impact: Journey consequences
* Character Traits: Bold, curious, sometimes reckless
* Gameplay Expression: Exploration mechanics, risk/reward
* Key Relationships: Fellow adventurers, homebodies, guides

## **16. Legacy Challenger**

* Primary Drive: Breaking from tradition
* Internal Conflict: Change vs. belonging
* External Conflict: Tradition defenders
* Story Impact: Innovation consequences
* Character Traits: Revolutionary, brave, sometimes destructive
* Gameplay Expression: Tradition breaking mechanics, innovation
* Key Relationships: Revolutionaries, traditionalists

## **17. Harmony Creator**

* Primary Drive: Fostering peace and unity
* Internal Conflict: Peace vs. justice
* External Conflict: Conflict creators
* Story Impact: Unity consequences
* Character Traits: Peaceful, understanding, sometimes enabling
* Gameplay Expression: Peace-making mechanics, unity building
* Key Relationships: Mediators, conflicting parties

## **18. Growth Catalyst**

* Primary Drive: Fostering development in self/others
* Internal Conflict: Growth vs. comfort
* External Conflict: Stagnant forces
* Story Impact: Development consequences
* Character Traits: Nurturing, challenging, sometimes pushy
* Gameplay Expression: Development systems, growth choices
* Key Relationships: Students, mentors, resistors

## **19. Mystery Solver**

* Primary Drive: Resolving unknowns
* Internal Conflict: Resolution vs. journey
* External Conflict: Mystery creators
* Story Impact: Discovery consequences
* Character Traits: Analytical, determined, sometimes obsessive
* Gameplay Expression: Investigation mechanics, puzzle solving
* Key Relationships: Witnesses, suspects, fellow investigators

## **20. Impact Maker**

* Primary Drive: Creating lasting change
* Internal Conflict: Change vs. preservation
* External Conflict: Status quo defenders
* Story Impact: Change consequences
* Character Traits: Visionary, determined, sometimes zealous
* Gameplay Expression: Influence mechanics, change systems
* Key Relationships: Supporters, opponents, affected parties