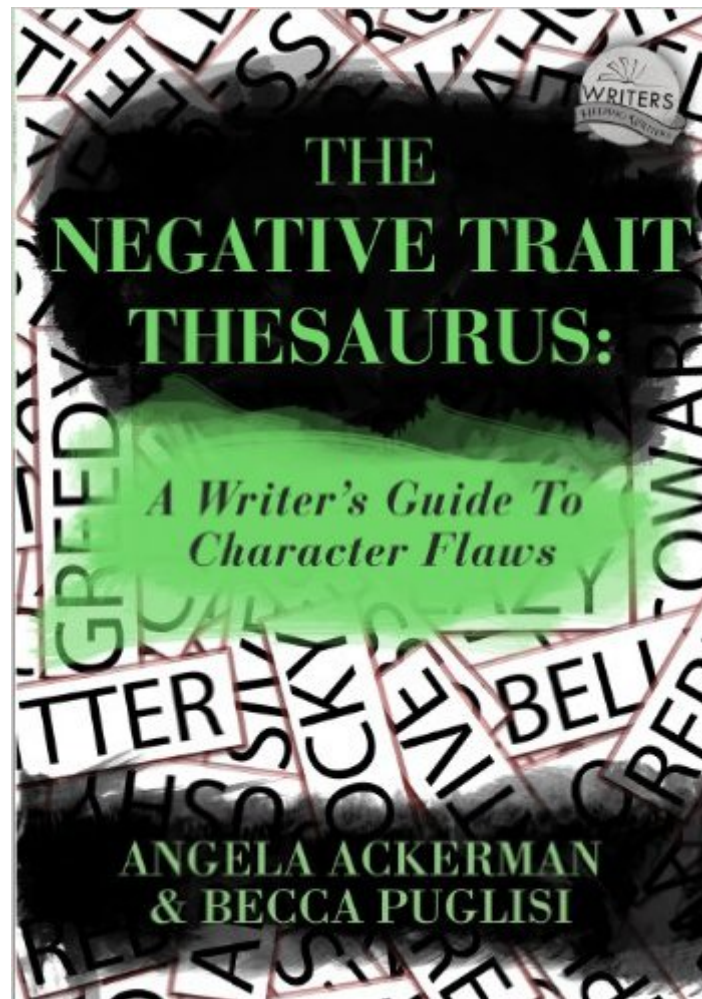


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The Negative Trait Thesaurus: A Writer's Guide To Character Flaws



Synopsis

Crafting likable, interesting characters is a balancing act, and finding that perfect mix of strengths and weaknesses can be difficult. But the task has become easier thanks to *The Negative Trait Thesaurus*. Through its flaw-centric exploration of character arc, motivation, emotional wounds, and basic needs, writers will learn which flaws make the most sense for their heroes, villains, and other members of the story's cast. Inside *The Negative Trait Thesaurus* you'll find:

- * A vast collection of flaws to explore when building a character's personality. Each entry includes possible causes, attitudes, behaviors, thoughts, and related emotions
- * Real examples from literature, film, or television to show how each flaw can create life challenges and relational friction
- * Advice on building layered and memorable characters from the ground up
- * An in-depth look at backstory, emotional wounds, and how pain warps a character's view of himself and his world, influencing behavior and decision making
- * A flaw-centric exploration of character arc, relationships, motivation, and basic needs
- * Tips on how to best show a character's flaws to readers while avoiding common pitfalls
- * Downloadable tools to aid writers in character creation

Written in list format and fully indexed, this brainstorming resource is perfect for creating deep, flawed characters that readers will relate to. *The Negative Trait Thesaurus* sheds light on your character's dark side.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I turn to Ackerman and Puglisi's *Emotion Thesaurus* regularly when needing inspiration for character reactions and action beats. Their new additions to the series are shaping up to be just as

valuable, if not more so. In the introductory material to this volume, they state that they view this book as a "brainstorming tool." This is spot-on. As they explain in their insightful opening chapters, character flaws drive character arcs. Without a solid understanding of what major problem is at the crux of our character's personal dilemma, we will never have the knowledge to shape a powerful transformation over the course of our story. But more than just power, we also want originality, and this is where the Negative Trait Thesaurus should prove especially helpful. Just in browsing a few entries, my imagination was immediately spurred to look beyond obvious, first-glance choices toward bigger and more unique possibilities. I look forward to using this wonderful tool (complete with some of the best "bonus goodies" I've ever seen in the appendices) in shaping my characters in my next work-in-progress.

I am a big fan of "The Emotion Thesaurus" and was excited to see that the authors released two new resources for authors... "The Negative Trait Thesaurus" and the "Positive Trait Thesaurus." I highly recommend both volumes. In "The Negative Trait Thesaurus," the authors provide a treasure chest of ideas for fiction authors to use to bring depth to their characters. These character flaws will help add additional conflict to your story as well as help bring your characters to life for your readers. The meat of the book (that I will use the most often) contains 106 negative traits. Each listing includes the following: 1) Definition 2) Similar Flaws 3) Possible Causes 4) Associated Behaviors and Attitudes 5) Associated Thoughts 6) Associated Emotions 7) Positive Aspects 8) Negative Aspects 9) Example from Film 10) Overcoming This Trait as a Major Flaw 11) Traits in Supporting Characters That May Cause Conflict. As you can see, each negative trait is jam-packed with great brain-storming content. I recommend authors use this tool as follows: 1) When creating your character profiles 2) When you need to add extra depth to your characters 3) When brainstorming new characters 4) To find additional ways to add conflict to your story. And I'm sure there are tons of other uses for this tool as well. The authors also provide introductory material which could be a book in itself as well as tools in the appendix including a needs and lies list, a reverse backstory tool and character pyramid tool with links to print these tools off as well. I highly recommend this book as a resource and brainstorming tool for fiction authors! Note: I received a copy of this book in exchange for my honest review, but would have gladly paid for a copy as I know I will use it often.

Authors, you need this book. As a writing coach who reads and critiques 200 manuscripts a year, I can't speak highly enough about this book and the companion book, the Positive Trait book. I have

a bookcase full of writing craft books that I draw on in my teaching and recommend to my clients, but I can easily say these books by Ackerman and Puglisi are at the top. It is so vital for writers to understand how to create believable characters, and that can't be done by randomly assigning traits and flaws with no regard for the background and history of the character. Just as in real life, characters need to act based on their true core personalities, which have been formed by events in the past and their upbringing. The authors of these books help writers see how to create rich, complex characters that will jump off the page. And the thesaurus style of these books makes for easy access to look up traits, flaws, and emotions (I'm including their Emotion Thesaurus in here too). Get all three. Your writing will greatly benefit!

Want to create true to life, fleshed-out characters? Start here. These two authors deliver. They show you how characters are the story and how to develop them for maximum effect in your own book. The first part of the book states that everyone is damaged, and the more emotionally traumatic the better. They tell you why negative traits, wounds and flaws are essential for character arcs, how to build them, and how they can be fit to make the journey harder and more meaningful. They also cover that people who are wounded form lies they believe (Ex. I'll never be a good mother.), which stems from one of the five basic needs. (Sorry, too long to list.) The second part lists flaws alphabetically. They cover definition, similar flaws, possible causes, associated behaviors and attitudes, associated thoughts, associated emotions, positive aspects, negative aspects, examples from film, overcoming this trait as a major flaw, and traits in supporting characters that may cause conflict. I read through each flaw and was surprised when my characters became fleshed out in my head. I knew what they were thinking and what caused it. We can all think of various flaws we want our characters to have (selfish, stubborn, reckless, etc.), but it is invaluable to have ALL the flaws listed out, so you can find the one your brain forgot, under that pile bills and junk mail, that adds the critical pulse to your character and brings your story to life. You might even find yourself identifying with flaws and eagerly turning to 'Overcoming this trait as a major Flaw'. It's like a mini therapy session. Acknowledge and correct. All in all, this book is worthy of a spot on your shelf, if just for having a complete list of flaws at your fingertips. I also highly recommend their other two books: The Emotion Thesaurus and The Positive Trait Thesaurus.

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