



# Schema:

## RECOGNITION / APPROVAL—SEEKING

This guide was designed to be used after watching the [Character Therapy series](#) found on [Sofiya's YouTube channel](#). Please watch that as you're doing these worksheets, or you may get stuck on something you don't understand!

DEEP DIVE INTO SCHEMAS FOR CHARACTERS

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# About Me

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## All About Sofiya

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Sofiya is an award-winning author and mental health professional who loves baking, hiking, and doing things with her family.

Her debut novel ANYA AND THE DRAGON is a Sydney Taylor Book Award Honor. The sequel is pretty good, too.

Find her online basically everywhere!



## About Schema Therapy

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Schemas are not diagnoses, even though you can use them to inform or elaborate upon diagnoses. Essentially, they're a way to focus therapy on particular topics or experiences, and can give the therapist a road map to follow. The schemas in this guide are simplified and are not for use on real humans (just imaginary ones!).

For more fun and helpful writing information, check out my website and [subscribe to my newsletter!](#)



# Recognition/Approval-Seeking



**I'M ONLY WORTH  
SOMETHING IF SOMEONE  
ELSE APPROVES**

**PEOPLE WITH** the Recognition/Approval-Seeking schema are incapable of generating an inborn sense of worth. They need others to praise them, or they believe they are failures.

**THOSE WITH** the Recognition/Approval-Seeking schema rely on others for a sense of self or promotion of self-esteem. They focus on the approval and praise of others at the expense of self-care or fulfilling core emotional needs.

**THIS SCHEMA** may begin in childhood due to parents or other attachment figures driving the child to seek recognition, such as competitive music, sports, or dancing.

# Recognition/Approval-Seeking

**OVERCOMPENSATION:** the opposite of the schema is true.

Behaves negatively to gain the disapproval of admired peers.

Stays in the background and doesn't draw attention to themselves.

**AVOIDANCE:** the schema does not exist.

Avoids relationships with anyone they admire to avoid lack of reciprocation.

Avoids any situation in which they may not get approval/recognition.

**SURRENDER:** the schema is true.

Draws attention to their accomplishments.

Acts in ways they know will impress admired peers.



# Lie – Want – Truth – Wound

## WHAT'S YOUR CHARACTER'S FUNDAMENTAL INCORRECT BELIEF?

"It's important to be liked by everyone."

"I try so hard to fit in that sometimes I don't even know who I am."

"Praise and compliments make me feel like I have worth."

"Even if I don't like someone, I still want them to like me."

## WHAT DOES YOUR CHARACTER THINK THEY NEED TO BE HAPPY?

Ex: "For everyone to love me and tell me how great I am."

## WHAT DOES YOUR CHARACTER ACTUALLY NEED TO BE HAPPY?

Ex: "To understand that not everyone will love me, and that doesn't diminish my inherent worth."

## WHAT CAUSED THIS BELIEF IN THE FIRST PLACE?

# Character Arc Outline

## INCORPORATING SCHEMAS INTO THE OUTLINE

- HOOK: THE LIE IS INTRODUCED VIA THE CHARACTERISTIC MOMENT AND REINFORCED BY THE “NORMAL WORLD.”
- PLOT TURN 1: THE LIE IS CHALLENGED WITH THE “NEW WORLD,” THE MC CONTINUES TO BELIEVE THE LIE AND PURSUE THE WANT.
- PINCH 1: MC UNABLE TO PURSUE THE LIE; FAILS WITHOUT REALIZING WHY; EVOLVES BELIEF IN THE LIE.
- MIDPOINT: MC SEES THE TRUTH BUT STILL FOLLOWS THE LIE.
- PINCH 2: ANTAGONIST REINFORCES THE LIE; MC TRAPPED BETWEEN THE LIE AND THE TRUTH.
- PLOT TURN 2: THE WANT IS WITHIN REACH, BUT NOW THE MC UNDERSTANDS THAT THE TRUTH IS THE BETTER WAY.
- RESOLUTION: MC REJECTS THE LIE FOR THE GREATER TRUTH.

## THE SEVEN POINT PLOT OUTLINE!

Unfamiliar with the Seven Point Plot outline? Check out [my video](#) on it, or Dan Wells' video series of his presentation given at the LTUE Conference in Provo, UT.

# Schema Operations

## USING SCHEMAS TO OVERCOME WRITER'S BLOCK

WHAT IS YOUR CHARACTER'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LIE?

WHAT COULD HAPPEN TO ENFORCE THE LIE?

WHAT COULD HAPPEN TO CHALLENGE THE LIE?



# Character Therapy

I HOPE YOU LEARNED SOMETHING COOL!

**NOW YOU SHOULD** have an idea of what the Recognition/Approval-Seeking schema is, how it relates to your character's Lie, and also what the Lie, Want, Truth/Need, and Wound are.

**YOU SHOULD ALSO** understand schema coping modes, and how overcompensation, avoidance, and surrender all tie into the schemas themselves, and how your character handles the emotions that come along with schema triggers.

**REMEMBER TO USE** this guide with the [YouTube Character Therapy series](#)!

**IF YOU'RE INTERESTED** in learning more in-depth about Schema Therapy, the following books are amazing resources:

SCHEMA THERAPY: A PRACTITIONER'S GUIDE  
EXPERIENCING SCHEMA THERAPY FROM THE INSIDE OUT

**ALSO, PLEASE CHECK OUT** K.M. Weiland's website, [www.helpingwritersbecomeauthors.com](http://www.helpingwritersbecomeauthors.com), especially her Character Arcs series. Her website is super helpful. You won't regret taking a look!