

## Dr. Linda Seger lecture on Character in Screenplays

December 7, 1997  
Watkins Film School

How can you become a writer trained to create great characters?  
How do you think, observe great characters?  
How do you take notes, prepare, and what processes do you go through to get there?

1.) No matter who your characters are, you want to get them from true life, not other movies.

In real life, you see all different kinds of people. Wise foolish, traditional, smart, dumb, non-traditional roles (rabbis, engineers, cable repair...) In movies, women are young beautiful, sexy. That's is... Women in movies are like women in Hollywood parties and photo shoots.

Men in movies are broader. There are still stereotypes, but it's broader. Flawed people. Men who are ministers, commanders of spaceships, doctors, bad and good and mafia... we see a broad range of men.

What's missing is the sensitive man...

Where is the man who would interest a woman? How can we be attracted to Jack Nicholson? How can we believe that Michelle Pfeiffer is attracted to Jack Nicholson? NFW.

As you create a character, how do you get your mind to go to real life to observe, see what's going on and create a compelling character an actor will want to play? You want them to beg to try out for the part.

FATAL ATTRACTION, SOPHIE'S CHOICE... great roles.

Your characters will be a way into getting the script sold, and having a great movie.

How do I train myself to look for characters, my ear for dialogue?

1.) Start file folders... many of them. Collect story and character ideas. Tear things out from magazines, photos and articles... who is this person in that photograph...

Put in there observations you have made about people you have met and noticed. You're observing the description of them, as well as their voices, dialogue and vocabulary. Good place to begin is looking for people out of the ordinary.

How do you describe someone so someone else will key into it... voice. Great smile, twinkling eyes... If there were eight other attractive women, how will you know which one is the one who is supposed to pick you up at the hotel?

You only have two sentences in the script to make 'em come alive.

So take notes on this kind of stuff. Write it down... right kind of words, where someone would meet them and know it's them.

Start with people outside the range of normal. Different size. Different appearance. Tiny hands. Big bear of a man.

Alex is 30's, but dresses younger, trendily, and gets away with it.

Do she have a limp... deformity? Walks with a limp, but doesn't know it.

How do you describe people who are similar? Group of men flying business class.. All in suits, all in 40's... much in common. One guy has red suspenders. One guy is sweaty and breathing hard. One drinks too much.

Start taking notes! Write this stuff down. Practice descriptions, practice observing. You can ALWAYS get your antennae out farther, keep sucking stuff in. It's a constant process of training to notice, notice, notice.

2.) Ear for dialogue.

Vocal tone, vocal rhythms. How someone talks.

File folders... what's different between restaurant between this kind of people and that kind. In the south, it's going to be different. Besides the accent, what are they saying.

-- Lunch today... You and me, and Dave. Okay.

--Well, Linda. How are you. I'm pretty good. I've been raising chickens and writing scripts.

--Now. Do you have this straight. I'm going to go over this one more time. Do you have your pencil out? I'm going to go over this one more time. Number one... [this woman was totally condescending, but also totally gorgeous and beautifully dressed. -- unexpected, as you don't think this woman would be that way.]

Keep these file folders on character... Northern, Southern, Scientist, etc.

In the South, we don't call it hot. We call it sultry.

Keep a micro cassette recorder, and record dialogue. Don't tape people without permission. "I am writing a major motion picture, and I need someone in it and your dialogue rhythm is what I need..." then interview them... ask them about their background, their work, and you can hear what it is they are saying... Or, you can dictate what they say into your tape recorder.

-- Hunhhhh.

-- You must have had a tough morning.

-- You don't know the half of it...

Linda's reading a script... and the woman was on her way to L.A. to have a night with an actor. An affair. She ordered a drink, at 9:00 in the morning... She'd have talked with the woman for five hours, and interviewed her.

had she not talked, Linda would have gone into the bathroom and dictated what the woman had said into the tape recorder.

Take the tape recorder with you!

Also, vocabulary, not just rhythm, culture and energy.

Different people use different vocabulary. Talking about E Coli and salmonella on the podium, if you're a microbiologist. Different countries use different vocabularies.

I'll take a rest and later I'll post a letter.

In New Zealand, you don't walk a dog, you bounce the dog. A water fountain is a bubbler.

Breakfast, dinner, and supper. Breakfast, lunch and dinner. In Spain, dinner means 1:00 in the afternoon, from when they learned to speak English...

What is unusual, that no one will tell you, but if you went to that place, you'd notice it. Breakfast in Norway... "what do you eat..." -- Eggs, herring, sardines, salami, etc. What they'll forget to tell you is that in September, you eat by candlelight. Would you ask about that? If you were there, you'd notice these customs.

In New York, they wear their tennis shoes to work and change shoes. Not in Los Angeles or Nashville. So, what's different in Nashville and Omaha, etc. Tune

yourself to subtle differences, like what kind of people are there? D.C. is very political and bureaucratic. Taxi drivers never know anything.

It's not my job to be curious about that door. I'm in charge of this door.

What do people do with their spare time?  
Men and women do different things.

After work, they have a beer. Shoot darts. Go to gym. Have a martini. Some only work. Women in the movie business take tango lessons. Tap lessons.

Do something unrelated to the Business that is unusual...

Don't just notice details of their occupation, but the stuff around them Where do they go to eat, and what do they look like? Noisy and chrome-y. See and be seen.

We sat next to Bob Dylan's clothes.

So, you take all these notes and observe and write it down.

3.) After observation, train your ability to research.

You may need more information. You'll have to go to the library, read more about an occupation. hang out at and E.R. If you're going to do a lawyer and be in a law library.

A law library is different than a university library than a downtown city library... get them right.

See what it was like, look at pictures. Look at maps...

Make friends with your librarian. Get their name. Go there, and be able to call 'em and ask for information.

Have a researcher, and you can call them and find a small piece of information. Susan Terry, in Los Angeles 818/ Does research. Call Linda's office...

Experiential research. What is it like to go through this emotionally. Make the script ring true. Make it specific. Real research will make it specific.

You HAVE to know what the character is going through emotionally. What emotional steps are they taking to get through the experience..?

In Russia, you waggle a pack of Marlboros to get a cab...

You go to where the drivers are waiting, and negotiate with the ones that aren't in cars...

Research can turn your story in a different direction...  
Get used to the unfamiliar.

In real life we live with what's comfortable. We do what's easy. We live with our own kind. We find our comfort zone, professionally, racially, etc. And we don't want to go beyond it.

Therefore, your characters are all going to look the same.

Once a month... do something you've never done before, and if it's a little uncomfortable. That's an even better to do. Be the only white person in a black church. Go country line dancing. See what it's like to speak some of another language.

Go on a cattle drive -- cowboy culture is different than you'll expect. Poets who write nature poetry. "I just finished my poem and it's a mighty shiny outfit." Women are very equal in cowboy culture. Wyoming was the first place in the world women could vote. 1871, as they needed women to settle the west.

Be prepared to feel funny, as that's when you're learning something.

Two kinds of research:

General research. Always doing this all the time. You're living, and you know a lot because you're educated, and you've lived, etc. If you've been in New York, had an acting class, and had a surprise birthday party...

TOOTSIE. Scene where he has a birthday party after complaining about his work. Then bits of dialogue about working hard in theater. Terri shows him a baby. Dustin talks to an actress Bill talks about what he wants in his plays. Terri is trapped in bathroom. Dustin plays piano. Terri takes food home. The girl leaves... Terri and Dustin walk away together, and then she cries. He says she's worried about the audition... He helps her with her part, she's auditioning for the Tootsie part. She's got a problem with anger...

In the scene, you notice loads of detail. Movement of the party and the various people you have in the party...

Woman in a wheelchair. Don't think white... Raise your consciousness about bringing color and texture and opening up your palette of characters to see this

kind of stuff. Don't just have lots of white people in it... variety in people who might really be at that party.

Dustin uses same line on women to pick them up... and then you move into the actual story, when he's better for the role than Terri is.

Terri steals food... that's detail. She obviously loves children. Dustin couldn't care less. She wants some second. Many many layers of what would go on in a NYC theater kind of a party.

Dustin always go after blonde tall women.

OUT OF AFRICA Kurt Luedke, the writer had been obsessed with Africa as a child. But when he wrote it, he had to do much research. he researched a woman who had a coffee plantation that failed.. and eh wanted to know why...too high up. Where did the trains come from? She came by boat, and then how did she get there by train, and what did it look like? If you don't know what it looks like... wooden seats and all in a row? The scene will be different if you know what the train looks like? She also has her Limoges china, not just china is Limoges. She has a dog. What kind of dog would she have? What is the ivory trade... what is Dennis doing in Africa? What is the ivory trade, where do you do it, does the train stop for you, and who would you be with? What kind of tribe is the guy from. What is the difference from a house servant and a Masai... What was going on in WWI in Africa and how did it affect them? What would her attitude be like, coming from Denmark. Feminist adventurer.... Tiny tiny character details that tell us this guy has done his research...

Kenya, East Africa 1913. She arrives on train.... The titles sequence. Incredibly short. They meet. Boom, it's over. But it all sure seems right.

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As a consultant, she doesn't tell you what she'd do. Wants to make your script work, not redo it herself.

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"Don't write unless you love writing, because it's too hard... why bother?" Linda Seger

## Backstory & Biography

Work on this!

Biography -- what do you know about your character in terms of background, what does father, mother do, have they moved a lot, where are they from, socio-economic, intelligence, religious, cultural background.. how has it had an impact on them?

It's like a C.V. Where did you grow up, go to school, etc. All you jobs and what you did in them. But that gets very dry.

But, it's also more interesting than that.

Most embarrassing moment, exciting, transforming experience, what makes them angry, what makes them happy, what kind of things happened to them that they've never gotten over (we're not dealing with the person, we're dealing with what happened to them when they are seven...)

To understand more about their biography, put them in an unusual circumstance... what would they do if they had a flat tire at midnight? Change a hundred dollar bill at night? Where go and where would they stay and where would they eat on vacation? What do they like in food? If she's a woman, what is her favorite perfume? Chocolate, animal, etc. How do they relate to their dog? What's the dog's name, etc.

Linda wears Jean Patou's "Joy."

Backstory is related to biography, but is about what we need to know about them to understand the movie. What went on before that is specifically related to the story in the movie.

Woman detective whose father was on the force and was killed. Every book in the Mallory series deals with the father's death in some way. It's how she gets by with stuff because he was so respected...

Her biography isn't very important, as we don't need to know where she went to kindergarten.

There's the person we see on screen is the tip of the iceberg... 90% of the work you do, we don't ever see. But we see the results of that work.

Backstory is also expositional information.

Don't do the "let's sit around the restaurant and talk about our backstory" scene... How much of this do we need to know...

The writers of RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK crammed a scene with exposition, but did it using every technique to hide it.

"The Nazis have discovered Tannus." That's the point to the scene.

Big auditorium. Not in a sterile classroom, but a huge room. Giant high ceilings. The Government guy talks about Jones's resume... the Government men tell him who he is, but with subtext.... They are buttering him up, as they want something, so they are telling him this... the subtext is "I want something out of you." Jones doesn't buy it, and sits him down.

Studied under Professor Ravenwood. yes. Know of his whereabouts? Now there is emotion... attitudes and feelings.

A skinny little guy and a fat little guy... use character contrasts to help make the scene interesting. Not just two government men.

Perhaps have the woman government agent. She doesn't have to just be a love interest. Woman vice president in AIRFORCE ONE.

He's somewhere in Asia... Haven't spoken to him in ten years... we were friends but had a falling out, I'm afraid. What's important is the relationship and the emotion about it. Poignancy and another layer.. feelings are discussed.

there is competition between the fat guy and skinny guy to say the interesting bits. There is something going on between them. All the scene is about is that they have discovered Tannus, and there is conflict to make it interesting.

Back and forth -- dialogue is a tennis ball. Keep it moving. Between the two agents. Keep the energy going, but having both men talk one after another.

The guy says the Nazis have discovered Tannus. But, Jones and the old guy are blown away, so we care too. We don't know what it is and we know it's important.

They do the emotion before they tell us what it's about.

One guy starts the information... and then Jones answers what Tannus is. You ask the question, and someone else answers. Jones explains about the Ark of the Covenant. He's also agnostic, as he doesn't believe in that sort of thing...information, but with attitude behind it.

Didn't you guys go to Sunday school.... so he used to be protestant...

Denholm explains that it vanished... 980 B.C... may have hidden it in Tannus, in the Well of Souls. Then Tannus was consumed in a sandstorm that lasted a whole year... "wiped clean by the wrath of God..." Denholm is egging the guy on...

The guys' attitude is in danger of keeping them from getting the information they need from Indiana, but the skinny guy wants to get the information, and keeps it going.

We learn that Ravenwood was obsessed with Tannus. And the Nazis think Abner has the headpiece, and then Q & A we find out about the headpiece for the Staff of Ra. And the map room... and the suns shines and the beam tells where the well of the souls is...

Use a visual to explain... so he uses a chalkboard. And he flips it over, which is visual.

He shows a picture of the Ark. MUSIC up for the visual... Set up the lightning and fire coming from the ark, the power of God coming from it...

"That's what the Hebrews thought.." An academic language choice.

The bible speaks of the Ark making an army invincible... NOW we know what's going on!

This is foreshadowing information... They've now told us what we need to know in the Third Act...

Jones's religious background is not all that important, but adds another layer. The slight layer that is added... "If you believe in that kind of thing." "Didn't you guys go to Sunday school?" It's attitude...

Linda is a Quaker. The guy in Witness had written a Methodist prayer. He called her for advice.

Dimensionality

Often we only see one aspect of a character. They're not so interesting.

Action guy is action.

Blonde is sexy and a bimbo.

Another guy is a football fan.

Soon, all you see is one thing about them. Look for ways to spread out the dimensions.

## Physicality

What do they look like?

## Think

How smart are they? How do they think? Really brilliant people skip steps... how did you get there? A woman's bracelet falls off, and he says, "Oh, that diet's really working..."

What is their philosophy, or theology of life? Cynical, idealistic, what's their belief system, value system on any subject? What about subject of controversy? Abortion, busing, gun control, death penalty... how does your character feel about these things? It doesn't have to come out, but it may shade your story...

## Values

In WHITE HUNTER BLACK HEART... Clint feels strongly about how people treat blacks and Jews. When people get bigoted in that way, he's egging them on, to let the attitudes come to the front, and then he will erupt and beat them up. You see where his value system is, and isn't, as eh feels less strongly about women.

Philosophy and Theology get talkie.

Values come in action.

Know the philosophy and theology, but if you can get them to "behave" -- to do something, gives them action... what are the decisions they make before they act...

Attitudes. Little and big. This is still what they think. Rose colored glasses vision of life, or grey colored glasses... victim, on top of the world... how do you feel overall toward life. Can be about anything.

Parking lot attitude... Her husband won't pay if he can park for free. They drive for blocks to find a free space. She had little money in grad school. She'd borrow money from Jesuits who took a vow of poverty... Now, she's not broke and wants to pay... "Yeah, but it's only two dollars..."

You can color a scene and a character with these attitudes.

Everyone will have an attitude if three dozen doughnuts come in... she'll want the ones with sprinkles and will make sure she gets 'em. others will think they're unhealthy... etc. This will add conflict and color the characters...

## Act

People do things. Get them moving. Give them actions. Give them actions which will advance the story and move us toward the climax.

Man and woman were on 38th floor and trapped in a fire.

Filter oxygen through water, oxygen trapped in cabinets. They couldn't break the windows. The actress wouldn't let the real woman consult with them, and the actress sat there and was passive and said, "Help me..."

A woman has more oxygen than a man. Fact. The man was losing his ability to think faster than he was. She uses oxygen in a different way. He'd make a sign and then face it the wrong way. Her brain was functioning better than his was. She'd do it with him...

Don't just give all the action to the guys.

## Feeling

People have an emotional palette.

We all express emotions, but some are more expressive than others.

--How are you?

--I have to think bout it.

-- How are you?

--I'm just devastated about what going on...

Under circumstances, a persons emotions can be stretched.

It's response to the circumstance... the circumstance dimensionalizes the character by giving them a response to what is going on.

Through emotions, we identify with the person on the screen. The characters have to feel.

How can I create events that will force feeling from a character?

If your father died... The flight attendants put you in a seat near the front, away from other people... so you can cry across the country...she was normally

together, and cried across the country... She had a thing in her computer that said, "Things to take when travelling" and she took it all for a weekend... she couldn't process what she needed. Four suitcases...

What pushes people who are not highly emotional into that kind of emotional response?

One way to introduce a character is by contrast...

FISH CALLED WANDA... we meet each of the people, in a different way... quick views, but sharp, well defined moments.. all under credits. We meet people and they are clear!

They are created by a consistency. The intellectual character who shows no emotion, then the unpredictability happens... they have a consistency, and then other dimensions com that open them up.

Cleese greets his wife in the yard... He won the case... conflict with wife over tea, and meeting the daughter who needs a new horse... he's henpecked...

then, later, we get an addition to the character... He's with Jamie lee, and they kiss. He's lively and horny.. He carries her upstairs. But he didn't et the right locket...

You want a multi layered character but with a core consistency.

Don't let us say, "The character wouldn't do that."

You don't ask Mother Theresa if she's going to spend the Nobel Prize money on a Mercedes... she's consistent, as you know she won't do... But, there are aspects that you don't expect, but you'll believe that they're true. The VP might take Tango lessons....

Spine

How do they advance the story?

How does the character get transformed by the story and by other people?

Motivation

they have to have a reason to enter a story. Why do they do what they do... The more unusual reason they have for doing it, we need to be VERY clear why.

I'm a cop. I solve murders. No problem, makes sense.

A woman falling in love with the wrong man... we have to explain why

A woman solving a murder, needs why....

say, character's goal is to solve a murder.

30 year old woman with 3 kids, staying home and not working.. She will solve a murder.

What are the whys the audience will ask and make sure the answers are there when we need them.

Why her?

Close relative was murdered. She has a personal investment.

Why not the police?

Police think it was suicide, and she knows it wasn't suicide. We believe her, but we also understand why the cops think it's suicide.

Why is she capable of doing this? What is her backstory?

Went to law school. Majored in criminal law, but quit practicing to be with kids.

Has experience with research skill. Not totally outside her ken.

Do we really buy it?

She loves mystery stories. Has a bookcase filled.

Give her a character who is a sounding board....

Uncle is retired from the force, or he's in a wheelchair and was disabled in line of duty. He can't do it for her, but he can talk to her.

Now we know why.

Motivation pushes them into the story and goal pulls them through to the climax.

Motivation makes the sincerity there, to get to the goal.

If they really want the goal, they're taking action.

Motivation.

Action.

Goal.

Conflict. One person wants one thing, the other one wants another.

Inner conflict, not so good in drama.

Relational conflict, one part of you vs. another person. this is the IMPORTANT one in drama.

Social. Person against the group.

Situational conflict. Situation -- the meteor is coming down.

Cosmic conflict Man vs. God or Devil... Supernatural.

Make it one against one. It's the most dynamic type.

Give the group a representative, so it's one vs one. God vs. man, you personify God with a person, to give him someone to fight against.

Salieri is angry at God for making Mozart, but he has conflict with Mozart.

Motivation.

WITNESS. Motivation is clear. Kid in bus station. Give your main character a great entrance.

--The kid in the funny black threads... reported the murder.

we see his tag, and know he's a cop.

Point to black guy and say the killer's not a runt.

This clip was not clear, actually.

Conflict.

Inner conflict doesn't work well in scripts for very long, but you can use it to shade a character.

PLACES IN THE HEART... sh doesn't know what to do. on porch. --what's gonna happen to us if I can't support this family? I haven't the least idea how to go about it... I've never done anything all my life but raise kids and keep this house. Russ paid all the bills. I never even know how much salary he made. What's gonna happen to us?

You don't want this scene to go on very long.

With inner conflict, you project it outward.

TOOTSIE.

Dustin has inner conflict about the woman he is, Dorothy.

Bang, when the phone rings, the inner conflict is projected out and you move from one to another.

They debate about who should answer the phone.

-- I don't want to pretend I'm not home because you're not that kind of girl.

It got projected out, and it happened between two people.

JAWS. Social. Persona against the group.

Scene on the ferry... the guys come with a Cadillac... Scheider wants to close the beach, but it's the mayor who represents the group. The mayor moves all the way to the front. It's relational... Finally, it's Marty vs. the Mayor. They walk into closeup. -- You yell shark, we got a panic on our hands on the 4th of July.

TOWERING INFERNO Situational, the fire forces all the relational conflicts into the open.

The strong conflict is between Holden and Chamberlain. Panic over the chair on the line.. and who gets on it..

AMADEUS. Cosmic, at the first turning point in the movie. Salieri burns a crucifix, and is in conflict with God, and will be the adversary of God's incarnation... Amadeus.

Salieri reads the perfect music that Mozart had written, first draft... and perfect music. -- Here was the very voice of God. I was staring through the cage of those meticulous penstrokes at absolute beauty. -- from now on, we are enemies, you and I.. .... I will ruin your incarnation...

## Women Characters

Trends in women characters in last six months... important and groundbreaking. Women characters have gone beyond the 1930's and '40s.

Women playing roles that don't exist in real life. AIR FORCE ONE: Woman VP. G.I. JANE: Woman Navy SEAL (which was produced by women.) Good female characters in AIR FORCE ONE.

It's hot to be smart. Authoritative women, in partnership with a man, and she's the authority figure... PEACEMAKER. Clooney takes orders from her, and he doesn't find it a problem to take orders from her. Very important part of the equation. He has to wait for the go-ahead from her... and he waits patiently. RED CORNER, authority is the Asian woman lawyer. TOMORROW NEVER DIES... at least from trailer... CONTACT, VOLCANO, CONSPIRACY THEORY.

In these movies, the romance starts at the last frame of the movie... VOLCANO, CONSPIRACY THEORY, PEACEMAKER. Earlier, in JAGGED EDGE, PRINCE OF TIDES... the woman sleeps with the client, even though it's inappropriate.

Women can help it and not sleep with the guy. Don't have the woman compromise her professional integrity and sleep with the guy to become the love interest. Wait until the appropriate moment to start the romance.

Multidimensional woman. Not just: Bad, crazy, or beautiful and perfect. Now, women are flawed in ways guys got to be flawed. MY BEST FRIEND'S WEDDING. She's manipulative, self absorbed and not that nice. WINGS OF A DOVE... Not a nice woman, and neither of them get the guy at the end. Julia Roberts has a bit of a transformation. Also, a friend who is interesting in there. Good women, kind, compassionate, who are still interesting. Not sappy. Melanie in GWTW was a touch of a sap... She's getting tired of evil...It's not very interesting. Goodness is more interesting.

Stronger depictions of girls. Not just boys as main characters in kids movies. LITTLE PRINCESS... FLYAWAY HOME, ANASTASIA, FAIRY TALE, LITTLE MERMAID, BEAUTY AND THE BEAST -- a girl who had a bigger picture, loved to read, wanted to see the girl... and the writer had to fight for that every day... they wanted her to bake a welcome home daddy cake... She fought for two or three years and changed things for women characters.

Sexy older women. MRS. BROWN. THAT OLD FEELING.

Ensemble films. FIRST WIVES CLUB. PARADISE ROAD, A THOUSAND ACRES.

Women are not just the love interest, but in lots of different roles. VOLCANO... two women geologist, major doctor, one other female doctor... all are women. Black women cops, Hispanic women... not a lot.. but they're there. Daughter. Put women in a group scene.

Do not overestimate the consciousness of a producer... write it in, that it's a woman. PAKISTANI FEMALE JUDGE.

Women aren't just like guys. Generally, you can't just change the name. Ripley was written as a man, and he simply became a woman in ALIEN.

However, generally, everything about us feeds into a character... so, we're different, men and women.

There is a sense that women can write better women than men can. However, many wonderful films have been written by men with women characters. DRIVING MISS DAISY, FIRST WIVES CLUB...

So, why are there so many bad women characters? Because men don't do their research.

STEALING BEAUTY is so Bernardo can sleep with a good looking actress.

## Male Hero & Female Heroine

Women can be heroes. Women can be adventurous. There are many amazing women heroes who have had little written about. African explorers. Sacajawea.

What is the mythic, dazzling side of the woman hero? Where's the mythic female John Wayne?

## HERO

- 1.) Call to adventure. "come take care of this..." big problem...
- 2.) Mentor. Usually another guy.
- 3.) Overcoming obstacles. Threaten to defeat them if they don't take action It's life and death problems.
- 4.) It's action oriented. Body count, defeating obstacles. He's busy doing stuff.
- 5.) Much good vs. evil. often, Good has to become Evil in order to win. Conflict is right and wrong... one will win, one will lose, and it's clear... Evil is defeated, conquered, overcome and gotten rid of... at the end.

## HEROINE

- 1.) Situation or problem, and her sense of value tells her she has to deal with this, and be at risk. A social problem of some sort. --That's not fair, that's not just. Something to be addressed, and her sense of compassion forces her into the situation. Homeless are freezing and her sense of compassion brings her in... her value system brings her in. It's not just survival stakes... a higher value.
- 2.) She has a support network, not a mentor. Women form support networks. Not a guy and he teaches me, but more, "We share things." Women talk about their experiences. A more circular model, not hierarchical.
- 3.) Violence is overcome through the support. When a woman is a victim, it's the support network that allows her to overcome the violence. Your support network helps you deal with your problem. Women are helping other women. You don't enter into a violent situation with violence, women look at violence and figure out what's ready to explode and stop it before it explodes instead of after. --You learn as a mother, to stop John from beating up Judy, to stop it before it happens.

Keeps you out of a win/lose situation. Avoid the spanking with diversion before it happens.

Women respond to violence differently than men.

4.) Women take action. Have physical abilities, however, women are not denied emotional and intuitive side of the experience. James Bond is cool, has a joke, but has no emotional response. COURAGE UNDER FIRE... Meg Ryan did her job, and then cried. It was the appropriate response... tears are in order when you're about to die... Guys aren't doing it, in that moment. They deal with it badly... one commits suicide.

In ALIEN RESURRECTION, Ripley uses her intuition. -- she is here, I feel her. And all that mother stuff... she has an intuitive connection with the monster. And, she's going to use it.

5.) End point is not about conquering, but transforming.

Transform evil instead of getting rid of it, embrace the shadow instead of trying to get rid of it... transform it. When you're talking about human beings, it's not just pure evil. How can you deal with it, and transform it... Don't just blow it away. It's not a body count kind of thing.

Evil has consequences, and you have to look at what they are. The women in FIRST WIVES CLUB only dealt with what the men had already done. The men deserved it. COLOR PURPLE.. --Everything you have ever done, will come back on you.

Evil when you disconnect... in PARADISE ROAD, the women can stay in camp and die, or be prostitutes. They have a choice. If you go, you are colluding with evil... "If you go, I've lost my alto..."

How do women deal with conflict?

In this model, you may not have a winner or loser, you change conflict and have creative conflict resolution.

HOWARD'S END. Engagement is broken, and the conflict is delayed. They have to see the guests off. Margaret doesn't deny her emotions, but deals with them and then goes on with it. She cries in her room. Having worked through it emotionally, she'll deal with it in a direct way. She finally confronts him, and makes him look at her. "It's not going to trouble us." She forgives him.

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD. Scene at the jail. When Scout defuses the situation when the mob comes. The children are lurking in the bushes, about to leave, and

the mob arrives. Conflict builds between Atticus and the mob, and kids get in, which raises the stakes and adds heat to the conflict. Scout explodes when one of the men grabs Jem. It's not enough for the female figure to drive it, the male has to respect her. Atticus knows she's the only one here who can save the situation, and he lets her do it.

STRICTLY BALLROOM Transforming conflict... when he brings her back home, the father finds out and it's tense. The conflict transforms, through the grandmother... They want to see his paso doble. He does it. [it is not a paso doble, as a Spanish audience made abundantly clear to Linda.] Then, the father does it with the grandmother. The scene is transformed when the grandmother likes his body, and shows him the rhythm.

FRIED GREEN TOMATOES The support group gets her through the abuse, and we see the bonding and the transformation where these women transform each other. When one steals money and stops the poker game... huge contrast between the women. When they talk on the bridge, about "you're not the only one who lost Buddy." They get on the boxcar together... Ruth is transformed through the course of the scene. Throwing food out of the boxcar to poor people. Then, she watches her friend steal honey from the bees and not get stung. Then, friend supports Ruth when she leaves her husband. Fights for her. She leaves her husband... then they eat fried green tomatoes in the café. They smear blackberries and flour on each other... transforming conflict... they change... and finally, at the end, the friend is dressed differently. Still supporting.

The Princessa Machiavellian techniques for women.