



# Schema:

## SELF—SACRIFICE

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!](#)





# Self-Sacrifice

**I CAN END THE PAIN  
OF OTHERS IF I  
SUFFER FOR THEM**

**PEOPLE WITH** the Self-Sacrifice schema believe they are responsible for preventing pain and suffering in others, at the expense of their own well-being.

**THOSE WITH** the Self-Sacrifice schema are acutely sensitive to the pain and suffering of others. They are driven to prevent this pain in others by taking some of it on themselves, voluntarily. Sometimes their drive is also to prevent a sense of guilt in themselves, or because they feel responsible for other people. This can lead into codependence with others. This schema can also prevent people from seeking medical attention unless they are “actually sick,” which means this schema is often accompanied by headaches, nausea, fatigue, etc.

**THIS SCHEMA** may begin in childhood due to a parent who is ill, weak, needy, childlike, or depressed, which lead to the child needing to parent their own parent and be the adult in the relationship.

# Self-Sacrifice

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

Experiences anger at loved ones who do not appreciate their sacrifices.

Pledges to never do anything for anyone ever again.

Gives as little as possible to others.

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

Avoids forming relationships so they have no one to sacrifice for.

Avoids any situation that involves giving or taking.

**SURRENDER:** the schema is true.

Engages in self-denial.

Does a lot for others and nothing for themselves.

Gives and gives and never asks for anything in return.



# Lie – Want – Truth – Wound

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

"I put others before myself, or I feel guilty."

"I could put up with anything if I loved the person."

"No matter how busy I am, I can find time to do things for others."

"If I do what I want, I feel very uncomfortable."

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

Ex: "To make everyone in my life happy."

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

Ex: "To understand that all people--including me--have an equal right to have their needs met."

## 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 Self-Sacrifice 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!