



Paul Graham

(PROTAGONIST)



- [Overview](#)
- [Backstory](#)
- [Personality](#)
- [Behavior](#)
- [Motivation](#)
- [Physical](#)
- [Daily Life](#)
- [Gallery](#)

OVERVIEW

BACKSTORY:

Paul's life fell apart when his wife, who, after seven years of marriage, came out as gay. (No infidelity was involved.) The two divorced and now share custody of their two children. Paul feels like he failed as a husband, and irrationally believes this happened in part because he wasn't enough of a man for her. He also thinks something's wrong with him in that he should have known, should have seen what was right in front of him.

After the divorce, Paul avoids relationships that could lead to commitment because he is afraid of being hurt again. He dates women who are sexually aggressive, showing exactly what team they play for, and cuts things off before they can get serious. Paul also struggles at work, underachieving in a secondary role because he's afraid he'll miss something vital again, thus showing the world just how inadequate he is. There's also friction at home as his kids are admittedly becoming somewhat spoiled due to his parenting style and Paul doesn't know how to correct it.

PERSONALITY:

Overview: Paul is intelligent, observant, and notices the little things, like when someone's trying to hide something. He is judgmental and finds it nearly impossible to take things at face value—it's like he expects people to not be who they say they are. He has a strong sense of fairness and honesty, which gets him in trouble when these traits take precedence over diplomacy.

BEHAVIOR:

Paul's tendency to display his suspicious side puts him on the offensive with interacting with others, and he can get aggressive if he thinks information is being held back from him (his trigger). Because he is insecure about his own self-worth, feels defective, and worries about failing, he avoids situations where he could fail.

When he's upset, he sometimes drinks too much, spends too much, or will isolate himself by working on his motorcycle as a way to process problems at work or with his kids. As a parent, he is overly permissive because he's terrified if he doesn't make his children love him enough, they will eventually ask to stay with his ex-wife full time, thereby leaving him just as she did.

MOTIVATION:

Paul meets the perfect woman on a road trip--a photographer shooting roadside cemeteries for a magazine. She's a great match because there's a mutual attraction, and she doesn't want a committed relationship either. They date and become intimate, and this is great for Paul, who is terrified of losing his heart...until he realizes he's falling for her.

Now he needs to work through his feelings of insecurity and self-blame in order to become someone who can be a true trusting partner in a relationship and prove to her that he's worth her risking her heart again, too.

PHYSICAL DETAILS:

Overview: Paul's 34, has gray-blue eyes that darken to a stunning indigo when he's emotional, in good shape, tall but not too tall, has a beard, loves motorbikes and so dresses like a biker when he's not at the office. Sexy, cleans up nice.

DAILY LIFE:

Overview: Paul is a marketing executive for a large IT solutions firm, makes good money but he doesn't love the job--feels like he could be more challenged and has ideas about how to steer the company's growth. He has 2 kids (a boy and girl, twins, age 6), and loves them to death. He also enjoys traveling with his sister, riding his Harley, hanging out with his kids and being an involved dad. (He's not close with his own dad and doesn't want to continue that cycle.)



Paul Graham



- [Overview](#)
- [Backstory](#)
- [Personality](#)
- [Behavior](#)
- [Motivation](#)
- [Physical](#)
- [Daily Life](#)
- [Gallery](#)

BACKSTORY

WOUNDS

DISCOVERING A PARTNER'S SEXUAL ORIENTATION SECRET [PRIMARY WOUND]

Possible Responses

- Confusion over what to tell one's children
- Ending the relationship at once
- Wanting to vent to friends but worrying about being viewed as homophobic, intolerant, or uncaring
- Not trusting anyone's word at face value
- Mistrusting even one's closest friends
- Dropping out of social circles one used to frequent with one's partner
- Avoiding new romantic relationships
- Choosing partners who embody a clear sexual preference (being highly macho, overtly feminine, etc.)
- Looking for deceit; believing that every person has a hidden agenda

Negative Attributes

Inflexible, Judgmental, Paranoid

Positive Attributes

Analytical, Cautious, Observant, Private

BEING RAISED BY PARENTS WHO LOVED CONDITIONALLY (FATHER)

Possible Responses

- Anxiety; being filled with self-doubt
- Feeling one must always be a giver rather than a taker
- Micro-managing others to ensure optimal results
- Tying one's worth to achievement and success

Examples

- When one gained accolades and awards for performances
- Provided one didn't cause embarrassment
- When one had control over one's emotions

Negative Attributes

Controlling, Impatient, Insecure

Positive Attributes

Efficient, Persuasive

BEING ABANDONED BY AN ADULT (A FRIEND'S PARENT) AT AGE 9

Possible Responses

- Is mistrustful of promises
- Became ultra responsible
- Creates a false front so others will not worry (taking on the burden of worry oneself)
- Difficulty trusting responsibility to others

Examples

Paul's mother was in the hospital and his dad was away for work, so Paul was farmed out to a friend who turned out to be unreliable and took off for several days, leaving Paul and his friend Richard (7) to fend for themselves.

Negative Attributes

Compulsive, Obsessive, Worrywart

Positive Attributes

Alert, Disciplined, Vigilant



Paul Graham



Overview	Backstory	Personality	Behavior	Motivation	Physical	Daily Life	Gallery
--------------------------	---------------------------	-----------------------------	--------------------------	----------------------------	--------------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------

FEARS

That their judgment and instincts are impaired [PRIMARY FEAR]

Being the last to know
Trusting the wrong person and being deceived again

FEAR-RELATED BEHAVIORS AND ATTITUDES

What situations will the character now avoid?

Relationships with the opposite sex that become too close
Friendship with people who like to keep secrets
Get-togethers involving "shared" friends with the ex
Situations where he risks failure or may display weakness

In what situations or settings will the character now feel threatened, unsafe, or vulnerable?

When a date opens up and shows vulnerability (suggesting trust & possibly of a deeper connection)
Situations where one has to show a sensitive side rather than a "tough guy" side
"Measuring stick" situations where he could be perceived as weak, incapable, or defective

How does the character hide this fear from others?

Not letting people in, creating distance
Embracing activities and interests (sports, promiscuity, drinking, customizing his motorcycle, etc.) that makes him feel macho
Underachieving at work so he never fails
Using the kids as an excuse to not work as hard as others, taking himself out of the leadership track

How does the fear impact the character's relationships with others (negatively and/or positively)?

He ends relationships before they get serious (so no one can hurt him)
He avoids showing his soft side because it leads to trust and vulnerability
He becomes a pushover parent, worried his kids will love Mom more and leave him as she did
He becomes suspicious of the motives of others and questions them until he's satisfied they aren't holding something back
Having lived through a personal scandal, he avoids all gossipy groups
He is always honest and forthright with others so people know they can trust his word

How does the fear affect the character at work?

He underachieves due to the worry that if he steps into a high profile position he will fail to see a problem before it's too late
He avoids risk of failure (again, he underachieves rather than puts himself out there as a leader)
People walk softly around him, viewing him as touchy and micro-managing (because he's mistrustful and reactive, always expecting someone to drop another bomb on him)

How has the character's fear diminished their self-esteem?

Because he's afraid to trust the wrong person, his guard is always up. He refuses to show vulnerability to anyone, hampering meaningful connections

LIES

LIE RESULTING FROM THE PRIMARY WOUND (DISCOVERING A PARTNER'S SEXUAL ORIENTATION SECRET)

At some point, people will see that he's not worth sticking around for. [PRIMARY LIE]



Paul Graham



Overview	Backstory	Personality	Behavior	Motivation	Physical	Daily Life	Gallery
--------------------------	---------------------------	-----------------------------	--------------------------	----------------------------	--------------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------

LIE-RELATED BEHAVIORS AND ATTITUDES

Your character may also hold biased beliefs about society or the world at large (all people are selfish, marriage is a trap, etc.). If your character has these kinds of negative biases, list them here. For optimal results, please phrase your answer as a statement in the following format: *He/She believes that* _____
 He believes that a lasting, committed relationship is a myth--at some point or one person will get tired of the other and want out

He believes that no one can ever be "enough;" people will have unrealistic expectations and always want more

Why does your character believe this?

He believes that his wife left him because he wasn't enough, he wasn't what she wanted and needed.

Does your character have trust issues with an individual? If so, who? Please phrase your answer as a statement in the following format: *He/She mistrusts* _____

He mistrusts his ex-wife

He mistrusts people who are secretive, hold back information, or refuse to disclose their motives

Mistrust manifests in many ways. What habits, behaviors, or attitudes does your character embrace due to their mistrust of any of these people or groups?

Paul will sometimes test people, even friends, by asking questions he knows the answers to, just to see if they will reply honestly.

Paul doesn't take things at face value. He asks questions until he's satisfied no information is being withheld.

Paul assumes most people are hiding something or not being fully honest.

Paul will question his kids about his ex-wife after they spend time with her.

Paul analyzes interactions after the fact to ensure he didn't miss something important that leaves him exposed

The lie a character believes will ultimately impact their sense of self-worth, often resulting in the disempowering belief that they're unworthy of something vital, such as love, trust, or success. This is related to the lie but also to the wounding event that caused it. What does your character secretly believe they're unworthy of? Please phrase your answer as a statement in the following format: *He/She believes that he/she is unworthy of* _____

He believes he is unworthy of unconditional love.

A lie that is tied to disempowering beliefs will affect the character's self-worth, leading to insecurity. When does your character feel insecure?

He feels insecure when someone pokes fun at his masculinity

He feels insecure when his partner asks a personal question that will lead to emotional intimacy

He feels insecure when another shows interest in his current romantic partner

He feels insecure when someone clams up or changes the subject when he enters the conversation

He's insecure when someone displays greater knowledge or capabilities at work

The character's lie causes them to think and behave in ways that are unbalanced or dysfunctional, often creating friction in relationships. What does this look like for your character?

Paul avoids emotional intimacy

Paul asks questions that suggests he doesn't believe what he's being told, offending friends and co-workers

Paul chooses romantic partners that he knows are not a fit long term



Paul Graham



Overview	Backstory	Personality	Behavior	Motivation	Physical	Daily Life	Gallery
--------------------------	---------------------------	-----------------------------	--------------------------	----------------------------	--------------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------

The character's goal achievement may be hampered by dysfunctional attitudes and behaviors that show up when he or she is working with others (at work, at school, on a team, while parenting, etc.) What might this look like for your character?

He won't take on challenges if success is uncertain, avoiding proving to everyone he doesn't measure up

He is too permissive as a parent because he's worried about not being a good enough dad and losing the love of his kids

He lets others take opportunities at work that can lead to great reward because he's afraid to stick his own neck out and risk failure

A trigger is something that reminds your character so strongly of a past negative event that it brings on the emotions, fears, and unhealthy responses related to it. It can be something sensory (a smell, color, taste, or sound), a person, object, situation, setting, or strong emotion tied to the trauma. What situations are triggers for your character?

He can be triggered by same-sex couples as it reminds him of the loss of his life partner

He's triggered when someone is keeping a secret

He's triggered when he catches someone in a lie

He's triggered when someone points out his flaws or shortcomings

What does she avoid (people, situations, places, smells, emotions, etc.) because of these triggers? Please phrase your answer as a statement in the following format: *She/He avoids* _____

He avoids emotional closeness and will leave a romantic relationship before he himself can be dumped

At work, he avoids working on high profile projects where screw ups will be under a microscope

How does your character overreact to these triggers? Please phrase your answer this way: *When triggered, he/she* _____

When triggered in a relationship, he will do something to sabotage it or end it

When triggered by criticism, he grows angry and reactive.

When triggered by possible deceptiveness, he will intimidate or refuse to let the situation go until the person reveals what they were holding back

What behaviors or beliefs stemming from the character's lie prevent the character from living their life in full? Please phrase your answer as a statement in the following format: *He/She is unable to* _____

Paul is unable to open his heart to others, fearing if he does, they will eventually see he's not a fit and leave him

He is unable to get promoted because he's always worried about failing and so avoids taking on responsibilities that will get him noticed

SECRETS

Is attracted to an oblivious friend or coworker

Is dating a lot of people at once



Paul Graham



- [Overview](#)
- [Backstory](#)
- [Personality](#)
- [Behavior](#)
- [Motivation](#)
- [Physical](#)
- [Daily Life](#)
- [Gallery](#)

PERSONALITY

POSITIVE TRAITS

VIGILANT [PRIMARY POSITIVE TRAIT]

Possible Causes

Was let down in the past

Associated Behaviors and Attitudes

Watchfulness

Paying attention to the small things

Being proactive; thinking about what could go wrong so one is ready for it

Associated Emotions

Worry, vulnerability, determination

ANALYTICAL

Skilled in thinking and reasoning; having a natural instinct to study and analyze

Possible Causes

Intelligence

A fear of making mistakes

Associated Behaviors and Attitudes

Asking questions

Running experiments

Getting hung up on the little things

Reading into what people say and do

Looking for patterns and cause-effect relationships

Being uncomfortable with sarcasm and jokes

Not being able to let something go

Being honest even when it hurts

Being skeptical when presented with new ideas, beliefs, or "truths" without proof

Being highly observant

Being able to quickly and accurately assess a situation

Associated Emotions

Conflicted, insecurity, skepticism

OBSERVANT

Paying careful attention

(Note => Being observant refers to one's ability to notice things, while being perceptive involves the ability to understand and draw conclusions from things that have been observed. While closely related, the two traits aren't synonymous, nor do they always go hand in hand.)

Possible Causes

Nosiness

A fear of missing something important

Associated Behaviors and Attitudes

Noticing when someone's mood has changed

Noticing details that others might miss

Instantly sizing up a room upon entering

Being nosy

Noticing pattern breaks (a co-worker's frequent absences, keys going missing, etc.)

PRIVATE

Having strong personal boundaries; preferring to keep one's affairs to oneself

Possible Causes

Fear of rejection and being hurt

Having one's secrets exposed, resulting in embarrassment or humiliation

Trusting the wrong person and being hurt by them

onestopforwriters.com



Paul Graham



Overview	Backstory	Personality	Behavior	Motivation	Physical	Daily Life	Gallery
--------------------------	---------------------------	-----------------------------	--------------------------	----------------------------	--------------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------

A fear of being judged

Associated Behaviors and Attitudes

- Deflecting questions; steering conversations to less personal topics
- Keeping one's fears and desires to oneself
- Keeping things light and fun in social settings
- Avoiding situations where one might be vulnerable
- Growing anxious at the thought of letting others get close
- Avoiding gossips and rumormongers
- Not asking many questions for fear of being rude or invasive

HONEST

Honorable in intentions; straightforward in conduct

Possible Causes

Being hurt in the past by the concealment of truth

Associated Behaviors and Attitudes

- Failing to find balance and exhibiting a lack of tact
- Being uncomfortable with keeping secrets or knowledge from others
- Keeping meticulous records so as to dispel any accusation of dishonesty
- Looking others in the eye
- Viewing things in black or white
- Sticking to one's commitments

PERSUASIVE

Able to influence others by argument, entreaty, counsel, or protest

Possible Causes

- Having a knack for reading people and influencing them
- Being passionate about a certain subject

Associated Behaviors and Attitudes

- Paying close attention to others
- Reading others well
- Staying focused on the end result
- Speaking and acting with authority and confidence

Associated Emotions

Determination

ALERT

CHARMING

FOCUSED

FRIENDLY

CAUTIOUS

HONORABLE



Paul Graham



Overview	Backstory	Personality	Behavior	Motivation	Physical	Daily Life	Gallery
--------------------------	---------------------------	-----------------------------	--------------------------	----------------------------	--------------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------

INFLUENTIAL FACTORS (POSITIVE TRAITS)

Positive Influencers and Role Models

A mother who shielded Paul from her struggle with chronic illness encouraged him to not settle and instead reach for what would make him happy.

His childhood friend George stuck by him even when kids at school turned on him, teaching him the value of friendship and loyalty.

A janitor at Paul's university taught him to be true to himself and not worry too much about what others thought. This gave Paul the courage to change majors and pursue business management instead of teaching.

Past Achievements and Sources of Pride

Working several jobs during and after university and paying off all his student loans in 3 years.

Getting his MBA in business management.

His daughter (Micah) and son (Matthew), six-year-old twins.

Ethics and Values

Paul believes that loyalty is one of the greatest gifts you can give someone and that loved ones are worth going to the mat for. He also believes in being forthright and treating people fairly and will put this ahead of ambition (sometimes to his own detriment).

Environmental Contributors

Paul grew up in a family that always struggled for money, so he's determined to give his kids an easier life, providing what they need (and want, within reason, so their memories of childhood are happy ones). He also had an absentee dad who was working all the time and demanded perfection, so he makes an extra-strong effort to be involved in his kids' interests (coaching, taking them to practice or a gymnastics club, teaching them how to swim, etc.). Very hands on.

NEGATIVE TRAITS

CYNICAL [PRIMARY FLAW]

Possible Causes

A past betrayal

Associated Behaviors and Attitudes

Not expecting people to follow through

Expecting things to not last (like a marriage) and promises to be broken

Looking for someone to blame when something goes wrong

Expecting people to break their promises

Difficulty with change

INFLEXIBLE

Immovable in will or purpose

Possible Causes

Insecurity

Associated Behaviors and Attitudes

Seeing things as right or wrong, with no gray area

Close-mindedness

Beliefs that are resolute

Being easily irritated or overwhelmed

JUDGMENTAL

Inclined to judge harshly and unfavorably

onestopforwriters.com



Paul Graham



Overview	Backstory	Personality	Behavior	Motivation	Physical	Daily Life	Gallery
--------------------------	---------------------------	-----------------------------	--------------------------	----------------------------	--------------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------

Possible Causes

Firmly believing in black and white, wrong and right
 Guilt or shame (needing to divert the focus from oneself to others)
 Insecurity; judging someone who has the same weaknesses as oneself

Associated Behaviors and Attitudes

Making snap judgments about others
 Focusing on people's flaws rather than on their attributes
 Intolerance for mistakes
 Perfectionism
 Assuming the worst of others

Associated Emotions

Annoyance, insecurity, defensiveness

INSECURE

Lacking confidence and surety

Possible Causes

Abuse, neglect, or abandonment
 Failure
 A fear of rejection
 Having a dysfunctional relationship with one or both parents

Associated Behaviors and Attitudes

Overcompensating for insecurities by focusing on other areas
 Comparing oneself to others and feeling inferior
 Blaming oneself when bad things happen
 Worrying about what other people think
 Entering into unhealthy relationships
 Seeking acceptance through unhealthy measures
 Self-destructive behaviors (drug use, engaging in unprotected sex, developing an eating disorder, etc.)

Associated Emotions

Doubt, loneliness

INFLUENTIAL FACTORS (NEGATIVE TRAITS)

Abusive Caregivers, Negative Influencers, and Bad Role Models

Paul's workaholic and often-absent father made him feel like he wasn't supported. His dad also only showed affection when he accomplished something exceptional (conditional love).

A wife who kept a secret that left Paul feeling duped

Kids at school who bullied Paul because he didn't fit in financially (the poor kid) and his parents never came to school events (plays, art night, baseball games, etc.)

Experiences that Were Unjust or Unfair

Having a mother with a chronic illness who could rarely venture out—meaning, she couldn't be there to support Paul in his important moments and witness his achievements

Being treated differently as a kid because of the clothes he wore and where he lived

Painful Memories

Missing a championship baseball game because his dad didn't get home from his business trip in time to drive him to the city where the final game was held






His mother passing away when Paul was only twenty

His wife revealing she was gay, and telling him she knew even before marriage but didn't tell Paul because she



Paul Graham



 Overview	 Backstory	 Personality	 Behavior	 Motivation	 Physical	 Daily Life	 Gallery
---	--	--	---	---	--	---	--

wasn't ready to accept it herself






Negative Life Lessons

When most of his friends turned on him as a kid because they wanted to be more popular, he learned that people are fickle and will throw you under the bus to get ahead



Paul Graham



- 
[Overview](#)
- 
[Backstory](#)
- 
[Personality](#)
- 
[Behavior](#)
- 
[Motivation](#)
- 
[Physical](#)
- 
[Daily Life](#)
- 
[Gallery](#)

BEHAVIOR









CORE BEHAVIORS

POSITIVE TRAITS	NEGATIVE TRAITS
VIGILANT [PRIMARY]	CYNICAL [PRIMARY]
Watchfulness Paying attention to the small things Being proactive; thinking about what could go wrong so one is ready for it	Not expecting people to follow through Expecting things to not last (like a marriage) and promises to be broken Looking for someone to blame when something goes wrong Expecting people to break their promises Difficulty with change
ANALYTICAL	INFLEXIBLE
Asking questions Running experiments Getting hung up on the little things Reading into what people say and do Looking for patterns and cause-effect relationships Being uncomfortable with sarcasm and jokes Not being able to let something go Being honest even when it hurts Being skeptical when presented with new ideas, beliefs, or "truths" without proof Being highly observant Being able to quickly and accurately assess a situation	Seeing things as right or wrong, with no gray area Close-mindedness Beliefs that are resolute Being easily irritated or overwhelmed
OBSERVANT	JUDGMENTAL
Noticing when someone's mood has changed Noticing details that others might miss Instantly sizing up a room upon entering Being nosy Noticing pattern breaks (a co-worker's frequent absences, keys going missing, etc.)	Making snap judgments about others Focusing on people's flaws rather than on their attributes Intolerance for mistakes Perfectionism Assuming the worst of others
PRIVATE	INSECURE
Deflecting questions; steering conversations to less personal topics Keeping one's fears and desires to oneself Keeping things light and fun in social settings Avoiding situations where one might be vulnerable Growing anxious at the thought of letting others get close Avoiding gossips and rumormongers Not asking many questions for fear of being rude or invasive	Overcompensating for insecurities by focusing on other areas Comparing oneself to others and feeling inferior Blaming oneself when bad things happen Worrying about what other people think Entering into unhealthy relationships Seeking acceptance through unhealthy measures Self-destructive behaviors (drug use, engaging in unprotected sex, developing an eating disorder, etc.)
HONEST	
Failing to find balance and exhibiting a lack of tact Being uncomfortable with keeping secrets or knowledge from others Keeping meticulous records so as to dispel any accusation of dishonesty Looking others in the eye Viewing things in black or white Sticking to one's commitments	
PERSUASIVE	



Paul Graham



- 
[Overview](#)
- 
[Backstory](#)
- 
[Personality](#)
- 
[Behavior](#)
- 
[Motivation](#)
- 
[Physical](#)
- 
[Daily Life](#)
- 
[Gallery](#)

POSITIVE TRAITS	NEGATIVE TRAITS
Paying close attention to others Reading others well Staying focused on the end result Speaking and acting with authority and confidence	
ALERT	
CHARMING	
FOCUSED	
FRIENDLY	
CAUTIOUS	
HONORABLE	

EMOTIONAL RANGE

When Idle

Likes to surf travel websites for vacation spots, look up motorcycle parts and accessories, and watch videos on motorbike maintenance

When Stressed

Raises the voice, lashes out, makes accusations

When Exhausted

Gives in to the kids and lets them have their way. Tries to retreat into his own space. Becomes irritable and sensitive to noises or people who don't observe social cues (that someone wants to leave, is tired, or doesn't want to discuss something, etc.)

When Inebriated

Grows really amorous and confident, becomes more touchy-feely with women, lets his humor loose

When Anxious

Jumps to conclusions, thinks about all the ways something can go wrong, and worries he will not handle any problems that come up the right way

When Distracted

Forgets where he puts things, loses track of time (and if he is late or drops the ball because of it, feels incredibly guilty and inadequate)

When Feeling the Pull of Attraction

Rushes into the physical to avoid having to be vulnerable by sharing meaningful personal details

When Aroused

Encourages skin-to-skin contact to rush things along, likes the female to take control, is suggestive and playful

Reserved or Expressive

Demonstrative

Quick to Anger

Yes

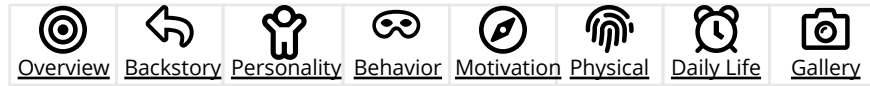
What Does It Take to Provoke the Character?

Anything that suggests a breach in trust. He hates not being in the know, so if he suspects someone is holding back,

onestopforwriters.com



Paul Graham



lying, or avoiding a topic, it triggers him and he will push until that person gives up what they know.

Will Overreact When

People acting secretive, even if it's for a good reason (such as the intent to surprise). Paul hates surprises.

Is in Denial About

Missing a deep, committed relationship with someone. He believes he's fine being single.

Negative Coping Mechanisms

Self-medicating (through drugs, alcohol, sleep aids, etc.)
Denial or repression
Avoiding the past event and anything associated with it
Burying one's emotions
Keeping relationships superficial
Manipulation
Distorted thinking

Positive Coping Mechanisms

Embracing responsibility
Making a list of things to look forward to
Learning a new skill to celebrate a small achievement
Volunteering (focusing on others rather than on oneself)

Uncomfortable Emotions

Acceptance, Disillusionment, Gratitude, Hopefulness, Loneliness, Love, Vulnerability

QUIRKS

Always arrives early
Refuses to borrow anything from anyone
Loves tacky lamps
Has to stop and talk to anyone with a motorcycle



Paul Graham



- [Overview](#)
- [Backstory](#)
- [Personality](#)
- [Behavior](#)
- [Motivation](#)
- [Physical](#)
- [Daily Life](#)
- [Gallery](#)

MOTIVATION

OUTER MOTIVATION

FINDING A LIFELONG PARTNER [PRIMARY OUTER MOTIVATION]

What's at Stake If the Goal Is Not Achieved

Feeling unfulfilled

[PRIMARY STAKE]

Forms This Might Take

Finding true, never-ending romantic love

Talents and Skills That Will Help This Character Achieve This Goal

Good listening skills, empathy, making people laugh, reading people

TRYING TO SUCCEED WHERE ONE HAS PREVIOUSLY FAILED

Forms This Might Take

To obtain a desired promotion in the company

Talents and Skills That Will Help This Character Achieve This Goal

A knack for making money, exceptional memory, good listening skills, reading people, strategic thinking, charm, gaining the trust of others

INNER MOTIVATION

Unmet Need (General): Love and Belonging

Unmet Need (Specific): To experience romantic love

CHANGE ARC BLUEPRINT

My character was hurt as a result of *Discovering a partner's sexual orientation secret* (Wound). In the aftermath, they internalized this hurt and may even believe it happened in part due to their poor choices or because they are somehow defective, unworthy or weak (Disempowering Beliefs). The spiral of negative thinking and/or mistrust is what led them to believe that *At some point, people will see that he's not worth sticking around for.* (The Lie). This lie, the fear of being hurt again, and the character's resulting decisions and actions caused a deficit in the area of a vital human need: *Love and Belonging.*

The unmet need either leads to a critical problem that must be solved or it creates a hole of dissatisfaction, which, over time, has grown into a deep, painful void that they can no longer ignore. The desire to meet this need becomes my character's Inner Motivation and pushes them to pursue a goal of *Finding a lifelong partner* (Outer Motivation) or more specifically: *Finding true, never-ending romantic love.*

In my character's circumstances, the yearning for *Love and Belonging* (Unmet Need) specifically means they want *To experience romantic love.* This and what will happen if they do not act - *Feeling unfulfilled* (The Stakes) - push them onward.

To achieve this goal, the character will face many obstacles, but the biggest comes from within: the Fatal Flaw, which is their dysfunctional go-to approach for solving life's problems. (The fatal flaw has a Mental Component and a Behavioral Component).

Until now, this flawed approach to navigating life's challenges seems to have worked for the character, but in the case of this goal, it does not. In fact, it is tripping them up and making the goal harder to obtain. Once the character recognizes this fact, they can choose a better way to approach their problems. This, along with the internal growth achieved by working through past trauma in a healthy way, will allow them to succeed.



Paul Graham



Overview	Backstory	Personality	Behavior	Motivation	Physical	Daily Life	Gallery
--------------------------	---------------------------	-----------------------------	--------------------------	----------------------------	--------------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------

EMOTIONAL SHIELDING

The Lie Resulting from the Primary Wound: At some point, people will see that he's not worth sticking around for.

The Primary Flaw Tripping the Character Up: Cynical

Lie-Related Behaviors and Attitudes:

He believes that a lasting, committed relationship is a myth--at some point or one person will get tired of the other and want out

He believes that no one can ever be "enough;" people will have unrealistic expectations and always want more

He believes that his wife left him because he wasn't enough, he wasn't what she wanted and needed.

He mistrusts his ex-wife

He mistrusts people who are secretive, hold back information, or refuse to disclose their motives

Paul will sometimes test people, even friends, by asking questions he knows the answers to, just to see if they will reply honestly.

Paul doesn't take things at face value. He asks questions until he's satisfied no information is being withheld.

Paul assumes most people are hiding something or not being fully honest.

Paul will question his kids about his ex-wife after they spend time with her.

Paul analyzes interactions after the fact to ensure he didn't miss something important that leaves him exposed

He believes he is unworthy of unconditional love.

He feels insecure when someone pokes fun at his masculinity

He feels insecure when his partner asks a personal question that will lead to emotional intimacy

He feels insecure when another shows interest in his current romantic partner

He feels insecure when someone clams up or changes the subject when he enters the conversation

He's insecure when someone displays greater knowledge or capabilities at work

Paul avoids emotional intimacy

Paul asks questions that suggests he doesn't believe what he's being told, offending friends and co-workers

Paul chooses romantic partners that he knows are not a fit long term

He won't take on challenges if success is uncertain, avoiding proving to everyone he doesn't measure up

He is too permissive as a parent because he's worried about not being a good enough dad and losing the love of his kids

He lets others take opportunities at work that can lead to great reward because he's afraid to stick his own neck out and risk failure

He can be triggered by same-sex couples as it reminds him of the loss of his life partner

He's triggered when someone is keeping a secret

He's triggered when he catches someone in a lie

He's triggered when someone points out his flaws or shortcomings

He avoids emotional closeness and will leave a romantic relationship before he himself can be dumped

At work, he avoids working on high profile projects where screw ups will be under a microscope

When triggered in a relationship, he will do something to sabotage it or end it

When triggered by criticism, he grows angry and reactive.

When triggered by possible deceptiveness, he will intimidate or refuse to let the situation go until the person reveals what they were holding back

Paul is unable to open his heart to others, fearing if he does, they will eventually see he's not a fit and leave him

He is unable to get promoted because he's always worried about failing and so avoids taking on responsibilities that will get him noticed

Flaw-Related Behaviors and Attitudes:

Seeing things as right or wrong, with no gray area

Close-mindedness

Beliefs that are resolute

Being easily irritated or overwhelmed

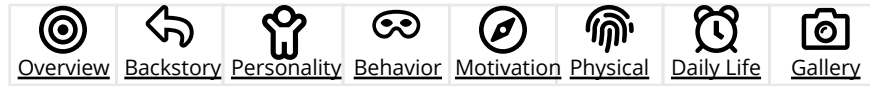
Making snap judgments about others

Focusing on people's flaws rather than on their attributes

Intolerance for mistakes



Paul Graham



Perfectionism

Assuming the worst of others

Not expecting people to follow through

Expecting things to not last (like a marriage) and promises to be broken

Looking for someone to blame when something goes wrong

Expecting people to break their promises

Difficulty with change

Overcompensating for insecurities by focusing on other areas

Comparing oneself to others and feeling inferior

Blaming oneself when bad things happen

Worrying about what other people think

Entering into unhealthy relationships

Seeking acceptance through unhealthy measures

Self-destructive behaviors (drug use, engaging in unprotected sex, developing an eating disorder, etc.)

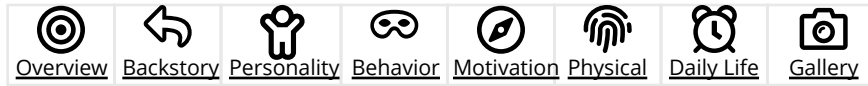
FATAL FLAW

Cognitive: He believes he is unworthy of unconditional love.

Behavioral: He avoids emotional closeness and will leave a romantic relationship before he himself can be dumped



Paul Graham



PHYSICAL DETAILS

Age: 34

Gender: Male

Race or Heritage: White

Height: 5'11

Weight: 170

Posture and Bearing

Paul is in good physical shape and is aware of it. He stands tall, moves confidently (unless his insecurity is triggered). He will use it to intimidate if needed when people are holding back, and to his advantage when with women as it tends to draw those who are superficial (and therefore not a long term match).

Physical Challenges

When it gets cold he struggles with one knee and may have a slightly stiff gait. It is from an accident when he was on a high school ski trip.

Overall Condition and Presentation

Attractive, a pleasing face, healthy, has good muscle tone without being overly muscular

Clothing Style Preferences

Well dressed, wears cologne, trendy during the work week, but during the weekend likes to just be comfortable and laid back. Often wears biker t-shirts and biker boots.

Common Adornments

When it's the weekend, he wears his wallet attached to a chain on his jeans.

FACIAL HAIR:

Shaped, beard, bristly, groomed

EYES:

Speckled, bright, dancing, deep-set

ATHLETIC BUILD:

Healthy, toned

HAIR:

Styled, thick, layered

Additional Notes

Paul is big on motorcycles and so when he's not at work, he often wears darker clothes, jeans that are well-worn, biker boots, and may carry a backpack for some of his gear or helmet.



Paul Graham



Overview	Backstory	Personality	Behavior	Motivation	Physical	Daily Life	Gallery
--------------------------	---------------------------	-----------------------------	--------------------------	----------------------------	--------------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------

DAILY LIFE

TALENTS AND SKILLS

MAKING PEOPLE LAUGH

Intuitively knowing how to make others laugh

Beneficial Strengths or Abilities

Having control over one's facial expressions and movements

A good sense of timing

Smooth speech flow and storytelling abilities

READING PEOPLE

Being able to size others up quickly and accurately

Beneficial Strengths or Abilities

Being a good listener

A non-threatening demeanor, coming across as approachable and trustworthy

Positive Traits Suited for This Skill

Alert, Charming, Focused, Friendly

A KNACK FOR MAKING MONEY

Being able to make and multiply money

Beneficial Strengths or Abilities

Being able to quickly and accurately size up an opportunity

Seeing opportunity where others see nothing

Charisma

Positive Traits Suited for This Skill

Friendly, Persistent, Persuasive

Negative Traits Suited for This Skill

Manipulative

MECHANICALLY INCLINED

Having the ability to intuitively see how things work

Beneficial Strengths or Abilities

Dexterity

Being able to think non-linearly (seeing pieces of a set and identifying what's missing; working backwards, etc.)

Positive Traits Suited for This Skill

Focused, Organized, Persistent

Negative Traits Suited for This Skill

Perfectionist

GOOD LISTENING SKILLS

DEXTERITY

FAMILY AND GENERAL LIFE

What is the character's job (if there's one)?

He is a marketing executive for an IT business solutions company

How does the character feel about his job?

onestopforwriters.com



Paul Graham



He likes the field but feels he's not really using his business degree to its full potential. He makes good money but would rather work on the strategic development side or oversee the sales department as upper management. But, because he's afraid he'll drop the ball, he doesn't bring this up to his boss.

Write a brief summary of the family:

Two kids, Micah (6) a girl and Matthew (6) a boy. Loves them to death. Would do anything to make them happy.

Mother has passed away (MS)

Father is alive but in another city and he doesn't see his dad often - they are not close

One sister living abroad -- very close and they stay in touch through Skype and Face time. Both love to travel and sometimes travel together when they can

If the character is a parent, what kind are they?

Paul is a very involved parent, mostly because growing up he didn't have a lot of parental involvement due to his mother's illness and his father's work. He coaches Matthew's soccer team and volunteers at the school once a month. Paul is also worried that the kids will prefer his wife to him and as they grow older, and demand to live with her full time.

Is the character in a relationship? Is it healthy or dysfunctional?

Dysfunctional types of relationships. Paul keeps an arms length from commitment so he moves from relationship to relationship if it seems like things are going to get serious. He is deathly afraid of risking his heart to someone again.

Who does the character choose to hang out with?

His sister when he can, Devin from work, and Steve, Lorna, and Pax (fellow motorcycle enthusiasts).

What is the character passionate about?

Motorcycles and travel. He also enjoys seeking out new craft beers.

What topics of conversation (if any) will get the character riled up?

When people talk about someone behind their back, especially if they are discussing their relationships. Paul hates it when friends ask about his ex, or if he's in a relationship now.

Does the character have any vices?

Can drink too much sometimes when depressed or feeling reckless

When the character is threatened, how do they respond (fight, flight, or freeze)?

Fight: argues, can become aggressive

Where is the character's safe place?

On the road on his bike

Where does the character live?

Denver, Colorado

Is the character introverted or extroverted? How do they show it?

Ambivert. Likes to be with people but needs alone time as well.

Does the character have regularly scheduled appointments, practices, or lessons they must attend?

Picking the kids up from school, attending soccer games as coach, work from 8 am-6 pm

How does the character typically get from place to place?

Car during the week, motorcycle on the weekends









How does the character spend their free time?

On his motorcycle, fixing it up and customizing it, traveling, and encouraging his kids' interests



Paul Graham



 Overview	 Backstory	 Personality	 Behavior	 Motivation	 Physical	 Daily Life	 Gallery
---	--	--	---	---	---	---	--

List any notable favorites.

Harley Davidson motorbikes

Craft beer

Traveling through Asia

Road trips (alone or with one other rider, not in big groups)

Collecting antique tools

OCCUPATIONS

HOBBIES

Taking road trips (to explore new areas, take pictures, try new craft beers, etc.)

Backpacking trips.

Motorbike restoration.

Working on motorbikes, either fixing broken ones or modifying them to be more powerful or attractive.

Buying antique tools to add to his collection.



Paul Graham



- [Overview](#)
- [Backstory](#)
- [Personality](#)
- [Behavior](#)
- [Motivation](#)
- [Physical](#)
- [Daily Life](#)
- [Gallery](#)

GALLERY

