



SHOW NOTES



The Irishman: What's Your Character's "Thing"?

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There are many conversations to be had about *The Irishman*, but one of the most valuable lessons it has to offer you as a screenwriter is the importance of the main ingredient in creating a truly compelling character.

"Every character has a way of looking at the world, and when you understand their way of looking at the world, writing them becomes very simple."

Why is this one element of character development, their mantra or worldview, so crucial to building the structure of your script? Because understanding the lens through which your character sees and experiences the world gives you all the information you need to take them on a journey. That "thing" will inform every interaction they have and decision they make.

"Everybody talks about the idea that characters need to have a "want." But what gets discussed less often is that underneath that "want" is something really powerful called the emotional need."

It's not enough for your character to simply have a goal. You want to dive even deeper into their psyche and discover what raw, human need is driving them toward their goal. Is it a need for love? Security? Power? Or, in the case of *The Irishman*, is it a need for respect? Tapping into that vital aspect of your character gives you the freedom to conjure up any number of scenarios to challenge that need, create conflict, and let your character respond truthfully to everyone and everything around them based on that need. It can force them to change or be the fatal flaw that destroys them.

"If you don't know what that "thing" is for your character, don't try to impose one. Get curious."

You have the unique opportunity as a screenwriter to ask a profound question and use your characters to try and find an answer. You may know immediately what's driving your character, or you may need to write the script to find it. Either way, discovering this "thing" within them will bring greater depth to your scenes, focus and improve your rewrites, and help you build a richer, more expansive structure that will transform your storytelling as well as attract top talent to your project.

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