

# Chicken Scratch Books



## Analyzing Two Sides of Motive

A strong motive is key for your readers to connect to your story, but your motive needs to be analyzed from two different sides—the conscious motive, and the instinctual motive.

### Conscious Motive

Your protagonist's conscious motive can be divided into 3 layers—the desire, the think need, and the root of all needs.

- The Desire is the surface want, and usually changes several times through the course of the story.
- The Think Need is what the protagonist *thinks* they need to solve their problems. They're wrong most the story, so they shift some, but it still doesn't quite work.
- The Root of All Needs is what lies at the heart of what they need to solve their problems. It's usually not discovered until late in the story.

These 3 layers of motive drive the main character as they are making conscious decisions as they work through the events of the plot. Ask your manuscript these questions to analyze your conscious motive:

*What is your protagonist's desire?*

*How does it change as the story progresses?*

*What do they think they need to solve their problems?*

*How do they respond when their think need doesn't work?*

*What ultimately helps them discover the root of all their needs?*

*How do they respond when they find the root solution to their problems?*

*Is this shifting conscious motive clear to the reader?*

*Are the choices being made deliberate and thoughtful?*

*Do these shifting motivations signal the character's arc of change?*

### Instinctual Motive

Your protagonist's instinctual motive is how they respond to situations instinctively. Human nature is to avoid risk, and lean on strengths. Identifying how your MC falls is called Choice Index, and is set on 5 areas of risk tolerance.

- Physical Risk
- Social Risk
- Intellectual Risk
- Emotional Risk
- Moral/Spiritual Risk

In each of these areas, individuals have a higher or lower risk tolerance. For example, some might tolerate physical risk well, but not emotional risk. Areas of strength will be consistently strong throughout the story. Areas of weakness will cause problems and influence the conscious motive. Weak areas might gain some strength as well. Consistency is the key, although there may be some growth in areas of weakness. Ask your manuscript these questions to analyze your instinctual motive:

*What are your protagonist's areas of strength?*

*Is this strength portrayed in every situation?*

*Does the protagonist respond instinctually to favor these strengths?*

*What are your protagonist's areas of weakness?*

*Are these weaknesses portrayed consistently?*

*Do these weaknesses hold them back, even during conscious attempts to change?*

*Do any of these weaknesses strengthen and improve?*

*Does that shift come too early or not connected to a conscious motivation?*