

‘Conflict’ - a follow-up drama workshop

Watford Writers - Monday, 21st August.

Based on Chris McDermott’s Watford Writers workshop on 31st July,
2023.

Aims of the session

- To further develop some of the ideas outlined in the Watford Writers workshop of 31st July, entitled 'The Drama of Decisions'.
- To encourage writers, whether they took part in the earlier workshop or not, to develop their ideas and to write a scene, involving two characters, who are in conflict in some way, whether this is apparent or hidden.
- For writers to put these ideas into a script for a competition which would take place in September. The competition will involve a script with two characters only, and would be on the theme of 'conflict'. The word limit will be 800 words (with a minimum of 500 words), to include stage directions and character names, but not the title. N.B. This idea will be further discussed and clarified at a future meeting.

Potential causes of conflict - please feel free to add to the list.

- Differing values and beliefs
- Control issues
- Mutually exclusive interests
- Rivalry
- Misunderstandings
- Jealousy
- Differing expectations of roles and cultural norms

What is the relationship between your two characters? (Some examples are below).

- They are a young couple, dating for the first time.
- They are an established couple, possibly with children.
- They are work colleagues, operating at the same hierarchical level.
- They are work colleagues with an hierarchical relationship i.e. one is the boss and the other is an employee.
- They are two people who are in competition for the affections of the same woman/man.
- They are two people with different political views.

When you are working in the break-out rooms, please consider:

- (i) The two characters and the nature of their relationship.
- (ii) The setting.
- (iii) The nature of the conflict.
- Following your time in the break-out rooms, you will be given time to start to plan your ideas/begin your mini-script, which you will later share with the whole group.

Some issues you may consider:

- **Symbolic violence** - this is when those who are dominated stop questioning existing power relations, as they perceive the world and the state of affairs in a social activity as natural, a given and unchangeable.' (Thapar-Bjorket et al.)
- **The iceberg** - how much is said and how much is implicit? Is there a 'backstory'?
- **Situational ethics** - how far does the situation allow behaviour which otherwise might be considered immoral or wrong?
- **Transparency** - how honest is the character being with themselves and with others?
- **Decision-making** - what decisions have the character/s made previously or during the dialogue and why? Alternatively, what decision/s will they make as a result of the dialogue and why? Will the interaction involve a 'moment of epiphany'? Is there a 'character arc'?
- **Your aim as a writer** - do you wish to instruct, provoke discussion, entertain, make the audience laugh or incorporate two of three of these elements?