

## Emotional conflict in a nutshell

### Some basic opposing values that will create emotional conflict between your characters

#### My hero is...

Flexible (goes with the flow)

Loyal (will never abandon his family)

Frugal (never wastes time or money)

Logical (like Mr. Spock, things need to make sense)

Private (seldom shares himself)

Driven (works 24/7)

Chaotic (grew up in a commune)

Traditional (big Sunday family dinners)

#### My heroine is...

Stubborn (will stick to her guns)

Independent (doesn't like to be fenced in)

Generous (need anything?)

Whimsical (why not color my hair neon pink?)

Open (tells everyone her troubles)

Relaxed (doesn't live for work, works to live)

Disciplined (ex-military)

Free-spirited (Vegan Sunday dinners in the nude!)

With opposing values like this, you can create emotional conflict for your characters. Give your character one core value, something the hero/heroine admires in the other person and wishes to obtain. Then have the hero or heroine's OWN core value seesaw and they are threatened with losing it. The core value can stem from an inciting incident in the past. Keep it simple.

For example, Stephen is a single dad and a driven corporate raider. He works long hours to provide for his only daughter. Secretly he yearns to have fun. Yet he cannot give up his quest for money because he grew up homeless and money means security. He is attracted to Debi, his nanny, who barely lives from paycheck to paycheck. Debi takes time off for vacations and holidays and has forged a close relationship with Stephen's daughter. Stephen wants this as well.

Debi urges Stephen to skip work one day and join them for a picnic in the park. He takes a gamble and does so, loses his cell phone and misses an important teleconference that will net his company \$50 million. He has fun with his daughter and his feelings grow for Debi, but in his mind, he's taken the first step toward being irresponsible. If he stays with Debi, will he become like she is, one step away from being homeless?

NY Times best-selling and RITA award-winning author Jennifer Ashley has penned numerous short stories and novels. *Lady Isabella's Scandalous Marriage* is a July historical release from Berkley. Coming in November under her Allyson James pseudonym is the urban fantasy *Firewalker*, Book 2 in the Stormwalker series. Her website is <http://www.jennifersromances.com/>

Bonnie Vanak has authored over 14 historical and paranormal romance novels and short stories. Her paranormal romance, *Immortal Wolf*, finished in the 2010 Maggie Awards. *Courage of the Wolf*, a Nocturne Bite, and *Christmas with a Vampire*, an anthology released by HQN Books, will be out this December. The next in her Draicon werewolf books for Harlequin Nocturne is *The Shadow Wolf*, a September 2011 release. Her website is [www.bonnievanak.com](http://www.bonnievanak.com)