

See annotations on next page/back. THE STORY DIAMOND is simply a graphic way to look at the traditional structural beats of a story and ensure that they are all supportive of the true moral premise, and create an emotional roller coaster effect, beat-to-beat, as the truth of the moral premise is tested. (It's true, no it's not, it's true, no it's not, etc.) The diamond was conceived by Chris Vogler and Will Smith, and used by screenwriters Marianne & Cormac Wibberly. It has been incorporated into the *Moral Premise Workshop*.

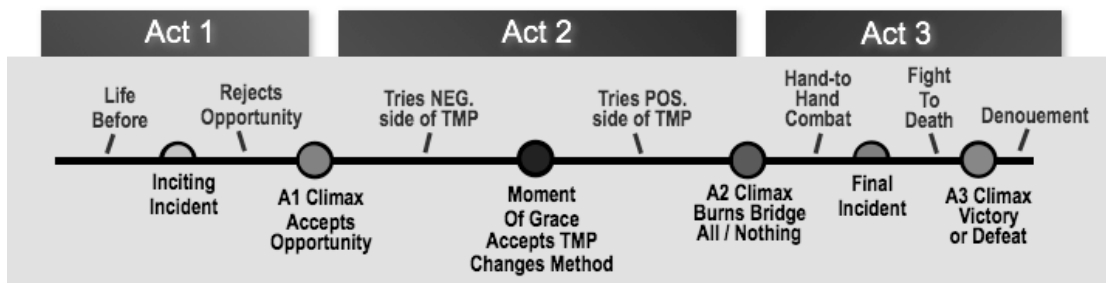
STORY DIAMOND ANNOTATIONS

The following annotations are suggestions from Stan Williams and not necessarily the originators of the Story Diamond, i.e. Chris Vogler, Will Smith, and Marianne and Cormac Wibberly. Instructions Copyright © 2010, Stanley D. Williams. Permission is granted for reuse with attribution of the above names. Please send suggestions and comments to Stan Williams (Stan@MoralPremise.com). Revised May 13, 2010. www.MoralPremise.com.

1. The boxed numbers 1-12 along the side of the diamond refer to the 12 Stages of the Hero's Journey. Their location is approximate. See *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers* by Christopher Vogler.
2. The number of beats during any one facet of the diamond is dependent on the needs of the story, genre, and plot. Expand or reduce as needed.
3. "Beats" are the logical, dramatic, chunks of evidence that argue for and against the conclusion of the story as defined by the moral premise statement. Think of them as the logical steps necessary to get to the next milestone or turning point. Use only those beats that are necessary. Delete superfluous beats that do not drive the story toward its conclusion.
4. There is no direct correlation between a "scene" and a "beat". Typically, there are more scenes than there are beats.
5. For explanations of how each beat and turning point must be irrevocably tied to a true moral premise for the story to resonate with general audiences see *The Moral Premise: Harnessing Virtue and Vice for Box Office Success* by Stanley D. Williams (www.moralpremise.com & moralpremise.blogspot.com). The typical moral premise statement looks like this, and it applies to every main character in your story:

[psychological vice] leads to [physical detriment] but [psychological virtue] leads to [physical betterment.]

6. Your story must be about a conflict of fundamental values (a motivating vice vs. a motivating virtue) that are true to the human condition and the moral dilemmas your characters face. Values are those things that psychologically motivate all persons (and thus your main characters) to take some action visible on the screen. All action originates from a value.
7. The two values your story is about must be motivational opposites; e.g. greed vs. generosity, or despair vs. hope. For example: a character must be motivated by some degree of "greed" and/or some degree of "generosity."
8. Every beat must test the truth of the moral premise, taking the audience on an emotional roller coaster ride as the various characters, in attempts to either achieve or block the physical goals of the characters, test the truth of the moral premise and physically experience the natural consequences.
9. Here is a diagram that explains what happens during the various facets of the story (diamond). A full explanation can be found in the Moral Premise book.



10. During Act 1 and Act 2A the protagonist's effort at achieving the physical goal is mostly hampered or delayed because he or she is embracing the negative side of the moral premise. At the Moment of Grace (in a redemptive story) the protagonist begins to learn to embrace the positive side of the moral premise. Then during Act 2B and 3 significant progress is made toward the physical goal. In a tragedy the protagonist rejects the truth of the moral premise.
11. During Act 1 the protagonist (and all main characters) are made aware of their psychological vice and their need to go on a journey (in Act 2) to overcome their psychological need so they can achieve their physical goal in Act 3. The physical goal can never be achieved until the character acknowledges and makes progress toward embracing their psychological need. (In Michael Hauge's terminology the negative side of the moral premise is the character's "identity" and the positive side of the moral premise is the character's "essence.")
12. Use the Moral Premise Story Check List at moralpremise.blogspot.com/2010/04/moral-premise-check-list.html.
13. The THEME is either the first half or the second half of the moral premise statement. A story must consistently apply a true moral premise in the universe (or diegesis) of the characters, but it can emphasize either the positive or negative, the virtue or the vice, or the redemptive or the tragic aspect.
14. Different genres may have different beat structures that are not covered in the moral premise book.
15. Stories are not required to have three Acts, but should follow some psychological process of natural law and the human condition such as the Five Stage (Acts) of Grief, or The Alison Fisher Purchase Pyramid. See the moral premise blog.