



# Paul Graham

(PROTAGONIST)



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## OVERVIEW

### BACKSTORY:

Overview: Paul was hurt deeply by his wife who, after seven years of marriage, confessed she was gay. They have two kids together and now have shared custody. As a husband and a father, Paul feels he failed, that this was partially his fault because he wasn't enough of a man for her.

Now in the aftermath, he has created a pattern of avoiding relationships that could lead to commitment because he is afraid of being hurt again. He only dates women who are sexually aggressive, showing exactly what team they play for, and cuts things off before they can get serious. Paul also struggles at work, underachieving in a secondary role because he's afraid he'll miss something vital again, something right in front of him, thus showing the world just how inadequate he is. There's friction at home as his kids are somewhat spoiled and Paul doesn't know how to handle it.

### PERSONALITY:

Overview: Paul is intelligent, observant, and notices the little things, like when someone's trying to hide something. He is judgmental and finds it nearly impossible to take things at face value—it's like he expects people to not be who they say they are. He has a strong sense of fairness and honesty, which gets him in trouble when these traits take precedence over diplomacy.

### BEHAVIOR:

Overview: Paul's tendency to display his suspicious side puts him on the offensive with interacting with others and he can get aggressive if he thinks information is being held back from him (his trigger). Because he is insecure about his own self-worth, feels defective, and worries about failing, he avoids situations where he could fail.

When he's upset, he sometimes drinks too much, spends too much, or will isolates himself by working on his motorcycle as a way to process problems at work or with his kids. As a parent he is overly permissive because he's terrified if he doesn't make his children love him enough they will eventually ask to stay with his ex-wife full time, thereby leaving him just as she did.

### MOTIVATION:

Overview: Paul meets the perfect woman on a road trip--a photographer shooting roadside cemeteries for a magazine. She's a great match because there's a mutual attraction and she doesn't want a committed relationship either. They date and become intimate, and this is great for Paul who is terrified of losing his heart...until he realizes he's falling for her. Now he needs to work through his feelings of insecurity and self-blame in order to become someone who can be a true trusting partner in a relationship and prove to her that he's worth her risking her heart again, too.

### PHYSICAL DETAILS:

Overview: Paul's 32, has gray-blue eyes that darken to a stunning indigo when he's emotional, in good shape, tall but not too tall, has a beard, loves motorbikes and so dresses like a biker when he's not at the office. Sexy, cleans up nice.

### DAILY LIFE:

Overview: Paul is a professional sales guy for a large IT solutions firm, makes good money but doesn't love the job--feels like he could be more challenged and has ideas about how to steer the company's growth. He has 2 kids (a boy and girl, twins, age 6), and loves them to death. He also enjoys traveling with his sister, riding his Harley, hanging out with his kids and be an involved dad. (He's not close with his own dad and doesn't want to continue that cycle.)



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## BACKSTORY

### WOUNDS

#### **DISCOVERING A PARTNER'S SEXUAL ORIENTATION SECRET [PRIMARY WOUND]**

##### Possible Responses

- Confusion over what to tell one's children
- Ending the relationship at once
- Wanting to vent to friends but worrying about being viewed as homophobic, intolerant, or uncaring
- Distrusting those of the same gender or orientation as one's partner
- Not trusting anyone's word at face value
- Mistrusting even one's closest friends
- Looking for deceit; believing that every person has a hidden agenda
- Dropping out of social circles one used to frequent with one's partner
- Avoiding new romantic relationships
- Choosing partners who embody a clear sexual preference (being highly macho, overtly feminine, etc.)

##### Negative Attributes

Inflexible, Judgmental, Paranoid, Promiscuous

##### Positive Attributes

Analytical, Cautious, Observant, Private

#### **BEING RAISED BY PARENTS WHO LOVED CONDITIONALLY (FATHER)**

##### Possible Responses

- Anxiety; being filled with self-doubt
- Feeling one must always be a giver rather than a taker
- Micro-managing others to ensure optimal results
- Tying one's worth to achievement and success

##### Examples

- When one gained accolades and awards for performances
- Provided one didn't cause embarrassment
- When one had control over one's emotions

##### Negative Attributes

Controlling, Impatient, Insecure

##### Positive Attributes

Efficient, Persuasive

#### **BEING ABANDONED BY AN ADULT (A FRIEND'S PARENT) AT AGE 9**

##### Possible Responses

- Is mistrustful of promises
- Became ultra responsible
- Creates a false front so others will not worry (taking on the burden of worry oneself)
- Difficulty trusting responsibility to others

##### Examples

Paul's mother was in the hospital and his dad was away for work, so Paul was farmed out to a friend who turned out to be unreliable and took off for several days, leaving Paul and his friend Richard (7) to fend for themselves.

##### Negative Attributes

Compulsive, Obsessive, Worrywart

##### Positive Attributes

Alert, Disciplined, Vigilant



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## FEARS

### **Opening oneself to emotional vulnerability and trust only to be hurt again [PRIMARY FEAR]**

That their judgment and instincts are impaired  
 Missing the obvious warning signs again  
 Being the last to know  
 Trusting the wrong person and being deceived again  
 Being viewed as "less of a man" by others

### **FEAR-RELATED BEHAVIORS AND ATTITUDES**

#### **What situations will the character now avoid?**

Relationships with the opposite sex that become too close  
 Friendship with people who like to keep secrets  
 Places that cater to a gay population  
 Get-togethers involving "shared" friends with the ex  
 Situations where one risks failure or displaying weakness

#### **In what situations or settings will the character now feel threatened, unsafe, or vulnerable?**

When a date opens up and shows vulnerability (suggesting trust & possibly of a deeper connection)  
 Being around gay people (is triggered)  
 Teasing about manliness  
 Situations where one has to show a sensitive side rather than a tough "masculine" side  
 "Measuring stick" situations where he could be perceived as weak, incapable, or defective

#### **How does the character hide this fear from others?**

Not letting people in, creating distance  
 Exhibiting more "masculine" behaviors (sports, promiscuity, drinking, an interest into motorcycles, etc.)  
 Underachieving at work so he never fails  
 Using the kids as an excuse to not work as hard as others, taking himself out of the leadership track

#### **How does the fear impact the character's relationships with others (negatively and/or positively)?**

He ends relationships before they get serious (so no one can hurt him)  
 He avoids showing his soft side because it leads to trust and vulnerability  
 He becomes a pushover parent, worried his kids will love Mom more or leave him as she did  
 He becomes suspicious of the motives of others and questions them until he's satisfied they aren't holding something back  
 Having lived through a personal scandal, he avoids all gossipy groups  
 He is always honest and forthright with others so people know they can trust his word

#### **How does the fear affect the character at work?**

He underachieves due to the worry that people will view him as weak or defective (his lie)  
 He avoids risk of failure (again, he underachieves rather than putting himself out there as a leader)  
 People walk softly around him, viewing him as touchy and micro-managing (because he's mistrustful and reactive, always expecting someone to drop another bomb on him)

#### **How has the character's fear diminished their self-esteem?**

Because he's afraid to trust the wrong person, his guard is always up. He refuses to show vulnerability to anyone, hampering meaningful connections

## LIES



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## LIE RESULTING FROM THE PRIMARY WOUND (DISCOVERING A PARTNER'S SEXUAL ORIENTATION SECRET)

This happened because something is wrong with him **[PRIMARY LIE]**

### LIE-RELATED BEHAVIORS AND ATTITUDES

**Negative experiences can result in bias toward specific kinds of people, such as a minority group, police officers, or the wealthy. Is your character biased against any people groups? Name them here. For optimal results, please phrase your answer as a statement in the following format: *He/She is biased against* \_\_\_\_\_**  
He is biased against homosexuals and "sexually ambiguous" people

#### **Why is your character biased against these people?**

He harbors anger toward these people because his wife was gay and wasn't honest about it, so he sees them as deceptive.

**Your character may also hold biased beliefs about society or the world at large (all people are selfish, marriage is a trap, etc.). If your character has these kinds of negative biases, list them here. For optimal results, please phrase your answer as a statement in the following format: *He/She believes that* \_\_\_\_\_**  
He believes that no one can ever be "enough;" people will have unrealistic expectations and always want more

He believes that a lasting, committed relationship is a myth--something will come along and spoil it at some point

#### **Why does your character believe this?**

He believes that his wife embraced homosexuality in part because he wasn't enough of a man for her or wasn't what she needed/wanted.

**Does your character have trust issues with an individual? If so, who? Please phrase your answer as a statement in the following format: *He/She mistrusts* \_\_\_\_\_**

He mistrusts his ex-wife

He mistrusts people who are secretive, hold back information, or refuse to disclose their motives

**Mistrust manifests in many ways. What habits, behaviors, or attitudes does your character embrace due to their mistrust of any of these people or groups?**

Paul will sometimes test people, even friends, by asking questions he knows the answers to, just to see if they will reply honestly.

Paul doesn't take things at face value. He asks questions until he's satisfied no information is being withheld.

Paul assumes most people are hiding something or not being fully honest.

Paul will question his kids about his ex-wife after they spend time with her.

Paul analyzes interactions after the fact to ensure he didn't miss something important that leaves him exposed

**The lie a character believes will ultimately impact their sense of self-worth, often resulting in the disempowering belief that they're unworthy of something vital, such as love, trust, or success. This is related to the lie but also to the wounding event that caused it. What does your character secretly believe they're unworthy of? Please phrase your answer as a statement in the following format: *He/She believes that he/she is unworthy of* \_\_\_\_\_**

He believes he is unworthy of unconditional love.

**A lie that is tied to disempowering beliefs will affect the character's self-worth, leading to insecurity. When does your character feel insecure?**

He feels insecure when someone pokes fun at his masculinity

He feels insecure when his partner asks for personal details that will lead to emotional intimacy



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He feels insecure when another shows interest in his current romantic partner

He feels insecure when someone clams up, changes the subject, etc. when he enters the conversation

He's insecure when someone displays greater knowledge or capabilities at work

**The character's lie causes them to think and behave in ways that are unbalanced or dysfunctional, often creating friction in relationships. What does this look like for your character?**

Paul avoids emotional intimacy

Paul asks questions that suggests he doesn't believe what he's being told, offending friends and co-workers

Paul chooses romantic partners that he knows are not a fit long term

**The character's goal achievement may be hampered by dysfunctional attitudes and behaviors that show up when he or she is working with others (at work, at school, on a team, while parenting, etc.) What might this look like for your character?**

He won't take on challenges if success is uncertain, avoiding proving to everyone he doesn't measure up

He is too permissive as a parent because he's worried about not being a good enough dad and losing the love of his kids

He lets others take opportunities at work that can lead to great reward because he's afraid to stick his own neck out and risk failure

**A trigger is something that reminds your character so strongly of a past negative event that it brings on the emotions, fears, and unhealthy responses related to it. It can be something sensory (a smell, color, taste, or sound), a person, object, situation, setting, or strong emotion tied to the trauma. What situations are triggers for your character?**

He's triggered when he's around same-sex couples

He's triggered when someone is keeping a secret

He's triggered when he catches someone in a lie

He's triggered when someone points out his flaws or shortcomings

**What does she avoid (people, situations, places, smells, emotions, etc.) because of these triggers? Please phrase your answer as a statement in the following format: *She/He avoids* \_\_\_\_\_**

He avoids emotional closeness and will leave a romantic relationship before he himself can be dumped

At work, he avoids working on high profile projects where his screw ups will be under a microscope

**How does your character overreact to these triggers? Please phrase your answer this way: *When triggered, he/she* \_\_\_\_\_**

When triggered in a relationship, he will do something to sabotage it or leave it

When triggered at work by criticism, he grows angry and reactive.

When triggered by deceptiveness, he will intimidate or aggressively refuse to let the situation go until the person reveals what they were holding back

**What behaviors or beliefs stemming from the character's lie prevent the character from living their life in full? Please phrase your answer as a statement in the following format: *He/She is unable to* \_\_\_\_\_**

Paul is unable to open his heart to others, fearing if he does, they will eventually see he's not a fit and leave him

He is unable to pursue meaningful promotions at work because the more responsibility, the higher risk of failure, proving to everyone he's just not good enough.



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## SECRETS

Is attracted to an oblivious friend or co-worker

Is dating a lot of people at once



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## PERSONALITY

### POSITIVE TRAITS

#### **VIGILANT [PRIMARY POSITIVE TRAIT]**

##### Possible Causes

Was let down in the past

##### Associated Behaviors and Attitudes

Watchfulness

Paying attention to the small things

Being proactive; thinking about what could go wrong so one is ready for it

##### Associated Emotions

Worry, vulnerability, determination

#### **ANALYTICAL**

*Skilled in thinking and reasoning; having a natural instinct to study and analyze*

##### Possible Causes

Intelligence

A fear of making mistakes

##### Associated Behaviors and Attitudes

Asking questions

Running experiments

Getting hung up on the little things

Reading into what people say and do

Looking for patterns and cause-effect relationships

Being uncomfortable with sarcasm and jokes

Not being able to let something go

Being honest even when it hurts => "yes, you do look overweight in that dress."

Being skeptical when presented with new ideas, beliefs, or "truths" without proof

Being highly observant

Being able to quickly and accurately assess a situation

##### Associated Emotions

Conflicted, insecurity, skepticism

#### **OBSERVANT**

*Paying careful attention*

*(Note => Being observant refers to one's ability to notice things, while being perceptive involves the ability to understand and draw conclusions from things that have been observed. While closely related, the two traits aren't synonymous, nor do they always go hand in hand.)*

##### Possible Causes

Nosiness

A fear of missing something important

##### Associated Behaviors and Attitudes

Noticing when someone's mood has changed

Noticing details that others might miss

Instantly sizing up a room upon entering

Being nosy

Noticing pattern breaks (a co-worker's frequent absences, keys going missing, etc.)

#### **PRIVATE**

*Having strong personal boundaries; preferring to keep one's affairs to oneself*

##### Possible Causes

Fear of rejection and being hurt

Having one's secrets exposed, resulting in embarrassment or humiliation

Trusting the wrong person and being hurt by them

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A fear of being judged

### Associated Behaviors and Attitudes

- Deflecting questions; steering conversations to less personal topics
- Keeping one's fears and desires to oneself
- Keeping things light and fun in social settings
- Avoiding situations where one might be vulnerable
- Growing anxious at the thought of letting others get close
- Avoiding gossips and rumormongers
- Not asking many questions for fear of being rude or invasive

### **HONEST**

*Honorable in intentions; straightforward in conduct*

### Possible Causes

Being hurt in the past by the concealment of truth

### Associated Behaviors and Attitudes

- Failing to find balance and exhibiting a lack of tact
- Being uncomfortable with keeping secrets or knowledge from others
- Keeping meticulous records so as to dispel any accusation of dishonesty
- Looking others in the eye
- Viewing things in black or white
- Sticking to one's commitments

### **PERSUASIVE**

*Able to influence others by argument, entreaty, counsel, or protest*

### Possible Causes

- Having a knack for reading people and influencing them
- Being passionate about a certain subject

### Associated Behaviors and Attitudes

- Paying close attention to others
- Reading others well
- Staying focused on the end result
- Speaking and acting with authority and confidence

### Associated Emotions

Determination

## **INFLUENTIAL FACTORS (POSITIVE TRAITS)**

### **Positive Influencers and Role Models**

A mother who shielded Paul from her struggle with chronic illness encouraged him to not settle and instead reach for what would make him happy.

His childhood friend George stuck by him even when kids at school turned on him, teaching him the value of friendship and loyalty.

A janitor at Paul's university taught him to be true to himself and not worry too much about what others thought. This gave Paul the courage to change majors and pursue business management instead of teaching.

### **Past Achievements and Sources of Pride**

Working several jobs during and after university and paying off all his student loans in 3 years.

Getting his MBA in business management.

His daughter (Micah) and son (Matthew), six-year-old twins.



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## Ethics and Values

Paul believes that loyalty is one of the greatest gifts you can give someone and that loved ones are worth going to the mat for. He also believes in being forthright and treating people fairly and will put this ahead of ambition (sometimes to his own detriment).

## Environmental Contributors

Paul grew up in a family that always struggled for money, so he's determined to give his kids an easier life, providing what they need (and want, within reason, so their memories of childhood are happy ones). He also had an absentee dad who was working all the time and demanded perfection, so he makes an extra-strong effort to be involved in his kids' interests (coaching, taking them to practice or a gymnastics club, teaching them how to swim, etc.). Very hands on.

## NEGATIVE TRAITS

### **PROMISCUOUS [PRIMARY FLAW]**

*Engaging in casual sexual behavior that is not restricted to one partner*

#### Possible Causes

Fear of commitment and long-term relationships  
Trust issues

#### Associated Behaviors and Attitudes

Participating in one-night stands  
Avoiding commitment  
Sex for the sake of sex, with no emotional attachments  
Not asking probing questions or getting too personal  
Having multiple partners in a short period of time  
Experiencing guilt or regrets in the aftermath

### **INFLEXIBLE**

*Immovable in will or purpose*

#### Possible Causes

Insecurity

#### Associated Behaviors and Attitudes

Seeing things as right or wrong, with no gray area  
Close-mindedness  
Beliefs that are resolute  
Being easily irritated or overwhelmed

### **JUDGMENTAL**

*Inclined to judge harshly and unfavorably*

#### Possible Causes

Firmly believing in black and white, wrong and right  
Guilt or shame (needing to divert the focus from oneself to others)  
Insecurity; judging someone who has the same weaknesses as oneself

#### Associated Behaviors and Attitudes

Making snap judgments about others  
Focusing on people's flaws rather than on their attributes  
Intolerance for mistakes  
Perfectionism  
Assuming the worst of others

#### Associated Emotions

Annoyance, insecurity, defensiveness

### **INSECURE**



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*Lacking confidence and surety*

## Possible Causes

Abuse, neglect, or abandonment

Failure

A fear of rejection

Having a dysfunctional relationship with one or both parents

## Associated Behaviors and Attitudes

Overcompensating for insecurities by focusing on other areas

Comparing oneself to others and feeling inferior

Blaming oneself when bad things happen

Worrying about what other people think

Entering into unhealthy relationships

Seeking acceptance through unhealthy measures

Self-destructive behaviors (drug use, promiscuous sex, developing an eating disorder, etc.)

## Associated Emotions

Doubt, loneliness

## **INFLUENTIAL FACTORS (NEGATIVE TRAITS)**

### **Abusive Caregivers, Negative Influencers, and Bad Role Models**

Paul's workaholic and often-absent father made him feel like he wasn't supported. His dad also only showed affection when he accomplished something exceptional (conditional love).

A wife who kept a secret that left Paul feeling betrayed

Kids at school who bullied Paul because he didn't fit in financially (the poor kid) and his parents never came to school events (plays, art night, baseball games, etc.)

### **Experiences that Were Unjust or Unfair**

Having a mother with a chronic illness who could rarely venture out—meaning, she couldn't be there to support Paul in his important moments and witness his achievements

Being treated differently as a kid because of the clothes he wore and where he lived

### **Painful Memories**

Missing a championship baseball game because his dad didn't get home from his business trip in time to drive him to the city where the final game was held

His mother passing away when Paul was only twenty

His wife revealing she was gay, and that she suspected it even before marriage but didn't tell Paul

### **Negative Life Lessons**

When most of his friends turned on him as a kid because they wanted to be more popular, he learned that people are fickle and will throw you under the bus to get ahead



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## BEHAVIOR

### CORE BEHAVIORS

POSITIVE TRAITS	NEGATIVE TRAITS
<b>VIGILANT [PRIMARY]</b>	<b>PROMISCUOUS [PRIMARY]</b>
<b>Watchfulness</b> Paying attention to the small things Being proactive; thinking about what could go wrong so one is ready for it	<b>Participating in one-night stands</b> <b>Avoiding commitment</b> <b>Sex for the sake of sex, with no emotional attachments</b> <b>Not asking probing questions or getting too personal</b> <b>Having multiple partners in a short period of time</b> <b>Experiencing guilt or regrets in the aftermath</b>
<b>ANALYTICAL</b>	<b>INFLEXIBLE</b>
Asking questions Running experiments Getting hung up on the little things Reading into what people say and do Looking for patterns and cause-effect relationships Being uncomfortable with sarcasm and jokes Not being able to let something go Being honest even when it hurts => "yes, you do look overweight in that dress." Being skeptical when presented with new ideas, beliefs, or "truths" without proof Being highly observant Being able to quickly and accurately assess a situation	Seeing things as right or wrong, with no gray area Close-mindedness Beliefs that are resolute Being easily irritated or overwhelmed
<b>OBSERVANT</b>	<b>JUDGMENTAL</b>
Noticing when someone's mood has changed Noticing details that others might miss Instantly sizing up a room upon entering Being nosy Noticing pattern breaks (a co-worker's frequent absences, keys going missing, etc.)	Making snap judgments about others Focusing on people's flaws rather than on their attributes Intolerance for mistakes Perfectionism Assuming the worst of others
<b>PRIVATE</b>	<b>INSECURE</b>
Deflecting questions; steering conversations to less personal topics Keeping one's fears and desires to oneself Keeping things light and fun in social settings Avoiding situations where one might be vulnerable Growing anxious at the thought of letting others get close Avoiding gossips and rumormongers Not asking many questions for fear of being rude or invasive	Overcompensating for insecurities by focusing on other areas Comparing oneself to others and feeling inferior Blaming oneself when bad things happen Worrying about what other people think Entering into unhealthy relationships Seeking acceptance through unhealthy measures Self-destructive behaviors (drug use, promiscuous sex, developing an eating disorder, etc.)
<b>HONEST</b>	
Failing to find balance and exhibiting a lack of tact Being uncomfortable with keeping secrets or knowledge from others Keeping meticulous records so as to dispel any accusation of dishonesty Looking others in the eye Viewing things in black or white Sticking to one's commitments	
<b>PERSUASIVE</b>	



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POSITIVE TRAITS	NEGATIVE TRAITS
Paying close attention to others Reading others well Staying focused on the end result Speaking and acting with authority and confidence	

## EMOTIONAL RANGE

### **When Idle**

Likes to surf travel websites for vacation spots, look up motorcycle parts and accessories, and watch videos on motorbike maintenance

### **When Stressed**

Raises the voice, lashes out, makes accusations

### **When Exhausted**

Gives in to the kids and lets them have their way. Tries to retreat into his own space. Becomes irritable and sensitive to noises or people who don't observe social cues (that someone wants to leave, is tired, or doesn't want to discuss something, etc.)

### **When Inebriated**

Grows really amorous and confident, becomes more touchy-feely with women, lets his humor loose

### **When Anxious**

Jumps to conclusions, thinks about all the ways something can go wrong, letting fear burrow into his thoughts. He worries about what people think and if he will be a disappointment to his kids

### **When Distracted**

Forgets where he puts things, loses track of time (and if he is late or drops the ball because of it, feels incredibly guilty and inadequate)

### **When Feeling the Pull of Attraction**

Rushes into the physical to avoid having to be vulnerable by sharing meaningful details

### **When Aroused**

Encourages skin-to-skin contact, likes the female to take control, draws close to speak in low tones, is suggestive and playful

### **Reserved or Expressive**

Demonstrative

### **Quick to Anger**

Yes

### **What Does It Take to Provoke the Character?**

Anything that suggests a breach in trust. He hates not being in the know, so if he suspects someone is holding back, lying, or avoiding a topic, it triggers him and he will push until that person gives up what they know.

### **Will Overreact When**

People acting secretive, even if it's for a good reason (such as the intent to surprise). Paul hates surprises.

### **Is in Denial About**

Missing a deep, committed relationship with someone. He believes he's fine being single.



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## Negative Coping Mechanisms

Self-medicating (through drugs, alcohol, sleep aids, etc.)  
Denial or repression  
Avoiding the past event and anything associated with it  
Burying one's emotions  
Keeping relationships superficial  
Manipulation  
Distorted thinking

## Positive Coping Mechanisms

Embracing responsibility  
Making a list of things to look forward to  
Learning a new skill to celebrate a small achievement  
Volunteering (focusing on others rather than on oneself)

## Uncomfortable Emotions

Acceptance, Disillusionment, Gratitude, Hopefulness, Loneliness, Love, Vulnerability

## QUIRKS

Always arrives early  
Refuses to borrow anything from anyone  
Loves tacky lamps  
Has to stop and talk to anyone with a motorcycle



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## MOTIVATION

### OUTER MOTIVATION

#### **FINDING A LIFELONG PARTNER [PRIMARY OUTER MOTIVATION]**

What's at Stake If the Goal Is Not Achieved

Blaming oneself for being unable to find love; believing oneself to be unlovable

#### **[PRIMARY STAKE]**

Forms This Might Take

Forming a bond of true love, respect, and mutual trust

Talents and Skills That Will Help This Character Achieve This Goal

Good listening skills, empathy, making people laugh, reading people

#### **TRYING TO SUCCEED WHERE ONE HAS PREVIOUSLY FAILED**

Forms This Might Take

To obtain a desired promotion in the company

Talents and Skills That Will Help This Character Achieve This Goal

A knack for making money, exceptional memory, good listening skills, reading people, strategic thinking, charm, gaining the trust of others

### INNER MOTIVATION

**Unmet Need (General):** Love and Belonging

**Unmet Need (Specific):** To experience romantic love

### CHANGE ARC BLUEPRINT

My character was hurt as a result of *Discovering a partner's sexual orientation secret* (Wound). In the aftermath, they internalized this hurt and may even believe it happened in part due to their poor choices or because they are somehow defective, unworthy or weak (Disempowering Beliefs). The spiral of negative thinking and/or mistrust is what led them to believe that *This happened because something is wrong with them* (The Lie). This lie, the fear of being hurt again, and the character's resulting decisions and actions caused a deficit in the area of a vital human need: *Love and Belonging*.

The unmet need either leads to a critical problem that must be solved or it creates a hole of dissatisfaction, which, over time, has grown into a deep, painful void that they can no longer ignore. The desire to meet this need becomes my character's Inner Motivation and pushes them to pursue a goal of *Finding a lifelong partner* (Outer Motivation) or more specifically: *Finding true, never-ending romantic love*.

In my character's circumstances, the yearning for *Love and Belonging* (Unmet Need) specifically means they want *To experience romantic love*. This and what will happen if they do not act - *Blaming oneself for being unable to find love; believing oneself to be unlovable* (The Stakes) - push them onward.

To achieve this goal, the character will face many obstacles, but the biggest comes from within: the Fatal Flaw, which is their dysfunctional go-to approach for solving life's problems. (The fatal flaw has a Mental Component and a Behavioral Component).

Until now, this flawed approach to navigating life's challenges seems to have worked for the character, but in the case of this goal, it does not. In fact, it is tripping them up and making the goal harder to obtain. Once the character recognizes this fact, they can choose a better way to approach their problems. This, along with the internal growth achieved by working through past trauma in a healthy way, will allow them to succeed.



# Paul Graham



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## EMOTIONAL SHIELDING

**The Lie Resulting from the Primary Wound:** This happened because something is wrong with him

**The Primary Flaw Tripping the Character Up:** Promiscuous

### **Lie-Related Behaviors and Attitudes:**

- He is biased against homosexuals and "sexually ambiguous" people
- He harbors anger toward these people because his wife was gay and wasn't honest about it, so he sees them as deceptive.
- He believes that no one can ever be "enough;" people will have unrealistic expectations and always want more
- He believes that a lasting, committed relationship is a myth--something will come along and spoil it at some point
- He believes that his wife embraced homosexuality in part because he wasn't enough of a man for her or wasn't what she needed/wanted.
- He mistrusts his ex-wife
- He mistrusts people who are secretive, hold back information, or refuse to disclose their motives
- Paul will sometimes test people, even friends, by asking questions he knows the answers to, just to see if they will reply honestly.
- Paul doesn't take things at face value. He asks questions until he's satisfied no information is being withheld.
- Paul assumes most people are hiding something or not being fully honest.
- Paul will question his kids about his ex-wife after they spend time with her.
- Paul analyzes interactions after the fact to ensure he didn't miss something important that leaves him exposed
- He believes he is unworthy of unconditional love.
- He feels insecure when someone pokes fun at his masculinity
- He feels insecure when his partner asks for personal details that will lead to emotional intimacy
- He feels insecure when another shows interest in his current romantic partner
- He feels insecure when someone clams up, changes the subject, etc. when he enters the conversation
- He's insecure when someone displays greater knowledge or capabilities at work
- Paul avoids emotional intimacy
- Paul asks questions that suggests he doesn't believe what he's being told, offending friends and co-workers
- Paul chooses romantic partners that he knows are not a fit long term
- He won't take on challenges if success is uncertain, avoiding proving to everyone he doesn't measure up
- He is too permissive as a parent because he's worried about not being a good enough dad and losing the love of his kids
- He lets others take opportunities at work that can lead to great reward because he's afraid to stick his own neck out and risk failure
- He's triggered when he's around same-sex couples
- He's triggered when someone is keeping a secret
- He's triggered when he catches someone in a lie
- He's triggered when someone points out his flaws or shortcomings
- He avoids emotional closeness and will leave a romantic relationship before he himself can be dumped
- At work, he avoids working on high profile projects where his screw ups will be under a microscope
- When triggered in a relationship, he will do something to sabotage it or leave it
- When triggered at work by criticism, he grows angry and reactive.
- When triggered by deceptiveness, he will intimidate or aggressively refuse to let the situation go until the person reveals what they were holding back
- Paul is unable to open his heart to others, fearing if he does, they will eventually see he's not a fit and leave him
- He is unable to pursue meaningful promotions at work because the more responsibility, the higher risk of failure, proving to everyone he's just not good enough.

### **Flaw-Related Behaviors and Attitudes:**

- Seeing things as right or wrong, with no gray area
- Close-mindedness
- Beliefs that are resolute
- Being easily irritated or overwhelmed



# Paul Graham



- Making snap judgments about others
- Focusing on people's flaws rather than on their attributes
- Intolerance for mistakes
- Perfectionism
- Assuming the worst of others
- Participating in one-night stands
- Avoiding commitment
- Sex for the sake of sex, with no emotional attachments
- Not asking probing questions or getting too personal
- Having multiple partners in a short period of time
- Experiencing guilt or regrets in the aftermath
- Overcompensating for insecurities by focusing on other areas
- Comparing oneself to others and feeling inferior
- Blaming oneself when bad things happen
- Worrying about what other people think
- Entering into unhealthy relationships
- Seeking acceptance through unhealthy measures
- Self-destructive behaviors (drug use, promiscuous sex, developing an eating disorder, etc.)

## **FATAL FLAW**

Cognitive: He believes he is unworthy of unconditional love.

Behavioral: He avoids emotional closeness and will leave a romantic relationship before he himself can be dumped



# Paul Graham



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## PHYSICAL DETAILS

**Age:** 34

**Gender:** Male

**Race or Heritage:** White

**Height:** 5'11

**Weight:** 170

### Posture and Bearing

Paul is in good physical shape and is aware of it. He stands tall, moves confidently (unless his insecurity is triggered). He will use it to intimidate if needed when people are holding back, and to his advantage when looking to hook up with a woman.

### Physical Challenges

When it gets cold he struggles with one knee and may have a slightly stiff gait. It is from an accident when he was on a high school ski trip.

### Overall Condition and Presentation

Attractive, a pleasing face, healthy, has good muscle tone without being overly muscular

### Clothing Style Preferences

Well dressed, wears cologne, trendy during the work week, but during the weekend likes to just be comfortable and laid back. Often wear biker t-shirts and biker boots.

### Common Adornments

When it's the weekend, he wears his wallet attached to a chain on his jeans.

### FACIAL HAIR:

Shaped, beard, bristly, groomed

### EYES:

Speckled, bright, dancing, deep-set

### ATHLETIC BUILD:

Healthy, toned

### HAIR:

Styled, thick, layered

### Additional Notes

Paul is big on motorcycles and so when he's not at work, he often wears darker clothes, jeans that are well-worn, biker boots, and may carry a backpack for some of his gear or helmet.



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## DAILY LIFE

### TALENTS AND SKILLS

#### **MAKING PEOPLE LAUGH**

*Intuitively knowing how to make others laugh*

##### Beneficial Strengths or Abilities

Having control over one's facial expressions and movements

A good sense of timing

Smooth speech flow and storytelling abilities

#### **READING PEOPLE**

*Being able to size others up quickly and accurately*

##### Beneficial Strengths or Abilities

Being a good listener

A non-threatening demeanor, coming across as approachable and trustworthy

##### Positive Traits Suited for This Skill

Alert, Charming, Focused, Friendly

#### **A KNACK FOR MAKING MONEY**

*Being able to make and multiply money*

##### Beneficial Strengths or Abilities

Being able to quickly and accurately size up an opportunity

Seeing opportunity where others see nothing

Charisma

##### Positive Traits Suited for This Skill

Friendly, Persistent, Persuasive

##### Negative Traits Suited for This Skill

Manipulative

#### **MECHANICALLY INCLINED**

*Having the ability to intuitively see how things work*

##### Beneficial Strengths or Abilities

Dexterity

Being able to think non-linearly (seeing pieces of a set and identifying what's missing; working backwards, etc.)

##### Positive Traits Suited for This Skill

Focused, Organized, Persistent

##### Negative Traits Suited for This Skill

Perfectionist

### FAMILY AND GENERAL LIFE

#### **What is the character's job (if there's one)?**

He works in sales for an IT business solutions company

#### **How does the character feel about his job?**

He likes the field but feels he's not really using his business degree to its full potential. He makes good money but would rather work on the strategic development side or oversee the sales department as upper management. But, because he's afraid he'll drop the ball, he doesn't even bring this up to his boss.

#### **Write a brief summary of the family:**

Mother has passed away (MS)



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Father is alive but in another city and he doesn't see his dad often - they are not close

One sister living abroad -- very close and they stay in touch through Skype and Face time. Both love to travel and sometimes travel together when Paul's ex has the kids.

Two kids, Micah (6) a girl and Matthew (6) a boy. Loves them to death. Would do anything to make them happy.

## **If the character is a parent, what kind are they?**

Paul is a very involved parent, mostly because growing up he didn't have a lot of parental involvement due to his mother's illness and his father's work. He coaches Matthew's soccer team and volunteers at the school once a month. Paul is also worried that the kids will prefer his wife to him and as they grow older, and demand to live with her full time.

## **Is the character in a relationship? Is it healthy or dysfunctional?**

Dysfunctional types of relationships. Paul keeps an arms length from commitment so he moves from relationship to relationship if it seems like things are going to get serious. He is deathly afraid of risking his heart to someone again.

## **Who does the character choose to hang out with?**

His sister when he can, Devin from work, and Steve, Lorna, and Pax who are all motorcycle enthusiasts.

## **What is the character passionate about?**

Motorcycles and travel. He also enjoys seeking out new craft beers.

## **What topics of conversation (if any) will get the character riled up?**

Sexual orientation, marriage, infidelity, and stories of betrayal

## **Does the character have any vices?**

Can drink too much sometimes when depressed or feeling reckless

## **When the character is threatened, how do they respond (fight, flight, or freeze)?**

Fight: argues, can become aggressive

## **Where is the character's safe place?**

On the road on his bike

## **Where does the character live?**

Denver, Colorado

## **Is the character introverted or extroverted? How do they show it?**

Ambivert. Likes to be with people but needs alone time as well.

## **Does the character have regularly scheduled appointments, practices, or lessons they must attend?**

Picking the kids up from school, attending soccer games as coach, work from 8 am-6 pm

## **How does the character typically get from place to place?**

Car during the week, motorcycle on the weekends

## **How does the character spend their free time?**

On his motorcycle, fixing it up, traveling or encouraging the kids' interests

## **List any notable favorites.**

Harley Davidson motorbikes

Craft beer

Traveling through Asia



# Paul Graham



Road trips (alone or with one other rider, not in big groups)

Collecting antique tools

## **HOBBIES**

Taking road trips (to explore new areas, take pictures, try new craft beers, etc.)

Backpacking trips.

Motorbike restoration.

Working on motorbikes, either fixing broken ones or modifying them to be more powerful or attractive.

Buying antique tools to add to his collection.



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## GALLERY

