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ALTERNATIVE  
ALIGNMENT MECHANICS



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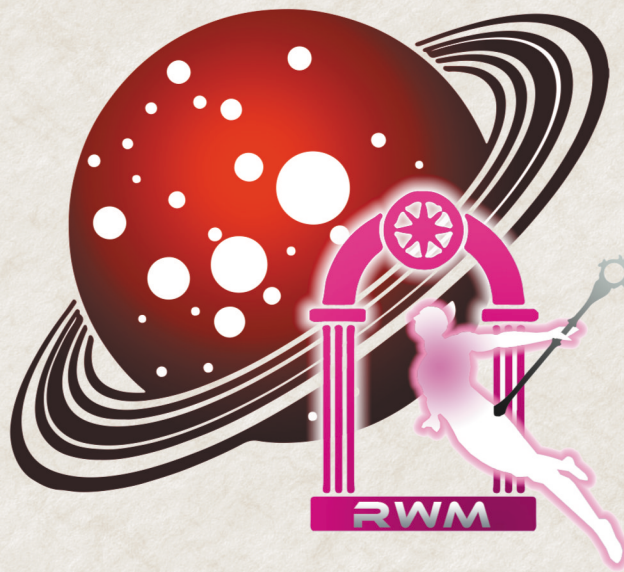
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# CONTENTS

<b>THE HISTORY OF ALIGNMENT .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>THE FOCUS AXIS .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>SELF-FOCUS VERSUS OTHERS-FOCUS .....</b>	<b>6</b>
Self-focus.....	6
Others-focus .....	6
<b>FOCUS RATING .....</b>	<b>6</b>
Focus Effects.....	7
<b>REPLACING ALIGNMENT .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>CONVICTIONS SYSTEM.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>CONVICTIONS .....</b>	<b>9</b>
Conviction Dice .....	9
Challenging the Conviction.....	9
<b>REPLACING ALIGNMENT .....</b>	<b>10</b>
Class Tables .....	10
<b>REPUTATION SYSTEM.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>FAME.....</b>	<b>14</b>
Gaining Fame .....	14
Levels of Fame.....	14
<b>REPUTE .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>REPUTATION .....</b>	<b>15</b>
Known or Unknown?.....	15
Charisma Checks Using Reputation .....	16

# THE HISTORY OF ALIGNMENT

When the original Dungeons & Dragons boxed set was released in 1974, it offered the players three alignments to choose from: lawful, chaotic, and neutral. Lawful and chaotic were presented as polar opposites—respect and obedience for rules and laws versus rebellion and individuality—while neutral was the balance between the two.

The 1977 release of the Dungeons & Dragons Basic Set added good, evil, and neutral, creating an axis that interacted with the first set. Good implied selflessness, charity, and altruism, and evil implied not necessarily cruelty but selfishness. This is the skeleton that most of the following systems would follow to varying degrees.

But alignment has never been stable—it did truly vary, as while the second edition (1988) and third edition (2000) kept the same alignment system, fourth edition (2008) reduced the number to five: lawful good, good, evil, chaotic evil, and unaligned. Fifth edition (2014) has returned to the old list of nine options, adding a tenth option—the ability to be unaligned.

However, the second and third editions, while keeping the same verbiage and structure, radically changed how alignment was approached. The previous editions treated alignment more like allegiance—alignments had languages that essentially made them communities, and there were guidelines as to what alignments many creatures could be. The second edition defined alignment as a character's view of others, morality, and the forces of the universe, penalizing players if they acted outside of their alignment too frequently. Their alignment would change forcibly, and they would lose experience points as a result.

The second edition was perhaps the most prohibitive when the penalties are taken into account alongside the class restrictions. Many classes experienced this from D&D's conception—paladins could not progress as paladins if they were not lawful, while rogues could not be lawful. The third edition stepped away from being so rigid, though was still restrictive by today's standards. Divine casters—paladins and clerics—were the most closely monitored, and to change alignment was to lose access to their abilities until they returned. Class abilities, items, feats, and spells were alignment-based, though less than in the second edition.

While some may consider these two editions as having overused alignment, the fourth edition was notable for rendering it nearly useless. In the fourth edition, spells, monsters, and alike would have keywords—such as “undead” for undead creatures or “necrotic” for a spell that deals necrotic damage—the alignments were not used as keywords. *The Book of Vile Darkness*, a fourth edition rules supplement, introduced new abilities for playing evil characters, but none of the abilities necessitated evil alignments.

The fifth edition has seen a return to using

alignments within some mechanics. There are creatures, items, classes, spells, and planes that interact with a character differently based on their alignment, though the numbers for each are few. Additionally, fifth edition emphasizes simple concepts: alignment is defined as the character's morality and their views on society and order. While mechanical penalties have been largely removed for changing alignments, fifth edition maintains strict adherence of some creatures, races, and classes to certain alignments.

Additionally, the *Player's Handbook* and the *Dungeon Master's Guide* of fifth edition do not address some factors of the previous systems, namely what occurs when a character changes alignment. It would seem the system has been stripped down to its bare bones—with the languages, the allegiances, and the penalties largely removed, many today question the necessity of alignment as a factor in character creation. It has been a controversial topic for many years, undergoing many changes between editions, and its importance to the system continues to be questioned. One might even dare ask if it has ever been a necessity to play the game at all.



## THE PROBLEM OF ALIGNMENT

Many of the alignment system's issues revolve around two core problems: reduction and usability.

At its best, it informs the players of ways their character deals with a situation and answers simple initial questions. Does your character follow the law or work outside of it? At their core, are they good, bad, or neither? But to the experienced roleplayer, these alignments are reductive—and not only do they reduce the ideas of good and evil, law and chaos, and neutrality down to one-note concepts, they fail to take into account the context and complexity of human behavior, as well as the ability to change.

Historically, alignment is meant to be descriptive. It provides initial guidance on the character's outlook and behavior, then changes according to the character's actions throughout a campaign. Descriptive alignment does just that: it describes the character that is being played. However, many approach alignment as *prescriptive*—instead of the character informing the alignment, prescriptive alignment informs the *character*. In a prescriptive setting, a character *cannot* act outside of their alignment, and as the current rules do not give thorough guidance as to how the character should be played, many mistakenly assume that they are trapped by their alignment.

This creates several problems. First, some players are limited in the choices presented to them and told, "That's not what your character would do." This negates the opportunity for growth and change, creating a less dynamic game. In addition, this also allows players to justify actions that hinder the growth and team aspects of a party—hence the well-known phrase, "Well, that's what my character would do." The alignment system lacks nuance, and when confined in a prescriptive system, creates a less unified team with fewer opportunities to develop together.

This is in part what we mean when we say that the system is "reductive." Character concepts do not exist in a vacuum. While a lawful good character may deem it appropriate to turn a villain over to the local law enforcement rather than handling it themselves, what if the guard system is corrupt? What if they have personal ties to the situation? What if their party member has personal ties? What if there is a long-term political benefit to acting differently? Does this character cease to be lawful good if other factors weigh into the decision? The system doesn't have a clear answer for that—it is a reductive system relying on simplistic, black-and-white concepts, and thus it squeezes characters into tight patterns of behavior without taking context into account.

Moreover, the alignment system is more a weight on the system than a boon. Put simply, it adds little mechanical benefit to a character's combat and roleplay experience. While some items interact with a character's alignment, these often feel more like an

afterthought, and they too reduce the character's alignment from a nuanced concept of how they interact with the world down to a changeable toy. Beyond these items, the system interacts so infrequently with alignment that it doesn't at all feel necessary, nor does it add depth to character creation the way other features do.

This doesn't even touch on the lack of diversity, nuance, and sensitivity in the ways that alignment is handled. The *Player's Handbook* packages classes into alignments as if it is realistic and *should* be realistic that many monks are lawful neutral, many barbarians and rogues are chaotic neutral, and all paladins are lawful good. If the alignment system presses these characters into tight boxes without a clear mechanical or roleplay benefit, how can this be anything other than restrictive? What is there to gain?

*Realigned's* goal is to make character alignment a vibrant, breathing system. Players should feel that their character's alignment is informative, kinetic, and nuanced. The system can be made to interact with alignments in ways that are fulfilling to both the DM and the player.



# THE FOCUS AXIS

Self	5	4	3	2	1	0	1	2	3	4	5	Others
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The Focus Axis is a dynamic scale that looks at the internal perspectives of player characters. As they adventure and interact with the world, characters base decisions on the effects they might have on themselves and those around them. Which of those is more important, and to what degree, varies between characters and over time. Looking at the focus of decision-making on a continuum rather than strictly defined moral alignments can hopefully allow for more nuanced characters, while also providing a feedback system that has an effect on gameplay.

## SELF-FOCUS VERSUS OTHERS-FOCUS

The Focus Axis is an 11-point scale, with Self focus on one end, Balanced in the middle, and Others focus on the opposite end. Each character will have a rating on this scale, and the closer their rating is to one end of the axis the more dominant that focus is.

### SELF-FOCUS

Self-focus indicates that a character prioritises their own emotions, goals, and well-being over those of others. The individual character is the key focus for all things. They would be less likely to consider something that benefits others but not themselves, and more likely to do something that could improve their own situation. This doesn't necessarily mean a self-focused character is selfish though. It can also indicate someone who values autonomy and independence, mastery of skills, and self-improvement. Characters with a high self-focus might be more resilient and self-aware, place more value on their mental health, and be more careful about being taken advantage of. Conversely, characters with a high self-focus may be less empathetic or generous and easily viewed as selfish or unreliable.

Examples of a highly self-focused character include:

- A greedy thrill-seeking thief
- A mindful ascetic who practices meditation as a way to understand their inner self
- A priest who does kind deeds to relieve a terrible guilt

### OTHERS-FOCUS

Others-focus indicates that a character prioritizes the feelings and well-being of others over their own. The individual character is of less importance than those around them. They would be more likely to consider something that benefits others but not themselves, and less likely to consider something that improves only their own situation. Others-focused characters might be generally seen as empathetic and giving, valuing

cohesion and the views and feelings of those around them. They aren't purely about giving and generosity though. Others-focus can also indicate someone who measures themselves by the opinions of others, valuing reciprocity and social status. Characters with a high others-focus may be more empathetic, placing more value on getting along with others and giving people what they want. Conversely, characters with a high others-focus might be less self-aware or self-sufficient, more likely to be taken advantage of, and more likely to have difficulty accomplishing their own goals.

Examples of a highly others-focused character include:

- An artist seeking the adoration of the masses
- A king using spies and brutally cracking down on crime to ensure his people's safety
- A priest who does kind deeds so the less fortunate have a better chance at a good life

## FOCUS RATING

Players choose a Focus rating for their character during character creation. It can then be moved one step in either direction whenever the Dungeon Master deems it appropriate based on things the character says or does. These adjustments don't have to be due to big decisions or defining actions, but should be something that clearly shows where the character's focus is in that moment. While this is the DM's decision, do allow players to express their character's intentions as sometimes the reason may be different than the action conveyed. Additionally, some actions might show a balanced perspective, so moving a rating towards the Balanced midpoint of the axis is valid.

Examples of things that might warrant a rating adjustment include:

- Refusing a quest that might damage an ally's reputation (move toward Others)
- Arguing against a party majority to pursue the plan you want (move towards Self)
- Voicing concerns over whether the means justify an end (move toward Balanced)
- Helping another character without being asked (move toward Others)
- Taking time to pursue a hobby or training (move toward Self)
- Steal a fun item from a shop (move toward Self)

## FOCUS EFFECTS

Focus effects are boons provided by each Focus rating, and are a mix of mechanical and roleplaying benefits (similar to background features) with similar levels of power. These effects are decided during character creation, or replaced as necessary when rating is changed. The effects provided by the Focus Axis are:

- The effect given by the character's current Focus rating
- The player's choice of one effect from an adjacent Focus rating
- An additional way of gaining inspiration
- The character can add a d4 to Charisma checks made to influence characters with a Focus rating up to two away from their own on the axis

Others 5	<b>Social Regard.</b> Once per long rest, when you make an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, you can replace the relevant ability modifier with a number equal to the number of allies you can see within 60 feet of you (maximum 5).	You gain inspiration when you convince someone to do something that is of no benefit to them personally
Others 4	<b>Empathy.</b> You're particularly good at understanding and relating to other people's current emotional state.	
Others 3	<b>Helping Hand.</b> You can use the Help action as a bonus action.	
Others 2	<b>Better Together.</b> You suffer less suspicion or social stigma when you go places or do things with multiple people accompanying you.	
Others 1	<b>After You.</b> When you roll initiative, you can trade your result with one friendly creature with a lower initiative score than you.	
Balanced	<b>Even Minded.</b> People are likely to recognise you as fair and reasonable. You're assumed to be operating in good faith when arbitrating disputes or negotiating deals.	You gain inspiration when you convince someone to weigh the effects of their actions against their personal gain.
Self 1	<b>Mastery.</b> Once per long rest, when you make an ability check with a skill you are proficient in, you can choose to have a roll of 10 instead of rolling the d20.	You gain inspiration when you find a way to improve your own well-being by working with the party.
Self 2	<b>Better Alone.</b> You suffer less suspicion or social stigma when you go places or do things by yourself.	
Self 3	<b>Personal Time.</b> When you engage in a downtime activity ( <i>Xanathar's Guide to Everything</i> ), you can add a d6 to one check made as part of that activity, and you reduce the time required for the training activity by 1d4 (minimum of 1) workweeks. Additionally, whenever you finish a downtime activity, you gain the benefits of the relaxation activity.	
Self 4	<b>Know Thyself.</b> You can't be magically compelled to act in a manner contrary to your ideals, bonds, or flaws.	
Self 5	<b>Self-Preservation.</b> You gain a +2 bonus to your AC while there are no conscious allies within 30 feet of you.	

## SOCIAL INFLUENCE

When giving the bonus to Charisma checks to influence characters of a similar Focus rating, adjudication is up to the DM. Giving this bonus to characters can tell them an NPC's general Focus rating, which can lead to interesting dynamics as characters try to figure out a focus rating so they can better appeal to that NPC.

Alternatively, the information given by this effect might be undesired or seen as metagaming. One roleplaying-based way to avoid metagaming this effect is to require characters to spend time with an NPC to gain the effect, such as an evening at the tavern. A more mechanical method would be requiring a successful Insight check from a character before they can gain the bonus. A DM-centered option is to instead subtract the d4 from an NPC's social checks (such as Deception or Insight) or decrease DCs.

*For example, Throckmorton the Fighter does something that moves her Focus rating from Others 3 to Others 2. She loses her previous Focus effects, then gains the effect for Others 2 and her choice of adjacent effect, either Others 3 or Others 1. She chooses the effect from Others 3. Her bonus method of gaining inspiration stays the same, and she could add a d4 to ability checks made to influence other characters with a Focus rating from Balanced to Others 4.*

## REPLACING ALIGNMENT

The Focus Axis provides an alternative to the alignment system, but alignment is built into aspects of fifth edition such as creature and NPC stat blocks, spell effects, and magic items. Dungeon Masters can replace any instances of alignment with their choice of Focus rating, though only player characters gain any Focus benefits. The following general guidelines can help decide what rating a creature might have. This translation is not ideal, as the Focus Axis is meant to be morally neutral.

Evil alignments can be replaced with a Focus rating of Self 3 to Self 5, neutral alignments with ratings of Self 2 to Others 2, and good alignments with Others 3 to Others 5. Chaotic alignments would likely tend toward Self, while Lawful alignment would tend toward Others. Unaligned creatures might have no rating. Remember that creature types won't necessarily have the same Focus rating, especially among humanoids. An orc or a ghost can easily have a rating of Others 5, while a halfling is Self 5 or a unicorn is Balanced.

## MODULAR SYSTEM

The Focus Axis system is made of a few components (Focus Axis, Focus effects, additional inspiration sources, and social influence), and you as the DM should feel to use only those you feel will work at your table or add to your game. You could ignore the inspiration component if your table doesn't play with inspiration, or remove the Focus effects if you don't like how it feels. Make the system your own!





## CONVICTIONS SYSTEM

The Convictions system is a deeply personal alternative to alignments that centers around rewarding individual actions. While it has less of an influence on the worldwide scale of the campaign, it encourages personal engagement: it starts the characters off with convictions to believe in and rewards strong roleplay moments that occur in accordance with those convictions. The Convictions system requires dedicated effort, but it is ultimately about rewarding the moments in games that should be rewarded, adding a mechanical benefit to encourage these moments.

This system can also be used to help new players track their character's growth over time—to see what their character started believing in and what they end up fighting for.

The Focus Axis and the Reputation systems guide the application of character actions to the world surrounding the party. The Convictions system charts personal growth, change, and strength, and when applied correctly, it is a system that will empower cautious players to be emboldened by their roleplay.

## CONVICTIONS

Instead of selecting an alignment, players set their character's convictions when creating a character. In this case, a conviction is a motivation or a belief that the character believes strongly enough in to pursue action. The player can set their own or use one of the rollable tables below to select them. Players set a number of convictions equal to their proficiency bonus, representing their personal growth as they find new things to fight for in the course of the campaign.

To choose a conviction, it's important to ask yourself, "What motivates my character to *act*?" These aren't just simple beliefs—they are statements that a character believes so strongly that they cannot sit idly by. Aside from browsing the class tables below, another good place to look for ideas is the chapter in the *Player's Handbook* on character backgrounds—the ideals, bonds, and flaws offer plentiful ideas for building powerful convictions.

These convictions should be broad enough to apply in a variety of situations, but not so broad as to be applied constantly. A good conviction should apply to a situation 1-2 times per session. Convictions are intended to encourage the pursuit of strong roleplay moments, and when that is achieved, the character gains a Conviction Die.

It is important to note that a conviction can be "good," "evil," or "neutral" in belief—it just needs to motivate the character to act.

## CONVICTION DICE

A Conviction Die is earned when a character acts according to their motivation in a way that challenges, complicates, or enhances a situation. This boon is given at the DM's discretion and is very situational. A character whose conviction is "I cannot allow a falsehood or injustice to stand without reproach" may or may not be given a Conviction Die for chiding a lying ally, depending on context—they will likely almost always, however, be given a Conviction Die for standing up against a powerful unjust person at risk to their own life. The DM should take into account the magnitude, the effect, and the *change* that happens in a situation because a character chose to act in accordance with their conviction.

When a character gains a Conviction Die, they roll a d20 and set the result aside. A character may have a number of Conviction Dice equal to one-half of their proficiency modifier (rounded up), which can be carried over into following sessions. The Conviction Dice can be used to replace any attack roll, saving throw, or ability check the character makes.

If a character earns a Conviction Die and already has the maximum they can have at a time, they can choose to replace one, but they must keep the new roll.

A character can only earn one Conviction Die per conviction per session.

## CHALLENGING THE CONVICTION

People change, and no one expects characters to end a journey with the same motivations and values they started with. When a character is put into a situation where they can legitimately act against a motivation—either because it presents a challenge they want to overcome or because they have an epiphany—they can choose to challenge the conviction.

The character gains a Conviction Die that is automatically rolled as a 20. The player must cross out the conviction, and the character must spend 2 hours of their next long rest meditating on their changed conviction before replacing it. They may either tweak the motivation to align with their revelation, or change it altogether in accordance with what they have learned.

It is once again at the discretion of the DM to determine when these milestone moments are applicable and when a conviction is appropriately challenged. It is not encouraged to game the system by changing motivations without reason, and the DM may choose to only reward the moments that have been narratively earned.

### VARIANT RULE: TABLE CONVICTION DICE

Given how cooperative roleplay is, DMs can use this variant setup to take some of the onus off of themselves and create a more communal experience. Instead of relying solely on the DM to grant Conviction Dice, each player has two Conviction Dice per session that they may award other characters for roleplay moments. These Conviction Dice do not carry over between sessions. The following conditions must be met: a character cannot be rewarded more than one at a time for a single action, Conviction Dice cannot be rewarded to oneself, and the character can still only have a number of Conviction Dice equal to one-half of their proficiency modifier (rounded up) at 1 time.

In this setup, the DM primarily acts as referee to ensure that these conditions are met and the system is not being misused or taken advantage of. Done properly, allowing players to reward each other should bring communal and affirming feelings to the table.

### SAMPLE SCENARIO

Ventius is a tiefling noble wizard whose parents paid for him to attend an arcane academy despite his initial rejection, which he believes to be unfair. He has two convictions: “I will prove that I deserved to attend the academy” and “Wizards in positions of power will earn my vengeance.” Ventius earns Conviction Dice when he uses magic to assist in situations (no matter the result), pursues further arcane knowledge no matter the cost, and lashes out at wizards in positions of power who he perceives as superior or condescending.

Over time, Ventius grows restless with his vengeance, and during an act of killing a wizard who is the arcane advisor for a king, he learns that this wizard has been teaching the king’s daughter in secret that she might defend herself, despite the king’s wishes. Ventius chooses to challenge his conviction, earning the Conviction Die rolled as a 20—he has learned that power can be used for good or for ill. He must remove “Wizards in positions of power will earn my vengeance” as a conviction and meditate on what he has learned. This could be replaced by a myriad of options depending on what Ventius has taken away from the situation: “I will use my arcane talents to teach those who need defense,” “I will fight back against those who abuse their positions of power,” or “I will not harm anyone until I know the full truth.”

Ventius goes forward with his two new convictions (“I will prove that I deserved to attend the academy” and the replacement conviction) and continues to earn Conviction Dice when he acts in accordance with them—and these convictions may continue to change as Ventius adventures, learns, and finds different things to fight for.

## REPLACING ALIGNMENT

The Convictions system provides an alternative to the alignment system. However, alignment is built into aspects of the fifth edition such as creature and NPC stat blocks, spell effects, and magic items. When determining how these affect a character, the DM should take into account the culmination of the character’s intentions, actions, and beliefs, keeping in mind the nuance and room for growth that the Convictions system is meant to achieve. The Convictions system is not stagnant, and it should never be.

For NPCs and creature stat blocks that still utilize alignment, the DM is encouraged to discard the alignment, as it is limiting. It will be far more fulfilling to set 1–3 convictions for them, ranging anywhere from “I must defend my territory” to “Power is my birthright,” and to play them as if fulfilling these convictions is their utmost priority. This will create stronger enemies and allies with more variety and realism.

## CLASS TABLES

### Artificer

d10	Conviction
1	My inventions are all I have—they’re the first thing I turn to in the face of a problem.
2	I can’t pass up an opportunity for rare or interesting materials.
3	Everything I make will improve the lives of others, not destroy them.
4	Technological advancement is power that I will sell, trade, or leverage to interested parties, no matter their goals.
5	Creations and constructs are devoid of soul and inherently inferior to mortalkind—just tools to be used.
6	Bad people don’t deserve good tools. Resources should go to the worthy.
7	The weapons I make will never be used for needless violence again.
8	I hunger for progress and advancement, so I won’t let others discover things first.
9	There is no point to creation without creativity—I won’t make anything trite unless I can make it interesting.
10	I would rather arm the people than arm anyone in power.

## Barbarian

d10	Conviction
1	Anything that invokes the full force of my rage deserves the consequences.
2	Civilization offers no comfort to me—I spit on the weakness and pity of so-called civilized men.
3	My rage is a force to be used in defense of those I care about, not to blindly destroy.
4	Strength is the only power that matters in this world, and I will increase mine above all others.
5	Those who insult my people will find no loyalty in me.
6	Strength is found in the natural world; I seek to learn from the creatures and will hunt down their guidance when possible.
7	There is nothing that cannot be proven by my might—trickery and deception are for cowards and fools.
8	I will do anything to avoid being mindlessly consumed by my rage.
9	My people have a rich culture and a storied history; I will make sure they are remembered by this world.
10	I embrace my rage utterly and anything that comes of it with no apologies.

## Bard

d10	Conviction
1	I am restless to discover new tales of adventure and heroism and cannot stay in one place for long.
2	It is impossible for me to resist the allure of performing in front of vast crowds.
3	Everything could use a little embellishment—even if it isn't necessary.
4	My talent means that all attention should be on me; the spotlight is mine by right.
5	People in power are in need of a good dressing down, and who better to give it than me?
6	If people won't listen to me, I'll make them listen.
7	All the realm's a stage, and part of my role is making sure others fulfill the parts I envision for them.
8	I can't resist any adventure that sounds like it would make a good tale.
9	If clever words can avoid—or get out of—a complicated situation, I'll try them first.
10	Keeping others inspired and in good cheer is my most important task.

## Cleric

d10	Conviction
1	I am called to make sacrifices for the good of others.
2	If my deity's followers are in danger, I must protect them.
3	Those who do not follow my god are lost, and I must shepherd them into my god's teachings.
4	I cannot allow others to blaspheme my god without rebuke.
5	At decisive moments, I must emulate the example set by my deity.
6	There is nothing I would not do in order to purge evil—or what my god perceives as evil—from this realm.
7	I have the power of a deity on my side; there is no challenge so daunting I cannot face it.
8	The word of my god is higher than any other, and I intend to make that known.
9	My time is best spent aiding those who need it the most.
10	I will not stand by while a temple or a holy site of my deity is threatened.

## Druid

d10	Conviction
1	I won't stand to see nature sullied by anyone.
2	Everything should act in harmony—even people, and I will make sure they do.
3	Those who harm innocent creatures will face nature's wrath at my hand.
4	I will conserve and heal nature at any opportunity.
5	Nurturing people is just as important as nurturing plants, no matter how solitary or hardy the person.
6	Industry and war are blights on the natural order; I will mitigate their impact at any cost.
7	I give my loyalty and service to others who revere and respect the environment.
8	It's uncomfortable for me to stay in a large city or barren place for an extended period.
9	Anyone who exploits nature for their own purposes deserves what I will set upon them.
10	As nature endures, so do I; I will always try peace before conflict.



## Fighter

d10	Conviction
1	I will rise to meet any challenge that is given to me.
2	The thrill of combat means everything; I will never deny a unique and dangerous fight.
3	Those who have fought side-by-side with me in the past have my undying loyalty.
4	When facing an enemy, peace is never an option.
5	I will risk my life to ensure the safety of others.
6	My martial prowess is unquestionable—anyone who thinks otherwise can witness it firsthand.
7	Honor is of the utmost importance; I will not use dishonorable actions to solve a situation.
8	Maintaining my health and the health of others is a priority.
9	To perfect my skill, I must seek out more techniques and greater weaponry.
10	I will do anything I possibly can to win in battle.

## Monk

d10	Conviction
1	No monetary or material reward can sway me from my principles.
2	This journey is a spiritual test and I will treat it with the gravity it deserves.
3	Gold has little value to me; I will only take useful goods as rewards for my deeds.
4	I will stop unnecessary violence whenever I see it.
5	Hedonism and indulgence are reprehensible traits I will condemn.
6	Even the most extreme actions are justified to preserve the balance of the world.
7	I wish to experience as many unique things outside my monastery as possible.
8	The mission that took me from the monastery is paramount—nothing else can come before it.
9	I will not participate in worldly activities that could tempt me from my way.
10	As I have no need for material belongings there is no reason not to be generous.

## Paladin

d10	Conviction
1	I refuse to compromise the ideals of my oath.
2	Chivalry, honor, and loyalty come before all else.
3	I cannot ask for a reward from those who are in great need.
4	The letter of my oath can be twisted to serve my own ends.
5	I will not stand idle if there is evil to be defeated.
6	Justice cannot be compromised—I will be my own inquisition to uphold the law.
7	My weapon acts on behalf of the common people.
8	I cannot turn my back on anyone who is afflicted, whether by wound, disease, or curse.
9	Everyone is allowed mercy and a second chance.
10	My oath and duty are bound to something greater than common jobs.

## Ranger

d10	Conviction
1	The most rewarding path is the one least traveled—and it's the one I prefer..
2	I seek out the strongest and most difficult game to hunt, no matter how rare it is.
3	Those lost in the wilderness will always find a guide in me.
4	I have little patience for the complaints of comfortable city folk.
5	My independence is my strength; I will not rely on anybody else.
6	There is no creature alive that I am afraid of facing.
7	My actions will leave as little disruption to the wilderness I travel as possible.
8	I cannot help but defend outposts and villages posted on dangerous borders.
9	If I can deal with a threat before it becomes one, I will.
10	Defending the wilds is a priority over any city.



## Rogue

d10	Conviction
1	Lofty nobles can't be allowed to sit on their coffers while people starve.
2	If somebody can't keep an eye on their possessions, they don't deserve to have them.
3	Locked doors and chests are just challenges—nothing and nobody can bar my way.
4	The shadows are the most opportune place to make a difference; I don't need credit for my work.
5	Anyone can buy my expertise for the right price.
6	Ideals like honor and valor are for fools, and I'll use every trick in the book if I have to.
7	Everything I do, I do to avoid as much danger and be as efficient as possible.
8	I take what I need and I take what I want, and someone else can take the consequences.
9	Where the law fails to take out the worst scum, I will work instead.
10	Illicit deeds can be done for a good cause.

## Sorcerer

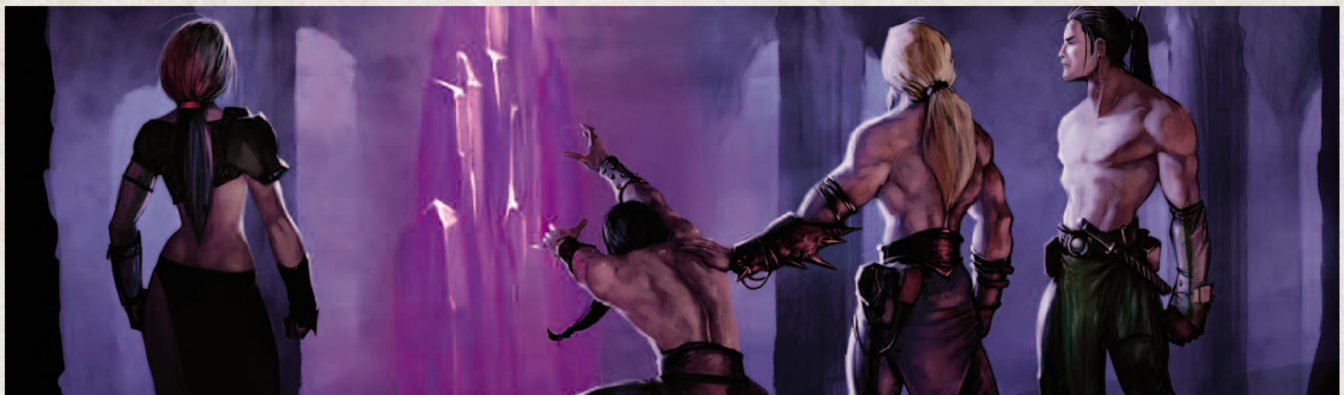
d10	Conviction
1	I will follow any clue to discover, find, or meet the origin of my sorcerous magic.
2	It is important to me to control my magic and avoid needlessly hurting people with it.
3	Power is everything to me; I will take any opportunity to increase my magical strength.
4	I will fiercely defend those who accept me as I am.
5	If my magic causes harm to innocent people, I have to make up for it somehow.
6	The less I have to use my magic until I can get rid of it, the better.
7	Those without inherent magical abilities are beneath me.
8	Anyone who seeks to use me will find themselves crushed under my magic.
9	This magic should be only used to aid others, not for pointless destruction.
10	I will take any chance to understand more about myself and about my powers.

## Warlock

d10	Conviction
1	Whatever my patron says, goes; I'm not compromising my powers.
2	I will strike any deal necessary to get what I want.
3	These powers give me the right to do what other forces ban me from doing.
4	Nobody, under any circumstances, can know where I got these powers from.
5	Dangerous power is power worth pursuing, and I will do what is needed to get it.
6	Striking this deal doesn't make me any less of a hero, and I'll prove it.
7	I willingly work with the weird, abnormal, or outcast before anyone else.
8	Whatever my patron asks of me, I will only do the minimum required to please them.
9	I refuse to allow others to have arcane knowledge and the power that comes with it.
10	Everyone and everything is a stepping stone in pursuit of my own goals.

## Wizard

d10	Conviction
1	I will agree to anything if I can expand my knowledge of arcane lore.
2	The magic I know is at the disposal of others—as long as they can pay for it.
3	My vast power means others should be beholden to me.
4	The history of our realm contains secrets untold; I leap at any chance to study what came before.
5	I am jealous of those who have not poured years of effort and study into their magic.
6	My studies demand constant attention, I cannot afford to relax.
7	If others are open to learning, I will teach what knowledge I can.
8	Magic should not be used to lord over others or for malevolent deeds, but should serve the people.
9	All knowledge and spells are mine to learn and master.
10	Magic is a worthy weapon and those who cannot stand against it should fall to it.



# REPUTATION SYSTEM

Alignment is only theoretical until it's applied. And there is no better application of alignment than social interaction. After all, social interaction is one of the three pillars of Dungeons & Dragons, alongside combat and exploration. So how does another character perceive your alignment? How does alignment affect a social encounter? It all has to do with how well you are known and how you're regarded. In other words, it has to do with your **fame** and **repute**.

## FAME

**Fame** is a numerical measure of how widely you are known. How far does your fame precede you? For instance, if you play a hero who has never left her village and has only put down local threats, she might be well-known in her hometown but remains unheard of elsewhere. But if she were to save the prince from a vampire, her fame might spread to a regional or kingdom-wide level. Her fame score gains a numerical increase to reflect that newfound popularity.

Like renown from the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, fame is a numerical value that starts at zero, then increases as a character accomplishes feats. The deeds must be known by the public to increase a character's fame, so secret or unseen acts don't count. The higher the number, the wider your sphere of fame (or infamy).

## GAINING FAME

A character earns fame with completed missions or quests that people become aware of. A Dungeon Master awards fame at their discretion as characters complete these missions or quests, typically at the same time experience points are awarded.

Most completed missions or quests increase a character's fame by 1. Especially impressive or noticeable deeds might merit an increase in fame of 2 or more, at the DM's discretion.

For example, suppose the characters complete a quest in which they slay a blue dragon. You might increase each character's fame by 1. Conversely, if killing the dragon freed a town from its tyranny, completing the quest might instead increase each character's fame by 2, given how public the deed was. In addition, bards and other entertainers might attempt to talk up a party's successes as well with a successful Charisma (Performance) check in a public place.

## LEVELS OF FAME

**Obscurity.** No one outside your immediate circle of family and friends knows you or can recall your name. This is a level reserved for nonplayer characters, since even the lowest-level player character has a small degree of fame. The vast majority of the nonadventuring public falls into this category.

**Local Fame.** You are known in your hometown or native village, or throughout the ward or borough of the city in which you live or operate. Most who know your name have met you in person.

**Regional Fame.** You are known throughout a vast swath of countryside, a large region of your nation, or an entire metropolis. Many who have never met you still know something about you and your exploits.

**Kingdom Fame.** You are known throughout the entire kingdom or nation and in many neighboring territories. The people who know about you but have never seen you vastly outnumber your personal acquaintances.

**Planar Fame.** Virtually everyone in the world has heard of you. Only in the most remote corners of this Material Plane has your fame not spread. Some other planes of existence might have begun to hear of you.

**Multiversal Fame.** A creature with multiversal fame is well known on nearly all planes of existence. Only gods, demigods, and godlike entities typically ever acquire this much fame.

## REPUTE

Of course, how a person perceives you is based on much more than whether or not they know about you. There's also the matter of *what* they know about you. That's where **repute** comes in, a neutral term than connotes either good- or ill-repute, or anything in between.

For example, if you're known far and wide for being sadistic and petty, that's very different than being known for your heroism and generosity. And those with whom you interact treat you and expect to be treated by you in different ways depending on your repute.

There are three types of repute: altruistic, undecided, and selfish.

Score	Fame	NPC Challenge Rating Equivalent
0	Obscurity (no fame)	0-1/2
1-5	Local	1-4
6-15	Regional	5-10
16-35	Kingdom	11-16
36-75	Planar	17-22
75+	Multiversal	23+

**Altruistic (A).** If you are altruistic, you have a reputation for valuing the well-being and safety of others at least as much as you value your own. More often than not, your known actions have been heroic and compassionate. A person interacting with you expects to be treated fairly.

**Undecided (U).** If you are undecided, people don't quite know what to make of you and they're unsure whether or not you'll treat them well. If they've heard of your exploits, it's a confusing jumble of selfless and selfish acts. People approach you with caution.

**Selfish (S).** You're proven what kind of a person you are through your actions, and it doesn't look good. People know you for your acts of selfishness and disregard for others. They expect to be mistreated, tricked, hurt, or deceived when around you. Only those with leverage on you or a mutually-beneficial offer approach you with confidence.



## REPUTATION

Your **reputation** consists of your fame and your repute together and is written alphanumerically. For example, if you are a 1st-level player character and your first act is to save a village home from a band of roving goblins, your reputation might be 1A. The '1' means you're known locally and the 'A' means people expect to be well-treated by you.

With a reputation, fame and repute together, players know more or less how their characters are perceived by the public at large. Your Dungeon Master can take cues from the listed reputation when planning and roleplaying social interactions.

What's more, player characters gain certain mechanical benefits with their reputation. These mechanics are detailed later in this section.

### KNOWN OR UNKNOWN?

The first thing to determine in a social interaction is who knows who. Any creature local to your base of operations that has a numerical reputation lower than yours knows or has heard of you. If a creature has a numerical reputation equal to yours, the DM decides if it knows you. For example, if you're playing a cleric with a reputation of 10A and you meet a 25S adult red dragon, you've heard of it but it's not heard of you. If you chance to meet the dragon again after your numerical reputation has climbed to 25A, the adult red dragon might say, "I've started to hear rumors of a young priest who's been acting too foolhardy for her own good!"

### STARTING ATTITUDE

The next thing to determine in a new social interaction is the starting attitude of those involved. The concept of starting attitude appears in chapter 8 of the Player's Handbook. When meeting a creature for the first time, determine whether the creature is friendly, indifferent, or hostile. Your Dungeon Master can make that decision on their own, or they can factor in the reputation of the concerned parties. Check the Starting Attitudes table to determine how creatures perceive each other.

#### Starting Attitudes

	Altruistic NPC	Undecided NPC	Selfish NPC
Altruistic PC	Friendly	Friendly	Hostile
Undecided PC	Indifferent	Indifferent	Indifferent
Selfish PC	Hostile	Hostile	Indifferent

For example, if you're playing a warrior character with a reputation of 37U and you meet a baroness with a reputation of 36A, she probably has heard of you but views you with indifference. Your fame is almost global, but no one knows whether to expect punishment or mercy from you.

A **friendly** creature wants to help the adventurers and wishes for them to succeed. For tasks or actions that require no particular risk, effort, or cost, friendly creatures usually help without question. If an element of personal risk is involved, a successful Charisma check might be required to convince a friendly creature to take that risk.

An **indifferent** creature might help or hinder the party, depending on what the creature sees as most beneficial. A creature's indifference doesn't necessarily make it standoffish or disinterested. Indifferent creatures might be polite and genial, surly and irritable, or anything in between. A successful Charisma check is necessary when the adventurers try to persuade an indifferent creature to do something.

A **hostile** creature opposes the adventurers and their goals but doesn't necessarily attack them on sight. For example, a condescending noble might wish to see a group of upstart adventurers fail so as to keep them from becoming rivals for the king's attention, thwarting them with slander and scheming rather than direct threats and violence. The adventurers need to succeed on one or more challenging Charisma checks to convince a hostile creature to do anything on their behalf. That said, a hostile creature might be so ill-disposed toward the party that no Charisma check can improve its attitude, in which case any attempt to sway it through diplomacy fails automatically.

## CHARISMA CHECKS USING REPUTATION

You receive a bonus to Charisma checks to interact with other characters if your fame is higher than theirs. This bonus represents the awe, admiration, or fear your past exploits inspire in others.

When dealing with an unfamiliar nonplayer character, compare your fame. You gain a +1 bonus to Charisma checks for every 10 fame more you have (rounded down). For example, let's say you are playing a 40U fighter character. Those you meet have a starting attitude of indifference, but you have a +4 bonus on Charisma checks against those with 0 fame, whereas you receive a +2 bonus against those with 20 fame. Nonplayer character fame can be quickly determined using the NPC Challenge Rating Equivalent column of the Fame Ranks table.

