

ALIGNMENT

This is an explanation on the use of Alignment. Obviously there are exceptions to any generalization but this covers the basic premise.

Alignments are best used to define how a character will act the majority of the time in a given situation. Some alignments will have a smaller grey area between them and the nearest alignment up or down (or diagonally depending on how you view the alignment “chart”).

If given a severe traumatic event, many characters can and will change alignment based on the event, BUT the change should reflect the character’s priorities based on the event, not just because the player gets bored and wants to try murder-hoboing for a while. (A certain bat cowed hero was probably closer to LG/LN before he witnessed his parents murdered in front of him, then becoming NG; he will not indiscriminately kill but goes outside established channels to bring criminals to justice).

Even the most Lawful Good character has the potential to murder given the right impetus just as the most Chaotic Evil character can still commit acts of kindness and genuinely care for others for their own reasons (or no reason).

Being realistic shouldn’t be the problem in any RPG but the party and society need to be functional even in a fantasy setting. People tend to gravitate to like-minded individuals and goals, not polar opposites. For instance a lawful good paladin is very likely NOT going to be in a party of chaotic evil assassins, necromancers and warlocks. Granted it can make for great role-playing (at times) but even the lowest perception LG will realize something is not right if the party keeps committing evil acts, or vice versa, the murder hobo will realize the “goody-two shoes” party is not his style.

Players shouldn’t be afraid to embrace the personality of the PC they are trying to roleplay. If your PC enjoys hurting/raping/murdering/stealing without regard, then it’s a safe bet they aren’t good and probably not neutral either. There is nothing preventing you from being a party member with hidden motives, acting “good” until you get what you want. Actual history and fiction is replete with such examples.

For instance a warlock who journeys with the party for years until they finally secure the (insert rare MacGuffin artifact) and then takes the item to their patron as they had been planning all along. OR the warlock faces their first moral quandary having realized the party members are now family and betrays their patron siding with his friends to keep the (insert rare MacGuffin artifact) out of evil hands.

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Lawful Good: Believes in an orderly society and trusts in legitimate authority. This character will help others and will not willingly harm anyone barring specific and infrequent circumstances (obviously adventurers will run into these circumstances frequently). However this character will take action to protect and defend their chosen society, even with lethal force.

Example: the paladin that puts the local goblin tribes to the sword, showing little remorse or concern, but will not execute prisoners (those that surrender) without reason or trial; the same paladin will also donate time and treasure to help the local orphanage and charities in their community.

Neutral Good: Has their own moral code that guides them, understands, but does not rely solely on the established norms and laws; is helpful and as lawful good, will not willingly commit wrongs, UNLESS the benefit of a short term wrong establishes a greater good in their eyes.

Example: the thief that breaks into the ducal treasury to find proof of embezzlement; the assassin who turns members of their own guild in to authorities to prevent a murder of innocents.

Chaotic Good: Free spirited individualist that values their own moral code over any other attempting to be imposed. Often a spur of the moment impetuous character, he or she will help and do “good” regardless of any established order or law.

Example: the thief who routinely steals from the extravagant rich to give to the poor (but not intentionally harming anyone in the process); the vigilante killer who goes after notorious wrongdoers regardless if they were found “innocent” by authorities.

Lawful Neutral: Sees order as necessary for a functioning society but is indifferent to outsiders; not to be confused with apathetic, this character will go to work, pay their taxes and be supportive of society and their neighbors, but will mainly be concerned with what maintains order, affects them, and those connected to them.

Example: the mage who becomes a guild instructor to better the training of magic to members, but will ignore non-associates; the bounty hunter that tracks down those fleeing justice regardless of the reason the accused committed the crime.

True Neutral: Often seen as an ambiguous fence-rider on most issues, the TN sees the value in both order and chaos but understands there must be a balance between the benefits and disadvantages provided by both viewpoints. These characters often make decisions based on the least destructive, most beneficial long term benefit to themselves or the group they are invested in.

Example: The ranger who keeps “his” area of the woodland secure but does not concern himself with events outside his territory without a clear and present danger to the balance of things.

Chaotic Neutral: Does what gives them the best advantage in any situation. Usually impetuous and can be convinced of nearly any job if the payout is high enough for the time to be invested. While this character will not intentionally hurt anyone without cause, neither will they go out of their way to help anyone without some benefit to themselves.

Example: the smuggler getting rich while supplying arms to known criminals; the street hustler conning others out of their coin.

Lawful Evil: Values order but enjoys the control society/laws give them; will utilize the existing system to further their own goals and ensure others are kept in line; Often sadistic and not concerned with the pain and suffering of others as long as order is maintained.

Example: the fighter lord who razes a village in revolt to make an example to keep the rest of the domain in line; the executioner/torturer/jailer that enjoys inflicting pain on others who violate the established law.

Neutral Evil: Commits evil acts in the furtherance of their own agenda and pursuit of power; enjoys seeing others suffer but always with a purpose behind the pain inflicted to enhance their own goals. Values others only if they are an asset in some manner, once they are no longer useful, they will usually be made an example of or discarded.

Example: the indiscriminate assassin who will take any job from anyone for any reason not concerning himself with anyone he has to kill to reach the main target and complete the mission; the rogue knight willing to kill as many of his own men as the opponent's to gain victory.

Chaotic Evil: Lives for sadistic vile acts; while this individual can fake interest in others and play along, it is always until they get bored or feel the urge to hurt someone or destroy something. Will stay with a party as long as they are killing or hurting others but will be just as likely to spontaneously turn on the party when they are least expecting it.

Example: the psychotic murder hobo already in your party.
