Alignment

Every Character has an alignment of some sort. That is to say; there are good guys, bad guys, anti-heroes, neutral onlookers and every shade in between. Although, the lines between them can be quite blurred. Alignment is a function of how you play your character.

There are two parts to alignment, Law & Chaos (or Approach) and Good & Evil (or Outlook). Each portion is independent of one another, and the combination of the two parts defines the Character's take on life.

Alignment has three applications for the game. The first is a general guideline on how your character *should* act. The second is a record of how your character *has* acted. And the last is how your character *will* act based on what he has done before and the guidelines.

By "guidelines," we are referring to expected alignments of some Character Classes. Many Classes are pre-disposed to be of a certain alignment and *should* be played that way.

Like many things in the game, alignment is represented in a numerical fashion. You have one number for Approach and one number for Outlook. Each one of these numbers individually represent your character's respective portions of their alignment, which make up their alignment as a whole.

Approach is the character's general view on law and order. Characters with a high score for their Approach is law-abiding and/or understand and value the principles of structure. Characters with a low score is those who have problems with authority and tend to buck the system. Characters who have an Approach somewhere in the middle are generally a little fickle when it comes to law and order and don't really personify either view.

The concept of Outlook is a little subtler. While it is easy to say Outlook is about good and evil, in reality, it is more about selflessness and selfishness. Characters with a high score in their Outlook alignment tend to think more about others before they think of themselves. Characters with a low score most certainly put themselves before others.

In game terms, both numbers range from -500 to 500. For Approach, anything above 100 is generally considered a character who finds value in a regimented way about life, order of things, and a set of rules to live by. Characters with a value below -100 are the opposite, preferring not to live by any set of rules and not accepting the law of the land. The same scale applies to Outlook. Characters with a value above 100 tend to think of others before themselves. Characters with a value below -100 put themselves before others. In both cases, characters with a score between -100 and 100 are somewhat in the middle.
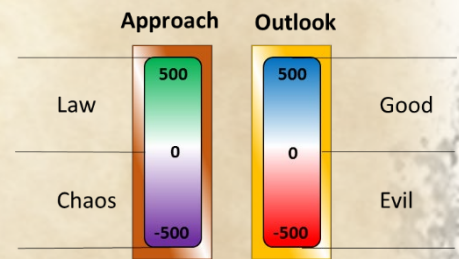
It is a combination of these two views that really define a character's personality. A character with a high Approach and a high Outlook is lawfully good in alignment and acts as such. A character with a high Approach but low Outlook is lawfully evil, and also acts as such. Remember, this is a game where you assume the role of that character. This means that the character's personality needs not to be your own and you are free to play that character however you wish. But, as with all things, it is not without consequence.

Many Character Classes have a requirement on what alignment they must be, while others have alignment restrictions. For instance, the Thief Character Class cannot be a law-abiding citizen; it is just not in their nature. Healers are generally very compassionate people and tend to think of others before themselves. As discussed in the Spells Chapter, the ability to access certain types of magics may depend on the personality of the individual. This is all to say that certain Character Classes must act a certain way.

Given the above information, we find that there are eight possibilities for a character's alignment. Let's take a little bit of time to review each one and

quickly describe some archetypes that fit these alignments.

Lawfully Good (Approach above 100 / Outlook above 100): "The Superhero."

Lawfully good characters uphold the law and put others before themselves in most every situation. In extreme cases, you could almost hear them yell "Foooor Laaaaawww, Ordeeerrr and Juustiiiice!" as their perfect white teeth shine through a huge perfect smile above an imposing cleft chin with their capes waving heroically in the breeze. In all seriousness, lawfully good characters can always be trusted by others and to do the right thing. Iconic examples would be characters like Superman and the old-school Batman. Some real-life examples of lawfully good characters would be firemen and police officers. In game, examples are any Character Class from the order of Tathun.

Neutrally Good (Approach around 0 / Outlook above 100): "The Family Man."

Neutrally good characters put others before themselves and try to do the right thing, but don't necessarily give in 100% to the laws of the land. They tend to take each situation as it comes and do whatever is necessary at the time for others. Iconic examples would be characters like Robin Hood and Shrek. If you subscribe to the notion that people are generally good, then this alignment describes the general masses of any population. In-game examples would be a good Thief or a non-lawful Healer.

Chaotically Good (Approach below -100 / Outlook above 100): "The Antihero."

This alignment can be easily summed up by describing just about any movie cop during the 1980s. If you're a little bit younger and don't remember that period, then this alignment describes a character that does anything for the greater good including questionable actions. They tend to have tremendous issues with authority and don't believe that good is encapsulated and guided by law. Iconic examples would be Martin Riggs from the Lethal Weapon series and Ozymandias from Watchmen. Real-life examples would be vigilantes. In-

game examples would be any Character Class from the Order of Lanun and the Chevalier.

Lawfully Evil (Approach above 100 / Outlook below -100): "The Evil Genius."

Characters of this alignment always have a plan, that at the very end of completion, ultimately serves themselves. These characters can be law-abiding but use any structure to further their own ends. Lawfully evil characters are not psychopaths and generally, tend to truly believe that what they're doing is right. But the definition of "right" mostly involves their own needs. Many times, characters with this alignment see the current system of law as flawed (whether they are correct or not) and seek to establish a new order. The key item here is when this new order is established, they is the ones on top. Iconic examples of lawfully evil characters would be just about any bad guy from the James Bond series. Real-life examples would be most dictators and dare I say, politicians. An in-game example is the Swunite Order.

Neutrally Evil (Approach around the 0 / Outlook below -100): "Lazy."

Characters of this alignment are always looking out for number one - plain and simple. They don't put too much stock into law and order, nor are they raving lunatics. They simply do whatever they feel they need to at the time to further their own agendas. This can be as simple as making sure they have enough to eat or can be as extreme as robbery. Characters of this alignment are inclined to be a little lazy because they never really commit to any idea at all. They tend to be drifters, petty criminals, and generally socially accepted unpleasant people. Iconic examples of this would be Worm from the Rounders movie and Grima Wormtongue from Lord of the Rings. Real-life examples would be dirty cops, petty criminals and bullies. In game examples are non-good Thieves and the Bandit.

Chaotically Evil (Approach below -100 / Outlook below -100): "The Raving Lunatic."

Characters of this alignment generally fall into two distinct archetypes. As the description says, one of them is a raving lunatic; the other is just a plain bad person. The raving lunatic obviously has no love for law and order at all and abhors kind acts towards others. The second type of this character is always looking out for number one and actively works to better his situation through trampling others. This does not need to be in a physical sense. Someone who constantly works (unlawfully) to discredit others so that he may look better fits into this category. Iconic examples would be Voldemort from Harry Potter and the Joker from Batman. Real-life examples would be hardened prison inmates and that jerk at the office that is always putting others down so he can get ahead. In game examples are the Jester.

Lawfully Neutral (Approach above 100 / Outlook around zero): "The Stickler."

These characters don't put much stock in the whole good and evil thing. Instead, they are mainly concerned about rules and regulations. They may help somebody else if rules permit and they may also turn a cold shoulder to someone in need if the rules speak against it. Characters of this alignment can be somewhat frustrating to others as they see everything in black and white as defined by the laws of the land. Although, it doesn't necessarily need to be official laws written down in documents. It can also be the "laws" of some other thing, meaning they have a very well-defined idea of how things are supposed to proceed and follows that ethos to the letter, like the duty-bound samurai who does whatever their Lord says even if it means hurting other people. Iconic examples would be the Vogons from Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. Real-life examples would be bureaucrats and lawyers. An in-game example is the Aurima.

Chaotically Neutral (Approach below -100 / Outlook around zero): "The Rebel."

Much like lawfully neutral characters, chaotically neutral do not concern themselves much with the struggle between self and others. They do however have an innate spirit of rebellion about them and actively go against the system at every opportunity. You could count on a chaotically neutral character not to be trustworthy in any instance. You can't even count on them to be greedy as they may throw away their treasure just for the sake of being rebellious. Chaotically neutral characters are probably the most difficult to play as every choice your character makes should be something odd and not necessarily make any sense. Iconic examples are James Dean from Rebel without a Cause and Cool Hand Luke. Real-life examples of this alignment are far more difficult to pin down as people of this view on life rarely gain any notoriety. In game examples are the Caller and perhaps the Bandit.

Characters of any good Alignment need to maintain an Outlook above 100, and evil alignment characters must maintain an Outlook below -100. Lawful characters must maintain an Approach above 100, and chaotic characters must maintain an Approach below -100. Neutral characters must dance between 100 and -100 Outlook. Characters always start with the minimum alignment per their Character Class. If they have no alignment requirements (Approach, Outlook or both), then they start at 0.

Non-Good, Evil, Lawful and Chaotic. Some Character Classes can be any alignment they wish, except one. This is written down in the negative. A Non-Good alignment restriction simply means you can play that character however you wish, just not good (meaning, don't go over 100 Outlook).

Building an Alignment

Characters earn alignment points through their actions during an adventure. The Storyteller assigns points to Players for both Approach and Outlook based on what their characters do. Obviously, this can be a wee tricky for the Storyteller as they may not always know the intention behind your character's actions. It is perfectly legitimate for a Storyteller to assign alignment points here and there and then take them all away or give you a ton of alignment points in the opposite direction when you reveal your true motive behind what your character has done. Of course, you may always have a discussion with the Storyteller about the subject at any time.

Actions that your character performs can, and will, become habitual. While this is a game where you play the role of a character in a fantasy world, you don't necessarily have full control over the character per se. The Storyteller acts as an overriding authority in certain cases. For instance, if you, for no good reason, wanted your character to jump off a cliff the Storyteller would probably say "ummm…. Your character doesn't want to do that". Or if you wanted your character to put his hand into molten lava the Storyteller would probably say something like "no way, you know that's hot, and if you put your hand in there it'll burn off - there's no way your characters going to do that."

The same holds true based on your alignment, to a certain extent, while this is going to be a much softer of a subject and very dependent on how the Storyteller sees things. As we said at the beginning of this chapter, alignment really has three aspects. That is how your character *should* act based on the requirements of the Character Class; how your character *does* act, as controlled by you the Player; and how your character *will* act, which is based on how your character HAS ACTED during the game. If you are playing a lawfully good character and have acted that way for the majority of the game so far, then you have played the Character Class correctly. But if at some point you decide that you don't like the look of a beggar's face and think would look much better with your sword lodged in it, you may not be able to make that happen. If you tell the Storyteller that you want to strike at that beggar, the Storyteller would probably say "I don't think so, you're a lawfully good hero. There's no way your character would act out in such a manner".

Now keep in mind that all this is up for discussion with your Storyteller. There may be a perfectly good reason why you want to hit that beggar in the face. Maybe you think he's a monster in disguise or perhaps you saw that same person murder somebody the day before. Whenever your character takes an action that is stopped by the Storyteller is a good time to start a discussion on why you want to do that. The general rule of thumb here is to reason with the Storyteller whenever they think the actions of your character are not commensurate with your alignment.

As we mentioned before, some Character Classes have alignment requirements. This means that certain Character Classes, for a multitude of reasons, must be of a certain alignment. Many of these reasons have to do with the Order to which they are associated. The Orders in Tara-Corax are millennia-old and have a rich history that guides the individuals that are part of that Order. For instance, the Order of Tathun is the Order of justice. Character Classes that are part of that order always act in a lawfully good fashion.

Normally, characters in-game grew up and were molded by those who were heroes in their eyes. Just as in real life, that hero is many times somebody who already embodies that person's take on life, and such people can be a heavy influence. Most children grow up saying they want to be something, a policeman or a fireman or maybe even an accountant. So, by the time your character is ready for adventuring, he has spent years in training and been inundated by the ideals of that Character Class, much in the same way a policeman who graduates from the Academy

Let's say your character's walking down the street and you find a bag of coins on the ground. Stitched onto that bag of coin is a small leather label that has a name on it. Your character decides to take that bag of coin and pocket it.

The Storyteller may then say "okay, -10 to your Approach", which means you would subtract 10 points from your current Approach score.

Let's say you continue to walk down the street and you see a beggar on the side of the road. Your character takes that same bag of coins that he found on the ground and hands it over to the beggar.

The Storyteller may then say "how nice, +50 to your Outlook". This means that you would add 50 points to your current Outlook score.

From this short example we can see that this character is acting in a Chaotically Good manner.

has spent a good deal of time training and being inundated with the ethos of the police force.

As you read a character description, many of the classes have an alignment requirement. This does not always speak to both Approach and Outlook. Some Character Classes may say "any lawful," which means that you may play that character as lawfully good, lawfully neutral or lawfully evil, the choice is yours. But keep in mind that if you have a trend of acting a certain way, let's say lawfully good, that your character may tend to continue to act that way even against your wishes as a Player. This means that if you want to play a neutral character of some sort, it is probably best to act good in some situations and not so good in other situations to maintain that neutrality. If the character description says "any alignment", then you're free to act however you choose, remembering if you show a trend of acting a certain way your character normally continues down the same path. The same holds true for your character's approach, meaning a character class description that says "any good" means you may play that character as lawfully good, neutrally good or chaotically good, but not swapping between the three willy-nilly.

Acting Outside Your Alignment

Obviously, the main question is what happens if you act outside of your Character Class's requirements. While the Storyteller undoubtedly works with you on this subject and do their utmost to make sure something like this doesn't happen, the consequences for breaking the Character Classes alignment are extreme. When you break an alignment that *you've* created this is a small thing that can perhaps, over time, redefine your character's alignment; especially if it is a conscious action and you let your Storyteller know you're trying to shift the alignment of your character. However, if you choose a lawfully good character and insist on playing them chaotically evil the ultimate outcome is that you lose your Class.

The in-game description of this is that characters who act outside of the ethos of their Character Class face a personality crisis. Let's take a Rector of Tathun for example. The Rectors of Tathun serve as the face of law and justice to the public.

Anyone who has trained for years to become one of these Character Classes has undoubtedly assimilated all the values associated with that Order - they are a true believer. Now, if for some reason you insist on trying to play a Rector of Tathun as an evil scumbag, your character has some serious internal issues. They begin to doubt themselves, who they are, why they are doing what they're doing, the choices they made in their life and the direction they want to go in the future. While this may be recoverable, depending on your Storyteller, enough of your character's actions that are against the required alignment can result in your character losing its Character Class.

Losing your Character Class essentially means that everything associated with that Character Class (weapon masteries, abilities, spellcasting proficiencies and so on) are no longer usable. The only thing your character would keep is their Hit Points, Skills, the ability to wear that class's armor and Preferred Weapons. This is a sign that all the things that character held dear and trained for and has special access to are gone.

The Storyteller has more information on the subject and alignment is something that the Storyteller should have far more knowledge about. Any good Storyteller is able to work with you as a Player if you start acting contrary to how you should be acting and how you have acted. The purpose for required alignments is to paint certain Character Classes as certain figures within the society of the world. Much in the same way that policemen are generally viewed as being people who uphold the law and protect others. Policemen that don't act that way (dirty cops) don't uphold the public trust. If every policeman could act the way they wanted the police force, in general, would not be viewed as an agency who upholds the public trust, and by extension, all the policemen within it would also not hold the public trust. Suffice to say that a Paladin should be a good guy and should be played that way, and if he doesn't, then he's no longer a Paladin.

So how much leeway do you really have in this whole alignment thing? Well, that depends on your Storyteller, but there are some general guidelines within the Storyteller's Guide to assist everyone. Small acts of kindness, like giving a beggar a few bronze coins, might earn you about 10 or so to your Outlook. Not paying for your ale at the local inn and slipping

out before anybody catches you might earn you -10 to your Approach. Helping out the old widow that lives in the shack at the edge of town by buying her a new house might earn you about 100 Outlook. A cold-blooded murder probably takes you down about -250 Outlook. Generally speaking, Approach is gained in small increments and is rarely doled out in large sums. Conversely, Outlook can swing greatly based on what you do.

The last item to consider about alignment is party interaction. While this rests more with the Storyteller, is important for you as a Player to understand that your alignment may have an effect on a party when playing with friends.

Many times, this game is played with multiple people, each one of them controlling a different character. Naturally, there is characters within that group with differing alignments. The general rule of thumb is that a characters' approach may create some tension within the party but usually don't amount to anything substantial. A good example would be Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday, a lawfully good and a chaotically good character that got along just fine with one another. While approach can create some tension, it does nothing more than start a little infighting within a party, as long as those actions don't directly conflict with the others'. For instance, a policeman and a petty thief could not be in the same party together.

Outlook is an entirely different story. Opposing Outlooks at least create tension, and can turn party members into enemies. It is usually the difference in Outlook that defines friend from foe. The Storyteller has more information on this, but a difference in value of 200 is usually the point where clashing Outlooks create tension. This is only true when one value is below 0, and the other is above 0. Starting characters (one is good, and the other is evil)

have outlooks 100 and -100 respectively. This is a difference of 200, and these characters would have tension between one another. If there were 2 characters in the same party, one with an outlook of 50 and the other with an outlook of 350, there would be no issue between them because neither of the scores is on the other side of 0. This tension grows as the Outlook scores become farther apart. Normally, characters with an Outlook that differs by 400 to 700 cannot be in the same party and generally sees each other as foes. Characters who have an Outlook difference of 700 or more are just straight enemies.

While characters in the same party can always try and hide their intentions and be on their best behavior. Eventually their true nature's going to come out. So, when creating a party with friends just keep in mind that differing Outlooks has an effect on the party. It is common for good characters to become more good as time goes on, and evil characters to become more un-good. If there is only tension when you first create your characters and form a party, bear in mind that over time those characters may not be able to continue their adventures together.

The best way to manage this is, when you and your friends sit down to create characters, have a discussion with one another about what Character Classes you would like to be and their alignments. Since only Outlook can hamper the party composition try and only focus on that part of the Character Classes. If you decide as a group that you want the party to be good, that doesn't mean everybody has to be of some good alignment. Plenty of the members can be a neutral alignment or a Character Class that doesn't specify good or evil. As long as nobody strays too far on the opposite side of 0 Outlook, there shouldn't be any problems.