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Neutral Good

A neutral good character does the best that a good person can do. He is devoted to helping others. He works with kings and magistrates but does not feel beholden to them.

Neutral good is the best alignment you can be because it means doing what is good without bias for or against order.

Neutral good can be a dangerous alignment because it advances mediocrity by limiting the actions of the truly capable.

Creatures of neutral good alignment believe that there must be some regulation in combination with freedoms if the best is to be brought to the world--the most beneficial conditions for living things in general and intelligent creatures in particular. Creatures of this alignments see the cosmos as a place where law and chaos are merely tools to use in bringing life, happiness, and prosperity to all deserving creatures. Order is not good unless it brings this to all; neither is randomness and total freedom desirable if it does not bring such good. (1)

Neutral goods value both personal freedom and adherence to laws. They feel that too many laws may unnecessarily restrict the freedom of good beings. They also believe that too much freedom may not protect society as a whole and encourage counterproductive divisions and in-fighting. They promote governments which hold broad powers, but do not interfere in the day-to-day lives of their citizens. (2)

These characters value life and freedom above all else, and despise those who would deprive others of them. Neutral good characters sometimes find themselves forced to work beyond the law, yet for the law, and the greater good of the people. They are not vicious or vindictive, but are people driven to right injustice. Neutral good characters always attempt to work within the law whenever possible, however. (3)

To a neutral good being, life and the assurance of other creatures' rights take precedence over all else. This is not to say that this character will have an aversion to taking another's life when faced with a choice between an attacker's and his own, however. Neutral good beings also believe that law and chaos are merely tools to use in bringing life, prosperity, and happiness to all deserving creatures. Neither numbers nor individual concerns have any bearing on decisions regarding the needs and rights of any given creature. In other words, in the view of a neutral good being, rarely will either the needs of the many or the personal desires of an individual outweigh the needs of any other creature. All life is given even-handed treatment. As with all alignments neutral with respect to law and chaos, self-reliance is a cornerstone of a neutral good being's personality. In a crunch, neutral good characters trust in themselves and in no other individual or group. This doesn't mean they can't make friends and develop trusting relationships with others, however. Neutral good beings aren't normally as independent as chaotic good beings, and they can cooperate in groups. But they won't always trust a group to be more effective than they could be themselves. (4)

A neutral good character will keep his word to those who are not evil and will lie only to evil-doers. He will never attack an unarmed foe and will never harm an innocent. He will not use torture to extract information or for pleasure. He will never kill for pleasure, only in self-defense or in the defense of others. A neutral good character will never use poison. He will help those in need and works well alone or in a group. He responds well to higher authority until that authority attempts to use the law to hamper his ability to do good. He is trustful of organizations as long as they serve his utilitarian purpose. He will follow the law unless more good can come from breaking the law. He will never betray a family member, comrade, or friend. Neutral good characters are indifferent to the concepts of self-discipline and honor, finding them useful only if they promote goodness. (5)

Here are some possible adjectives describing neutral good characters: self-reliant, helpful, courteous, kind, respectful, sensitive, friendly, loving, merciful, gracious, humane, altruistic, giving, respectful, and protective of

life.

Well known neutral good characters from film or literature include: Captain James T. Kirk (Star Trek), Gandalf the Grey (Lord of the Rings), Harry Potter (Harry Potter), and Spiderman (Marvel Comics).

Equivalent alignment in other game systems: Scrupulous (Palladium), Road of Humanity (Vampire), Light Side (Star Wars), Good (Warhammer).

The Ten Neutral Good Commandments

A list of Ten Commandments for a neutral good religion may look like this:

1. You shall lie only to evil-doers.
 2. You shall not harm the innocent.
 3. You shall not murder.
 4. You shall help the needy.
 5. You shall honor those who promote goodness.
 6. You shall follow the law unless breaking the law results in more good.
 7. You shall not betray others.
 8. You shall bring evil-doers to justice.
 9. You shall steal only to promote goodness.
 10. You shall seek unlimited good for others.
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Ten Neutral Good Sins

Likewise, a neutral good religion may list the following as sins. This list is given in the order of least severe infraction to most severe.

1. Refusing to defy authority to perform a good act.

2. Failing to speak out against an evil act.
 3. Following a law or keeping your word when you feel that breaking the law would result in more good.
 4. Theft, robbery, or willful vandalism unless it harms an evil being or cause.
 5. Willful causing of harm to a good being.
 6. Failing to assist good beings when they are in need.
 7. Turning down a chance to destroy or bring to justice an evil being.
 8. Allowing major act of evil to go unavenged. Betraying a friend or ally for evil reason.
 9. The murder of an innocent.
 10. Aiding the servants of Evil. Committing a heinous or demented act.
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The Neutral Good Adventurer

The following two lists detail common actions undertaken during "adventuring" that are considered honorable and dishonorable for the neutral good alignment. An honorable action is one that is in keeping with the spirit of this alignment, while dishonorable actions tend to be those which bring shame to the character in the eyes of his or her alignment peers. Note that an action which is considered honorable by one alignment may be considered dishonorable by another alignment and vice versa.

The following actions are honorable for this alignment:

Allowing a disarmed enemy to pick up his weapon

Allowing the enemy to attack first

Defeating a superior opponent

Perpetrate humiliating prank on enemy

Picking up the funeral expenses of someone you slew in combat

Refusing medical treatment for the good of the party

Saving the life of another at great risk to own self

Taking an arrow or hit for someone else

Taking prisoners

The following actions are dishonorable for this alignment:

Accused of crime (innocent or not)

Attacking an unarmed or obviously inferior opponent

Being taken prisoner

Convicted of a crime

Defeated by an inferior opponent

Delivering death blow to a helpless opponent

Desecrating an enemy's corpse

Dirty fighting

Falsely claiming the 'bragging rights' that belong to another or outright lying

Fleeing a battle that's obviously going poorly

Fleeing a fight with a superior opponent

Fleeing a fight with an equal opponent

Killing a host who has provided you food or shelter

Neglecting to properly bury a member of one's own race

Rash or improper social behavior

Refusing a fair contest/challenge

Surrendering

Taunting an enemy into fighting

Treason

Unjustly slaying a prisoner or unarmed opponent who has yielded

Walking away from a challenge

Neutral Good and Society

A neutral good being...

Values his family, but will not heed their requests necessarily.

Will provide for friends, and expects to be repaid in some manner.

Does not seek positions of authority over others.

Fits in with their society.

Supports their nation.

Supports the law when advantageous to do so.

Is not concerned with politics, most likely.

Will keep his word.

Will take risks if the benefits are great.

Will not want to disappoint his family.

Will support their family even if it means personal discomfort.

Will never betray a friend and enjoys having close friends.

Considers the needs of the community in personal life.

Will give his life in defense of his community.

Will take actions to aid others during times of crisis, even if unprofitable to do so.

Believes everyone should be treated fairly and kindly.

Feels guilt when he commits a wrongdoing and will seek to right his wrong.

Uses wealth to help others who are less fortunate.

A neutral good government rarely influences the residents of the community other than to help them when they are in need. Neutral good societies tend to adopt whatever government seems most expedient at the moment. A particular form of government lasts as long as the ruler or dynasty in power can maintain it. Transfers of power are usually marked by shifts in government, though these are often bloodless coups. There is a certain apathy about politics and government. Adventurers are treated the same as everyone else.

Neutral Good and Other Alignments

Neutral Good vs. Lawful Good

Since neutral good characters see no inherent worth in laws, other than how well they provide for the common good, they may disagree with lawful good characters on a number of issues. Conflicts between characters of these types will center around the lawful good character always wanting to work within the law to accomplish good, even if breaking the law might result in more good for people. They will not accept the neutral good character's argument that working around the law is sometimes a better way to accomplish the spirit of the law. To lawful good characters, the letter and spirit of good laws should not be violated. They see a legal system as something that should be followed, as long as it is good, even if an illegal, or shady way might accomplish better results. Neutral good characters will be disgusted by their lawful good allies'

adherence to laws, when the path is clear for them--break the law. Lawful good characters will contend that if they do not follow the law to accomplish what is right, how are they different from criminals? Their ethical sensibilities will be offended by the way that a neutral good character might do things.

Neutral Good vs. Chaotic Good

Neutral good characters will always attempt to work within the law, but sometimes recognize the need to disobey laws for the greater good. Chaotic good characters will never consider the law in any of their decisions. If they happen to work within the law, it isn't because they made a decision to do so. Chaotic good characters feel that they know what good is, so they don't need laws to force themselves to be good. Chaotic good characters are also individualists. They will find their own way in the world and live the way they want to. Neutral good characters will avoid lies, but the chaotic good character has no aversion. The neutral good character will try to keep his word once given, but the chaotic good character will discard an oath when it no longer is useful to him in doing what is right. The chaotic good character isn't primarily concerned with providing the greatest good for the greatest number of beings. He will always behave in a manner that is considered good, but he may only be interested in a select group of beings, or he may perform acts of goodness when the mood strikes him. You never know when a chaotic good character will take up a cause, but you can be fairly certain of when a neutral good character will.

Neutral Good vs. True Neutral

Neutral good and true neutral characters both believe that any means should be used to achieve desirable outcomes, but they disagree on exactly what types of outcomes are desirable. The neutral good character uses a variety of means to promote and further the cause of goodness, but true neutral characters are not interested in a selfless pursuit of beneficial results for others. Where neutral good characters are altruistic, true neutral characters are interested in their own affairs. True neutral characters will behave altruistically when it comes to friends, relatives,

and allies, but for the most part will return the kind of treatment they receive from others. Neutral good characters, on the other hand, will behave altruistically even when dealing with others who are not friends or relatives, and may even forgive enemies that have done them grievous harm in the past (provided their enemy has truly mended his ways). True neutral characters will not extend the olive branch in such situations and may take advantage of their enemy's weakness to protect themselves from further machinations. True neutral characters follow a morality of reciprocity. Neutral good characters follow the Golden Rule.

Neutral Good, Lawful Good, and Chaotic Good

In situations where goodness must be advanced in society, this is how characters of these different alignments may respond. The lawful good character will promote weal throughout society through increased legislation or a more powerful government. They will work to provide laws and procedures to protect the population against every foreseeable ill in society. They will protect citizens against abuse from unscrupulous individuals. They will advocate and construct power structures and economic systems that provide the most benefit for the population as a whole. Lawful good characters will provide equality of result. The chaotic good character will promote happiness in society by increasing freedom and allowing its citizens to decide the best way to increase prosperity for all. They will promote systems which give maximum freedom and opportunity for citizens to increase their own happiness and the happiness of others. They will ensure that the population is protected against every possible abuse by the governing system. Chaotic good characters will provide equality of opportunity. Neutral good character will build a system that promotes both harmony and freedom. They will attempt to balance opportunity and results. They will use only enough laws and order to protect the freedom of its citizens to promote prosperity and happiness for all. They will guard the population against abuses from within the power structure, but also against abuses from individuals. Neutral good characters will build a flexible social order that allows both public and private action to increase goodness in society.

The Philosophy of Neutral Good

Neutral good is the philosophy that goodness should be advanced by using whatever means provide the most benefit. It is a philosophy of altruistic consequentialism. This philosophy holds that people should behave altruistically and balance the needs of the collective as a whole and the needs of the individuals making up the collective. Neutral good can also be associated with act utilitarianism and ethical altruism.

Neutral good philosophers generally maintain that there is metaphysical balance in the multiverse and thus may support doctrines of soft determinism, pragmatism, conventionalism, and/or instrumentalism. They may believe in free will or choice. They could also embrace skepticism or suspend judgment on philosophical issues. They tend to be moral relativists, holding that values differ from society to society, from person to person; that they are conditioned by the peculiarities of the society in which they arise; that they are not universally applicable at all times or in all places; and that they are correct or incorrect, desirable or undesirable only relative to whether or not they conform to a common norm or to common acceptance.

The ideal government for this alignment is any social order in which altruism is rewarded and radical egoism is punished. Neutral good beings want the power of the state to be used for the benefit of all without sacrificing individual freedom. Rehabilitative justice is used to reform criminals and evil-doers.

(1) Gygax, Gary. *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons Dungeon Master's Guide*. TSR:1979. and Gygax, Gary. *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons Player's Handbook*. TSR:1978.

(2) Cook, David "Zeb," et al. *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons, 2nd Edition Player's Handbook*. TSR: 1989.

(3) Wujcik, Erick. *Ninjas and Superspies*. Palladium Books: 1994.

(4) Renaud, J.R. "Making law out of chaos." *Dragon* (#163).

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(5) Parlagreco, Carl. "Another View of the Nine-Point Alignment Scheme." *The Dragon* (#26). June 1979: 23. and Wujcik, Erick. *Ninjas and Superspies*. Palladium Books: 1994.