

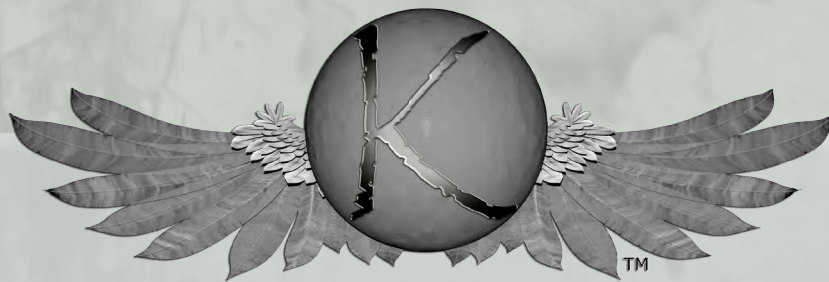
# EMPATHIC GUIDE

FOR CONSPIRACY RULES™  
A DARK CONSPIRACY® III BOOK



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# EMPATHIC GUIDE™



D A R K  
CONSPIRACY III



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# D A R K CONSPIRACY III





## INTRODUCTION

We present this guide as an expansion of *Conspiracy Rules* for use in the *Dark Conspiracy III* setting described in the upcoming *Conspiracy Lives*. Based on the demands of their campaign, referees are encouraged to use all, some, or none of the empathic disciplines, skills, or background. After a brief refresher on what psionics in the empathic multiverse is, we present a set of careers representing the various disciplines empathic characters can study. With these disciplines comes a new set of empathic skills. Referees can use these skills to augment those found in the *Conspiracy Rules* core rules set.

### Empathy and Psionics

Empathy refers to a previously indefinable set of energies and forces that pervade the set of universes and proto-dimensions comprising the multiverse. Throughout history humans have shown an ability to manipulate these forces and energies, but the ability to manipulate something that could not be measured was dismissed as farce. In the world of the *Greater Depression* empathic forces and energies can be measured, manipulated, and to a large extent repeated. Humans and not-so-human beings regularly do manipulate these forces. Psionics refers to the ability to manipulate the forces and energies of empathy. Human beings that can latently sense and use empathic forces and energies are called *empaths*, while empathists that are trained to use empathy are generically called *psionics*—the population and the media often confuse the two terms.

Psionics use a force of will to manipulate empathic energies to cause specific and predictable outcomes, predictable to a point, actual results vary widely. This force of will that psionics use to bend and manipulate local empathic energies leaves a stamp on those forces as a form of psionic signature. Forces of the Dark can sense this signature and can tell that it is human. Darklings leave a similar signature that generally disagrees with human feelings. That is why humans entering a location where Minions have been performing dark psionics, to include the consumption of empathic energies, will feel that darkness as very unsettling. Empathic humans with the *Foreboding* capability will feel this the strongest, but all empathists will feel this to some extent.

Corrupt and powerful psionics from other dimensions leave an empathic flavor quite different than that of the prime Earth dimension. Empathic creatures from the prime Earth dimension have a signature recognizable as coming from that dimension. This is because all creatures, including plants and insects, in the prime Earth dimension can manipulate empathy even if it is to the nano-scale. Actions that use or manipulate empathic forces and energies leave a signature of the event on the local environment. Like a noxious gas or a perfumed scent, these actions can be sensed after the fact, sometimes for centuries or longer depending on the strength of the action that took place. Death and suffering leave a powerful imprint on the local empathic environment. This is why some locations make humans feel calm and joyful, while other locations make them feel unsettled and irritated.

While the forces of empathy are now understood, that does not mean that psionics who can use those forces are accepted. Historically and mostly due to a lack of understanding, the use of empathic forces and energies has been perceived as witchcraft, and those using it condemned. In the world of the Greater Depression, the bulk of humanity still denies the possibility of empathy actually working. Societies that are aware of empathy often seek out—some say hunt—psionics, with most ending up in laboratories or other facilities where they are imprisoned, studied, or exploited. Generally in non-informed societies, the dread of the supernatural still manifests as hatred against those that overtly display psionic talents, even though all living things have the ability.

*Conspiracy Rules* presented two extremes to players and the referee indicating that the degree of psionic use is negotiable. This guide presents another facet that allows psionics to be disciplined. From *Conspiracy Rules*:

**Mundane** : Manipulating empathy is the domain of the Dark, and humans have little or no psionic skill. The core generic psionic skills are available to characters, but the PSI attributes of humans limit their full use.

**Wild Talents** : Empathic talents are blossoming in humans at ever-increasing rates. Clandestine schools and other organizations may have emerged to arm humans with psionic skills. While the core psionic skills are still available to specialists, specific skills giving psionic specialists drastic abilities should be made available as part of the setting. The setting should also detail career paths for these specialists.

This guide, as part of the *Dark Conspiracy III* setting, addresses Wild Talents with specific schools:

**Disciplined Empaths**: Empathic talents are channeled into mutually exclusive psionic disciplines based on the philosophy behind the study and training of empathy. Untrained empathists can only have the generic psionic skills from the core rules, but trained psionics can have the skills listed in this guide. These skills are generally only available to psionics that undergo the empathic careers also listed in this guide, but the referee can always change this.

## USING EMPATHY

While all human characters may be empathic, not all characters have psionic skills. This guide offers new psionic skills available through dedicated empathic specialist careers. But these skills, like the generic empathic skills from the core rules, cannot be attempted without an attained skill level. That is, a character cannot attempt a psionic skill without a skill level in that skill. The default skill level of zero (0) does allow psionic skill use. Success and effectiveness determination are the same as the core rules. Note that any character may still choose from the generic psionic skills listed below when allowed psionic skills as part of the character generation process, but only trained psions can select psionic skills listed in this guide.





### Psionic Task Pre-Requisites

Some psionic skills operate through an existing empathic link. This link is established through the appropriate Empathy skill: Human Empathy, Animal Empathy, Darkling Empathy, etc. The character must pass the Human Empathy task prior to attempting the dependent task check. A Power Level of Stage 3 or higher reduces the difficulty level of the dependent task check by one level of difficulty.

#### Psionic Task Difficulty

Condition	Difficulty Shift	Base Difficulty
Total Security	0	Easy
Relaxed	-1	Average
Normal Stress	-2	Difficult
Great Stress	-3	Formidable
Incredible Stress	-4	Impossible
Outstanding Success on Empathy Link	+1	—

### Psionic Task Difficulty

As stated in the core rules, psionic skill use is a function of character will and is entirely mental in nature. The mental condition of the psion is critical in determining psionic difficulty. Psionic skill attempts are typically Easy [psionic skill] when done under very relaxed conditions, such as in a safe and peaceful environment, and with willing subjects. In normal conditions, however, skill checks suffer a -1 difficulty shift, due to general distractions and normal resistance. In a stressful condition, such as during combat, they suffer -2 or more difficulty shifts. Difficulty shifts add, so shifts due to being wounded, fog of war uncertainties, or other psionist and target conditions also may apply. One modifier is the positive shift due to an high power level empathic link. The referee, of course, has the final word in determining which conditions apply to any specific psionic skill use.

### Psionic Task Check

Players conduct empathic task checks the same way as other skill checks. (See the “*Empathic Task Resolution*” on page 8). For empathic tasks the base target number for the empathic task check is the psionic skill’s asset—the PSI attribute—plus the character’s psionic skill level.



**Empathic Task Resolution**

<i>Action</i>	<i>Description</i>
<b>Step 1</b> <i>Declare Psionic Actions</i>	Characters declare psionic actions in the same way as normal actions. Players should note that some psionic skills usually require an empathic link with the target to have already been established before attempting the task.
<b>Step 2</b> <i>Define the Target Number</i>	Controlling attribute for psionic skills is always Psionics (PSI). The asset is always PSI plus the psionic skill level.
<b>Step 3</b> <i>Set Empathic Task Difficulty</i>	The conditions under which the character attempts the task drive the difficulty level the referee will assign. Difficulties are generally defined by the mental or emotional state of the character attempting the task.
<b>Step 4</b> <i>Check for Psionic Success</i>	The player rolls 1D20 and compares the result with the target number—the same as for mundane task checks. But success in this roll does not mean success in the task. The results of the Power Level check can cause a ‘no effect’ result. Players should note an Outstanding Success or Critical Failure, as they impact the Power Level.
<b>Step 5</b> <i>Determine Psionic Power Level</i>	To determine the effects of the psionic task the player or the referee must perform a Power Level check. The referee then interprets the roll result to describe the outcome of the task. If additional resolution is needed, for example from an Outstanding Success result, the player may have to make more rolls, such as another Power Level determination or another task check

**Normal Empathic Task Check**

$$\text{Target Number} = \text{Psionist's PSI attribute} + \text{Psionic skill Level}$$

Difficulty shifts are then applied to the target number in the normal fashion. The PC rolls 1D20 and compares it to the target number. Success occurs when the roll is less than or equal to the target number. But how effective the task was executed is determined by rolling for the attained Power Level. Success indicates the power level is rolled normally. Outstanding Success improves the power level roll. Normal failure means no effect with no negative consequences. Critical Failure indicates something bad has happened—wrong target, destroyed target, backlash effect determined by the referee, etc. Players should note that success in this check does not mean that the target was affected. The Power Level describes that.

**Psionic Success**

Using the base target number for the psionist's attribute and skill, a 1D20 is rolled to determine outcome. Players and referees should note that this roll should be done in secret by the referee.

The referee should tell the player whether the task succeeded or failed, but not any extreme results. Some uncertainty in the use of empathic forces remains, regardless of the training level and capabilities of the psionist.

**Catastrophic Psionic Failure**

When attempting the empathic task, if the number rolled is 10 or more points higher than the target value, then the player will need to roll again. As with a normal Catastrophic Failure, if the subsequent roll is not a success, then a Catastrophic Failure results. The results of a Catastrophic Psionic Failure are left to the referee, and are based completely on the context of the situation including the action being attempted, entities present in the area, and the other environmental factors.

**Outstanding Psionic Success**

When attempting the empathic task, if the number rolled is 10 or more points below the target value, then the Power Level is doubled. If the number rolled is 20 points or more below the target value, then the Power Level is tripled. Theoretically, this progression will continue for every 10 points of success.

**Pushing**

The core rules describe an ability to push when attempting and failing psionic skill checks. This skill is not allowed a trained empath, specifically Psions, Mystics, and Empathic Sorcerers listed in this guide. The Neuropath can push their skills.

Pushing their power gives untrained psionist a better chance of succeeding empathic checks, but causes them specific physiological harm. Whenever a psionist fails their Psionic skill check, they have the option of ‘pushing’, which involves taking damage to the brain (the head location). By taking this damage, the character can perform the skill check again. Failing a push, the psionist can try again by pushing harder. Each push attempt causes more damage to the head location. The first push attempt causes 1D6, each succeeding attempt causes a cumulative 1D6 in damage, so that the second attempt causes 2D6 additional, the third, 3D6 additional, etc. Note that a third push will cause (1 + 2 + 3 =) 6D6 damage. After taking the damage, the psionist may roll again for psionic skill success. Note that this damage is caused whether the task succeeds or fails. Pushing attempts must be announced when the failure is rolled and not delayed until other actions have taken place.

**Control Issues**

Pushing represents a wild natural talent channeled with no control. The untrained psionist ‘pushes’ empathic energy into the situation with hopes of forcing it to work. For this reason the character has difficulty controlling their applied power. When pushing, psionists cannot throttle-back their skill results. For example, should the result call for a target to explode, the character cannot throttle back to just blistering. (See “Throttling the Power Level” on page 9.)

In addition to the core rules, when using the Neuropaths, the Staged D10 roll used in the Power Level is staged on a 9 or 10 roll instead of just a roll of 10 (see “Neuropathic Discipline” on page 13).

**Exploding Head**

Should the damage taken from pushing cause a Critical Wound, the psionist's head explodes causing 1D3 wounds from pieces of bone in a 2-m blast radius.



Power Level Table

Power Level	Stage of Success
≤ 0	No effect
1-9	Basic Success
10-17	Stage Two
18-27	Stage Three
28-36	Stage Four
37-45	Stage Five
46-54	Stage Six
55-63	Stage Seven
64-72	Stage Eight
73-81	Stage Nine
82+	Stage Ten

### Psionic Power Level

On a task success psionics then check their attained *power level* using the psionic task-specific formula is reproduced below:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Psionic Power Level} = & \text{Staged (1D10)} \\ & + \text{Empath's (Psionic Asset)} \\ & - \text{Target's (Willpower Asset)} \end{aligned}$$

*Psionic Asset* = PSI Attribute + Psionic Skill level

*Willpower Asset* = INT Attribute + Willpower Skill level

A successful task check does not guarantee an effect on the target. The psionist may have insufficient power to cause any effects at all. This occurs when the target's asset is greater than the psionist's plus the staged die roll. The effects of an Outstanding Success on the task check double the resulting power level.

### Darkling Detection

Situation	Task Difficulty
Dimension Walk same dimension	Average
Extended Dimension Walk in the same dimension	Difficult
Dimension Walk to another dimension	Difficult
Extended Dimension Walk to another dimension	Formidable
Sorcerous Combat (Change Environment: atmosphere, gravity, temperature)	Easy
Sorcerous Combat (Change Environment: special)	Difficult
Sorcerous Flight for less than 15 minutes	Easy
Sorcerous Flight for more than 15 minutes	Average
Sorcerous Telekinesis	Average

*Situation:* Condition that causes the detection avoidance check by the psion. *Change Environment (Special)* includes bringing energy or matter into this dimension from another. Dimension Walk includes any other means of opening or closing a portal between the current dimension and another.

*Task Difficulty:* the difficulty of a task check that the psion must pass to avoid being detected.

Task resolution can use the empathic power level in two different ways. Sometimes it is translated point for point into a unit of measure, such as range of effect in meters, or number of kilograms affected, etc. At other times, it is used to determine Stages of Effect, with each nine full points equaling one additional stage beyond basic success, and each extra stage indicating another creature detected, or another sense appealed to, etc. The exact effects depend, of course, upon the specific skill being used, as explained in the individual skill descriptions.

Target resistance is captured in the target's Willpower asset. If the target's Willpower has been reduced through a Willpower Drain attack, nothing is subtracted from the power level (including the controlling attribute). Dark psionicists often will Drain the Willpower of their victims prior to the main empathic assault.

### Staged D10

When computing the Power Level, the player (or the referee in secret) rolls a 1D10. This roll is *staged*, meaning that a result roll of 10 allows the player another 1D10 roll. Each roll made adds to the result. There is no limit to the number of 1D10 rolls as long as the player continues to roll a 10. For example, when checking for the attained Power Level, the player rolls a 10 and so rolls again. The second result is also a 10, so the total is 20 and the player rolls yet again. The third roll is a 7 for a total roll value of 27.

Note that for Neuropaths the staged die uses a 9 or 10 result to stage further when the Neuropath uses pushing (see "Neuropathic Discipline" on page 13).

### Throttling the Power Level

Players should note that the Stages of Success will manifest unless intentionally throttled. The player declares he is throttling prior to making any psionic skill checks. Further, area effects cannot be limited to the opposition when pushing. Therefore an empath's unexpectedly good dice rolls when projecting fear, for example, can cause her Project Emotion attack to affect her friends.

### Combining

Empaths can combine their efforts in order to achieve higher power levels. One empath acts as the focus of the effort with other neuropaths adding their power to the attempt. There is technically no limit to the number of empaths that can combine their power.

All the assisting empaths must pass a *Human Empathy* test at one difficulty level higher than normal to establish an empathic link with the focus empath. Empaths failing this test do not add their power into the effort. The focus empath makes the skill test for the empathic skill for which the group is assisting. If the skill test is successful, each empath adds power equal to his or her empathic skill level—doubled a contributing empaths power if they achieved an Outstanding Success on the Human Empathy check. With a large number of empaths, the power level can attain great heights. The down side is that if the focus empath fails the skill attempt, each contributing empath suffers 1-point of damage to the head from the psychic feedback. Should the focus empath suffer a Catastrophic Failure, the focus empath and each suffer effects as if they had failed in a pushing attempt (see "Pushing" on page 8).

Dark Minions have been reported with the ability to combine their empathic powers with each other and with humans. Latent neuropaths (untrained psions) have used this power for centuries as the power of the "coven" channeled through one skilled focus, the Coven leader or a Dark Lord.



## STUDYING EMPATHIC DISCIPLINES

Characters can study empathic disciplines—allowing trained use of the psionic skills in this guide—in one of two ways. In this case disciplines are neuropath, mystic, psion, and empathic sorcerer. First, the character can serve in one of the empathic careers from this guide and for the specific discipline the character desires. Second, the character can find a teacher and through a regimen of study and training, receive a discipline “status.” Psionics, sorcery, and mysticism training outside of a career term require that the character find a teacher. This is normally an empathic contact converted to a solid contact, or can be a teacher encountered during play (a new contact), including a teammate. Note that another method applies to neuropathy, in that the character can *awaken* their capabilities through unintentional use (see “*Neuropathic Discipline*” on page 13).

Some of the disciplines are so inconsistent with others as to render their simultaneous practice impossible; characters cannot simultaneously have skills from the incompatible disciplines. One set has to be completely forsaken to receive and use other.

### Improving Empathic Discipline Skills

Characters can improve their generic empathic skills using the normal skill improvement rules. An empath upon awakening as a neuropath gets a bonus that she can apply to a specific neuropath skill. For the neuropath to improve beyond this initial capability, she must seek training from another neuropath or a psion. An empath from one of the other disciplines can improve his specialized skills only if he has a teacher whom he sees on regular basis for study (at least 40 hours a week), otherwise discipline skills cost double, as if buying them at a level above the character’s Empathy. This doubling is in addition to the doubling that takes place if improving the skill level beyond the character’s PSI attribute. These additional skill costs are only applied to the discipline-specific skills and not the generic empathic skills, which are progressed normally.

### Empathic Training – Full Time

Characters seeking specialized discipline, including follow-on neuropathy, participate in two phases of empathic training: *training* and *study*. Training consists of the character learning the basics of the empathic discipline from a teacher. This training consumes eight hours each day, every day, and may last months. Each month of training, characters make a Formidable [INT] test modified by the teacher’s Instruction skill check, if they have that skill. See the *Conspiracy Rules* Instruction skill description (page 67 in the core rules) for more information. Interruptions in this training incur additional difficulty on the training success test. For each month of interruption, apply one difficulty shift (–1 Step) to the training success task check. Breaks in training of over 3 months duration will cause the trainee to begin again on the track to receive the desired level. Once the pupil character succeeds this check, they have grasped the principles of the discipline, and may move on to *study*.

After *studying* a number of months equal to the desired new skill level. If the new skill level is less than or equal to the PSI attribute, the character must pass a test of Average [INT + empathic

skill level] . The test is Difficult [INT + skill] for levels above the character’s PSI attribute. The difficulty goes up for each week of delay before or during the study period. Once the character passes this study-test, the character gains the desired levels that are applied to the skills of the discipline—those skills in their specialized skill cluster. Like the training phase, the study phase also consumes 8 hours a day, every day. Also like the training phase, the test may

### Empathic Training – Part Time

Alternately a character can study a new discipline in their part time. To do this the training and study times are doubled. During the training phase, the training test is every 2 months instead of 1 month. The character suffers the same increase in difficulty due to interruptions in training and study. Part time training and study takes four hours a day, every day.





## Returning to the Body

Difficulty	Normal Trance		Suspended Animation	
	Time Needed to Regain Control	Catastrophic Failure Damage	Time Needed to Regain Control	Catastrophic Failure Damage
Easy	> 60 minutes	0	240 hours (10 days)	1D6
Average	30 minutes	1	144 hours (6 days)	2D6
Difficult	15 minutes	2	96 hours (4 days)	3D6
Formidable	5 minutes	1D6	60 hours (2.5 days)	4D6
Impossible	< 3 minutes	2D6	30 hours	5D6

$Asset = (CON + CHR) / 2$

A failure means that the mystic cannot start to return at this time. The mystic will need time to get their mental state back into order and can make another check in an hour. If the mystic catastrophically fails in returning to their body, the mystic may incur damage. The mystic takes a number of dice of damage according to the desired return time. This damage is applied randomly using the hit location chart for each die.

## Mystic Discipline

*A restlessness that you could never explain drove you to hit the road disappointing your family and friends. But you knew the answer "it" was out there somewhere, and you had to find it. Asking questions led you to various places, but while visiting a stupa in New Mexico, you were approached by a weathered old man, dark and very wrinkled. You could not tell if he was native American or Eastern, but you were astonished when he called you by name. He told you he was waiting for you and that you should buy him lunch. Reluctantly spending the last of your cash on this likeable old man, he told you things about yourself and your journey. Then he invited you out to the ranch, which looks more like a monastery than a farm. Twelve years later as you meditate one meter off the floor, you fondly remember your training and your ordeal. You have at last found "it".*

Mysticism is the oldest of the empathic disciplines, being handed down through oral traditions for millennia. When humans lived closer to nature and used their other senses they were able to perform some amazing feats: flying, teleportation, spirit walking, communication with spirits, etc. All the mystic discipline capabilities center on the human spirit, either the mystic's or their target's.

While spiritual in context, the emergence of a trained empathic discipline evolved as mankind's relationship with the universe evolved and not through any given dogma. Primitive shamanistic rituals gave way to esoteric ones. Physical rituals gave way to mental ones. As society refined, so did the mystic.

In the East, large schools founded in monasteries identified and trained young empaths for leadership of the sects that supported them. In Europe, mysticism was at first fostered in the growing Roman Catholic Church, but later during the schisms that took place in the church, they were feared and exiled. In native cultures, the mystic traditions continue and in some regions remain unchanged over the last several thousand years.

The one thing that is constant across all the mystic schools is the need for a skilled mentor often called a guru, who is skilled in the mystic discipline and in recognizing what the student requires for growth. For this reason mystic skills can only be developed through the training given by a very personal mystic mentor (empathic contact) or from another source at the mentor's direction. The mystic will not take advanced training from anyone not endorsed by their mentor.

## Trances

To fully access their mystical powers, the empath can free their mind from the confines of their body using a trance state. The trance state is one where the mind is free of the distractions of caring for the body. Autonomic functions like breathing and heart beat continue, but at a much lower rate, and the body continues to require food and water, but again at a much lower rate. In the trance state, the mystic is most powerful.

To enter the trance state, the empath must spend about 30 seconds and needs no skill test. Once the mystic enters a trance their body goes limp with heartbeat and respiration reducing to the minimums needed to survive. In the trance state, the mystic is aware of her surroundings and can perform a variety of empathic actions.

While in the trance state all the empath's mystic school skill levels are doubled, for example, an Aura Reading skill level of 5 becomes 10. Note that the doubling takes place prior to adding the governing attribute. The mystic's Initiative is also increased while in a trance state by  $\frac{1}{2}$  of their *Astral Travel* skill, rounded up. Mystics require being in a trance to enter the Astral Dimension where they are very powerful.

When the mystic returns to their body, slow and easy causes no harm. If the mystic needs to come back faster, she will take damage according to how fast she wants to return (see "Returning to the Body" on page 11). The mystic has no chance of a coma from returning fast like there is for *suspended animation* (see below).

## Suspended Animation

Mystics can enter a trance and slow their bodily functions to a very slight fraction of normal—where life is detectable only with sensitive instruments. Entering into such a suspended animation state is a normal trance use. The mystic can remain in such a state for a length of time equal to their PSI attribute squared ( $PSI \times PSI$ ) years. For example, given  $PSI = 8$  means the mystic can enter suspended animation for up to 64 ( $8 \times 8$ ) years. By entering and exiting suspended animation, the mystic can extend their trance for a long time.

Returning from suspended animation has a difficulty that depends on how fast the mystic wants to recover. The mystic declares how fast they are trying to recover, adjusts their difficulty level, and rolls to see if they make it. The asset to use in the test is the average of the mystic's constitution plus the charisma ( $CON + CHA$ ). The recover times and difficulties are listed in the "Returning



to the Body” on page 11. Should the mystic take a Serious or Critical wound from this damage, they have lost their way back to their body and enter a comatose state until they find their way back. Once per week the mystic may attempt to find their way back with a Formidable [INT + CHA] test. Any success means the mystic recovers from the coma. An outsider may attempt to wake an unconscious mystic by entering their mind, finding the lost consciousness, and guiding it back to the mystic’s body. This is done through the Psyche Surgery use of the “Project Thought” skill (see the *Conspiracy Rules* core rules, page 91).

### The Astral Dimension

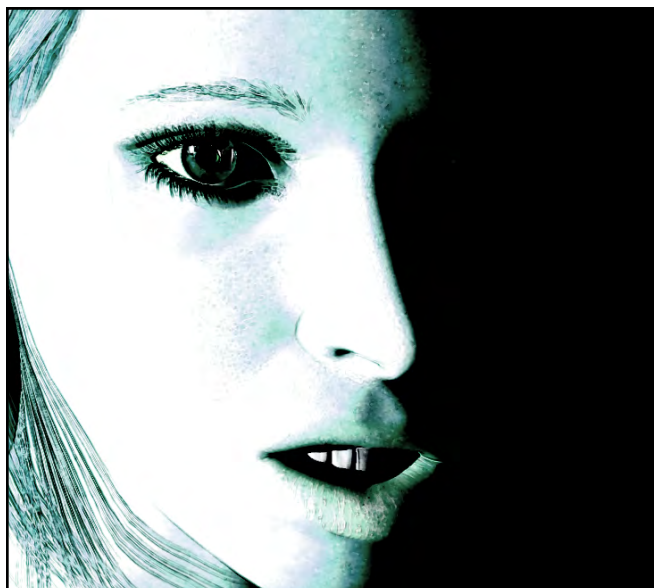
Mystics send their minds into the Interstices, the Astral Plane (see the core rules). Entering the interstices in mental form does not incur the mental effects that entering physically does. This is only available to the mystic and is why they call it the Astral Plane. With their minds to control their actions in the Astral Plane, the skilled mystic can move around, sense action, interact with other consciousnesses, and engage in astral combat. The mystic’s physical body lies in trancelike repose in, hopefully, a safe location. By using only their consciousness, mystics can move to a location in the Astral Dimension, and from that location observe specific events in a neighboring dimension within the multi-verse, including the prime Earth plane. Players should note that their characters must have experience of the dimension to be observed (see “Dimension Walking” in the *Conspiracy Rules* core rules, page 92). Using this method, the mystic can observe other places within this dimension in real time and undetected by mundanes.

### Silver Cord

To astrally travel the mystic must enter into a trance, will themselves into the Astral Dimension, then will themselves to a location. This is done through the *Astral Travel* empathic skill check. Travelling through the Astral Dimension is at the speed of thought—‘will it so and there you will go’—but the mystic must have a clear idea of where they are going. See the “Astral Travel” skill description on page 19. While a mystic travels in the Astral Dimension, the consciousness remains *attached* to the physical body, or rather the point in the Astral Dimension corresponding to where the mystic’s body reposes. It is this physical reference that protects the mystic from the negative effects of the interstices; physical travelers who have no such reference. This attachment has a representation in the Astral Dimension of a *silver cord*. Although it can be difficult to find, the silver cord is recognizable as such and can be used by enemies to follow, find, and possess the mystic’s body. It is dangerous in the Astral Dimension.

While the Interstices appear as a washed out grayness with mind-numbing plainness to physical travelers, to mystics using *Astral Travel*, it appears much more vibrant and dynamic. The Astral Dimension appears as a dark sky with a field of stars in perpetual twilight over half-solid Earth-looking terrain. Near a Demonground, the Astral Dimension appears as a strange juxtaposition of Earth terrain and terrain from the other, intruding, alien dimension.

Note that the cord can be cut through empathic attack using Astral Combat (see page 13) causing the mystic’s mind to lose its frame of reference. The mystic will not be able to find the way back to her body. The cord can be re-established by another mystic seeking out the lost mind in the Astral Dimension and bringing it back, forcing it back into the body. This is done with the Exorcise skill.



### Mystic

*You’ve always been more attuned to the nature of things than most people. Lately, you’ve felt a sickness growing in the world, like a sort of psychic gangrene. Even the common people, who aren’t as sensitive as you, are beginning to feel its pressure, and it adds to the world’s problems, causing them to lash out in ever-increasing violence. Someone has to locate the source of that infection and lance it. Unfortunately, it looks like that someone will have to be you.*

*As a student of the mystic school of empathy, you will challenge the role of the psychic being in the physical universe. With a special set of skills available to you, your investigations will lead you to challenge also, the role of the physical being in the psychic universe.*

*As a mystic, you play the part of a psychic investigator. Chances are that you will have some other type of occupation to support you during your investigations. (Teaching and writing careers are good choices, for example, because of their flexible schedules.)*

**PREREQUISITES:** PSI 4+, and at least one empathic contact (no exceptions on the contact).

#### FIRST TERM

**Skills:** Foreboding 3, Human Empathy 3

#### SUBSEQUENT TERMS

**Skills:** Charm, Determination, Perception, Empathy, Mysticism.

#### ALL TERMS

**Special Assignment:** 8+, DM +1 per term served as a mystic, Acrobat, Empathy, Mystic, Social Science, Ground Vehicle, Vice.

**Contacts:** One empathic per term. On a 1D10 roll of 8+, the contact is foreign.

**Special:** When determining starting money, use CHR rather than EDU for all terms as a Mystic.



### Astral Time and Space

In the Astral Dimension, what appears as distance merely represents the amount of mental focus required to change the mystic's point of view to that reference. By exerting a sufficient amount of mental effort, the mystic could change their point of view to another point instantaneously.

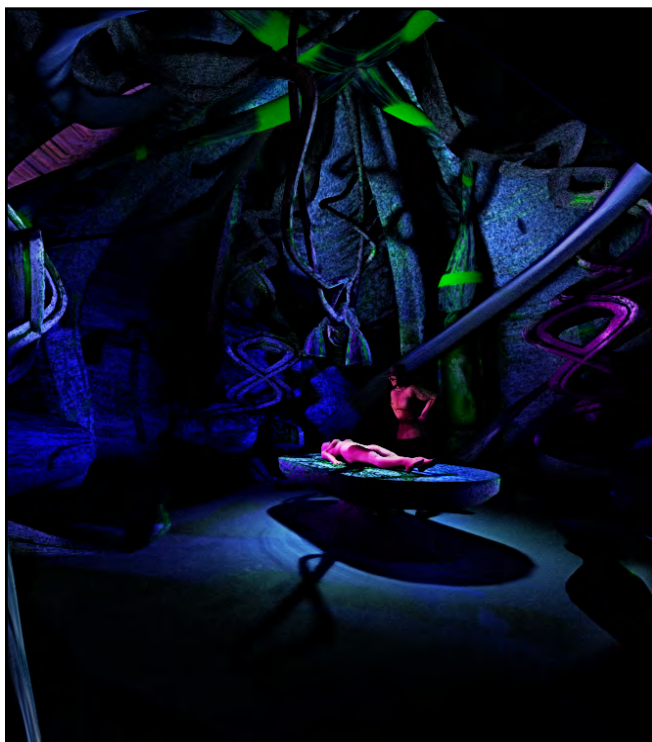
### Astral Combat

When opponents meet and do combat in the Astral Dimension, their struggle is a contest of wills and skills waged on a purely mental basis. Astral combat is usually non-lethal, since it is difficult to sever the link between the mind and its body—difficult but not impossible. Mystics use their Exorcism skill to engage in combat in the Astral Dimension. Otherwise, no astral traveler can physically interact with another traveler. See the “Exorcism” skill on page 21.

### Astral Travel and Dimension Walk

The *Dimension Walk* skill operates on the quantum proto-dimensions created by the walker's intention. The Dimensional Walker uses it to allow travel from one point in the dimension to another point in the same dimension by moving through a quantum dimension created for that purpose. These quantum proto-dimensions use warped time and space to make travel to the new destination appear to be instantaneous and not passing through the intervening space.

The *Astral Travel* skill is not quite the same thing, although it can be used for Dimension Walking, i.e. creation and travel through the quantum dimensions, the mystic takes a difficulty shift making it harder to do so. *Dimension Walk* allows the use of existing portals and gates to other non-quantum proto-dimensions, but it cannot be used to create new portals or gates. *Astral Travel* can be used to travel through existing portals and gates (with no penalty), and can create portals to other proto-dimensions. However, it cannot be used to create gates. When used to create portals to other dimensions, the mystic using *Astral Travel* to do so suffers a difficulty shift making it harder.



## Neuropathic Discipline

*It was hard for you to keep a job. You never seemed to fit in, you could tell when they didn't want you around and resented it. One day they were so antagonistic, so mean, they really wanted to hurt you, but only through their words. You snapped, you don't know what happened, but the burst was felt by everyone around. Most of the bystanders fell to their knees clutching their heads and screaming. But your primary antagonists' eyes rolled back and they fell to the ground like a sack of garbage. Panting and bleeding from the nose, staring at them, watching them drool, fear took hold. You did that. You. So you ran away, hid in an alley. There a stranger stepped out of the shadows, offered you a kind word and a smoke. He seemed scary, but you felt safe with him and he wanted to help. This stranger said that for running some tests and doing some easy things, you would get a place to stay and plenty to eat. So it began.*

Characters with high PSI ratings often develop their abilities through the hit-or-miss of trial and error. Following this character path allows relatively untrained individuals to develop a considerable, if narrowly defined, psionic skill set. To reflect this, characters can become a neuropath naturally through awakening, or through training and study in the Psychic Test Subject.

Characters can *awake* only if they meet the prerequisites—basically they have not advanced in empathic abilities and have studied no empathic disciplines. Alternately characters have the option to become a neuropath through the “Psychic Test Subject” career (see page 15).

### Awakening

An empath is awakened through a significant emotional event generally represented by the following:

- The loss of a loved one—significant grief accelerating though to anger and violent breakout.
- A particularly horrible injustice—must have a severe psychological impact similar to grief.
- Excruciating pain—the kind one gets from torture.
- Physical trauma to the head—a kick in the head, gunshot wound, etc.
- Nasty narcotics or other brain intrusion—drugs that expand the consciousness of power up neurons.
- An invasion of another's mind—empathic attempt to control the character.

The awakening itself can be in the character generation phase as part of the character's Major Events or Vignettes. If it involves the Dark, the referee and players are encouraged to role play it out. Alternately, a character can awaken during regular play should the circumstances dictate. Referees will work out the details with the player to get the right series of events that lead to an awakening during character generation or during play. Awakening as a way of becoming a neuropath is different than getting some training to be one and leads to different skill sets and outcomes.

To awaken, the character must have all the following:

- PSI ≥ 3
- No more than 6 total skill levels in psionic skills
- No previous training in a discipline



With the prerequisites for awakening established the empath can awaken in-game any time the character suffers an event of the type listed above (referee's decision). Immediately after the initiating event the character awakens by passing an Impossible [Willpower] test. The new neuropath immediately gets the neuropath benefits indicated below. Alternately, if the empath meets the prerequisites and is subjected to a psychic invasion via Project Thought in game, the test is conducted as an Average [Willpower] test. The difficulty goes down due to the realization coming from the outside influence. Empaths meeting the prerequisites who are drugged or infected with psychoactive substances will become awakened by passing a test that the referee defines—could be easier if the drug is designed to create neuropaths.

It always hurts when awakening, but fighting a mental invasion is the most painful and can result in death. Severe headaches leading to nose-bleeding and dizziness and sometimes unconsciousness can result from emotional, chemical, or physical sources. The psychic assault is far more painful causing 1-point of damage to the head until the empath passes the awakening test and releases the rush of neuropathic energies accumulating in her head. If the character's damage level reaches a critical wound, the empath must pass a Difficult [CON] test for each point received thereafter. Failure of this test results in the empath's head exploding causing 1D3 damage to characters in the blast radius of 2-meters.

### Benefits of Awakening

A newly awakened neuropath increases all her current psionic skills by 1 level. This applies only to skills possessed at the time of the awakening, not to any skills acquired subsequently. The fledgling neuropath also receives 4 skill levels in any one psionic skill from the Neuropath cluster. This bonus is in addition to the one-point increase in all skills described above.

The acquisition of these new skill levels does not come free. When the focused neuropath skill levels are acquired, the neuropath must immediately use the skill against a nearby target. If the neuropath passes the skill check, she doubles the Power Level outcome (quadruples if an Outstanding Success was attained). Failure to attack a target will cause the neuropath damage to her head—that energy must get out! The player rolls for an attained Power Level, doubles it, and takes 1D6 damage to the head for each Stage of Success attained. If the damage to the neuropath's head causes a Critical wound, the neuropath's head explodes causing 1D3 damage inside a blast radius of 2-meters. It is pretty important to let that surge go...

Once the neuropath selects their focus skill—the one that got the extra levels—future costs to that skill, only, do not suffer the doubling for not having a mentor (see "Improving Empathic Discipline Skills" on page 10).

### Disadvantages of Neuropathy

The down side to neuropathy is that the wiring in the brain that allows empathic energy to be channeled also negatively affects the character's behavior. For this reason the character takes on a mental illness. This can be negotiated with the referee to add flavor to the character, or the illness can be rolled from the "Therapy Results" on page 46.

Historically those practicing neuropathy without assistance suffer a downward spiral to self-destruction. Without a mentor to warn of the side effects of neuropathic practice, the neuropath succumbs to her desire to use her wonderful new-found neuropathic abilities. In



### Awakening

*Victor has had these abilities for some time now. When he wanted to remain unnoticed, he could. It has helped him out when cutting into lines at the soup kitchen, hiding from the cops on their sweeps, and borrowing things from the drugstore. He and Gus had a good thing going. Gus would play the sax and Victor would walk around with the hat. A little nudge and most folks would pitch in buck or two, sometimes a twenty. Gus was the closest thing Victor had to a friend; and here he is...Gus, laid out like so much cold beef, that mook going through his pockets... Victor could feel his something coming on, a red rage, fire, burning, the pain. Victor could feel the burning, the mook. He could feel the mook burning.*

*Victor watched with a slight sneer as the mook burst into flame, white-hot flame. It was so fast...the mook was completely enveloped in flame, skin crackling, sizzling and popping; the mook writhing, as stunned as Victor. As the mook tumbled away and fell further into the alley, Victor wiped a trickle of blood from his nose as he knelt next to his old friend. Whispering good-bye Victor gently closed Gus' eye lids. Standing up and turning away from the mook, Victor couldn't tell if it was grief or the mook's smoking carcass that was stinging his eyes to tears.*



### Psychic Test Subject

Here and there across the globe and the solar system, a number of different organizations are building clandestine labs to study psychic phenomena—some of those organizations are not human. These labs need subjects to feed their studies. You have been identified as having a high psychic potential and have been recruited or captured to become a test subject. All sorts of stimuli are tried to bring your abilities to light: hypnosis, drug therapy, and electro-stimulus are just a few. The result has been a rapid improvement in your empathic powers, which you like. But you've learned a few things about medicine and psychology along the way, and maybe a little bit about torture as well.

**PREREQUISITES:** PSI 2+.

#### FIRST TERM

##### Skills:

**Psions:** Human Empathy 3, Project Emotion 2,

**Psionics** 1, Willpower 2

**Neuropaths:** Human Empathy 1, Project Emotion 1,

**Neuropathy** 2, Willpower 2

#### SUBSEQUENT TERMS

**Promotion:** 10+, DM +1 for PSI 8+, DM +1 for CHR 6+. The first promotion moves the character from unwilling test subject into psionics research.

##### Skills:

**Psions:** Empathy, Psionics, Perception, Medical, Willpower.

**Neuropaths:** Empathy, Neuropathy, Willpower, Observation, Luck.

#### ALL TERMS

**Commission:** 9+, DM +1 if CHA 6+, DM +1 if INT 7+. If commissioned, character is a psion test subject; otherwise the character is a neuropath test subject.

**Special Assignment:** +, DM +1 for INT 7+, Charm, Vice, Social Science.

**Contacts:** 8+, DM +1 for INT 7+, Charm, Vice, Social Science.

**Special:** Each term the character must make an Average [CHR] test. Failure indicates that the character must flee from the lab after being judged too uncontrollable to live. This difficulty is increased for each term spent in this career. For example, the third term spent as a psychic test subject requires a Formidable [Charisma] test. Characters who are forced to flee cannot return to this career. When calculating starting money, use PSI instead of SOC for each term as a psychic test subject. However, if the character has to flee the lab, all payment for this career is lost.



the laboratories, the mental stability of neuropathic test subjects is of critical concern. The slow and easy neuropathic development in the laboratory can end up in the empath awakening with a sudden flash of energy destroying several scientists. As a result, neuropaths, awakened and laboratory rejects, can be found in mental institutions, in homeless shelters, and in the graveyard.

The referee and the player should negotiate how the neuropath's mental health will play out. Perhaps a team member is a psychologist or psychiatrist who can offer treatment. Perhaps there is an Empathic Underground cell that can provide assistance. Perhaps the negotiated decision is for the neuropath to spiral, ending up killing herself or her acquaintances.

### Psionic Discipline

After your sister's incident, never truly explained to you, she became cataleptic and didn't respond to any stimulus. Your insurance did not cover her; she was released from the hospital and left in your care. While looking through a text on psychology, searching for a clue to your sister's catalepsy, you stumbled upon a scientific reference to the use of psionics to penetrate barriers in a patient's mind. Chasing down that reference opened a whole new vista for you. Ever since, you read and studied until one day you attempted one of the experiments yourself. Concentrating on your dog, you noted that without saying a word or moving a finger, the dog fetched your shoes from their place near the front door. She had never previously paid your shoes the slightest bit of attention, but in this experiment she did what you mentally asked. Taking the results of that little experiment with you, including the videos, you went to the Institute, nearly a world away and asked for training in your newly found skills. The ultimate goal: to go into your sister's mind and bring her back. After three long years of study and constant exercise, you are released—the only cost to you is to bring back all data you may accumulate on the use of your skills. Rushing back to your sister, you go into the trapped consciousness of her mind. There you see what she saw and it sends you reeling. Instinctively falling back upon the control techniques learned at the Institute, your mind whirs trying to figure out what the heck happened that night. But it was too much of a blur, a devastatingly horrible blur. One thing for sure, your sister is no longer there. Oh, her body is, but no one is upstairs...gone.



Empathy was hailed as pure mystical bunk with no basis in science, that is, until the discovery of measurable empathic energy. This almost haphazard discovery shifted empathy from the focus of scientific skepticism to the focus of hard research. At first neuropaths were the only subject of study, but their wild talents and unpredictability, not to mention their mental instability, led to a more disciplined approach to empathy. The result was a new breed of disciplined empath—trained in the new science of psionics. Research in psionics resulted in very precise methods for attaining empathic effects. Arising as it did from clinical study, there was no room for the mumbo-jumbo attributed to the mystical schools. Instead, hard work, strict discipline, an analytical mindset, and logical, emotionless rationality are required of psionic practitioners. Psions are trained in the workings of the mind, psychology, and current theories of psionic phenomena. Empaths trained in the other schools are amazed at the ease with which psions operate—there is no backlash, feedback, or needed rituals to affect the target—merely designate, concentrate and viola.

### **Mental Focus**

Psion training and discipline affect the outcome of psionic skill use drastically. For this reason mental control is a necessary component of using psion skills. This mental control is captured in the Focus Skill. Prior to using any psionic skill, the psion must first test their Focus Skill. Using the same empathic skill modifiers as the empathic task to be attempted, each Power Level attained in the Focus Skill test is applied as a positive difficulty modifier (making it easier) to the subsequent empathic check. A Power Level check is still performed if the skill check results in a Catastrophic Failure. In this case, each stage increases the difficulty (makes it harder). However, the psion has the choice of continuing skill use given a Catastrophic Failure.

### **Disciplined Mind**

Psions have the ability to throttle-back any empathic skill result to any lesser stage. For example, if the attained power level indicated a Stage 6 result, the psion could throttle that result back to Stage 2 or Stage 3.

## **Empathic Sorcerer Discipline**

*The old man just stared at you and finally told you that “you wouldn’t do, not at all.” But when you insisted, telling him that you studied with Mercer and Brackus, he reconsidered. The next evening he took you to a warehouse in a deserted business district. There amid the rubble, he showed you strange symbols, taught you strange words—words that twisted your thoughts. But mostly he taught you how to do strange things: how to crush concrete to dust, how to melt steel, how to push heavy machinery around. In the next few weeks, the old man taught wonderful things to you and others too—dark reserved strangers standing on symbols painted on the floor and generating strange lights by manipulating unusual energies. But one night, the old man’s solemn expression was unusual. “Time to go,” was all he said.*

*As you and the other misfit students packed your gear, a bright flash and a shock wave knocked you to the floor. Rising, you saw the old man facing something that hurt the eyes to look at, something twisting the vision into angles not meant for human eyes, something large and seriously ominous. “GO!” the old man yelled as a sound*



### **Psionic Researcher**

*As an expert in the workings of the human mind, you have become very interested in what have come to be called empathic powers by the masses and psionic powers among academics such as yourself. This field was once very secret, but empathic powers are out of the closet. Corps and governments alike see the need for rigorous controlled research to delineate the limits of those powers and to learn how they work.*

**PREREQUISITES:** PSI 3+, medical school or PhD (two graduate school terms) in biology or psychology. (Also see Psychic Test Subject)

#### **FIRST TERM**

**Skills:** Perception 2, Psionics 3, Determination 1.

#### **SUBSEQUENT TERMS**

**Skills:** Charm, Determination, Perception, Psionics, Social Science.

#### **ALL TERMS**

**Special Assignment:** 7+ for PSI 5+. **Crime, Interaction, Small Arms, Vehicle.**

**Promotion:** 8+, DM +1 if INT 7+. Use the commissioned scientist ranks for promotions.

**Contacts:** One per term, medical, academic, or empathic. On a 1D10 roll of 8+, the contact is foreign.

**Special:** No secondary activities are allowed during this term. No income is generated for terms as a psionic researcher. Upon completion, the character is considered a *psionist*.



*of rushing air announced the portal forming at your back. Running though the portal was not a choice, but tears came unasked when the portal closed, the old man left behind. The new setting seemed to be a barn of some sort, dimly lit, spacious, and it felt...clean for some reason, in spite of the need to sweep out the stalls. Lady B tugged your sleeve and handed you a tissue. "We will avenge him. But first, we get strong."*

Sorcery is the empathic discipline most shrouded in mystery. Empathic Sorcery's mystery swirls around the belief that strange symbols, bizarre paraphernalia, and obscure, fearful rites can unleash titanic powers. This mystery shrouds the truth that empathic sorcery is about masterful manipulation of interdimensional portals, conduits to elemental proto-dimensions. In addition to travelling from one proto-dimension to another, the adept sorcerer can reach into a proto-dimension, grab a handful, and bring it back. The power of sorcery is in what is brought back—energy, physics...something else. But to understand the interdimensional fabric well enough to do this simple but delicate task, the sorcerer must learn complex interdimensional relationships and memorize dimensional impressions. The ability to access proto-dimensions is based on experience with that dimension, so sorcerers must train and be mentored.

In the past, esoteric texts containing geographic symbols, cryptic diagrams, strange chanting, and other imagery associated with classic high sorcery were used by adepts to channel their thinking, as memory aids to remind them of the paths to the dimensions they seek. Twisted interdimensional geometry required arcane thought processes, stimulated through chanting, glyphs, and ritual. Rituals with all the appurtenances of heinous demonology were performed to access powers and worlds very different than our own. These esoteric masters of arcane knowledge were actually masters of interdimensional physics.

### Source of Power

Sorcerers in typical esoteric fashion keep the mystery of their power sources secret, even from each other. In truth, the source of their power is not their own empathic life essence, but rather in their knowledge of the multi-verse. The empathic energy necessary to manifest sorcerous effects in this dimension is beyond even the most powerful empath. But their knowledge of

which proto-dimension to tap into to get which effect allows them to manifest some significant sorcery.

### Sorcerer's Life

Because their power lies in their knowledge instead of their raw empathy, sorcerers are especially sought after by Dark Minions who would sap that knowledge and use it for their dark purposes. Most empathic Minions have a sensitivity to the opening and closing of portals. They can detect where and to some extent who is *tripping the dims* in the local area. It also seems that the locale where the sorcerer practices goes downhill pretty fast, the barriers weakening to allow *other things* to get through. Sorcerers that stay in one place too long do not stay alive too long. So sorcerers stay on the move—changing residence often, moving from town to town, and trying to stay ahead of any Dark Minion pursuers.

### Sorcery and the Dark

By some strange quirk of fate, humankind is the only interdimensional species beyond the Dark Lords themselves that is capable of practicing sorcery. For this reason fledgling Dark Lords desire to corrupt the occasional sorcerer, or torture their secrets from them. *Charons*, human sorcerers who have accepted Dark Masters, can also use sorcery and always seek to expand their powers or serve their masters' dark designs. Again this makes sorcerers choice targets of the Dark.

### Dangers of Sorcery

Opening a portal to another dimension is like throwing a rock into a pond. The ripples expand outward and can be sensed by observers. By tracing back the ripples, the source of the waves can be found. In the case of sorcerers, Dark Minions can locate them through sorcerous opening and closing of portals. Using the rock analogy, a bigger rock causes bigger ripples. Using sorcerous combat is like using a bigger rock and is more detectable and traceable than typical Dimension Walking. Sorcerers should not practice too much on one place, since their chances of being detected grow with each portal opening. A viral rumor on the 'net speaks to the added danger that the walls of the interdimensional fabric are weakened with prolonged portal generation, but you cannot believe everything you read on the net, right?





***Empathic Sorcerer***

*As a kid you could make matches light by just holding them, but when your father saw you doing it, he was very stern, insisting you never do that again, "It is very dangerous for you and everyone around you." So you withheld your secret. But when you were alone you would try it again and again. As a teen after your parents were killed in the collapse of the family home's roof, you kept up the secrecy. Your father's sister insisted you live with a stranger. Janus spent time with you, asking you to assist in the strange rituals he did, teaching you things from musty old books, how to manipulate who-knew-what to do amazing things. "Never. Never use your talent where you live. THEY might find you." It seemed good advice, but it didn't really make sense. One evening in a dilapidated factory building, the ritual was going well. The two of you were to go to LA by stepping into the chalk ring on the floor. But when the blackness opened, it was not LA on the other side, it was a writhing mass of chitinous creatures – all teeth and claws. Janus turned to you and yelled, "Run!" and you did. You never saw Janus again, but you want to avenge him in the worst way. You want to kill every one of THEM.*

**PREREQUISITES:** PSI 4+, and at least one empathic contact serving as sorcerous mentor (contact is mandatory).

**FIRST TERM**

**Skills:** Perception 2, Sorcery 3, Willpower 2.

**SUBSEQUENT TERMS**

**Skills:** Charm, Determination, Interaction, Perception, Sorcery.

**ALL TERMS**

**Special Assignment:** 7+ for PSI 5+. Crime, Fine Arts, Small Arms, Vehicle, Vice.

**Promotion:** 8+, DM +1 if CHR 7+.

**Contacts:** One empathic contact per term. On a 1D10 roll of 8+, the contact is foreign.

**Special:** No secondary activities are allowed during this term. No income is generated for terms as a sorcerer. Upon completion, the character is considered an *empathic sorcerer*.





# PSIONIC DISCIPLINE SKILLS

## Mystic Cluster

The mystic school skills set centers around the relationship between the self and the universe.

### Astral Travel

### Mysticism—PSI

The mystic school of empathy holds that the *astral dimension* is the binding force of the universe, the glue, where the entire universe truly becomes one. *Astral Travel* is the classic mystic skill that allows a mystic to slip into the astral dimension. Since the astral dimension is always nearby (dimension-wise), a mystic can enter it easily, as long as the mystic can enter a trance state.

Classic astral travel requires the mystic's emotional/mental self (her life-force or spirit) to separate and leave her physical body completely. This requires a trance, a little bit of time, and a successful test of the *Astral Travel* skill. This skill is different than the Dimension Walk skill in that the mystic's life-force only enters the astral dimension. When a Dimension Walker's body enters the astral dimension, which when interacting with the astral dimension like this, it is called the Interstices, their whole body and consciousness enters the interstices, which could cause some psychological problems.

The base difficulty of the *Astral Travel* skill test is Easy, but subject to modifiers from the *haste* of gaining entry into the astral dimension. The mystic can "rush" entrance by increasing the difficulty level. For each -1 difficulty modifier (more difficult) that the mystic applies to the task check, the time needed to enter the astral dimension is halved. For example, the base rate is 30 seconds at the Easy level (the mystic is at peace and calm). The mystic can get into the astral dimension in 7 seconds by passing a Difficult task check. Normal empathy skill modifiers for emotional or physical duress apply.

Once in the astral dimension, mystics can journey far from their bodies to explore. No matter how far mystics travel in the astral dimension, their bodies are just a thought away, via their psychic link. This link appears in the form of the classic "silver cord"—it doesn't really exist, being merely a mental reference in the existence

of the astral dimension, but other travelers in the proto-dimension can see it, too. Re-entering the body and regaining control is accomplished just like regaining control from a trance—since that's exactly what the mystic is doing.

**THIRD EYE:** Mystics can use their *Astral Travel* ability to perform the Third Eye feat. Using the Third Eye allows the mystic to slip into the astral dimension for a short time without being in a trance, and to look back into the real world without physically moving. Mystics can use this ability for parlor tricks such as blindfolded mystics seeing beyond the blindfold, describing items behind them, etc. Another less frivolous use is where the mystic serves as an astral watchman, constantly checking the surrounding astral domains for minions. Dark minions resonate strongly in the astral dimension, particularly those without physical form, such as bleaks, ghosts, poltergeists, and so on, which primarily exist in the astral dimension and intrude on the "real" world to wreak their havoc. Such strong psyches cannot hide when viewed through the astral third eye.

The Third Eye does require some skill to keep from losing consciousness. Slipping into the astral dimension for a moment is no problem, but if the mystic remains there too long they will pass out. Mystics using the Third Eye can oscillate back and forth between the astral dimension and their body allowing them to remain conscious and to maintain their vigil. If a mystic divorces mind from body for more than 6 seconds, the body loses all volition and collapses; and if the mystic stays in the astral dimension using the Third Eye for over 12 seconds, she must re-enter the body as if recovering from a trance, at one level of difficulty higher than normal (-1). One success at Astral Dimension using the Third Eye allows 5 minutes of planar oscillation--bouncing back and forth--without penalty. In tactical mode this duration is reduced to 1 minute.

Astral travel using the Third Eye requires passing an Easy [*Astral Travel* asset] test modified as per the normal circumstances. Failing the test means that the mystic didn't make it into the astral dimension, and they are stunned for five seconds (one combat phase). The Third Eye cannot be done while already in a trance, because popping into the astral dimension while in a trance is basic *Astral Travel*.

### Mystic Skills

Mysticism Skill Cluster	Base Difficulty
Astral Travel	Easy
Greater Empathy	Easy
Possession / Exorcism	Easy
Mystic Hypnosis	Easy
Invulnerability	Difficult, Impossible in tactical mode
Psychic Invisibility	Easy
Psychic Mask	Easy
Dream Intrusion	Easy
Psionic Trace (•)	See the Psionic Trace Skill Cascades table

### Greater Empathy

### Mysticism—PSI

To a mystic, touching minds with another person is as easy as reaching out and touching him with a finger. It's a very natural thing, life flowing to life. Of course, with Dark Minions, the "life" on the other end may be a very loose definition of the term. A mystic can delve deeper into a subject's psyche than mere surface emotion information imparted with normal Empathy skills.

The Greater Empathy skill has the same range limitations as normal Empathy skills. The exception is when a mystic uses Greater Empathy while in the astral dimension. While there, a mystic can make empathic contact with other minds in the same dimension, or with minds in the "real" world. While in the astral dimension, a mystic's Empathy range restrictions are centered on her Astral form—the body may be located very far away, but the mystic has to keep her Astral form within Empathy range of the subject, as per



the normal rules. While the distances are not real, the perceived distances (by the mystic) in the astral dimension are analogous to those in the physical dimension.

Another difference is that the Greater Empathy skill can be used on any living (and spectral) entities, unlike the generic Empathy skills.

The mystic can use the Greater Empathy skill in three ways: *Crowd Appeal*, *Psychic Deep Dive*, and *Channeling*. Note that these are note cascades, but rather uses of the Greater Empathy skill.

**CROWD APPEAL:** To link to multiple minds, the empath must achieve at least a Basic Success. This provides up to 1D6 possible links. For each Stage of Success the mystic gets another 1D6, so that, for example, an attained level of Stage Three would provide 3D6 possible links to various minds.

With increasing stages of success the mystic can experience emotions, surface thoughts, deep thoughts, and the target's subconscious. While psions can read surface thoughts and subvocalized words like when the target reads a book using a Telepathic link, when using Greater Empathy skills, the mystic can experience those foreign thoughts as if they were her own, perceiving and feeling what the subject perceives and feels with all the contextual icing. When using Greater Empathy, however, the mystic maintains enough independence to prevent being adversely affected by those foreign perceptions and emotions—until the mystic ventures past conscious contact into the target's subconscious mind.

**PSYCHIC DEEP DIVE:** Mystics can establish empathic contact with a target at one level easier than it is for the normal Empathy skills. So for example, a mystic makes empathic contact with friends and close associates—with whom empathic contact has previously been established—automatically when under easy conditions. After making an empathic contact or link, the mystic can probe more deeply than the target's surface thoughts and emotions. To go deeper and get the full experiences of the target, the mystic must enter a trance.

The mystic can only probe one mind at a time, and that the mystic's body is helpless and mindless until the mystic chooses to break the contact and return. When the mystic does decide to break contact, she returns to their body without

difficulty assuming that the body is still safe at the time, that is, unoccupied.

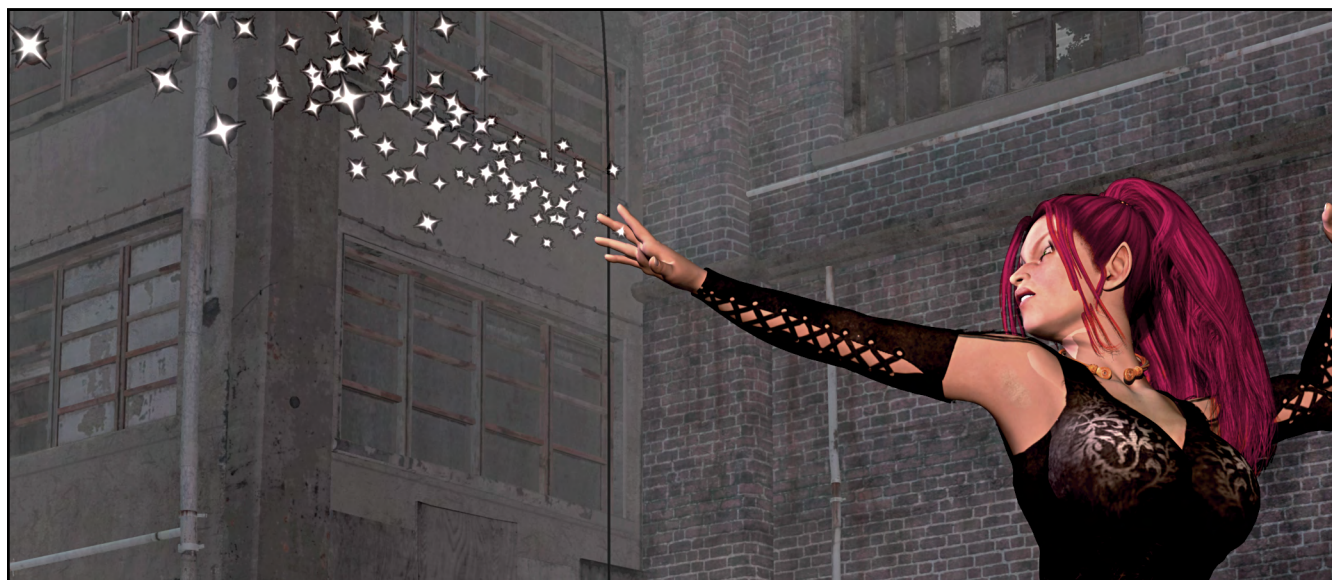
A conscious empath finding that their mind is being intruded upon through the Greater Empathy skill can rudely throw out the intruding mystic's consciousness by passing an Average [Willpower] test.

**THE SUBCONSCIOUS:** The subconscious mind is a place of chaotic power, flowing from the most basic desires and fears of an individual. The impulses filling the subconscious can be powerful enough to overwhelm a mystic intruding into this arena of mental turmoil. Each minute, or part thereof, that a mystic spends in another person's subconscious, he has to pass an Average [Willpower] test. If the subject is dreaming, the test becomes Difficult [Willpower] because when the subject is dreaming—their subconscious runs rampant. If the roll fails, the mystic feels the probed psyche's raging emotions and desires and flees back to her own body, ending the trance normally.

If the mystic suffers a Catastrophic Failure of her Greater Empathy test, she flees from the other mind and returns to her body, and has to roll on the Catastrophic Failure Table for regaining control from trances. The mystic suffers any damage from that rapid return. Players should note that when such mystics wake, they will be deeply affected by the emotions and desires which repelled them (the exact nature is based on the subject's mind and is up to the referee, as appropriate). When recovering from subconscious deep dive, all mental tasks the mystic may attempt suffer a difficulty modifier of one making those activities more difficult.

So why go into the subconscious if it is so dangerous? The subconscious mind cannot lie; not even the most experienced mystics can conceal their desires and emotions in the subconscious. Also, the subconscious is where fears, phobias, post-hypnotic suggestions, and other mental aberrations lurk. Curing one of these problems requires a trip to the subconscious.

To penetrate to the target's subconscious mind, the mystic needs to attain a Stage Four success on the Greater Empathy skill check. If the target is dreaming, the mystic needs only a Stage Two success. Attaining less than that means that the mystic has made contact, but has not found what she is looking





for. Note that Greater Empathy success at Stage 4 (or 2) is needed to “cure” catatonia or coma.

**CHANNELING:** Physical beings are not the only entities that a mystic can contact through Greater Empathy. The mystic can also link to spectral entities, such as ghosts and poltergeists. The mystic can use Read Aura to determine if a spectral entity is nearby, then use Greater Empathy to establish a link. Linking to a spectral entity is one level more difficult than a physical entity, even if the spectral entity desires the link. Once the link is established, the mystic experiences the spectral entity with sufficient linkage that it appears that the mystic speaks with the entity’s voice, inflections, mannerisms, etc. This is not possession by the spectral entity, but only a link—one useful for communication. Failure to pass the Greater Empathy check means the entity refused. Catastrophic Failure means that the entity was angered for their own reasons. For poltergeists, this can be somewhat dangerous.

### Possession / Exorcism

### Mysticism—PSI

The mystic’s ability for their mental and emotional essence to leave their physical body has a dramatic consequence: *possession*. Using possession the mystic can leave their body and enter the body of another, forcing the consciousness, if there, aside, and controlling the body as if it was her own—making it do things the owner does not want to do. In ancient times, this was called *demonic possession*, since the most notable cases were when a malevolent entity possessed a relative innocent. With the current onset of darkling activity, possession incidents are increasing, and the threat of darkling possession is very real.

The mystic lexicons also contain methods of fighting the phenomenon—forcing an invading entity out of another’s body. The mystic lexicons call this *exorcism*, and it can be used from the astral dimension as well as from the “real world”.

**POSSESSION:** In a sense, a Stage Six success with Project Thought is effectively possession. The empath is able to control every movement, every action of the subject. Mystic possession is somewhat different—mystics do not simply control a subject; they place their mind in a subject’s body and become the subject. Mystics can remain in control of the subject’s faculties for a long time.

In order to possess another body, mystics leave their own body, while in a trance, and venture into the astral dimension. There, they locate the target subject and attempt possession. This is a standard Possession test, and a Stage Three success allows the mystic to overlay their mind on the subject’s and take control. The process takes 30 seconds, and the subject perceives it while it’s happening. The safest time to possess a subject is while the person is sleeping. Possessing mystics can then stay in charge until they decide to leave, or are forced out (see below).

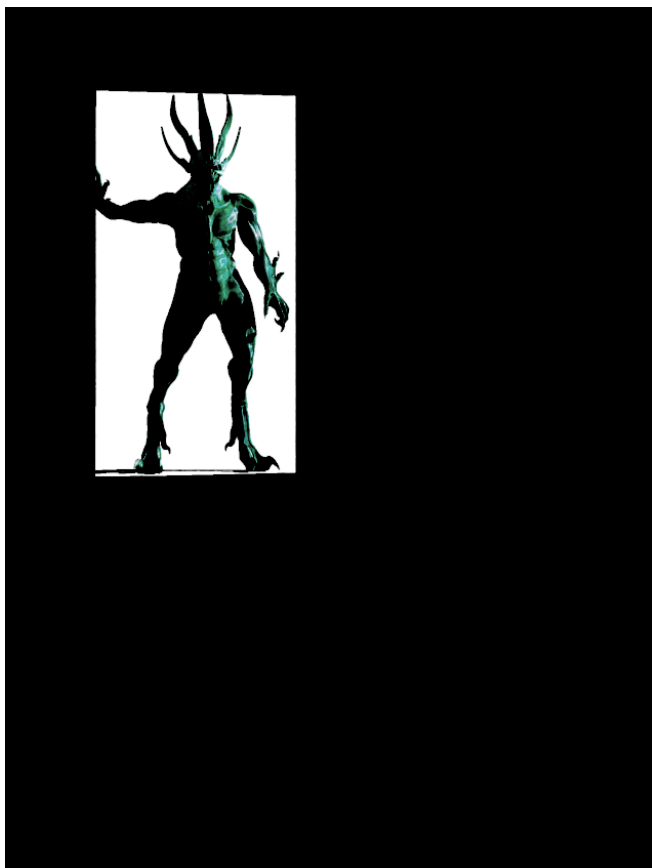
The degree of control over the host body is dependent on the attained Stage of Success for the Possession attempt.

While in charge of a host body, mystics can manipulate it like their own subject to restriction due to level of control. At lower Stages of Success, the host body cannot do things beyond its capabilities. For example, a strong adult mystic taking over a child’s body would be advised to forgo lifting 100-kg weights. Both resident minds, regardless of which is on control, can perceive everything that the host body perceives, and feels

### Possession Level of Control

Stage of Success	Level of Control
Basic Success	The two minds take turns, the possessor first. Each personality gets control for: 5 × nD6 minutes Where n is a number of dice equal to the personality’s Willpower skill level (not asset) The mind in possession moves at Initiative 1, AGL 2 with movement rate = 2 / 2 / 4 / 10.
Stage 1	The two minds take turns, the possessor first. Each personality gets control for: 10 × nD6 minutes Where n is a number of dice equal to the personality’s Willpower skill level (not asset). The mind in possession moves at Initiative 1, AGL 2 with movement rate = 2 / 2 / 4 / 10.
Stage 2	The two minds take turns, the possessor first. Each personality gets control for: 10 × nD6 days Where n is a number of dice equal to the personality’s Willpower skill level (not asset). The mind in possession moves at Initiative 1, AGL 2 with movement rate = 2 / 2 / 4 / 10.
Stage 3	Possession is complete. The mind in possession moves at Initiative 1, AGL 2 with movement rate = 2 / 2 / 4 / 10. Memories and skills of the subject are not shared with the possessor. Possessor’s voice patterns, gestures, mannerisms.
Stage 4-5	Possession is complete. The mind in possession moves at Initiative = possessor, AGL = subject’s with normal movement rate. Memories and skills of the subject are not shared with the possessor.
Stage 6-7	Possession is complete. The mind in possession moves at Initiative = possessor, Attributes = Possessor. Memories and skills of the subject are not shared with the possessor.
Stage 8-9	Possession is complete. The mind in possession moves at Initiative = possessor, Attributes = Possessor. Possessor has access to subject’s memories and skills, including languages.
Stage 10+	Possession is complete. The mind in possession moves at Initiative = possessor, Attributes = Possessor. Possessor has access to subject’s memories and skills. Possessor has access to all mannerisms, gestures, voice patterns, and inflections—even the brain scan pattern of the subject’s.





everything that the host body feels—pleasures and pains. For example, a mystic possessing a drug addict under the influence would suffer a level of mental impairment due to the influence of drugs. The possessing mystic while in the subject, in control or not, cannot use their own psionic skills—their empathic abilities are being used to stay in the host's body or operate the host's body when in control.

**FORCED OUT:** If the host's consciousness is still in the body, it will fight the mystic's control. Anytime the mystic does something that the host violently disagrees, suffers any serious or worse wounds, or suffers any attack or other effect to their mind, the mystic must pass an Average [Possession – Host's Willpower] test. A mystic's failure of this test expels the mystic's mind from the host body and their incorporeal form returns to the astral dimension.

When a possessing mystic leaves a host body, the host remembers all that transpired while possessed (unless there was no mind in the body). The mystic can prevent this by using Project Thought skill to erase that portion of the former host's memory; a Stage Five success is needed to accomplish this as the mystic seeks out the familiar experiences and transforms them into a fuzzy dream. A Stage Six success blanks out those experiences altogether.

**EMPTY BODY:** A mystic can also possess a body that has no mind, either a person who has suffered brain death, a person whose mind has retreated to their subconscious (coma or catatonia), or a person whose mind is far away in the astral dimension. The mystic only needs a Stage Two success to possess an empty body. Possession in this case is like a Stage 10 success, but there will be no host memories, skills or mannerisms available to the

possessor. The possessing mystic cannot be expelled since there is no mind there to fight back.

If a host body dies while a mystic is in possession, the mystic is hurled back into his own body, rolling on the Trance Catastrophic Failure table.

While the mystic is in possession of the host, the mystic's "silver cord" is quite visible in the astral dimension, leading from the host body back to the mystic's own. Anyone in the astral dimension can see it and follow it. This can lead to the mystic's own body being possessed by minions while they are off wandering in the astral dimension. Smart mystics typically leave friends guarding their bodies, and have code-words and countersigns to identify themselves. If the silver cord is cut while the mystic is in possession of a subject, the mystic becomes permanently attached to that body. The mystic loses access all her former attributes except Initiative and uses the host's instead. If the host is sharing their body with the mystic, once per day the mystic must pass an Average [Possession – Host's Willpower] test to have control for the day. When the mystic enters the astral dimension or leaves the body for whatever reason, the host's mind takes over (unless the host suffers a coma or catatonia). The mystic's empty body will appear to be in a coma, but no silver cord will be visible in the astral dimension. The mystic can go searching for it and reverse the process by having someone else cut their silver cord. Note that when the mystic is stranded in a host's body, she has the host's hit points and wound levels. If this body dies, so does the mystic.

Players should note that *possession* is a classic and favored darkling tactic, especially by minions who have no physical form to be possessed in turn.

**EXORCISM:** In practice exorcism is a contest of will and empathic power. The exorcising mystic and the possessing power both make Difficult tests—a Difficult [Exorcism] test for the exorcist and Difficult [Possession] test for the possessor. Exorcism combatants determine their Power Levels without the opposed target Willpower subtraction and add their own Willpower asset. Then the possessor subtracts their total from the exorcist's. If the exorcist achieves a Basic Success with the remaining power level, the possessor is expelled from the body, just as if the host mind had repulsed the possessor.

If the host mind is in the host body at the time of the exorcism, the host's Willpower is also added to the exorcist's combined Exorcism and Willpower skills for purposes of Power Level. This assumes that the host also wants to expel the possessor. In the event the Power Level is insufficient to expel the possessor, the mystic can make another attempt, if desired.

The exorcism task is a long and arduous process, often taking a number of hours equal to the possessor's Possession asset. Each stage of success the exorcist scores over Basic Success halves the time required, round down. Players should note that the possessor remains in possession and can make the host body move in the meantime. Restraining the host body is a common precaution.

An exorcism struggle can go on for days. Dark Minions are usually powerful empathes, and while exorcism is exhausting, it is not particularly dangerous beyond the ability of the possessed to wreak physical damage. Often human exorcists have to work for a long time to finally defeat the possessor.



**Mystic Hypnosis****Mysticism—PSI**

One reason for wanting to reach into the subconscious is that, while powerful, the subconscious is also rather gullible. The slightest suggestion placed there takes on concrete strength forcing compulsion on the hapless victim. Parlor-trick hypnotism has proved this, often with hilarious and sometimes sinister results. The mystic form of hypnosis delves deeper into the subject's subconscious and compels a much more complete behavior than the parlor-trick form.

Mystic Hypnotism is more powerful than any parlor trick, and is more insidious than other forms of thought projection. After penetrating to the subject's subconscious mind through an empathic link (using Greater Empathy), a mystic using Mystic Hypnosis may implant commands and opinions there, in the form of desires and emotions. The more complex and specific the command, the more difficult it is to implant it. For instance, a vague, unfounded dislike, such as prejudice against industrial polluters, would be an Easy [Mystic Hypnosis] task. Turning this into hatred of a single company would be an Average [Mystic Hypnosis] task. Aiming all the subject's fury at a single executive of this company would be a Formidable [Mystic Hypnosis] task. The more specific the case, the more justification the implanted command requires.

Working against the subject's desires is not easy. The more the subject is opposed to the implanted behavior; the greater the difficulty of the Mystic Hypnosis task checks. For example, a mystic commanding a subject to kill a loved one is one level of difficulty harder (–1).

This careful mental work takes time. It has to be subtle and long lasting. An Easy task takes a minute; an Average task takes 5 minutes; a Difficult task takes 30 minutes, a Formidable task takes 90 minutes; and an Impossible task takes 3 hours.

If the mystic succeeds in implanting a command or opinion, the subject believes it to be his or her own, complete with rationale to explain it. That is the strength of Mystic Hypnotism. Entire facets of a personality can be changed, and the source of the changes is almost invisible. Even Psyche Surgery has trouble finding and correcting such changes.

Mystic Hypnosis can be broken by the subject. If the command or opinion is one that the subject violently disagrees with, the subject makes an Impossible [Willpower] test. If successful the subject resists the implanted suggestion and realizes that an alien idea is rattling around inside their brains.

**Invulnerability****Mysticism—PSI**

Invulnerability is a mystic's ability to draw on the body's reserves to quickly knit its tissues even while it is being harmed. The mystic takes one minute (one combat turn) to activate, and once activated, the mystic can use it in any of her following phases. Invulnerability remains in force as long as the mystic can maintain concentration. To use it, the mystic attempts to reduce points from damage taken in her phases. On a successful Difficult [Invulnerability asset] test prior to combat the mystic computes the Power Level. Once combat has begun, the task becomes Impossible [Invulnerability asset].

**Invulnerability Power Level = Staged (1D10)**

- + Empath's (PSI attribute
- + Invulnerability Skill Level
- + Willpower Skill Level
- + INT attribute)

When successful, the mystic can reduce the criticality of one wound per location per attained Stage of Success. On a Catastrophic Failure, the mystic takes wounds from the Invulnerability attempt. The player rolls for Power Level as normal, but the mystic instead takes one (1) point of damage to a random location per attained Stage of Success.

For example, Sabrina is a mystic with Invulnerability asset of 12 and Willpower asset of 7. Now Sabrina has to walk through a burning room to escape a hellfire. She spends one turn preparing her mind and body for the ordeal (activates Invulnerability) then plunges into the flames. The referee determines that the entire room is ablaze and the air is filled with flame, so all body parts will take 1D6 damage per phase from the flames. Sabrina will only take two phases to pass through the fire. Sabrina can reduce the damage done that in these two phases by rolling a 3 or less—she is in tactical mode requiring an Impossible test. Sabrina rolls a 3 and then a Power Level of 26 (Stage Three), allowing her to reduce wound levels.

*Example: On the first phase, Sabrina rolls for each body location (Head, Chest, Abdomen, Right Arm, Left Arm, Right Leg, Left Leg) 3, 6, 1, 3, 3, 2, 6. At Stage Three she reduces damage to her Head, Abdomen, Right and Left Arms, and her Right Leg to no damage. Sabrina reduces damage to her chest to only three points (6 – 3 = 3) and damage to her Left Leg to three also. The second phase Sabrina takes 1, 2, 1, 3, 4, 5, 3. Sabrina takes one point (4 – 3 = 1) to her Left Arm; and two points to her Right Leg (5 – 3 = 2).*





**Psychic Invisibility****Mysticism—PSI**

Psychic Invisibility is a skill operating similarly to Project Thought, and is closely related to its illusory powers. For a mystic, though, the concept of cloaking oneself in illusion is alien and mechanical. Psychic Invisibility is a blending process, where mystics attempt to merge with the universe, to hone their psychic vibrations to match the cosmic background and broadcast this harmony to other minds around. Mystics are not veiled in illusion as they are camouflaged.

In practice, Psychic Invisibility is simple to use. The mystic spends five minutes attuning themselves to the frequency of the universe, and makes their Psychic Invisibility test, modified as per the usual circumstances—it is easier to concentrate on being invisible when you're not under stress. The attained Stage of Success can be used in two ways, at the mystic's option: Each Stage can subtract one minute from the time required for universal tuning, or it can increase the difficulty level of Observation checks for every living thing that can perceive the *invisible* mystic, including friends and allies.

Psychic Invisibility does not actually make the mystic invisible. Instead, it clouds the perceptions of all living things that see, hear, touch, or smell the protected mystic, as long as they perceive the mystic unaided. Invisible mystics are still fully visible to mechanical senses—they show up on TV cameras, but the camera operator observing the mystic would have trouble seeing them live, looking through the viewer plainly reveals the mystic. Mystics using Psychic Invisibility photograph normally, and they trip infrared and sonic sensors, etc.

Mystics cannot use Psychic Invisibility with other psionic skills, except for *Astral Travel* when the mystic is in the astral dimension. Mystics can also use it while in a trance to shield their body from physical perception. However the mystic can perform no other activities when doing so. In the astral dimension a mystic can use Psychic Invisibility to screen herself from notice by others in the astral dimension. In the astral dimension Psychic Invisibility works against empathic perceptions by lowering the Success Stage of Human Empathy links by one per attained Stage of Success of the Psychic Invisibility skill check. If the searching empath manages even a Basic Success despite all subtractions, the Invisibility is stripped away and the shielded mystic exposed.

Outside of the astral dimension, Psychic Invisibility is not as effective against empathic perceptions. It still lowers the success stage of Human (or Darkling) Empathy as before, but any success at all with Human Empathy alerts the probing empath that there is another presence in the area, and that it is shielded. Success with this skill also allows the attained Stages of Success to be applied as difficulty modifiers to a psion's Psionic Scan and a mystic's Psionic Trace (Aura Reading) attempts.

**Psychic Mask****Mysticism—PSI**

Psychic Invisibility provides a mystic concealment for her physical body, but does not protect her from psychic detection by other empaths. Psychic Mask does for the mystic's empathic-self what Psychic Invisibility does for her physical-self. It does this by using the same principles, namely attuning her psychic "signature" to that of the background so as to blend the edges and make her aura indistinguishable from normal psychic noise.

By concentrating on the inner self, mystics can shield their mind, that is, their psyche, from detection and disturbance. In doing so, mystic pulls all her empathic emanations back into her trance state. Concentration on the inner self, on blending with the background of the universe, is far more effective in a trance--the standard trance benefits and drawbacks apply. The mystic then performs an Easy [Psychic Mask] test with difficulty modified according to the standard circumstances. If the mystic is successful, each Stage Of Success achieved is subtracted from the Power Level attained by any other empath's attempts directed at them. And once this success is achieved, it can be maintained as long as the mystic is conscious. The main drawback to Psychic Mask is the necessity of maintaining empathic "silence." Any use of any other empathic skill except Psychic Invisibility nullifies Psychic Invulnerability. Psychic Mask does not do anything to mask the mystic's physical form. Such trickery is covered under Psychic Invisibility.

*Example: Claudia decides to shield herself from psychic probes, knowing that there are empathic Dark Minions about. Her Psychic Mask asset is 10, and she's in a relaxed environment. She rolls 4 and succeeds; her power level is 18, giving her a Stage Two success. Later, a bloodkin vampire attempts to lure her close with its illusion. The vampire achieves a Stage Four success with its Project Thought skill,*





*normally enough to project an auditory and visual image. Claudia is still protected, though, and subtracts two Stages from the illusion—she sees the illusion as a ghostly hologram, and clearly sees the vampire through it. She brings up her sawed-off shotgun ...*

### Dream Intrusion

### Mysticism—PSI

As noted for the Greater Empathy skill, a mystic can slip into another mind more easily when the subject has retreated to the subconscious during a dream-state. Normally entering into a sleeping mind can result in the mystic being sucked into a whirlpool of the subject's disjointed memories, images, fancies, and unfettered emotions deep in the subject's subconscious—a dangerous place for the mystic to be. Unlike using the Human Empathy skill to "eavesdrop" on a dream—watching it like a person watching a vid show—the Dream Intruding mystic actually feels the mental backlash and can be battered by the subject's wild subconscious.

Dream Intrusion is a skill similar to Project Thought, but which actually inserts the mystic into the subject's dream. The subject can perceive the mystic's form, should the mystic desire it and can interact with the mystic. The mystic can alter her appearance in the dream, taking on any form she feels appropriate.

While in the dream, mystics use the Dream Intrusion skill to alter the subject's dream, changing it to their liking. This can be dangerous, as the subject's subconscious can resist the changes. A successful Greater Empathy task is required to contact the subject's subconscious. Players should refer to the Greater Empathy description to note that entering the subconscious of a dreaming subject requires less Stages of Success. Once contacted, going into the dream is an Easy [Dream Intrusion] task. Altering the dream is an Average [Dream Intrusion] task.

Each time the mystic changes the dream, the subject's subconscious will resist. In this case, the combat requires a task check with the base difficulty of Average [Dream Intrusion – subject's

Willpower]. If the mystic fails the test, she is rudely tossed out and has to return to her body. The player must check as if their mystic is regaining control in one phase, and if the result is a Catastrophic Failure, she must roll on the Trance table for one phase.

If a mystic encounters a hostile empath inside the subject's dream, Dream Intrusion can be used as a "reality changer," allowing the mystic to change the dream's "reality" to fight the foe. Both empaths use their Dream Intrusion or Project Thought—Dark Minions specializing in nightmares use their Project Thought at full strength—in the combat, making Difficult tests. Subtract the subject's Willpower asset from both combatant's power levels, unless the mystic is clearly aiding the subject, in which case the subject's Willpower asset is added to the assisting mystic's power level. Subtract the higher power level from the lower, and determine the winner's Stage Of Success. Resultant Power Levels of Stages Two through Five repel the loser, forcing them from the subject's dreams—mystics have to return to their bodies as described above. A Stage Six level forces the loser from the dreams, as above, and also requires the loser to succeed at an Easy [CON] test or suffer heart failure—in the dream the loser dies horribly.

An alternate use of Dream Intrusion is where a mystic allows another person into his own dreams. This requires a successful Difficult [Greater Empathy] test, followed by a successful Average [Dream Intrusion] test, before the mystic goes to sleep. The mystic and the others to be allowed into her dreams must sleep touching one another. Using the skill in this fashion is not as useful as intruding on another's dreams, but if a mystic is under subconscious attack, he can thereby bring allies into his dreams, where the subconscious makes them active participants in the dreams and they can assist in repelling the attack—allies add their Willpower asset to the subject's in dream combat. One situation where this is extremely useful when encountering a Dream Master in a dream world. Other mystics can enter the dream of the attacked person and even bring along non-empaths in to assist.



### Psionic Trace

### Mysticism—PSI

*Psionic Trace* is a family of skills forming a cascade. The cascade specialties follow the normal cascade rules for skill advancement. Up to level three, the other skills in the cascade have a value of ½ the specialist cascade skill. For example, a mystic gaining level 5 in Psychic Tracking would have a level 2 (½ of 5, rounded down) in Psychometry, Beacon, and Aura Reading. The *Psionic Trace* cascade consists of the following skills:

#### Psionic Trace Skill Cascades

Cascade	Base Difficulty
Psychometry	Easy
Psychic Tracking	Easy
Beacon	Easy
Aura Reading	Easy

#### Psychometry

Psychometry allows the mystic to look into the past of an object, "reading" the shifting aura of time-stream existence that accrues to all matter. Psychometry does not require *Astral Travel* and is relatively safe, but requires that the mystic touch the item being probed. The mystic can perform Psychometry in a Trance state to receive its benefits.



The mystic must succeed at a Psychometry task check with the difficulty dependent on the amount of time the mystic wishes to probe back into the past. The amount of time the process takes is also dependent on this time-shift. To read the last hour of history is Easy and takes 30 seconds; to read the last day is Average and takes five minutes; to read the last week is Difficult and takes 30 minutes; to read the last year is Formidable and takes an hour. Reading any further back is Impossible and takes two hours for every 10 years. Normally, a simple success allows the mystic to read the highlights of the object's history—as the past flashes before the mystic's senses in fast motion, the mystic is able to remember only those occasions which most impressed him. An Outstanding Success means that the mystic can remember nearly every detail, and can “stop the film” and “rewind” back to review events of interest.

### Psychometry Effects

History	Duration	Difficulty
Last 1 hour	30 seconds	Easy
Last day	5 minutes	Average
Last week	30 minutes	Difficult
Last year	1 hour	Formidable
Over 1 year	2 hours / 10 years	Impossible

### Psychic Tracking

A mystic can follow the aura of another life through the whole of the multiverse. In theory, another life can be located anywhere. In practice, actual distance limits the effectiveness of the tracking, although it is easier to find those persons more attuned to the oneness of the universe than those whose auras are dim or dark.

In order to use Psychic Tracking, the mystic must have experience of the aura of the life she will track. To perform this, the mystic typically moves into a trance, Astral Travels to the astral dimension, then declares her intention of finding the entity who has that familiar aura. In theory, the mystic zips right to the place in the astral dimension corresponding to the location on the outside. In practice there are limits to the physical range.

Once in the astral dimension, the mystic must pass a successful Easy [Psychic Tracking + subject's PSI] test to locate the subject. The subject's PSI rating is a measure of the entity's aura strength. The mystic faces the usual empathic task circumstantial difficulty and receives the benefits of being in a trance, but applies additional difficulty modifiers due the physical range to the subject. The following table lists the range-based difficulty modifiers.

### Psychic Tracking Range Limits

Mystic's Range to Subject	Difficulty Modifier
Mystic's PSI × 10 km	+1 (easier)
Mystic's PSI × 200 km	0 (no change)
Mystic's PSI × 2,000 km	−1 (harder)
Mystic's PSI × 20,000 km	−2 (harder)
> the Mystic's PSI × 20,000 km	−4 (harder)

The attained level of success determines how much the mystic was able to tell about the subject's movements.

### Psychic Tracking Results

Stage	Effect
Basic Success	Subject's current general location
Stage Two	Subject's current exact location
> Stage Three	Can backtrack on the subject's movements for 24 hours per additional stage.

For example, a Stage Five success means the mystic knows the subject's exact location and can follow its previous movements for up to 72 hours before the present time.

Psychic Tracking can be used while conscious and not in a trance, but only the relative direction from the mystic's current location can be discerned, regardless of the result.

### Beacon

A mystic with the Beacon skill can project a strong emotional thought pattern that serves as a *psychic beacon*. The beacon can be sensed in the physical world as well as the astral dimension, and all who know the mystic and can read auras can immediately identify the beacon as belonging to the mystic. The beacon bears a distinctive aura, and reduces to Easy all difficulties of any Psychic Tracking attempts aimed at that mystic. Searching mystics using the Psychic Tracking skill can home in on the beacon by adding the Beacon skill attained Stage of Success to their own Psychic Tracking Stage of Success. The Beacon skill's attained Stage of Success also determines how long the mystic can maintain the beacon on a single attempt. The cubed Stage of Success is the number of hours the beacon can be maintained, even through unconsciousness.

For example, a Stage Three result allows a searching mystic to add three Stages of Success to their Psychic Tracking outcome. It also allow the Beaconsed mystic to maintain her beacon for 27 hours ( $3 \times 3 \times 3 = 27$  hours). Once established, the mystic can stop a Psychic Beacon with a single thought. Players should note that mystics may perform other actions including the use of other psionic skills while maintaining a beacon. Players should also note that the mystic's beacon is also easily sensed by other empathic beings, including minions who are more adept at locating empathic use than human mystics.

### Aura Reading

All life has an aura an empathic signature. Inanimate objects can also have auras imbued through the long emotional attachment of their owners. Life auras are always much brighter and more distinct than the auras attached to inanimate objects. The mystic can glean information from the aura's color—auras tainted by the Dark Masters feature a sickening green-black-purple veined glow surrounding them. The only way for a mystic to hide an aura is through Psychic Mask.

Aura Reading is accomplished in the same fashion as Human Empathy, except that additional stages of success can only increase the area sensed or sense additional people. The mystic must succeed at an Easy [Aura Reading] test. All the trance's benefits apply when the mystic performs Aura Reading while in a trance state. A mystic can also read auras while using *Astral Travel* when



observing another dimension; otherwise, the mystic must be awake and able to see the location they are reading. A successful Aura Reading will tell the mystic the following facts about the subject or subjects being read:

- Subject's existence, even if hidden behind cover.
- Numbers of subjects in an observed volume
- Subject's emotional and physical state.
- Taint of a Dark Masters' influence.

Sensing the aura of an inanimate object is one level of difficulty greater than reading living auras. A successful reading of an inanimate object's aura allows the mystic to guess at the emotion the owner most closely associated with the object, and allows the mystic to become familiar with the owner's aura. Players should note that reading an aura gives the mystic sufficient experience of the aura to enable Psychic Tracking. It does not identify the owner, or reveal anything else about the object—for more information the mystic must use Psychometry. However, a mystic who identifies the aura of an object and later spots the same aura on a person can be sure that the person is the owner of the object in question.

## Neuropathic Cluster

While all the skills in the generic empathy skills cluster are available to characters, the following skills are only available to the neuropath specialist.

### Neuropathic Skills

Neuropathy Skill Cluster	Base Difficulty
Pyrokinesis	Easy
Cryokinesis	Easy
Electrokinesis	Easy
Telekinesis	Easy
Mind Blast	Average
Compulsion	Average

### Pyrokinesis

### Neuropathy—PSI

The neuropath has the ability to increase the temperature of a target object or life-form by using their Pyrokinesis skill. The effects of pyrokinesis are not immediate, but progress through stages with each stage taking approximately 5 seconds or one combat phase. Nothing happens in the same phase as the skill attempt, but heating begins the phase after the task check. Therefore, a Stage Six Success begins with the Basis Success effects on the next phase, then takes six combat phases—thirty seconds or one complete combat turn—to attain Stage Six effects. The neuropath must maintain concentration on the target through each stage as a *continuing action*. Once a neuropath attains their final success level, she can subsequently maintain that level by continuing to concentrate—also a continuing action. For example, once 20 liters of water have begun to boil, the neuropath can continue boiling it by continuing to concentrate. Once concentration stops the temperature returns to normal at a rate equal to one level per 5 seconds—the reverse of heating it up. The Pyrokinesis Effects table lists the possible outcomes. The volume of effect is spherical with a radius equal to the neuropath's pyrokinesis skill asset in meters.

Note that the effects of Pyrokinesis can be offset through the successful use of Cryokinesis. For each stage of success in cryokinetic skill use, the pyrokinetic stage of success is reduced by one. For example, a neuropath attacks with pyrokinesis attaining a Stage Five success. A Pale responds with a cryokinetic attack attaining a Stage 4 success, the net effect is a pyrokinetic attack against the Pale with a Basic Success.

### Cryokinesis

### Neuropathy—PSI

The neuropath can lower the temperature of an object or life-form by forcing an entropic heat-exchange. Like pyrokinesis, the effects are not immediate, but progress through stages each taking 5 *seconds* beginning on the phase after the skill success. The neuropath must maintain concentration on the target for the duration of the effects or the process begins to reverse.

**REVERSAL:** For each attained cryokinesis Stage of Success in an attack, it takes 5 minutes for a human-sized body to recover. For example, attaining a power level of Stage Four requires the victim spend 20 minutes to recover—and then only if a heat source is available to counter the cold. The Cryokinesis Effects table lists the possible effects—actual details of the effects are up to the referee. The range is equal to the neuropath's cryokinesis skill level (asset) in meters.

Pyrokinesis can be used to oppose the effects of cryokinesis. See the “Pyrokinesis” skill entry, above. Players should note that when using cryokinesis and attaining the listed Stage of Success, a lesser effect cannot be selected. So if the Neuropath wanted to cool some too-hot coffee and rolled extremely well, the cup could instead explode into a spray of ice crystals. Control is always an issue for neuropaths.

### Electrokinesis

### Neuropathy—PSI

A neuropath can cause the flow of electrical current by relieving the electron's propensity to stay in its orbital clouds. Electricity is not created, but caused to flow. This effect can be invisible to observers or very dramatic depending on the usage. Based on the stage of success attained during the skill check, a varying amount of electrical current can be induced to flow in directions specified by the empath. There must be a source of a charge, meaning that electricity must be available from a source, but where the electricity goes is up to the empathy overcoming resistive circuits. Typically, the effects manifest in a number of damage dice available to be applied to the target. However, the electricity must have a mostly conductive path to the target or the electricity *arcs*—jumps over intervening air—according to the Electrokinesis Effects table. The Electrokinesis Effects table lists the damage resulting from attained stages of success. While failure means nothing happens, Critical Failure means that the electrical charge follows a random path, often hitting a random target. Metal, water, and most organics are conductive to some degree. Note that higher level results will most likely cause electrical fires, the smell of ozone, hair to stand on end, and may otherwise trip breakers such that the electrical source ceases shortly after tapping it.

For dramatic effect the neuropath can draw from multiple sources into herself and use advance stages of success to fire lightning at targets. Less dramatic uses, for example, include opening an electrical lock, shorting out a security card reader, or powering the motors driving a blast door.



## Pyrokinesis Effects

<i>Stage of Success</i>	<i>Cold Creature Damage</i>	<i>Water to Boil (liters)</i>	<i>Effects on Inanimate Objects</i>	<i>Effects on Creatures</i>
Basic	1D6	4-	Objects get hot to the touch. Gasoline of other highly flammable substances may become ignited (20%)	Human-sized creatures are hot and break into a sweat.
2	1D6 + 3	20	If the neuropath has targeted a small object (less volume than 20 liters of water), the object will become hot enough to inflict painful blisters on any creature touching it. Gasoline or other highly flammable substances may be ignited (60%).	Human-sized creatures suffer heat exhaustion—nausea, profuse perspiration, weakness—making the target creature's task checks one level more difficult (–1).
3	2D6	50	Ignites paper, cotton cloth, and other readily flammable materials.	Human-sized creatures suffer heat prostration—headaches, dry skin, and loss of concentration. Conscious target perform all other tasks at a penalty of two difficulty levels (–2).
4	2D6 + 4	100	Ignites wood, synthetic cloth, and other flammable materials.	Targets suffer a possible loss of consciousness (Average [CON] or pass out). Conscious targets perform all other tasks with a penalty of two difficulty levels (–2).
5	3D6	200	Effect “cooks-off” explosives like small arms ammunition, grenades, plastic explosives and dynamite.	Human-sized creatures suffer severe heat prostration with the added effects of delirium and hallucination. Targets suffer 1D6 physical damage to the head hit location.
6	5D6	400	Ignites anything flammable and scorches anything non-flammable.	Causes 1D6 physical damage applied to every hit location and gives the effects of severe heat prostration. Conscious targets must make a Difficult [CON] test or pass out. Other skill checks suffer a –2 difficulty level penalty.
7	10D6	600	Existing fires spread to in intensity and volume.	Effect causes 2D6 damage applied to every hit location and continues to give the effects of severe heat prostration to conscious targets. Targets are reduced to zero Initiative and lose consciousness upon failing a Formidable [CON] test.
8	Cold creatures explode	1,000	Anything flammable bursts into flame, non-flammable objects radiate heat, appearing to be red-hot.	Human-sized targets burst into open flame suffering the effects of gasoline fire damage (see Burns on page 131 in the Conspiracy Rules core rules book). Burning targets fall unconscious upon failing an Impossible [CON] test.
9	Stage 8	2,000	Flammable objects are reduced to ash, merely dispersing in the heat-induced wind. Non-flammable objects begin to liquefy, metal flows, molten, white hot. Concrete and stone flow like magma glowing red-hot.	Target begins to melt taking 4D6 to each location. If a Critical wound is taken to the head, it explodes.
10	Stage 8	4,000	Objects that have kept their shape, i.e., did not melt into a flow, will explode.	The target object vaporizes; the target creature explodes in a flaming gas ball.



## Cryokinesis Effects

Stage of Success	Water to Freeze (liters)	Effects on Inanimate Objects	Effects on Creatures
Basic	½	Makes objects uncomfortably cold to the touch.	Makes a human-sized creature uncomfortably cold.
2	5	Water in the hand will freeze on contact causing the hand to stick to the object.	Human-sized creatures shiver uncontrollably.
3	20	Moisture in 30 cubic meter volume lightly freezes and falls as snow.	Human-sized creature's movement reduced by half (50%).
4	60	Frost forms on metal objects. Batteries stop working. Snow volume increases to 100 cubic meters.	Effect causes the further freezing of creatures further reducing their movement to 75% and increasing the difficulty of their tasks (-1). Hypothermia sets in—lips turn blue, target is confused.
5	120	Frost forms on all objects. Chemical lubricants fail causing machinery to stop. Organic objects less than 100-liters in volume freeze hard.	Creatures failing an Easy [CON] test will fall unconscious due to advanced hypothermia. Creatures passing this test have their movement reduced by 90% and suffer a penalty of two difficulty levels (-2) added to task checks.
6	240	Hard frozen organic objects shatter. Metals become brittle; non-treated glass shatters; frozen water is no longer slick.	Conscious creatures failing a Difficult [CON] test will fall unconscious due to advanced hypothermia. Effect inflicts one die of damage (1D6) to each body location due to frostbite. External heating and clothing do not stop this damage.
7	440	Two centimeters of hoarfrost covers everything in a 400-cubic meter volume.	Causes victims to fall into a coma. Creatures not naturally frozen will die after 5 minutes unless treated.
8	560	Metal structural components become break, causing structural failure and collapse. Two centimeters of hoarfrost covers 1,000 cubic meter volume.	Causes 1D3 reduction to the INT attribute due to the formation of ice crystals damages the brain.
9	2,000	Air and other gasses start to liquefy.	Causes the immediate death in any creature not frozen by nature.
10	4,000	Warm objects (normal temperatures) introduced into the frozen volume shatter due to differential expansion.	Allows freezing of up to 4000 liters of water. Target creature or object shatters.



**Electrokinesis Effects**

Stage of Success	Damage Dice	Arc Jump Length
Basic	1	1 mm
2	2	1 cm
3	4	10 cm
4	8	1 m
5	12	10 m
6	14	15 m
7	18	20 m
8	24	30 m
9	48	90 m
10	100	120 m

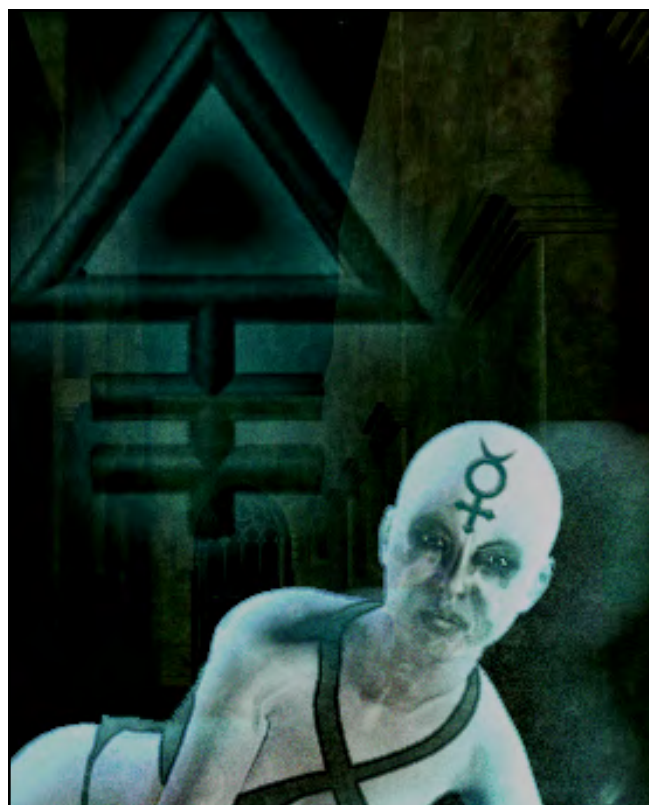
**Telekinesis****Neuropathy—PSI**

By using Telekinesis, the neuropath can move objects, including herself without physically touching them. Each attained Stage of Success allows the neuropath to move a number of kilograms/meter during combat. For instance a Basic Success allows 10 kg to move 1 meters, 1 kg to move 10 meter, or 100 kg to move 10 cm. Neuropaths with this skill can *combine* with other neuropaths to lift and move massive objects with precision (see “Combining” on page 9). For example, ten darkling neuropaths could use a nice safe ritualistic setting in cooperation to move that 10 ton block covering the gateway to their Dark Master’s domain.

Weapons and devices can be manipulated telekinetically provided the neuropath can sense them (see the object or remote sense it). However, melee tasks performed telekinetically receive –2 difficulty shift (more difficult). Players should note that to attain combat-level quickness, the neuropath must attain 10 meters per phase of speed when performing telekinetic melee combat. This means that to strike or block using telekinesis, the object must be going at a rate of at least 10 meters in one phase. To equate to throwing something at a target, the telekinetically-moved object must attain a movement rate of 20 meters per phase of speed..

**Telekinesis Effects**

Stage of Success	Mass Moved 1 meter
Basic	10 kg
2	100 kg
3	1,000 kg
4	2,000 kg
5	5,000 kg
6	10,000 kg
7	50,000 kg
8	100,000 kg
9	300,000 kg
10	500,000

**Mind Blast****Neuropathy—PSI**

By using the Mind Blast the neuropath strikes out at enemy minds around him, in some cases causing physical wounds, including exploding heads. The radius of effect is called the Mental Blast Radius and is the product of the Stage of Success and the neuropath’s PSI attribute. Every sentient entity in the Mental Blast Radius is affected by the blast. Using the Mind Blast Effects table and cross-referencing the neuropath’s attained Power Level results in a die modifier (DM) to use on the Mind Blast Damage table. Roll 1D6 for each target in the blast radius, even targets that are hidden or concealed, and add the DM. Consult the Mind Blast Damage table to find the effects. Empathic shielding, physical or mental, can resist this damage.

**Mind Blast Effects**

Stage of Success	Effect Die Mod (DM)	Mental Blast Radius
Basic	0	Neuropath’s PSI in meters
2	+1	2 x PSI meters
3	+2	3 x PSI meters
4	+3	4 x PSI meters
5	+4	5 x PSI meters
6	+6	6 x PSI meters
7	+8	10 x PSI meters
8	+10	20 x PSI meters
9	+12	50 x PSI meters
10	+14	100 x PSI meters

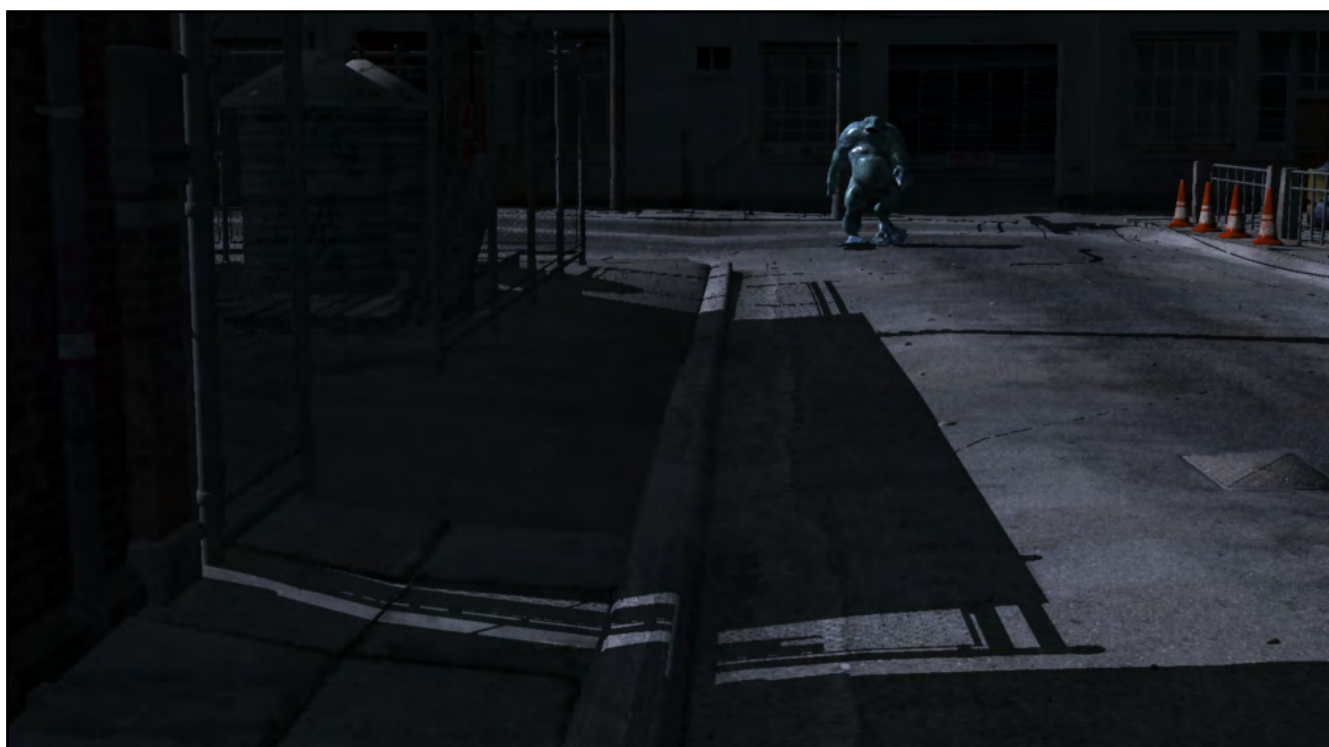


## Mind Blast Damage

<i>1D6 + DM*</i>	<i>Damage</i>
1	No effect**
2	No effect**
3	No effect**
4	Stunned for 1D6 combat phases.
5	Stunned for 1D6 combat phases.
6	Stunned for 1D6 combat phases.
7	Stunned for 1D6 combat turns.
8	Stunned for 1D6 combat turns.
9	Stunned for 1D6 minutes.
10	Stunned for 1D6 minutes.
11	Average [CON] or fall unconscious. Success still stunned for 1D6 combat turns.
12	Formidable [CON] or fall unconscious for 2D6 minutes. Success. Success still stunned for 1D6 combat turns.
13	Fall unconscious for 2D6 minutes.
14	Fall unconscious for 2D6 minutes.
15	Fall unconscious for 2D6 minutes. Reduction of Intelligence attribute by 1D3 (minimum 1) for 1 week.
16	Fall unconscious for 2D6 minutes. Reduction of Education attribute by 1D6 (minimum 1) for 1 week.
17	Fall unconscious for 2D6 minutes. Memory erased for 1D6 weeks.
18	Fall unconscious for 2D6 minutes. Take 1D6 damage to head. On Critical Wound head explodes.
19	Fall unconscious. Take 2D6 damage to head. On Critical Wound head explodes.
20	Head explodes (or whatever contains the brain)

\*DM is obtained from the Mind Blast Effects Table based on attained Power Level.

\*\*Note that with this outcome, the target still loses its action for this combat turn.  
For the Stun/Consciousness result consult Conspiracy Rules 1.1, page 125.





**Compulsion****Neuroathy—PSI**

A neuropath can compel one or more sentient entities to perform a series of actions by using the Compulsion skill. The neuropath must be of the same species as her target because the ability requires similar target brain structures to those of the neuropath. The neuropath can effect up to two people using Compulsion from a range of PSI x 5 meters, but the neuropath must maintain concentration on controlled targets at all times. Breaking the neuropath's concentration, breaks the compulsion; the neuropath can use no other psionic skills while using the Compulsion skill.

Effected targets are controlled—to a greater or lesser extent—until the target breaks the compulsion. The target can break the compulsion in two ways, both of which require a Formidable [Willpower] test. Should the test result in an Outstanding Success, the target breaks the compulsion and stuns the neuropath for 1D6 combat turns. If the target has a normal success, the target acts on his own for that turn. If the target wins the compulsion fight for two successive combat turns, the compulsion is broken, but the neuropath is not stunned. Otherwise, until the compulsion is broken twice in a row, the target must perform the control check or the neuropath gets to control his body. Note that the neuropath does not get access to any of his target's skills or abilities.

Neuropaths cannot Compel mystics shielded with the Psychic Mask ability. Psions cannot be Compelled when the psion is protected by his Mind Shield, if it is active.

**Compulsion Effects**

<b>Stage of Success</b>	<b># Persons Effected</b>	<b>Degree of Control</b>
Basic	1	Target movement is halved. Target performs tasks at 1 difficulty level harder. Initiative reduced by ½.
2	1	Target is frozen, unable to move or perform actions. Target can speak normally.
3	1	Target is moved by neuropath at ½ rate and haltingly. Target can still speak.
4	1	Target is moved by the neuropath at full rate (no running), haltingly. Target performs actions directed by the neuropath. Target can still speak, but cannot yell.
5	1	Target is moved by the neuropath at full rate, smoothly. Target performs actions directed by the neuropath. Target cannot speak.
6	2	Target acts and is moved by the neuropath. Target cannot speak.
7	2	Target acts and is moved by the neuropath. The target speaks what the neuropath desires, haltingly.
8	2	Target acts and is moved by the neuropath. The target speaks what the neuropath desires, smoothly. Target does not remember his actions.
9	2	Target acts, speaks, and is moved by the neuropath. Neuropath sees what the target sees. Target does not remember his actions.
10	2	Target acts, speaks, and is moved by the neuropath. Neuropath senses what the target senses (all senses). Target does not remember his actions.



## Psion Cluster

The psionic school skills set centers around the power of the mind, using the mind to control one's own or others' minds.

### Psionic Skills

<i>Psionic Skill Cluster</i>	<i>Base Difficulty</i>
Focus	Easy
Mental Attack	Easy
Mind Shield	Easy
Psionic Scan	Easy
Remote Sensing	Easy
Self-Healing	Average
Telepathy	Easy
Teleportation	Difficult

### Focus

### Psionics—PSI

The Focus skill is the basis of every psion's empathic abilities in a way similar to the mystic's trance. But for the psion, the use of the Focus is mandatory prior to the use of any other psionic skill, even generic empathic skills. Success for the Focus skill is checked using the same difficulty modifiers as the other psionic skill test. If the Focus check fails, the psion does not have to do the follow-on skill check. If the Focus succeeds, the psion can add the attained Focus Power Level (Stages of Success) to the subsequent skill check as positive difficulty modifiers. The psionic can halt the use of the subsequent empathic skill if the Focus result is deemed insufficient. Catastrophic Failure of the Focus check stuns the psion for her next action—if in tactical mode, for 1 minute if not; otherwise there are no other backlash or ill effects. This is a small price to pay versus the catastrophic backfire effects from some skills.

### Mental Attack

### Psionics—PSI

As the most powerful psion attack, the Mental Attack allows the psion to enter another mind and cause it to malfunction. The Mental Attack is similar in results to the neuropath's Mind Blast attack, but more focused. The range of the attack is equal to the

psion's skill level in meters. A telepathic link (see "Telepathy" on page 36) must previously have been established to enable the attack. Players should note that the psionic must make a Focus test prior to establishing the telepathic link and another prior to the Mental Attack.

The Mental Attack is an opposed empathic attack using the target's current Willpower when calculating Power Level. The impact to the target depends on the Stage of Success. After calculating the Power Level, cross-reference the Stage of Success on the "Mental Attack" on page 33. If the damage inflicted by the Mental Attack causes a Critical Wound to the head, the target's head explodes immediately, killing the target.

The base task difficulty is Easy, but is modified due to the mental nature of the target (see the "Dissimilar Mind Modifiers" on page 33). Note that the psion can attack the minds of other creatures but suffers a difficulty based on the creature type from the Mental Attack Difficulty table. Psionics can combine to extend the Mental Attack range and damage. Range is extended by 10 meters per additional psion, and the psion adds their Mental Attack skill to the Power Level calculation. The Psions have to all be telepathically linked.

### Dissimilar Mind Modifiers

<i>Intellect Type</i>	<i>Difficulty Shift</i>
Animal	0
Human, terrestrial insect	-1
ET, physical Darkling	-2
Non-corporeal creature	-3
Dark Lord, ET Biocomputer	-4
Base difficulty is Easy [Mental Attack]	

### Mind Shield

### Psionics—PSI

The Mind Shield is simply the will of the psion intensified by her sheer mental discipline. Mind Shield is typically the first skill learned by the psion and, when operating, is automatically triggered upon mental empathic attack. The Mind Shield lowers the effectiveness

### Mental Attack

<i>Stage of Success</i>	<i>Effects</i>
Basic	Stunned for 1D6 combat phases.
2	Stunned for 1D6 combat turns.
3	Stunned for 2D6 minutes.
4	Average [CON] or fall unconscious. Success still stunned for 1D6 combat turns.
5	Formidable [CON] or fall unconscious for 2D6 minutes. Success. Success still stunned for 1D6 combat turns.
6	Fall unconscious for 2D6 minutes.
7	Fall unconscious for 2D6 minutes. Memory erased for 1D6 weeks.
8	Fall unconscious for 2D6 minutes. Take 1D6 damage to head. On a Critical Wound head explodes.
9	Fall unconscious. Take 2D6 damage to head. On a Critical Wound head explodes.
10	Head explodes (or whatever contains the brain)

\* DM is obtained from the Mind Blast Effects Table based on attained Power Level.

\*\* Note that with this outcome, the target still loses its action for this combat turn.

For the Stun/Consciousness result consult Conspiracy Rules 1.1, page 125.





of mental empathic attacks against the psion or others she protects. When activating the Mind Shield, the base difficulty is Easy [Mind Shield] and the mandatory Focus check receives a +2 shift in difficulty level (easier) since willpower and concentration are linked. However, the psion may not use any other psionic skills while the Mind Shield is operating. When triggered, the psion makes a Power Level check to determine how many points (not stages) to add to their Willpower asset for this attack. The attacker uses this modified Willpower asset in calculation of the attacker's Stage of Success. In combat situations or where multiple empaths are attacking, the player makes a separate Power Level roll for each attack. The Mind Shield remains active for the psion's Mind Shield skill level in minutes, after which the psion must renew the Mind Shield with a new task check.

*For example, Jackson has a Willpower asset of 9 and has successfully activated his Mind Shield. Later he is probed by a Darkling using Project Thought. Jackson's Mind Shield is automatically triggered and Jackson's player rolls for a Power Level. Some lucky D10 rolls Nets Jackson a Power Level of 12 and Willpower Asset for this attack of 21. The Darkling must now subtract 21 instead of 9 from his power level.*

The psion can *protect* others with which they have previously established a telepathic link. The protected person adds the psion's attained Power Level to her own Willpower asset. All other difficulty factors apply. It takes three phases to put the Mind Shield in place on another mind: one to establish the telepathic link, one to establish the Mind Shield, and one to transfer the shield across the link.

Players should note that a Mind Shield is personal and cannot be *combined* with other psions.

### Psionic Scan

### Psionics—PSI

Properly trained psions are sensitive to the empathic emanations from other beings. While these emanations appear as clearly to the psion as heat waves off of a hot sidewalk, the psion does not see them with her eyes, but rather, they are *sensed*. The base difficulty after the psion's Focus check is Easy [Psionic Scan] subject to the normal empathic difficulty modifiers. Upon success, the psion senses all empaths or sentient creature with empathy or empathic skill, including plants in the sensed volume—a sphere centered on the psion. The psion can also tell if the empath is using an empathic skill at the time. The normal range is equal to the Psionic Scan skill level (not asset) in meters, but each Stage of Success greater than the Basic doubles the range. Empaths can hide from this scan using the Psychic Invisibility or Mind Shield empathic skills, but blocking the scan does not prevent other unshielded empaths from being detected. Players should note that this might lead to a false sense of security.

### Remote Sensing

### Psionics—PSI

By using the Remote Sensing skill, the psion can see, hear, and feel the objects or actions at a remote target location. The base difficulty of Easy—the normal empathic difficulty modifiers apply—allows sensing up to a distance equal to the psion's Remote Sensing skill level times 10 meters. The psion can increase the range, but with increased difficulty (see the "Remote Sensing Range" table, below). The psion's sensory radius is equal to her Remote Sensing skill level in meters.

#### Remote Sensing Range

Base Difficulty Level	Range
Easy	Skill × 10 meters
Average	Skill × 100 meters
Difficult	Skill × 10 kilometers
Formidable	Skill × 1,000 kilometers
Impossible	Skill × 10,000 kilometers
Impossible	Another dimension

*For example, Scarlettte has a Remote Sensing skill level of 3. She wants to see what is in the safe in the office next door. She is not even sure there is a safe, but she needs to see anyway. It is dark and she is tense, the task's base difficulty level is modified from Easy to Difficult. Scarlettte succeeds and rolls a Power Level of 13 for a Stage 2 Success. She uses sight (clairvoyance) for one stage and spends one Stage of Success on hearing (clairaudience). Scarlettte "sees" the safe and hears Joe-Bob Greeley eating something slurpy.*

Remote Sensing is actually a skill composed of several 'applications' or sensory interactions (sight, sound, smell, etc.) that allows the psion first-hand experience of a location at a distance. Remote Sensing remains in operation at the target point unless the psion breaks concentration. Nothing can block this action, except being in another dimension—psionic Remote Sensing cannot see past space-time barriers. However, the psion must concentrate and do nothing else while using this power. On a success, the psion can see, hear, feel, and in general, experience, the target location, including empathic energies. On a Basic Success, the psion receives input to the sense of her choice. Additional senses require additional Stages of Success (see the "Remote Sensing



## Remote Sensing Applications

Application	Sense	Stages of Success Cost To Add	Description
Clairvoyance	Vision	1	The psion uses this ability to 'see' with her mind's eye a vision of distant occurrences. The psion sees everything at the lighting levels that she would experience if she were centered in the Remote Sensing volume. Sights obscured from that location would not necessarily be seen.
Clairaudience	Hearing	1	The psion uses this ability to 'hear' things beyond normal hearing distances. Success in clairaudience allows the psion to sense any sound that can be heard if she were centered in the Remote Sensing volume, even if the sounds originate from beyond that volume. Larger volumes (greater than the default) allow the psion to know the direction of the sounds relative to her location.
Clairsentience	Touch	2	The psion uses this ability to 'feel' things with which they are not in physical contact. Anything in the Remote Sensing volume can be 'felt'. The psion can sense surface roughness, temperature, stickiness, sharpness, etc.
Clairalience	Smell	1	The psion uses this ability to 'smell' odors at locations beyond normal sensory distances. Any odor present in the Remote Sensing volume can be 'smelled'. If the psion has never experienced the odor, she may not be able to identify the source.
Clairgustance	Taste	2	The psion uses this ability to 'taste' things with which they are not in physical contact. Anything in the Remote Sensing volume can be 'tasted'. If the psion has never experienced the taste, she may not be able to identify it as a substance.
Empathic Sense	Empathy	3	Unlike the other applications, the psion can use this application if they have a level in the Psionic Scan skill. On a success and by allocating an additional three Stages, the psion can sense if there are empathic creatures in the Remote Sensing volume and if one of them is actively using an empathic skill. Success does not provide the nature of the creatures being sensed, nor the nature of the psionic skill in use. Rather the psion only knows that a creature is capable of psionic skills is in the volume and if psionic skills are being used at the moment of sensing.

Application" table on page 35). The psion allocates attained Stages of Success to get the sensory input she needs, but the psion can also allocate stages to increase her sensory *radius* by allocating Stages to multiply the Base radius, for example, by allocating 4 Stages to the sensory radius results for a Remote Sensing asset of 15 yields a radius of  $15 \times 4 = 60$  meters.

The psion can move the center of her Remote Sensing volume by making another test at a difficulty one level easier—Difficult becomes Average, Easy becomes automatic. The psion can move the center in any direction up to the psion's physical movement rate of 8 meters. The psion does not need to make another Focus test, the original Focus modifiers apply to the new Remote Sensing test. She is, after all, in the middle of a *focused* task.

## Self-Healing

## Psionics—PSI

The psion empathic discipline discourages the type of emotional ties needed to perform empathic healing on others—that mumbo-jumbo crap is left to the mystics. However, healing oneself is right in line with the tenets of mind-over-body that the Psion School promotes. Psion students can and do receive training in Self Healing which does more than just heal one's own wounds; it works in two distinct ways.

**HEALING WOUNDS:** The first is to heal bodily wounds or illnesses by accelerating the natural healing process. Upon a successful Focus task check, the Self Healing task is at an Average difficulty, subject to normal environmental difficulty modifiers. Each Stage of Success lowers the healing time of a wound by half to a minimum time of one hour. Self-Healing may only be used one time for each wound level-location combination (for example, serious-left arm) until the psion receives a wound there again. Note that the psion must be conscious during this action

A Catastrophic Failure when using Self-Healing indicates that the psion has overdone it. If Self-Healing a wound, the psion takes a number points of damage equal to the Stages of Success allocated to the location being healed.

**PERFORMANCE BOOST:** The second way psions use Self-Healing is to accelerate the body to heights of physical performance. The psion can allocate attained Stages of Success to one of the two following effects:

- Increase her own STR, AGL, or CON by 1 point per Stage of Success
- Increase her foot movement by 25% per Stage of Success





This performance boost lasts for one combat phase in which the psion can act. A Catastrophic Failure when Self-Healing a wound, the psion takes a number of D6 damage dice equal to the allocated Stages. Each die is applied to a random body location.

### Telepathy

### Psionics—PSI

This is the psion equivalent of Human/Animal/Darling Empathy, but without the touchy-feely mumbo-jumbo. The psion doesn't really probe into the target's psyche, as the Empathy skills do; instead, the psion monitors brain activity and 'listens' for subvocalized thoughts—almost everyone 'talks' in their heads when they think—and this is what the psion 'hears'—the surface

thoughts. Advanced Stages of Success for Telepathy allows the psion to manipulate the brain's reflexes and emotion centers to stimulate the brain into the desired state, and to 'speak' subvocalized mental speech into the subject's consciousness appearing as his own surface thoughts. At extreme power levels, the psion can seize control of her target.

After the mandatory Focus task check, the base difficulty level of Telepathy is determined by the familiarity of the subject mind to the psionic as shown in the *Dissimilar Mind Modifiers* table, below. If the psion is only trying to establish a telepathic contact with one person, the difficulty listed in the table applies. If establishing contact with multiple minds, use the highest difficulty that applies.

### Telepathy Depth

Stage of Success	Depth of Contact
Basic	The psion can sense the current emotions OR hear surface thoughts. Can establish a link used for other psionic skills.
2	The psion can implant an emotion OR surface thoughts. The target knows the words or emotions are coming from an outside source.
3	The psion can hear and respond as in a normal conversation in the target's mind. The target knows the words are coming from an outside source.
4	The psion can plant a deep emotion. The target is unaware that the emotion comes from an outside source.
5	The psion can implant thoughts that appear to the target as their own.
6	The psion can access the target's memories.
7	The psion can control the target's actions, but the target is aware of the outside control.
8	The psion can lock the target's personality into a subconscious <i>jail</i> allowing another entity and unopposed possession. The target knows they were forced into the jail by an outside source, but not necessarily the identity. The target falls into a coma.
9	The psion can make the target say what the psion speaks. The target is unaware that they said anything and that the control was from the outside.
10	The psion can shift the target's mind into a subconscious jail and control the body. The psion has full access to the target's memories and personality traits and can mimic the target's behavior. The target remains aware of the intrusion and loss of control. The target will suffer a mental health challenge as a result.



## Telepathy Outreach

Stage of Success	Number of Minds
Basic	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	All in a radius of 10 meters
7	All in a radius of 20 meters
8	All in a radius of 50 meters
9	All in a radius of 100 meters
10	All in a radius of 1,000 meters



Basic success reveals the presence and nature of all unshielded minds within a sphere with a radius equal to the attained Power Level in meters. The psion can then allocate attained Stages of Success to the type of result she wants (see the “*Telepathy Depth*” on page 36) or the number of minds linked (see the “*Telepathy Outreach*” on page 37).

Note that using this skill to force behavior on a target may cause a neuropathic awakening in the target.

The psion can use telepathy to form the *telepathic link* required by other psionic skill use (see “*Mental Attack*” on page 33). When using a telepathic link in this fashion, the psion can initiate a link with only one mind at a time. When *combining* with other empathys, the psion can accept any number of incoming telepathic links.

## Teleportation

## Psionics—PSI

Teleportation is the psion discipline version of Dimension Walk with slight differences and certain limits. Unlike Dimension Walk, the psion does not create a portal to enter and traverse a quantum proto-dimension to get to her destination. Neither does the psion teleport to a different proto-dimension or prime dimension—the Teleport skill operates totally within the psion’s current dimension. The Teleport skill allows the psion to shift into another probability reality—similar to a quantum proto-dimension, but not quite—then shift back again, hopefully somewhere else, and where the psionic wants to be. In the blink of an eye, a psionic can cover hundreds of meters of distance. Once again, the scientists don’t know how this is accomplished since little empathic energy is left and there is no detectable portal. Even the psions are unable to explain where they go when passing the distance without traversing through it. It works, and that’s enough for most.

Teleportation is a very hard skill to practice. After the usual Focus task check succeeds, the psionic must pass a Difficult [Teleportation] test. The psionic must be able to see the destination, but the psionic can use Remote Sensing to supply the necessary familiarity. Using Remote Sensing increases the difficulty to Formidable [Teleportation].

If the teleport is successful, then the psion teleports a number of meters in the direction of the destination equal to the attained Power Level (in meters). If the power level is less than the distance to the destination, then the teleporting psion reappears at the lesser distance, along a line drawn between starting position and destination. If the power level is greater than the distance to the destination, the extra distance is lost and the psion reappears at the destination.

Teleportation is fraught with dangers. If a teleporter reappears short, inside another object, whatever body part(s) is inside the object sustains an immediate Critical wound. If a teleporting psionic suffers a Catastrophic Failure, consult the *Teleport Catastrophic Failures* table, below.

## Teleport Catastrophic Failures

## 1D6 Roll

## Catastrophic Result

- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| 1-5 | The psion transports her Teleportation asset + 1D20 meters in a random direction.    |
| 6   | The teleporting psion disappears, and doesn’t reappear. Where he went? No one knows. |



## Sorcerer Cluster

Sorcery skills are focused on the opening, closing, and manipulation of portals to other dimensions and proto-dimensions.

### Sorcerer Skills

Sorcerer Skill Cluster	Base Difficulty
Close Portal	Easy
Open Portal	Easy
Phase	Average
Grab	Average
Change Environment	Easy
Sorcerous Flight	Average

#### Close Portal

#### Sorcery—PSI

When a sorcerer wants to close a portal opened by another empath, he uses his Close Portal skill. This includes portals that are incorporated into gates, independent ones opponents may use to enter or escape, and also applies to stopping opponent Change Environment attacks, which are based on the use of a portal.

Close Portal requires passing an Easy [Close Portal] test subject to the normal empathic use modifiers from the core rules.

When the sorcerer wishes to close the portal of another, he must attain a success stage equal to greater than that of the agency opening the portal. Closing a permanent portal—such as in a gate—requires a Stage Six success, plus the destruction of the portal's physical components.

When used to halt a Change Environment attack, successful use of the Close Portal skill allows the sorcerer to stop atmosphere, gravity, or temperature effects of the attack immediately upon success, and conditions revert to normal. Players should note that the Close Portal is ineffective against Change Environment (Energy and Special) attacks, since the portal used in those attacks does not remain open long enough to stop the sorcerous transfer.

Closing a portal is very picturesque in application—radiant lines of force connect the sorcerer and portal as the opposing forces interact. This interaction is very noticeable to darklings. When used in this fashion, the Close Portal skill is treated as “*Sorcerous Combat (special)*” when testing for *darkling detection* (see page 9).

Backlash from the use of this power occurs when the sorcerer closing the portal fails to succeed in overpowering the portal innate resistance. The difference between Stages of Success is applied in D6 damage to the sorcerer with each die randomly allocated to a hit location. For instance, Vincent tries closing a Stage Five portal and only attains a Stage Two success. So he takes 3D6 damage and rolls three times for hit location.

#### Open Portal

#### Sorcery—PSI

The Open Portal skill is very similar to the Dimension Walk skill in the generic Empathy skill cluster. However, the sorcerer, being a specialist in the opening and closing of interdimensional portals, can do more with the Open Portal skill than the Dimension Walk skill provides.

**QUANTUM DIMENSIONS:** When opening a portal to a quantum proto-dimension—the most common use of the Dimension Walk



skill—the sorcerer receives a +1 difficulty level (easier) to the task check.

**MECHANICS:** While the duration that a portal can remain open is the same as for when the Dimension Walk skill was used, the sorcerer is not immediately drawn through the portal when he creates it. The sorcerer can remain on the originating side of the portal as long as he desires, entering and transiting just before the portal collapses. For example, this allows the sorcerer to see that everyone gets through before the portal collapses.

**SCANNING:** By using Open Portal, a sorcerer can open a visual portal, a virtual peephole, and scan a nearby proto-dimension. The sorcerer must have knowledge of the proto-dimension to succeed. This task check is treated as “Dimension Walk to another dimension” for purposes of darkling detection, and allows the sorcerer to see what’s in the proto-dimensional neighborhood, in order to go to the right place. Note that the sorcerer’s face can be seen from the other side, providing an eerie countenance to those being observed.

**HOPPING:** A sorcerer can also use the Open Portal skill to travel the dimensions using short hops, staging from one proto-dimension to another, since some proto-dimensions can’t be reached without passing through others. The referee decides how many proto-dimensions the sorcerer has to travel through, and the sorcerer makes a separate Open Portal test for each, at one level of difficulty less than normal, for example, Easy becomes Automatic. Using this skill counts as “Dimension Walk



to another dimension” for purposes of darkling detection. The sorcerer has to spend an amount of time equal to 20 minus her Open Portal asset (20 – Open Portal skill level – PSI) in minutes, between hops, empathically recalculating her next jump. During this time, the local inhabitants have a chance to make the sorcerer’s acquaintance, something that the sorcerer may not find desirable.

During Open Portal operations, a Catastrophic Failure means that the sorcerer has tapped into the wrong dimension, usually totally at random, but up to the referee. The portal opens and remains stable for 1D20 *turns*. That means the portal will remain in existence for 30 seconds to 10 minutes. Things can pass through it both ways, including the sorcerer and nasty beasts. Note that Catastrophic Failure when scanning works slightly differently. For a scan that catastrophically fails, the ‘peephole’ expands to a full-sized portal one-way portal on the other side for 1D20 turns, so things can come through to the sorcerer, but he can’t go through to the dimension and still sees a ‘peephole’ from her side.

### Phase

### Sorcery—PSI

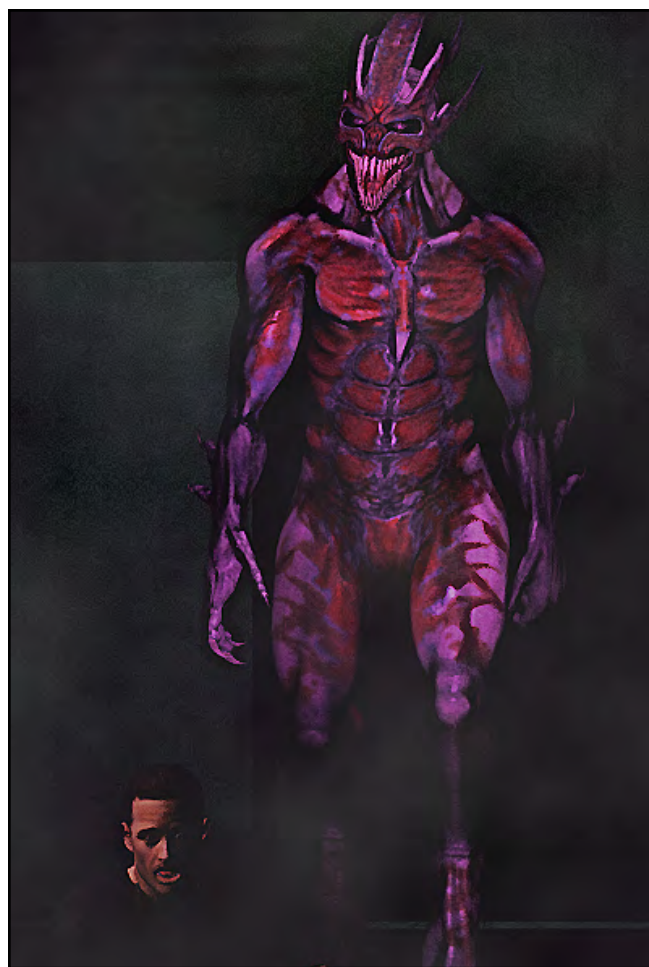
Perhaps the most useful skill to a sorcerer is the Phase skill—it is also one of the most difficult. To Phase the sorcerer opens a portal to another dimension or proto-dimension, but does not fully enter it, rather remaining balanced between dimensions in a condition known as the *out-of-phase* state. If done properly, Phasing conveys certain advantages upon the sorcerer. First, the sorcerer is immune to physical attacks from either proto-dimension—not being in one or the other. However, out-of-phase sorcerers may still act and be acted upon empathically. Second, the sorcerer can “move” in one dimension or another by changing his focus and physically moving—over hills, through doors, and so on. Finally, the sorcerer may at any time choose to step all the way through into either dimension—phasing completely into one dimension or the other.

Entering the out-of-phase state, takes an entire five-second action, but maintaining the out-of-phase state requires none. In order to Phase, the sorcerer must pass an Average [Phase] test, subject to the usual empathic use modifiers. The sorcerer remains in the out-of-phase state for 15 seconds for each Stage of Success (Stage of Success × 15 sec). Once out-of-phase, sorcerers remain in it without concentration, and may use other empathic skills.

While out-of-phase, the sorcerer can only touch objects that exist in both dimensions—what she is wearing or carrying. However, sorcerers may walk through walls and other solid obstacles, but only if the obstacle does not exist in one or the other of the dimensions.

Players should note that the use of the Phase skill is treated as ‘Extended Dimension Walk in a different dimension’ for the purpose of darkling detection.

Phasing backlash is hideous. A sorcerer who rolls a Catastrophic Failure when phasing partially enters both dimensions as normal, then exits abruptly before completely phasing. This can result in the sorcerer leaving body parts and internal organs in the wrong place when phasing back in. The sorcerer suffers 5D6 damage to one random hit location. If the damage suffered at that location reaches the Critical damage level, the body part so damaged is severed, left in the other dimension.



### Grab

### Sorcery—PSI

In a fashion similar to Phasing, the sorcerer opens a portal to another dimension or proto-dimension. The sorcerer then reaches through empathically and *grabs* something on the other side and pulls it back through. The “thing” recovered from the other dimension suffers any assimilation effects due to differences in the reality of the two dimensions. Other dimensions and proto-dimensions have a wide variety in their reality. Objects, living beings, energy, and so forth can be grabbed.

To Grab things from another dimension, the sorcerer must first pass an Average [Grab] test, subject to the usual empathic difficulty modifiers.

What exactly is grabbed depends on the proto-dimension and the power level of the Grab skill use. The thing that is drawn back in is limited by its volume. The sorcerer can pull things though having a volume of 1 cubic meter per each Stage of Success. For example, a Stage 4 Success allows 16 cubic meter thing to be pulled through—a small killer machine from *Mechaniaca*, a diseased cow from the *Plaguelands*, etc.

Note that is the sorcerer does not have a means of controlling the thing, or another means of protecting herself, the Grab skill may be very dangerous. On a Catastrophic Failure the target dimension was missed, or the expected location in that dimension is not what was accessed, so that something unexpected comes through.

In some sorcerer circles, the Grab attempt is shrouded in a deep ritual involving the symbology of demon summing and binding. In those rituals, the sorcerer uses Project Thought/



Emotion to place a compulsion into the vulnerable psyche of the entity being “summoned.” This skill may also be called Gate or Gating. One dark lord, Rasputin, uses this skill to snatch some protean genetic material, which he manipulates to torture his enemies.

Note that this skill can be very powerful, and also note that the sorcerer must have experience with the target dimension. The referee is encouraged to control access to proto-dimensions containing grab-able unbalancing “things.”

### Change Environment

### Sorcery—PSI

Sorcerers use the *Change Environment* skill to weaken the barriers between the dimensions and *borrow* some of the conditions “over there” by dragging that “environment” into the dimension they currently occupy. With this skill, a sorcerer can alter the content of the air, the atmospheric temperature, and the gravity in a confined area. The sorcerer can also use the skill as a sort of emergency life-support, in essence bringing her environment along on a trip into a hostile one.

In practice the sorcerer accesses *elemental* proto-dimensions—dimensions that are composed of the elemental components of the desired environmental aspect. All earthly energy forms have an elemental proto-dimension, as do the other aspects: proto-dimensions of air, gases, gravity (such as a proto-dimension containing a black hole or one with no gravity at all), as well as other *special* environments. The *Change Environment* skill allows the sorcerer to tap them all (so long as she is familiar with them).

The *Change Environment* is a skill with cascades as shown in the *Change Environment Cascade Skills* table, below, representing the way that the sorcerer can manipulate the environment. *Change Environment* affects a spherical area, with a radius equal to the sorcerer’s *Change Environment* cascade skill level in meters. The center of the sphere can be set at a range determined by the

attained Stage of Success. The range is 10 meters times the Stage of Success. Note that the sorcerer must see the point for the center of the sphere.

### Change Environment Cascade Skills

Atmosphere
Gravity
Temperature
Energy
Special

Psionically changing the environment requires a great deal of controlled, focused empathic power, which emanates through the multiverse sending a clear signal to nearby Dark Ones, and is treated as ‘*Sorcerous Combat*’ for purposes of darkling detection.

Sorcerers can use *Change Environment* in two ways: In Combat and as an Extended Use.

### Extended Use

*Change Environment* requires a skill test starting at Easy for the first environment change and becoming one difficulty level harder for each additional environment change. Normal empathic difficulty modifiers apply. Furthermore, the sorcerer must make a successful *Change Environment* skill test every 15 minutes or lose the dimensional merging—conditions revert to the original environment. The sorcerer may not use any other empathic power while maintaining this changed environment.

*For instance, if Nyquist is venturing through a proto-dimension of fire, and doesn’t want to burn. He lowers the temperature by reaching into a proto-dimension of extreme cold. He also brings along some*





of Earth's atmosphere so he can breathe. This is two environments, so every 15 minutes he has to succeed at an Average [*Change Environment* (Atmosphere or Temperature)] test to retain his more hospitable pocket environment.

Changing environments for extended lengths of time can achieve the following effects:

**EXTENDED USE OF ATMOSPHERE:** Merges the normal atmosphere with another, up to a 90% mix.

**EXTENDED USE OF GRAVITY:** Allows a change of up to 5 Gs when lessening the gravity, or up to 20 Gs when making it heavier. Some places just have too high a gravity for humans. A G is an Earth standard gravity, representing an acceleration of 9.8 meters (32 feet) per second per second (m/s<sup>2</sup>). Using weights, a 100-kg box weighs 220 pounds at 1G and 1,100 pounds at 5Gs.

**EXTENDED USE OF TEMPERATURE:** Modifies temperature to a range that the sorcerer specifies. As the range of temperatures among the proto-dimensions approaches the infinite, the sorcerer can alter local temperatures to fit her wishes.

**EXTENDED USE OF ENERGY:** Applies energy drawn from an elemental proto-dimension, such one of fire, to a volume. This requires a great deal of effort from the sorcerer with two levels added to her skill test. The type of energy used defines its effects on the target volume. The sorcerer can keep the effect for a number of minutes equal to two times the Stage of Success. See the Neuropath skill *Stages of "Success"* tables for pyrokinesis, cryokinesis, and electrokinesis in the "*Neuropathic Cluster*" on page 27 for examples of the effects of energy use.

**EXTENDED USE OF SPECIAL:** Effects differ according to the special proto-dimension being accessed.

Catastrophic Failure while trying to change environments for an extended period causes a backlash upon the sorcerer and anyone else within a radius in meters equal to the sorcerer's *Change Environment* skill. The exact effects are up to the referee, but they only last for one combat phase. Treat the backlash as a *Change*

*Environment* attack of the appropriate type. This means that a backlash on an extreme *Change Environment* use can be lethal.

### In Combat

The base task difficulty of Easy is modified to Difficult when Changing Environments in tactical mode (combat phases). In combat, the *Change Environment* skill cascades have the effects listed below. These effects can be sustained, as long as the sorcerer concentrates on keeping the dimensional mix. However, the sorcerer may not make any other attacks or use any other empathic powers while using *Change Environment*. However, the sorcerer may increase the effects of an attack, for example, continuing to raise gravity or alter temperature in the same area.

**ATMOSPHERE IN COMBAT:** Each stage of success replaces 10% of the atmosphere within the effective volume with an equal quantity from another proto-dimension (this 10% could also be from a vacuum). By changing the atmosphere, a sorcerer can blind his foes (smoky, hazy, or otherwise opaque atmosphere) or choke his victims (depending on the toxicity of the changed atmosphere, the victims could be poisoned, choked, or even drown). The referee decides the exact effects.

**GRAVITY IN COMBAT:** By raising the gravity, a sorcerer can slow and even crush her enemies. Each stage of success raises or lowers the gravity by up to 1-G within the effective volume—the sorcerer specifies should she desire a slower increase. At 2-Gs, movement is halved and physical tasks are two levels more difficult. At 3-Gs, movement is quartered and physical tasks are three levels more difficult. At 4 Gs, only crawling movement is possible, and physical tasks are four levels more difficult. At 5+ Gs, movement and physical tasks are impossible. At 7-10 Gs, anyone inside the enhanced gravity field must pass a Difficult [CON] test each combat turn or pass out. In addition to this test, victims at 10+ Gs take 1D6 damage per G over 10 to their chest location each turn. For example, a person trapped at 14 Gs takes 4D6 damage to the chest location each turn. These effects may be altered for creatures adapted to higher gravities. By lowering the gravity, a sorcerer can suspend a target, slowing movement to a crawl (it is hard to move fast when each step hurls you several feet into the air) and making all physical tasks two difficulty levels higher.





**TEMPERATURE IN COMBAT:** Each stage of success raises or lowers the temperature 15°C (27°F) within the effective volume. At greater than 40°C or less than 5°C (greater than 104°F or less than 41°F), humans find physical tasks to be one level of difficulty higher—unless prepared, such as wearing additional clothing. At greater than 60°C or less than -15°C, humans find all physical tasks to be two levels of difficulty higher, and must make a Difficult [CON] test each combat turn to avoid passing out from either heat or cold. The effect of the temperature changes can be offset with appropriate clothing and/or equipment (such as good winter gear, or an “ice-box”). Should a sorcerer roll a Catastrophic Failure while using this skill to attack, only the sorcerer suffers the effects projected. Note that temperatures above 80°C will cause burns to the lungs (chest) and exposed skin. At 150°C breathing is impossible and exposed skin and lungs are seriously burned. Use the *Burn* rules on page 131 of the *Conspiracy Rules* core rules.

**ENERGY IN COMBAT:** Using energy in combat involves the sorcerer reaching into an elemental proto-dimension and ‘pulling out’ radiant energy to hurl at his foes. It is tricky—usually done during combat where the best difficulty level the sorcerer is likely to find is Difficult—backfires are often fatal to the sorcerer. To make matters worse, it is so unique a form of dimensional exchange that it is easily noticed by nearby darklings (dimensionally speaking), and has its own separate listing when checking for *darkling detection* (see page 9).

Sorcerers can hurl pure fire or lightning at their foes, out to the range defined by their attained Stage of Success (10-meters times Stage of Success). Each stage of success can be used to do one of the following:

- Attack the a given target with a 1D6 per Stage damage attack
- Increase the volume of a given attack by the sorcerer’s *Change Environment* (Energy) skill level in meters.

*For instance, Roman the sorcerer has a Change Environment (Energy) skill at 6 and PSI at 5 for an asset of 11. He hurls a fireball at his foes, and rolls a power level of 18, for Stage Three success. He can either damage one of them for 3D6 damage, or damage all foes within a 12-meter radius for 2D6 damage—two Stages for 2D6 damage and one Stage to expand the volume from a 6-meter to a 12-meter radius sphere.*

Treat fire and lightning attacks as having a Penetration of 1. Sealed and armored vehicles or other highly sealed suits (like power suits or an undersea hard-suits) reduce damage from these attacks.

Fire and lightning also have their own additional effects. Targets hit by fire may catch on fire and burn, at the referee’s discretion. If the target starts burning, it suffers fire effects as per burning rules (see “Burns” on page 131 of *Conspiracy Rules*). Electrical devices hit by lightning will be destroyed having their circuitry burnt out, unless they are grounded. If the unit is plugged into a power grid the grounding is sufficient on an 8—on a 1D10 roll. Flammable objects hit by lightning will ignite on a 1D10 roll of 1. In addition, living beings hit by lightning are automatically knocked down and must pass an Average [CON] test to remain conscious.

Backlash from this skill occurs with a Catastrophic Failure

or a natural die roll of 19-20. This inflicts a number of D6 dice damage at a single location equal to 10 minus the sorcerer’s *Change Environment* cascade skill level. Note that extremely skilled sorcerers do not suffer damage from backlash.

*Example: Roman has a Change Environment (Energy) skill of 6 and rolls a 20. He suffers 4D6 (10 – 6 = 4D6) damage when his lightning rebounds back upon him.*

**SPECIAL ENVIRONMENTS IN COMBAT:** Not all the elemental proto-dimensions in the multiverse are heat or electricity. Some are a little weird or have assimilation effects that cause weirdness to come through. For example, pulling a piece of environment through that causes the assimilation effect of turning people into Teletubbies. Adept sorcerers can draw upon special materials or conditions, such as the physics associated with a proto-dimension that makes things brittle, and apply them to targets. Players and referees are encouraged to be creative in the special environments a sorcerer can apply.

### Sorcerous Flight

### Sorcery—PSI

Sorcerous Flight is a very carefully controlled use of gravity manipulation. The sorcerer manipulates another proto-dimension’s gravity to levitate and move about. The sorcerer takes off after an Average [Sorcerous Flight] test. Once take-off has been achieved, sorcerers do not have to test again unless their concentration is disturbed, such as by being wounded, panicked, or Fear-stricken, etc.; or they have to make a difficult or tricky maneuver, such as changing direction abruptly, stopping suddenly, etc. If the sorcerer’s concentration is disturbed, the sorcerer has to pass a Difficult [Sorcerous Flight] test or fall. If the sorcerer has to make a hard maneuver, the sorcerer declares the maneuver first, then the referee sets the difficulty level modifiers or the test, then the sorcerer makes a base Average [Sorcerous Flight] plus modifiers test to remain in the air. Flying sorcerers can move at a speed of three (3) times their Sorcerous Flight skill level (not asset) in meters per turn. Altitude is gained at the expense of forward movement.

Backlash for Sorcerous Flight varies. Sorcerers who fail their initial Sorcerous Flight tests become dizzy from the momentary gravity change and can’t take any further actions that turn, except for failing prone or hiding behind something. Catastrophic Failure causes the sorcerer to rocket their Sorcerous Flight skill level (not asset) meters into the air, then fall. The sorcerer takes falling damage from the descent or from hitting a ceiling and then falling back.

**SORCEROUS TELEKINESIS:** Sorcerous Telekinesis is an application of Sorcerous Flight and is another tricky and delicate use of controlled gravity manipulation. The sorcerer must juggle the gravity around the object being moved, maintaining a fragile and sometimes unpredictable gravity bubble. This method is crude and can only cause objects to move—it cannot be used to manipulate moving parts, just to move the complete object. Where the psion’s telekinesis skill can pick up and manipulate items at a distance without any problem, the sorcerer struggles to gently float a feather across a meter of space. An object’s mass is of no concern to a sorcerer. A greater or lesser gravity nullification makes no appreciable difference to the final effect. The entire item must fill a volume no larger than a sphere with



a radius of the sorcerer's the Sorcerous Telekinesis skill level in meters, or the telekinesis attempt simply can't work.

The sorcerer's telekinesis has a range equal to the Sorcerous Flight asset in meters. Telekinesis is rendered more difficult by the amount of movement needed rather than by the amount of weight to be levitated. Simply levitating an object at a distance of the sorcerer's range in meters is an Average [Sorcerous Flight] test. Success means the object moves up to the Sorcerous Flight skill level in meters above its current position. Outstanding Success doubles that height limit. Catastrophic Failure causes the object to shoot into the air and land 3D6 meters in a random direction. Moving an object is another test of Difficult [Sorcerous Flight]. A success means the object can be moved a number of meters per phase equal to the Sorcerous Flight

skill level. Failure means the object does not move. On a Catastrophic Failure the object moves 3D6 meters in a random direction.

Both of these telekinesis tests are made one level more difficult by great stress or combat, and are made two levels more difficult by incredible stress, such as being wounded. Despite its difficulty, Sorcerous Telekinesis can be an effective, if clumsy, weapon. A sorcerer with enough skill could comfortably lift a car, wobble it over a target, and let it fall.





## MENTAL PATHOLOGIES

When the referee or the player feels that the character should develop a mental pathology (mental illness), they can just negotiate one or more and run with the story. Sometimes the referee or player will take their chances by rolling on the *Mental Health Pathologies* table, below. The character develops the pathology and manifest symptoms either immediately, such as catatonia or amnesia; or over time, as with paranoia or delusion.

The referee may desire to keep the pathology die rolls secret from the character. The referee would then reveal the result during game play as it becomes appropriate to do so. For example, if a character develops a phobia of rats, the referee would not reveal the phobia until the character encounters or otherwise considers a rat. Some maladies may become readily apparent—mostly due to behavior—others may take time to show up. After all, the word “depressed” does not suddenly appear on the character’s forehead.

**Mental Health Pathologies**

1D20 Roll	Result	Number of Hours per Week / Number of Weeks
1-6	No effect	—
7	Aggression	1D6 / 2D6
8	Amnesia	3D6 / 2D6
9	Catatonia	—
10	Compulsion	1D6 / 2D6
11	Delusion	1D6 / 2D6
12	Dementia	2D6 / 4D6*
13	Dependence / Dependent Personality Disorder	2D6 / 2D6
14	Depression	1D6 / 2D6*
15	Hallucination	1D6 / 3D6
16	Narcissism	1D6 / 2D6
17	Paranoia	2D6 / 4D6
18	Phobia (choose a focus)	2D6 / 2D6
19	Psychosis	4D6 / 8D6
20	Schizophrenia	3D6 / 4D6*

\* Requires the use of pharmaceuticals—values are tripled if not used.

**NO EFFECT:** The character has escaped the new affliction. Any old ones from previous breakdowns are retained.

**AGGRESSION:** The afflicted character becomes extremely and noticeably short tempered and prone to violent behavior, often resorting to violence even when another course of action is more suitable. This behavior may result in an increased use of energetic psionic powers (for neuropaths and sorcerers), or might translate into physical actions, depending on the character and the situation.

**AMNESIA:** The character will forget the events leading up to the point of the breakdown as well as a period of time afterward. This

includes the ability to perform skill tasks in use at the time of the breakdown or just before it. Treating amnesia is trickier than normal psychiatric counseling. Usually, each amnesiac has to recover by herself. The disturbed character has two means of recovering from amnesia at their disposal. The character can undergo psychological counseling as detailed below, but requiring 2D6 hours per week to maintain treatment and the Psychology task check after every 3D6 hours. The other means is through a mental shock. Whenever the afflicted character undergoes a significant psychological stress or trauma, they receive the benefit of a “self-treatment” as described below, but the results are doubled, meaning that each attained Level of Success counts as two.

**CATATONIA:** Characters who have been rendered catatonic are those who have survived an insufferable ordeal by drawing on inner strength and retreating within themselves. While this is not a bad strategy in Dark Conspiracy, the characters tend to lose touch with the outside world and completely freeze up, trapped within their own minds. Catatonia cannot be cured with normal psychology for only the individual can escape the battlements they have erected within their minds. Once a week, the afflicted character makes a self-treatment check. Accumulated Stages of Success are carried over to the next week. Certain mystic and psion disciplines (Psyche Surgery and Telepathy, respectively) can also assist in breaking through the mental barriers by adding attained Stages of Success to the character’s. Once the character passes an Impossible [Willpower] test, they awake. The character can attempt a new test once per day. When awakening, the character will have just finished replaying in their minds the scene where they had their mental breakdown, often flailing in defense.

**COMPULSION:** The character suffers from an obsessive compulsion related to the situation that caused it. This can range from a compulsion to defeat a certain person or creature, to a compulsion to protect something or someone. Whatever the compulsion is, it will become an overriding feature of the character’s actions and will always be the most important thing in the character’s life.

**DELUSION:** Delusional characters believe themselves to be something they are not. This can range from being someone else, having capabilities they do not have, feeling invincible, or knowing something no one else does, e.g. the belief someone else is actually a Dark One. The delusions do not go away on their own, even if the target or their delusion dies. Once defeated the delusion will shift to another target. Treating delusion requires twice as much psychiatric attention (time spent counseling the patient) as normal.

**DEMENCIA:** Dementia is the loss of brain function and while typically due to physiological reasons like head trauma, when dementia is indicated in the table, the character suffer has the effects of dementia, but not the physical loss of function. Lost brain functions include language problems, loss of memory, narrowed or lacking perception, emotional behaviors or personality, and



loss of cognitive skills, such as calculations, abstract thinking, and judgment. Characters subtract the result of a 1D10 roll from their asset when performing skills, including basic language skills and other charisma.

**DEPENDENCE:** The character develops a dependence upon a substance of some kind—your basic addiction. This can range from alcohol to drugs to something as silly as hard candy. The referee and player work together to determine what the dependent substance is, and what the effects will be. Common sense should indicate the most suitable dependence. Players should note that some chemical dependencies have the physical component of withdrawal. In treatment or when their substance is withheld, the character can actually take damage from not consuming their substances. In an alternate tack, the referee and player can change this to Dependent Personality Disorder where the dependence is on another, specific person. That person will become the center of the patient's thinking. The character may emulate their target of his dependence by taking on the target's appearance, clothing, and mannerisms. Deferential treatment or outright worship of the target can result from this form of dependence.

**DEPRESSION:** The character manifests the belief that he is not worthy of success or even living, current and future events are piled up against him, or that the outcome of any actions will not change his situation, a situation that is intolerable. Symptoms include diminished or a halt in normal social communications, subdued emotional response to normal situations, an extreme

loss of or increase in sleep, and a general withdrawal from previously enjoyed social circles. Lack of treatment will make this pathology get worse. Severely depressed individuals will take their own life or needlessly sacrifice themselves. Depressed characters have a hard time treating themselves. The Self-Treatment check is one difficulty level harder (Formidable [Willpower]) and takes twice as long (checks every two weeks instead of one week). See “Self-Treatment” on page 47.

**HALLUCINATION:** The character suffers from regular hallucinations of a distressing nature and often cannot distinguish between reality and the hallucinatory state. The exact nature of the hallucinations should be discussed by the referee and player; and should involve something from the situation that caused the condition. The hallucinations will often cause the character to see things, which are not there, even seeing friends as foes or fallen comrades as ghosts. If the character does not receive some sort of treatment, the hallucinations will grow worse over time and the victim will attack their imaginary tormenters. This can make the victim of the hallucinations very dangerous to those around them and to themselves. The treatment of hallucinations requires psychological counseling as discussed in “Therapy” on page 46.

**MULTIPLE PERSONALITIES:** The character develops a number of multiple personalities—at least two, their own and one other—selected by the player with the assistance of the referee. Each personality manifests under certain conditions and will be markedly different from the others. The referee and player should work together to determine the “characters” of each personality, whether they are neuropathic, etc. This state requires nearly constant psychiatric care, 1D6 hours per day, and the patient only tests every month for a cure.

**NARCISSISM:** The character has an inflated sense of self-worth and is continuously preoccupied with himself. Narcissistic characters will take all forms of criticism with anger, shame, or humiliation. They will take advantage of those around them to achieve their own goals, often to the detriment of friends and associates. The character tends to exaggerate his skills, capabilities, and achievements often outright lying in the process. At extremes—such as when the affliction is not treated, the character may harm those blocking his goals. The key phrase here is: self-interest.

**PARANOIA:** Minion Hunter paranoids believe that they are the targets of some heinous (and totally imaginary) plot. The referee should work with the player to determine a specific group or organization that the character believes is after him, based upon the situation which caused the disorder and the character's history. This can be a real organization, or one made up solely for this purpose. Paranoid characters will develop an unreasonable fear of “them” and will do anything to ensure their own safety, often going to great lengths to achieve this. Paranoid characters will often construct ludicrously complex explanations to fit ordinary events into their worldview. Paranoia requires twice as much psychiatric attention (time spent counseling the patient) as normal.

**PHOBIA:** The character develops an irrational phobia based upon the situation that caused the breakdown (the exact phobia is up to the referee. Examples include darkness, specific types of





## Therapy Results

Condition	Good Week	No Progress	Missed Week
Patient did not receive the required number of counseling hours			X
Patient did not take required meds			X
Patient Power Level greater the Counselor's		X	
Patient's Power Level 2-times the Counselor's			X
Counselor's task check failed		X	
Counselor's Power Level greater than the Patient's	X		
Counselor's Power Level 2-times the Patient's	X: 2 weeks		
Counselor's treatment Catastrophic Failure			X

Dark Minions, spiders, heights, monsters in general, spoons, etc.). When confronted with this situation, the character will do anything to avoid it immediately, and if forced to remain in the situation, will panic completely, per the Rout rules. Curing the fear requires psychiatric counseling, or the character can confront the fear himself. Each time the character intentionally exposes himself to the source of his phobia, the character makes a self-treatment task check. Success means the character has beaten the fear and broken the hold of the phobia.

**PSYCHOSIS:** Some portions of the character's mental makeup are so damaged by the ordeal that the character loses touch with reality. Often this will cause the character to suffer violent mood swings and to become very hostile, even violent, for no apparent reason, making them very unpredictable. Psychosis requires twice as much psychiatric attention—time spent counseling the patient—as normal. Psychologists treating psychosis suffer an additional difficulty penalty when providing treatment.

**SCHIZOPHRENIA:** Characters suffering schizophrenia are similar to psychosis—which is a part of schizophrenia—where the character has difficulty distinguishing between real and unreal experiences. The character will have significant difficulty thinking logically and leap from subject to subject non sequitur. In the early stages, the character will be irritable and argumentative with a lack of concentration. Later stages are characterized by psychotic episodes where the character acts out their false beliefs. Schizophrenia has good success with pharmacology in Dark Conspiracy with the character receiving double the benefit from pharmaceuticals.

### Psychological Recovery

To recover from the pathologies of mental illness the character must take a treatment, either from a qualified mental health practitioner who can counsel and treat the character or from self-treatment. When the player rolls on the "Mental Health Pathologies" table on page 44, she notes the treatment requirements and rolls the number of dice to determine her required number of hours per week in treatment and the number of weeks of continuous treatment needed to recover. The patient must meet with a therapist the required number of hours for the required number of *good* weeks. Failure to receive the required number of hours per week means that the week does not count towards treatment; it is considered *missed*. The week is only

considered good, if the treatment rolls pass—counseling or self-treatment—(see below).

### Backsliding

If the character puts off treatment, for every two weeks where the patient does not get treatment for the minimum number of hours, the patient adds one week to the required number. For a break in the treatment the same applies. For every two missed weeks, the patient adds one week to his required number of weeks. Self-treated weeks count if the requirements for self-treatment are met. Where the pathology requires pharmaceuticals, the week is considered missed regardless of the time spent in counseling. So refusal to take required medications can result in backsliding.

### Therapy

Psychological therapy involves a counselor restoring the damage done to the patient's mental faculties. The counselor will communicate with the patient during counseling sessions and prescribe pharmaceuticals as needed to treat the patient.

A player character or NPC serving as a therapist, the counselor, uses their Psychology skill to interact with the patient to root out the causes of the affliction. Interaction must be repetitive—measured as a number of hours per week on the *Mental Health Pathologies* table—to gain patient trust and work at feelings the patient otherwise denies having. The patient must spend the required number of hours for the week to allow a check for the cure. No more than 4 hours per day applies to the weekly total.

Once per week, after spending the required number of hours in counseling sessions, the counselor makes an Average [Psychology] test. When the counselor succeeds, the counselor rolls for her Power Level. The patient also rolls a Power Level using her INT attribute. In both cases the D10 is exploding. If the counselor fails her test, there is no progress made this week. If the test passes, the two power levels are compared. If the patient's power level is higher than the counselor's then no progress was made. If the counselor's power level was greater, the week counts toward the number needed. If the counselor's power level is two-times greater, the week counts as two towards the number needed. Once all required weeks have been successful, the patient is cured. Everyone hugs with smiles all around...

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**Counselor's Power Level = Staged (D10)**  
+ Counselor's (Psychology + INT)

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**Patient's Power Level = Staged (D10)**  
+ Patient's (INT)

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Self-Treatment

The afflicted character can attempt to work himself out of his problem. This is very difficult, if not impossible to do. If the treatment requires pharmaceuticals, the character cannot treat her self. Further, treatment of the self requires double the time—the required number of good weeks is doubled or one self-treatment check every two weeks satisfies one week of the required number.

The self-treating character spends the required weekly number of hours in self-contemplation and introspection or whatever. She does this for two weeks at a time, then attempts self-treatment to meet the required number of *good* weeks. In this case, the character makes a Formidable test using either their Willpower or Psychology assets (Formidable [Willpower or Psychology]). A success results on one good week counted against the requirements. A failure is no progress, while a Catastrophic Failure means the attempt resulted in a missed week. An Outstanding Success results in two good weeks.

Self-Treatment Results

Condition	Good Week	No Progress	Missed Week
Patient did not receive the required number of treatment hours for 2 weeks			X: 2 weeks
Patient succeeds self-treatment check	X		
Patient fails self-treatment check		X	
Patient achieves a Catastrophic Failure			X
Patient achieves an Outstanding Success	X: 2 weeks		







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