Attitude Trackers
For Complex and Realistic NPCs

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Colophon

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Introduction

What is This?

There are many ways of making characters "feel real" in a tabletop roleplaying game.

Experienced game masters (GMs) can use improvisation to bring life to even the most common NPC. But some GMs, some gaming groups, might not be good at improv, or may wish to have a slightly more formalized, thought-out-in-advance approach to breathing life into NPCs.

This document introduces an approach to character interaction that may help gaming groups of all manner. It provides tools for tracking and managing NPCs and suggesting reactions.

Although it's a concept that was developed for use with the **Pathfinder Roleplaying Game**, the concepts and tools described here are mostly abstract. Except for explicit **skill checks**, for example, nearly all of the tools herein can be applied to a roleplaying game of any system and nature.

How, and to what extent, you apply these concepts in your gaming group is really a function of the style of gaming your group enjoys, and the goals the GM and players have in gaming to begin with. Hack-and-slash groups need not even consider this sort of formalized approach; groups whose main focus is on storytelling and character might benefit from this sort of tool.

This approach is provided free of charge, for two reasons. First, I genuinely feel that this is a useful, interesting alternative to other methods, and it's worked really well for me over the decades as a GM myself.

Second, as a means of introducing GMs and players alike to the concept, since it's used heavily throughout all **Infinium Game Studio** RPG products.

Enjoy!

Attitude Trackers

Crunch and Fluff

"**Crunch**" is a term commonly used to refer to the dozens of statistics that describe a creature from the standpoint of raw game mechanics. Although there is a great deal of flexibility in these stat blocks being used to convey flavor, demeanor, behavior, and personality, such "softer" yet still important game elements are often referred to as "**fluff**".

Each GM and player has their own relationship to these game elements, and preferences as to their balance in gameplay. Some groups live by crunch,

You can have a great deal of fun at either end of the spectrum, or anywhere in between! This document attempts to describe a set of tools that will make it easier for GMs to elaborate a great deal of **fluff**.

Attitude Tracker

Each NPC in your adventure or campaign setting can be given an **Attitude Tracker.** This is meant to represent an NPC's current **Attitude** toward the party.

Pathfinder uses the five classifications of **Hostile, Unfriendly, Indifferent, Friendly,** and **Helpful**; this adventure introduces a bit more detail into the
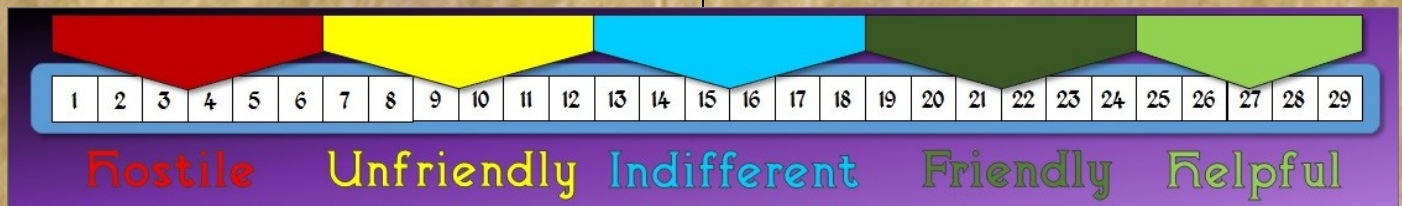
and largely ignore fluff; adventures tend to be little more than an organized dungeon crawl, and min/maxing your PC's character options and equipment is commonplace. Other groups focus solely on storytelling, and use game mechanics only when it's necessary to introduce a bit of randomness to the proceedings.

equation. The **Tracker** provided below uses these classifications; for use with another roleplaying game system, you can adapt these gradations to those used by your game.

An example of an **Attitude Tracker** is shown below. The GM is encouraged to use pencil to mark the current and changing **Attitude** of each NPC as the game progresses.

Using the Attitude Tracker

Attitude is measured on a **29**-point scale: **1** is the worst possible feeling an NPC can have toward the party, and **29** is the most favorable. This is referred to as an NPC's **Attitude Value**.

The five **Attitude** classifications defined in the **Pathfinder Roleplaying Game** correspond to roughly 6-point "blocks" of these values. Specifically, **Attitude Values** between **1-6** represent a **Hostile** character, values between **7-12** mean the NPC is **Unfriendly**, **Indifferent** characters have **Attitude Values** between **19** and **24**, and any value of **25** or above means the character is **Helpful** toward the party. This is the NPC's **Attitude** overall.

Each NPC is given a **"Starting Attitude"**, for example, "14 (Indifferent)". When the adventure begins, and with no other considerations or complicating factors, this is the NPC's initial perspective on the party.

Attitude Modifiers

Beneath "**Starting Attitude**" can be one or more **Attitude Modifiers**. Each describes a scenario, and the effect it has on that NPC's **Attitude Value**.

Attitude Modifiers can be pre-existing, unchangeable things, such as *"Party Contains at Least One Elf"*. These Modifiers should be taken into consideration as soon as the party see the NPC, or even during pre-game setup by the GM.

Some are action-based: for example, *"Party Engages in Conversation: +2"*; in that scenario, the moment the party approaches the NPC and greets her, that NPC's **Attitude** increases by **2** points. Action-based **Attitude Modifiers** only have an effect once; in the example above, if the party approaches the NPC the next day and speaks with her, there is no further effect to her **Attitude**.

An NPC may have repeatable action-based **Attitude Modifiers**; these may take effect multiple times, and are usually phrased to make this obvious. For

example: *"Each Time the Party Slays a Giant Rat on the Property: +1"*.

Others have **maximum effect caps**. In the example *"Making a Purchase (+1 per 50 gp spent, max 5)"*, the NPC in question will grow more fond of the party the more they buy... but this caps out at **+5** for **250 gp** spent. The party is of course welcome to spend more money than that, but it will have no further effect in terms of the NPC's **Attitude**.

Attitude Modifiers that cause an NPC's **Attitude** to shift to the range for a different classification take immediate effect as it applies to **Diplomacy** rolls and the like. For example, if an NPC's **Attitude Value** is **18** (Indifferent), and speaking with her grants **+1**, this would bump her up from **Indifferent** to **Friendly**. So, starting a chat with

her means the ensuing conversation would take place with her being **Friendly**.

Modifiers that would take an NPC's **Attitude Value** above **29**, or below **1**, have no effect.

Default Attitude Modifiers

The following is a suggested set of "default" **Attitude Modifiers** that would reasonably apply to most NPCs. A given NPC may have higher or lower specific values of **Effect** for a given modifier; as well, one or more of these **modifiers** may simply not apply to a certain NPC.

The GM is encouraged to use these as a starting point only for NPCs in your adventures.

Type	Condition	Effect	Notes
Action	NPC joins party for any length of time	+5	Does not stack with subsequent iterations of itself (maximum effect +5 no matter how many times NPC joins party)
Action	NPC witnesses the PCs commit a crime	-5	Assumes the crime does not involve the NPC; stacks with other modifiers that involve crimes against the NPC; does not stack with other "witnesses crime" modifiers
Action	NPC witnesses the PCs commit murder	-10	Assumes the crime does not involve the NPC; stacks with other modifiers that involve crimes against the NPC; does not stack with other "witnesses crime" modifiers
Action	NPC witnesses the PCs commit murder in self-defense	-5	Assumes the crime does not involve the NPC; stacks with other modifiers that involve crimes against the NPC; does not stack with other "witnesses crime" modifiers
Action	NPC witnesses the PCs defend a bystander or innocent against violence	+10	Does not stack with other "witness" modifiers
Action	PCs agree to help when asked	+4	Per request; maximum +12
Action	PCs attack **with** provocation	-10	Does not stack with other attack-based modifiers
Action	PCs attack **without** provocation	-15	Does not stack with other attack-based modifiers
Action	PCs defend this NPC against violence	+15	Does not stack with other "witness" modifiers
Action	PCs heal or "boon" NPC	+5	Per healing spell/potion/skill check or beneficial spell or effect; maximum +15
Action	PCs refuse to help when asked	-3	Per request; no maximum

Type	Condition	Effect	Notes
Commerce	Make a purchase	+1 per full **50 gp** spent	Maximum effect **+5** for spending **250 gp**; assumes NPC is a vendor or merchant of some sort, or offers services for sale
Conversation	Engage NPC in conversation outside the context of a mercantile transaction	+1	-
Conversation	PCs attempt a bribe (for information, for action)	-1	GM's discretion as to whether the bribe produces results (positive or negative!)
Conversation	PCs fail at a **Diplomacy** check for any reason	-1	Per failed check; no maximum
Conversation	PCs fail at an **Intimidate** check for any reason	-2	Per failed check; no maximum
Conversation	PCs share **Rumors / Lore**	+1	Per each **Rumor** shared; maximum **+4**; assumes an adventure context that has some form of **Rumors and Lore** table
Conversation	PCs succeed at a **Diplomacy** check for any reason	+2	Per successful check; maximum **+6**
Conversation	PCs succeed at a **Sense Motive** check for any reason	+1	Per successful check; maximum **+4**
Conversation	PCs threaten violence	-5	-
Extant	One or more PCs have been arrested	-1	Per offense, no limit; assumes a civilized urban adventure context or one with a lawful enforcement organization
Extant	Party contains at least one PC of the same race as the NPC	+1	No effect for **2** or more such PCs; assumes NPC is of a "minority" or disadvantaged race (e.g., half-orc)

Converting Existing NPCs to the Attitude Tracker Format

Adapting an NPC to use this format is quite straightforward, and involves two steps. You can use this approach to "convert" NPCs that are already defined as somewhat fleshed-out characters in existing adventures, or you can apply this approach to more "common", less fully-featured NPCs as desired.

Step One: Define a Starting Attitude

The **Starting Attitude** value should perhaps be somewhere in the middle of the range. **14-16** seems to be a good place to begin.

NPCs from an allied faction, or who are pleading with the PCs for help at the start of an adventure, may have a higher **Starting Attitude**. Conversely,

evil NPCs or those who are initially at conflict with the party may have a lower value to begin with.

The GM is encouraged to thoughtfully define a **Starting Attitude** for each NPC, and to note it to themselves.

Step Two: Adjust the Default Modifiers

The **Default Modifiers** table listed above is, as mentioned, merely a starting point. For common or inconsequential NPCs, it can be used as-is.

For characters who have a long, or major, plot relationship, or those who are intended to be quite close to the PCs, further modifications are in order.

Blank Attitude Tracker

On the next pages is a **blank attitude tracker**. The intent here is for GMs to print this out, and fill it out as needed to represent the **Attitude** of a given NPC.

Simply write in an **Initial Attitude** value in the top section. Next, cross out the **Attitude Modifiers** that you do not intend to use, or cross out and write in new **Effect** values if desired.
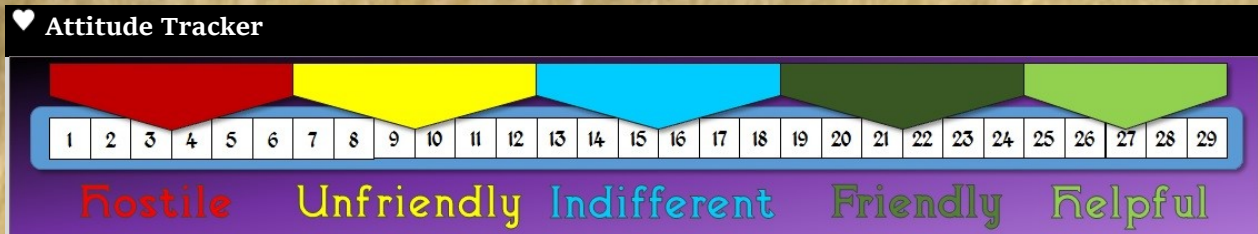
Finally, there are several blank lines for you to write in your own custom **Attitude Modifiers** that might apply specifically to this NPC.

Conclusion

Hopefully, these tools are helpful considerations for your gaming group. If you choose to use them as-is, may they serve you well. Other GMs may use them merely as inspiration for their own methods of fleshing out NPCs.

Blank Attitude Tracker

♥ Attitude Tracker

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |

Hostile   Unfriendly   Indifferent   Friendly   Helpful

Starting Attitude: _____

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