

# MORALE



hen in the course of supernatural events an average hireling or middling lieutenant feels their mortality rapidly closing in on them in the face of daring-do-deadly adventures bearing in on them, the time has come for them to fully re-assess the nature of their loyalty.

## MORALE CHECKS

A morale check is a simple Wisdom saving throw with the target number determined by two factors: how **committed** they are to the fight in question, and how **brave** they are.

### COMMITMENT

Target Number	Commitment Level
~	Back to the Wall
2	Zealous
6	Eager
12	Obligated
14	Wary
18	Flighty

If a creature has nowhere to go and the cessation of hostilities will merely hasten their death, their commitment level is **Back to the Wall** and no Morale Check is elicited.

**Zealous** creatures would rather die than fail here, and are likely driven by deep emotions—faith, hatred, love, hope, or despair. Those on a mission from their deity, fighting for a cause to which they have staked all their fortunes, and those who believe any outcome less than victory is less favourable than death in this conflict belong here.

**Eager** creatures are actively seeking the commencement and execution of the conflict at hand, without regard for the fatality it presents. A charging army, vicious marauders, and desperate assailants belong here.

**Obligated** creatures are carrying out their duty. An army bracing for impact of a charge, bandits who know failure here could mean starvation. rag-tag militia with a would-be executioner at their back should they break ranks and flee, and those who consider themselves to hold only slim or no advantage over their foe belong here.

**Wary** creatures are feeling things out, hardly in the mood to die, and generally more willing to quit the scene than stay put and fight. These are scouts, opportunistic bandits who've eaten recently enough to not risk their life easily, and those serving compulsory military service without a would-be executioner at their back to ensure good order.

**Flighty** creatures are really not wanting to fight at all and will take the first chance to bolt. They should rarely-to-never commence an engagement, and will likely be trying to escape the party even as combat progresses.

### BRAVERY

Target Number Mod	Commitment Level
~	Mindless
+8	Unyielding
+4	Stalwart
+2	Tempered
+0	Knaveish
-2	Cowardly

**Mindless** is a catch-all for automatons, animals so blood thirsty they are incapable of considering retreat, and those presently incapable of exerting free will. Those creatures the DM deems to fall under this category simply never make morale checks as they cannot make the choice to run as surely as someone trapped in a corner.

**Unyielding** creatures are driven by something greater than themselves or a nigh-suicidal contempt for death. Only a fluke in the natural order could see them turn and flee the field. Truly something must be awe-inspiring to yield such a result. Fanatical cultists, the most blood thirsty of orc chieftans, and righteous paladins are usually here.

**Stalwart** creatures are the kinds of folk universally described as dependable, who would never back down from a challenge when they were obligated to stand and fight. Such people are highly valued for their grit, though they are not necessarily loyal—just unwilling to backdown outside exceptional circumstance. Temple guardians, common orcs, and soldiers in good morale belong here.

**Tempered** creatures are more likely to stand firm than break, but only by so much. Soldiers, those of dependable but cautious nature, and people not known for backing down from or seeking out fights belong here.

**Knaveish** creatures aren't terribly dependable. Odds are they don't want to ever be in a fight they won't clearly win, and are usually in it for the loot or abstract joys of sadism rather than displaying any sort of martial prowess they likely lack. Truly the knave is a wretched sort. Militia, general folk of non-violent professions and un-exceptional character, and those of decidedly non-confrontational natures (their best solution being to remove oneself from an obvious, violent confrontation) belong here.

**Cowardly** creatures are good for running away and not much else. Cowards, goblins, and similar belong here.

## ELICITING CHECKS

When in any encounter involving those creatures (not PCs or Mindless\Back to the Wall) capable of making Morale Checks, upon one these events occurring to their side of the conflict, they must roll a Wisdom Saving Throw with a target determined by their commitment to fighting out this encounter and modified by their bravery.

*First Blood!* Someone on your side of the conflict has been reduced to 0 HP. Most unfortunate!

*Half Strength!* Half of your number has been reduced to 0 HP.



**Leaderless** The person directing your combat efforts has been reduced to 0 HP or otherwise incapacitated.

On a failed check, they flee as fast as possible from the fight, and only a friendly Difficult Persuasion or Intimidation check will cease this of their own accord (though the situation becoming Back to the Wall works just as well). Their EXP is awarded if they escape beyond feasibly gettined killed that same day by the party.

## MODIFYING MORALE

Since time forgotten commanders have sought to bolster their troops, tyrants to fully commit their means of power to their cause, and hobgoblins to make those pitiful green wretches stand and fight for just long enough to flank the enemy with the wargs. All have made common cause in seeking items and abilities that can alter the morale of their men.

It's worth noting that as PCs are not subject to morale checks, these items and abilities will largely be wielded by NPCs. Consider it a way to spice up encounters—targetting a source of bravery could be a good way for the players to break their foe.

## BARD'S SONG OF REST

Anyone enjoying the effects of the Bard's Song of Rest is treated as one step braver. Thus, a coward would become knavish until their next rest without Bard's SoR being used.

## BANNER OF GRUMSH

This brutal icon of bone and stripped hide reminds orcs the fate of the cowardly and defeated. Any Orc or other goblinoid within 50 feet of the banner and in plain view of it, while it is held aloft by a friendly unit, has their level of commitment elevated by one level. Thus, an eager goblinoid would become zealous upon seeing their banner hoisted nearby. It weighs ten pounds and if anyone were willing to buy it, it'd be worth 2gp at most.

## ICON OF GOOD

This holy symbol, likely tailored to a specific god, inspires those with goodness in their hearts to fight on. Any good creature within 50 feet of the banner and in plain view of it, while it is held aloft by a friendly unit, has their level of commitment elevated by one level. It weighs ten pounds.

## ICON OF EVIL

This unholy symbol, likely tailored to a specific god, inspires those with goodness in their hearts to fight on. Any good creature within 50 feet of the banner and in plain view of it, while it is held aloft by a friendly unit, has their level of commitment elevated by one level. It weighs ten pounds.

## WEAPON OF BRAVERY

This template can be applied as a +1 enchantment to any weapon. The wielder and any compatriots within 50 feet and with the wielder and weapon in plain view become treated as one step braver. Thus a Stalwart creature, upon seeing their weapon unsheathed by an ally, would becoming Unyielding.

## LIQUID COURAGE

Those actively under the sway of alcohol become one step braver, although they may also suffer other penalties at DM discretion. Generally speaking, while getting your army drunk is good for morale, you don't want them to charge into battle that way.

## ARMOUR OF RESOLVE

This template can be applied as a +1 enchantment to any armour. The wearer becomes two steps more committed to any task upon donning this armour, and any allies within 50 feet of them who can plainly see them and their armour becomes one step more committed.

Thus, a group of Eager soldiers who see their comrade has donned some Armour of Resolve grow Zealous, whereas the soldier has themselves become as if though their Back is to the Wall, and will not be subject to morale checks.

## BRAVERY OF THE GODS

*1st-level abjuration*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 60 feet

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** Until dispelled

Requires **concentration**. This cleric spell raises all those who the caster so desire at the moment to be one level braver, including themselves if they so wish. Thus, a Knavish creature could be elevated to Tempered. The area shimmers with golden twinkling lights if the caster is Good, silver if Neutral, and red if Evil.



Credit: DM's Guild Artpack