
PHOENIX COMMAND MENTAL DAMAGE SYSTEM

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1. INTRODUCTION

Credit to R.J. Andron of www.phoenixcommand.com for the inspiring Integrated Morale Rules.

Herein is my attempt to come up with some decent insanity rules for PCCS, to allow it to simulate mind-bending situations all the way from incidental phobias up to full-on fright-film scenarios. In so doing, I needed to design into it an understanding of what sanity actually is and generally why some people lose it and not others. You probably won't agree with this understanding, but that just means that one of us is crazy... and that's rather appropriate, don't you think?

2. INCAPACITATION

A **Knockout Roll** is required whenever a character:

- 1) Senses the presence of an inimical creature or hostile animal, or anticipates combat, and/or
- 2) Reacts fearfully to some unexpected circumstance.

Each fearful thing encountered is measured in **Shock Points (SP)**, which are the fuel of fear. There are two types of SP: **Acute SP**, are those which affect a character instantly, akin to an electric shock, or being surprised by something terrible. Acute SP is what can panic someone or freeze them with fear. **Chronic SP**, are those which settle in the depths of the mind, eating away at sanity.

Below are some sample **KV** and **SP** values. The GM must arbitrate these values for the specific personalities of the characters. A wolf-trapper, for instance, will probably be inured to most fear of wolves.

Sample KV Stereotypes

Six year old child	2
Housewife	3
Grown man	5
Street tough	10
Crack combat vet	38
Bushido-code samurai	90

KV Modifiers

Adrenalin Rush	x5.0
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Sample Acute SP Values (see also **Stress-Induced Illness**, below)

Surprised by popped paper bag	1
Argue seriously with an acquaintance	2
Argue seriously with a stranger	4
Alone, walk through an unlit park with no moon	5
Alone, lost in the woods at night	10
Broken arm	15
Anticipate an imminent fight with a stranger	20
Surprised by 4" long scorpion (e.g. open drawer)	30
Blair Witch creepiness, per night	50
Heather discovering the bundle	90
Alone at night, encounter a hungry Timber Wolf	150
Alone at night, chased by pack of Timber Wolves	300

PCCS Conversions

Acute shock points (broken bone)	SP/10
Chronic shock points (stomach ache)	SP
Physical injury to skull	PD/10
Physical injury elsewhere	PD/50

SP Modifiers

Creatures outnumber characters by 2 to 1	x1.5
Creatures outnumber characters by 4 to 1	x1.8
Creatures outnumber characters by 8 to 1	x2.0
Creatures outnumber characters by 16+ to 1	x3.0
Phobia	x10.0

Total all **Acute SP**, and add that to any **Chronic SP** (see below) the character may have. Compare the result to his **Knockout Value (KV)**, and roll a 00 - 99 number on the table below. If the **SP Total** is equal to or less than **1/10** of his KV, the character does not need to roll.

Temporary Incapacitation Table

SP Total	KO	Stun	Daze	Disor	Fright	Caut	Bold
SP > 1/10 KV	00-00	01-02	03-05	06-09	-	10-49	50-99
SP > KV	00-02	03-08	09-16	17-24	25-49	50-97	98-99
SP > 2 * KV	00-13	04-31	32-52	53-74	76-89	90-97	98-99
SP > 3 * KV	00-26	27-53	54-82	83-97	-	-	98-99
SP 200+	00-60	61-94	95-96	97-97	-	-	98-99

KO = Knockout. The character loses **2 Wpr** (see below) and is unconscious. The time he remains unconscious is taken from the **Incapacitation Time Table (8B, below)**, and double the result.

Wpr: If the character spends **4 Wpr**, use the **Frightened** entry instead.

Stun = Stunned. The character loses **1 Wpr** (see below) and is semi-conscious with terror but incapable of action or coherent thought. **Incapacitation Time** is taken from **Table 8B**.

Wpr: If the character spends **2 Wpr**, use the **Frightened** entry instead.

Daze = Dazed. The character is panicked, and if there is no support available, he drops to the ground conscious but incapable of offensive action or thought, else he clings to the support. After half a second, a Dazed character may flee and take non-offensive actions at 1/2 normal efficiency. **Incapacitation Time** is taken from **Table 8B** with a **-1** modifier to the 0 - 9 roll.

Wpr: If the character spends **1 Wpr**, use the **Frightened** entry instead.

Disor = Disoriented. The character is panicked, but is fully functional and may flee, cry for help, pull a trigger, slam a door, or duck to save himself. Except for reflexive action, the character is incapable of offensive action and may not advance toward the menace. **Incapacitation Time** is taken from **Table 8B** with a **-2** modifier to the 0 - 9 roll.

Wpr: If the character spends **1 Wpr**, use the **Frightened** entry instead.

Fright = Frightened. The character acts normally, except that all offensive action is conducted at 1/2 efficiency.

Wpr: If the character spends **1 Wpr**, use the **Cautious** entry instead.

Caut = Cautious. This is the normal condition of characters in a "horror" scenario. All offensive action is conducted at 3/4 efficiency.

Wpr: If the character spends **4 Wpr**, use the **Bold** entry instead. (This cost is high to remind the player that he is hurling caution to the wind, disobeying his body's urgent warnings.)

Bold = Bold. The character is fully capable of action. A roll result of **98 - 99** on the **Temporary Incapacitation Table** indicates an adrenalin rush.

Incapacitation Time Table (8B)

SP	Random Roll (0-9)						
	Total	0	1-2	3-5	6-7	8	9
0		1p	1p	2p	4p	6p	11p
50		4p	15p	29p	47p	73p	4m
100		25p	3m	5m	9m	14m	25m
200+		3m	11m	21m	23m	53m	96m

p = 2-second Phases, m = Minutes

A character who recovers from an incapacitation, becomes **Frightened**, remaining so until an hour after he has reached a safe, secure environment. If during that hour, he is shocked again, begin timing again.

Willpower (Wpr): All characters start with a certain amount of **Wpr** to spend, equal to their **WIL**. To give players more choice in how their character responds to danger, they may spend **Wpr** (as mentioned in the incap. listings above), to avoid incapacitation. Notes:

1. If a character's **Wpr** is reduced to either $\frac{1}{2}$, or **4 or less** of his **WIL** (whichever comes first), then his long-term motivation is at **three-quarters**, and he is in a **Disoriented/Panicked** state until he recovers that threshold, insisting on leaving ASAP for a place of relative safety. He won't fight or help search for anything or anyone. If attacked, he flees.
2. If a character's **Wpr** is reduced to **0**, his long-term motivation is at **half**, and he is in a **Stunned** state until he recovers at least **1 Wpr**, but remains capable of very slowly obeying simple, innocuous commands.
3. A character regains **Wpr**, when, while in a secure environment, he eats a meal, imbibes refreshments, gets sleep, or is inspired by beauty. Any such act grants from **1 - 3 Wpr**. A character may regain **Wpr** equal to **no more than $\frac{1}{4}$ his WIL per 24 hours**, and may never regain to **Wpr** to beyond his **WIL**.

INSANITY

One-tenth of all **Acute SP** a character sustains, remains with him as **Chronic SP**. Do not round off until actually using the **Insanity Table** (see below). To determine whether a character sustains any long-term injuries from his experiences, multiply total **Chronic SP** by **10**, and divide by his **Sanity (San)**, which equals the sum of his **Leadership (LDR)**, **Moral Fitness SAL***, and his (**Learning Roll** minus ten, divided by **10**), rounded off. Rephrasing:

$$\text{San} = (\text{LDR} + \text{Moral Fitness SAL}^*) + [(\text{LR}-10) / 10]$$

As this value will rarely change, it can easily be figured beforehand.

* **Skill Accuracy Level.** There's no other term for this, for consistency with the main PCCS rules. It is based on the skill, found on the table below. For those not playing PCCS, the **SAL** can easily be substituted for the **Moral Fitness** score itself.

Moral Fitness SAL

<u>Fitness</u>	<u>SAL</u>	<u>Fitness</u>	<u>SAL</u>
0	5	3	10
1	7	4	11
2	9	etc.	etc. (increasing by 1 per level)

Skill Tradeoffs & Calculating Moral Fitness:

1. Note that especial non-Classical, mind-stilling meditative arts, termed here the **Meditation Skill**, such as Zen or Raja Yoga, trade off to **Moral Fitness** at $\frac{1}{2}$, rounding off, and vice versa. Thus, a Zen Grandmaster (Meditation SL 15), would have an effective minimum **Moral Fitness** SL of 8. Were he to enter into a program of Classical spiritual exercises, any new experience would be added on top of that experience.
2. The following skills trade off to **Moral Fitness**, as shown. In this instance only (and including Meditation, above), all accrued skill levels are cumulative, rounding off at the end.

Exorcism / 4.
 Theology / 10
 Classical Art Specialty / 20
 Science Specialty / 20

Example: An investigator has Meditation 4, Exorcism 4, Theology 8, Literature 9, and Astronomy 10. His minimum Moral Fitness is therefore $2 + 1 + 0.8 + 0.45 + 0.5 = 4.75$, rounding to SL 5.

Moral Fitness Skill: A mixture of effort and efficacy of pursuit of knowledge and relationships with man and the universe, which develop the agapic, cognitive quality which sets man apart from the beasts, and allows for successful survival of the race by allowing man to develop his masterful relationship with the universe. Moral Fitness is developed through what are called "spiritual exercises", namely things such as working through ontological paradoxes via the Socratic method, as in the dialogues of Plato, and otherwise akin to that, participating in the discovery and transmission of universal principles, as by engaging in Classical art or science, which amount to the same thing. Moral Fitness can (but is not the only means to) increase a person's confidence, motivation, calm, and intelligence (though it is the sole means of increasing cognition per se, whether its practitioners know this or not).

On the **0 - 20** skill scale, here are both skills and their descriptions:

Physical Fitness		Moral Fitness
0	Invalid	Bona fide Nietzschean
1	Couch potato	Raised by television
2	Comp. Jockey	Bona fide Pentecostal
3	Stroller	Phoenix Command Nut
4	Walker	Bona fide Calvinist
5	Speed-Walker	Bona fide Catholic
6	Jogger	Philosopher
8	Boot camp	Jeanne D'Arc
10	Drill Sgt.	Classical Scientist/Artist
12	Olympian	The Pope
15+	Übermensch	Philosopher-King

Enter the adjusted **Mental Damage Total** on the following table, to find the odds of sustaining various types of long-term injuries. Roll a **00 - 99** number once, and write down the number. On the appropriate row, for each column entry which the roll is equal to or less than, that level of injury is sustained. Thus, a character may sustain multiple levels of injury at once.

Insanity Table

Mental Damage Total	Healing Time HT	CTP	1	2	3	4	5
1	1d		00				
2	2d		01				
3	3d		02	00			
4	5d		03	01			
5	7d	12h	04	02			
10	14d	10h	09	06			
15	21d	8h	13	09			
20	30d	6h	17	12	03		
25	38d	5h	21	16	03		
30	43d	4h	25	19	04		
35	48d	3h	29	22	05	01	
40	60d	2h	32	25	06	02	
45	90d	1h	35	28	07	03	
50	120d	1h	38	30	08	04	
60	150d	1h	44	35	09	05	
70	180d	45m	49	40	11	05	
80	210d	30m	54	44	13	07	
90	240d	15m	58	48	15	07	
100	270d	10m	62	52	16	08	
200	300d	3m	86	77	31	16	02
300	1yr	10p	94	88	43	24	04
400	1.5yr	2p	97	94	53	31	06
500	2yr	2p	98	96	61	37	08

600	3yr	dur	98	97	68	43	10
700	4yr	dur	98	98	73	48	12
800	5yr	dur	98	98	78	53	14
900	6yr	dur	98	98	82	57	16
1000	7yr	dur	99	98	85	62	18
2000	8yr	dur	99	99	96	85	34
3000	9yr	dur	99	99	98	93	46
4000	10yr	dur	99	99	98	96	57
5000	11yr	dur	99	99	98	97	65
6000	12yr	dur	99	99	98	98	72
7000	13yr	dur	99	99	99	98	77
8000	14yr	dur	99	99	99	98	81
9000	15yr	dur	99	99	99	98	84
12000	20yr	dur	99	99	99	99	91
16000	40yr	dur	99	99	99	99	95
20000	55yr	dur	99	99	99	99	97
40000	80yr	dur	99	99	99	99	98
60000	100yr	dur	99	99	99	99	99
80000	300yr	dur	99	99	99	99	99
100000	900yr	dur	99	99	99	99	99

p = Phases; m = Minutes; h = Hours; d = Days; yrs = Years

HT = Healing Time. This is the amount of time it takes for the Mental Damage Total to be removed. To prorate for any given stage in the recovery process, find the Mental Damage listing for the remaining time. Thus, if a character sustained 7 chronic SP, healing time 7 days, then after two days, his total would become 4.

CTP = Critical Time Period. If the character is given successful emergency psychiatric aid within this time after he has made his **Knockout Roll**, then he may reduce his Mental Damage Total by a certain amount (see Psychiatry Skill, below). The listing “dur” means that aid can only take effect if it is, somehow, actually administered during the traumatic episode. Unfortunately, most patients at that level will not notice the psychiatrist, and therefore administering aid will be impossible.

1 = Traumatised. The character is shaken for a prolonged period, and will typically suffer nightmares, phobia, amnesia, or even extended catalepsy, and other deleterious effects. Recovery follows normal Mental Damage recovery (i.e. when all **Chronic SP** are healed, the trauma is fully recovered from, at least in these terms – scars will remain). In any trying situation the character is treated as automatically **Frightened**.

2 = Neurotic. The character’s mind is permanently altered by his experience in some severe way. He will probably suffer post-traumatic stress disorder for the rest of his life, but may also or instead suffer some kind of schizophrenia. As a guide, full recovery time is on the order of **Mental Damage Total * (10) months**.

Type **2**, **3**, and **4** recovery times are concurrent. In the presence of trigger circumstances (determined by the GM), treat the character as **Disoriented**.

3 = Psychotic. The character's mind is permanently altered by his experience in some grotesque way, whether visibly or invisible. Paranoid schizophrenia is possible for those with such tendencies (or perhaps even those without). Recovery from this state will typically be slow and very difficult, if possible at all. As a guide, full recovery time is on the order of **Mental Damage Total * (10) months**. Type **2**, **3**, and **4** recovery times are concurrent. In the presence of trigger circumstances (determined by the GM), treat the character as **Dazed**.

4 = Mindless. The character is essentially mindless, either in a cataleptic shock, a coma, or otherwise fantastically incapacitated by insanity. Recovery will typically be slow and exceedingly difficult, on the order of years, if possible at all. As a rule, full recovery time is on the order of **Mental Damage Total * (10) months**. Type **2**, **3**, and **4** recovery times are concurrent. Treat the character as **Stunned** for the duration.

5 = Dead. The character is overwhelmed by the shock to his system, and dies, as of a heart attack, stroke, total brain shutdown, etc. Apply his Mental Damage Total as actual **Physical Damage (PD)** for the purpose of medical aid, incapacitation time, and potential resuscitation. Treat the character as **Knocked Out**, if prompt medical aid is conceivable.

Permanent Mental Injuries: A person who has gone insane with fear, horror, pain, or stress, will be less resistant to subsequent shocks, even once cured. Use the following table as a guideline, though the GM should apply his own rules for special situations (e.g. a character with low WIL may increase it while manic, etc.):

Permanent Mental Injury Table

<u>Insanity Level</u>	<u>WIL/LDR</u>
Traumatised	-2
Neurotic	-4
Psychotic	-8
Mindless	-16

Therapy (see **Psychiatry**, below) allows the character to regain back half of what he lost. Therapy can never reduce the penalty to that for one category less severe. E.g. A Neurotic character who lost 4 WIL and LDR, then was cured of his Neurosis (while remaining Traumatised), would regain 2 WIL and 2 LDR. Further therapy could cure his trauma, but he would never regain further WIL or LDR in that way.

Note that altering **WIL** by extension alters **KV** and **LR**.

Moral Fitness Effects: Whenever a character goes insane, it becomes, by definition, a questioning event for his faith. There are two concerns here.

1. How much the person's **Moral Fitness** is reduced. As only rational faith is sane, only rationality can rationalise questions of faith, in a manner as to truly sustain it. The character makes an **INT** roll: if he fails, he loses **Learning Points** equal to his **Mental Damage Total**. If he succeeds, he loses **LP** equal to his **Mental Damage Total / 10**.
2. In situations where the nature of the evidence inverts the very foundation for faith itself (see my post, linked to below), the degree of faith is actually an impediment to sanity. In these cases (whether or not said foundation is actually inverted, rather than merely perceiving to have been so), the character must make an **INT** roll: if he succeeds, he gains **Acute SP** equal to his **Learning Point Total * 10** for Moral Fitness. If he fails, he gains **Acute SP** equaling his **LPT**. In either case his **LPT** is then reduced to **0**.

If the revelation is spread out, as through a person brooding on some inexplicable yet unsettling clue he has discovered, slowly fathoming its significant, prorated **Acute SP** value – there is less chance of immediate panic, but the ultimate spiritual effect is the same. Once such a revelation has begun, it begins working through the mind like an acid. A character who makes some kind of perceptiveness or self-awareness roll (in PCCS, either raw Telepathic Sensitivity, or a skill out of either Psychology, Theology, Moral fitness, Perception, or Traps & Spotting) has a terrible, preconscious premonition of where his thoughts are leading to. Generally, such characters attempt to drown out the looming knowledge through drug additions, prayer, running away, and the like. Every **20 - INT** weeks, he must sacrifice a point of permanent long-term motivation (**MOT**) to avoid the revelation, or else his **Chronic SP** accrual continues. During this time the character may not recover from insanity (but he may recover from Incapacitation). Each said time increment, he must check for suicide: If he rolls above his long-term motivation (**MOT**), he is suicidal. If he then rolls equal to or less than his **WIL**, he spends all his **Wpr** and attempts suicide. If the player feels it is in character, he may spend **2 Wpr** to resist making the attempt. This continues until he either dies, deals with the revelation, or reaches **0 MOT**. At **0 MOT** he is in a state of pure and exhausted cognitive dissonance, dividing his **SAN** by **10** for the purposes of resisting the ultimate revelation. He is no longer capable of volition, and will probably eventually rot away of bedsores or die of the flu unless tenderly and constantly treated.

CoC: Transcript of a Tape-Recorded Psychiatric Session

<http://forum.rpg.net/showthread.php?s=f648351337401abdb10fec52c024256f&threadid=35526>

PSYCHIATRY SKILL

This skill is modified by **Teaching** (TCH) and **Telepathic Sensitivity** (TS) characteristics. This skill allows the character to perform emergency psychiatric aid on a patient. The maximum **Mental Damage Total** which a given skill level can attend, is given below.

Expertise Requirement Table

Mental Damage Total	Psychiatry Skill Level Needed
5+	4 (Crisis Centre Help)
30	6 (Therapist)
50	8 (Psychiatrist)
100	10 (Excellent Psychiatrist)
200+	12 (Renowned Specialist)

If sufficient aid is administered, the person's **Mental Damage Total** may be immediately halved.

If a REM-suppressing soporific is administered, the person is rendered unconscious for the duration (varies), and his **CTP** is frozen, resuming countdown when he awakes. If REM is not suppressed, the person's **CTP** is multiplied by **100**. Forcing a pill or an injection on someone already panicked induces an additional **50 Acute SP**; if the person is both insane and panicking, it induces **500 Acute SP** instead.

If an insufficient skill level is present, the person may attempt a Psychiatry skill roll, in order to partially stabilise the patient until he can be gotten to a hospital or other care facility with the needed expertise. Treat the task as being easy for the needed skill level (listed above), and prorate the odds for the less-skilled, from there. The GM should apply appropriate modifiers if the problem is compounded by distractions, background noise, injuries, or even an ongoing assault. If the interim skill roll is made, increase the patient's **CTP** remaining by the original **CTP times the amount succeeded + 2**. If a person is calmed sufficiently to allow him to willfully take a sedative of some kind, his **Mental Damage Total** may be temporarily halved for the duration, only for the purposes of attaining sufficient aid.

Example: One night at an unsupervised party, Jonas has takes a severe overdose of lysergic acid, sustaining 200 Chronic SP. After 30 minutes of the trip the GM demands an Insanity roll; Jonas rolls a 20 and goes psychotic. His Critical Time Period is 3 minutes. His friends, themselves only partially aware, and squabbling about what to do, decide two minutes later to try to calm him down. Despite the distractions one of them makes his unskilled Psychiatry roll, succeeding by 0, and therefore increasing his CTP by 6 minutes. They bring him to a next-door neighbour's house, who is a friendly registered nurse (SL 4), and whose roll succeed by 2, thus calming him for an additional 12 minutes. They drive to the hospital through the lonely streets, reaching the sanitarium where a psychiatrist (SL 8) is working late. He realises that they need a specialist, and succeeds in his roll by 6, calming Jonas for 24 minutes, or long enough to convince him to take some anti-psychotic medication and a soporific, which renders him unconscious for the night (freezing his CTP and artificially decreasing his Mental Damage Total to 100). They restrain him in a hospital room and the doctor

makes an appointment with a specialist for the next day. When Jonas awakens, as specialist (SL 10) is waiting for him, who is capable of treating him because he was temporarily reduced to Mental Damage Total 100. This proper treatment makes that reduction permanent. Reapplying his roll of 20 to the 100 row on the Insanity Table, he is removed from his psychotic state, and is instead now only heavily neurotic. Jonas will need months of therapy to recover.

A note on groups: A big risk in chaotic situations is that not everyone will recognise, or have enough sense to defer to the most capable person there. Anyone who wishes to take charge, must make a **Leadership** roll, cumulatively modified negatively by any Will bonus of anyone present. If no one succeeds, there is chaos. Whoever beats all comers by **0 - 2**, causes an argument of command, taking **10 Phases** (20 seconds), whereupon new rolls may be made. Whoever beats all comers by **3+**, takes charge and cows all others for the next **Minute**. Arguments should be roleplayed out normally, and the real time taken, used as game time for the purposes of the patient's **CTP** running out. Note that a person with high **Leadership** may thus easily take charge, but aside from maintaining order, he may not be person needed for the task at hand – and may not be smart enough to realise it!

Therapy: A psychiatrist of sufficient skill (see above) may attempt to cure an insane character, by applying therapy, psychoanalysis, drugs, and the like. For the purpose of these rules, think along the lines of a Psychiatry skill roll, modified by various circumstances, as situation, personality differences, subsequent trauma, drug effects, head injuries, relationships, and so on – on other words, this presents a distinct roleplaying opportunity. The GM may consult medical manuals and other references to devise a particular mental illness complex for the player to deal with as an ongoing in-game puzzle (possibly secretly insoluble!), without simply flatly declaring a diagnosis. If the psychiatrist in charge makes a diagnosis, the GM should roll the result secretly, as even psychiatrists make mistakes. As a rule, a cure may be attempted once every **(6)** months. Success will extinguish the most extreme column-result the character suffers. Thus, a **Mindless** person will be coaxed down into mere **Psychosis**.

Therapy can also tend to **Permanent Mental Injuries** (see above).

STRESS-INDUCED ILLNESS

Major life changes of any kind can, alone or cumulatively, weaken a person's will to life and immune system, making them more prone to illness. To determine the chance of a person falling ill over various time periods, enter his **Mental Damage Total** (determined above), on the **Stress-Induced Illness Table** below. Include **Chronic SP** accumulated from the **Major Life Change** table following. The nature and severity of the illness is left to the GM.

Stress-Induced Illness Table

Chronic SP Total For	Illness Chance		
	That Year	Bi-Yearly	Yearly
2000	98	90	11
1500	97	82	08
1000	96	77	06
700	95	74	05
500	94	73	04
400	79	59	01+
300	69	47	01
200	50	25	00
150	24	15	
100	11	04	
70	04	01	
45	01		
30	00		

Major Life Change Table

Chronic SP	Event
10	Spouse dies
7	Divorce
7	Marital separation
6	Detained in jail or institution
6	Death of close family member or old, close friend
5	Personal injury/major illness
5	Marriage
5	Fired from job
5	Marital reconciliation
5	Retirement
4	Health change, family member
4	Pregnancy
4	Sex difficulties
4	Gain new family member
4	Business readjustment
4	Change in financial state
4	Death of close friend
4	Change in line of work
4	Increased disputes with spouse
3	Large mortgage
3	Foreclosure, mortgage or loan
3	Change in responsibilities at work
3	Child leaves home
3	In-law trouble
3	Outstanding personal achievement

3	Spouse starts or stops work
3	Start or finish school
3	Change in living conditions
2	Revise personal habits
2	Trouble with boss
2	Change working hours or conditions
2	Change in residence
2	Change schools
2	Change in recreation
2	Change in church activities
2	Change in social activities
2	Loan on car, major appliances
2	Change in no. of family get-togethers
2	Change in sleeping habits
2	Change in eating habits
1	Busy Christmas
1	Major Vacation
1	Minor traffic violation

Example: A newly divorced man suffers the following SP: 7 (divorce) + 3 (major changes in living conditions) + 2 (major change in eating habits) + 2 (change in residence) + 4 (major change in financial state) + 4 (close friend dies) + 2 (trouble with boss) + 1 (traffic violation ticket) + 2 (major change in working conditions at job) = 27. He makes a 00 - 99 roll and gets a 00, suffering a heart attack an hour after signing the divorce papers.

POSSESSION

This is a state, in which a Satanic spirit possesses a character's volition, rendering him an incarnation of wrathful lust. It should be stressed that because of the potential for psychological feedback, a GM must never force a PC to be Satanically possessed. A player must be given the option, and then must freely choose to allow the GM to engage in some kind of possession story-arc, which his character is victimised by. This is an invasion, so remember that a devil is not a player-character (even though player-characters may be close to being devils). NPCs, of course, may be possessed normally, perhaps even being sufficiently evil or sick as to choose to summon them, as decided by the GM. The point to be stressed here is, the element of free will. If a PC is threatened with true possession, such as if his character's mind is entered by a devil, the question is how much free will he, as the human possessed, retains.

In order to be potentially possessed, a person must have gone insane. This may be caused either by the possession attempt itself, or the possession attempt must take place in the context of a mind weakened by insanity (such as by psychotropic drugs, or great faith-testing trauma). The resultant insanity must not have induced either death or mindlessness in the character, or else the devil has nothing left to possess. Once the devil has entered, in whatever form, the character's odds of

being possessed, depend on his **Moral Fitness** skill alone. The odds of resisting, per day of a new attempt, are **9 plus his Moral Fitness SL**, minus the devil's **Potency (P)**. If the character cannot find a quiet place to pray, meditate, or otherwise get his head together for the bulk of the attempt duration, subtract **2** from the base odds. If he is actually shocked somehow, rendering him **Frightened** at any time during the attempt duration, subtract **4** from the attempt (cumulative with being chronically distracted). Each attempt costs **1 Wpr**; and note that Wpr may not be regained while a character is engaged in a moral struggle. The GM should roll secretly on **3(6)**, attempting to roll equal to or less than his success odds in order to let him resist. Whether the character realises that he is winning his moral struggle or not, is the GM's call.

Demon Potency Example Table

<u>Demon</u>	<u>Potency</u>
Leviathan (John Carpenter's The Thing)	15
Son of Satan (Prince of Darkness)	12
Sutter Cane (In the Mouth of Madness)	10
Legion (Mark 5:9)	7
Devil (The Exorcist)	5
Columbine spirit (Doom)	3

If the roll succeeds by **10+**, the devil is rejected outright, and is gone from the mind.
 If the roll succeeds by **7+**, the character resists the attempt outright, but the devil lurks somewhere in the cavernous recesses of the mind.

If the roll succeeds by **5 - 6**, the character resists the attempt over the next hour, and the devil lurks as above.

If the roll succeeds by **3 - 4**, the character resists the attempt over the next full day, and the devil lurks as above.

If the roll succeeds by **1 - 2**, the character resists the attempt over the next week, and the devil lurks as above.

If the roll succeeds by **0** (rolling exactly what he needed), the character succeeds over the next **(6)** months, unless something happens to lower his **Moral Fitness SL**, in which case treat it as a failure, below. And the devil lurks, as above.

If the roll fails by **1 - 2**, the devil either gains possession of the character over the next **(6)** months, else forfeits that chance to gain weak influence over him immediately (GM's choice), while lurking.

If the roll fails by **3 - 4**, the devil either gains possession of the character within a week, or forfeits that chance to gain moderate influence over him immediately, then lurks.

If the roll fails by **5 - 6**, again the process either takes a day, or the devil gains strong influence over the character.

If the roll fails by **7+**, the character is possessed outright.

If the roll fails by **10+**, the character goes into fits and dies.

Weak influence means that the devil causes the character to think and do things which are not true to his character. The fact that the devil entered his character in

the first place indicates that he does not know himself sufficiently well. If the character realises he is possessed, he becomes **Frightened** whenever in a stressful or inexplicable situation. The GM should not allow the character to distinguish between impulses originating from his real self and the devil within; instead, he will find that the universe simply acts differently – people are stupider, more vexing, things don't go right, police are incompetent, etc. The character responds to this as if he were the normal one, thus guiding him toward evil.

Moderate influence means that the devil tries to shove him over an impulsive edge, into committing murder, or some other act of depraved violence. The devil, suddenly acting, takes control of the character's body and emotions for a **number of half-seconds equal to 20 minus the character's WIL**. E.g. a character with WIL 13 would "not be himself" for 3 full seconds. The character perceives what he is doing, but the moral significance of the act is occluded. Aside from total possession, this is probably the most beguiling manifestation, because the character acts before he has time to reflect on what he is doing.

Strong influence means the devil controls the character's body to a substantial degree, but may be bound by certain idiosyncratic rules relating to the exact nature of the possession (adjudicated by the GM). The character is effectively **Dazed**, but if he realises he is possessed, he may spend **4 Wpr** to roll his **WIL or less on 3(6)**, in order to take any simple action not directly related to countermanding what the devil is trying to make him do. In other words, the only way to act in even the simplest manner, is to trick the devil by either conjuring the impulse to do something, which the devil also wants to do, or doing something which the devil cannot find sense in, and therefore mistakes for some kind of insanity (which is the nature of the situation, after all!).

Total possession means the individual has gone **Mindless**, *after* the devil has taken him. Treat the person as being **Knocked Out** for the duration. This is actually disadvantageous to the devil, because although it now controls the person's body, it cannot torture the character at its pleasure, as by allowing him to scream, shout for help, etc. Thus, it cannot hide behind the person's mind to avoid tipping off potential exorcists.

Recognising a possession attempt in yourself is a **Theology** skill roll, with Base Odds of **0**, modified by **INT**. Recognising it by another person requires four hours of face to face investigation with the subject while he is awake, with Base Odds of **8 minus the given devil's Con/Acting SL** (averaging 10+); if the possessed person is totally possessed, add **4** to the Base Odds. Success also renders the character automatically **Frightened** for the remainder of the possession attempt. A character who is aware of such an attempt, can determine whether a devil is struggling for full possession, or merely flanking his soul through lesser influence, by making a **Perception** roll (modified by **Telepathic Sensitivity**), with Base Odds of **8 minus the devil's Con/Acting SL**. A possessed person realises he is possessed by spending **1 Wpr** and rolling **INT + 2 or less on 3(6)**; he may try again whenever presented with compelling evidence.

Example: After being forced to ingest Liquid Satan, Calder (INT 9, WIL 17, Moral Fitness 7) attempts to recognise that he is being possessed, spending 1 Wpr. His odds are $8 - 1$ (the Liquid's Con/Acting SL) $+ 7 = 0$. He rolls a 5, realising he's in supernatural peril.

Calder's odds to resist are $9 + 7$ (his SL) $- 12$ (Liquid's Potency) $= 4$. Calder rolls a 9. As the devil is on a schedule, it takes immediate strong possession of him, and he rises up from the wet office floor. He makes an INT roll, scoring a 3 and realising with horror that he is possessed. He spends 4 Wpr, trying to clutch a chair to stop himself from moving. The GM rules that the Liquid isn't terribly intelligent, and so mistakes this as an attempt to grasp a weapon. The chair banging on the risers behind him, Calder ascends the stairs toward his friends.

Slowly realising this isn't working, Calder struggles through his dread and confusion, spending another 4 Wpr to begin singing, hoping to forewarn his friends. As it happens, he is a fine Negro Spiritualist (Classical Singing 10) and the devil disregards this in bemused mockery. Hearing singing and banging, his friends gather at the top of the stairs, to find Calder, face drenched in sweat, pouring his soul into "Amazing Grace".

Standing at the top of the stairs, he realises that if he does nothing, he will murder his friends. Unable to warn them, he spends 4 Wpr and rips a flat wooden baluster from the nearby railing. The devil again thinks of this as a weapon. Smiling and laughing, as if at the insanity of it all, Calder spends his last 4 Wpr to kill the nearest innocent person by sticking the wooden knife through his own throat.

A possession remains until the person is killed or the devil is cast out in some manner. This requires the use of the **Exorcism** Skill. See below:

Exorcism: This is modified by Leadership, Teaching, and Telepathic Sensitivity characteristics. This is the special skill of detecting and casting out devils from tormented souls. It trades off to **Moral Fitness** at $\frac{1}{4}$. Each exorcism proper session takes four hours, and requires elaborate preparation, best left to the GM to detail, tailored to his specific campaign, and arbitrate the effectiveness of various methods, depending on the exact nature of the situation. For instance, a Catholic Rite of Exorcism probably wouldn't be able to exorcise the Liquid Satan, any more than it could exorcise LSD; in those cases, a biotic, and an abiotic contaminant is physically preventing the devil from loosening its grasp. However, performing such a rite might furnish the beset character with additional Wpr, in the form of added faith in his friends' confidence. Proper exorcism's Base Odds are **5 minus P**, where P is the **Potency** of the devil.

In a pinch, and provided both that the victim is not Mindless, and that the character's attention can be gained for sufficient time, an exorcist can try to reconnect with the humanity of the victim for long enough to avoid further calamity. In these cases, the attempt requires a few seconds or minutes -- use the **Command Time** rules, treating this as a single command. On a success, the devil is reduced to merely lurking for a minute, and whatever incapacitation state the victim is in is drawn out. The GM must decide whether and when the devil

attempts to regain control. Note that this may give the victim a chance to get to a proper place of sanctuary. An exigency exorcism's Base Odds are **12 - P**.

Example: In the midst of a high-school shooting massacre, a Professor (LDR 15, Moral Fitness SL 4), follows the strongly possessed Shooter into a dead-end classroom. The Shooter raises the rifle to shoot, but the Professor has a brainwave and attempts an on-the-spot exorcism, by pointing at his own face and saying "Look into my eyes!" to call his attention to the humanity of his rifle-target. His odds are base 12 + 1 (his effective Exorcism SL) + 1 (Leadership 15) - 3 (the devil's Potency) = 11. The professor rolls an 11, and the Shooter suddenly recognises Mr. Anderson, dropping the rifle and stumbling into a corner to curl up in a ball.