

The Chips of Artha

This is an add-on system that can be applied to any Roleplaying game or system. It exists to coerce players to truly immerse themselves in their characters, and even add drama themselves. The version here assumes we are using Bennies and Advancements from Savage Worlds, but any kind of meta-reward and Leveling-up in any kind of system will do.

The base idea are colored Chips, inspired by poker. It was also clearly inspired by the Artha system from Burning Wheel.

Beliefs

Each player decides 3 Beliefs for his character to hold. One or two should be vague and general («all xenos are to be exterminated«, »I alone can lead this nation to salvation«, »Don't trust people until they give you reason to«), while one or two should be actionable and in reference to the immediate situation, and the players should write them together («Tony is sleeping with my wife«, »I need to sieze Frostmourne if I want to kill Mal'Ganis«, »I will not succumb to Moiraine's manipulations«, »I need to get the One Ring to Rivendell«).

White - Play the game

This is the default chip. Every Wild Card (Player Character or important NPC) gets 3 per session. They do not transfer between sessions. Some Extras (NPCs) start with 1 or 2. In D&D, they serve as Inspiration- in Savage Worlds, they are Bennies. In other systems- a reroll.

Blue - Roleplay, get rewarded

This chip grants you an extra White chip and is kept until Advancement. Every player, including the GM, can Award 1 Blue chip per session . They can award the Blue chip to any other player during the game for outstanding in-character roleplay of their beliefs, or otherwise making the game more enjoyable out-of-character.

Red - Stir up drama, get rewarded

This chip grants you an extra White chip (Benny) and is kept until Advancement. The GM gets unlimited. This chip is rewarded when a player does what their character would do, even when they would rather do something different. Perhaps it's less optimal, perhaps the character's personality holds them back from getting info out of a suspect.

Additionally, another way to get Red chips is to suggest complications or emerging plot events. A savvy GM might tell the players to come up two or three obstacles when they decide to travel between two towns, or a player might do so on his own, to gain a Red chip.

Unlike the Blue chips, for which others nominate you, you can nominate yourself for a Red chip. A GM is often busy with many things, and everyone's views are subjective. If you feel you deserve a Red chip, you should say so- if the GM agrees, you get it.

The GM can also decide to take away a player's red chips if the player obviously refuses to stick to his character.

Black - True Immersion, Twist fate

This chip is special. It can be awarded at most once per session, and can only do so if ALL the players (except the reciever and the current holder of the black chip) AND the GM agree. It can only be awarded for something you did in-character. There cannot be more than one at a time, though. If someone else gets awarded the Black chip before you spend yours, you have to give it to them. So, spend it.

The Black chip can be spent for a major story-wise character advancement. Perhaps your Space Marine gets promoted to Captain, or your knight's uncle dies and you inherit a castle. You can also use it to force the hand of fate- trying to win a local election? Spend your Black chip, and remind the GM that you will win because the local population loves you. Trying to travel to a foreign land? Spend a Black chip and decide that there is an expedition being organised there right now, looking for a navigator. The GM can only deny your request if it's outrageous or would change the tone or direction of the campaign too much- in which case, he must still reach a compromise.

Advancements

At an appropriate milestone, when some of the characters have resolved their immediate beliefs, the GM can announce »Advancement«. This should usually be during downtime after a dramatic moment. The following happens:

- If any player's beliefs have been resolved the way the characters wanted («I need Frostmourne to kill Mal'Ganis« ---> Arthas acquired Frostmourne), they can Evolve the belief for free («I need to kill Mal'Ganis for good now«). If it was completely resolved, they can replace with with something context-appropriate (Arthas killed Mal'Ganis ---> »I want the Helm of Domination«). They also get a Blue chip.
- Any player may spend a Red chip to forcefully change one of their Beliefs- either flip it on it's head, evolve it, or replace with something context-appropriate. This usually means that a character saw his belief failed him (when getting the Red chip), and now questions it.
- If a player spends the Black chip, they can undergo major character change- change 2 Beliefs, even in dramatic ways.

Then:

- Any player with at least 1 Blue and 1 Red chip gets an advancement (level-up).
- The player with the most Blue and Red chips combined is the MVP; they get 2 advancements.
- If a player has a Black chip, they can spend it here to gain 2 Advancements.
- You cannot get 3 advancements, even if you are MVP AND have the Black chip.

