

- Rules Relating to Behaviour

When we started Apotheosis in 2007, it was a group of people who already knew each other. “Rules?” we said. “We don’t need rules. Just use common sense!”

Hot tip: “common sense” is not really all that common.

With regards to behaviour, I knew there were a few things I didn’t want to see in the guild.

- a) No casual use of the word “rape”.** No, dear guild member, you are not, in fact, “raping” your opponent. You are dominating him. Wrecking him. Ruining him. You are not “raping” him. I had grown extremely tired of hearing that word being flung about (mostly by guys) and I didn’t want to put up with it any longer. It had been a taboo word in our old guild, Fated Heroes, but I wanted to codify it. No more using “rape” as a word that meant “dominating”. Why? Well, I’m lucky in that I’ve never been assaulted, but I know people who have been and I get really cranky when people use that word without much care for people listening who may be survivors of rape, assault or abuse themselves. (Check out <http://www.rainn.org/> for more information and statistics.)
- b) No using the word “gay” in the pejorative sense of the word.** That means not saying “that’s so gay!” and such. No, the new raid boss isn’t “gay”, he’s annoying. No, that raid boss mechanic isn’t “gay”, it’s something of which you need to be aware. No, that guild member isn’t “gay”, he’s being irritating. Why do I take issue with this? First of all, there’s nothing wrong with being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender, so “insulting” something by calling it “gay” doesn’t even really make sense. What “gay” has come to mean, when used in that context, is “stupid”. That essentially equates homosexuality (and those who are homosexual) with stupidity. Further, a lot of the time, people will say it to de-masculinize the person or object being insulted, which, in our binary society, means that

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if they are not male, they are female. And still, using this term, implied to be stupid. Treating people who are GLBTQ or female as “stupid”, or implying that any of those types of people are “stupid” is not acceptable to me and I don't care to spend time with people who think it's okay. (That we get to codify our own morals and beliefs into the policies of the guild is one of the *very* few perks we guild masters get!)

I also wanted people to be more or less respectful. One of the major flaws that I've seen over and over in video games is that the more skilled a group you have, chances are, they are going to be less friendly and less respectful than others who are not as skilled or progressed. I'm not saying this is something that always happens, without fail, but it does happen sometimes and it isn't something I wanted to see happen with Apotheosis. Everyone was a newbie (or noob) at one point, right? It doesn't cost anything to be nice, so I wanted people to at least be respectful of others.

That's essentially what we started with in 2007. Of course, we found reasons to add another few rules...

c) No applying to other guilds. One would think this is a no-brainer, but we hated that people would “ninja” people from our guild. Essentially, more progressed raiders would whisper people from our guild and say “hey, leave them, join us”. We were okay with the idea of people leaving if they weren't happy, but we just wanted them to be upfront about it. You're going to apply to another guild? Fine. Quit our guild first. We didn't want to be blindsided and see half our roster end up elsewhere. This sort of goes along with the whole “respect” thing. We expected our members to be respectful enough to leave before applying to go elsewhere.

d) Raiders and Friends. Apotheosis had a Friend rank reserved for friends of raiders. We had a situation where someone applied to our guild and didn't get through the application process. A current raider then said “oh, he's my friend, it's cool, he can stay”. So sure, the applicant got to stay in the guild as a “friend”. And then, not a week later, the raider who

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had basically sponsored the applicant as a friend, *left* the guild and went to another one. And we were kind of stuck with the former applicant. The guy hadn't done anything wrong, so it seemed kind of weird to just throw him out, but the guy who had just vouched for him had just left! So... what to do? Well, the situation resolved itself when the applicant left shortly thereafter. Then, we immediately introduced this rule where if the person at the "friend" rank no longer had any raider-ranked friends in the guild, they would be asked to leave, so that we'd never have to deal with that kind of strange awkwardness again.

- e) **Other people using your characters.** While it's against the Blizzard Terms of Service, we didn't really care if someone else used your character – as long as it wasn't in a raid situation. Sadly, what prompted us to create this rule is because this *actually happened* a couple of times. We didn't want people not playing their own characters in raids. Period. Punishments, which were a rarity in Apotheosis, would have ranged from being removed from the raid, to losing DKP/EP, to being thrown out of the guild. Once this rule was enacted, there were no recurrences of this behaviour.

Of course, these are just the rules that we came up with for Apotheosis. Your rules will likely be different. Just make sure to *codify* what you have in terms of rules, because "common sense", even among friends, will eventually require something written down, I promise you. You may as well get a head start on it.

- Community

The secret to having a close-knit guild is to remember that a guild is not just a collection of people. A good, tight guild is a collection of people with the same plans, sharing many of the same values and, here's the big one, sharing all kinds of experiences together.

While I wouldn't say I was good friends with a ton of people in Apotheosis while I was the GM, I will say that we certainly went

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through a lot together. Countless wipes, many victories, the INFAMOUS LAST ATTEMPT, Thrall dropping us, the Skyfire being, well, on fire... all these little things add up and make a lasting impression on people.

Sharing experiences isn't enough, although it's a large part of what builds a team. The other major part of building a team comes from communication. As such, it's really important to have guild forums to discuss things. We had an officer section, for the officers to discuss all kinds of things, from changes in policy to what to do with a troublesome player to what to charge for loot.

However, we also had sections for melee DPS, ranged DPS, healers and tanks. We also had a whole section of the forums reserved for raid reviews where we would discuss the issues we saw in the raid, using World of Logs parses as our basis and, well, proof.

Apart from that, we also had role channels for healers, tanks and the various DPS. I actually also had CLASS channels, but many people didn't really bother with them. Our paladin chat was pretty quiet since it was just me and the other holy pally for most of Cataclysm, despite having something like six pallies on the roster.

Finally, we embraced Twitter. And by "embraced", I mean all my healers were on Twitter pretty quickly. It was great for discussing things during the day or just asking quick questions or whatever. Many others in the guild eventually got on Twitter and everyone followed everyone. It was just a really nice way to get to know others and to stay in touch with them.

I would say that the in-game chat channels dedicated to various roles plus Twitter were the most effective at creating a sense of teamwork between people. Plus, it was a lot of fun to participate in some of those conversations. (Then there were the conversations about bears and poop that you kind of wished you had missed, but you were secretly glad you were there for them because everyone else was grossed out, too.)

Ahem.

There are other ways to build up your community, but we’ll deal with that in a later section, appropriately entitled “Community Management”. For now, I would recommend making sure you have forums and in-game chat channels available as well as encouraging others to start using Twitter.

- Dealing with People (Legendary Bonus)

While you may find it strange to have an entire, lengthy segment dedicated to “dealing with people”, you will likely thank me for writing this up at some point in the future. As you prepare for your adventure as a guild master, be warned that you are about to become a “people person”, even if you loathe other people with every fibre of your soul. (Note that if you *don’t* loathe other people with every fibre of your soul, you may end up that way after your time as a guild master.) This segment of the Starting Up module is going to help prepare you for being the “go-to” person that *everyone* turns to.

- 1) Designate.** Depending on how large your guild is and what your overall goals are (remember goals? We talked about them earlier in the section!), you may be able to designate certain people for others to talk to. What do I mean? Well, say that you’re a 25-man raiding guild and you have a healing lead, a melee lead, a ranged lead, a tank lead and a raid leader. Whenever anyone has any questions about anything to do with raiding, shove them off to the appropriate person! (This may be less helpful if you’ve taken on one or more of these roles.) For example, if you have a healer who has various concerns about a strategy your team has enacted, gently remind them that you’re not the raid leader but that they should feel free to chat with the raid leader about that particular situation. Similarly, if that healer has concerns about, say, their output or general

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assignments within raids, gently remind them that they should go to their healing lead.

It’s important that you do this *gently*. Don’t say “hey, moron, I’m not the raid leader/your role officer!” or anything, obviously. Always *thank* the individual for coming to you or writing to you. You want to encourage an environment where people should feel free to ask questions or voice concerns. Feedback is extremely important, so anyone who is giving you feedback should be listened to. Mind you, sometimes their suggestions may not always make sense or work in your environment, but *listening* to someone’s suggestions and *enacting* someone’s suggestions are completely different. People just want to be heard and you (or your designated individual) can listen to your guild member’s suggestions, comments or concerns without enacting them. This goes a long way in affirming that someone is a valuable and, indeed, valued member of your team!

***** Please note:** The Legendary bonus, *Dealing with People*, will only be available to those who purchase the Legendary version of **Module 1: Starting Up**, or the Legendary version of the complete guide. The *Designate* segment is only a tenth of the *entire* legendary bonus! ***