

PalaDiary Day 12: Moral system: Loyal Dog

So, 2 or 3 years ago, I was introduced to the single-player LARP *Brave Sparrow* by Avery Adler. It punched me square in the therian feels and I highly recommend it (it's free!). Inspired by this game, but not connecting to an avian experience, I wrote my own, canine variant of the game: *Loyal Dog*

The interested can download it here, for free: <https://vyt.itch.io/loyal-dog>

The game document has active, play-aspects that I won't talk about here. But this game, like the one that inspired it, are about self-transformation. Which means, in the course of writing *Loyal Dog*, I basically had to come up with a personal ethos. That's what I want to describe here. One might notice it takes a lot of the concepts I started with with the 5 Pillars, and combines some of them under larger umbrellas, as well as adding a dog filter to the whole deal.

The core of this system is **Loyalty**. All subsections are just types of Loyalty and ways of approaching it.

Duty

Duty is responsibility for. It concerns how the individual handles their privilege and power. It is about service and support. It is about fighting, literally or metaphorically, for a better world. It is about using one's strengths, gifts, and abilities for the benefit of others. It is protecting the vulnerable, assisting those in need, making one's home a safe place. Examples of Duty can be teaching someone, voting, volunteering, standing up to a bully, making a space more accessible. Duty fundamentally acknowledges that people do have power over others, and asks that that responsibility be taken seriously and handled graciously. Compared to the older 5-pillar system, Duty encompasses Sharing the Light and Fighting Monsters (Following the Quest is not it's own thing in this system but gets subsumed as actions taken).

Friendship

Friendship is the loyalty between peers and companions. It is the relationship building between friends and family, and reflects how one treats their equals in power and privilege. examples of friendship can be sharing a meal, giving a compliment, writing to a pen pal, or joining a team sport. Friendship is how one chooses one's pack, and maintains supportive relationships with them. Compared to the five pillars, this is most heavily rooted in Sharing the Light.

Trust

Trust is the inverse and complement to Duty. Where Duty is responsibility *for*, Trust is responsibility *to*. Just as everyone has aspects and roles in their lives where they hold power or privilege, everyone has spaces in their lives where others hold power, or the individual is the novice. Ways to show trust include keeping promises, accepting criticism graciously, and asking for help from those more skilled or experienced. Trust is not blind following, but is a matter of humility, respect, and acknowledging that no one achieves alone and everyone must put their trust in others to some extent. From the five

pillars, this is most rooted in Respecting the liege.

To give a canine example: A herding dog has Duty to it's sheep, Friendship to it's fellow herding dogs, and Trust in it's human shepherd. In human society, depending on context and situation, the same person will fit into all of these roles with different people in different circumstances. In my counseling career, I have a duty of care to my clients (they are autonomous and free individuals, but I have a responsibility to them as a professional they have sought out for help), friendship with my fellow students and interns, and trust in my professors and supervisors.

Compared to the 5-pillar system, Loyalty is much more hierarchy-conscious. The three types are subdivided into whether the individual is the one in power, among peers, or the one learning and depending on others. The hierarchy doesn't have to be absolute (e.g. A classmate may be a peer to me, but I would treat them as the expert on their specialties and life experiences, and be the expert in mine). But I think it speaks to how much I have an internalized idea of order, respect and social valence. I think often of power relationships, not with the goal of being the one at the top of the pile, but with a consciousness of interdependence and a feeling of responsibility and respect toward anyone I interact with.