

# INFINITE GALAXIES

## Rules Update – Triggering Drives & Relationships

This document updates the Infinite Galaxies rules in development. This introduces Drives and Relationships found in the new version of the rules set.

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### **WHAT'S CHANGED**

This new system replaces a few things. First, Drives are introduced. These replace the prior system of Interests related to Plots and Subplots. Drives are verb-phrases that describe an action that the character undertakes during the course of a session. Second, Relationships replace Bonds. These work mostly like Bonds, but are worded in a way to encourage more roleplaying and interaction between the characters. Finally, triggering Drives and Relationships earn the character xp. This completely replaces the “fail for xp” system that was inherited from Dungeon World.

During playtesting, we found that Interests weren't working as intended. Since Plots and Subplots were not being introduced right away, players often forgot about Interests or were unsure how to write good ones. Often, players would write Interests that were too easy to achieve or were unusable. In the Drives system, the players are provided with a selection of Drives to choose from.

Similarly, Bonds were not quite working as well as we would have liked. Marking Bonds was an additional burden on the players and the GM had to remind the players to mark Bonds when they were roleplayed or when a character aided another. In the Relationship system, the Relationship conditions are pre-existing, meaning that the player just fills in a name for each.

The biggest feedback we received during playtesting was to remove the “fail for xp” system that Infinite Galaxies inherited from Dungeon World (and some similar games). In this implementation, the “fail for xp” system has been completely removed. In its place, characters now earn xp when triggering Drives and Relationships.

### **TRIGGERING A DRIVE**

Inherent in this new system is the concept of “triggering” a Drive. At the start of each game session, the player marks 2 Drives. For the rest of the session, the character may trigger the selected Drives when taking actions. Triggering a Drive earns the character xp each time, so this is something that the character should be trying to do. To trigger a Drive, the character must actively achieve the terms of the Drive. This must be something that drives the story forward and has a meaningful impact on play; the character cannot simply “spam” the same action over and over, hoping for more xp each time. Ultimately, the GM will decide whether a Drive has been triggered.

Drives are worded in very specific ways. First, the Drive should be something that the character could theoretically do several times a session. Second, the language has to be restrictive enough so as not to make it too easy to trigger the Drive.

Here are some examples of Drives and actions that would trigger them --

- *Impress someone with your fine piloting skills* (from the Ace): The Ace could evade an enemy in vehicular combat by using a move like Evasive Action and scoring a 10+. Since “Impress” is the action, some groundwork would need to be laid before triggering this Drive; there would need to be someone who could/would be impressed by the Ace’s piloting skills.
- *Find critical information no one else can* (from the Jack): The Jack would probably use the default move, Gather Information, for this. Because of the “no one else can” language, this information might only be obtainable from the Jack’s sources or others have tried to get the information and could not.
- *Spend a critical resource getting an ally back into the fight* (from the Leader): The Leader has several “healing” moves, so any of these could theoretically be used here. Spending a “critical resource”, though, is important. This could be a use from Medic Gear, Reserve, Credit, or something along those lines. It also implies that there is an ongoing combat situation, so this could not be triggered during downtime.
- *Investigate a new and interesting place* (from the Robot): A lot of playbooks have Drives like this. For the Robot, this could include package moves like Database of Places and Things, or it could be using a basic move like Analyze or Understand. The place has to be “new” and “interesting”, so this somewhat restricts how often this will be triggered. To trigger this, the Robot must be actively doing something to learn more about the place.
- *Heal someone who is dangerously close to death* (from the Soldier): Like the Leader example, this involves healing someone else. The Soldier has ways to heal people, specifically from the Medic package. The “dangerously close to death” language restricts how often this is triggered; healing someone with Wounds marked would probably qualify, assuming they are still in significant danger of taking more damage.

Note that playbooks offer an advance that allows the player to mark 3 Drives instead of 2.

### **TRIGGERING A RELATIONSHIP**

Also part of this new system is the concept of triggering Relationships for xp. Relationships replace Bonds, but act in much the same way from a roleplaying and mechanical perspective. Unlike the prior Bonds system, Relationships are written into the playbook; players will fill in the name of another player character for each Relationship. The Special Relationship is carried over from the prior system and has a similar mechanical effect in game play. When a Relationship is triggered, the character earns xp. Unlike Drives, of which only a few are marked per session, all Relationships are available to be triggered for xp. To trigger a Relationship, there is an action that the character or another character must complete. When this happens, the character earns xp (even if the triggering action is done by someone else). This must be something that drives the story forward and has a meaningful impact on play; the character cannot simply “spam” the same action over and over, hoping for more xp each time. Ultimately, the GM will decide whether a Relationship has been triggered.

Note that all Relationships that are filled in with a name are eligible for xp; the player does not need to mark any at the start of the session.

Relationships are worded in very specific ways. First, the Relationship should be something that the character (or another character) could theoretically do several times a session. Second, the language has to be restrictive enough so as not to make it too easy to trigger the Relationship.

Here are some examples of Relationships and actions that would trigger them --

- *I need to show \_\_\_\_\_ how to be self-reliant* (from the Explorer). This is a “push” Relationship, meaning that the Explorer is trying to get someone else to do something. For this Relationship, a trigger would be that the Explorer has a conversation with the subject about doing something on their own, without help, and so forth. The “show” part could indicate that the Explorer will need to actually do something on his or her own to prove to the subject that it can be done.
- *I need \_\_\_\_\_ to keep me somewhat legit* (from the Jack). This is a “pull” Relationship, meaning that the Jack needs someone else to do something to them or for them. For this Relationship, the Jack, who is probably somewhat involved in shady business or in constant contact with underworld characters, needs the subject to keep him or her from getting too deep into trouble.
- *I need to help get the very most out of \_\_\_\_\_'s abilities* (from the Leader). This is a “push” Relationship, meaning that the Leader is trying to get someone else to do something. For this Relationship, the Leader wants to push the subject to get the maximum out of their capabilities. Laying the groundwork for this might involve a subject who was not performing to their utmost and the Leader has a conversation involving improvement. The Leader has to “help”, so this might also involve using Issue Orders or the Aid move.
- *\_\_\_\_\_ must take me to dangerous places* (from the Psi). This is a “pull” Relationship, meaning that the Psi needs someone else to do something to them or for them. This Relationship is pretty straightforward; essentially, the subject takes the Psi to a dangerous place. This could simply be flying to a dangerous place in a starship, which is something that the Ace might do. It could also be triggered by another character leading the Psi to this dangerous place.
- *\_\_\_\_\_ must remind me that I am brave* (from the Soldier). This is a “pull” Relationship, meaning that the Soldier needs someone else to do something to them or for them. For this Relationship, the subject and the Soldier need to have a conversation about bravery. This sort of situation may come after the Soldier had to flee from a battle or other stressful situation.

Because triggering Relationships will usually involve some groundwork in roleplaying, the examples given above are necessarily simplistic. The players and GM will need to work together to make it possible to trigger these Relationships.

## **XP SYSTEM**

When a Drive or Relationship is triggered, the character earns xp each time. Everything else in the xp system should remain unchanged. On a miss, nothing happens in terms of xp; the GM still has a hard move to use.

For a single action, whether a Drive or Relationship is triggered, only 1 xp is earned.

## **THE GM'S ROLE**

The GM will be the final arbiter in whether a Drive or Relationship has been triggered. It is also somewhat incumbent on the GM to create or enable situations where selected Drives and Relationships can be triggered. This can be done in the creation of Milestones, in the choice of Hard Moves, or choices offered to players as a result of 7-9 results and so forth.

## **FURTHER DEVELOPMENT**

While the Drives are prescribed in the current implementation, we would like to have at least one Drive that is related to a Milestone. One idea for future exploration is to provide a list of Drives that can be selected from a current Milestone in play. To implement this, we would change one of the existing Drives on the character sheets to a blank space and then create Milestones with Drives for players to choose. Obviously, this puts an additional burden on the GM when creating Milestones.

Obviously, we will need to playtest how well the new xp system replaces the old system. The suspicion is that players will earn slightly less xp than before.