

-panel start-

Kin Manners 101

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[Image ID: Slide contains images of the seven-pointed otherkin star, the plural rings symbol, the therian theta delta, and the fictionkin inkwell in black and white]

So the community has a problem.

A problem regarding harmonious interactions with others regarding our identities.

This is a very avoidable problem, and this panel is going to be about how to do that.

If its in this panel, we have seen someone do it- and likely in the last three years. Its why we felt the need to include the points we did.

This panel is geared primarily towards fictionkind, fictives, and factives, but a good number of the things in this panel can be useable advice for all alterhumans.

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Before we get into the panel we need to go over some stuff first.

Content Warnings:

Due to some of the Problems, fandom discourse will have to be briefly touched on.

Some people may also find certain sections feel like Reality Checking.

Lastly, you may experience heavy secondhand embarrassment from the things in this panel.

Please take care of yourself and leave the panel if you know these things will upset you.

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NO NAMEDROPPING

We will NOT be shaming specific people for bad behavior

This is about improvement, not shaming or punishment.

DO NOT NAMEDROP OR GIVE IDENTIFYING INFORMATION ON PEOPLE WHO HAVE DONE THESE THINGS DURING THE PANEL

This encourages harassment and does NOT encourage growth. Don't do it.

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[Image ID: Pixel image of the panelist's system symbol which is a series eight of diamond-shaped crystal shards in different colors arranged in the rough shape of a star or flower. Four are larger and four are smaller.]

We are The Dragonheart Collective, we use they/them pronouns and are a nonhuman multiple system.

We have identified under various alterhuman labels for over a decade, and -relevant to this panel- we have been in fandom spaces for a just a bit longer.

Our website may be found at dragonsroost on neocities.

If you are citing this panel, please cite us as 'The Dragonheart Collective' or Dragon[s] where appropriate should you wish to do so.

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The manners talked about in this panel will be specific to the community. Regular manners such as respecting pronouns and reasonable boundaries will not be included.

This is not a complete list of everything that is possibly impolite and what to do instead, do not treat it as such. Its merely a guideline.

We would also like to thank the various denizens of Otherconnect for giving helpful feedback!

Y'all know who you are. Thank you.

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Some people may ask when faced with this panel, "Isn't this respectability politics"?

In short- No.

This is pointing out inappropriate behavior.

Manners aren't respectability politics, they are being considerate.

When you have no manners this hurts others. It can deeply upset people, cause kin & systems to be banned from servers or interacting wholesale, and increase anti-kin, anti-plural, and anti-alterhuman harassment, among other things.

It also makes people not want to interact with you when you have no manners.

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Some people may also ask when faced with this panel, "Uh-Oh! I do these things! What now?"

It's good you have recognized you were doing wrong!

Now you know better and can choose to do alternate behaviors and grow as a person.

Everyone makes mistakes and you do not need to wallow in them! You are not evil, you are learning to behave and can do better in the future.

We are all animals learning to behave for our whole lives, take this as a learning moment, not a shaming moment.

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We also need to go over some definitions as used in this panel

Noemata: All knowledge relating to a alterhuman identity. Mentally exchange for your preferred specific word such as exomemory, source memory, knowings, etc.

Fictionfolk: All those with fictional identities. Again exchange for your preferred specific word such as fictive or fictionkind.

Kinposting: Overtly talking about your kintype or exomemories or talking about the canon 'in character'.

Validation Begging: Asking strangers if they are ok with your identity or if they think these things are valid.

And \*now\* we are ready to get into the meat of the panel.

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As a general rule of thumb, you can follow what we have decided to call The Golden Rule; don't make your identity or beliefs other people's problems.

It doesn't matter what you meant by it, it matters how it comes off.

To elaborate on this rule, remember the acronym 'SON'

Are you applying the same standards to this person that you would yourself?

Have they indicated that they are open to the topic?

Is it necessary to interact in this way to convey what you need to?

These questions to ask yourself can give you a general guide on when and how to engage with others with your alterhuman identity in an appropriate way.

However, sometimes this sort of general rule isn't enough, so we have collected a list of notable problem behaviors, sorted them into general categories, elaborated a bit on why they are inappropriate, and gave some alternatives to those behaviors.

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First general category: Do not make your identity Fandom's problem

For many reasons, fandom by and large does NOT like actual 'kin- even (and sometimes especially) when they know what we are.

People violating boundaries or fandom etiquette is often the first and only thing they see of us, which causes dislike of us.

Some of this dislike can be mitigated by encouraging better behavior in the community.

Fandom has its own etiquette regarding things like tagging, character hate, and roleplaying in 'common areas'. USE IT.

There will still be people who dislike us, but we can make less drama happen this way.

We have a very long history of harassing and upsetting each other. Stop adding to it.

For specific bad behaviors in this category...

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The first of which is overt 'kinposting' in fandom spaces.

This often looks like inconsiderate roleplaying to those unfamiliar with kin.

As fandom is engaging from the perspective of play pretend and you aren't, when they do know you are not roleplaying this easily leads to confusion and upset and can look like forcing one's beliefs on others.

This doesn't mean you can't be open about your identity and in fandom, to be clear, it just means one should avoid explicitly putting their material reality in other people's play pretend unasked for.

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In terms of alternate behaviors, keeping overt kinposting to alterhuman-specific or private areas is the number one way to avoid conflict here.

Alternately, flagging your content in a way that it can be blacklisted or otherwise avoided if you put it in the main fandom spaces of a given website is also a good option.

For example on tumblr also tag your post as fictionkin if you tag it with the fandom tag as tags are public searchable fandom spaces and people can then blacklist 'fictionkin' in their settings.

You can also present the kinposting you wish to do in fandom areas as headcanons, meta, or fanfic without saying they are your literal experiences.

For example say 'headcanon: character did this', not 'I did this'

To be again very clear: You do NOT need to be fully stealth, just be respectful of the context and tone of the space.

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Next is claiming your identity gives you authority on what interpretations are the 'right ones'

You cannot impose your identity or beliefs on other people without looking at best inconsiderate.

They are doing what they are doing with fictional representations that are like your experiences. They are not doing these things to you literally-directly.

They are not erasing your experiences, they are interpreting what is widely considered a play pretend story differently.

Your version of events does not trump that of anyone else's version of events. This includes sourcemates, fans, canon, etc.

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Blocking and/or unfollowing the people/tags/etc who's content upsets you in fandom is the major alternative behavior for this.

Recognize that you cannot control what other people do with fictional characters and find other ways to cope with being upset by their content.

Make or commission more content of things you do like. Engage with the content of it that already exists.

Remember that putting unavoidable hate for things in communal fandom spaces (including tumblr fandom tags) is considered bad manners in fandom.

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Oh yeah. People have done this.

-big sigh-

Using your identity as an argument in shipcourse.

This is ESPECIALLY not appropriate or safe.

Your personal reality and beliefs regarding it do NOT need to be followed by other people, ergo they are NOT appropriate debate points.

No matter what 'side' you are on, it is NOT helping either position.

Fandom folks are engaging with fiction as fiction, you are engaging with it as your personal reality. It muddies the water of the discourse to cross these. This is NOT negotiable.

This particular discourse is ESPECIALLY volatile, and harassment is common- from some camps more than others. Do not make yourself or the community a target. It is UNSAFE.

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Instead, structure your argument to stand without bringing your non-consensus reality personal beliefs regarding fiction and reality into it. Others do NOT have obligation to share them.

If your argument holds weight it will stand without your subjective identity experience coming into it.

Vent quietly to friends about ships that upset you for fictionfolk reasons, or block those that make content you dislike.

Engage with and make things you DO like.

If you engage mostly with things you do like, you will be happier.

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Using your identity to validate or invalidate interpretations or headcanons.

Even if its positive its still not appropriate to interact in that way without asking or in an argument context.

It is again, mixing YOUR reality, with their fantasy in a way that can make people uncomfortable or otherwise upset.

Specifically asked for input is fine, but do NOT do so to win arguments for others.

From the position of the canon as a story, your noemata do not trump their headcanons as a valid interpretation of a story. Do not act like they do.

In fandom, all headcanons and interpretations have equal weight, disrupting this is considered rude.

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Instead, you can say you like or dislike someone's headcanon without mentioning your identity in the process.

If it will confirm or joss the interpretation of a media it will stand on its own without your identity coming into it.

Reserve opinions that are overt about your identity for alterhuman-specific or private spaces.

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Talking at fan creators about how well they 'portray you'

Unless it is known the creator welcomes this, DON'T. Don't do it.

It reads to many as being entitled to their work or like space-inappropriate roleplaying.

This is -as a note- one of the many reasons given for why people were putting 'don't tag as kin' banners on fanart a lot a few years back. People were doing this kind of a lot. To the layman it very much looks like entitlement to labor that was not done for you specifically and is very uncomfortable.

It also reads as unnecessary levels of information being given on a topic they may not know much about.

Even for fellow alterhuman artists, unless you KNOW they are ok with it, assuming that the author was trying to portray you and saying so is Rude and comes off as blurring the boundaries of fantasy and reality, which not everyone is ok with.

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Instead, say you like or dislike someone's character portrayal in their work without mentioning your identity in the process, or at the very least avoid claiming your identity allows you to validate or invalidate headcanons.



Reserve opinions that are overt about your identity for alterhuman-specific or private spaces.

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Offering fanwork/headcanon consultations unasked for

Again, while it may seem helpful it is actually rude. Sorry.

This still sounds entitled to fandom, as fandom etiquette says everyone's headcanons have the same weight and directly telling people this implies their headcanons are lesser than yours.

It also sounds controlling and like requesting work uninvited, which is also considered very rude.

Even if they fully understand what kin is, again, they are engaging with it as a story and you are not and it can come off as blurring boundaries.

Note: If someone does ask for fictionfolk input specifically, it's fine to respond if you desire.

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Instead, try getting your noemata out in a memory dump in alterhuman-specific or private spaces.

You can also post your noemata as a plotbunny you are offering up for others to use, create the fanwork you want to see yourself, or commission one without stating its noemata.

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Claiming to be 'The Real -insert character- ask me anything' in fandom spaces

Like the other points, most people don't really understand and will assume you are a roleplayer being inconsiderate.

When they do understand, the mismatch in engagement (reality vs fiction) can upset people who are there for play-pretend and not real experience.

If they want to ask fictionfolk they will come to fictionfolk to ask them.

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[Image ID: public domain vector of a black and white book with a yellow starburst pattern behind it. Small text on the image states it is from [publicdomainvectors.org](http://publicdomainvectors.org)]

Instead, do these invitations to questioning in alterhuman-specific spaces or more private ones.

'Grilling' threads in alterhuman forums are a space specifically for this kind of thing. Consider using those.

Do kintype question lists/prompts/ask games in your own space, without spamming the main fandom ones.

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Some quick miscellaneous tips

DO make a separation between the character and yourself in these spaces. It can be confusing otherwise.

DON'T expect people like you purely because they like your fictional counterpart.

DON'T try to explain fictionfolk and force a person to say if they are ok or not with something purely so you can do something on this list of rude behavior to them. It comes off as pushy.

DON'T try to tell strangers about niche subcultures or experiences out of the blue. Many people don't appreciate this.

DO recognize that the default is that they don't want this kind of interaction. Opt-IN not Opt-OUT.

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Some other general tips are;

Keeping fandom and alterhuman stuff separate in terms of tagging, accounts, or behavior to reduce confusion and upset. When in doubt, just don't mix them. You can't accidentally overstep if you don't mix them in the first place. When in doubt, just don't.

When writing fanfic of your noemata, avoid directly tagging things that way.

For example do 'x character for y AU, tagged not!fic' instead of 'hi im a DID system fictive and these are my exomemories' with a non-prose memory dump and no filter tags.

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The next major thing to not do; Do not make your identity the creator's problem.

Most creators don't know what we are, even if they are VERY ONLINE.

By drawing attention to fictionfolk or factives in their view, you force them to have an opinion in public about a topic they likely know little about.

Even chill ones feel awkward about being forced into interacting about the topic with fictionfolk from their creation or factives of them.

Their first glimpse of us is often negative, then that ruins it for everyone.

Our community does NOT need a negative spotlight from celebrities.

What they say or do may cause things to be difficult for you or others like you.

It may invite community bans, harassment invitation, fakeclaiming, and other penalties.

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One of the biggest ways you can do that is causing lots of trouble in a fandom the creator actually looks at.

If you are very notorious in a fandom where the creator may see you, they will probably see you.

In indie fandoms the level of upset you need to cause to be seen is much less.

Doing previous points that upset fandom a lot in these situations can cause a compounding effect to you and others like you.

If you are a menace they will feel obligated to do or say something about it, and this can cause you or the community problems. Do not be the person who ruins things for everyone.

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[Image ID: Public domain clip art of a gray computer with a yellow screen and mouse pad from publicdomainvectors.org]

Instead, be polite and courteous in the fandom with your identity by using previous points listed.

Be extra careful in indie fandoms to not cause too big of a stir.

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Validation Begging From Creators.

When you do this, you are putting them on the spot to have an opinion on a niche thing. Its Rude.

Most don't think its their business and would wonder why you need their approval or validation in the first place.

It also makes things awkward and comes off as boundary crossing and overly familiar to a stranger.

The possible bad reaction would likely be in public and bring a lot of negative attention to the community.

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Instead, you can learn to get validation internally. You know your experiences and feelings, so you do not need the approval of others to exist or have those feelings and experiences.

You are experiencing it, so its a thing you are experiencing.

Recognize that you are not beholden to the creators. They don't need to approve of you for your identity to be real and ok.

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Talking about your identity to the creator(s) when they haven't specifically indicated this is fine

This includes comments on their stuff, going into their discord servers, sending DMs or emails, saying it to them in person at cons, and ESPECIALLY sending twitch donation messages about it.

Just... Don't. Don't force any creator in the process to have opinions on alterhumans either, such as VAs, animators, and actors.

Its bad boundaries with reality and fiction and may make people uncomfortable and confused.

It also makes things awkward and comes off as boundary crossing and overly familiar to a stranger.

In addition, the possible bad reaction would likely be in public and bring a lot of negative attention to the community.

Even if they have said its fine, use heavy caution and we would recommend against it.

While they may be cool with it, their followers may not be and that may cause problems as well.

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[Image ID: Public domain clip art of two hands shaking each other. One hand is wearing nail polish and the sleeve is pink, and the other hand and the other hand has a gray sleeve and no nail polish. The image is from [publicdomainvectors.org](http://publicdomainvectors.org)]

Instead, if you can say what you want to say without mentioning your identity, do so.

Seek validation and engagement surrounding your identity from alterhuman sources or at the very least your peers.

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Claiming your identity means they have to make your headcanons/noemata canon

Demanding certain things to be canon for any reason is incredibly boundary crossing, entitled, and rude. It does not get less so if your identity is involved.

It in fact gets moreso, and gives people a bad impression of the community.

The creator does not have to cater to you or anyone else that is not in the publishing process.

It is THEIR story, not yours.

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Instead, make fanworks about what you desire to happen in canon.

Talk about how much you are hoping for certain things to happen in canon to the appropriate spaces to vent your emotions and feelings.

Recognize and internalize that artists don't have to change their story for you.

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Offering up your noemata to them without them asking about it at all

This comes off as demanding it be canon or trying to insist your view is right, these behaviors are considered entitled and rude.

It also comes off as boundary crossing because it's personal info and overly familiar.

Even for regular headcanons, its vaguely rude to detail fandom activity at creators who aren't explicitly ok with you talking fandom at them

People generally do not want unasked for memory dumps, especially those who may not understand what your identity even is.

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[Image ID: Public domain clip art of a rodent sitting in a tall chair and writing with a quill and inkwell. The rodent is wearing what looks like a dress. The image is from [publicdomainvectors.org](http://publicdomainvectors.org)]

Instead, express your noemata in alterhuman spaces or in private, or alternately, express your noemata as 'headcanons' if you want to put them in fandom spaces.

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Another thing not to do is giving portrayal reviews -be they positive or negative- at all.

As with fandom creators, DON'T.

It again reads like entitlement or space inappropriate roleplaying as well as TMI on a subject they know little about.

Some creators may also get the mistaken idea that you are doing IP theft/plagiarism.

Even for fellow alterhuman artists, don't.

Unless you KNOW they are ok with it, assuming that the author was trying to portray you specifically and saying so is Rude and comes off as blurring the boundaries of fantasy and reality, which not everyone is ok with.

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Instead, say you like or dislike their work or specific aspects thereof without mentioning your identity in the process.

Reserve opinions that are overt about your identity for alterhuman-specific or private spaces.

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Advertising you are a factive of them to them AT ALL really, is, in general a bad idea.

Due to the nature of factive identity, disclosing it -much less forcing in-depth discussion about it- to the person that is your factotype can cause them severe distress.

It may trigger dissociation or psychosis issues to have to face that, and you cannot know ahead of time who may have these issues.

It might also be seen as identity theft/impersonation by people who don't get it.

Sorry most people will see this as very creepy to bring up. It by default causes some level of existential discomfort in many people to have to interact with an effective copy of themselves.

Even if someone says they are ok with that kind of interaction, exercise extreme caution.

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Instead, recognize you do not need validation or permission from your factotype to exist and bothering them about it will likely make them very uncomfortable.

Talk about your identity in factive-specific or private spaces.

Give your praise or criticism without bringing up your identity.

Consider going incognito when talking to them, for example not going by the full name of the person around that person or people who know them personally.

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Some quick miscellaneous tips:

Don't go by your heavily noticeable as fictional or factual identity in discord servers that the creator mods.

Do choose an alternate name to go by there for plausibility. If they have PluralKit, consider making an alternate profile to use there if your identity is obvious from your profile.

Don't @ them on twitter or reply to them in some other manner with kinposting.

Do ensure your posts about your identity stay out of the creators' way.

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**Do Not Make Your Identity The Expert's Problem**

Experts in a given field also are unlikely to know what 'kin are.



By drawing their attention to the community, you force them to have an uninformed opinion in public about it

As they are concerned with the reality of their field and science provable to others, it may confuse or upset them depending on the situation if you force this on them.

What they say or do may cause things to be difficult for you or others like you, and may lead to things like community bans, harassment by onlookers, and fakeclaiming.

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One major specific example is speaking over experts.

This includes animal experts, history experts, science experts, and so forth.

Their research trumps your noemata.

There are many reasons why your noemata may not line up to the research, that the peer reviewed sound research is wrong is unlikely to be one of them.

Insisting otherwise without equal sound research to back up your claims may cause the expert to associate the community with misinformation.

Note: If the expert is wrong about specifically alterhuman experiences -such as a sociologist who thinks all otherkind and therians are clinical lycanthropes and is spreading that misinformation- then correcting them respectfully is acceptable.

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Instead, ask about what the current science is on the topic if you desire to interact with these people in some way WITHOUT talking about your noemata.

Recognize that your noemata are not viable data that can be used as scientific evidence.

Talk about your noemata in alterhuman spaces instead.

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Another major issue is speaking over people with lived experience

People who have lived experience of being a particular minority in this life take precedence over your noemata.

It can make them feel very upset to be talked over, even if they understand what kind they are.

Your noemata do not trump their lived experience and you cannot know what it's like to be those things in body in this current life.

You cannot reclaim slurs based on this.

This includes race, disability, religion, being transgender, and other minority groups.

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Instead, read about the experiences of these groups and support them in social justice efforts.

When you are seen and treated as your body, recognize that things you may do may come off as appropriation and consider carefully how you engage with minority groups and the culture thereof that your kintype is part of.

Remember that your noemata do not give you an accurate look at the experience of existing that way in this world.

Keep your talking about your experiences in more private or alterhuman spaces where it might be more understood.

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Finally, there is making your identity anyone else's problem

Do not expect or demand people to treat you exactly as you were treated in your source such as royalty, god, leader, etc. It is unreasonable to demand subservience or veneration from others on the basis of your identity.

Do not use your identity as an argument for why you are allowed to do an impolite or harmful act. Your identity is not reason enough to be discourteous.

Remember: Even gods have to do the dishes!

Following from this...

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Do not use 'Hello Mortals' syntax constantly

This is stuff like always referring to people as 'humans' or 'mortals' instead of their name, referring to your astral plane adventures unprompted constantly, calling your body your 'mortal vessel' in a unjoking manner constantly, and other heavily grandiose and noticeable turns of phrase.

NO ONE KNOWS HOW TO RESPOND TO THIS

It's important to match your language somewhat to the space and the people around you. This helps them communicate with you effectively.

Others may have a hard time parsing your words, or feel uncomfortable when you put yourself in a position of power verbally like this.

This doesn't mean you have to give up this way of speech entirely, just try to match the general atmosphere of the space.

It is inappropriate to lean hard into an odd syntax your kintype may use constantly in general. This includes hard to read 'typing quirks'. Most typing quirks mess with screenreaders and many cognitive disabilities, but some of them are especially hard to decipher. Please at least provide a translation.

You still have to meet people halfway with language if you want them to reach out and interact.

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Interacting With Other Alterhumans

This guide is more focused on interactions with those outside the community than inside, but we also have a short section for internal etiquette as well.

Our document 'Safety in Alterhuman Spaces' can be used as a list of things to not do, though we will also give general categories of things to avoid doing.

It can be found at the link provided.

<https://dragonsroost.neocities.org/essay/SafetyInAlterhumanSpaces.pdf>

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In terms of why you should care about manners in the community

When you are in a space, it's good to follow the etiquette of that space.

Following the etiquette of alterhuman spaces helps keep interactions harmonious and can help you socialize.

Yes, the impulse to do whatever you feel like and lean into your identities in a space that finally understands is strong, but it's important to be sure to do that in a way that doesn't upset others!

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### General Alterhuman Manners

Be aware that the community has many experiences under it, and not all will be like yours. This is just diversity! Do not get mad at people for having different experiences or attitudes about those experiences or try to push your frameworks for those experiences on them.

You do not have to understand someone's identity to respect them and how they want to be seen.

Be aware that other people in this community are indeed people, and deserve to be treated like them. Treat others how you would like to be treated!

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### Metaphysical Etiquette

Tolerate others who don't believe the same things as you. Not everyone is going to believe the same things you do, or attribute their identities to those things. Exercise spiritual/religious tolerance, even of nonbelievers.

Know there is a time and place for talking about your spiritual/metaphysical experiences, and putting them in every conversation isn't it. It can feel like pushing beliefs on others when this happens.

Some of these beliefs have a strong history of bad behavior done in their name, such as things like 'the kin rapture', 'veil falling', and 'astral war' beliefs as well as system hopping. Be mindful of this and mind when and where you bring them up.

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### Physical Shifting Belief Etiquette

The community has an extremely long history of p-shifting being used as a tool of abuse.

P-shifting mini-cults would -and still do- draw desperate nonhumans in with promises of the ability to shapeshift, abuse them, and then keep them compliant with threats of violence and the allure of a wanted ability.

Due to this, publicly talking about having physically shapeshifted is considered very frowned upon in general spaces and it can deeply upset people.

Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence.

Clinical lycanthropes are welcome in the community, but talking about physical shapeshifting hallucinations or delusions without a disclaimer somewhere can often be misinterpreted as being part of a p-shifter cult. Please add some kind of disclaimer to prevent misunderstandings.

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### On control of others - don't

You don't have control over other people's identities.

People will identify however they like and you cannot and should not stop them.

If you do not like an identity someone has, avoid them or block them. You don't have to like them, but you do have to be courteous.

This includes people who share your identity -otherwise known as 'doubles'-, those who have different noemata than you, and people who have 'problematic kintypes'.

You cannot control how they identify or what noemata they have, but you CAN control how you respond to them.

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On claiming superiority - don't

Your identity, noemata or alleged special powers do not make you better or give you a special rank over others. Claiming such is impolite and hurts the feelings of others. Everyone here is on equal footing as people. Act like it.

Do not insist others worship you if you are a deity or claim you are better or more real than other gods. This forces spiritual beliefs on others and violates the equal footing atmosphere.

Again: Even gods have to do the dishes!

We are all people on equal footing here!

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Social dynamics etiquette

Things like 'pack dynamics' (that's the alpha, beta, omega pack ranking), predator/prey dichotomy, and other ranking systems are social dynamics that if done incorrectly can cause serious power imbalances and encourage abuse and bullying. It has historically done so in the community.

Being rude or dismissive to people based on predator/prey categorization is hurtful and cruel.

Forcing these social dynamics on others without consent is inappropriate and disturbs the equal footing atmosphere.

Only engage with these things in settings where everyone has agreed to the social dynamics and have protocols in place to prevent abuse due to the dynamic.

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Greymuzzle Etiquette

'Greymuzzle' is an honorific used towards experienced therians and otherkin, usually those who have contributed a lot to the community and/or who have been active in it for over 10 years. It is not a rank or leadership indicator.

It is a community given title. You do not call yourself a greymuzzle, other people gift the title to you.

It is considered very arrogant to call yourself a greymuzzle, especially if you are doing so to lend weight to your opinions. Therefore: DO NOT DO THIS

You are not superior for having been in the community a long time or having contributed to it.

If your opinions are worth merit, they will stand without you calling yourself a greymuzzle.

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Interacting with fictionfolk etiquette

Treating fictionfolk like collectable baseball cards, like fanfic fodder, or like a celebrity is dehumanizing and can make them upset or uncomfortable. They are people - treat them like any other person.

This is an especially common thing people do to fictives, do not do this.

Expecting people to be exactly like their source and getting mad at them when they aren't is also dehumanizing and inappropriate. Fictionfolk will often be at least a little different from their fictional counterpart. Again - treat them like any other person.

Fictionkind are people like anyone else!

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Fictionkind-specific etiquette

Even within the community, it's important to be courteous with your identity.

Acting you're already close friends with someone you have just met because you share a source is inappropriate and can make people uncomfortable.

This is also a common tactic abusers and manipulators use to establish rapport quickly. People may avoid you or become uncomfortable due to this.

Sharing a source is not a 'shortcut' to connection, actually get to know the person.

This person is also not necessarily the person you are missing, and may be very unlike them.

Sourcemates are not replacement goldfish, they are their own people.

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## Grilling Etiquette

Grilling, a form of hazing in the community meant to weed out trolls and alleged 'fluff', is where one is asked in-depth questions about their identity by other community members so that they may offer up arguments for why their identity is valid. Grilling can be seen in all alterhuman communities, but is most common to therian spaces.

Grilling has historically been a massive problem amongst therians and otherkin, used to gatekeep the community. It used to and still does get quite intense in some locations, and is often forced on people when they first join communities.

This is wildly impolite and causes people to avoid communities they belong in and labels that fit them, for fear of being forced to validate their identity to strangers who may fakeclaim them for not presenting 'correctly'.

Grilling has its place in helping people reason their identities and further the questioning process, HOWEVER it's important to be courteous with it.

Therefore...

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Here is how to grill without being a jerk

The most important thing is consent.

Only grill someone who asks to be grilled and accept 'I don't know' as a valid answer.

People do not have to have all the answers for 'why' they do or do not identify as something, and they don't need to justify themselves to you even if they do.

It's also important to have clarity of purpose.



Grilling isn't for you to determine if they meet your metric for the identity, grilling is for that person's benefit in understanding themselves.

If they are not gaining benefit, it is not a mutually productive conversation, its being cruel.

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On misanthropy

Misanthropy is the view that humans are inherently evil or bad. It may also be phrased as the hatred of humanity. Alterhuman spaces have an undeniably huge misanthropy problem.

It is an inherently flawed viewpoint that makes a judgment on people before you get to know them and is strongly associated with eco-fascist talking points.

Many of those in the community still identify as human. Even in these spaces this rhetoric is going to target some of those you are talking to.

Outside of them, you position the community as the enemy of humans, which does not improve harmonious relations.

Being fully nonhuman does not inherently make you superior. It does not absolve you of wrongdoing, either.

Humans are not the enemy or uniquely evil.

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In terms of managing your misanthropic feelings,

One cannot control their feelings, but one can control how they act about those feelings.

You can feel like humans are inherently bad, and still make a choice to treat them as though they are not while knowing these feelings are factually untrue.

Feelings can be valid while also being factually untrue in reality.

If you have feelings like this, be careful where and how you express them, as they can make many members inside of the community deeply uncomfortable.

Venting privately about your feelings and taking care to not treat others poorly because of them is paramount.

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[Image ID: Photograph of the Panelist's cat. The cat is a small-sized longhaired tortoiseshell cat wearing a pink harness with a black lead clipped to it. The cat is standing on some wooden steps covered in a light coating of snow and has some snow stuck to her fur.]

That concludes our lecture on manners in The Community.

Just in general- please be kind and considerate to others.

We hope this presentation was helpful in having a rough guide on ways to do this.

Thank you for your time.

Also have a picture of our cat.

-panel ends on several seconds of silence and a blank screen to allow people to finish up their commentary-