

Knowledge Distilled from the book "Creating Emotion in Games" by David Freeman

Index	Technique Classification	Technique	Explanation
1	NPC Interesting Techniques	Create an interesting Character Diamond For all Major NPCs.	At least four Character traits for each major NPC. Attributes should be different and new. All the NPC says or does should be in accordance with his Diamond. Traits should not be opposing or too similar. One or two character quirks add to naturalness.
2		Create At least two Character Traits for minor NPCs.	These two traits should be interesting and novel. No cliché characters.
3	NPC Deepening Techniques	Emotional Pain	When the NPC has repressed or obvious emotional pain, he/she has depth.
4		Regret	Regret over a previous mistake that had terrible effects can give depth to an NPC.
5		Hiding a big Secret	Having a big secret that is scarcely referred to and hidden be an NPC, when shared only with the player, or found out by him gives Depth to the NPC.
6		Hiding Emotions	An NPC that is trying to cover a strong emotion by another, when found out by the player can gain immense depth. (e.g. hiding fear with Sarcasm, Love with unnecessary toughness, etc.)
7		NPC Emotions affect gameplay	Making the NPC's emotions affect gameplay and vice versa helps deepen the character of the NPC.
8	Dialog Interesting Techniques	Add color to the dialog	"Color" does not prompt the player into any action, but it gives a sense of character and drama to the speaker. Ideally this would match his character diamond.
9		Dialog prompting action	Dialog should not only prompt the player into a single specific action, but it should further the listener's awareness and information of the speaker, the situation, and the history of the game world.
10		Splitting Information	The player needs to talk to more than one NPC to get the required information. This should be done in a way so as not to confuse the player.
11		Withheld Information	There should be some NPC's that simply don't give the player the information he needs at that moment. Maybe they don't know? Maybe they have their own secret agenda relating to that information?
12	Dialog Deepening Techniques	Speaker having deep feelings	Worries for the situation of other NPC's or the player, Deep regret over having made a mistake, Self-sacrifice, Love and Wisdom or deep insight into some matter, all qualify for such Deep emotions.
13		Hint at Emotions beneath the surface	In this type of dialog the NPC does not tell you his/her direct emotion, but hides it beneath a different wording. (E.g. an NPC loves you and wants to marry you. When you come back from a battle She acts cold and tell you: "I didn't aspire to be a widow!" Another example would be hiding anger by being cold.
14		Ambivalence	The NPC is first negative in his/her dialog and doesn't seem to care about the player/other NPC's. But then the same NPC might join the cause. Or will he?
15	Group/Culture Interesting Techniques	Group Diamond	Any group of people/beings that is encountered a lot in the game needs and interesting cultural diamond (E.g. All Klingons love music, heroism and battle, show passionate attraction for the opposite sex and deeply believe in afterlife.)
16		Group Diamond affects Gameplay	All Group/Culture traits and quirks should have at least some effect of the group's behaviors in gameplay context (E.g. the Klingons would attack their sworn enemies at first sight, and probably without thinking about the outcome.)
17		NPC's Don't greatly violate their Group Diamond	NPC's, except for good reasons, should not violate the traits and quirks of the group or culture that they belong to.
18		Avoid Cliché Group Diamonds	Nasty, evil, flesh eating, throat-chewing, battle-loving aliens are no more!
19	Group/Culture Deepening Techniques	Give the Group Deep Attributes	Traits such as an Aesthetic culture, having ancient Wisdom, Carrying Mysterious knowledge of Nature and Creation, Being Noble, etc. add a lot of depth to a culture.
20		Inter-Group Relations	A weird and mysterious relationship among groups can also add depth to both (e.g. If one Group of huge aliens protect another race for a reason that nobody knows!)
21		Two NPC's Think the same way	When two or more NPC's think the same way and complement each others thoughts and dialogs, a sense of prior history is created between them. This creates chemistry between the NPC's.
22		Two NPC's have an ongoing Argument	If two or more NPC's have an ongoing argument about past events or current tastes, it also adds to their history and gives a sense of chemistry. This also creates a feeling of affection between the NPC's, because it shows they haven't left each other despite their argument and disagreement.

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23	NPC towards NPC Chemistry Techniques	NPC's talking warmly about each other when the other NPC is absent.	If one NPC talks affectionately about the other NPC, when the other is not present, the player gets a feeling of depth about their relationship.
24		Keep the Emotions between NPC's Vague and Complex.	One NPC telling the player that she loves another NPC is not a good idea to show their chemistry. It will not give the player the sense of "realness" that a few vague references would.
25		NPC1 can read NPC2's Hidden Feelings	If one NPC can read the feelings of another, while the player really can't, it will seem as if those two NPC's have a shared history, prior to the player's entry into the game. This will add to a sense of chemistry between them.
26		NPC's have Shared Bits	A Shared Bit is a funny piece of recurrent dialog between two NPC's. (e.g. NPC1: "You are trying to get me killed again!", NPC2:"You keep telling me that, and look you are still alive!")
27	NPC towards NPC Relationship Deepening Techniques	Multi-Layered Feeling between NPC's	This means that one NPC doesn't only need to have one feeling for the other. Instead of an NPC simply loving the other, there might be other layers beneath that that might show in a single dialog (e.g. a Lover also feels protective, sometimes annoyed, and even sometimes jealous towards a loved one)
28		Avoid Cliché Feeling Layers (Emotional Cakes)	If Emotional Cakes are created according to cliches (Critical Father->Delinquent Son) the player will immediately recognize this. The emotional cakes need to be fresh, and interesting (Varied feelings in different layers)
29	NPC Character Arc Techniques	Character Arcs don't come easily to an NPC	The NPC will need to struggle a lot along a rocky path, going through emotional, physical and mental delusions, distress, enlightening and change in order to "Travel his Character Arc". This must be shared with the player, therefore if an NPC does not appear regularly to the player, giving it an arc will look stupid!
30		One Arc is more than enough	There is very little space and time in a game to give any single NPC more than one character arc (e.g. Timid-> Brave, Material -> Spiritual, etc.). More than this might confuse the player to as who the NPC is and why he is changing so often.
31		Character Growth Comes in increments	Traveling an arc and growing to be a different (hopefully better!) NPC has to be done in distinct steps that the player can understand and relate to.
32		Good Events can also change characters	A Character Arc doesn't necessary have to be filled with only pain and suffering. Sometimes, learning a new useful skill could help the NPC change for the better
33		Discarding Masks is a good Arc	Some NPC's might be using masks to hide their true nature or feelings from the player. If the NPC can travel his/her arc behind this mask, then drop it when he has grown, the player will be impressed by that character's change.
34		Imply a successful arc, don't overstate it!	an NPC shouldn't just state that he has changed. It should be apparent through his actions and dialog instead, and the player should find out that the change has occurred on his own.
35		Character arcs can fail	some character arcs can fail and end in a worse, or "lost" character. This adds to the emotional depth of the game.
36	NPC Rooting Interest Techniques	Who is Interesting to you! Use his diamond!	If you can find a real human or a story character that you really feel empathy with and that people can relate to, use their character diamonds on NPC's.
37		Too much Uniqueness can cause engagement rupture!	If a character diamond, along with its quirks is so unique that the player cannot identify with it (e.g. a mother character that is evil and jealous and burps all the time!) the player will loose interest in him/her.
38		Put the NPC in Danger	Putting an NPC in danger will make the player want to protect him/her, especially if the character acts emotionally dependant on the player. This will root the player's interest in that NPC.
39		Let the NPC make a big sacrifice	An NPC that is making big sacrifices, or even sacrificing their lives for the player or other NPC's will definitely root the interest of the player in him/herself.
40		Put the NPC in Undeserved Misfortune	Players feel emphatic with NPC's that have gotten into great undeserved misfortune.
41		Learn about an NPC's Painful Past	Telling the player about an NPC's painful past, or the player finding out himself about that past, can root the player's interest in an NPC.
42		Make the NPC Exceptionally Brave	An NPC might save the player or other NPC by exceptional Bravery. Similar to self-sacrifice, this will create a rooting interest towards that NPC.
43		Let the player invest into an NPC.	An NPC that the player has invested a lot in, creates a rooting interest. E.g. if the player has been giving an NPC lots of attention and gifts to get him on his side, the player will have a strong emotional bond towards that NPC.
44		Make the Player Responsible for an NPC.	Characters that the player is responsible for (protecting them, killing them, guiding them, etc.) immediately have more rooting interest than others, especially if they are sympathetic to the player.

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45		Flip Rooting Techniques to get "Hating Techniques"	If a Rooting technique is reversed (e.g. instead of an NPC showing braver, showing fear and running from battle) the players emotions can be manipulated to hate that character (note that this is different from a player's indifference towards an NPC). This allows us to tune the player's emotions towards NPC's quite early in the game.
46	Player Towards NPC Chemistry Techniques	NPC Admires Player	when an NPC admires a player, especially in a subtle way, the player feels an emotional bond towards that NPC which makes the NPC very interesting to the player.
47		NPC reads Player's mind!	Every NPC's dialog can be tuned, so her or she "knows" about past events that the player caused. This will allow the NPC to know the history of the player. When this history is referred to by any NPC, it makes that NPC seem to have a common past with the player. This makes the NPC immensely interesting to the player.
48		The NPC has things in common with the Player	If the Player finds out that the NPC has had a past that resembles the current path that the player is taking in the game-world, especially if they both had similar problems, the player will have chemistry with that player.
49		The NPC Anticipates the Player's Needs and Desires	Let's say the player is out of ammo and is facing a tough boss. If an accompanying NPC tosses him some ammo at that point, the player will feel a bond with that NPC.
50		An NPC helps the player on his Character Arc	If an NPC helps the player take a step forward on his character arc, and provides him with opportunities to grow, the player will feel some chemistry with the NPC.
51	NPC Towards Player Relationship Deepening Techniques	Layer Cakes	If the NPC has different layers of emotions towards the player (one layer of emotion over the other) the relationship between them will feel deeper.
52		An NPC Causes the player both Harm AND Good	If an NPC can cause the player both harm and good in various stages of the game the player will have an emotionally-complex feeling towards the NPC. This will deepen their relationship. Another example would be if the player had to protect a villain who attacked him before during the game.
53	Player Towards NPC Relationship Deepening Techniques	The player has mixed feelings for an NPC	If you make an NPC act in a way to create mixed feelings in the player (e.g. Help him, make him jealous, hurt him, and then save him from greater misfortune) the player will feel various things for this NPC. This will create a deep and complex relationship between the two.
54	Group Bonding Techniques	Shared Appearance	When a group of NPC's and the player share some elements of appearance (i.e. they look alike) Group bonding is stronger.
55		Shared Goals	Shared Goals can make a Player/NPC group feel stronger bonds.
56		Shared Rituals	Shared Rituals can make a Player/NPC group feel stronger bonds. Obviously the player will be "motivated" to take part in these rituals.
57		Shared Ordeals and Adventures	Shared Ordeals can make a Player/NPC group feel stronger bonds.
58		Taking Heroic Action to Protect Other Group Members	When NPC's or the player sacrifice themselves to protect a group, strong inter-group bonds are created.
59		Complementary Skills	If among a group of NPC's and/or players, skills available to each member, complement those available to other players, a necessary dependency and bond is created between them.
60		Members of a Group Saying good things behind each other's backs, even if they don't to their Faces	Teasing or apparent antagonism between group members, when combined with good words that members say behind each other's backs, creates an atmosphere of trust between members, and makes the player feel a strong bond in the group.
61	Shared References	Allusions to experiences (in gameplay) that the player and a group of NPC's have gone through can be a positive group bonding factor.	
62		Player is forced to do Evil	Forcing the player to do Evil (e.g. in order to prevent even greater evil, or in order to be able to do good subsequently) puts him/her in an emotionally complex situation. Doing Evil can be hurting good people, helping bad people, betraying a friend or group, joining up with evil forces, destroying something that belongs to the good, creating something that can cause potential evil, etc.
63		Forcing the player to care about, or see the world through the eyes of an NPC they are ambivalent about	If a player is forced to defend or help an NPC that they are highly ambivalent about, or slightly dislike (e.g. by use of NPC negative rooting techniques) they will find themselves in an emotionally complex situation. Now if the player is forced to see the world through that character's eyes (e.g. playing/controlling that character for some time) it will create further complexity.
64		Ambivalence towards a previous friend	Finding out that a friend was actually following their own agenda in helping the player creates ambivalence and a complex emotion.

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65	Emotionally Complex Situations Techniques	Ambivalence towards a previous Enemy	Finding out that someone who was an enemy, had to do what they did to the player creates emotional complexity, because whereas the player hated that enemy before, now he/she is forced to consider their position. The same thing might happen if the player finds out that his enemy has had a painful past, or is dying a terrible death, is helpless, or can actually cause great good at some points in the story.
66		The Player finding out that he/she has been tricked or used	If the player finds out that he has been tricked or used by evil forces to do evil, or by good forces to do good, he will have an emotionally complex feeling towards those forces. The same holds true, if he thought he was doing the "right" thing all along, and suddenly found out it had terrible results, or vice versa. In a Weird way, even if some NPC tricks the player into doing good the player will feel an emotional complexity.
67		The player is helpless in aiding someone he loves	If the player finds out that someone he has an interest for is in grave danger or in trouble, and is helpless in aiding her, he will find himself in a complex emotional situation.
68		Good and Evil are not White and Black	A Clash of interests between two factions in the game world could be used to put the player on the side of one faction (maybe because they are more pretty, cuter, more helpless or weaker.) causing the player to realize later on that helping that faction wasn't necessarily helping the good, but rather just serving one cause and harming another equally valid one will create mixed feelings in them.
69		Forcing the Player to Violate their own integrity.	for example, at one point in the game the player might absolutely need to get help from an NPC that has previously killed many of his friends, and whom he hates.
70		Incongruity	E.g. a beautiful NPC you have learned to like, tells you the worst things about your mother! Or a beautiful meadow which has been the scene of a previous battle where your parents died!
71	Plot Interesting Techniques	Plot Twists	Adding plot twists, when all the plans and prior ideas of the player are reversed is the best way to keep a plot interesting. Use as many plot twists as you can, but remember that a story must be very rich and engaging emotionally if the player is not to feel fooled and cheated by your twists.
72		Structure Twists	E.g. If a player thinks that your game has a totally linear structure, but then finds out that it branches into nonlinearity at some point.
73	Plot Deepening Techniques	Two Key Characters Change Place	If two of the NPC's take over each other's character arcs at one point in the story and achieve what the other leaves behind the plot is considerably deepened.
74		The Story makes Spiritual Forces Palpable	Spirituality and spiritual forces made visual and active, be it in the game world or the player and NPC's add to the plot's depth.
75		A Character we Like Dies	A key Sympathetic NPC's death can always leave the player in doubt and wondering about the rest of the plot.
76		A Bittersweet Ending	If a Major Character , or the player achieve their Character arc, but not the goal set for them in the game (I.e. the material goal) or vice versa the ending is bittersweet, more so in the second case.
77		An Uncertain Ending	Open endings that leave the player speculate (but not too wildly) on how the plot really ended add to the thrill of a game.
78		A Downside to Victory	If a victory in the game is accompanied by a painful downside (e.g. opening a hole in a dam to save the upstream city from flooding, but being informed that a loved one was killed downstream!) has more plot depth than a simple victory. However, the victory should always be greater than the downside, otherwise the player will feel unnecessarily punished.
79	Player Character Arc Techniques	Reward a Player if he Travels his Character Arc	Rewards can include help or admiration from "interesting" NPC's, power-ups, or simply a richer gameplay experience.
80		Punish a Character if he does NOT Travel his Character Arc	Punishments can be being isolated in the game, loosing allies and friends, tougher enemies, being blocked off from some areas, or a less-fun game experience.
81		Create Guides and Helps to show the Player what the intended Character Arc is	The game world and NPC's should provide the player with hints towards what he should change in himself. E.g. killing innocent people should be punished in gameplay if the Character arc is changing from a selfish person to a protective guardian.
82		Use Emotioneering Techniques to Make sure the player cares about his Character Arc.	The player should really care about the game world, and his and other characters if he wants to be made to change his character actively to suit that of the game world.

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83		Shun the inherent Character arc: Weak -> Strong	The Weak -> Strong character arc is inherently present in all game rules. Using this same arc just adds boredom, and takes away the possible gameplay richness that could be added by a fresh and unique character arc.
84		Don't Start the Arc by alienating the Player (I.e. Total Loser -> Winner)	If a character arc starts from a timid and shy person, and you show the player as being very timid it might shy off those players who do not find this shortcoming in themselves. A better way would be to go from a socially acceptable "Good" to a heroic "Perfect" in your arc. when reaching Perfection, however the Good that was left behind should look distant enough and the "Perfect" should look valuable enough.
85	Player Character Deepening Techniques	Emotional/Moral Difficult Decisions	Every branching along the path or the storyline should leave the player with an emotionally or morally challenging decision to make (E.g. Will he help the beautiful and honorable space-race that is being invaded by humans, or should he serve his own race that has provided him with love and care up to know?)
86		Conflicting Viewpoints	If the player can see himself as a magician, dealing with immense spiritual powers that could create worlds in an eyeblink, but at the same time spend some of his time protecting a little girl from her abusive father, who is being controlled by some lesser demon of anger, he will have the chance to see the world through two viewpoints. The same applies if the gameplay allows the player to instantly change from a good magician into a powerful demon who is strong but feared and shunned by all.
87	Enhancing Character Depth	Use of Visual or Verbal Symbols	A Greedy character can be symbolized by a rat. The player could see rats hanging around him whenever he gets too greedy in the game and leaves the path of good and self-sacrifice. Similarly the Homa (Mythological bird that announces spiritual power and right to rulership, or simply good luck) could fly over the player's head whenever the player achieves a major victory towards the game's goals. Similarly Dark clouds passing overhead could mean bad fortune for the player or NPC's.
88		Show the Character Diamond through Character Actions and Imagery	Try to avoid overt use of dialog to show the character traits. Atleast half of any character's traits should be visible in their appearance and actions.
89		Use Subplots as Symbols of the main Player character arc	Small sub-plots can symbolize what the player or other NPC's are trying to achieve by traveling on their character arc.
90	Gameplay Motivation Techniques	Don't Interrupt the gameplay	The game story should merge into the natural flow of the gameplay. Do not take away control from the player in order to present information or story plots to him/her.
91		Don't hold back too long on the Carrots	The player needs some sense of achievement early in the game. Later on when he/she is hooked and emotionally involved he will be able to take more beating until the next big prize.
92		Repetitive Gameplay should be fun	Don't make gameplay too repetitive. On the other hand, do not change gameplay drastically, once the player has accumulated a lot of experience in it and direly needs this experience to advance in the game.
93		Keep the plot twists coming	Plot twists, and some unexpected results to the player's actions keep the game interesting. Don't start throwing in random effects too often though as it will confuse the player.
94		Use Action puzzles	Action puzzles use the available game mechanics to create a puzzle that the player has to solve by actively doing something in the game (e.g. fighting in a special pattern, with a sequence of spells that naturally unleashes another strong spell effect useful to the gameplay).
95		Create a Mysterious World that takes some Time to Sort out	This is self-explanatory.
96	Cohesiveness Techniques	The Player Character Gets a Reputation	If the player character's actions in one part of the world, are remembered and referred to in another part, the player will feel he has a reputation and the world is cohesive.
97		The Player carries Karma	If the actions of the player in one part of the world affect the behaviour of NPC's towards him all over the world, The player feels as if he lives in a cohesive world.
98		NPC's in various places refer to each other	If NPC's in different parts of the world seem to know each other, or at least have heard of each other the player will feel like living in a cohesive world.
99		A Game has to have a Theme	If the Theme e.g. is "Power" it needs to be studied from various viewpoints in the game and in all places. Some final conclusion might be reached about this theme, or not, but atleast it has to be present in all parts of the game.
100		Abilities Learned are useful a lot later	If an ability learned in one part of the world is useful at a later stage in another the world will have cohesiveness.

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101		Remind the Player of the Stakes	The player has to be reminded in different ways and in various places and times of the importance of achieving the goal he has set out for.