

Godlike: Crisis Dice

by Shane Ivey, © 2002

The human body is capable of surprising things when faced with tremendous stress. We've all heard stories about a mother lifting a car off her trapped child, or a soldier "blacking out" in combat only to find out afterward that he saved the whole squad. These aren't the literally superhuman powers of Talents – they are natural, if rare, responses to overwhelming stress, an ephemeral combination of adrenaline, concentration, and willpower.

In *Godlike*, they're called **crisis dice**. How they work is quite simple: Any time you're exposed to a situation of enormous personal stress – in other words, when you're at risk of losing Will due to some catastrophic loss or danger – you can spend Will for bonus dice.

Each point of Will spent gets you one bonus die. The bonus dice only last a short time, usually no more than a few rounds. They are always normal dice, and they can never increase your dice pool beyond 10d – if you already have 10d due to massive stats and skills, you're already so proficient at tapping your human potential that crisis dice won't do you much good.

If you succeed in preventing the catastrophe, you regain the Will normally.

If you *fail* to save the day, however – if you pull the car off but the kid dies anyway from smoke inhalation, or you don't save your buddies in the ambush – you lose it as *Base Will*.

Yes, you can risk every last point of Will, so you'll be at zero afterward. But you'd better hope you don't blow it: If your Base Will goes to zero, it will stay there until you can somehow raise it again – leaving your character a mental wreck for the long haul.

There are usually several restrictions on when crisis dice can be used.

- There must be a **specific, short-term goal** that they can accomplish: "kick in the door to the burning ammo shed"; "save the Captain from the stormtroopers"; etc.
- You must have some **powerful emotional investment** in the event. Usually this equates to the risk of losing Will if you don't succeed – a loved one is about to die, or you're about to get killed or captured – but other circumstances might be appropriate.
- You have to **roleplay appropriately** to the character and situation. Incoherent shouting might be in order, or going into a fugue where you remember nothing afterward, or a berserk rage. You don't have to be a frothing maniac, but even for characters with Hypercool it shouldn't be just another day at the races: It should be impressive and interesting – in fact, gamemasters are encouraged to refuse crisis dice if the player makes it boring!
- The GM should decide whether an NPC can use crisis dice. If it will make the game more interesting, use them.

Unlike most uses of Will, crisis dice are available to anyone with a Will stat, whether it's "fluctuating Will" (see *Wild Talents*) or not.

You don't have to be a Talent, in other words. Just desperate.