

# GM Principles

by  
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You can go to extremes with any form of GMing. I think of GMing as a balancing act where the performer (Ms GM) is spinning a plate.

Over the years, I've found the following rules to be useful (they've made it into print/seminars several times, e.g., *Shadis*, *Tales of the Reaching Moon*, *Role-Player*, Seminar at Long Island Polytechnic, Arisia, etc. so my apologies on the old news if you have seen them before):

**Stafford Principle:** Maintain a sense of wonder in the campaign. Make sure there is always some surprise or something special that makes a session, an adventure, a campaign and your whole world unique.

**Perrin Principle:** Be consistent. If you do something once, it becomes a precedence. The players will remember it, and count on it being the same next time. If it's not the same later, have a darn good, obvious to the players reason that it's different.

**Petersen Principle:** Make it fun. Don't be afraid to change a plot to go with player enthusiasm. Try something crazy or goofy, even (or especially) in serious settings. Roll with the mood and make it happen. Be high energy!

**Staats Principle:** Reward the players as well as the characters. Handouts, riddles, music, etc. that can be experienced by the players' senses directly or challenge the players' creativity reward the players. The players are the ones that come to the sessions every week, and ultimately, it is the GM's goal to reward the players. Some folks are just fine being vicariously rewarded through their characters, but it's oh so much more fun to be rewarded as a player during the course of a session.

**Sandy's Axiom:** Involve at least three senses in every scene. These can be described or experienced (e.g. props, incense, etc.). People have five senses, and adding details about weird sounds, the unusual smell or the texture of something adds to the gaming experience.