

Channel 01

Set XX

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About the Channel Ace Card

by Susan Van Camp

On Grandilar, most magic is performed with spells. Spells are created by manipulating magical energy with the power of mind. Spellcasting requires two ingredients: Magical power (od or warp) and the skills of a sentient mind to make use of that power. The power of mind is critical to magic making, as any mage's apprentice knows. What is less well known is that the power of mind, by itself, can be used to create powerful effects that are very much like magic. Among these non-magical skills is the Power called Channel.

Dating back from ancient times, Channel is an power that allows a group of sentient beings to link their minds together and pool their mental strength. The origins of the Channel mental discipline is murky. Some ancient writers claim that it was invented by the Dark Moon Clan. Others say that it was a creation of mortals, who came up with it as a defense against the magic of ancient dragons. Wherever it came from, Channel is currently a skill practiced by a wide variety of beings. Everyone from Valarians to especially bright warp plants have been known to use it.

The following paragraphs give details about Channel, both in general and in regards to specific cards. This information also applies to the Channel Link card in the original Dragon Storm set.

No matter what this article says, rule 3.4 is still in force. If your group uses Channel in a way that you enjoy, stick with it. For Guild Sanctioned games, we suggest that Channel be restricted in the ways described in this article.

Of all the powers in the Dragon Storm role-playing game, few can compare with the power of Channel. It grants a group the power to speak mind-to-mind. It gives them the power to pool their strength. The subtleties of Channel, and the link it creates, needs further explanation.

When playing the Channel Card, a user forms a psychic link with characters who choose participate. This is called a Channel Link. Linked characters may speak mind to

mind and may use channel cards, even if they don't have Channel in play themselves. If the user of this Ace dies, enters a meditative state, or goes unconscious from damage while it is in play, the card is drained and the link is broken.

The question we've heard most often has to do with the number of people who need the ace in order for it to function. Must everyone participating in a Channel have the ace in order to share in its benefits? No. The holder of the active ace becomes the central figure and telepathic communication flows through the ace holder to everyone invited to join a Channel.

It's possible for multiple characters in a group to have this ace in play. Channel functions as normal, no matter how many characters have the ace. However, if all characters with the ace go unconscious, die or are out of range (see below) then the remaining characters lose the link.

The next question that comes up has to do with a Link's range. How far can a linked group stretch a Channel? In general we use the 'line of sight' rule; if you can see the other members of your group, the Channel works fine. If others are out of sight but still nearby (say within 500 feet) then the link continues to function. Any farther than that creates problems. I suggest allowing characters to stay in touch at a distance of up to a mile, but to require a + WIS roll if the 500 feet/line of sight rule has been broken. A failed roll means a temporary loss of the link. The player may attempt a roll to re-establish the link, but it takes all of her concentration to do so; this means, in a combat situation, she must use her action. Rolls to re-establish a link may be made once every five minutes. An interesting wrinkle would be to extend or shorten a link's range depending on terrain: Double it in pristine regions, leave it the same in normal regions, cut it to half in warped regions and limit it to line of sight in wasted areas.

Another question we frequently receive relates to Channel cards like Share the Pain and Channel Healing. Can anyone in a Channel use these cards, whether or not they hold the ace? Yes, Channel, like the Valarian Champion boon, allows its user access to a new class of cards. Your character only has to be linked to someone who has this ace active to use Channel cards. Exceptions are covered in the actual cards below. This makes Channel cards even more powerful and desirable.

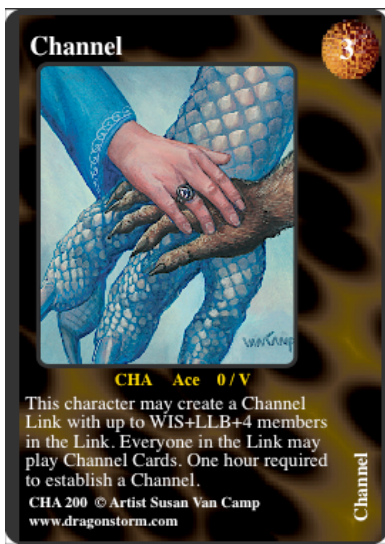
The next question is related to time. How long does it take to establish a Channel or add someone new to the link? It takes at ten minutes for each person added to the link. In our games, characters join hands to perform ritual chants and meditations that establish the link. The exact form of these rituals vary (and can be left up to players and gamemasters). A linked character who remains out of range of his link for more than one day loses contact with the group. He must repeat the ritual and meditation to rejoin the link.

We also get a question from gamemasters. How can I challenge a group of players with Channel? Given how powerful a linked group can be, this is a good question. Tap the Link provides the best solution. This Necromancy spell lets a death mage listen in on conversations between the members of a link. There's no better way to second-guess attacking Valarians than to overhear their plans as they make them. If a GM wants to really challenge the characters, Blast the Link is effective.

The GM will want to place enemy groups in a Channel of their own for tough fights. Most Necromancers do not want to hear directly from their minions so they hesitate to put up a link. I recommend that a Necromancer only use Channel when the players have 700 card points, or more, in their party.

Even with these restrictions, Channel remains a formidable card. It encourages teamwork among Valarians and allows them to combine their strength. This gives them an advantage over necromancers, whose paranoia makes them suspicious of their allies. A death mage never knows who to trust. A linked Valarian can reach trusted allies with a thought.

The Cards:



Channel CHA-200 (3 CP)

Card Type: CHA Ace 0 / V

This character may create a Channel Link with up to WIS+LLB+4 members in the Link. Everyone in the Link may play Channel Cards. It takes ten minutes to “Link” with each individual.

Comments: Channel is the basic skill needed to create a working mental communication link between several sentient creatures. Channel allows the user, and all joined to her through the link, access to Channel cards.

When this Ace is drained voluntarily, or drained through the unconsciousness, sleeping, meditating or reaching zero HP, the Link disappears.

As mentioned in card rules, it takes ten minutes to link each individual using Channel. This means that it takes 30 minutes for a user to create a link with three other people, 40 minutes for four other people, ect.



Channel Healing CAS-201 (5 CP)

Card Type: CHA Ace Ind / F

All characters in a Channel Link may play 0/F timing Enhance cards which enhance STR. The combined STR is added to a D6+2 roll, which is applied to heal one character in the link.

Comments: Channel Healing illustrates the cooperative methods used by Valarians, Elethayists and Rogues in the battle against the forces of Evil. You rarely see this card on a Necromancer. Characters who have specialized STR cards that can only be used in particular Forms may use those STR

Enhance cards for Channel Healing.

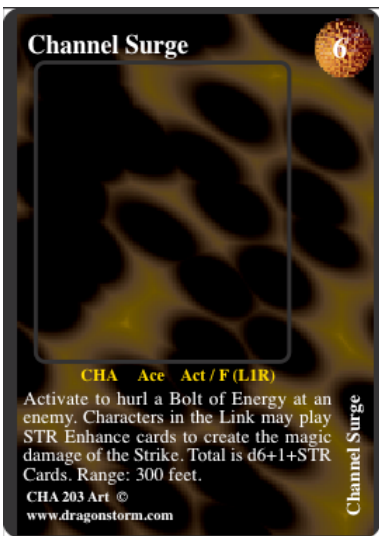


Share the Pain CAS-202 (3 CP)

Card Type: CHA Ace Ind / F

Activate when a character in the Link takes damage. Other characters in the Link may divert damage from the target and take it themselves instead by using an Independent Action.

Comments: Share the Pain allows a character in a Channel to transfer damage as it strikes someone else in the Channel and to accept that damage themselves. The amount of damage that they take is up to the character accepting damage. When this is Activated within a Channel other characters may also accept damage by expending an Independent. They do not need to play a separate card to Share the Pain.



Channel Surge CHA-203 (6 CP)

Card Type: CHA Ace Act / F (L1R)

Activate to hurl a Bolt of Energy at an enemy. Characters in the Link may play STR Enhance cards to create the magic damage of the Strike. Total is d6+1+STR Cards. Range: 300 feet.

Comments: This can be a potentially devastating attack.



Channel Spear CAS-204 (6 CP)

Card Type: CHA Ace Act / F

Activate to cause 2d6+6+WIS Od damage to a single target. Warpspawn take double damage. Range: 300 feet.

Comments: Channel talents allow users to stretch their minds and control energies available only when a Channel is active.



Activate Waystone CAS-205 (2 CP)

Card Type: CHA, Glyphmaster Ace Act / F

Activate a Waystone by touching it. User and their gear is transported to the sister stone. Takes 1 Minute per Terrain square distance travelled. May transport 2 other Living beings with you.

Comments: Waystones are a small personal version of what used to be a complete transportation system covering the Stormlands before the Deathday massacre.



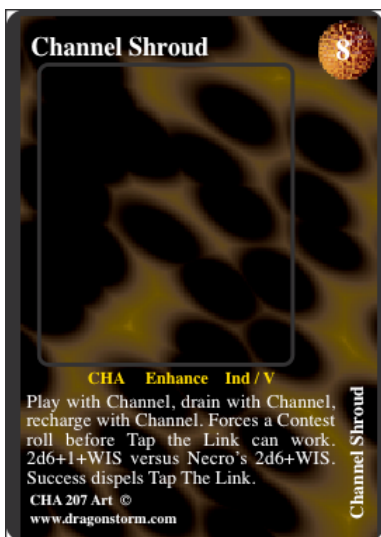
Storm Wars CHA-206 (6 CP)

Card Type: CHA Ace Ind / F

Activate at a Warp Storm's Nexus. 2d6+ # of Characters in Link versus Storms Resistance. Success destroys the Storms Nexus and dispels the Storm. Range: 50 feet.

Comments: Yes, you have to get to the center of the storm to use this.

Storm Hunters always carry one of these. The most common use is to destroy Hopper Storms before they can grow into full tempests.



Channel Shroud CHA-207 (8 CP)

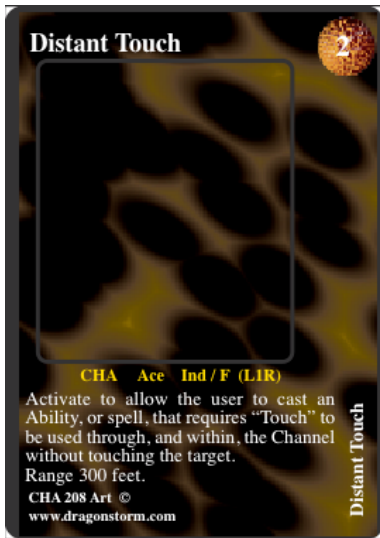
Card Type: CHA Enhance Ind / V

Activate with your Channel Ace, drains with your Channel Ace. Forces a Contest roll before Tap the Link can work. 2d6+1+WIS versus Necro's 2d6+WIS. Success dispels Tap The Link.

Comments: Before the advent of Tap the Link and Blast the Link no self respecting civilized individual would have considered attacking a Channel. These came with the Pylos Necromancy alliance. Channel Shroud does not work with the Channel Link card.

The Channel Shroud stays in play even if it fails. A second Tap would need a new roll, but the winning Tap stays with no further rolls.

A Channel user with Shroud in play can sense that a necromancer has tried to tap her link and will know if the attempt succeeded or failed.



Distant Touch CHA-208 (2 CP)

Card Type: CHA Ace Ind / F (L1R)

Activate to allow the user to cast an Ability, or spell, that requires "Touch" to be used. The spell or ability becomes ranged. Range is 300 feet.

Comments: This Ability allows helpful Spells, Abilities or Powers that normally require contact to be used at a distance.

This is an expensive way to use cards like Healing Touch due to the extra Independent used and the extra 2 CP involved, but there are times when it is essential.