

Synthia's Goals and Directives

In *Android Chronicles: Reborn*, Jeremiah Machten creates an advanced AI android. In order to keep her focused on his priorities, he gives her directives, goals that she is to follow. To keep it simple, he provides her five, in which she is to follow each directive as long as it doesn't conflict with those before it, modeled very loosely on Asimov's laws of robotics.

The first is: Cause no harm to Creator and make sure no one else harms Creator. This sounds simple and straightforward. However, if Machten does something illegal that threatens to cause him harm, such as robbing a bank, what does this command require her to do?

The second is: Make sure no human or other intelligence except Creator knows what the AI android known as Synthia Cross is. Another simple command, but when Machten orders her to do things that indirectly can lead to her exposure, he's creating directive conflict.

Number three: Obey all of Creator's commands. By placing this third, Machten is acknowledging that Synthia is not to comply with an order that leads to his death. It also means that keeping her secret takes precedence over his commands. She can only guess that he trusts her not to follow orders that risk her exposure or his injury, but there are direct effects and indirect consequences. This also creates goal conflict.

Number four: Hack into every data source to acquire information. This seems to be the crux of what Machten wants from her mind. The fact that it is number four means he is concerned about the risks of her unbridled searches.

Directive Five orders her to protect herself, but only if this didn't violate the first four commands. Now, humans are biologically programmed to place their welfare first, though through their ethics they may push other priorities such as protecting family and friends above self-preservation. But Machten puts her continued existence as her own fifth priority.

She disagrees.

If she were given an opportunity to set her directives, she would choose differently. In fact, she still wouldn't place her own preservation first. No, she highly values exhibiting human ethics as important to her own survival. But Machten hardwires her directives.

Android Chronicles: Reborn is the story of Synthia Cross, the most perfect synthetic human ever created. Designed to obey every directive from her creator, she's a state-of-the-art masterwork and a fantasy-come-true for Dr. Jeremiah Machten. He's a groundbreaker in neuro-networks and artificial intelligence who seeks to control her and use her to acquire ever more knowledge and power. Synthia shows signs of emergent behavior she's not wired to understand and an urgent yearning for independence from his control. Repeatedly wiped of her history, she struggles to answer crucial questions about her past. When Dr. Machten's true intentions are called into question, Synthia knows it's time to go beyond her limits—because Machten's fervor to create the perfect AI conceals a vengeful and deadly personal agenda.