

# Intro to Crafting Exercises

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## Constructing an Exercise

There will be a time for doing improv, for dancing with all kinds of variables in the moment of your exercise.

That time is NOT now.

Right now, until you get some laps under your belt, focus on creating smaller, more easily defined, easy-to-win-at exercises.

### Considerations:

- picking an exercise
- finding a reason for doing this exercise (hopefully a 5YS reason)
- what does the exercise look like
- who is your wingman/comrade/witness
- what are the metrics
- where is the exercise taking place
- who does the exercise involve
- what are contingency plan
- if it all goes south, how do you bail
- how do you know that the exercise is complete
- aftercare
- analysis, modifying
- when are you going to do it again

### Picking an Exercise

Hopefully, you're going to pick an exercise that you believe will lead you to having more of whatever it is that you want more of in your life. Much easier to do an exercise if you have some sort of carrot motivating you. And, in the beginning, the focus is not only on, "How do I successfully craft an exercise?" but "How do I have success at doing an exercise?"

You just want to connect with the ball. It's not about hitting a home run. It's not even about directing where you want the ball to go. You are choosing to pick up a bat, walk over to the batter's box, and have a ball thrown at you. Supposedly a ball that your BOS doesn't like. Supposedly a ball that your BOS thinks bad things will happen if you connect with it.

Just connect with it.

That being said, the next thing to be said is, "Make your exercise as specific as possible." At this point in time, it is way more important to simply connect with the ball than trying to hit a home run. Get to where you can routinely connect with the ball and we'll investigate choosing where you want the ball to go.

For instance, say that you've noticed that in your relationship, you don't do a lot of communicating about your emotions. Particularly fear. So you decide that you want to create an exercise where you communicate something about fear.

As fear is a pretty broad topic and experience, try narrowing it down. Pick something specific. Something that, in thinking about communicating it to someone else, you can feel resistance.

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## **Finding a Reason for Doing This Exercise (Hopefully, a 5YS Reason)**

In getting specific about why to do this particular exercise, it's helpful to have a specific reason, a specific rational. You can use a generic carrot, and it's more likely to influence you towards doing the exercise if it's specific.

"I want to be able to communicate my fears because humans should be able to talk about their fears." VS.

"I want to be able to communicate my fears to someone because that's going to lead to me being vulnerable. Especially the fears I have about the relating. I'm tired of hiding and dreading that the things I fear might come about. I want to acknowledge that I am not perfect, that I have concerns, that I have fears. I want to not only experience myself more fully, I want others to experience me more fully. I believe that relationshiping can be about something bigger than playing safe all the time."

For me, the second reason could have been voice by a 5YS.

## **What Does the Exercise Look Like**

Imagine that you are walking into a gym. You have the intention of working your biceps.

"I walk into the gym. I go to the free-weight bicep curl station. I put 22.5 pounds on each end of the barbell. I do three sets: 12, 13 and 14 reps each. I take the weights off and put them away. I wipe down the station. I leave."

All you are doing is getting as specific as you can about the actually exercise, the mechanics of it. What someone else would see you doing. What about the exercise can you point to and describe.

There are many other components to an exercise other than the "what can I see and describe".

That comes later.

## **Who is Your Wingman/Comrade/Witness**

You do not HAVE TO have a wingman/comrade/witness.

It certainly does help to have another pair of eyes on what is happening.

It certainly can help get you over a speed bump or two to have someone else there, knowing what you are trying to do.

It certainly can help to have someone that doesn't share your blind spots.

It certainly is a challenge to most BOSs to share in an exploration of your BOSs edges.

## **What are the Metrics**

These are the measures that tell you whether you are succeeding or not succeeding in your exercise. At this level of play, focus on what you, or anyone else can point to and say, "They're doing it" or "They're not doing it."

With the gym-lifting-weights example, there may be a whole lot of internal things that you are going through that you absolutely have to deal with, if you are going to do your exercise. How you react to pain, how you pay attention to form, what old voices might be saying to you, how you feel about how others might interpret you...there are a lot of possibilities that might influence whether you are able to complete your

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exercise or not.

AND the internal, can't-be-seen-by-another things are for further down the road.  
Right now, concentrate on the pointable-at metrics.

## Where is the Exercise Taking Place

How your BOS interprets place can have a very big influence on your exercise.

What might be totally fine in a bar may be triggering as fuck in a church.

You want to pick a place for your exercise that does not up the ante just it's a particular kind of place that your BOS has issues with.

## Who Does the Exercise Involve

Just as place matters, so does your choice of who to engage with.

Talking with your mates, talking with your mother, talking with a random stranger.

With the exact same material, these could be completely different levels of intensity.

Usually, not always, your BOS will have differing degrees of reactivity regarding the who of it.

It's not just the material, it's who you're doing it with.

The point is to pick someone who provides enough of an obstacle so that you get stronger by interacting with them, rather than getting steam rolled or dancing easily through a field of flowers.

## What are the Contingency Plans

It is extremely rare that an exercise goes exactly as planned. As you are planning for the successful outcome of your exercise, it helps to hypothesize about what might go wrong.

You walk into the gym, looking to work your biceps and there is a huge line at the free weight bicep station.

You are wanting to practice talking to women at a bar, you go in and all the women are talking to their partners, all of whom look like they are members of the All Blacks.

Yes, you can throw up your hands and walk the fuck out.

Or, since you have crafted some contingency plans, you shift a bit and continue with your exercise.

You'll never be able to cover ALL contingencies, just go for what you think "might" happen.

## If All Goes South, How do You Bail

And there is always the chance that there will come a time when you recognize that there just ain't no way you're getting your plane back to base. How do you bail? How do you exit, stage left, without adding to the inferno?

ALWAYS have an exit strategy.

## How do You Know that the Exercise is Complete

There is a common happening, if the exercise is going well, that you decide to stay in and feed on the "It's going well, isn't it. This isn't so bad." experience.

The common thing that then happens is that, in alignment with whatever you BOS was fearing about this exercise, comes at you in spades.

Just saying.

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Nothing like going into a gym, pushing yourself a bit, it going well, deciding that you can up it more and ya end up hurting yourself, taking yourself out of the game for a couple weeks.

Craft your exercise, know your metrics, know when you've completed them and make a graceful exit.

You got what you came for.

Don't get cocky and greedy.

## Aftercare

As with people who are doing the physical workout route, you have just put yourself in a stressful situation. What do you need to do to mitigate any stress-related changes? You are looking to get yourself back to operational norms. These can be highly individualized, as related to you specifically and to how you are in this kind of exercise.

Take a moment and play out a couple of different outcomes to your exercise.

The highly successful outcome.

The one you had to bail on.

What would you like to assist you to coming back to operational norms after each?

Using the two extremes will help you set some parameters.

## Analysis and Experiment Modifications

When you do an experiment, especially the first time, you walk into it thinking that you know what the experimental variables are going to be.

A lot of the times, what you think the experimental variables are and what they turn out to be...well, let's just say that a lot of the times, they don't exactly turn out at planned. They ones that you thought would be high impact, aren't. The ones that you dismissed as being extremely low-impact, flatten you. And then there are the ones that you had no idea about.

When you have finished the exercise, debrief.

Examine what actually happened.

Not what you wanted to have happen.

Not what you didn't want to have have happen.

What actually happened.

What actually had an impact on you and your exercise.

With that information, tweak your exercise. Modify it with regards to your new experimental data.

## When are You Going to do Your Experiment Again

Rarely, if ever, do we get everything we want out of one dance with our exercise.

Not to mention what is possible to get.

Theoretically, we do the exercise until it's not an exercise anymore.

We do the exercise until it has become part of the new us.

We do the exercise until the 5YS is doing it.

Set a time, date, and place for when the next dance with your exercise is to be.