

THE GROUND RANGE CARD

Read the GROUND before you take the shot.

THE SIX LETTERS

G — GET TO GROUND TRUTH

Ask: What do I actually know, versus what I was told or assumed?

Done when: “you’ve confirmed the load-bearing facts, and you’ve consciously labeled the rest.”

R — RANGE THE STAKES

Ask: How big is it, and can I take it back?

Done when: “you’ve placed the decision on both axes, and you’ve found the irreversible thread if there is one.”

O — OBSERVE THE PEOPLE

Ask: What do they want, know, fear, and won’t say?

Done when: “for the people who actually matter to this decision, you’ve read past the stated version to a real sense of what they want, what they know and don’t, what they fear, and what they’re not saying — at least on the points that bear on the call in front of you.”

U — UNCOVER THE UNKNOWN

Ask: What would have to be true for this to blow up that I haven’t checked?

Done when: “you’ve deliberately hunted for the hidden factors, as hard as the stakes earn; you’ve dealt with the ones you can find; and for everything you couldn’t find, you’ve built in margin.”

N — NAME THE REAL QUESTION

Ask: Can I put it in one sentence?

Done when: “the read has a finish line, and the finish line is the question.”

D — DECIDE & DEBRIEF

Ask: What did the read get right, and what did it miss?

Done deciding: “You’ve committed — actually committed, with the options you said you’d give up given up. And you’ve written down, in four lines, what you decided, why you thought it would work, and what would tell you it didn’t.”

Done debriefing: “you can name what the read got right, name what it missed and where in the six letters the miss lives, and state one behavior you’ll change. And it’s written down.”

THE TWO THAT NEVER COMPRESS

Check the chamber yourself.

“No time” is never a reason to be less sure. It’s a reason to pass.

THE RESOLUTION DIAL

“Range the Stakes is the step that calibrates every other step. It’s the dial that tells you how hard to work.”

Match the depth of the read to the stakes — and watch the small-but-irreversible corner.

MAGNITUDE	BIG	BIG · REVERSIBLE Two-way door — move fast. <i>Where time gets wasted.</i>	BIG · IRREVERSIBLE <i>“The shot.”</i> Give it everything.
	SMALL	SMALL · REVERSIBLE Decide on instinct. Don’t over-read it.	SMALL · IRREVERSIBLE The killer corner. Looks small, can’t be undone.
		← REVERSIBLE	IRREVERSIBLE →

THE COMPRESSED READ — WHEN THERE’S NO TIME

What am I sure of? · What can’t I take back? · What’s changed?

Ten seconds. G, the urgent half of R, and the deviation check. O and U get dropped — which is why you bank them in advance.

A WELL-FORMED QUESTION

Four marks — all four, not three:

- It’s specific.
- It’s answerable.
- It’s aimed at the actual constraint.
- It changes what you’d do.

Four bad shapes:

- Too broad.
- A symptom instead of a cause.
- A solution in disguise.
- Too big to answer.

FIVE TELLS YOU’RE ON THE WRONG QUESTION

1. The answer doesn’t relieve the pressure.
2. You keep solving the same problem.
3. The two-in-the-morning test.
4. Other people’s confusion.
5. The answer needs more and more force to hold.

FROM THE BOOK

The Question Before the Question

A field manual for reading the situation before you decide what the problem is.

by Evan Dextraze