THE FREE TOOLKIT

THE PRICE OF PLAYING SAFE

Why Doing Nothing Is the Riskiest Bet You'll Ever Make · Armando Gutierrez

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Twelve worksheets from the book. Print them. Write on them. Argue with them.
A clean worksheet is a worksheet that didn't work.

PROTECT THE FLOOR. PRICE THE RISK. TAKE THE LEAP.

PRICE THE BET

One decision. Both sides of the risk. No fortune cookies.

THE DECISION

WHAT DO I ACTUALLY WANT? (NOT WHAT I'M SUPPOSED TO WANT)

IF I DO NOTHING

ONE YEAR FROM NOW

FIVE YEARS FROM NOW

THE PRICE OF WAITING

MONEY ______________________________

TIME ______________________________

OPPORTUNITY / SKILLS ______________________________

WORST PLAUSIBLE DOWNSIDE IF I ACT

MONEY ______________________________

INCOME ______________________________

TIME / OTHER ______________________________

WHAT CANNOT BE PART OF THIS BET (THE CORE)

DOES MY CORE SURVIVE FAILURE? ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ UNSURE

CAN I SURVIVE BEING WRONG? ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ UNSURE

LABEL THE NUMBERS

KNOWN (VERIFIED) ______________________________

ESTIMATED (SOME EVIDENCE) ______________________________

ASSUMED (GUESSING) ______________________________

CHEAPEST SERIOUS WAY TO GET MORE EVIDENCE

HOW REVERSIBLE IS THIS? ☐ EASY ☐ PARTIAL ☐ HARD ☐ NOT REVERSIBLE

PRICE THE BET

One decision. Both sides of the risk. No fortune cookies.

WHAT WOULD MAKE ME EXPAND / CHANGE / STOP

MY NEXT ACTION ______________________________

I WILL DO IT BY ____________________

MY OUTPUT — circle one

GO | **WAIT** | **SHRINK IT** | **GET MORE EVIDENCE** | **WALK AWAY**

THE CALCULATOR CANNOT FIX A BAD ASSUMPTION.

THE FAILURE WEB

When one thing fails — ask what else fails with it.

THE THING I'M BETTING ON:

____

SALARY / INCOME

If the center fails, what happens here?

____

____

CAREER / REPUTATION

If the center fails, what happens here?

____

____

INVESTMENTS / RETIREMENT

If the center fails, what happens here?

____

____

HOUSING / CORE

If the center fails, what happens here?

____

____

RELATIONSHIPS / OBLIGATIONS

If the center fails, what happens here?

____

____

HEALTH / TIME / ENERGY

If the center fails, what happens here?

____

____

READ YOUR WEB

WHAT BREAKS TOGETHER? (ONE EVENT — HOW MANY CONSEQUENCES?)

____

WHICH CONNECTION SCARES ME MOST — AND WHAT WOULD DECOUPLE IT?

____

NO SINGLE FAILURE SHOULD GET TO DECIDE HOW YOUR STORY ENDS.

THE SKILL ROI SPREAD

Five jobs before five grand. Reality first. Checkout page second.

THE SKILL / CREDENTIAL I'M CONSIDERING ______________________

TOTAL COST (TUITION + MATERIALS) ______________ $

TIME TO COMPLETE ______________

INCOME GIVEN UP WHILE LEARNING ______________ $

FIVE REAL JOB POSTINGS THAT REQUIRE IT

1. TITLE / EMPLOYER ______________

POSTED PAY __________ $

2. TITLE / EMPLOYER ______________

POSTED PAY __________ $

3. TITLE / EMPLOYER ______________

POSTED PAY __________ $

4. TITLE / EMPLOYER ______________

POSTED PAY __________ $

5. TITLE / EMPLOYER ______________

POSTED PAY __________ $

THREE INDEPENDENT PAY SOURCES (BLS, industry survey, people in the job)

1. ______________________

2. ______________________

3. ______________________

THE MATH

REALISTIC PAY INCREASE PER YEAR ______________ $

YEARS TO BREAK EVEN (TOTAL COST ÷ YEARLY INCREASE) ______________

THE PAY NUMBERS ABOVE ARE MOSTLY: ☐ KNOWN ☐ ESTIMATED ☐ ASSUMED

MY OUTPUT — circle one

GO | **WAIT** | **CHEAPER VERSION FIRST** | **MORE EVIDENCE** | **WALK AWAY**

IF THE PAYOFF ONLY EXISTS IN THE SCHOOL'S BROCHURE, IT'S NOT A PAYOFF YET.

THE LEVERAGE STRESS TEST

Fill this out before the position becomes emotional.

PAGE 1 — WHAT AM I ACTUALLY EXPOSED TO?

MY CASH / EQUITY ______________________ $

BORROWED MONEY OR OTHER OBLIGATION ______________________ $

TOTAL ECONOMIC EXPOSURE ______________________ $

EXPOSURE ÷ MY EQUITY ____________ x

MAXIMUM POSSIBLE LOSS ______________________ $ (or write UNKNOWN)

CAN I LOSE MORE THAN THE CASH I PUT IN? ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ UNSURE

CAN SOMEONE ELSE FORCE LIQUIDATION? ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ UNSURE

CAN I BE REQUIRED TO ADD CASH OR COLLATERAL? ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ UNSURE

IS THERE AN EXPIRATION OR DEADLINE? ☐ YES ☐ NO

WHAT HAPPENS DURING A LARGE GAP MOVE?

____

____

UNKNOWN IS NOT ZERO. INVESTIGATE BEFORE CALLING IT CALCULATED.

THE LEVERAGE STRESS TEST

Fill this out before the position becomes emotional.

PAGE 2 — DOES MY LIFE SURVIVE?

IF THE UNDERLYING FALLS 10%, MY EQUITY ≈ ______________________ $

IF IT FALLS 20% ______________________ $

IF IT FALLS 30% ______________________ $

Stress points — not predictions or maximum-loss estimates.

COULD THE POSITION REQUIRE MORE CASH? ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ UNSURE

IF YES — WHERE WOULD THAT MONEY COME FROM?

____

WOULD THAT INVADE MY CORE? ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ UNSURE

COULD ANOTHER ASSET BE FORCED TO SELL? ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ UNSURE

DOES MY CORE SURVIVE THE WORST STRUCTURAL OUTCOME? ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ UNSURE

MY OUTPUT — circle one

AFFORDABLE | **SHRINK** | **UNDERSTAND FIRST** | **WALK AWAY**

BUYING POWER IS NOT RISK CAPACITY.

PSYCHOLOGICAL RISK RECEIPT

Fear is a signal. Investigate it before you obey it.

THE DECISION

HOW SCARY DOES IT FEEL? ________________ / 10

WHAT CAN ACTUALLY BREAK? ☐ L1 FLUCTUATION ☐ L2 INCONVENIENCE ☐ L3 SETBACK ☐ L4 IMPAIRMENT

WHAT AM I AFRAID WILL HAPPEN?

WHAT EVIDENCE SAYS IT COULD?

MAXIMUM PLAUSIBLE COST — MONEY ______________________________ $

TIME ______________________________

HOW REVERSIBLE? ☐ EASY ☐ PARTIAL ☐ HARD ☐ NOT REVERSIBLE

DOES FAILURE THREATEN THE FLOOR? ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ UNSURE

AM I AVOIDING: ☐ DANGER ☐ DISCOMFORT

AM I RUSHING BECAUSE OF: ☐ FOMO ☐ EGO ☐ EXCITEMENT ☐ COMPARISON ☐ RECENT WIN

WHAT EVIDENCE WOULD CHANGE MY MIND?

THE MISMATCH GRID

HIGH FEAR + LOW DOWNSIDE Take the cheap step.	**HIGH FEAR + HIGH DOWNSIDE** Slow down. Protect. Shrink.
LOW FEAR + LOW DOWNSIDE Easy experiment.	**LOW FEAR + HIGH DOWNSIDE** PAY ATTENTION.

FEELING RISK IS NOT THE SAME AS MEASURING RISK.

YOUR REAL VISION BOARD

Your calendar knows what you're actually building.

THE FUTURE I SAY I WANT

WHAT HAVE I DONE IN THE LAST 30 DAYS THAT PROVES I WANT IT?

WHAT HAVE I DONE IN THE LAST 30 DAYS THAT WORKS AGAINST IT?

IF SOMEONE SAW ONLY MY CALENDAR, SPENDING, AND SCREEN TIME — WHAT WOULD THEY THINK MY REAL GOAL WAS?

IF FUTURE-ME WATCHED MY LAST 7 DAYS, WOULD THEY BELIEVE I WANT THIS LIFE? ☐ YES ☐ NO

WHY?

THE NEXT MOVE

MY NEXT SEVEN-DAY ACTION ______________________

I WILL DO IT ON ______________________

IF SOMETHING GETS IN THE WAY ______________________

THEN I WILL ______________________

DO NOT ASK THE UNIVERSE FOR EVIDENCE. CREATE EVIDENCE.

THE TEN-YEAR RISK PORTFOLIO

Five jobs. One decade. Build options, not predictions.

1 · CORE — what must survive?

FINANCIAL FLOOR ______________________

PEOPLE / OBLIGATIONS ______________________

HEALTH ______________________

NON-NEGOTIABLES ______________________

2 · COMPOUNDERS — what deserves repeated investment?

MONEY ______________________

SKILL ______________________

CAREER ______________________

RELATIONSHIPS / NETWORK ______________________

HEALTH / SYSTEMS ______________________

3 · EXPERIMENTS — what am I allowed to fail at?

EXPERIMENT 1 ______________________

MAX MONEY ____________ $

MAX TIME ____________

EVIDENCE I WANT ______________________

EXPERIMENT 2 ______________________

MAX MONEY ____________ $

MAX TIME ____________

EVIDENCE I WANT ______________________

THE TEN-YEAR RISK PORTFOLIO

Five jobs. One decade. Build options, not predictions.

4 · BIG BETS — what might earn more exposure?

POTENTIAL BIG BET ______________________________

EVIDENCE REQUIRED FIRST

____

WHAT MUST REMAIN PROTECTED ______________________________

WHAT WOULD MAKE ME SAY NO ______________________________

5 · RISKS OF INACTION — if I change nothing for ten years:

CAREER ______________________________

MONEY ______________________________

SKILLS ______________________________

OPTIONS / FREEDOM ______________________________

WOULD I CHOOSE THAT FUTURE ON PURPOSE? ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ UNSURE

BOTTOM LINE

THE FUTURE I AM TRYING TO BUILD

____

WHAT I REFUSE TO DESTROY TO REACH IT

____

SMALLEST MOVE I CAN MAKE THIS WEEK ______________________________

EVERY 90 DAYS

KEEP — WHAT'S WORKING ______________________________

CHANGE — WHAT DID REALITY TEACH ME ______________________________

EXPAND — WHAT EARNED MORE ______________________________

TEN YEARS HAS TO EVENTUALLY BECOME TUESDAY.

RUN BOTH MOVIES

Action can fail. Inaction can cost. Neither gets immunity.

THE DECISION I'M WEIGHING

MOVIE ONE — I ACTED. IT FAILED.

Assume it went badly. Watch the whole movie before you judge it.

WHAT HAPPENED?

WHAT DID I UNDERESTIMATE?

WHAT COST MORE THAN EXPECTED?

WHAT EVIDENCE DID I IGNORE?

WHICH FAILURE MODE COULD THREATEN THE FLOOR?

HOW CAN I SHRINK OR CAP THAT RISK TODAY?

A GOOD DECISION CAN STILL LOSE. PLAN FOR THAT MOVIE.

RUN BOTH MOVIES

Action can fail. Inaction can cost. Neither gets immunity.

MOVIE TWO — I DID NOTHING. FIVE YEARS PASSED. I REGRET IT.

The movie almost nobody runs — and the regret research says it's the one that sticks.

WHY DO I REGRET IT?

WHAT OPPORTUNITY DID I NEVER TEST?

WHAT SKILL DID I NEVER BUILD?

WHAT DID WAITING PROTECT ME FROM?

WHAT DID WAITING EXPOSE ME TO?

WOULD I CHOOSE THAT FIVE-YEAR OUTCOME ON PURPOSE? ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ UNSURE

BOTH MOVIES WATCHED — NOW DECIDE

MY OUTPUT — circle one

GO | **WAIT** | **SHRINK IT** | **GET MORE EVIDENCE** | **WALK AWAY**

IF YOU ONLY IMAGINE MOVIE ONE, ACTION BECOMES THE ONLY PATH THAT CAN FAIL. THAT'S FALSE.

THE FLOOR

The part of your life no bet is allowed to touch. Build it first.

WHAT MY FLOOR PROTECTS

HOUSING (MONTHLY) ______________________ $

ESSENTIALS — FOOD, UTILITIES, TRANSPORT (MONTHLY) ______________________ $

INSURANCE & REQUIRED DEBT PAYMENTS (MONTHLY) ______________________ $

PEOPLE WHO DEPEND ON ME ______________________________________

TOTAL ESSENTIAL MONTHLY COST ______________________ $

THE LIQUIDITY TARGET

MONTHS OF RUNWAY I WANT ______________ × essential monthly =

FLOOR TARGET ______________________ $

WHAT I HAVE IN REACH TODAY ______________________ $

THE GAP ______________________ $

IS MY FLOOR FUNDED? ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ GETTING THERE

THE RULES

WHAT IS NEVER ALLOWED TO BECOME BET MONEY (WRITE IT SO FUTURE-YOU CAN'T NEGOTIATE)

____

____

MY FIRST MOVE TO STRENGTHEN THE FLOOR

____

I WILL DO IT BY ______________________

A FLOOR IS NOT A PRISON. A FLOOR IS WHAT LETS AMBITION SURVIVE A FALL.

CORE + EXPERIMENTS

What you have is not what you can afford to lose.

TOTAL MONEY AVAILABLE ______________________ $

THE CORE — must survive, no exceptions

WHAT'S IN IT (EMERGENCY FUND, OBLIGATIONS, LONG-TERM BASE)

____

____

CORE TOTAL ______________________ $

EXPERIMENT CAPITAL — allowed to fail on purpose

AVAILABLE MINUS CORE = EXPERIMENT CAPITAL ______________________ $

If this number is small or zero, experiments start with time, learning, and conversations — not cash.

EXPERIMENT 1

WHAT IT IS ______________________________________

MONEY CAP ________________ $

TIME CAP ____________________

EVIDENCE I'M BUYING ______________________________________

EXPERIMENT 2

WHAT IT IS ______________________________________

MONEY CAP ________________ $

TIME CAP ____________________

EVIDENCE I'M BUYING ______________________________________

CAN I LOSE EVERY EXPERIMENT DOLLAR AND KEEP MY LIFE INTACT? ☐ YES ☐ NO

If NO — the experiments are oversized. Shrink until YES.

THE CORE BUYS YOU ROOM TO BE WRONG. EXPERIMENTS GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO BE VERY RIGHT.

THE FUTURE RECEIPT

See it. Price it. Build it. The universe is not your project manager.

SEE IT

THE FUTURE I WANT (TEN YEARS OUT)

WHY IT MATTERS TO ME — NOT SOMEBODY ONLINE

AN ORDINARY TUESDAY IN THAT LIFE LOOKS LIKE:

DESIRED INCOME RANGE $ to $

APPROX. ANNUAL LIFESTYLE COST $

ASSETS, INVESTMENTS, OR BUSINESSES I WANT TO BUILD

WHAT DOES FUTURE-ME KNOW HOW TO DO THAT I CURRENTLY DON'T?

THE FUTURE RECEIPT

See it. Price it. Build it. The universe is not your project manager.

PRICE IT

BIGGEST CURRENT OBSTACLE

KNOWN — WHAT CAN I VERIFY ______________________

ESTIMATED — SOME EVIDENCE ______________________

ASSUMED — I'M GUESSING ______________________

WHAT COULD MAKE THIS PLAN FAIL?

WHAT AM I CURRENTLY DOING THAT DIRECTLY CONTRADICTS THIS FUTURE?

PROTECT IT

WHAT CAN I NOT AFFORD TO DESTROY WHILE PURSUING THIS?

MAX ACCEPTABLE DOWNSIDE, NEXT EXPERIMENT — MONEY ______________ $

TIME ______________

IS THE NEXT MOVE REVERSIBLE? ☐ YES ☐ PARTLY ☐ NO

BUILD IT

CHEAPEST SERIOUS EXPERIMENT THAT COULD TEACH ME SOMETHING

IF (THE CUE) ______________________

THEN I WILL ______________________

DEADLINE ______________

YOU HAVE DONE ENOUGH IMAGINING. CREATE EVIDENCE.

THE 90-DAY REVIEW

Keep. Change. Expand. Then go live your life.

DATE ____________________

THE BET / GOAL UNDER REVIEW ____

KEEP — what's working? what still matters?

CHANGE — what did reality teach me? what assumption broke?

EXPAND — what has earned more money, time, or commitment?

NEXT 90 DAYS

THE OUTCOME THAT GETS DONE (NOT 'WORKED ON')

MONEY I'M WILLING TO EXPOSE ____________________ $

HOURS/WEEK ________________

EVIDENCE THAT MAKES ME EXPAND ____

EVIDENCE THAT MAKES ME CHANGE ____

EVIDENCE THAT MAKES ME STOP ____

FIRST MOVE THIS WEEK ____

DATE ____________________

PLANS SHOULD UPDATE. DECISIONS SHOULD LEAVE RECEIPTS.