

# BOLDNESS EXERCISES:

## LEVEL 1

First of all, remember that these are *exercises*. They are designed to get you to flex and develop new muscles, the atrophied side of your social development. They are crafted to gradually shake something loose in you, to slowly unhinge you from that narrow frame in which you've defined yourself. They are not meant to be radical changes in your life or your lifestyle. The approach and the results will be gradual and cumulative, just like any form of exercise.

The intention is for you to consciously experience your reaction and other people's when you do each exercise. In particular, I want you to experience the lack of real consequence to these actions, despite the bizarreness of some of them, and to make special note of the fear that they might generate in you.

These are the rules to follow when doing Boldness Exercises:

1. *Work at a pace appropriate for you.* Everyone is different. You may leap through the first and second levels in a week or stay at Level 1 for a month. You alone know that boundary, so you will have to fashion your exercise pace based on your own Dosage. They are designed so the average person could complete them in ninety days, but you may take twice as long. So what? The reward will be huge, affecting the rest of your life.
2. *Expect to feel uncomfortable.* You will be Prepared, and attempting to Relax, but this will not be a miraculous transformation. Embrace the discomfort. If you are deliberately aiming for it, you won't be as freaked out. Ideally, you don't want your mouth dry, your armpits wet, your tongue tied and your mind unraveling. You don't want the discomfort to paralyze you. If it does, start slower. But don't go too easy on yourself. Discomfort, not paralysis, is the goal.
3. *Expect a negative response.* Or no response at all. What? Yes, the strategy is you are setting yourself up for deliberate failure in many of the exercises. This eliminates any possibility of disappointment.
4. *Pick a person who is not crucial to you meeting.* If the specific exercise requires you to interact with someone and you perceive the stakes to be high, then it will be more difficult. Remember, we're trying to keep the Dosage low. For example, if one of your goals is to be comfortable striking up a conversation with a person that you find appealing, the target of your exercise will be to strike up a conversation with a different person, someone you will be just fine with if you had never met them.

5. *Don't let yourself off the hook.* If you are frozen with fear attempting one Boldness Exercise, pick a different one. But stay committed for as long as it takes to act at least once a day. If you miss one day, get right back on schedule the next day.
6. *Return to the PRIDE Method steps.* If you find yourself frozen in your tracks somewhere during the exercise, it usually means  
you missed a step. Start over.
7. *Repeat each level until you feel comfortable moving up.* It's not a race or a competition. It's about expanding your comfort zone at a pace that doesn't set you back. Go back to the exercises in that level that made you most uncomfortable and repeat those.
8. *Once you move to the next exercise, that doesn't mean stop doing the previous ones.* You can add some of them to your daily activity, and most likely you'll want to. You may find yourself doing several different Boldness Exercises in a single day. Think of it exactly like physical exercises. You'd start with pushups, then add sit-ups, then lunges. The workout gets bigger as you broaden your skills and strength. Hopefully you'll sweat less than you would in the gym, but maybe not.

**With each exercise, make an entry in your journal that day. The Appendix specifies all the detail you should include with each entry.**

## EXERCISE 1

### **Smile at five complete strangers.**

One at a time, if I have to clarify.

This is learning to employ the first Power Tool. It could be to someone walking in your direction, or it could be someone stopped in the car next to you at a traffic light. Expect them not to smile back. (Rule #3.) They might think you're a bit crazy. But are you any crazier than a person running in place as they wait for the light to change so they can continue their jog? You're exercising too. Nothing crazy about that.

Examine how you feel when someone smiles back. And how you feel when they don't. Eventually you will have an insight into how truly harmless this is.

Do this five times each day until you feel ready to add the next exercise. Apply the PRIDE Method:

- Preparation: Brush your teeth. Smile in the mirror.
- Relaxing: Breathe. Play your theme song in your head.
- Insight: People tend to smile back at someone. It doesn't matter if they don't. We don't know their headspace. We are doing it as an act of pure positive generosity. Expecting nothing.
- Dosage: Minimum one smile to a stranger. (The goal is five, but feel free to do it all day.)
- Every Day Action: Don't let the day end without doing this. (Do it early.)

Pitfalls: Holding someone's gaze too long. Smiling like a crazy person. Invading someone's space. Cheating by smiling at someone you know. That's OK, of course, but the exercise is to smile at a complete stranger.

Journal your experience: With this and all the exercises, record the results of the day.

## EXERCISE 2

### Say one sentence to a stranger.

This may seem like a giant leap forward, but it's critical to break the verbal barrier. The Dosage is simple: one sentence. That sentence could be "Hi." This doesn't take a lot of Preparation. You are going to say something very simple. Remember the expectation, which is a negative response or no response at all. Anything beyond that is a bonus.

You are not asking them a question, just making a statement, an observation.

Now that we're leaping to verbal exercises, let's break down the PRIDE steps in more detail.

**Preparation:** Think of the exact thing you will say, that you could say to almost anyone, like, "I'm glad it stopped raining" or "Summer's almost here." Say it out loud, alone, until it feels natural. Because you want to make sure you say it audibly and it flows off your tongue. Say it five times if you have to. Do it in the mirror so you can see that you're smiling while you say it. Examples would be "It's such a nice day today" or "I love it when the elevator goes right to my floor without stopping."

**Relaxing:** The moment before you speak to someone, take two or three deep breaths. Center yourself. Shake off the tension. Start your theme song playing in your head. Do the vagus breath if you're feeling any anxiety.

**Insight:** You will not die, no matter what happens. This will be an insignificant moment in both your lives. The first few times you will likely mess this up, and that is part of it. You expect to. And it won't matter. If you were learning to juggle, wouldn't you expect to drop a ball a few times? I thought so. Same thing here.

**Dosage:** Control the amount of speaking you plan to do. If you intend to invite a response, have your own response prepared. If that is too much for you at the outset, prepare a simple observation that doesn't require further interaction, like, "The sky is so blue today" or "I think traffic is better today than usual." No exchange beyond that is necessary in this exercise.

**Every Day Action:** Once you start, you are going to do this every day. Your personal Dosage control will determine your minimum number of times, but it's going to be at least one. Do it early in the day so you can have a win, and maybe do it again. Or maybe stack up a bunch of rejections, just for the fun of it.

To summarize:

Preparation: Three possible opening lines—simple comments or observations.

Relaxing: Three deep breaths. (Add the vagus breath if necessary.) Insight: You won't die. And you are expecting no response.

Dosage: Minimum one sentence to one stranger. Ideally do it until you have one total failure.

Every Day Action: Don't let the day end without doing this. (Do it early.)

Pitfalls: Starting a conversation you can't handle yet. Not smiling or making eye contact as you do the exercise.

## EXERCISE 3

### Ask a stranger a question.

Same as Exercise 2, except now you are going to ask a question instead of making a statement. Something that requires a simple response, like,

“Yes” or “I agree.” Something like, “How was your weekend?” or “What did you think of the Super Bowl?” Say it out loud, alone, until it feels natural. You’re still going to break away after they respond. If the exchange goes further, run it out until you feel uncomfortable. That would be the bolder approach to the exercise.

Pitfalls: Not listening to the answer and not responding if necessary.

## EXERCISE 4

### Learn someone’s name.

This is learning to employ the second Power Tool. This sounds simple, except that you know that it isn’t. Because *learning* someone’s name means

you’ll remember it the next time you see them. This could be someone you work with, if you’re in a big office, or it could be the security guard you see every day, or the barista at your local coffee shop, or a waiter. Or someone you meet at a party, a seminar, or just someone you want to meet. This is not something you do with a passing stranger, unless it’s a follow-up to a previous exercise. It may also be polite to offer your name first, then wait for them to respond with theirs.

Also, consider that neighbor you’ve never met, or that person you pass on your way to work or in your building, whose name you never learned.

How about starting with them?

Preparation: Be ready to smile and make eye contact, and think of how exactly you are going to do it—either by offering your name first or by simply asking theirs. Have the exact line ready. When in doubt say, “Hi,

I’m Fred. What’s your name?”

Relaxing: Three deep breaths. Theme song. Vagus breath optional.

Insight: Most people like to hear their name. Most people are happy to tell you their name. (And will forget yours.)

Dosage: Learn and remember at least one name a day.

Every Day Action: Don’t let the day end without doing this. (Do it early.)

Examples:

“Would you mind telling me your name?”

“I should know your name. What is it?”

“Hi, I’m Fred.” If they don’t say their name back, ask.

“I’m sorry, I don’t know your name. I’m Fred.”

Pitfalls: Having to ask a third time because you forgot their name. Not telling them your name. Getting tricky, like saying, “You’re not Lisa, are you?” when you know they’re not. That violates my “no scam approach” principle (we’ll unpack this in Chapter 16, What Not to Do).

## EXERCISE 5

### Compliment a stranger.

In other words, make someone feel better about themselves, as in, the prime directive. This is a big step, because Preparation now happens right before you speak. It's going to require that you prepare something in your head when you see the person you want to offer a compliment to.

Remember and apply the rules about compliments in Chapter 10 (Power Tool #4). Make it easy on yourself at first. Don't go for something complex or wordy. And avoid physical attributes, for now. The perverse side of you will want to say something like, "Those are the biggest ears I've ever seen." Shut that voice down!

In this Boldness Exercise, you do not continue with the conversation. This is a drive-by, a throwaway compliment. You are making someone feel good about themselves, expecting nothing in return. So, break away after they respond. Or just be quiet. They will be a little bit surprised that you have no ulterior motive, no agenda. Big points for you.

Preparation: Choose the person, choose the thing about them you want to compliment, and then create the line in your head.

Relaxing: Take three deep breaths. Think your theme song. Adjust your body language.

Insight: You won't die. People tend to believe compliments and appreciate them from anyone, as long as they are not done in a creepy way.

Remember, you are expecting nothing positive or significant in return.

Dosage: Minimum one compliment to one stranger.

Every Day Action: Don't let the day end without doing this. (Do it early.)

Pitfalls: Space invading (getting too close). Not smiling and making eye contact. Not breaking away and ending up in a dead-end exchange.

## EXERCISE 6

### **Compliment a stranger that you have a specific negative judgment about.**

This is a variation on the previous Boldness Exercise, with the obvious adjustment.

This should actually be a really easy exercise in one aspect, because you are running these judgments through your mind constantly as you observe people or listen to them. You know how this goes. You're standing there, looking at someone and defining them based on the fact that they are wearing a ball cap backward, or have a goatee, or an expensive purse. Or they're frowning. Or laughing loudly. Most of us do these judgments instantly and reflexively. That's the exact person I want you to compliment.

So ideally, you take the exact thing you are judging them about and fashion your compliment based on that. (I know. This suddenly makes it much harder.) When you offer a compliment to someone you actually have a negative judgment about, both of you are affected. The person is not expecting it, and you have reversed your negative judgment by making that person real instead of a biased caricature in your mind.

Preparation: See the person, listen to your judgment, reverse it to find a compliment about it, and prepare the exact line in your head. Make eye contact and smile.

Relaxing: Three deep breaths. Theme song. Adjust your body language. Vagus breath (quietly if you are in public).

Insight: You won't die. It's a rare person who doesn't like a compliment, and if they don't, they are in a negative headspace at the moment. It is not you. You're moving on.

Dosage: Minimum one judgment-reversing compliment to a stranger.

Every Day Action: Don't let the day end without doing this. (Do it early.) If you can't find a stranger, at least do it with someone you know.

Pitfalls: Coming up with a creepy compliment. Sounding fake. Using clichés. Space invading. Not breaking away. Not saying, "You're very welcome" if they say, "Thank you."

## EXERCISE 7

### Introduce yourself to a stranger.

This exercise can be an add-on to one of the previous exercises, once you feel less uncomfortable with them. (Notice I didn't say, "Once you feel comfortable with them." I don't want you to wait that long!) In its ideal form, the exercise is done in a situation where there are a number of people you don't know, and perhaps some that you do, such as a party or a meeting. It could even be with a new employee at your workplace.

You are going to approach the person and say, "Hi, I'm \_\_\_\_\_.  
I'd like to meet you."

Now, you can follow it with a compliment, or start with one and then introduce yourself. It works either way. And very likely you will shake hands, if you are a man. Women need to gauge the situation more closely and decide if it merits a handshake or if it is a more casual first encounter.

I would lean toward a handshake in most situations.

You are not to proceed to the next batch of exercises until you can do this. This may freeze you in your tracks the first few times you set out to do it. Stay with it until you feel like you can be at least 50 percent relaxed as you do it.

You can still choose to break away after a quick exchange, but since you did introduce yourself, you might have to converse. Now you have to ask some questions. Listen to the answers. Remember their name. Don't break away abruptly, despite your nervousness. That would be a little rude. Have a sense of when you could gracefully break away, or just stay with the person until it becomes uncomfortable. (It's an exercise, remember? You're pushing to the point of failure.) That will be what you want to observe. How did that happen? What was the moment that caused it?

It's an easy breakaway. "Really nice to meet you." Smile. Shake hands, maybe. Walk away.

Preparation: Choose the person, then choose a simple, well-rehearsed introductory line. Nothing clever, witty, or sarcastic. Just something casually cordial. Make eye contact and smile. Come up with a potential compliment. Have your breakaway line ready.

Relaxing: Three deep breaths. Theme song. Dry your hand if you need to.

Insight: You won't die. You are aiming to fail, so anything else will be a bonus.

Dosage: One stranger. Three sentences minimum.

Every Day Action: Don't let the day end without doing this. If you have to go into a grocery store and do it, fine.

Pitfalls: Space invading. Breaking away too soon. Not following up with a question or two or a compliment, if called for. Forgetting their name.

## EXERCISE 8

### **Meet people at an event where they will be wearing name tags.**

This is an open-invitation environment where people can walk up to strangers, so you are going to apply all the skills of the previous Boldness Exercises. You'll learn people's names, and say yours, so they don't have to look at your name tag. Then ask them something simple about themselves. Be careful not to start to babble or monologue, as that is the reflex when people in these groups meet.

Break away at a certain point, and then circle back to the person much later. Pay them a compliment, like saying that they were the most interesting person you met all night. (You can say this to more than one person, but don't say it five or six times!) Repeat this exercise with several people until you find your Dosage limit. Be sure to make everyone feel good about themselves.

## EXERCISE 9

### **Use people's names for an entire day.**

With everyone you encounter in any service capacity, use their name. Your coffee server, the waitress, the grocery checkout person, the security person in your building, absolutely everyone for the entire day. They should have a name tag, but if they don't, ask their name. Use it twice if you can. This is different as a Boldness Exercise because it's not just one action, but a series, taken whenever there is an opportunity. These are easy targets, and most other people don't use or even know these people's names, so you will be the uplifting voice in their day.

## EXERCISE 10

### **Positive Judgment Day.**

All day, with everyone you see—strangers, friends, coworkers—have a positive judgment in your head about them, and try not to couple it with a negative one. You will find this incredibly hard at first. You'll also notice how often you play a negative judgment in your head about someone and how comfortable you are doing it (since no one can hear you).

This doesn't take much Preparation, unless you are unable to think positive thoughts. This is more about gaining an insight about yourself and starting to reprogram that behavior. The Dosage is that we are not saying it out loud. Hopefully you don't need to relax too much to do this, unless you think people can read your mind. But it may even have a relaxing effect on you, and you will have a different hormonal response by being so much more positive than negative.

Because this is an all-day exercise, I want you to record as many of these positive judgments as possible that as well. Then calculate how often you were wrong.

## EXERCISE 11

### Defuse a cringeworthy moment.

You need to unburden yourself of the humiliations you are carrying around. The best way to do that is to tell someone about them. Choose one of your cringeworthy moments, and tell someone, “Here is one of my most embarrassing/disappointing/ridiculously missed opportunities because I hesitated/was too shy/lacked social skills or sense.”

Spill your guts to your friend. It will defuse the event, minimize it, or neutralize the cringe factor. Often, you’ll find the other person has something equally embarrassing they need to release themselves from. Or they will just put yours in proper perspective. Sometimes they will laugh—not at you, but because they identify with the experience and the feeling. It makes you human.

And it will set you free.

This also requires you to control the Dosage. Don’t disgorge your worst moment to someone right out of the gate. Just pick one you can handle revealing. Eventually you are going to go through your entire list. Also, at this level you are not going back to the person with whom the moment actually occurred. That’s for later. For this specific exercise, you’re telling someone else.

Of course, don’t feel like you have to confess to an actual crime, and make sure you are not hurting anyone by revealing your story. Better to endure the embarrassment and leave it unexpressed, in that case. I’m quite serious about this. Consider the effect on other people when you choose to reveal your innermost horrors. You’ve got plenty of them, so just pick ones that first do no harm.

## LEVEL 2 EXERCISES

- 1. In a restaurant, learn your waiter or waitress’s name.** When you’re ready to leave, find them, shake their hand, and thank them, repeating their name as you do. (This is a great way of cultivating general friendliness.) You can also do this with a bartender. But don’t cheat and get drunk first.
- 2. Ask a stranger for an opinion about something you’re wearing.** This means that you should be wearing something different or worth asking about. It can also be something goofy or inappropriate, which just adds to the fun, especially if you see them staring at you already. This could be a hat, a scarf, a T-shirt, or shoes. Doesn’t matter. You could even ask if two of the things you are wearing go together.
- 3. In a grocery store, ask someone if they know the difference between two produce items.** For example, ask about a regular cucumber and Persian one, or a tangerine and a tangelo. Then don’t buy either of them. (This is because a shy person ends up buying something they don’t need or want, simply because they feel like they must because they asked about it. You are going to resist that urge.) If you’re feeling under-confident at first, start with a grocery clerk, but



eventually move on to your fellow shoppers. This can expand to almost anything in any store that you ask a stranger for an opinion about.

4. **For an entire day, ask everyone you meet their name.** Try to remember all of them. This is obviously a broader exercise than just doing it a few times a day, as in Level 1. The idea is that you are prevented from excluding anyone. You'll know when you finally get strong at Level 2, because you'll actually start remembering names instead of forgetting them the instant people tell you.
5. **Ask a waiter for something you don't need.** The more absurd, the better. Ask for a side of peanut butter in an Italian restaurant, or grass-fed butter for your vegetables. You'll notice that the exercises are starting to demand some creativity on your part. I want you to get more mentally nimble, which means you are both prepared and relaxed, and can improvise more. The more unbold you are (or were until you did Level 1), the more challenging this will be, because the old you wouldn't even ask for something extra that you wanted.
6. **Ask someone sitting near you in a restaurant what they are eating.** It might be more fun if it's really obvious what it is, like a cheeseburger. They'll look at you like you're nuts, but they'll most likely answer. Then you can say, "Oh, I thought it might be a turkey burger." Conversation might ensue, or not, but you're just trying to engage a stranger. Don't forget to thank them. If you're feeling under-confident at the outset, start in a sushi bar. It'll be easy. That's what everyone does there. Then branch out.
7. **Be super positive with five people.** Say to the first five people you encounter in your day, "I don't know about you, but I'm having one of the best days of my life. I hope you are too." If you're feeling on a roll, do it all day.
8. **Introduce two people to each other at a party or event.** Offer effusive compliments about each of them, how wonderful and amazing they are, going into great detail, to the point of near embarrassment. And then walk away. You'll feel surprisingly good about it. And you know what they'll talk about after you're gone? How great you are. This may require you to meet some new people at the party first to gather your material. That ups the ante. Go for it.
9. **Go to a restaurant and eat alone.** And don't hide in your phone. At most, read a book, but ideally just sit there with a smile on your face the whole meal. Totally immerse yourself in the discomfort. Register how lonely and alone it makes you feel. I guarantee that you won't always feel that way. You'll be imagining that a bunch of strangers are looking at you and thinking,

"Look at that sad, lonely person eating alone." *And you'll actually care what these strangers think!* I want you to bathe in the irrelevance and absurdity of your reaction.
10. **Smile at every single person you meet for an entire day.** If they smile back, say hi. Ideally, this includes plenty of strangers. You will experience the full range of reactions. Relax and enjoy the variety of them. Marvel at how differently people respond to a stranger smiling at them.
11. **For an entire day, make eye contact with everyone you interact with.** Keep track of how often you don't, and you look away. (You might need to give yourself a break at some point, but we're looking for at least 90 percent here.) Observe the variety of reactions to eye contact. Calculate where that person might fall on the boldness scale.
12. **Talk to a stranger while riding in an elevator.** Make a random observation or ask what they do on their floor. Or say something positive, like, "I know not everyone thinks this, but I love Mondays." Elevators are a classic environment where people don't talk. But you will discover that they don't

mind at all. They think it's as weird as you do that no one talks. If there are no elevators where you work, go use one in a nearby hotel. (By the way, if you're in Australia this doesn't count, because everyone talks to you in elevators there.)

- 13. Buy something you don't need and then return it.** (Make sure they have a 100 percent return policy!) Return it with a big smile on your face and try to give as little explanation as possible as to why you don't want it. Unbold people hate to do this even when they decide they don't want something. This exercise will show you that all this stuff you're playing in your head just isn't true.

Most employees could care less if you bring something back. And most stores are fine with it. Even if they aren't, and they don't take it back, the exercise worked.

- 14. Bring something back to a store that you've used or worn and try to return it.** (This is an expansion of the previous exercise.) If you're really bold, try it without the receipt. The bolder you are, the more used the item should look. The goal is to have your request be so ridiculous that you're sure it will be refused. If they tell you their return policy is no returns, then act all disappointed. Taking it to an even higher level, bring the used item back after the return date limit.

Or entirely used, like a pair of shoes. (Zappos doesn't count.

They'll take anything back within a year, the first time. Besides, I'm talking about someplace where you actually have to walk inside.)

- 15. Go to a bar, and don't leave until you interact with someone.** Have at least a brief conversation, including learning their name. It could be with someone your gender or the opposite. If you're gay, this doesn't count as an exercise if you go into a gay bar. It's too easy to strike up a conversation in a gay bar. If you don't drink alcohol, do this in a coffee shop. Or just order soda water in the bar. A professional bartender won't bat an eye.
- 16. In a department store, ask another shopper to help you choose a tie, or a shirt, or a blouse, or an accessory.** A few people will likely decline to help. If you start with, "You look very well dressed. Could you suggest . . ." then you are employing the embedded compliment. That always helps.
- 17. When staying in a hotel, call and ask for all sorts of crazy stuff.** A robe, slippers, hangars, free ice cream, even. Ask if someone will come to your room and iron something for you. Your ultimate goal is an "Uh, no, we can't do that." You will find that you will get many more things than you expected.
- 18. Walk backward into a movie theater without showing your ticket.** At least half the time no one will stop you and try or ask to punch your ticket. Do buy a ticket, though. This is not scam training.
- 19. Introduce yourself to a complete and total stranger.** But first, go to an area of town where you've never been to before. This gives you "diplomatic immunity." Most likely this will happen on the sidewalk. You're not going to know anyone, so you can be foolish and not worry about it. And I would like you to be a little bit foolish. Say, "I'm new to the area. Do they have any interesting Asian food here?" Or any one of a million questions you can ask. Try to go three sentences, and get their name if you can. See how much information they want to give you. Keep asking questions. Then thank them and walk away.
- 20. Ask a stranger if they have change for a twenty.** This will arouse suspicion in most people. Which is the point of the exercise. I want you to get comfortable with accepting suspicion, even though you are innocent. It's harmless, unless you turn it into harm. They are having a normal reaction to a stranger expecting them to be trusting. In fact, if anyone gives you change, I'll be shocked. Either way, the exercise worked.

- 21. Pretend to be choking in a public place.** See if someone steps up to perform the Heimlich maneuver on you. I'm kidding! Don't do this! It's a terrible way to meet people!

There is a lot to do here, and you could feel really uncomfortable trying most of these exercises, but you will have dozens of little breakthroughs, and you will be steadily reprogramming yourself.

A win for you will be when you have that feeling that you went outside your comfort zone, met someone new, and had a real exchange. It may not have been deep and meaningful, but for at least a moment or two it was a connection. Maybe, if you did it right, they felt better about themselves after encountering you. That's when you really start to appreciate the satisfaction that can only come from that experience. I hope to get you addicted to it.

## LEVEL 3 EXERCISES

- 1. Put earbuds in and sing out loud in a public place.** You'll know it's working when people give you strange looks. You will not die. Do it for as long as you can stand it, then leave the area. Each day, make sure you extend the amount of time you do it.
- 2. Call a customer service line.** Try to return something that is over a year old, or try to get them to fix a product that is not their brand.
- 3. Wear a Band-Aid on your face.** Do it for as long as you can stand it. Revel in the heightened feeling of self-consciousness, knowing that at any time you can take the Band-Aid off. The next time you do it, make it an even more awkward place that you put it. Right across your nose, or your lip. The goal is to eventually do it for an entire day. People will stare at you and ask you what happened. Enjoy making something up.
- 4. Use the restroom opposite of your gender.** You know what happens? Nothing. At most, someone will look at you oddly. And don't, when you come out, under any circumstances, resort to giving any excuse as to why you did it. Just smile at anyone who looks at you harshly. It is not a crime. (And if you're a male, put the seat back down!)
- 5. Wear something you never would normally wear.** It could be an outlandish shirt or blouse, or wild shoes, or a hat. It just has to be something you feel very uncomfortable wearing in public. Used clothing stores are great for these types of things, especially on the funkier side of town. Wear it at least four hours. Embrace the discomfort. Enjoy the feedback.
- 6. Wear a wig in public.** A good one. For at least four hours. If you're a woman this might be easier, so it has to be a radically different hairstyle than yours (and looks worse, ideally). For a man, you're going for almost a toupee look. But either way, it has to be radically different than how you normally wear your hair, in length, color, and style. Then, with it on, go and do a Level 1 or 2 exercise. Enjoy the fact that you are essentially in disguise and get out and talk to people. You're incognito. Guys could even try a fake mustache as well. You'll be surprised how it will embolden you, as if you are someone else. Take the lesson to heart.
- 7. Ask someone to scratch your back.** (This one is for guys only.) Ask a stranger, in a public place. Expect, of course, to be refused—this is one exercise where you will rarely get cooperation. Give an explanation of why you can't reach the spot—your arms are stiff from exercise, your nails are too short to be effective, whatever.
- 8. Walk into the back room of a grocery store.** There will be alarms going off in your head saying, "I shouldn't be back here," but there will be no other alarms going off. It's not a bank vault. In fact, it is not a crime to go into the back room. Most likely someone will say something to you like, "Can I help you?" or

“Are you lost?” They may say, “You can’t come back here,” and then you can apologize and leave. But nothing bad will happen! No one will beat you over the head with a hammer, nor will you be charged with trespassing.

9. **Sit in a fastfood restaurant with takeout food from somewhere else.** Just sit at one of the tables and start eating. Maybe even use the napkins and utensils, if you are feeling extra bold. At most, someone will come up to you and either stop you and ask you to leave, or they will be so much in shock that they will ask if they can bring you something to drink. Refuse. Produce your own beverage. Maybe ask for a cup with ice. Most likely, nothing will happen at all. Warning: don’t do this in a place that is so crowded that you are preventing their paying customers from sitting. We are not striving to be inconsiderate, ever. Also, leave a tip.
10. **Ask a stranger if you can use their napkin.** Obviously, this is in a restaurant. Alternatively, it could be their towel at the beach. I actually did this once because I had forgotten my towel and I could see that this couple had a spare towel and were going swimming. I almost didn’t ask, but I made it an exercise. And then it turned out I knew them. That’s what can happen when you’re bold and have become fearless of the harmless.
11. **Challenge a stranger to a game you’ve never played before.** Like chess or gin rummy. If they agree, ask if they could teach you how to play. Or ask someone to play a game with you, probably a card game, and offer to teach them. Expect to be refused or brushed off. (As if I have to keep saying that. But I feel compelled to remind you.)
12. **Come up with your own challenge.** Get creative as you get bolder. Find signs prohibiting you from doing something, like a retail store that insists that you don’t bring sale items into the restroom. And then do it. See if anyone says anything. This has a dual purpose, as do most of the exercises. You will find out that most of the time, nothing will happen.

I’m not saying shoplift here. Do not commit any crimes as part of your exercises. But you will see signs everywhere prohibiting things, sometimes for silly reasons. The point is to countermand your inner voice that is saying, “Don’t do it. You’ll get caught. It will be embarrassing to be told you can’t do it.” You are *trying* to be told that you can’t do it, precisely so that you can experience how little impact it will have. What will also be happening is you’ll be building up your rejection callus, and you won’t really care if someone stops you.

## LEVEL 4 EXERCISES

**Level 4 Boldness Exercises are a combination of real-life situations** and some wild activities designed solely to build your boldness muscle.

All the standard PRIDE Method steps apply, but be even more introspective in your journal entries, reflecting on what’s changed about you, how you see people differently, and how they react to you differently. And really savor both the failures and successes.

You'll notice there are a lot more Boldness Exercises at this level. That's because some of them you may only do once or twice. Some of them may take several tries before you get up the nerve to complete them. Also, they are in no particular order because some of them you can only do when a situation presents itself.

### **Exercise 1**

Single out the shiest person in the room. This could be at a party or any social or business event. At first, just watch the person's behavior. Study them and see yourself in them, or some part of your former self, like the defense mechanisms as they stand by themselves, running a dozen judgments a minute through their head as they scan the room. How long ago was that you?

Now, introduce yourself to them, walking right up, engaging them and, after a reasonable conversation, break away. Part two is to then find another group and introduce yourself, and eventually invite that shy person into it. Think of it as throwing a lifeline to that person who once was you.

### **Exercise 2**

Ask some people on the beach if you can leave your stuff on their blanket while you jump in the water. They will likely say no. That's the point. We are now pushing the boundaries of when someone would reasonably go along with your request, and yet you will find that some people will. (Be sure not to leave anything valuable!) You will feel the boldness muscle developing when it happens. There are alternatives to this, especially if you're not near the water, like if you have a child, asking if someone will watch your kid while you order at a fast-food restaurant. You will get some seriously disturbed looks, and possibly some admonishment from a concerned parent. If someone by chance agrees, don't actually leave your child with them. Oh, and don't ask someone to watch your bag at the airport. Duh.

### **Exercise 3**

Put on headphones and sing and dance in public to what you're listening to. If you don't trust your voice is good, even better. This expands on the Level 3 Boldness Exercise, adding the dancing, which takes way more self-confidence. It can be anywhere: grocery store, bus stop, a shopping mall, or right out on the sidewalk. The more uncomfortable you imagine yourself feeling in a place, the more it becomes something to work your way up to. That's the Dosage control here.

Once you've done this in a fairly innocuous environment, it's time to push the envelope. Find a more crowded place, a more unexpected place, like on a bus or in an airport. The goal is to get some really strange looks, a few people laughing, and maybe one or two people encouraging you. I think you'll be shocked at how many more people are delighted than weirded out. Some of them might even be a little envious. When they stare, smile back.

### **Exercise 4**

Ask if you can borrow someone's cell phone. You're looking for a no here, to find out that you don't die. Your Preparation is to make up a fairly lame reason why you need to borrow it.

## **Exercise 5**

Walk into a chocolate shop and yell, “I love chocolate!” I guarantee you that some people will smile, and no one will throw you in jail or a mental hospital. You can repeat this exercise, replacing the chocolate shop for any other store you might be passionate about (or not!): an ice cream shop, an antique store, or Costco.

## **Exercise 6**

Be so loud that people are compelled to tell you to be quiet. Do it in a restaurant or a movie theater before it starts, or on an airplane. If you have a fear of being shushed or an angry reaction to it (like I do), even better. Get over it. Nothing happens. You will never die from being shushed. They will forget about it the moment you give them a lame excuse, like you have water in your ear or you’re losing your hearing and haven’t adjusted to your new hearing aid, and you apologize. Try it, because you need to find out that no injury will come to you, and you can even be polite about being rude. Do it with a smile. You’ll also be surprised at how loud you have to get before someone says something. Why? Because they’re too shy to speak up!

## **Exercise 7**

Walk into a coffee shop and say, “Can I have everyone’s attention? I lost my car keys. Did anyone find them in the parking lot?” The whole public address thing is a huge challenge, but this gives you an excuse. Of course, you’re making up the reason, but it’s still a very reasonable thing to do.

## **Exercise 8**

Sit in a handicapped seat at an airport or bus station, but only if there are several empty ones. Obviously get up if someone handicapped needs the seat. You’re not hurting anyone. You’re just afraid of the “rules.” There is no penalty for sitting there. You won’t get a ticket. It’s not like you’re parking in a handicapped spot. Don’t *ever* do that, by the way.

## **Exercise 9**

Bring a pork roast to a bar mitzvah. No, don’t. That’s a joke. There’s bold and there’s ignorant. Don’t cross that line or even go near it. These exercises are never about being rude or inconsiderate. Loud, maybe, but that’s it.

## **Exercise 10**

Do an open mic night at a comedy club. Three minutes. Don’t worry about being funny. Many other people won’t be that night.

## **Exercise 11**

Hand out comedy club tickets in a public place. This is likely the comedy club where you did the open mic. They are always putting people on busy street corners to hand out free tickets. These are comedians who are desperate for stage

time, and the deal they make with the club is to accost strangers and try to get them to come to the comedy club. It's a tough gig, and it will make you tough. You can replace this with volunteering to get people to sign a petition for a cause you support. Massive rejection will come your way. And you won't die.

## **Exercise 12**

Panhandle for an hour. That will be plenty of time to give you an idea what real rejection feels like.

## **Exercise 13**

If you're single, try online dating. But here's the requirement: deliberately aim for someone who is interesting rather than attractive. This is the big trap for shy people, that we use appearance as our excuse for not meeting someone. We set our standard so high that naturally everyone is excluded except the people who we have the lowest percentage chance with.

Here is the strange truth people who've been married or dated very attractive people know that most others don't: you get used to their beauty. In fact, if their personality is unattractive, they become unattractive to you. I've seen super-studs turn a woman off in three sentences. And I've seen women who people would call a ten turn into a three to the person who is constantly waiting for her to get ready to go out.

## **Exercise 14**

When you find yourself in a situation that disturbs or upsets or irritates you, summon the opposite reaction to it, then speak. First, change what it means to you, as I laid out in Chapter 11. Then find a way to say something friendly, even complimentary, to that person even if it doesn't relate to what's bothering you. But if it does relate, all the better. This goes beyond what I had you do in Chapter 11, because now you are going outside of your head and expressing yourself and saying the reverse of what your original reaction was.

If, for example, you find yourself in an elevator with someone wearing such an overwhelming amount of perfume that you're almost gagging, say, "That's a lovely scent you've chosen." (And leave out the part about how they put on too much of it.) Or someone may be talking too loudly on their phone in a public place, and you get to say, "Isn't it nice to always be able to stay in touch with people?" (Who knows? They could just be doing a Level 4 Boldness Exercise!)

## **Exercise 15**

Sing karaoke and really put your body into it. Imitate Jagger or Beyoncé. Don't just stand there. And hey, don't forget: you don't need to know how to sing. There are lots of easy choices. Rap music is technically just reciting rhymes, mostly about women's body parts and guns. And Eminem "sings" almost completely in monotone. You will eventually need one or two of your own personal karaoke songs that you can bust out whenever you're asked to go to a place. This is called Preparation.

## **Exercise 16**

Ask someone in a restaurant if you can try the dish they're eating. You'll be amazed at how many people will let you. Start off by just asking how they like it and proceed from there.

I once walked up to two women in a restaurant and asked them how the Mexican corn was. They ended up offering me a piece. This is how adept I've become at approaching strangers. Will it work all the time? No. Will people snub me, ignore me, or even rudely dismiss me? Yes. Sometimes. Their loss. Not mine. The corn was excellent, by the way.

## **Exercise 17**

Memorize a toast. Or a few of them—a funny one, a serious one, and an inspiring one. Be the one who steps up and gives one. When you are in a large group, a dinner or whatever, stand up, tap a glass with a knife until you have everyone's attention, and then offer your toast, ideally to the host, or to express your appreciation for being part of the group. Eventually you need to do this without having memorized a toast, and just offer your thoughts extemporaneously.

## **Exercise 18**

Go into a bar alone and buy someone a drink. Not as a pickup move. Say you're celebrating waking up this morning, or something equally innocuous. If you've got the cash, buy two people a drink at the same time. You could even say to the bartender, "I'd like to buy the two nicest people at the bar a drink. You decide." Or say to the people around you in a bar, "I will buy anyone a drink who can tell me a joke I haven't heard." The way you will decide the winner is if you can say the punchline yourself or not. And you've added a public address challenge to the exercise.

## **Exercise 19**

Ask a stranger for a hug. Low percentage results on this one, to be sure, but you may be surprised who steps up and gives you a squeeze.

## **Exercise 20**

Dress up when people are dressed down. Wear a tie, or a suit, or a fabulous dress. Cross-dressing is allowed for either gender. I'm not kidding. Once you've cross-dressed, then you'll be amazed how hard it will be to feel embarrassed by anything you do.

## **Exercise 21**

In a restaurant or coffee shop, ask someone if they will swap tables with you. Make up a reason, or don't even give one.



## **Exercise 22**

Go to an acting audition. You will undoubtedly be terrible, and even if you're not, rejection is 99 percent of the typical actor's experience. It will have to be a nonunion audition, or you won't be allowed in. But hey, that might turn out to be the entire challenge. Show up at an audition you know they won't let you in for.

## **Exercise 23**

Play a musical instrument for tips in front of a store or in a city square. Badly, ideally. Get someone to pay you to stop. (If you actually do this, I will be so impressed with you. I've never even done this exercise myself!)

# LEVEL 5 EXERCISES

At Level 5, you are the creator of the Boldness Exercises. You will need to be totally honest and introspective and determine what it is that you're still afraid of. Then come up with Boldness Exercises that gradually help you work your way up to feeling comfortable in those situations.

Level 5 is endless because you are going to work at becoming bolder for the rest of your life. Because now it's fun, satisfying, and rewarding. This is how you become superbold, creating situations and summoning boldness in each of them.

Some things to keep in mind:

- Control the Dosage, but increase it on your own.
- Aim for failure as part of the design.
- Don't worry about making people uncomfortable.
- Don't harm anyone in any way, or scam anyone.
- Get suggestions from your wing person if you can't think of anything.
- Do something every day (of course!).

Eventually, you are going to look at all sorts of situations that require boldness, and you'll approach them just like one of these Boldness Exercises. Your comfort zone will get larger and larger, and your dreams closer and closer.

If you create some interesting exercises, post them on my website, and check [fredjoyal.com](http://fredjoyal.com) for more ideas for exercises for yourself.