

THE TREBEK TECHNIQUE

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A beautiful Melbourne day with the sun shining, a group of six 'BOOTCAMPERS' are midway through a set of ten push ups, opposite their INSTRUCTOR. GRACIE (23) and JO (24) finish their set and collapse onto their elbows, slightly out of breath.

JO
So who's it down to?

GRACIE
Me, Ben and Nat.

JO
Ben?

GRACIE
I know! They think he's got the 'X factor'.

JO
You run rings around him.

GRACIE
Oh well, it's down to us three.

JO
It's all yours, baby!

The pair stop talking and watch as a CUTE GUY (23) sits on a nearby park bench; impeccably dressed and grasping a Jane Austen novel.

INSTRUCTOR
Okay guys. Let's smash out another ten sit ups!

The group starts with the sit ups. Gracie and Jo haven't even moved into the sit up position.

INSTRUCTOR (cont'd)
Something special about you two, Gracie and Jo?

JO
No.

INSTRUCTOR
Ten sit ups!

Gracie and Jo begrudgingly start their sit ups. Gracie takes another glance at the Cute Guy as they finish their set.

JO
You all fired up for Saturday?

GRACIE
Grand final! I reckon we've got 'em covered.

JO
Well, were gonna need another blinder from you if we have a chance.

GRACIE
Quiet confidence, Jo.

JO
Thanks Confucious!

2 INT. JO'S CAR - DAY

2

Dressed in a tracksuit, JO sings horribly as she pulls up to Gracie's house and beeps the horn twice. After a few seconds, GRACIE runs out in her obligatory tracksuit and carrying a sports bag. She runs around to the passenger's side and jumps in.

GRACIE AND JO
Game day!

Playing on the car radio in the background as the pair drive away is an AM radio sports interview.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
A big week for your boys this time around, coming off a 32 point drubbing against the Cats.

INTERVIEWEE (O.S.)
Yeah, we just want to move on, Macca. We definitely didn't embarrass ourselves out there, but we are focusing on the positives and hoping to build on the groundwork that we have been...

3 EXT. SUBURBAN NETBALL COURT - DAY

3

The pair pull up in Jo's car to an already crowded netball court. They sit and watch some of the action underway.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Gracie and Jo's netball team warming up.

A bit of game action.

Gracie and Jo's team are winning well.

Gracie gets hit in the face with the ball and has to go to the sidelines.

The team celebrate the win.

4 EXT. STREETSCAPE - DAY

4

Lunchtime for JO and GRACIE. Jo sits with two coffees as Gracie approaches and sits next to her, taking one and having a sip.

JO

What a win!

GRACIE

I know! That's what they get for trash talking.

JO

How you feeling after the ball to the nose?

Grace answers in a robotic fashion, as if she is a professional footballer.

GRACIE

Well, I had a good night sleep. A little sore after copping one to the old schnoz but I'm sure I'll bounce and be back out there again in no time.

JO

What?

GRACIE

What?

JO

What are you talking about?

GRACIE

(bewildered)

I don't know.

5 INT. GRACIE'S MUM'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

5

Over a pair of coffees, GRACIE and GRACIE'S MUM are flicking through some magazines at the living room table.

GRACIE'S MUM
And you've been taking care of
yourself?

GRACIE
Yeah.

GRACIE'S MUM
How are you going for money?

Gracie slips back into a robotic, cliché-ridden answer.

GRACIE
That's a very good question. I
suppose it's all relative, isn't it?
You can always have more resources
but I like to keep within my means
and just perform with the tools that
I have.

Gracie's mum puts down her magazine. Gracie stops cold. She has a problem.

GRACIE'S MUM
(concerned)
Are you getting enough sleep?

GRACIE
Yes.

GRACIE'S MUM
How is work going? Have you had your
interview for that big promo yet?

Another answer with no explanation.

GRACIE
Yeah, you have to go in knowing that
you can do the job. Anything less
than your best and you're just
kidding yourself. I mean, we've all
got to perform when it matters, but
it's also a case of having fun and
enjoying yourself at the same time.

The pair look at each other, speechless.

6 INT. OFFICE INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

6

In a reasonably barren interview room - more like a room for interrogating suspects - sits LIAM (41) and KEN (47) opposite GRACIE. Her promotion interview is in full swing.

LIAM

Absolutely no doubt that you're one of the best we've had come through in your role.

GRACIE

Thank you.

LIAM

And we think that you are more than ready and capable to move into a regional position.

Gracie affords herself a small smile, mostly on the inside.

LIAM (cont'd)

Do you feel ready?

Still confident, Gracie's answer is, once again, cliched and completely unstoppable.

GRACIE

Thanks Liam. I am ready. The role itself is well within my skill set and I firmly believe that I can step up and be a big game day player.

LIAM

(taken aback)
Well, that's good to hear.

But Gracie isn't finished.

GRACIE

We've got a good team overall and I think that I fit in really well. We've got some experience at the top that isn't getting any younger and the next crop coming through just needs to get some hours into their legs so that the whole outfit can keep building on our success.

She could die! Her heart skips a beat and she would give Liam \$1000 if he would just end the interview now. He doesn't. In fact, he gives her another chance.

LIAM
We surely do have some 'experienced
players'! Um, Gracie, is everything
else okay? When was your last
holiday?

This question snaps her out of it, at least, but she knows
that the damage is already done.

GRACIE
I went to the Gold Coast at
Christmas.

Liam nods. He smiles and nods.

7 INT. DOCTOR'S ROOM - DAY

7

A standard GP's office, with all of the free stuff from
pharmaceutical companies on the walls. GRACIE sits opposite
a DOCTOR.

From behind a manila folder, the Doctor's face slowly
appears.

DOCTOR
And it all started after you got hit
in the face with a netball?

GRACIE
Yes. In the nose.

DOCTOR
HMMMMMM.

The manila folder goes up again, and then comes back down.

DOCTOR (cont'd)
Let me try something. Just go with me
on this.

GRACIE
(desperately)
Anything.

DOCTOR
Okay. Tell me Gracie, what time is
it?

Gracie looks at the clock on the Doctor's table.

GRACIE
Quarter past one.

DOCTOR

Hmmmm.

(Beat)

How was your wait in the waiting room, just before?

She answers, the cliches are back.

GRACIE

Well, after making the appointment I found a fantastic park right out front, which really opened up a clear path down the corridor. A cancellation from another patient was a bit of a welcome relief and we managed to keep on schedule, which I'm thankful for. Going forward.

DOCTOR

Oh.

GRACIE

(really desperately)

What 'oh'? What's happening? Why am I talking like this?

Reaching for a big, impressive-looking book from behind on the shelf, the Doctor flicks through a few pages and stops on a certain page. The glasses come off and the look of worry is undisguisable.

DOCTOR

(grimly)

SAS.

GRACIE

(tentative)

What's SAS?

DOCTOR

Sportsperson Answering Syndrome.
Pretty bad case, too.

GRACIE

Sportsperson Answering Syndrome?
That's not a thing!

DOCTOR

Really? Have you enjoyed finding out about your diagnosis?

GRACIE

(SAS answer)

I was taken aback a little at first
but I'm sure over time I'll be able
to just play on with the tools at my
disposal and really make a go of it.
Oh god!

DOCTOR

This is not good.

GRACIE

(panicked)

This is not good!

8 EXT. PARK BENCH - DAY

8

Coffee time for JO and GRACIE again.

JO

So did the Doc give you anything for
it?

GRACIE

I've got to go back tomorrow. Reckons
that they've researched some common
techniques that SAS sufferers use.
Man, I need it fixed. I've got
another promotion interview on
Monday.

JO

What I don't get is, why can you
answer that question normally and
then you answer others like you're
running out as full-forward for the
Bombers?

Gracie is genuinely perplexed.

GRACIE

I don't know!

JO

Has it been hard to adjust, like in
your daily life?

GRACIE

(SAS answer)

Yeah, good question. It has definitely lengthened the amount of time that it takes to do things, especially where a conversation is involved. It's a learning process and I'm in it for the long haul. The main problem is when I keep getting asked questions that I have to...

JO

(interrupts)

Sorry! I know, sorry.

9 INT. DOCTOR'S ROOM - DAY

9

GRACIE (O.S.)

Never heard of him.

DOCTOR

Alex Trebek. Host of Jeopardy. You've never heard of him?

GRACIE

I'm sorry. I heard of Jeopardy. I just haven't watched it, like, ever.

DOCTOR

Wow, never watched Jeopardy?

GRACIE

(SAS answer)

No. My life has been filled with many TV shows over the years and scouring through some of the fondest memories has returned a negative response.

DOCTOR

Well, it's an affirmative treatment. It involves answering questions with a question. You've never seen Jeopardy?

GRACIE

What is a show that I've never seen that is hosted by Alex Trebek?

DOCTOR

Hey! That's it! How did that feel?

GRACIE

(SAS answer)

Good question Doc. I feel like an idiot answering questions with questions and I can only wonder how much longer my day is going to be from now on. Going forward.

DOCTOR

It's obviously not going to be a quick and easy fix to your SAS.

GRACIE

I can't bear this! I can't order food at a restaurant. Any time someone asks me a bloody question I feel like I've got to thank the supporters for coming out!

DOCTOR

It's not going to be easy.

GRACIE

How long will I need to keep using the Trebek Technique?

The Doctor is very grim now.

DOCTOR

Gracie -- You will need to use the Trebek Technique for the rest of your life.

10 EXT. GRACIE'S CAR - DAY

10

Gracie pulls up to a random breath test, where a POLICE OFFICER prepares the equipment and leans in to her window.

POLICE OFFICER

Good morning. This is a random breath test. Have you had anything to drink today?

GRACIE

No.

POLICE OFFICER

One long breath until I say stop.

Gracie takes a deep breath and blows. The machine beeps and the officer holds it up to get the reading.

POLICE OFFICER (cont'd)

All good.

GRACIE

Thank you. Do you get many at this time of day?

POLICE OFFICER

You'd be surprised when we get them. What about you? On your way to work?

GRACIE

(SAS answer)

It's all about putting in an honest day for some honest pay...

She stops herself, and regathers.

GRACIE (cont'd)

How do I afford all of the good things in life? Yep, I'm off to work.

11 INT. OFFICE INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

11

Against the odds, Gracie is back for the final interview for her possible promotion. Liam and Ken are primed for Gracie's weird answers.

LIAM

You know the role. What sort of changes would you make if you were promoted?

Deliberately, Gracie measures her answer.

GRACIE

What changes would be necessary once I was promoted? Okay, first we would have a gap analysis of all current systems with accepted best practice and act accordingly.

Liam and Ken are impressed.

LIAM

I'm listening!

GRACIE

Then, we'd obviously ensure our ERP and CRM are up to the task.

LIAM

Obviously.

(Beat)

How would you feel if we were to offer you the job?

GRACIE

What feelings would I have if I became regional manager? I would shake your hand right now in acceptance, and never let you regret your decision.

Liam stands and offers his hand for Gracie to shake.

12 INT. CAFE - DAY

12

There are a couple of people in line waiting to order before GRACIE's turn. The BARISTA greets her with a smile.

BARISTA

How has your day been?

Gracie takes a breath as she answers deliberately. She is starting to master the Trebek Technique.

GRACIE

What hasn't been good about my day? I've had an extremely productive morning and now I would like to order two lattes please.

BARISTA

My pleasure! Two lattes coming up.

As she moves to the side and waits for her coffees, the CUTE GUY walks in and stands beside her, waiting for his coffee too.

Gracie decides to throw caution to the wind and goes up to him.

GRACIE

So, I take it you're a Jane Austen fan?

CUTE GUY

Yeah! I love her work. Emma, Pride...

GRACIE

Would you like to discuss some of her
other works, over dinner?

The Cute Guy switches his answering style. It's almost as if
he can't help it.

CUTE GUY

There is very definitely a lot to be
said for some of the fine output from
Jane Austen. Your offer of a further,
detailed discussion is, I'm sure,
bound to be met positively from both
sides of the aisle.

The pair look at each other. She is taken aback; his heart
embarrassingly goes to his mouth.

CUTE GUY (cont'd)

Um, I have something called PAS -
Politician Answering Syndrome.

A smile slowly lights up Gracie's face.

GRACIE

Well, after dinner, I think we'd
better watch Jeopardy.