

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 sit ups, opposite their INSTRUCTOR. GRACIE (23) and JO (24) finish their set and collapse onto their backs, 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. What the hell's the 'X factor'?

GRACIE
Apparently Ben has it. At least that's what he's been telling everyone.

JO
Clown.

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 push 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

Noses in the dirt!

Gracie and Jo begrudgingly start their push 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, we're gonna need another blinder from you if we have a chance.

GRACIE

Quiet confidence, Jo.

JO

Thanks Confucious.

2 INT. BRENDAN'S CAR - DAY

2

Dressed in his best supporter gear, BRENDAN listens to talkback radio as he 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

Hey Brendan! How's the girls?

BRENDAN

Good sis. They're spewin' they couldn't come today. But, they did send these with me.

He hands her two pieces of paper, with stick figure drawings of a girl playing netball. Both say "Good luck Auntie Gracie". She looks at them and smiles.

GRACIE

Awwwww.

BRENDAN

Grand final! You fired up?

GRACIE
Bring it on, bro!

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 Brendan's car to an already crowded netball court. They sit and watch some of the action underway.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Gracie's netball team warming up.

A bit of game action. Brendan watching from the sidelines.

Gracie's team are winning well.

Gracie gets hit in the face with the ball and has to go to the bench with a blood nose.

Brendan calls Jo. <INSERT SHOT>

The team celebrate the win, sing the team song.

4 EXT. CAFE - 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
Brendan says it was a pretty big hit.
Are you sure you're okay?

GRACIE

Yeah, our team doc gave me the all clear. Nothing broken.

JO

Still, what a win! BOG in the grand final. Brendan was saying everyone was really worried about you for a while there.

GRACIE

They breed 'em tough where I come from.

JO

Ha ha! How did you feel when you got up this morning?

Gracie answers in a robotic fashion, as if she is a professional footballer in a TV interview.

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 promo you were
talking about 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.

KEN

Do you feel ready?

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

GRACIE

Thanks Ken. 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, but impressed)
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. He actually likes what he hears and pushes on, mirroring her style.

LIAM

We like to recruit for the big games. It's not easy matching youth with experience but our policy has just been getting the best available talent to fill the key positions.

Gracie's whole mood changes. She is a little bewildered.

GRACIE

Yeah?

KEN

You've demonstrated form as a team player and we're wondering how you will go in a bigger arena.

GRACIE

Um -- So am I.

LIAM

Yeah, we think you may have the 'X factor'.

7 INT. DOCTOR WILLIAMS'S ROOM - DAY

7

A standard GP's office, with all of the free stuff from pharmaceutical companies on the walls. GRACIE sits atop an examination bed, whilst a DOCTOR WILLIAMS examines her nose.

The doctor places a stethoscope on Gracie's back under her blouse, who jumps a little at how cold the metal is.

DOCTOR WILLIAMS

Big breath please.

Gracie takes a deep breath.

DOCTOR WILLIAMS (cont'd)

Again.

She takes another.

DOCTOR WILLIAMS (cont'd)

Okay. Take a seat.

The pair sit down on respective sides of the doctor's desk. The doctor looks at her manila folder on the desk and starts jotting down notes, without looking up.

DOCTOR WILLIAMS (cont'd)

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

GRACIE

Yes. In the nose.

DOCTOR WILLIAMS

Hmmmmmm.

She jots down more notes. Gracie gets even more tense.

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

GRACIE
(desperately)
Anything.

The doctor looks up.

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

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

GRACIE
Quarter past one.

DOCTOR WILLIAMS
Hmmm.
(Beat)
Do you like -- pasta?

GRACIE
Yes.

DOCTOR WILLIAMS
Okay. 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.

DOCTOR WILLIAMS
Uh huh.

GRACIE
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 WILLIAMS
Oh.

GRACIE
 (really desperately)
 What 'oh'? What's happening? Why am I
 talking like this?

Reaching for a big, impressive-looking book from behind her shelf, the Doctor flicks through a few pages and stops on a certain page. She takes a deep breath as shes reads, putting her hand to her chin and rubbing slowly. She doesn't look up from the book as she speaks.

DOCTOR WILLIAMS
 (grimly)
 SAS.

GRACIE
 (tentative)
 What's SAS?

DOCTOR WILLIAMS
 Sportsperson Answering Syndrome.
 Pretty bad case, too.

GRACIE
 Sportsperson Answering Syndrome?
 That's not a thing!

In response to the challenge, the doctor looks up.

DOCTOR WILLIAMS
 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 WILLIAMS
 This is not good.

GRACIE
 (panicked)
 This is not good.

Dressed in jammies and dressing gowns, JO and GRACIE sit on opposite ends of a couch, watching television.

Gracie eats Cheezels off her fingers one by one, with Jo licking a freshly-dunked spoon of Nutella.

JO

So did the Doc give you anything for it?

GRACIE

I've got to go back tomorrow. She reckons that they've researched some common techniques that SAS sufferers use.

(Beat)

Man, I need it fixed. I've got another promotion interview on Monday. Actually, that's the weird thing. I think Liam and Ken might have it too.

JO

What?

GRACIE

Sportsperson Answering Syndrome.

JO

Why?

GRACIE

They were crapping on about 'team player' and 'matching youth with experience'.

JO

What I don't get is, why can you answer that question normally and then you answer others like you're on The Footy Show?

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 --

JO

(interrupts)

Sorry! I know, sorry.

GRACIE

Arrrrggghhhhh!

9 INT. DOCTOR WILLIAMS'S ROOM - DAY

9

DOCTOR WILLIAMS and GRACIE sit opposite each other again.

GRACIE (O.S.)

Never heard of him.

DOCTOR WILLIAMS

Alex Trebek. He's the host of Jeopardy. You've never heard of him?

GRACIE

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

DOCTOR WILLIAMS

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 WILLIAMS

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 WILLIAMS

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 WILLIAMS

Well, 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 WILLIAMS

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 WILLIAMS

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

10 INT. ANOTHER ACTIVITY - NIGHT

10

JO

Don't get me wrong, but that seems like a long time.

GRACIE

Many people lead full lives, apparently.

JO

Well, I've got your back. I've never seen Jeopardy, but do you want to have a practice?

GRACIE

Sure.

JO

Okay. Ahhh, how did your performances this season help the Bombers to a third straight title?

GRACIE

(SAS answer)

Team game, and it takes a group effort for the sustained run of success that we've had. Oh, dammit!

JO

Righto. What are your chances of becoming regional manager?

Wanting to answer quickly, Gracie steadies herself.

GRACIE

What are the chances of me landing my dream role? I think that I have a reasonable chance.

JO

Reasonable? That's hardly worthy of the 'X factor'. Hey! The 'X factor'. That's it! SAS is the 'X factor'.

GRACIE

What do you mean?

JO

You said it yourself. Ben has it. Liam and Ken thought you had it when you started answering like you're on 'Grandstand'. They even talk like it.

GRACIE

Jo! I think -- I think you're right. But I still need to be able to talk, you know, like a human being.

JO

Well, you can use SAS to your advantage. Some people obviously respond to it. At other times, you'll need to use The Trebek Technique.

12 INT. OFFICE INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

12

GRACIE is back for the final interview for her possible promotion. LIAM and KEN are primed.

LIAM

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

Gracie lets her SAS run free.

GRACIE

Well, we've got to get everyone on the same page. No passengers if you want to play in the firsts.

Liam and Ken are impressed. Gracie uses the Trebek Technique for the balance of her answer.

GRACIE (cont'd)

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.

KEN

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

It would be a massive reward for effort. You like to know that when you lace up for the big games, everyone is behind you 110%. 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.

13 INT. CAFE - DAY

13

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. Pride and
Prejudice, Emma, Pride, oh...

GRACIE
I'm Gracie.

CUTE GUY
I'm Aiden.

GRACIE
Well Aiden, would you like to discuss
some of her other works, over dinner?

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

AIDEN
There is very definitely a lot to be
said for some of the fine output from
Jane Austen.
(MORE)

AIDEN (cont'd)
 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.

AIDEN (cont'd)
 Um, I'm so sorry. 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.