



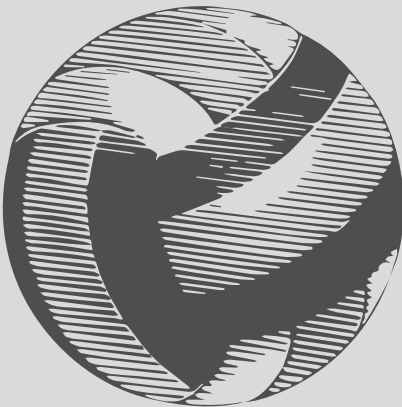
PLAYGROUND

# Area 6

**Home Base: CHAPTER 6**

**Let's Do a Time Warp**

Once you finish your game,  
return to home base on p. 122.



# LET'S FACE IT

## Self-Reflection Questions

1. What baggage are you still carrying from your past?



2. What would it feel like to throw that baggage on the floor and walk away from it or, better yet, burn it? (Metaphorically speaking, of course, not lighting a funeral pyre in your living room.)



3. What are some of your best memories that you want to bring on your journey? When you dig into that sandbox, what are the buried treasures?



### **LET'S DO IT:**

#### **Unpack Your Bags and Lighten Your Load**

We all carry baggage (bags), mental stuff that weighs us down. Also, we rarely travel with just one bag. It's more like a set of matching luggage. The gremlins use this baggage to slow us down and discourage us from ever venturing out. But we can beat the gremlins at their own game. Let's start by refocusing on the change we want to make.

***I want to make a change:*** \_\_\_\_\_

## THE UNPACKING GAME

Your goal in the Unpacking Game is to identify your bags, bring them into the light, unpack them, decide what you want to take with you, and decide what you want to toss.

### First, Identify Your Bags

How do you identify the bags weighing you down? Here's where you can use the gremlins to your advantage. The gremlins know which bags you carry, and they know where the bags are stored. You will use that information to unpack your bags. You need to get inside the gremlins' heads. (They're certainly inside yours.)

Start with stating the change you want to make (above). "I am going to [make my change]." The internal alarm will sound. The gremlins will spring to their feet and come running with your baggage filled with worries. You want them to tell you the worries packed in those bags. Start with, "I want to change \_\_\_\_\_, but I'm worried that \_\_\_\_\_" The gremlins will dump out your worries to fill in the blanks. For example:

*I want to change \_\_\_\_\_, but I'm worried that \_\_\_\_\_*

**Bag:** I'm not experienced enough.

**Bag:** I'll embarrass myself.

**Bag:** They'll think I'm stupid.

**Bag:** They won't like me.

**Bag:** I'll make a mistake and not do it "perfectly."

### Second, Open Your Bags and Ask Questions

Your instinct may be to throw the bags in the basement or shove them into the back of a closet. The gremlins love when you try to bury your baggage because they know your worries fester in the dark. You need to unpack your bags if you want to beat the gremlins at their game. Now that you know the worries you're carrying, use the following questions to unpack them and capture your answers on the table below:

#### ***What if it's true?***

Parts of those worries may be rational. You'll have one of two reactions to this question: (1) Of course, it's true, or (2) of course, it's not true. You may think "of course it's not true" is a healthier,

more rational answer. But if you really think it's not true, then it isn't weighing you down, and you can just walk away, right? So why are we even having this conversation? We often dismiss worries as trivial because we know "rationally" they're not true. Trivializing these worries is a sneaky gremlin trick to keep us from unpacking. When we genuinely explore whether it's true, we begin to access some of our deeper worries in those dark hard-to-reach corners.

***What's the worst that can happen?***

This is not a rhetorical question to brush off your concerns. Really, "What is the WORST that can happen?" Dig in to find out how your brain is catastrophizing the outcome and weighing you down.

***What will I lose if I let these worries stop me?***

It's far too easy to focus on the risks we face if we make a change and do something different. BUT, what about the risks of not doing something different? Bring those risks into the light. What will you lose if you let these worries stop you? Leverage that natural human fear of missing out (FOMO) to your advantage.

***Yes, AND... (Disarm the Gremlins)***

When you acknowledge the part(s) of your worries that might be true, you throw the gremlins off balance. They're ready for a fight, but you don't want to give them the satisfaction. Instead, acknowledge the possibility, and pivot to a new perspective that disarms them. (You'll see what I mean in a minute.)

**Start Unpacking!**

The table below contains the previous questions as column headers. Some of your worries will be similar to ideas you've identified in previous exercises. That's to be expected. When you play with these ideas from different perspectives, you gain new insights. I'll start you off with my own example.

## MY EXAMPLE

I want to make a change: I want to quit graduate school and find a new path.

### UNPACKING MY BAGS

Bags (Worries)	What if it's true? Then...	What's the worst that can happen?
I might fail	People will think I'm stupid and incompetent.	<u>Right now, I can still hold onto hope that I'm not stupid or incompetent, but if I risk confronting my fears, I may confirm beyond any doubt that I am.</u>
I'll make a lot of mistakes.	I'll be embarrassed, maybe humiliated.	People will ridicule me and think I'm stupid.
I'll never figure out my path.	I'll be stuck on a path I hate, or at least that I don't like, for the rest of my life.	<u>I'll be helpless.</u>

## UNPACKING MY BAGS

What will I lose if I let these worries stop me?	Yes, AND...? (Disarm the Gremlins)
The chance at happiness.	<p>Yes, I might fall on my ass, BUT "falling" is not the same as "failing." Falling is learning.</p> <p>AND I could succeed in finding something I love. There's no chance that will happen on my current path.</p>
The chance to succeed, and to prove critics wrong. If I give up, those type of people win, and so do the gremlins. I don't want them to win.	<p>Yes, I'll always make mistakes when I'm learning something new.</p> <p><b><u>AND if people ridicule me from the side lines it's because they don't know what it's like to really push outside their comfort zone. They are playing it safe. They want to make me feel small, so they don't have to look at how small they are.</u></b></p>
<b><u>I will believe I'm helpless, and that will impact other areas of my life. I will get smaller and smaller until there is nothing left.</u></b>	<p>Yes, AND I'm already stuck on a path I hate. So, what's the risk?</p>

Each of the worries above has shown up in my previous exercises. What's new are some of the insights I unpacked (see bold, underlined text). I dug deeper and brought something bigger and scarier into the light.



## YOUR TURN

I want to make a change: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### UNPACKING MY BAGS

Bags (Worries)	What if it's true? Then...	What's the worst that can happen?



## UNPACKING MY BAGS

What will I lose if I let these worries stop me?	Yes, AND...? (Disarm the Gremlins)

## LET'S DO IT:

### Unpack Your Bags and Lighten Your Load

#### **Continue to Play and Ask for Help**

You won't toss out all your baggage in a single game, but you can't let that stop you from starting your journey. If you keep playing as you go, your bags will get lighter. In addition, you don't have to play this game alone. Solitaire isn't a bad game, but you can also ask for help from people you trust. They may offer different perspectives or additional insights. At a minimum, they can cheer you on. There is no limit to the number of players you can have on your team.

Finally, if you're carrying heavier baggage like a steamer trunk or an overweight suitcase with a broken handle and a cracked roller wheel, it may be too big to unpack by yourself. You may want to hire a professional mover like a counselor or therapist to help with the heavy lifting. No one can carry a steamer trunk alone.

With time and practice, you will develop your skills and further lighten your load. You'll become a champion unpacker. You may even reach a point where you realize you've dropped some bags along your path, and you have no intention of going back to get them. You just keep moving.

## UNSTRUCTURED PLAY:

### Design Your Own Game

**Reflect:** What are you taking away from your experience with this exercise and self-reflection questions?



**Go Play Outside:** How do you want to take what you've discovered into your real life outside this book?

