

playwithray

RAY | THE PLAY PARADIGM

Consciousness.
Curiosity.
Possibility.

A 7-DAY FIELD GUIDE

Your Next Move

Seven moves for playing your life on a higher level. Especially when the people around you would rather you didn't.

7 MOVES | 10 MINUTES A DAY | WORKBOOK PAGES | POCKET CARD

RAY TYLER · FROM THE PLAY PARADIGM

START HERE

You've been playing a game your *whole life.*

Nobody showed you the rules. You just started playing.

Compete. Stay in control. Don't lose what you have. Be good, avoid bad, and always keep one eye on what everyone else thinks. Most of us were handed that rulebook before we could read it, and everyone around us agreed: this is just how things are.

But you've felt something else, too. A conversation where you lost track of time. A day you stopped keeping score and were simply curious, creative and alive. That wasn't luck. For a little while, you stepped out of the old game and played a different one.

This guide is about playing that game on purpose. It's the core of my book, *The Play Paradigm*, distilled into seven moves you can use this week.

> *Seven moves. One a day. About ten minutes each. Read it, try it, write a few lines.*

You can't do this wrong. Every move is an experiment, and the only way to fail an experiment is to never run it.



Ray

Ray Tyler · Author of *The Play Paradigm*
Creator of the animated series *Play With Ray*

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THE MAP

Two games. You pick.

Level One is the game most of the world is still playing. Level Two is the one you're being invited into. Same life. Same people. Different rules.

	Level One	*Level Two*
LIFE FEELS LIKE	A battle you have to win or survive	An adventure you get to explore
DRIVEN BY	Fear of losing, of others, of failing	Curiosity and love
YOUR GRIP	Tight. It has to go this way	Loose. You have preferences and stay open
OTHER PEOPLE	Competitors, judges, threats	Fellow players on the same board
PROBLEMS	Proof that something is wrong	Puzzles worth solving
IT FEELS LIKE	Never quite at peace	Lighter, even when it's hard

> *Level Two isn't escapism. You still care, maybe more than before. You just carry it with curiosity instead of panic.*

THE MAP

Beyond either / or.

The old game turns every moment into a choice between two things: fear or love, win or lose, right or wrong. Pick a side. Defend it.

0	1	*0 & 1*
FEAR	LOVE	PLAY

Play is the third option. A qubit in a quantum computer can be 0, 1, or both at once. Play works the same way. It doesn't make you choose between fear and love. It takes the push and pull of both and turns them into a dance.

> *You can be scared and move forward anyway. You can be serious about your life and playful in how you live it.*

HOW IT WORKS

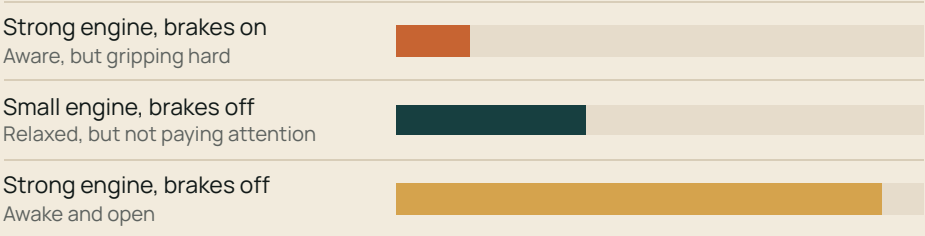
The whole idea in *one line.*

$$P = C \times (1 - H)$$

P **Play potential.** How much creative, free, alive energy is available to you right now.

C **Consciousness.** Your awareness and creative capacity. The engine.

H **Rigidity.** Fear, control, clinging to one outcome or one identity. The brakes.



You have two levers: grow your awareness, and loosen your grip. Most of the moves in this guide work on H, because it's the lever you can pull today.

BEFORE YOU START

Where are your *brakes?*

A quick read on your H. Circle 0 for rarely, 1 for sometimes, 2 for often. Be honest. Nobody sees this but you.

I need to know how something will turn out before I'll start.	0 1 2
When plans change, it throws off my whole day.	0 1 2
I replay mistakes long after they happen.	0 1 2
I avoid things I might be bad at.	0 1 2
I hold back changes because of what certain people will think.	0 1 2
In an argument, being right matters more than finding a way through.	0 1 2

0 to 4	Your grip is loose. Use the week to go further.
5 to 8	You're gripping in a few places. The lines you scored 2 are where this week will pay off most.
9 to 12	The brakes are on. Good news: small moves will feel big, fast.

Today	**_____ / 12**
After Day 7	**_____ / 12**

You inherited the rules.

You can question the game.

DAY ONE STARTS ON THE NEXT PAGE



1

DAY ONE · 10 MINUTES

Name the game

Why it works: you can't change a game you can't see. Naming a rule turns it into a choice.

Most of the rules you live by were handed to you. Nobody asked if you agreed.

TRY THIS

Write down three rules you live by that you never actually chose. Then ask of each one: who taught me this, and does it still serve me?

For example: "Always be the one who has it together." Learned as the oldest kid who kept everything running. Still serving me? It keeps me from asking for help.

My three rules, and who taught them:

The one I'm ready to stop playing by:

2

DAY TWO · 10 MINUTES

Meet the voice

Why it works: the voice feeds on fear. When you notice it instead of obeying it, it loses its food.



There's a voice that shows up every time you try something new. "You'll never keep it up." "Who do you think you are?" In the book I call it the Parasite. It isn't you. It just borrows your voice.

TRY THIS

Write down what it says to you most often. Give it a ridiculous name and a cartoon voice. Next time it speaks up, answer it: "Thanks, [name]. Noted." Then keep going.

For example: "Captain Doubt" says "Nobody wants to hear from you." In the Captain's squeaky voice, it's a lot easier to ignore.

What it says most:

Its new name, and what I'll do anyway:

3

DAY THREE · 10 MINUTES

Read your mirrors

Why it works: whatever triggers you is pointing straight at a fear you're still holding.



The things that get under your skin are mirrors. They show you exactly where you're still gripping.

TRY THIS

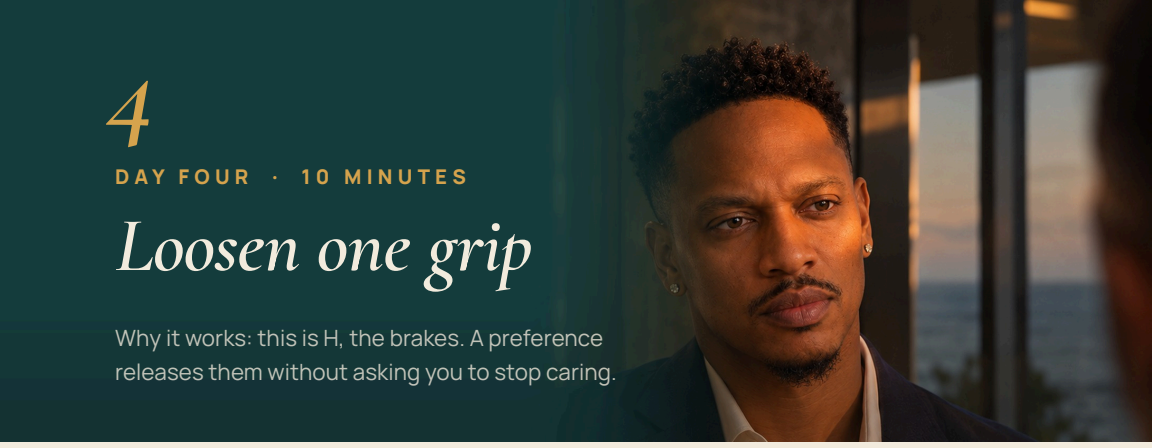
Pick one thing that bothered you this week: a person, a comment, a situation. Instead of replaying it, ask: "Why is this bothering me so much? What fear is it showing me?"

For example: A friend's bragging made you angry. Underneath: a fear that you're falling behind. That fear is the thing to work on, not the friend.

What triggered me:

The fear underneath:

What I could let go of:



4

DAY FOUR · 10 MINUTES

Loosen one grip

Why it works: this is H, the brakes. A preference releases them without asking you to stop caring.

Rigidity sounds like "It has to go this way or everything is ruined." Lowering it means holding the outcome with an open hand.

TRY THIS

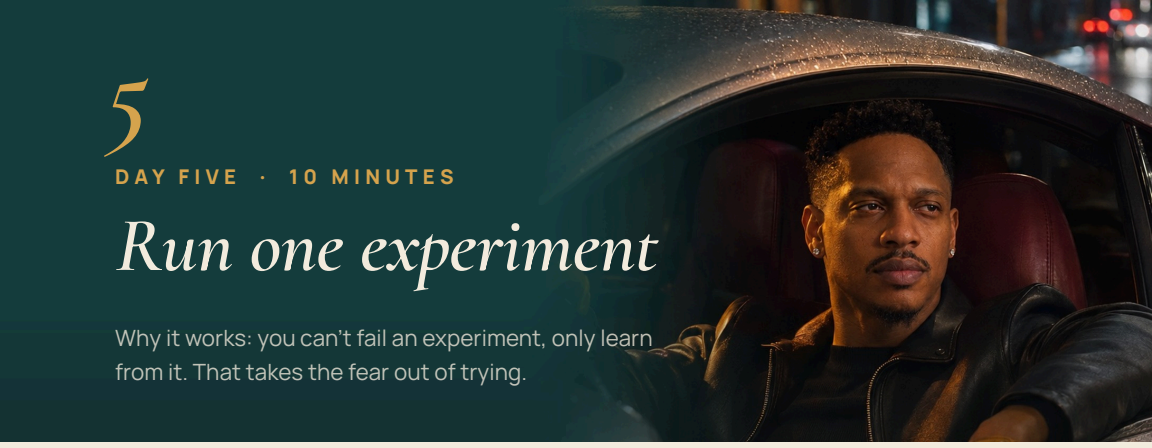
Pick one outcome you're clinging to. Rewrite it from a demand into a preference: "I'd like ____. If it goes another way, I'll ____." Read it back and notice what happens in your chest.

For example: "I have to get this job" becomes "I'd like this job. If it goes another way, I'll take what I learned into the next interview."

The thing I'm gripping:

I'd like…

If it goes another way, I'll…



5

DAY FIVE · 10 MINUTES

Run one experiment

Why it works: you can't fail an experiment, only learn from it. That takes the fear out of trying.

Life gets lighter when it's a series of experiments instead of final exams.

TRY THIS

Ask yourself: "If this were a game, what would I do?" Pick one small thing you'd normally avoid and do it today as an experiment. Nervous? Play a character: the version of you who already does this easily.

For example: Speak first in a meeting. Post the thing you've been sitting on. Ask the question you've been too proud to ask.

My experiment:

What actually happened:

What I learned:



6

DAY SIX · 10 MINUTES

Call the plot twist

Why it works: a stressed mind can't see creative options. Naming the twist gets you back into play.

Something will go sideways today. In the old game that's proof the world is against you. In the new one it's just the next scene.

TRY THIS

When something goes wrong, before you react, say it: "Plot twist. How do I respond creatively?" Give yourself thirty seconds to find one move a stressed version of you would never see.

For example: The meeting got cancelled. Old game: wasted morning. Plot twist: an open hour for the thing you keep putting off.

The plot twist:

My first reaction:

The creative move:

7

DAY SEVEN · 10 MINUTES

When they push back



Why it works: stop fighting and stop shrinking, and the conflict has nothing left to feed on.

When you start changing, some of the people around you won't like it. They'll joke, doubt, or try to pull you back. They aren't villains. They're still playing Level One, and your change moves the pieces on their board too.

You don't have to fight them, and you don't have to shrink. Be the playground: the space the conversation happens in, not a player trying to win it.

TRY THIS

Think of one person who reacted to a change you made. Write what they might be afraid of losing. Then write one line that keeps you on the same team without giving up your change.

For example: "You've changed." Try: "I have. I'm still your friend. Come see what I'm into."

Who, and what they might fear losing:

My same-team line:

YOUR WEEK

Look how far *you moved.*



Tick each move as you finish it. One word is enough. You'll be surprised what it shows you.

	MOVE	DONE	ONE WORD FOR HOW IT FELT
1	Name the game	☐	
2	Meet the voice	☐	
3	Read your mirrors	☐	
4	Loosen one grip	☐	
5	Run one experiment	☐	
6	Call the plot twist	☐	
7	When they push back	☐	

Brakes, Day 0 _____ / 12

Brakes, Day 7 _____ / 12

The move that changed the most for me:

YOUR NEW RULES

On Day 1 you named the old rules. Now write yours.

You decide the rules of the game you play. Write three you'll play by from here, short enough to remember in a hard moment.

> *For example:* "Curious before certain." "Preferences, not demands." "Same team, even when we disagree."

1

2

3

> *Put them where you'll see them tomorrow morning.*

SIGNED

DATE

KEEP IT CLOSE

Your pocket *card.*

The whole week on one card. Screenshot it, or print it and cut along the line.

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$P = C \times (1 - H)$

1. **Name the game.** Which rule am I following that I never chose?
2. **Meet the voice.** "Thanks, Captain Doubt. Noted."
3. **Read your mirrors.** What fear is this showing me?
4. **Loosen one grip.** "I'd like ____. If not, I'll ____."
5. **Run one experiment.** If this were a game, what would I do?
6. **Call the plot twist.** How do I respond creatively?
7. **When they push back.** Same team. Don't fight, don't shrink.

Curious before certain. The next move is always yours.

✂ CUT ALONG THE DOTTED LINE

Know someone who's changing and getting pushback for it? **Send them this guide.** It might be the permission they've been waiting for.



YOUR NEXT MOVE

There's no final score. Just the next move.

Run the moves again whenever you need them. Every time you choose curiosity over fear, it gets a little easier. And the people around you notice.

Let's play together.

Watch

Play With Ray, the animated series · YouTube @play.withray · TikTok @playwithray · IG @playwithray.tv

Write it out

My Real Feelings Journal, on Amazon

Talk it through

Sounding Board with Ray: 30 minutes, one on one, by video.

cal.com/playwithray/sounding-board

SCAN TO BOOK

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