0045 Capacity Is Subject To The Principle

The Summers Principle Book · https://kb.jeffreysummers.com/docs/0045-capacity-is-subject-to-the-principle/

The operator hearing the principle for the first time often lands on a version of this objection: I do not have the capacity to design like a bigger, better-funded, more experienced operator. The principle assumes I can design against my dimensions, but I lack the knowledge, the capital, the time, the authority to do so. Design or default is not really a choice for me — I am forced to default because I do not have the resources to design.

This objection contains a truth and a hidden assumption. The truth is that operators have unequal capacity. Some have more capital, more knowledge, more time, more authority, more experience. That is real and not going away. The hidden assumption is that capacity is a fixed input to the principle — that the operator arrives with whatever capacity they have and works within it, and if their capacity is low, their ability to design is low.

The hidden assumption is wrong. Capacity is not fixed. Capacity is subject to the principle.

This is where the principle becomes recursive. Every input to the restaurant is itself an outcome — of the operator's prior choices, of prior operators' choices, of the market's history, of the cast's history. Capital was accumulated or spent by prior decisions. Knowledge was acquired or not acquired by prior study. Time was engineered into the schedule or defaulted out of it. Authority was built through prior action or eroded through prior avoidance. Every capacity the operator brings into today's shift was produced yesterday, and the day before, and the year before — by design or default at those prior moments.

Which means the operator has capacity right now. Not equal capacity to another operator. But some capacity. Everyone does. And the operator can read their own capacity honestly and choose what to do about it.

If they decide to expand their capacity, that is design at the capacity layer. They study to expand knowledge. They save to expand capital. They restructure their schedule to expand time. They earn or negotiate authority to expand what they can decide about. Every act of capacity expansion is an application of the principle to the operator's own ability to operate.

If they decide to leave their capacity where it is, that is default at the capacity layer. They stop learning. They spend rather than save. They let time drain into low-return activity. They accept the authority they inherited without pushing to expand it. Every act of capacity acceptance without engagement is default on the capacity itself.

The operator with $50,000 in the bank and the operator with $5,000,000 are not equally positioned. That is real. But both operate under the same principle at the capacity layer. The operator with $50,000 designs on that capital — engineers what it can do, protects what remains, invests in whatever produces the highest capability return. The operator with $5,000,000 either designs on that capital or defaults on it. If they default — if they treat the capital as a buffer that removes the need for design — they produce defaulted outcomes at ten times the scale of the smaller operator, and the extra capital does not save them. Restaurants with lots of capital that default fail. Restaurants with limited capital that design succeed within the ceiling their capital allows.

Capacity sets the ceiling on what design can achieve. It does not exempt the operator from designing on the capacity they have. And it does not fix the capacity at whatever it currently is. Capacity itself is a Summers outcome — designed or defaulted by choices the operator is making right now, on their own knowledge, capital, time, and authority.

This changes what the principle asks of the operator. It is not asking the operator to design at a scale they cannot reach. It is asking the operator to design on the scale they have — and to design on their capacity itself as its own operating dimension. The operator who is learning is designing on capacity. The operator who is saving is designing on capacity. The operator who is restructuring their schedule to make design work possible is designing on capacity. Every one of these is the principle running on the operator's own ability to operate.

The operator who wants to run a restaurant that is bigger than the one their current capacity can support has one path: design on capacity, expand it, then design on the restaurant with the expanded capacity. There is no other route. Waiting for capacity to arrive from outside is default. Expanding capacity through engineered intent is design.

This also resolves what would otherwise be a moral problem inside the principle. If the principle blamed the operator with limited capacity for outcomes they could not have designed against, it would be a blame frame — and struggling operators would rightly reject it. But the principle does not blame anyone. The principle names what caused the outcome. An operator with limited capacity who designed to the limit of that capacity produced designed outcomes at that scale. If the outcomes were not enough to sustain the operation, the diagnosis is at the capacity layer —

the operator did not expand their capacity through prior design, or their capacity was constrained by prior externalities they had defaulted against. Either way, the diagnosis is causal. Not moral.

No operator is exempted from the principle by having less capacity. And no operator is trapped by their current capacity, because the principle governs capacity itself. Every operator has capacity. Every operator can read their capacity honestly. Every operator can design to expand it or default and leave it where it sits. What they cannot do is claim that capacity is a third cause — that it produces outcomes independent of design or default. It does not. Capacity is subject to the principle. Which means it is available to the operator to design against, at whatever scale they currently occupy.

This is also why the platform exists. Every book, every fieldbook, every Review, every workshop, every mentoring session, every consulting engagement is a mechanism the operator can use to expand their capacity. Buying the platform is not shopping for tips. Buying the platform is designing on the operator's own capacity — the knowledge layer, the diagnostic layer, the peer collision layer, the direct pressure layer. The operator who buys the platform is operating under design at the capacity layer. The operator who does not is either designing capacity expansion through some other means, or defaulting on capacity. Both are running the principle. Which mode is running is the diagnostic.

Capacity is subject to the principle. That is the recursion. And it closes the last honest exemption the operator might have believed the principle allowed them.