Good Enough Line

Facilitator guide

Your job: find the version that first achieved the purpose, show what the effort since then bought (usually nothing), and set a fit-for-purpose line the team stops at — then redirect the saved effort to work that still needs it. Make the over-polish visible as already-wasted effort, without lecturing anyone about working less. It runs solo or with a team, in 20–25 minutes.

The one line you must hold: this is not about lowering standards — it's about seeing the work was already done. The trap isn't "we don't care enough" — it's "we care so much we can't see it's finished." Drive to the moment someone says **"this was finished on Tuesday."**

· WHEN DO I USE THIS?

Use this when

GOOD FIT

Craft-driven work that keeps getting refined — decks, reports, features, proposals, analyses — where the team's pride in quality is real, and the work has quietly passed the point where more effort changes the outcome.

WRONG TOOL

Afraid to ship finished work › Done ≡ Show It. A whole cycle is sagging › Mid-Sprint Reset. The scope itself is too big › Subtraction Game. Running hot across cycles › Execution Pacing System.

The one test before you start: can you point to a real piece of work with versions or stages? If yes — a deck on its 9th revision, a feature being endlessly refined — this tool works on it directly. If the work hasn't reached fit-for-purpose yet, it's not over-polishing; don't use this.

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· WHAT DO I NEED?

What you'll need

What	Why it's there
A real piece of work with versions	A deck, report, feature or proposal with a visible history of revisions. The activity only works if people can compare versions.
Its purpose, stated plainly	What the work was meant to achieve ("the client can act"), not what it is. The purpose tells you whether the work is finished.
A facilitator (team only)	States the purpose, finds the done-version, counts the effort beyond it, sets the line — without it feeling like a lecture.
The Done-Line sheet	To mark the version that first achieved the purpose, tally the effort spent past it, and write the fit-for-purpose line.

Resilience · Sustain Momentum · 20–25 minutes · solo or a team. The time is indicative and will depend on the nature of the work.

Before you begin

- ✓ Choose one real piece of work with visible versions or stages
- ✓ Make sure everyone agrees what the work was trying to achieve
- ✓ Have the versions available before the session starts

· HOW DO I RUN IT?

Run sheet

Four steps, 20–25 minutes. The bold part is what you say or do; the note under it is where you add the most. Steps 2 and 3 are the heart of the activity — never skip Step 3.

1 State the purpose — 3 min

"What was this meant to ACHIEVE — for whoever receives it? Not what it is." Write it as a checkable outcome ("the client can act on it"), not a description ("a polished deck"). This is the measure the whole activity depends on — if it's vague, the Done Line will be too.

2 Mark the Done Line — 6 min

"Walk the versions. Which one first achieved that purpose — would already have done the job?" Circle it. Ask "which version would already have worked?" — people can't define "good enough" in the abstract, but they can point to it. Visible discomfort as they realise it's far earlier than expected is reveal 1 landing.

3 Count what the effort bought — 6 min

"From that version to now — what changed in the outcome?" Usually: nothing. Then count the effort spent past the line: revisions, hours, review rounds, meetings. Put them side by side: zero outcome gain, all that effort. This is reveal 2 — the one that stops the defending.

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4 **Set the line and redirect**	**7 min**	*"What's the fit-for-purpose line we stop at — and where does the saved effort go?"* Write the standard as a checkable outcome. Then name where the freed effort goes — real work that still needs it. Without a redirect, stopping feels like loss, not gain.

Keeping time: 20–25 minutes, indicative and flexing with the work. Protect steps 2 and 3 — the two reveals are the tool. Step 1 (purpose) must be tight or the rest drifts; step 4 (the line + redirect) is what makes it stick. **When to stop:** once everyone agrees where the Done Line is and where the saved effort will go, stop — don't keep debating whether later versions are "better".

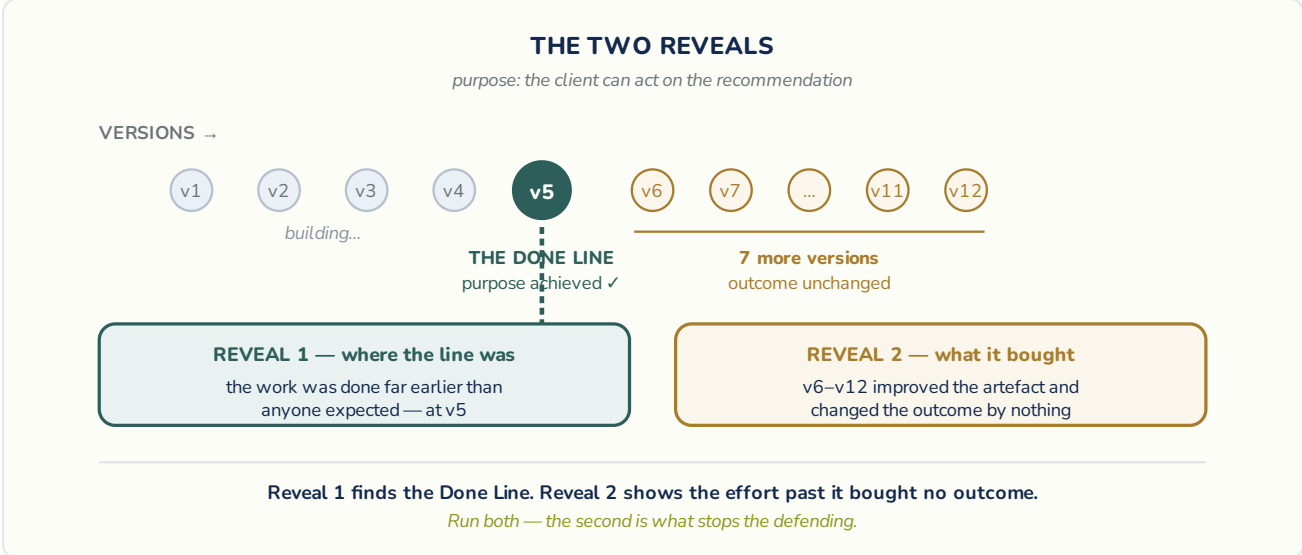
IF THE ROOM DISAGREES ON THE DONE LINE — THE TIE-BREAK

You'll hear "v5… no, v7… v8 was better." That's the wrong argument. Never ask **"which version was best?"** — best is endless. Ask the only question that matters: **"could the recipient already have acted successfully using version 5?"** If yes, v5 is the Done Line, regardless of which version was nicer. Walk back to the earliest version where the answer is still yes.

· WHY TWO REVEALS?

Why two reveals — and why versions

People can't locate "good enough" in the abstract, but they can instantly point to "this version would already have worked." The concrete versions make the done-point findable — then the effort past it makes the waste clear.



Why the second reveal is non-negotiable: reveal 1 alone can be argued away — "but it's better now." Reveal 2 kills that: better how? The outcome at v5 and v12 is identical; the artefact improved, the outcome didn't. Running only reveal 1, or skipping to "let's not over-polish", is the one failure mode — people defend the polish and nothing changes.

· WHAT DOES A RUN LOOK LIKE?

A worked run

Watch the facilitator hold the second reveal — don't stop at the Done Line.

WORKED RUN — A CLIENT DECK ON ITS 12TH VERSION

Purpose: "What was the deck for?" — "For the client to understand the recommendation and act." Written up as the yardstick.

Done Line: "Which version would already have done that?" A pause. "...honestly, v5. They could've acted on v5." Circle it.

The reveal: "From v5 to v12 — what changed?" Silence. "Three days, seven revisions — and zero of it improved the decision."

The redirect: "Fit for purpose = the client can act. We stop there. The three days go to the launch prep that's behind."

"We improved the deck, not the decision. It was finished on Tuesday."

· HOW DO I KNOW IT WORKED?

Done well vs a hollow run

DONE WELL

The purpose was an outcome; the team found the done-version (often surprisingly early); both reveals landed; they set a checkable fit-for-purpose line and redirected the saved effort to real work.

A HOLLOW RUN

It became "let's not over-polish"; no purpose stated, no version marked, no effort counted. Or it landed as "do worse work" — and the team got defensive and disengaged.

· WHAT WILL PEOPLE SAY?

The objections you'll hear — and your move

What they say	Your response
"So you want us to do mediocre work?"	"The opposite. The work was excellent at v5 — I want you to see it was already done, not spend three more days proving it."
"But the later version is better."	"Better how? The outcome's the same. We improved the deck, not the decision the client makes."
"I can always find something to improve."	"Always — that's why we need a line. Fit for purpose, then stop, and put the effort where it still moves the outcome."

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Appendix · Reference

You should not need this while you run it. Read it before, or use it if a run goes sideways.

· COMMON MISTAKES & EDGE CASES

Common mistakes and edge cases

What happens	What to do
Running only reveal 1	Without "what did it buy", people defend the polish. Always run the second reveal.
A purpose that's a description	"A good deck" isn't a purpose; "the client can act" is. Push for a checkable outcome before going on.
Multiple purposes emerge (inform / impress / sign-off)	Agree the primary purpose first — "which does this mainly exist to do?" Mark the Done Line against that one; note the others.
The polish genuinely is the purpose (e.g. brand showcase)	Then make that the stated purpose and find the done-line against it. "Impresses the client" still has a point where it's achieved.
The later version really did improve the outcome	Then it wasn't past the line — good. Move the Done Line to the version that genuinely achieved the purpose.
No clear versions to point to	Use stages or review rounds instead, or reconstruct: "when could the recipient first have acted?"
Perfectionism is deeply tied to someone's identity	Don't challenge their skill — honour it, then redirect: "that skill is valuable; point it at the work still below the line."

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· WHERE DOES THIS FIT?

Where this sits in the Gym

The real question	Use this
Is this one piece of work already done? (refining past the point it was useful)	**This tool — Good Enough Line.** Find the done-version, see the wasted effort, set the line.
Am I willing to ship this finished work?	**Done ≡ Show It** — overcome the fear of releasing.
What can we remove from the scope?	**Subtraction Game** — cut features, not refinement effort.
A whole cycle is sagging right now	**Mid-Sprint Reset** — recover the cycle.
We run hot every cycle	**Execution Pacing System** — set a sustainable pace.

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