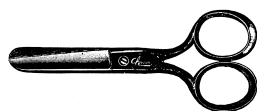


Not So Oblique Strategies

*by Larry Crane,
with Garrett Haines*

In 1975, Brian Eno (*Tape Op* #85) and multimedia artist Peter Schmidt published their first set of *Oblique Strategies: Over One Hundred Worthwhile Dilemmas*. These cards work as creativity resets, prompting breaks in non-productive work patterns as well as inspiring new methods. As we've seen the tools of music recording become more affordable, and now in so many musicians' hands, I think there's also a need to examine the basics of music production. With that in mind, I present my version of their groundbreaking work. Let's call it the *Not So Oblique Strategies*. Use these suggestions wisely!

*Print out this PDF to
some card stock and
then get to a paper
cutter (most copy shops
have them) and use the
dotted lines on this page
to cut these out.
Have a nice session!*



**PICK UP YOUR OWN SET OF
THE REAL OBLIQUE
STRATEGIES HERE:
<WWW.ENOSHOP.CO.UK>**

**Is this song
too long?**

**Do you really want
the guitars and vocals
to be panned to the
exact same position?**

**Is this key too high
or low for the
vocal parts?**

**Is that the best place
to put the drums?**

**Can all those parts
be submixed
for easier use?**

**Is that guitar amp
making too much buzz
or hum?**

**Do you have a decent
talkback system
set up?**

**Can you hear everything
said between takes?
Set up a mic!**

**Is anything
out of tune?**

**Are the
lead vocals
legible?
Should they be?**

**Are you sure you need
so many overdubs?**

**That's a lot of mics
on the drums.
Mute all but four.
Add sparingly.**

**Are there tracks in
the mix with low end
noises you didn't
notice?**

**Listen to the headphone
mix before asking
others to do so.**

**Does this song need a
click track?**

**Is this the best tempo?
Listen to vocal delivery.**

**Do vocals need
de-essing?**

**Is the de-esser
removing too much?**

**Pick one doubled vocal
or instrument and
remove that double.
Better? Worse?**

**Turn off all reverbs and
delays. Is the song
stronger or weaker?**

**Check drum phase
on all mics.
check again.**

**Press the mono button.
Is the mix worse now?
Repair.**

**Listen from the
other room.
What stands out?
What's missing?**

**Do the drums ring out in
annoying/obstructive
ways? Listen.**

**Is the singer as
comfortable
as possible?**

**Does the acoustic guitar
have loud squeaks on
chord changes?**

**Solo the kick drum and
bass instrument.
Listen closely.**

**Do you really need this
many drum mics?**

**Is the electric bass
going sharp? Examine.**

**What is the structure of
this piece of music?**

**Turn off all plug-ins.
Is the mix better
or worse**

**Are the bass amp and
DI box really in phase?**

**Are all those stompboxes
causing ground loops?**

**Does that guitar chord
really need to use
every string?**

**Perform the song again.
Compare to
the previous take.
Decide.**

**Listen to the artists as
they are talking and
prepare for the next
task. Think ahead.**

**Solo the subwoofer
and listen
for conflicting sounds.**

**When was the
last time
the musicians ate?**

**Is everyone tired?
Go home and
try again tomorrow.**

**Honor thy intention
as a hidden error.**

**Use the 4 blank spaces
on this page for your
own strategies**