Q1: Why is using medium bet sizes (1/3 to full pot) often detrimental in poker?

Using medium bet sizes is often detrimental because live poker players tend to play unbalanced. When opponents make large bets, their range is typically very strong, meaning they are less likely to fold to a medium-sized check-raise. If your opponent has a strong hand, a medium raise won't get them to fold, effectively lighting money on fire. Conversely, against a weak range (indicated by a small bet), a medium raise might still fold out weak hands that would have folded to a large bet anyway, while failing to extract maximum value from slightly stronger, inelastic hands. In many situations, an extreme bet size (either very small or very large) is more effective for either value extraction or successful bluffing, as it exploits common player tendencies like inelasticity or predictable hand strength indicators.

Q2: When is it advantageous to use a large check-raise size (e.g., 6x) as the pre-flop raiser?

It is advantageous to use a large check-raise size when your opponent, as the pre-flop caller, makes a large stab on the flop, especially on wet and dynamic boards. Live players tend to telegraph hand strength with their bet size; a large stab typically indicates a very strong range (e.g., top pair, two pair, sets, straights). In such situations, a medium check-raise is ineffective because their range is too strong to fold. Instead, a large check-raise (e.g., 6x) exploits their strong, yet inelastic, range. While a solver might suggest large folds against such a raise, live players are often sticky and will call with hands like two pair or top pair, leading to more profitable large pots for you. This strategy works because you're targeting the strong, but not unbeatable, hands that are less likely to fold to a big raise.

Q3: When should you consider a very small bet size (e.g., 10% pot)?

A very small bet size (around 10% pot) is effective in specific scenarios, particularly in 4-bet pots on Ace-high boards when you hold a very strong value hand like Aces. The goal is to keep your opponent's range wide and weak by making it cheap for them to continue with hands like Kings, Queens, Jacks, or Tens. If they have the last Ace, you're likely to stack them anyway. This small bet extracts a tiny amount of value from weaker overpairs that would fold to a larger bet. If they call the small flop bet and then check the turn, it usually means they don't have an Ace, and you can then make a very small river bet to get calls from these weaker, capped hands. This strategy also works well for bluffs, as it allows you to keep their range wide on the flop and then fold on the turn if they stab, or bluff big on the river when their range is capped to one pair.

Q4: In what situations should you use a small bet size in a 3-bet pot?

In a 3-bet pot, particularly when you are the pre-flop raiser in position and flop a strong hand (like the nuts), a small bet size (e.g., $50) is often ideal. The reasoning is that in 3-bet pots, the absolute size of the bet matters more to live players than the relative pot size. A small bet encourages opponents to check-raise their strong hands (e.g., two pair, sets), building a bigger pot for you. It also allows weaker hands (e.g., pocket sevens, Ace-high) to continue, which they might fold to a larger bet. This strategy effectively caps your opponent's range on later streets; if they call the small flop bet, you know they are less likely to have premium hands that would have raised. This is particularly effective on wet, dynamic boards where opponents out of position tend to fast-play their strong hands.

Q5: When should you use a very large bet size (overbet) on the turn?

A very large bet size on the turn is effective when your opponent's range is capped after check-calling on the flop, especially on a blank turn card. For example, if you open with pocket sixes, flop a set, and your opponent check-calls on a wet board, their range is unlikely to contain two pair or sets (which they would have likely raised on the flop). While their range isn't necessarily "weak," it's capped, meaning their strongest hands are often king-queen, ace-queen, or flush/straight draws. These hands are inelastic and will often call a massive turn bet, whereas a medium size might not get sufficient value. This also applies to bluffs: a large bet gets more money into the pot, making a future river bluff more profitable if your opponent's capped range can be folded.

Q6: When is a small bet size preferred on a "nut-changing" turn card?

A small bet size is preferred on a "nut-changing" turn card (e.g., a board pair when you have bottom set, completing your full house). This is because you want to encourage your opponent to raise their newly strong hands (e.g., trips from the paired card) and to keep their draws (straight draws, gutshots, flush draws) in the pot. Recreational players become more price-sensitive and less inclined to chase draws when the board pairs, so a smaller bet ensures they stick around. This strategy maximizes value by allowing opponents to commit more chips with their strong hands and by keeping draws in play that you want to hit your hand, leading to larger pots. A medium bet might lead to slow-playing from strong hands and folding from draws, reducing your overall profit.

Q7: In what river situations is a very large bluff (1.5x-2x pot) most effective?

A very large bluff (1.5x-2x pot) is most effective on the river when your opponent's range is significantly capped and weak. This often occurs after you've used small bet sizes on previous streets (flop and turn) to keep their range wide and encourage them to raise their strongest hands. By the river, their remaining range is often weak, consisting mostly of one-pair hands (e.g., King-X). At this point, if your value bets would typically be small (to get calls from specific weaker hands), the very large bluff takes advantage of the fact that your opponent has very few strong hands remaining and can be forced to fold a high percentage of their capped range.

Q8: What are some rare exceptions where a medium bet size (around half pot or 2/3 pot) is acceptable?

There are four rare exceptions where a medium bet size can be acceptable:

1. **When you are the pre-flop raiser making a C-bet in a single-raised pot:** In these scenarios, a medium size (around half pot) often encourages opponents to raise their strong hands and call with their weak hands, striking a good balance for value and range manipulation.
2. **In 4-bet pots on low, dry boards:** On boards like 2-3-4, a medium-large bet (e.g., 2/3 pot, which is a large absolute size in a 4-bet pot) is effective because opponent's overpairs (Nines through Kings) are highly inelastic and unlikely to fold, allowing you to maximize value against that portion of their range before scary cards appear.
3. **When bluffing on the river, if your value bets would go either very large or very small:** If your "thick" value hands want to go very big and your "thin" value hands want to go very small, the medium size for a bluff can exploit the gap, making it hard for opponents to differentiate. It allows you to get folds from mid-strength hands without risking your entire stack against stronger hands.
4. **When your bluffs would go very large or very small, but your value wants to go "just right" (medium-large):** This is the inverse of the previous point. If your bluffs would prefer to be either tiny (to fold draws) or huge (to force folds from weak pairs), a medium-large bet for value (e.g., slightly over pot) can be optimal, as it gets calls from specific mid-strength hands (like Ten-X) while appearing less committal than an all-in bluff.