Value in Live Poker

This briefing document summarizes Maron's strategies for maximizing value in specific live poker situations, emphasizing aggressive sizing when holding strong hands or exploiting opponent tendencies. Maron, a full-time poker player with over five years of experience, advocates for "putting in an unreasonable amount of betting discs" in these five scenarios, claiming to have "netted over seven figures" by applying these principles.

Key Takeaways:

* **Aggressive Sizing is Key for Value:** Maron consistently advocates for using "absolutely massive" or "huge" bet sizes in specific situations where opponents are unlikely to fold strong-but-worse hands, or when they are capped or transparent in their hand strength.
* **Exploiting Opponent Tendencies:** The strategies are heavily based on exploiting common mistakes of live recreational players, such as telegraphing hand strength, not protecting check-back ranges, and being uncomfortable in unfamiliar sizing territory.
* **Identify Capped Ranges:** A core principle is to identify when an opponent's range is "capped" (i.e., they don't have the strongest possible hands), as this allows for larger value bets without fear of being raised or folding out better hands.
* **Sculpting SPR for River:** In some multi-street scenarios, the goal of a large bet on an earlier street is to manipulate the Stack-to-Pot Ratio (SPR) for the river, making it difficult for opponents to fold even strong-but-not-nutted hands.

Detailed Breakdown of Top 5 Spots:

5. When the Turn is a Blank

* **Scenario:** You have a strong value hand (e.g., Pocket Queens), open on the button, and the villain calls in the big blind. The flop is uncoordinated (e.g., Jack-Nine-Deuce with two spades). You bet half pot on the flop, and the villain calls. The turn is a "blank" (a card that doesn't significantly improve draws or connect with many hands in the villain's calling range).
* **Maron's Logic:** On a blank turn, the villain's range is often "capped." They are unlikely to have the absolute nuts. Maron asks, "Are they capped? And if yes I like to go big and if no I like to go small." The best hand they likely have is Ace-Jack or King-Jack. Since these hands are unlikely to fold to any size, even a massive one, you should bet huge to extract maximum value.
* **Quote:** "Are they capped and if yes I like to go big and if no I like to go small... They're not folding Ace Jack right now put in more money while you can."
* **Action:** Bet "absolutely massive" on the turn.

4. When Bottom Card Pairs (Turn or River)

* **Scenario:** You have a strong value hand (e.g., Aces). You open on the button, and the villain calls. The flop is uncoordinated (e.g., Queen-Nine-Deuce). You bet half pot on the flop, and the villain check-calls. The turn (or river) pairs the bottom card (e.g., another Deuce or Nine).
* **Maron's Logic:** Opponents are unlikely to have trips of the bottom card in their range after calling a flop bet. While they get "much stickier with top pair on paired boards," they become "much less sticky when they have draws." Players with draws will fold for large sizes because the paired board makes them uncertain if their hand will be good even if they hit. However, players with top pair (e.g., Queen-King, Queen-Jack) or even a two-pair hand involving the paired card (e.g., Nine-X on a paired nine board) will "get less price sensitive" and are "just not folding for even huge sizes here on this turn."
* **Quote:** "Treat these bottom card paired turns and rivers as more of a blank turn or river and choose that big size once again."
* **Action:** Treat the paired bottom card as a "blank" and bet "huge" (overbet) on the turn or river.

3. When the Villain Takes a Bet-Bet-Check Line (River)

* **Scenario:** You call a pre-flop open in position. Villain C-bets the flop (under half pot) and you call. Villain bets the turn (around 2/3 pot) and you call. Both flop and turn are blanks. On the river, which is another blank, the villain checks.
* **Maron's Logic:** Recreational players "generally check the river to check call." When they check the river, their range is polarized: either a "busted draw that decided to give up" or a "pretty good hand like Jack X that is planning on check calling." If you have a bluff, you'd go small to get them to fold draws. Therefore, if you have value, you should go "absolutely massive." Busted draws aren't giving any more money anyway. Hands like Queen-Jack or King-Jack (which are strong but not nuts) are unlikely to fold to any size. Maron notes he used to bluff small in this spot and "would just get tank called every single time by King Jack," indicating that even large value bets will be called.
* **Quote:** "If villains are checking this River to check call when we have value here we should just be blasting." "I would almost always overbet when all the draws brick."
* **Action:** Bet "absolutely massive" on the river, even 1.5x pot or more.

2. When Villain Check-Raises the Flop and then Checks the Turn (Nuts Change)

* **Scenario:** You open in position (e.g., Ace-Seven of Spades). Villain calls in the big blind. Flop is Jack-Nine-Deuce with two spades. You C-bet half pot, and villain check-raises. You call with a nut flush draw. The turn is a spade, completing your flush (the "nuts change"). Villain then checks the turn.
* **Maron's Logic:** When villain check-raises the flop, their range is heavily weighted towards value (sets, two pairs like Jack-Nine, Pocket Nines, Pocket Deuces). They are unlikely to have many flushes because aggressive players who would check-raise a flush draw on the flop would generally continue betting when they hit their flush on the turn. Passive players who might check a flush draw would not have check-raised the flop. Therefore, villain's range on the turn is mostly two pairs and sets. These hands are "just almost never folding a set on this turn" because they believe they can "boat up" on the river. The goal is to "sculpt that River spr so they just can't fold a set."
* **Quote:** "Villain's just almost never folding a set on this turn because they can call and in their mind you know they're getting odds to boat up if they boat up they're going to get the money right that's what they're thinking." "The goal here is to sculpt that River spr so when we get to the river... they're getting quite a price on the river."
* **Action:** Bet "absolutely massive" on the turn, even an overbet, to build a large pot and set up a favorable SPR for the river, making it difficult for sets to fold.

1. When You Check-Raise (Flop)

* **Scenario:** You are the pre-flop caller in the big blind (e.g., with Pocket Deuces). Villain opens on the button. Flop is Jack-Nine-Deuce with two spades. Villain C-bets half pot. You have a strong hand (e.g., a set of Deuces).
* **Maron's Logic:** Maron identifies three reoccurring mistakes by live players in position:

1. They C-bet way too much.
2. They "telegraph their hand strength with their sizing."
3. They "do not protect their checkback range" (don't have enough strong hands when they check back).

* Maron believes that weaker hands like Pocket Sevens that are C-betting mindlessly will fold regardless of check-raise size. Stronger hands like Ace-Jack or Ace-X of spades "are not folding whether we check raise 3x or whether we check raise 9x." Because villains "aren't used to looking at this spot," they can be "exploit[ed] the shit out of them by just targeting that top 10% of the range that is just never folding in a million years."
* **Quote:** "I think almost all live players are going to play worse if you put them in unfamiliar territory... I think we just exploit the shit out of them by just targeting that top 10% of the range that is just never folding in a million years when we take this huge check race size."
* **Action:** Take an "absolutely ridiculous check-raise size" on the flop, up to 9x the initial bet.

**Disclaimer:** These strategies are presented as Maron's personal approach and success stories in live poker. While he claims significant financial gains, individual results may vary. Applying these aggressive strategies requires a deep understanding of opponent tendencies and accurate hand reading.