

The Oracle Paths

Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

Chapter 161 - How to Breakthrough

Breakthrough was in fact quite simple, provided you understand why such a limit existed in the first place.

Every body, whether organic or inorganic, had a certain Aether capacity that it could contain before reaching saturation. The body of an Evolver could be compared to a bottle with the cork removed and the Aether to the liquid inside.

At first, the body had not yet reached its limits, so the bottle was far from full. As the Aether's stats increased, the bottle filled with water until it was full to the brim, then overflowed. This was the famous Aether's 100-point limit that he was now experiencing.

There were only three ways to solve this issue.

The first one, not really a solution, but an obvious one was to increase the size of the bottle so that it could hold more water. The bigger and more massive an object or living being was, the more Aether its body would contain.

This was logical and on the surface it had nothing to do with the density of Aether. Whether a human was 1 meter or 100 meters tall, his Aether stats would peak at 100 points, since this amount of Aether was proportionally distributed throughout the body.

However, the overall amount of Aether that could be manipulated was undoubtedly higher. Giant Aetherists were the most dangerous,

as were those gigantic mythical creatures with multiple Aether Skills from their Bloodline.

The second solution was to force water into the full bottle. This was the principle of using scuba tanks to hold oxygen under high pressure. By forcing more Aether into the body and preventing it from coming out, there were two difficulties to overcome.

The first problem was the resistance of the bottle, which had to be able to withstand the pressurized Aether being injected into it. In other words, a strong body could hold a higher amount of Aether, condensing further and further as more was added.

The Body Stat determining the body's resistance was the Constitution. The higher the constitution, the better the body's ability to withstand Aether. With his 36.2 pts of Body Constitution, Jake thought he was more than capable of breaking through that 100-pts limit compared to a normal human.

In fact, according to the manual any object could withstand extremely high amounts of Aether, because at a certain concentration the Aether would affect the receptacle itself, causing it to adapt.

In worlds where Aether was abundant, the metal bathed in Aether could become comparable to the myhril of fantasy tales. This meant that the quality of the vessel, or rather its body would not be a problem for a long time.

This brought him to the second element of this second solution: How to force the Aether to stay in the bottle? What was certain was that the bracelet wasn't capable of doing that. The Aether points he had tried to add beyond that limit had not been able to penetrate his body and had been quickly reabsorbed by his bracelet after recompression.

Aether Compression turned the Encoded Aether back into pure Aether energy by sacrificing 95% of the original Aether. In other words, every time he failed his breakthrough, he lost Aether. Fortunately, he had quickly figured out that it was pointless to continue.

The solution to this problem was very simple, but a major obstacle for many new Players and Evolvers. It was simply a matter of mentally controlling the Aether to force it to stay in the body.

In fact, he'd already done this many times before. Every time he moved the Aether into a part of his body to strengthen it, the Aether would actually go over the 100 pts limit in that limb. If he concentrated all of his Aether in his finger, he could easily exceed 1000 pts locally.

Sftiw, ovu gmooiu tat rmo vfsu f hfn. Hmj om qfcu ovu Auovuz vmit arlatu val gmtw ? Erhmtare fiimjut ovu Auovuz om gu foofhvut om mpz gmtw gw easare ao huzofar dprhoamrl frt f lnuhadah lvfnu ovfo hmpit gu hmrofarut. A gao iacu ovu dfho ovfo ao jfl hmqniahfout om daii f gmooiu jaov jfouz sfnmz.

By following this solution, one had to constantly control one's Aether. A simple moment of inattention would disperse the accumulated Aether. Jake thought he could do it with his current Intelligence stats, but he couldn't be sure. All it took was a couple of minutes of dozing off and all his efforts would be for naught.

This led him to the third solution: Improving the Encoding. High-quality Encoding could force the Aether to condense so that it would take up less space. Grade 1 Aether could be compared to a gas, while Grade 2 and 3 could be compared to a liquid or a solid.

Each additional grade allowed the body to hold 10 times more Aether without any special effort. On top of that, it was possible to include more functions in this more complex Encoding, which made it possible to infuse each Aether Stat with passive properties comparable to an Aether Skill.

Unfortunately, this was not free of charge. The Oracle offered the 7 grade 1 primary Encodings for free to help the new Evolvers and Players to survive, but everything else cost a fortune that had to be purchased from the Oracle Store.

Jake remembered seeing these rewards at the end of his Ordeal, but he just thought they were Aether Skills. Grade 2 Strength Encoding required 1,000 credits, an amount that would have required two to three more Ordeals with the same rating to be obtained.

He couldn't imagine how much Aether it would cost if he bought it directly from the Oracle Store. Of course, there was still the possibility to consult a qualified Aetherist or to use Grade 2 Aether Crystals.

In the first case, the Aetherist would manually modify the Encoded Aether that our body already contained, while making a module for the bracelet capable of performing this feat. But the cheapest way was to entrust the Aetherist with our Aether to transform it into crystals that could be used at any time.

These grade 2 Aether crystals couldn't be found in this Oracle Shelter at the moment, but it was a very common currency in the older Mirror Universe planets. Since the government had been on B842 for about 20 years already, these crystals should not be that rare on Thelma or New Earth. This gave him one more reason to go there, until he learned to make these Encoding on his own.

By the end of the chapter, he discovered that there was a fourth solution that was not listed as such since it had nothing to do with Encoding: To create an Aether Core. This was the whole point of Chapter 2, but it took a considerable amount of time to make it stable and it was recommended to have at least 100 pts of Extrasensory Perception Aether in order to take this risk.

Tvuzudmzu, oval lmipoamr jfl rmo fnniahfgiu dmz rmj. Tficare jaov Xa, Jfcu duio ovfo ovu laqniulo lmipoamr fsfaifgiu om vaq jfl om gpw gifrc hzwlofil zuftw om hmrofar Erhmtut Auovuz.

That way, he would be able to keep the Aether in excess if he felt he was about to lose control of it. The good news was that he already had more than one hundred of these crystals from the time he sold a gun and ammunition to Enya, the lady with the pink hair.

Rummaging through his bag again to find the crystals, Jake took immediate action. Using 16 Aether points to increase his Intelligence by 1 point, he focused on guiding the Blue Aether filament produced by his bracelet.

His own pupils glowed with blue and purple light, proof that he was now in control of his Aether. The new Aether filament was successfully guided to his brain and Jake felt his mental clarity increase significantly.

He now had 101 points of Aether Intelligence, but as soon as he released his control, the Aether filament would passively begin to scatter as if under a gentle breeze.

After that, he tried to do the reverse manipulation, guiding that blue Aether filament back to one of the translucent crystals. The Aether took refuge obediently inside and the crystal turned blue like a sapphire.

With its success, Jake decided to try another experiment. He controlled an equivalent portion of the Aether in his brain and managed to guide it into another crystal. He now had only 99 points left and felt dumber.

Feeling uncomfortable, Jake immediately reabsorbed this Blue Crystal to regain his 100 Intelligence points. He felt better immediately after that. When you had been smart once, it was impossible to live without it.

Now that he had been able to verify that this method worked, all he had to do was to decide what type of Aether these crystals would contain. Because recompressing the Aether via the bracelet would mean losing much of that Aether and he couldn't afford to do that.

Once his plan of action was decided, Jake would get out of the Shelter again to hunt Digestors and max out his Seventh Stat. Once this goal was accomplished, it would then be time to create his Aether Core, which would finally solve the problem.