

The Messy Middle

Navigating Transition

Deck r13 (17 Oct) · 30 slides · Guide r14 · Feiler Companion r1 · 90 minutes

Session at a Glance

This morning is the valley. Sessions 1 and 2 stood the men on the first summit and showed them what the descent costs; Session 3 walks them down into the transition itself and hands them the tools for walking through it. Two movements: thirty-three minutes of re-entry and review (the men talk before they are taught), then the **messy middle** proper — Bridges, Burnett, Feiler, Hollis — landing in fifteen protected minutes of writing in the Harvest Charter.

THE SENTENCE THAT MUST LAND

Trying does not work until shedding has made room. Everything else this morning — the prototypes, the ABCs, the reorder — hangs on the men hearing that transition asks for subtraction before addition. If the room remembers one sentence, make it this one.

Three outputs leave the room this morning: **§1.0 My Threshold checked (written after Session 2; reread and amended in the margin if needed)**, the **Peak marker written** (§1.1 Step One, three sentences), and the **homework assigned in three tiers** with the Couples Conversation named as the main work. Everything else is teaching in service of those three.

The closing arc — many voices, one passage, three moves: Shed · Experiment · Write. The synthesis slide (24) says it; you only have to point.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN · SETUP

CHECK	DETAIL
The hookup	HDMI from the PC to the TV. Test it with slide 6 up — the Two Summits painting is the one slide that suffers most from a bad screen. Confirm slide 24 (the reprise) renders its gold band.
The notebook	The course is on paper. Each man brings his WhyzMen notebook; hand out the Session 3 Participant Guide and the Feiler Reader's Companion at the door, hole-punched, to file behind Session 2. Men write in them with a pen.
Pens and spares	Pens at every seat, and two spare guides and companions for the man who forgot his notebook.

CHECK	DETAIL
Practice cards	No cards to print: card P came out of the front-cover pocket at Session 2, and the Toolkit is in the Reference tab. Bring a few spare P cards for anyone who lost his. You name the practice at Slide 29.
Charters	Every man brings his Harvest Charter — this morning is the first time it is opened in the room. Loose paper standing by for the man who forgot his; he transcribes this week.
Remote men	Optional per session: open Teams or Zoom early, share the deck screen, and make sure a remote man can hear the room and sits with one of the threes by phone or speaker.
No videotaping	A man who misses this morning catches up by paging the deck and working the guide. Give him the guide and the Feiler Companion, and send him the deck file tomorrow.
Time discipline	The closing writing block is the payoff of the whole session. If you are running long, cut from the review and the discussions — never from the writing.

WHAT CHANGED SINCE YOU LAST SAW THIS DECK

Today's changes (26 Sept deck r7, 30 slides; guide rev 6 → rev 7) come first. The five r5 → r6 changes that follow still stand.

CHANGE	WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT
New slide 18 — Knapsack callback	The Losses We're Setting Down: five losses, what we grieve and what we set down. Four minutes, just before Bridges. Scripted below.
New slides 28–29 — Readings, Practice of the Week	Readings in tiers: point, don't teach, one minute. Practice of the Week "Let them finish": thirty seconds to a minute; the card came at Session 2; one minute in pairs at Slide 29. Session 4 opens with one moment from each man.
Slide 4 check-in line	Re-entry (r12) checks each Session 2 item in one short line: §1.0 ("open to §1.0 — done / not yet"), Three at the Table (one sentence), Falling Upward in brief (one sentence that landed), and "Practice of the Week: tell us one moment with 'Ask the second question.'" The 30-day experiment, identity moments and cohort texts are no longer checked (optional at Session 2).
Slide 17 — Seasonal, not Annual	The rhythm line now reads "New Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Seasonal Rhythms." Say it that way.

CHANGE	WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT
New slide 24 — the synthesis	The Two Summits painting returns with a gold band: SHED · EXPERIMENT · WRITE, just before the Charter block (deck r7). One minute, scripted below. It is the hinge into the writing.
Renumbered; minutes moved	Old 18–22 are now 19–23; the synthesis is 24, the Charter block 25, Markers 26, Homework 27, Readings 28, Practice of the Week 29 and the Benediction 30. The six minutes came from Cultures (2→1), Opening Discussion (6→5), Experience of Transition (3→2), Closing Discussion (8→6) and the synthesis (2→1). Protected blocks untouched.
Rohr’s third panel is “Revealing”	Slides 8 and 9 now say the second half REVEALS meaning rather than fills it — the contents were always inside; the cracked container lets them appear. Teach it that way.
The Hero’s Journey is gone	Cut from deck and guide — one model too many. If a man brings up Campbell, honor it in a sentence (“same shape — descent, trial, return”) and move on. The story work lives in the Three Markers now.
Slide 17 slimmed down	The process bullet is one line. Moynes’ four phases (Vacation → Loss → Trial & Error → Reinvent) moved to the Participant Guide as a sidebar — point, don’t teach.
Charter numbering	Faith Foundation is §1.4; the Caring Shift is one line in §1.3 Strengths & Gifts (Charter v12). If your printed Charter says otherwise, it predates v12.

THE 90 MINUTES · RUN OF SHOW

Cumulative starts; ends at 1:30:00. Protected blocks are marked ★ — they are never the place you save time. The arc slide tells the room “30 / 60”; this table is the operating truth behind that round number.

#	BLOCK	MIN	START	
1	Cover — doors open, men settle	1	0:00	
2	This Morning's Arc	1	0:01	
3	The Path So Far	1	0:02	
4	What Came Up This Week — re-entry	10	0:03	★
5	Two Voices, One Passage	1	0:13	
6	The Two Summits — whole program in one picture	3	0:14	★
7	What Other Cultures Call the Second Summit	1	0:17	
8	Voice 1 · Richard Rohr	2	0:18	
9	Rohr's Two Halves & Your Container	1	0:20	
10	Voice 2 · David Brooks	2	0:21	
11	Science Confirms Theology	1	0:23	
12	One Passage · Avodah	1	0:24	
13	Key Distinctions	1	0:25	
14	Hollis & Lawrence-Lightfoot	1	0:26	
15	Biblical Foundation	1	0:27	
16	Opening Discussion — threes	5	0:28	
17	The Experience of Transition	2	0:33	
18	Knapsack callback — The Losses We're Setting Down	4	0:35	
19	Feiler & Bridges — Three Phases of Transition	4	0:39	
20	Burnett — Prototypes, Not Plans	5	0:43	
21	Feiler — The Two Jobs	4	0:48	

#	BLOCK	MIN	START	
22	Feiler — The ABCs & the Reorder	4	0:52	★
23	What Hollis Suggests	2	0:56	
—	Closing Discussion — threes, two questions	6	0:58	
24	The Synthesis — Two Summits reprise	1	1:04	
25	Open Your Charter — writing block	15	1:05	★
26	My Three Markers — send-off	2	1:20	
27	Homework — three tiers	2	1:22	
28	This Week's Reading — point, don't teach	1	1:24	
29	Practice of the Week — Let them finish	1	1:25	
30	Benediction	2	1:26	
—	Buffer · closing prayer runs long here, not in the writing	2	1:28	

IF YOU ARE RUNNING LONG — CUT HERE, IN THIS ORDER

1. Slide 7 (cultures) — read one language, not three. 2. Slides 11–15 — these review; thirty seconds each is enough. 3. The opening discussion — one question instead of two. 4. The closing discussion — four minutes instead of six. Never the re-entry, never the ABCs, never the writing block, never the Benediction.

MOVEMENT 1 · REVIEW & DISCUSSION (0:00 – 0:33)

The design principle: **review is re-entry, not recap**. The men talk before they are taught, and the “teaching” slides in this movement are thirty-to-sixty-second touches on material they have already met. Resist the lecture. Name the movement as you enter it — five seconds: “Movement one. You talk first.”

SLIDE 1 · Cover · 1 min · 0:00

Up as the doors open. Rohr's epigraph — “You must go down before you can go up” — is this morning in nine words. Greet; do not teach.

SLIDE 2 · This Morning's Arc · 1 min · 0:01

Two movements, one question each. Movement one: where are you this morning?
Movement two: who will you become?

SAY *“Review is not recap. It is re-entry. You will do most of the talking for the first half hour.”*

SLIDE 3 · The Path So Far · 1 min · 0:02

Covenant · your Why · the Charter. One line each. Land the bottom bar: this morning the seeds of the Charter's first chapter get written — identity before everything else.

SLIDE 4 · What Came Up This Week — Re-entry · 10 min · 0:03 ★

The four bullets under the §1.0 line are §1.0's actual prompts, assigned at the close of Session 2. Ask first: “Open your Charter to §1.0 — done or not yet?” (a show of hands). Then ask for the lines **in the man's own words** — do not have anyone read the page back. Also on the slide, one short line each: Three at the Table — one sentence on what you heard from her; Falling Upward in brief — one sentence that landed; the Practice of the Week moment.

EXPECT Lines 1 and 2 answered; lines 3 and 4 thin or blank. That is normal, and it is the setup for the closing writing block.

SAY *“Hold line three. We come back to it this morning, and you will have better tools for it by then.”*

SAY *“Practice of the Week: tell us one moment with ‘Ask the second question.’” The line is on the slide, word for word. Take three or four moments, one sentence each, inside the ten minutes. Thank each man; do not coach the practice.*

GUARDRAIL Do not let this run past ten minutes — it will happily take thirty. And note: earlier drafts asked “which summit are you on / what loss to grieve / who am I becoming.” Those prompts were **retired**. Ask what is on the slide.

SLIDE 5 · Two Voices, One Passage · 1 min · 0:13

Frame the method: two credible thinkers, one transition, no winner picked. Proverbs 11:14 — victory through many advisers. If you have ten extra seconds, point at Joshua 14: Caleb at eighty-five, asking for the hill country. That is the posture of the whole program.

SLIDE 6 · The Two Summits — One Picture · 3 min · 0:14 ★

Not decoration, not a divider — the single image that holds the entire program. Put it up and let the men look before you say anything. Then walk it left to right in four moves:

MOVE	SAY, ROUGHLY
1 • First summit	Success, identity, the container. Fluid intelligence got him up it. “Most of you climbed this one well. That is not the problem.”
2 • The descent	Rohr’s breaking of the container; Feiler’s lifequake. A man does not go around this valley. He goes down into it.
3 • The valley floor	The part men miss: the valley is not a waiting room. The tree — roots, faith, WHO I AM, the ten domains. Harvest what the first half grew; plant new seeds. TENDING is the daily work; BROTHERHOOD is who does it with you.
4 • Equipping	The word at the bottom is the hinge. He climbs the second summit on what he grew in the valley — roped to other men. Point at the climbers, the elders, Jubilee.

SAY *“Down into the valley, harvest the past, plant new seeds in every domain, and come out equipped to climb the second summit — with other men.”*

WHY HERE This morning IS the valley. Saying so is pastoral, not just instructional — the disorientation the men feel is on the map, and the map says it is terrain, not a wrong turn. Do not explain every label; the picture returns in the synthesis before the Charter block, and the guide carries the written walk.

SLIDE 7 · What Other Cultures Call the Second Summit · 1 min · 0:17

Retirement is an English outlier. Read two or three, not all eight — jubilación (you enter jubilation), kanreki (at sixty, reborn in red), ikhehla (an investiture, not a stopping). Then the question at the base: which of these fits you better than “retire”? Take two answers and move.

SLIDE 8 · Voice 1 · Richard Rohr · 2 min · 0:18

Container built — container cracked — contents **revealed**. Rohr’s claim to press: the fall is not punishment, it is curriculum. The first half was real and necessary; the tragedy is only getting stuck there. Ask the card’s question — how does the container image sit with you? — but take one answer, not five; the threes get it at slide 16.

SLIDE 9 · Rohr’s Two Halves & Your Container · 1 min · 0:20

The two-column detail behind slide 8. Do not re-teach it — let the columns hang, point at one contrast you like (binary → both/and is the sleeper), and read the Rohr quote at the base.

SLIDE 10 · Voice 2 · David Brooks · 2 min · 0:21

First mountain: ambition, résumé virtues, happiness — real but conditional. The valley: reckoning. Second mountain: commitment — community, vocation, faith, family; the eulogy self. Land the bottom line: happiness is what we want; joy is what we are made for.

SLIDE 11 · Science Confirms Theology · 1 min · 0:23

Let the numbers do the work: 40% depression-risk increase and 60% more physical conditions after retirement (IEA, 2013) — versus rising happiness in the 60s and 70s for men who navigate the transition (the U-curve). Arthur Brooks’ reframe: fluid intelligence declines, crystallized rises. The men who fight the shift suffer; the men who lean in flourish.

SLIDE 12 · One Passage · Avodah · 1 min · 0:24

Hebrew: one word for work and worship. The calling was never the job title. Rohr says the container cracks; Brooks says the mountain shifts; avodah says the service continues either way.

SAY *“We may retire from a job. We never retire from a calling.”*

SLIDE 13 · Key Distinctions · 1 min · 0:25

Happiness vs. joy (Brooks) · default vs. purposeful (Leider & Shapiro). The gold line is the takeaway: joy endures, happiness fades — and the second half is the first season you live on purpose.

SLIDE 14 · Hollis & Lawrence-Lightfoot · 1 min · 0:26

Four headlines: the adaptive strategy · then it cracks · loss and liberation are inseparable · the willingness to be a beginner again. The reasoning behind each is written out in the Participant Guide — say so, and read only Hollis’s question aloud: is the life you’re living the life that wants to live through you?

SLIDE 15 · Biblical Foundation · 1 min · 0:27

Seven renewal texts. Pick one, read it, let it stand — Isaiah 43:19 comes back at the Benediction, which makes it the elegant choice. The guide carries all seven.

SLIDE 16 · Opening Discussion · 5 min · 0:28

Threes. The Participant Guide lists four questions; choose two or three, not four — the container question and the “has a fall taught you more than your successes” question are the reliable pair. Sixty-second warning before you call time. Take one report-out per table at most.

MOVEMENT 2 · THE MESSY MIDDLE (0:33 – 1:04)

Now the new teaching. The through-line to keep in your own head: Feiler and Bridges name the terrain → Burnett gives the method → Feiler gives the target and the warning → Hollis gives the interior work. Each hand-off below is scripted because the joints are where sessions wobble.

SLIDE 17 · The Experience of Transition · 2 min · 0:33

This slide sets up the map; it does not draw it — the three phases come two slides on; resist previewing them. The line that must land: transition is normal, necessary, and it means **experimenting**. The Old teaches; the New signals the mess is done. End on the question and leave it open — not “what will I do?” but “who will I become?” It returns on the Burnett slide.

IF MOYNES COMES UP The four phases men recognize — Vacation → Loss → Trial & Error → Reinvent & Rewire — are a sidebar in the Participant Guide. They are not a rival map: Moynes’ phases can overlap the transition, with some direct parallels — Loss ↔ the Long Goodbye, Trial & Error ↔ the Messy Middle, Reinvent ↔ the New Beginning. You may point that out in a sentence, then send him to the sidebar.

RHYTHMS The bottom row now reads “New Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Seasonal Rhythms” (it said Annual). Point at it, do not teach it; the Rule of Life builds those rhythms in Session 4.

SLIDE 18 · Knapsack · The Losses We’re Setting Down · 4 min · 0:35

A callback to Sessions 1 and 2, placed just before Bridges’ “every transition begins with an ending.” Five cards, one per loss: what we grieve on top, what we set down underneath.

SAY *“In Session 1 we packed for the second summit. In Session 2 we asked what goes in the Knapsack. This morning, the five losses. Some of these are grief. Some of them are weight you were never meant to carry this far.”*

DO Walk the five cards left to right. For each, read the top line, then the bottom line: the title / having to prove it; the calendar that ran the day / a clock someone else owned; the daily colleagues / ties held only by obligation; being the one who knew / always having to be the expert; a mission handed to you / a purpose someone else chose.

ASK “Which one of these is actually a weight release for you?” Take two or three answers. Do not rush past the grief: you don’t skip it, but you know where it leads.

CLOSE “Grief well done lightens the Knapsack. A lighter pack lets you make the descent. That is not a tragedy. That is the curriculum.” Then straight into Bridges.

SLIDE 19 · Feiler & Bridges — Three Phases of Transition · 4 min · 0:39

Change happens to you; transition happens in you — and every transition begins with an ending, not a beginning. Walk Feiler's three phases (Bruce Feiler, *Life Is in the Transitions*), with Bridges' descriptions under each: The Long Goodbye (grief is appropriate; skipping it costs), The Messy Middle (not failure — gestation; this is where what matters happens), The New Beginning (emergence, not arrival; you will not notice the moment it began). Bridges' own names are Ending, Neutral Zone and New Beginning; the slide uses Feiler's because "messy middle" is the program's language — credit Bridges for the descriptions if asked.

SAY *"The Messy Middle is the longest phase. Do not be in a hurry to leave it."*

PASTORAL NOTE Some man in the room is eighteen months in and ashamed it is not done. Bridges is his permission slip. Watch faces during "do not be in a hurry" — that is who you check on afterward.

SLIDE 20 · Burnett — Prototypes, Not Plans · 5 min · 0:43

The question shifts from what will I do to who will I become — and you do not answer it by thinking harder. Three prototype principles: think big, test small (a 2-hour experiment beats a 6-month plan you never start); many ideas, not one (the Odyssey exercise — three radically different futures — is the extended version); failure is data, not verdict.

SAY *"Hope is not optimism. Hope is the willingness to prototype the future."*

HAND-OFF OUT Do not resolve the obvious question — experiments looking for WHAT? — that is Feiler's job, two slides from now. If a man asks it early, grin and say "hold that for four minutes."

SLIDE 21 · Feiler — The Messy Middle Has Two Jobs · 4 min · 0:48

Placement matters: Burnett has just sold experimenting, which is Feiler's SECOND job. Leading with Shed makes subtraction the news — and it is the news, for men whose reflex is to fill the calendar by March.

SAY *"The messy middle asks two things of you. One of them you already want to do."*

JOB ONE — SHED. Habits, routines, delusions, identities. The shedding comes first, and men skip it. Klotz gives the mechanism — subtraction neglect: given a structure to stabilize, almost everyone adds a pillar; almost no one considers removal. **JOB TWO — TRY.** The Burnett material they just heard. One line: "You already have this one. Hold on to it."

THE HINGE The only sentence that has to land this morning: ***trying does not work until shedding has made room.*** A man who stacks a second-half calendar on a first-half life has not made a transition. He has just gotten busier.

CHARTER This lands in §3.1, My First Steps, which opens with what he sets down — written at Session 13. Name it, do not teach it: “There is a page for this later. This morning, just notice whether your instinct is to add.” John 3:30 is on the slide because the subtraction question is finally theological, not managerial.

PUSHBACK “I have already lost plenty — I don’t need to shed more.” The right objection; give the straight answer: involuntary loss is not the same as chosen release. The first happened to him. The second he chooses — and it is the one that makes room. Do NOT run the Meaning Audit here; it is named next slide and worked in the Reader’s Companion.

SLIDE 22 · Feiler — The ABCs & the Reorder · 4 min · 0:52 ★

SAY *“So you run small experiments. Fair question: looking for what? Here’s the answer.”*

Walk the three cards one at a time — define one, let it land, move on. Sixty seconds each. Agency: for forty years work handed it to you every Monday at 8am; nobody hands it to you now — the loss most men feel first. Belonging: relationship, not proximity — a man can be surrounded by people and belong to none of them; the card’s question (“would anyone here miss me if I stopped showing up?”) is the sharpest on the slide. Let the silence sit. Cause: something higher that outlasts you — avodah and Ephesians 2:10 come back here.

Work the reorder out loud — do not leave it abstract. Two demonstrations, thirty seconds each: the plant manager whose week quietly reorganized around his grandson’s Tuesday — Belonging moved to first, and nobody announced it. The surgeon whose board seat looked like Agency, who cannot stop thinking about the mission clinic — Cause did not get louder; everything else got quieter. Then the blank row: A-B-C, arrow, three question marks.

SAY *“That is the honest state of most men in this room this morning, and it is not a problem. It is the assignment.”*

THE CALLBACK The **REPLACES** row is the point of the slide: the five losses fold into three targets. Mastery, Structure, Identity were Agency. Relationships was Belonging. Purpose was Cause. Say it — the men have carried five losses since Session 1; this morning they become three things to aim at.

HAND-OFF Name the Meaning Audit; do not run it: “There is an instrument for this — the Meaning Audit, in your Reader’s Companion. Ten minutes, and the most useful ten minutes in that packet. Not this morning.”

SLIDE 23 · What Hollis Suggests for the Second Half · 2 min · 0:56

Six practices, appendix register — this is reference, not teaching. Read the six titles at most, then leave his question hanging over the closing discussion: is the life I am living the life that wants to live through me, or the life I constructed to meet others' expectations?

SLIDE — · Closing Discussion · 6 min · 0:58

Threes, the two questions in the Participant Guide: (1) Which of the three — Agency, Belonging, Cause — took the biggest hit when you stopped working, and which is quietly rising? (2) Name one experiment you could run in the next thirty days — small, cheap, reversible, and specific enough that someone could ask you next month whether you did it. Push for specificity on question two; “reconnect with friends” is not an experiment, “call Bill Tuesday” is.

THE CLOSE (1:04 – 1:30)

The last twenty-six minutes are the reason the first sixty-four exist. Protect them.

SLIDE 24 · The Synthesis — Two Summits Reprise · 1 min · 1:04

Same painting as slide 6 — that is the point; do not teach it again. One minute: go straight to the SAY lines and the three verbs. The men have now walked the terrain it shows.

SAY *“We put a lot in front of you this morning — Rohr, Brooks, Bridges, Feiler, Burnett, Hollis. Those are not six theories to choose between. They are voices describing one valley from different ridgelines.”*

What transition is, in one sentence, pointing at the picture: a season with a shape — an ending that cracks the container, a long disorienting middle where meaning gets reordered, a new beginning that emerges rather than arrives. Then the gold band, one breath per verb: **SHED** — Feiler's first job, Hollis's provisional self, the setting-down lines of §1.0. **EXPERIMENT** — Burnett's prototypes, each one testing Agency, Belonging, Cause. **WRITE** — harvest what the first half grew: the Three Markers, the Charter.

SAY *“The third verb is write. Open your Charter.”*

GUARDRAIL Do not add the ten domains, tending, or Jubilee vocabulary here — Session 7–8 territory. The tree in the valley carries them silently.

SLIDE 25 · Open Your Charter — Writing Block · 15 min · 1:05 ★

First time the Harvest Charter is opened in this room. Everything before this morning was discussion; make the shift explicit, then get out of the way.

SAY “Take out your Charter. Turn to Section 1.0, My Threshold — the first page of Part One. You wrote these four lines into the Charter after Session 2. This morning is a check, not a rewrite: done or not yet? Then reread line three.”

BLOCK	RUN IT
§1.0 • 8 min	A check, not a rewrite. The man who has not written §1.0 writes it now; the man who has rereads it and amends in the margin, dated. Lines 3 and 4 are the work. Do not rush a man off line 3. Silence in this block is the block working, not failing.
Peak marker • 7 min	“Three sentences. One scene where you felt most fully alive.” Peak is the safe marker — which is exactly why it gets written here, not alone at ten o’clock on a Thursday. Valley and turning point go home.

RULES — SAID ONCE Nothing is read aloud. Nothing is collected. Nothing is graded.

WHY THIS MORNING, IF ASKED He could not honestly answer “what still deserves to be mourned” before he was taught that every transition begins with an ending. Bridges gave him the vocabulary forty minutes ago. §1.0 is written at Session 2 (Charter v12); here he checks it and adds what he now has words for.

CONTINGENCIES No Charter → loose paper, transcribe this week; do not let him sit it out. Finished in three minutes → he wrote the acceptable version; ask quietly for the one he would not want read aloud. Nothing on line 3 → note it; check in privately afterward, never in the circle.

SLIDE 26 • My Three Markers — Send-off • 2 min • 1:20

Do NOT read the cards item by item — the worksheet is in the guide and the peak is already written. Three things: (1) What is left: valley and turning point, three sentences each — that is the whole assignment. (2) Where it goes, said once: peak feeds §1.3 Strengths; valley feeds §1.0 Threshold and §1.4 Faith; turning point feeds §1.1 Story and §1.3 Caring Shift. Men finish work whose destination they can see. (3) The rules: private, not graded, in the Charter at §1.1, due Session 4 (Monday, November 30). Session 4 opens with “open to §1.1 — done / not yet.”

SAY “Your story is the primary raw material for your second-half re-authoring.”

IF STUCK Tell him to start with the valley — almost always the easiest to find, and it usually surfaces the turning point on its own. Three sentences means three sentences; men who write pages now will have nothing left for Session 5.

SLIDE 27 · This Week's Work — Required and Optional · 2 min · 1:22

Required on the left, optional on the right — say the distinction plainly. Two-week window: Session 4 is Monday, November 30; no session Thanksgiving week.

REQUIRED, with minutes: the Couples Conversation (45 min — the main work; Session 4 cannot run without it) · §1.1 Three Markers, Valley and Turning Point, three sentences each (Peak was written in the room; 30 min) · the Two Halves Reader's Companion, one sentence that landed (20 min) · Practice of the Week "Let them finish" (5 min; From the Toolkit: 1 · Listen). Total line on the slide: about 100 minutes over the two weeks. Bring the Charter and the Couples Conversation page to Session 4. **OPTIONAL** (say "optional" out loud; not counted): the Feiler Companion, the Hollis Reference Note, and the recommended text to the men left and right. If asked "is that all?" — yes. Two things finished beats seven started.

KEEP SEPARATE The Couples Conversation (marriage assignment, reported at Session 4) and the Three Markers (Charter work, open to §1.1 at Session 4). Don't let them blur.

SLIDE 28 · This Week's Reading · 1 min · 1:24

Point, don't teach. Name the required reading and say where it lives (binder or shared folder). Mention Going Deeper once, lightly: optional, never assigned. Required: The Two Halves of Life: Reader's Companion (Rohr and Brooks compared; bring one sentence; about 20 min) and the Couples Conversation Guide & Worksheet (the main work). Going Deeper: the Feiler Companion (The ABCs of Meaning) and the Hollis Reference Note. The Summary of Falling Upward was Session 2's reading and is no longer listed here.

CONFIRMED The Two Halves Companion is the required Session 3 reading (Simplification Plan, approved).

SLIDE 29 · Practice of the Week — Let them finish · 1 min · 1:25

READ THE PRACTICE Let them finish. "When they stop talking, wait two beats. Then speak." Name its Toolkit skill and section: "It is section 1, Listen, in your Toolkit — the card is the menu, the Toolkit is the kitchen." **ONE MINUTE, IN PAIRS** "Try it once on the man beside you right now": one man says what he is taking home this morning; the other waits two beats after he stops before he speaks; switch. If the session is out of time: "Name the one person you will try it with this week" — the obvious one is your wife, in the Couples Conversation. Tried it? Tick the one box on the card. Session 4 opens with "Tell us one moment with this week's practice."

ROOTED IN James 1:19: "Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry." The card came out at Session 2; bring spares for anyone who lost his.

SLIDE 30 • Benediction • 2 min • 1:26

Isaiah 43:19 — a way in the wilderness. Read the blessing, brief closing prayer, announce Session 4: The Marriage Retirement Lands In — and that it only works if they arrive having had the conversation.

No man walks through this valley by accident. May you understand the transition you are in, experiment boldly — and make it well.

WATCH-FORS • THE WHOLE MORNING ON ONE PAGE

THE MAN WHO...	YOUR MOVE
writes nothing on line 3	Note it during the writing block. Check in privately afterward — never in the circle.
goes quiet at “valley”	Same: privately, this week, not publicly, not this morning.
says “I already have all three”	Sometimes true; more often the provisional personality talking. Don’t argue — ask which he would rank first, and whether that was also his answer at 45.
deflates at “five years”	“That is not five years of suffering. That is five years of becoming. And you are not doing it alone — that is what this room is for.”
resists shedding (“I’ve lost enough”)	The right objection; the straight answer: involuntary loss is not chosen release. The first happened to him; the second makes room.
is 18 months in and ashamed	Bridges is the permission slip: the messy middle is the longest phase. The average lifequake runs about five years. He is on the map, not off it.
brings up Campbell or Moynes	Honor in a sentence. Moynes: you may name the parallels (Loss ↔ Long Goodbye, Trial & Error ↔ Messy Middle, Reinvent ↔ New Beginning) and point to the guide’s sidebar. Campbell: point to the markers (story work). Do not add new models from the front.

ACCURACY GUARDRAILS • FEILER

What Feiler actually says: the ABCs are his taxonomy of where meaning comes from, and his transition claim is that a lifequake REORDERS them — a new dominant source emerges. His stated mechanics for the messy middle are shedding and creativity.

What is ours, not his: using the ABCs as the search target for our experiments. A fair application — but do not attribute it to him in the room. If a well-read man challenges you, concede cheerfully: “Right — the ABCs are his map of meaning. Using them as the checklist for your experiments is ours.”

Numbers safe to say aloud: a disruptor every 12–18 months, roughly three dozen per lifetime; about one in ten becomes a lifequake; the average lifequake runs about five years; about half are voluntary — worth saying out loud in a room of men who chose their retirement date. Say “hundreds of life stories,” not a count. And keep order-not-rank in view: Cause is not the highest letter, and the goal is not to climb to it.

WHAT’S DUE WHEN

ITEM	BRING TO	DUE
Couples Conversation worksheet	Session 4	Session 4 — the session depends on it
§1.1 Three Markers (peak, valley, turning point)	Session 4 — open to §1.1	Session 4 (Monday, November 30)
Read: “The Two Halves of Life” companion	Session 4 — one sentence that landed	Session 4
Feiler Reader’s Companion worksheets	—	Optional; Meaning Audit feeds the Caring Shift line in §1.3 and §2.1 later
Practice of the Week: Let them finish	Session 4 — one moment	Tried it this week ☐ on the card

TEES UP • SESSION 4

The Marriage Retirement Lands In — two callings, one covenant. The scaffolding that held a marriage in place for thirty years comes down when the work does, and what was always there becomes visible. It runs on the Couples Conversation the men are doing this week; a man who arrives without having had it can observe but not fully participate — which is why it is named this morning as the main work, twice.

Story drafting begins at Session 5; the markers the men started this morning are its raw material. §1.0 is revisited at Session 9.

THE MORNING ON ONE PAGE · CUE CARD

#	BLOCK	CUE
1–3	Open	Review is re-entry. This morning: seeds of the Charter's first chapter.
4	Re-entry ★	Four \$1.0 prompts, their own words. One PotW moment each ("Ask the second question"). "Hold line three." Ten minutes, hard.
5–6	Voices · Two Summits	No winner picked. Walk the picture in four moves; this morning is the valley.
7–15	Review touches	Thirty–sixty seconds each. Revealing, not filling. Joy endures. Avodah.
16	Discussion	Two questions, threes, five minutes.
17–19	Transition · Knapsack · Three Phases	Process, not event. Seasonal rhythms. Grieve and set down: the pack gets lighter. Every transition begins with an ending. Don't hurry the middle.
20	Burnett	Prototype the future. Don't answer "looking for what?" yet.
21	Two Jobs	Shed before try — the one sentence of the morning. Subtractions named, not taught (§3.1, at Session 13).
22	ABCs ★	Three cards, two reorder demos, blank row. Five losses → three targets. Name the audit.
23 + disc.	Hollis · threes	"The life that wants to live through you." Experiment question: make it specific.
24	Synthesis	Many voices, one passage. SHED · EXPERIMENT · WRITE. "The third verb is write."
25	Charter ★	\$1.0 (8 min) + Peak (7 min). Nothing read aloud, collected, or graded.
26–30	Send-off	Markers due S4 (Nov 30). Three homework tiers — "optional" out loud. Readings: point. PotW: Let them finish. Isaiah 43:19.

"For lack of guidance a nation falls, but victory is won through many advisers." — Proverbs 11:14. That is the room you are holding this morning. Hold it gently and keep the clock.