

SESSION 4 · FACILITATOR GUIDE

The Marriage Retirement Lands In

Two Callings, One Covenant

Deck Session_4_The_Marriage_Retirement_Lands_In_7 · 21 slides + 1 facilitator-only · Guide r11 · 90 minutes

Session at a Glance

This morning is tender. Sessions 1–3 asked a man to look at himself; Session 4 asks him to look at the person his transition lands on. Three movements: twenty minutes of **review and debrief** (the couples conversation, spoken aloud), forty minutes on **the three at the table** (what retirement removes, the theology of the covenant, polarities, and why now), and thirty minutes on **a Rule of Life** — the instrument that answers Session 3’s loss of Structure and travels home to the kitchen table.

THE SENTENCE THAT MUST LAND **The covenant is not the Venn intersection of what each of you wants.** Everything else this morning — the scaffolding, the polarities, the Rule — hangs on the men hearing that the marriage is a third party with its own vision and claims, not the overlap of two agendas. If the room remembers one sentence, make it this one.

Three outputs leave the room this morning: **the room named** (widowers, divorced, never-married men told they belong — in the first two minutes, out loud), **a first draft begun** (a guiding sentence and one practice per rhythm in the guide’s scratch space), and **the Kitchen Table Conversation assigned as the designed centerpiece of the week to Session 5 (Monday, December 7)**. Everything else is teaching in service of those three.

She is not in the room this morning. Speak as if she were — it is on the arc slide, and it is the tone check for every joke, every example, every aside.

First Two Minutes · Naming the Room (slide 22 — do not project unless needed)

Given the demographic, some men in the room are widowed, divorced, never married, or married to a wife who wants no part of this. A session built around “your wife” leaves them holding an empty chair for ninety minutes — unless you name it, aloud, before the first content slide.

SAY *“Some of us are widowers. Some are divorced, or never married. Some have a wife who wants no part of this. This session is still yours — no one holds an empty chair this morning.”*

Also in your pocket this morning: the **alternate Charter path** (honor and continue a vision built with someone now gone — or complete the Marriage Shared Vision worksheet with an adult child or a close friend); for widowers, take-home step 4 becomes honoring the “we” they built; and the listening posture — label the feeling, ask a real question, resist fixing. The Participant Guide carries all of this on its “No One Holds an Empty Chair” page, so a man can find it again without asking.

Know before this morning who in the room is widowed or facing illness. The Being Mortal slide (8) is written gently, but you watch faces, not slides — if someone goes quiet, follow up privately afterward.

Before You Begin · Setup

The hookup	HDMI from the PC to the TV. Test it with slide 6 up — three columns of small text suffer most from a bad screen. Confirm slide 4 (the dark divider) reads as intentional, not as a dead input.
The notebook	The course is on paper. Each man brings his WhyzMen notebook; hand out the Session 4 Participant Guide at the door, hole-punched, to file behind Session 3. Men write in it with a pen. The Harvest Charter is the last section of the notebook.
Cards: E1, H1	E1 · The Great Listener Card (Listening vs Fixing on its back) and H1 · The Marriage-Safe Conversation are in each man’s front-cover pocket, labeled Session 4; bring spares of each. Both come out at slide 15. The men have had the Toolkit in their Reference tab since Session 2. Have pens and two spare guides at the door.

Charters	Every man brings his Harvest Charter, open to §1.1 for the opening check. This morning's writing is scratch-space drafting in the guide; the homework is one line, one practice for the marriage. The Marriage Shared Vision worksheet (Charter Appendix C) is optional Going Deeper.
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 inside a table group 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 both cards, and send him the deck file tomorrow.
Time discipline	The couples debrief will happily eat the morning. Twenty minutes, hard. If you run long later, cut from review touches and discussion length — never from naming the room, never from the Kitchen Table assignment.

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. Three new slides this revision (14, 19, 20) took five minutes from Breakout 1, Breakout 2, Core Orientation, and the Closing Discussion; the protected blocks are unchanged. The arc slide tells the room “20 / 40 / 30”; this table is the operating truth behind those round numbers. r11 moved one minute from the Closing Discussion (4 → 3) to the Kitchen Table assign (3 → 4) to make room for the repair story.

#	BLOCK	MIN	START	
1	Cover — doors open, men settle	1	0:00	
2	This Morning's Arc + Naming the Room	3	0:01	★
3	Couples Conversation — debrief + Practice check-in	16	0:04	★
4	The Three at the Table — dark divider	1	0:20	
5	The Scaffolding Comes Down	5	0:21	
6	Three Sit at the Marriage Table	7	0:26	★
—	Breakout 1 — which difference is most alive?	6	0:33	
7	Polarities to Manage	5	0:39	
—	Breakout 2 — which pole do you lean toward?	4	0:44	
8	Why Answer This Now? (Being Mortal)	6	0:48	
9	A Rule of Life — Not a Cage. A Trellis.	4	0:54	
10	The WhyzMen Core Orientation	2	0:58	
11	How to Build Your Rule — See · Choose · Build	4	1:00	
12	The Four Rhythms	4	1:04	
13	A Worked Example	3	1:08	
14	The Rule Clears the Way — callback (NEW)	3	1:11	
15	From This Room to the Kitchen Table	4	1:14	★

#	BLOCK	MIN	START	
16	Closing Discussion	3	1:18	
17	The Kitchen Table Conversation — assign	4	1:21	★
18	Homework	1	1:25	
19	Readings — point, don't teach (NEW)	1	1:26	
20	Practice of the Week — Her day first (NEW)	1	1:27	
21	Benediction — Ecclesiastes 9:9	1	1:28	
—	Buffer · closing prayer runs long here	1	1:29	

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

1. Slide 10 (Core Orientation) — read the four arrows, skip the commentary. 2. Slide 13 (Worked Example) — point at the guide's copy instead of walking it. 3. Breakout 2 — fold its question into the closing discussion. 4. Closing discussion — one question instead of two. **Never the naming of the room, never the debrief, never slide 6, never the Kitchen Table assignment.**

Movement 1 · Review & Discussion (0:00 – 0:20)

The design principle carries over from Session 3: **review is re-entry, not recap**. The men talk before they are taught — and this morning what they talk about is the conversation they were assigned to have at home.

SLIDE 1 · Cover · 1 min · 0:00

Up as the doors open. Saint-Exupéry's line — looking outward together in the same direction — is this morning in one sentence. Greet; do not teach.

SLIDE 2 · This Morning's Arc + Naming the Room · 3 min · 0:01 ★

Three movements, one question each. Movement one: what did the conversation surface? Movement two: who sits at your table? Movement three: what will you build?

Then the script from the “First Two Minutes” section above — before the first content slide, verbatim if that helps. Read the arc slide's bottom line aloud: *she is not in the room this morning; speak as if she were.*

SLIDE 3 · Couples Conversation — Debrief · 16 min · 0:04 ★

Tables, not the whole room. Three questions in order, exactly as the slide has them: one sentence on what you heard from her, and any surprises → where were you agreed → where were you misaligned, and what tension sits underneath. The order matters: surprises loosen the room, agreement builds safety, and the misalignment answers feed directly into the Polarities slide — you will point back at them at 0:39.

SAY *“Share only what you feel comfortable sharing. Her words stay hers — bring the topic, not the transcript.”*

EXPECT A man who did not have the conversation. Do not shame him — he can speak to the questions from his own read of the marriage, and the Kitchen Table Conversation gives him a second chance this week. Privately, find out whether “didn’t” means “couldn’t”: a wife who refused is a man who needs the alternate path, not a nudge.

GUARDRAIL Twenty minutes for the whole movement, hard stop. This debrief will happily take fifty. Close with the checklist, one short line each — a show of hands, social pressure, not collection. The reading: two or three men give one sentence that landed from The Two Halves of Life Reader’s Companion, no discussion. The Charter: “Open to §1.1, your Three Markers — done or not yet?” Markers were assigned at Session 3 and were due today; a man who is not done finishes this week, without fuss.

PRACTICE OF THE WEEK The slide’s last line is the check-in on Session 3’s practice. Straight after the markers check-in, still inside the twenty minutes:

SAY *“Tell us one moment with this week’s practice: Let them finish.”*

One moment per man, no commentary. A man who forgot says so and passes — no shame; the new practice comes at slide 20.

Movement 2 · The Three at the Table (0:20 – 0:54)

SLIDE 4 · Dark Divider · 1 min · 0:20

Opening, dark and quiet: when the scaffolding comes down, who is your marriage now? Let it sit a beat. The room was named at slide 2; this is where the tone you promised begins.

SLIDE 5 · The Scaffolding Comes Down · 5 min · 0:21

Core idea: retirement removes the scaffold (career + child-rearing) that organized separate roles and masked real differences. The five differences listed were always present; the scaffold hid them. **Normalize this hard** — it is not a marriage in trouble, it is two people discovering they were never identical. Invite one or two men to name which difference is most alive; the breakout after slide 6 gives everyone the same question.

SLIDE 6 · Three Sit at the Marriage Table · 7 min · 0:26 ★

The theological centerpiece. Pre-empt the objection before anyone raises it: “isn’t a separate vision almost disloyal — even blasphemy against ‘one flesh’?” One flesh is not erasure. The model is the Trinity: distinct persons, undivided union. Then the three seats — his calling (valid even when not yet shared), her calling (not an appendix to his, not a vote to be won), and the covenant itself, a real third entity with its own vision and claims.

SAY *“The covenant is not the Venn intersection of what each of you wants. Only two whole people can be one flesh.”*

GUARDRAIL The deeper “solo vision / emotional sovereignty” material lives in the Reader’s Companion and is always paired with covenant vision. Do not hand a man “your calling is valid without her” without the covenant frame around it — that sentence loose in a struggling marriage does damage.

SCRIPTURE If a man wants a text: Genesis 2:24, Ephesians 5:21, and Ecclesiastes 4:9–12 — the last is the cord of three strands. All three are printed in the Participant Guide.

BREAKOUT 1 · At tables · 6 min · 0:33

One question, in the guide with writing space: **which of the five differences is most alive in your marriage right now — and how do you know?** Sixty-second warning before you call time. One report-out per table at most.

SLIDE 7 · Polarities to Manage — Not Battles to Win · 5 min · 0:39

Barry Johnson’s polarity management, lightly. Adventure⇌security, together⇌family-centered, spend/give⇌save, mission⇌enjoyment: tensions a couple rebalances for life, not disputes with a winner. This reframe lowers the temperature — nobody has to be wrong. Point back at the misalignments from the debrief: most of them live on one of these four lines, and that is the point.

SAY *“Difference is the norm, not the alarm.”*

BREAKOUT 2 · In pairs · 4 min · 0:44

“Which pole do you lean toward? Which does she?” Then the both/and template in the guide — “We will honor ____ by ____ and ____ by ____” — one polarity, one sentence, ninety seconds of writing. A reframe becomes a tool when it is written down.

SLIDE 8 · Why Answer This Now? · 6 min · 0:48

Being Mortal — handle gently, especially with ill men and widowers present. Gawande, drawing on Laura Carstensen’s socioemotional-selectivity research: as time horizons shorten, priorities shift from achievement and accumulation toward presence, relationship, and meaning. The urgency: the healthy, mobile, adventuring years are a finite window, open now.

CAUTION Frame as an invitation to clarity, not fear. All Gawande/Carstensen content is paraphrased — do not read long quotations from the book (copyright and tone both). Watch the room; if someone goes quiet, follow up privately afterward.

HAND-OFF *“So if the window is open now — what do you build in it? Not a plan. A trellis.” That sentence is the hinge into Movement 3.*

Movement 3 · A Rule of Life (0:54 – 1:14)

The through-line to keep in your own head: Benedict gives the image (*regula* = trellis) → Willard gives the method (Vision–Intention–Means, taught as See it · Choose it · Build it) → the four rhythms give the structure → the worked example proves it is real. This movement answers Session 3’s loss of Structure — say so when you enter it.

SLIDE 9 · Not a Cage. A Trellis. · 4 min · 0:54

“Rule” translates the Latin *regula* — a trellis, the frame a vine is trained on. Benedict called his “a little rule for beginners.” Why now: retirement removes imposed structure overnight — the alarm, the commute, the calendar someone else filled. Two easy errors: rebuild the old scaffolding (busyness for its own sake) or drift (the open calendar as quicksand). The Rule is the third way — structure a man *chooses*, aimed at who he is becoming.

SLIDE 10 · The WhyzMen Core Orientation · 2 min · 0:58

The vision layer of the Rule. Four postures, each an “over” statement: withdrawal→presence, proving→contribution, isolation→relationship, control→wisdom. Invite each man toward his own — the collisions between what he chooses and what he defaults to are exactly the conversation. John 15:4 grounds it: abiding, not achieving. First cut if you are behind.

SLIDE 11 · How to Build Your Rule · 4 min · 1:00

Beneath the slide sits Dallas Willard’s Vision–Intention–Means, reframed as See it / Choose it / Build it. The diagnostic question for SEE IT: where do you feel most alive, and where most defensive? Aliveness points toward the vision; defensiveness names what stands in the way. For CHOOSE IT: a vision admired is not a vision chosen — the artifact is a present-tense guiding sentence (“I am learning to...”), a confession of direction, not a boast of arrival. The guide has two ruled lines for a first draft — give the room ninety seconds of quiet to write one.

SLIDE 12 · The Four Rhythms · 4 min · 1:04

Daily practices ground; weekly connect and give away; monthly review; seasonal prune and recommit. One guideline above all: one practice per rhythm — a rule kept small is a rule kept. Dallas Willard’s disciplines of engagement and of abstinence (The Spirit of the Disciplines) sit behind the examples if a man wants more.

SAY “*Small and sustainable beats heroic and abandoned.*”

WATCH-FOR The most driven man in the room will try to turn his Rule into a new performance review. Willard's line for your pocket: "Grace is not opposed to effort; it is opposed to earning." Name the irony gently — a rule that says 'contribution over proving' must not itself become a way of proving.

SLIDE 13 · A Worked Example · 3 min · 1:08

This is Participant Zero's actual rule — a model, never a template. The power is seeing a real, specific, honest rule ("presence over withdrawal, contribution over proving"), not copying it. Point at the guide's copy rather than reading every line.

PASTORAL NOTE For a man whose identity was his schedule, the empty calendar can feel like grief before it feels like freedom. Don't rush him to productivity. The Rule is the slow, kind rebuilding of rhythm — companionship for the Tuesday-morning ache.

CHARTER Each man's draft Rule lands in the Harvest Charter — §3.2 My Rule & My Triad (the fuller version is optional, Appendix L · My Rule of Life). The Kitchen Table Conversation brings his spouse into the rhythms. Name the destination; men finish work whose destination they can see.

SLIDE 14 · The Rule Clears the Way · 3 min · 1:11

Callback to Session 2 — Particularity, plus the habit mechanics. Placed after the worked example, before the take-home. The Rule of Life is not the destination; it makes room to be present.

SAY *"In Session 2 we said meaning lives in the particular: this sunset, this conversation, this man. The Rule is how you make room for that. It clears the way for presence."*

Point to the left card: Psalm 46:10, "Be still, and know." The Hebrew for "be still" (rāphāh) means let go, release. The five minutes of stillness on the daily line is the join between Particularity and the Rule. Point to the right card: every practice gets a cue (when and where — "after morning coffee, in the red chair") and a two-minute version (what you do on the day you don't feel like it). Session 13 will build on this; this morning just name it. Land the bottom line: "The trellis holds the vine up. It does not make the fruit. Presence does." The Participant Guide carries both cards in a box after the worked example.

BELOW THE WATERLINE Clear's Atomic Habits (make it obvious, make it easy) and Fogg's Tiny Habits sit behind the right card. Behind the left sits the program's Particularity pairing: notice the moment (Burnett & Evans) · mark the moment (Heath & Heath, The Power of Moments). Do not name any of them to the room.

The Close (1:14 – 1:30)

SLIDE 15 · From This Room to the Kitchen Table · 4 min · 1:14 ★

The road home, four steps: name the third · bring one polarity · listen to understand · begin the “we.” The listening step is the tactical-empathy posture — label the feeling, ask a real question, resist fixing; make her feel known first. Step 4 is this week’s one-line homework: one practice for the marriage, named together. The Marriage Shared Vision worksheet (Charter Appendix C) is now optional. For widowers, step 4 becomes one practice that honors and continues the “we” they built — say it from the front; it is also printed in their guide.

SAY *“The program doesn’t pull you away from her. Done right, it sends you toward her with better tools.”*

PULL OUT E1 · The Great Listener Card and H1 · The Marriage-Safe Conversation. Have the men take both from the front-cover pocket. Thirty seconds, no teaching: *“Step three — listen to understand — is on these two cards. One for any conversation, one for the kitchen table. Take H1 with you to this week’s conversation. The long versions are Toolkit §1 Listen and §4 At Home, in your Reference tab.”*

SLIDE 16 · Closing Discussion · 3 min · 1:18

Two questions, at tables, both in the guide with writing space: (1) the biggest gap between me and my wife in how we spend our time together in this half of life — and what our apart time adds to the relationship; (2) one experiment we might run together this season. Push for specificity on the experiment: “a Tuesday walk after dinner, starting this week” beats “spend more time together.” At three minutes, keep both questions brisk; if the tables are slow, run question (2) only.

SLIDE 17 · The Kitchen Table Conversation — Assign · 4 min · 1:21 ★

The designed centerpiece of the homework — twenty minutes, three questions: what daily rhythms do we want to protect · what is one thing each of us may need to release · what new rhythm do you hope we build together. Amos 3:3 sits above the footer on purpose — agreement before motion is the whole assignment. One thing heard comes back to Session 5.

GUARDRAIL Keep it separate from the Charter work — the conversation is the main work; the one practice for the marriage flows out of it, not the other way around.

TELL 60 seconds, right after the three questions. “Some of you will fumble this conversation. You’ll start fixing, or get defensive, or miss what she’s really saying. Here’s what to do when that happens.” Then tell it plainly: A therapist at the VA was working with a woman veteran. After about the fourth session, the woman left saying she “might get busy” and not come back. Nothing dramatic; it just felt off. Before the next appointment the therapist picked up the phone: “I think I may have said something, or missed something. The session felt different. It could help to talk about that.” The woman came back and went on to make real progress. Asked at the end what had made the difference, she said: “There was this point where you noticed I wasn’t happy with what you did. The fact that you even noticed was a big deal.”

SAY *“Getting her wrong is not the failure. Not noticing is. Long marriages don’t run on never missing each other. They run on going back.”*

THE LINE Give them the sentence for the week, and say it twice: “I think I missed something the other night. Can we go back to it?” For widowers and unmarried men, it works the same with an adult child, a sister or a close friend.

CARE Say “a woman veteran” and nothing about why she was in therapy; that detail can land hard on a man whose wife or daughter carries something similar. Tell it as a story, not a study. Do not name Pugh to the room.

BELOW THE WATERLINE Allison Pugh, *The Last Human Job* (2024), as told on Hidden Brain. Therapists call it rupture and repair. The full story is in Facilitator Background › Power of Being Seen, §13; the participant reading on Pugh comes at Session 10.

SLIDE 18 · Homework · 1 min · 1:25

Point, don’t read — the guide carries the same list, minutes and total. Say the window out loud: Session 5 is one week away, Monday, December 7. **REQUIRED**, with honest minutes: the Kitchen Table Conversation, card H1 in hand, one thing heard (30) · one practice for your marriage, one line, from this morning’s Rule of Life (10) · Practice of the Week, Her day first (5). No reading: the conversation is the reading. Pulled out at slide 15: cards E1 (The Great Listener, Listening vs Fixing on the back) and H1. Bring to Session 5: one thing heard, your one line, one moment. Total on the slide: about 45 minutes this week. **OPTIONAL** — say “optional” out loud: the Marriage Shared Vision worksheet (Charter Appendix C), The Life Story Interview II, and slide 19’s Going Deeper readings; not counted. The McAdams appendix and the Allender reference move to Session 5’s library.

SLIDE 19 · Readings — This Week's Reading · 1 min · 1:26

Point, don't teach. No required reading this week: the Kitchen Table Conversation is the reading. Mention Going Deeper once, lightly — optional, never assigned: The Life Story Interview II, and the Rule of Life, Atomic Habits & From Knowing to Doing readings (the Going Deeper Reading Guide). The Participant Guide lists them the same way.

DECIDED Simplification Plan: no required reading at Session 4; Rule of Life, Atomic Habits and From Knowing to Doing stay Going Deeper; McAdams and Allender move to Session 5's library.

SLIDE 20 · Practice of the Week — Her day first · 1 min · 1:27

One to two minutes. Read the practice, name its Toolkit skill, then one minute in pairs:

SAY *"Ask about her day before you tell yours, and stay with her answer." It is section 4, At Home, 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" — ask about his morning before you say anything about yours, and stay with his answer for one more question; switch. If the session is out of time: "Name the one person you will try it with this week." Tried it? Tick the one box on the card. Rooted in John Gottman's research on turning toward a spouse's bids for connection — the slide shows "Gottman: turning toward"; say no more than that. This is the Rule of Life at work: one small practice, noticed weekly. It pairs naturally with the Kitchen Table Conversation. For widowers or unmarried men: a daughter, a sister, a close friend — say it aloud.

CHECK-IN Session 5's opening check-in asks for one moment with this practice: "Tell us one moment with this week's practice: Her day first."

SLIDE 21 · Benediction · 1 min · 1:28

Ecclesiastes 9:9 — enjoy life with your wife, whom you love, all the days of this fleeting life. "The days are numbered — and they are yours together. Go spend them on purpose." Brief closing prayer. Announce Session 5, two weeks away (Thanksgiving): Me, the Co-Author & Protagonist of My Story — markers due, and bring one thing you heard at the kitchen table.

Watch-Fors · The Whole Morning on One Page

the widower who goes quiet	Being Mortal and the kitchen-table language can land as grief. Privately, this week — never publicly, never this morning. His alternate path is real work, not a consolation prize.
the man whose wife “wants no part of this”	Do not coach persuasion. The alternate path (adult child, close friend) keeps him moving; pushing his wife through him builds resentment in two directions.
the man who didn’t have the conversation	No shame at the table — he works from his own read this morning and gets the Kitchen Table Conversation as a second chance. Privately: was it “didn’t” or “couldn’t”?
the man who goes quiet at the repair story	He may already be carrying a missed conversation at home. Don’t name it in the room. Find him at the break, or call this week, and let the repair line be his way back in.
the man who hears “her calling” as a threat	Usually fear wearing theology. Don’t debate; restate the Trinity frame — distinct persons, undivided union — and offer the Reader’s Companion material paired with covenant vision.
the driven man building a performance review	He will have seven practices per rhythm by Thursday. One per rhythm, out loud, twice. Grace is not opposed to effort; it is opposed to earning.
the man who deflates at the worked example	“I could never write that.” He is comparing his blank page to another man’s finished draft. The guiding sentence is two ruled lines, present tense, this morning — start there.
tears, anywhere	This morning is the likeliest session for them. Do not rescue the room from silence. A hand on the shoulder at the break beats a public comfort in the moment.

Accuracy Guardrails

Gawande / Carstensen. Everything on slide 8 is paraphrase, and the slide says so. Gawande's argument in *Being Mortal* draws on Carstensen's socioemotional selectivity theory: shrinking time horizons shift priorities toward emotionally meaningful goals. Do not read long book quotations aloud, and do not turn her research into "science says you will die soon" — it is about horizons, not prognoses.

Barry Johnson. Polarity management is his framework (Polarity Management, 1992). What is ours: applying it to retirement-vision differences. Concede cheerfully if a well-read man knows the source.

Willard / Foster / Benedict. Vision–Intention–Means is Willard (*Renovation of the Heart*); the disciplines of engagement and abstinence are Willard (*The Spirit of the Disciplines*); Foster (*Celebration of Discipline*) is a fuller menu of practices; regula-astrellis is the standard reading of Benedict. "See it / Choose it / Build it" is our house reframe — do not attribute the phrasing to Willard.

The Trinity analogy. An analogy, not a doctrine of marriage. If a theologically careful man presses, agree: all analogies to the Trinity limp; this one is doing one job — distinct persons, undivided union — and it is not asked to do more.

If the room wants numbers. Safe to say aloud, from Bowling Green's National Center for Family & Marriage Research: the gray-divorce rate doubled between 1990 and 2010; by 2022, nearly 40% of people divorcing were 50 or older (8% in 1990); the median first gray divorce ends a 29-year marriage. Use only if asked — the deck deliberately carries no fear slide.

Pugh. The repair story on slide 17 is Allison Pugh's (*The Last Human Job*, 2024), retold here from the *Hidden Brain* episode summary. Tell it in your own words. The client's closing line is the only quotation worth keeping word for word; check it against the book before it ever goes on a slide. Leave out the clinical reason she was in therapy.

In the Facilitator's Kitchen

Sources to draw from, and to ration on participant-facing slides: Benedict's Rule (regula = trellis) · Dallas Willard, Renovation of the Heart (Vision–Intention–Means) and The Spirit of the Disciplines (disciplines of engagement and abstinence) · Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline (the menu of practices) · John Mark Comer, Practicing the Way (rhythms) · Annie Dillard (“how we spend our days...”) · Atul Gawande, Being Mortal · Barry Johnson, Polarity Management · James Clear, Atomic Habits and BJ Fogg, Tiny Habits (the cue and two-minute version on slide 14 — below the waterline). As the Psalmist asks: “Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom” (Psalm 90:12). That is the whole work of this session — numbering the days on purpose, together.

What's Due When

ITEM	BRING TO	DUE
Kitchen Table Conversation — one thing heard	Session 5	Session 5 — the session opens on it
One practice for your marriage — one line	Session 5	Session 5 — read at the opening check
Optional: Marriage Shared Vision worksheet	—	Optional; can be added to Charter Appendix C
Three Markers (Peak · Valley · Turning Point)	Session 4 — open to §1.1	Session 4 — assigned at Session 3
Practice of the Week · Her day first — Tried it this week ☐	Session 5	Session 5 — one moment at the opening check-in

Tees Up · Session 5

Me, the Co-Author & Protagonist of My Story. The Three Markers the men have carried since Session 3 become raw material: story drafting begins. Session 5 opens on the kitchen table — one thing each man heard, his one line — so this morning's assignment is not optional homework; it is the opening ten minutes of Session 5, one week from now.

Open Items for Dave

1. Resolved (October 15): the listening material now lives in the Communication & Relationships Toolkit (§1 Listen, §4 At Home) and on cards E1 and H1, which the men receive at slide 15; the Toolkit has been in their Reference tab since Session 2. Session 4 names no later session.
2. Resolved (Simplification Plan): the McAdams appendix and the Allender reference are no longer Session 4 homework; they move to Session 5's library.
3. The deck carries no breakout slides; both breakouts (after slide 6 and after slide 7) run from this guide and the Participant Guide. If you want them on screen, two quiet question slides would close the gap — the S3/S4 split notes recommended the same two questions.

4. Resolved: slide 19 now has no required reading; the Rule of Life, Atomic Habits and From Knowing to Doing readings stay Going Deeper.

The Morning on One Page · Cue Card

#	BLOCK	CUE
1–2	Open ★	Name the room in the first two minutes — no one holds an empty chair. “She is not in the room this morning; speak as if she were.”
3	Debrief ★	What you heard → surprises → agreements → misalignments. Topic, not transcript. Then the checklist: a Two Halves sentence, open to §1.1 — done / not yet, one moment each with Let them finish. Twenty minutes, hard.
4–5	Scaffolding	Dark divider, one beat. The scaffold hid the differences; it didn’t create them. Not a marriage in trouble.
6	Three at the Table ★	Trinity: distinct persons, undivided union. “Not the Venn intersection.” Covenant frame stays around solo-calling talk.
B1 · 7 · B2	Polarities	Which difference is most alive? Tensions, not battles — nobody has to be wrong. Both/and sentence: write it.
8	Being Mortal	Gently. Paraphrase only. Invitation to clarity, not fear. Hand-off: “Not a plan. A trellis.”
9–12	Rule of Life	Regula = trellis. See it · Choose it · Build it. Guiding sentence, ninety seconds of quiet. One practice per rhythm.
13–14	Worked example · Rule clears the way	A model, never a template. Watch the driven man. Grace is not opposed to effort — it is opposed to earning. Be still: each practice gets a cue and a two-minute version.
15–16	Kitchen table ★	Toward her, not away from her. Label, ask, resist fixing. Pull out E1 and H1. Widowers: honor the “we.” Experiment: make it specific.

#	BLOCK	CUE
17–21	Send-off ★	Twenty minutes, three questions, one thing back to S5. Amos 3:3. Ecclesiastes 9:9 — go spend them on purpose. Practice: Her day first. Repair story: “Can we go back to it?”

“Two are better than one... a cord of three strands is not quickly broken.” — Ecclesiastes 4:9, 12. That is the room you are holding this morning — and the marriage each man goes home to. Hold both gently and keep the clock.