

The Strengths Portrait

What Am I Wired to Do?

North star: he walks in holding two reports. He walks out holding one sentence. Everything before the Convergence is gathering material for it.

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Wise Men Still Seek, Knowing Their Why's

Session Overview

Purpose, outcomes, and the timing spine

Purpose

Session 8 is the convergence session. Men arrive holding two assessment reports, the two core values they narrowed to at Session 7 (already checked once against their VIA top 5 in that session's Echo Check), and their own story from Sessions 5 and 6. None of it is new. What is new is that for the first time it gets laid side by side on one page, so that what repeats across five independent readings becomes visible.

The danger is the assessment results party. Four sequential debriefs will make the morning informative, flat, and forgettable. Everything you teach is in service of the Convergence — and if you have to choose, you cut teaching, never the Convergence.

Session Outcomes

- Men can distinguish what CliftonStrengths measures from what VIA measures from what a practical skill is — three different questions, not three flavors of one.
- Men understand that talent is not calling: an assessment names the shape of the tool, not the job.
- Every man has written one sentence in two clauses — The Signature (Charter 1.3) and the Contribution Hypothesis (feeds My Next Chapter).
- Every man has done the Crosswalk and the Skills Harvest in the room, and named one test action under two hours for Wilderness Week 3.
- Men understand why the sixth row of the Board is blank, and expect to fill it at Session 9.

TIMING SPINE 90 minutes · post this where you can see it

CLOCK	MOVEMENT	MIN	SLIDES	WORKBOOK
0:00	The Unemployed Strength & From Your Week	8	3-5	—
0:08	Wiring — CliftonStrengths (8 and 13 hidden)	10	6-13	Wiring page
0:18	Character — VIA & the Crosswalk, in the room	10	14-19	Crosswalk page
0:28	The Trained Hand — the Skills Harvest, in the room	10	20-22	Skills Harvest page
0:38	The Caring Shift — three lines (27 hidden)	6	23-27	Caring Shift lines

0:44	The Convergence — three rounds	38	28–36	Board, R1, R2, R3
1:22	Close — test, Naming the Gift, homework, reading, practice, benediction (1 min float)	8	37–44 (38 hidden)	Naming the Gift

READ THIS BEFORE YOU PLAN ANYTHING ELSE

There is almost no float this morning: about one minute, inside the close. Session 8 now fits 90 minutes with the Crosswalk and the Skills Harvest done in the room (r9), and the twenty minutes came from shorter teaching. Four slides are hidden: 8 (one in 33 million), 13 (the Knapsack callback), 27 (Working the Harvest) and 38 (the Two-Hour Clearing). Wiring runs 10 minutes instead of 18, the Caring Shift 6 instead of 11, the Convergence 38 instead of 40, and the close 8 instead of 11. Everything hidden is still in the Participant Guide. If you are behind at 0:44, cut in the order in Appendix B. Never from Round Two.

NO PRE-WORK TO CHASE

The Crosswalk and the Skills Harvest used to be home pre-work, and a cohort that arrived without them was a twelve-minute problem with no good answer. They now happen here, about ten minutes each, in the Session 8 Workbook, so every man starts level. What men must bring: CliftonStrengths Top 5, VIA top 5, and the Charter binder open to §1.1 and §1.2. Send a Saturday text: “CliftonStrengths Top 5 and VIA top 5 printed or on your phone? Bring your binder.”

Before Men Arrive

Set-up checklist

Threes pre-assigned, on a card at each seat

Do not let men self-select this morning. Round Two works better between men who have to actually listen to reconstruct each other. Separate men who arrived together.

A plan for a count that does not divide by three

Make one quad and give it 24 minutes from your own float. Do not make a pair — the Witness round depends on two men hearing the same Board.

Three spare CliftonStrengths theme lists, printed

For the man who did not take it. He circles five he recognizes; it counts for this morning. Do not let a missing assessment become a reason to disengage.

Three spare VIA lists

For the man without his VIA top 5. He circles five he recognizes and works the Crosswalk from them.

A visible timer

This session has a hard spine and Round Two will run over if you let it.

Session 8 Workbooks — one per man, at each seat

Handed out this morning, not at Session 7: the Crosswalk, the Skills Harvest, the Caring Shift lines and the Board are all done in it here, and the Naming the Gift card and evidence page are its last two pages. Bring five spares.

Your own answers written out

You go first on the Unemployed Strength, and you model the paid-for/free question. Have them ready — improvising sets the wrong depth.

DO NOT preview Session 9 content beyond the one-line handoff at the end. In particular, do not preview the “Named by the Body” exercise. Let it arrive.

1

The Unemployed Strength

0:00 – 0:08 • 8 minutes • Slides 3–5

Cold open. No welcome, no housekeeping, no prayer yet. Put the slide up and speak. Every man's voice is in the room inside eight minutes, and the question the morning answers is on the table because they put it there.

WHAT YOU SAY

“Achiever does not stand down at 65. Command does not resign. Responsibility does not get a severance package. Whatever you were wired to do, you are still wired to do — the difference is that for forty years somebody handed you a place to put it. Nobody hands it to you now. And if you do not assign a strength a job, it will assign itself one. Usually a small one. The lawn. The portfolio you check six times a day. Your wife's kitchen.”

WHAT YOU DO

- Let the laugh happen on the kitchen line. It is a real laugh and it is also recognition — that is why it works. Do not explain it and do not soften it.
- Go around the circle in seating order. Do not ask for volunteers.
- You go first, with one word. That sets the length.
- One word each. If a man gives a sentence, let the first pass; on the second offender say “one word” pleasantly and keep moving.
- Absolute silence between men. Do not nod approvingly, do not say “good one.” Any response you give one man becomes a standard the next performs to.
- Then a second lap, the Practice of the Week check-in (last line on Slide 4). SAY: “Tell us one moment with this week's practice: Name the value you see.” One moment per man, no commentary.
- Only if you are ahead: Rule of Life seasonal check — one question, not a discussion: “Is the Rule you drafted in Session 4 still alive? What would you prune?” A practice that quietly died is information, not failure.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

You will hear leadership, building, fixing, deciding, teaching, negotiating, protecting. Also — and note these — “being needed,” “being the guy,” “solving.” Those are identity words wearing a strength costume. The men who say them are the most likely to stall at Round One's need question, and the men for whom this morning matters most. Note them; do not name them.

From Your Week (3 min, slide 5)

The Session 7 items, one short line each. Same circle, same order as the one-word round, one sentence now: “Read one of your two values aloud, and the sentence you wrote for it. No commentary.” The field report is gone: sharing a value became last week’s practice, and its moment was the second lap on slide 4.

WHAT YOU DO

- Then hands only, about thirty seconds: “§1.2 — two values written? CliftonStrengths Top 5 on the table? VIA top 5 on the table?” Done or not yet; both are honest answers. Spare theme lists and VIA lists are on the set-up list; men without results work the Crosswalk from the five they circle.
- Tell the men their two values go on the Board this morning, and the Crosswalk runs on them at 0:18.
- If you are behind, hands only for all of it.

2

Wiring — CliftonStrengths

0:08 – 0:18 · 10 minutes · Slides 6–13 (8 and 13 hidden)

Three teaching moves and one pairs exercise, then get out. You are not certifying strengths coaches — men can read their own report. Your job is the three things the report does not tell them. (r9: the one-in-33-million slide and the Knapsack callback are hidden; both are in the Participant Guide.)

1. The group skew (3 min, slides 7–9)

Sixty seconds on Gallup's four groups (Gallup calls them domains), then have every man mark which group his five cluster in. Ask for a show of hands: three or more in Executing or Influencing? In a room of retired engineers, managers, and tradesmen, expect a lot of hands.

WHAT YOU SAY

“Your most developed themes are the ones your employer gave targets to for forty years. That is not a flaw — it is what happens when a system rewards one part of you for four decades. The problem is that the second half does not come with targets. Nobody assigns them. I am not telling you your Executing themes are useless. I am telling you they are currently unemployed, and the hiring is now your job. That is a structural problem, and structural problems have solutions.”

WATCH-POINT

Some Executing-heavy men hear “you are obsolete.” Watch for the man who visibly deflates. Catch his eye and repeat the last line directly to him. Follow up after the session. Conversely, men clustered on the right are not off the hook — they often have vision with no execution habit. Name that in one sentence so they do not coast.

2. Talent is not calling (1½ min, slide 10)

This is the theological spine of the session and it protects everything downstream. Buechner's line has two terms — deep gladness and the world's deep hunger. The report in their hand is one term. Say so plainly, and tell them that in about forty minutes you are going to make them put a need on the table alongside their strengths, on the same page.

Callback: the men heard Buechner at the Session 3 Benediction. Say “you heard this in November” — the repetition is doing real work.

3. Every theme has a basement (1 min, slide 11)

Light in tone, serious in content. The retirement-specific point is the guardrails: a deadline told Achiever when enough was enough, a colleague told Command to sit down, an HR department told Responsibility it was not his job. All gone at once, and nobody warned them. Read the four basements and take no

answers unless you are ahead. The Barnabas Turn at the close is the same move, so the slide still earns its minute.

Sourcing note: “balcony and basement” is strengths-coaching community language, widely used but not official Gallup terminology. Use it freely; do not attribute it to Gallup if asked.

4. Pairs — paid for, or done for free (4 min, slide 12)

Pairs, not threes, and pair men who did not arrive together. Two minutes each way; call the switch out loud and firmly. The question is the whole exercise — say it twice before releasing them.

WHAT YOU SAY

“Which of those five did your job pay for — and which one did you do for free?”

WHAT YOU DO

- Model it first. One sentence, thirty seconds: a theme your work paid for, and one you never got paid for.
- Circulate. Listen for the man who says “all five were the job.” Do not correct him in the room — note him. He most needs Round Two, and his partner may already have handed him the answer.
- Before you move on, make sure every man physically marks the free one on his report and on his Workbook Wiring page. It becomes a Board entry in twenty minutes.

5. Hidden • The Knapsack — Built to Carry This (slide 13, optional)

Hidden in r9 to make room for the Crosswalk; show it only if you are ahead, two minutes. Capacity, not just weight. Some heavy things are yours to carry; others were never yours. It lands straight after the paid-for/free question because the free theme is the one you carry well.

WHAT YOU SAY

“The Knapsack problem isn’t only about weight. It’s about capacity. You’re wired to carry some heavy things well. Others are heavy and you were never built for them. Those can go.”

WHAT YOU DO

- Point to the knife: one tool, many uses. That’s a strength.
- ASK: “What’s one thing still in your pack that you were never wired to carry?” Two answers, then move on.

3

Character — VIA and the Crosswalk

0:18 – 0:28 • 10 minutes • Slides 14–19

VIA is a confirming lens, not a second full debrief — and nothing in this block is new to the men. They took VIA before Session 7 and laid their top 5 beside their two core values in that session's Echo Check. The Crosswalk now happens here, in the Workbook (r9: it was thirty minutes at home). In the room: a thirty-second reminder, one distinction (one minute), a thirty-second callback, six and a half minutes of Crosswalk, and ninety seconds surfacing the finding. Give VIA equal airtime to CliftonStrengths and you will lose the Convergence.

The reminder and the distinction (1½ min, slides 15–16)

Thirty seconds of reminder, not orientation — the Peterson and Seligman origin, the six virtues and the 24 strengths were taught at Session 7. Re-say only the three markers of a signature strength (essential, effortless, energizing) and circle the energy marker verbally; it returns twice this morning. Then the distinction itself, which IS new, because it needs both reports in the room:

WHAT YOU SAY

“CliftonStrengths tells you what you do. VIA tells you who you are while you do it. Two men both score Achiever — one drags people along behind him, one carries them. Every one of you has worked for both, and twenty years later you can still name which one you would follow again. That is VIA. It is the part of you that people remember after the project is over and nobody remembers the project.”

That last line matters for this room specifically. These men are leaving the projects behind. What is left is what VIA measures.

The callback to Session 7 (30 seconds, slide 17)

A callback, not a teach — men did this at Session 7. Say it once: “Last week you narrowed to two values and checked the road each one travels — the VIA strength that carries it. Same value, three roads: Kindness, Leadership, Humor. This morning adds the third thing: the report in your other hand tells you who is driving.” The clean formulation, worth saying slowly: your values say where, your VIA says which road, your CliftonStrengths say how you drive.

The Crosswalk (6½ min, slide 18, added r9)

This was thirty minutes of home pre-work; it now happens here, silent, on the Workbook Crosswalk page. Say it once: “Your two values down the left, from §1.2. Beside each one, the VIA strength in your top five that carries it — and the CliftonStrengths theme that drives it. Draw the line. If a value has no strength carrying it, tick it and leave it. Do not fix it this morning. Six minutes.” Circulate; a man without his results works from the spare list. Call one minute left. Do not discuss — the next slide surfaces the finding, hands only.

The orphan value (90 sec, slide 19)

The Crosswalk was just done, in the room. Surface the finding and move. Ask who found a value with no carrier — hands only. With two core values, most men will find exactly one orphan; say so.

WHAT YOU DO

- Say out loud how many hands are up: “Look around. That is most of the room.” That is what makes it safe.
- DO NOT ask which value. Naming it in plenary turns a useful finding into a confession, and you will lose four minutes and some trust.
- Say the pastoral line even if nobody looks troubled: an orphan value is a gap in practice, not a gap in character.
- Circulate afterward and note privately any man for whom both values are orphans. That is a direct feed to Session 13 and to his §3.1 First Steps — and he will not raise it himself.

Common orphans in this population: Generosity with no Kindness or Love ranked high. Faith with no Spirituality. Courage named as a value with Bravery sitting at nineteen. Integrity valued with Honesty low.

4

The Trained Hand

0:28 – 0:38 • 10 minutes • Slides 20–22

The Skills Harvest from the First Mountain now happens here, in the Workbook (r9: it was forty-five minutes at home). It is still a harvest, not a brainstorm: asking men to invent skills cold produces “management” and “Excel” and nothing else. Reading your own story back with a pen is what works, and six silent minutes with §1.1 open is enough to do it.

The harvest (7 min, slide 21)

One minute to walk the sources: Charter §1.1 My Story — underline every verb you used about yourself; Appendix B My Forgotten Range, if he wrote it (optional) — the Darwin list nobody ever paid him for; and anything else he does uncommonly well. Then six minutes, silent: underline, then list the verbs on the Skills Harvest page. Call one minute left. A man without his binder works from memory and checks it against §1.1 at home.

The criterion (3 min, slide 22)

WHAT YOU SAY

“I did not ask which three you were best at. I asked which three you would keep doing if nobody ever paid you again. Most of you were best at something you are relieved to be done with. You can be the finest cost estimator in three counties and never want to open a spreadsheet again. That is a skill that drains — and it is the same energy marker you read on your VIA report twenty minutes ago.”

WHAT YOU DO

- Name the VIA callback out loud. It makes the two blocks feel like one argument rather than two exercises.
- Transfer now. Every man copies his three verbs onto the Trained Hand row of the Board. Do not let him carry them in his head into Round One.

TWO WATCH-POINTS

THE MAN WHO WROTE JOB TITLES — “operations manager” is not a skill. Push quietly: “What did you actually DO on a Tuesday?” You will get scheduled, mediated, forecast, trained. THE MAN WHOSE PAGE IS EMPTY — more common than you would expect, particularly among men whose careers ended badly. He is not being modest; he is grieving, and the grief is telling him the forty years were worthless. Do not argue with him. Say quietly: “Use your Forgotten Range instead.” His Workbook already tells him that route is legitimate. Follow up after the session.

5

The Caring Shift

0:38 – 0:44 · 6 minutes · Slides 23–27 (27 hidden)

This block sits between the two analytical stretches on purpose. Two cognitive blocks back to back and the room is flat by minute forty. It is also structurally load-bearing: strengths tell a man what he is capable of, and without a direction the Convergence degrades into a matching game. This is where he supplies the world's-hunger term from inside himself rather than off a spreadsheet.

Slow your pace here. Lower your volume. The previous three blocks were briskly taught; this one is not taught, it is opened.

Carstensen (2 min, slide 24)

Do not name the theory unless someone asks — “Carstensen at Stanford” is enough attribution. Iceberg principle: the framework is yours, the experience is theirs. Open-ended horizon means optimizing for information, novelty, a wider network. Limited horizon means meaning, depth, the people you already love. The finding that makes it more than a truism: the trigger is horizon, not age. Younger people given a limited horizon re-sort the same way.

The reframe (1 min, slide 25)

This is the emotional pivot of the session. Deliver it slowly and then stop talking.

WHAT YOU SAY

“Some of you have been quietly worried that you are losing something. That the fire is going out. That you used to want more than you want now, and you have been reading that as a warning sign. It is not. Your drive did not diminish. It got re-aimed, and the thing that re-aimed it was the truest information you have ever received — that the time is not unlimited. That is not decline. That is accuracy. And a re-aimed drive is a far more dangerous thing than a scattered one.”

COUNT FIVE FULL SECONDS OF SILENCE BEFORE YOU ADVANCE

Do not fill it. Some men need those five seconds and one or two may need a handkerchief. This is the slide where grief surfaces in men who have lost a peer, had a diagnosis, or buried a parent recently — “time is finite” is not abstract for them. Do not name anyone in the room. Find him at the break or call him this week.

Three lines (3 min, slide 26)

WHAT YOU DO

- Two minutes writing, silent, in the Workbook. Prompt once, then be quiet: “Full sentences, not lists. And be specific — ‘my family’ is true of every man in this room and tells you nothing.”
- One minute reading. LINE TWO ONLY, around the table, one sentence each, no response from anyone.

- Say before releasing: “You will hear five sentences. You are not going to respond to any of them. Just let them be in the room.”
- Tell them line two becomes the Direction row of the Board, and the one Caring Shift line in §1.3 this week (the full paragraph is optional). It gives the writing a purpose and improves the quality noticeably.

Why line two and not line three: line three is often the most tender — a diagnosis, a death, a grandchild, a marriage that nearly ended. It belongs to the man and to his triad in the spring, not to the room at minute fifty. If a man volunteers it anyway, receive it warmly and do not invite the rest to follow.

Hidden • Working the Harvest (slide 27, optional)

A look ahead, not a teach. The Harvest Tree shows what each part is; this slide shows what a man does to bring the fruit to ripeness, in four steps. The Goal: choose the fruit and domain — where one value meets one domain, a goal is born. The Equipping: know your roots and trunk — CliftonStrengths Top 5, VIA strengths and personality are his path of least resistance. The Tending: do the daily work — skill-building (deliberate practice), small identity-based habits (Atomic Habits) and experiments run this week. The Harvest: gather the fruit — the ripe apple goes into his Harvest Charter. The eyebrow carries the frame: under the sun, Jubilee — the work is for rest, not endless toil.

WHAT YOU SAY

“Everything you named this morning is equipment. In the spring you pick one fruit and grow it. Domain and fruit give focus. Strengths power the work. Habits sustain it. Experiments keep it honest. Persistence carries it to fruit.”

Hidden in r9: the slide has no minutes in the spine. Show it for ten seconds only if you are ahead at 0:44; the four steps are in the Participant Guide.

6

The Convergence

0:44 – 1:22 • 38 minutes • Slides 28–36

This is the session. Everything before it was gathering material.

Protect this block absolutely. If you are twelve minutes behind, cut Round Three's one-word circuit and send the sentence home — but run Rounds One and Two in full.

The run of show — walking the room through the thirty-eight minutes

The three sections after this one give you the reasoning behind each round. This is the spoken spine: clock, instruction, and what you say, in order. Post it beside the timer. The stamps assume you released the Caring Shift at 0:44; if you are late, shift every stamp and keep every duration.

0:44 • Setup (1 min, slide 29)

- Board page open in every Workbook. Walk the six rows in under a minute; men are transcribing, not inventing.

WHAT YOU SAY

“Everything on this page you have already written — most of it in the last forty minutes, the rest back in December. You are transcribing, not inventing. Wiring: your top three themes, including the one you did for free. Character: your top two VIA strengths. Non-negotiables: your two values from last week. Trained Hand: the three verbs you would keep. Direction: line two, from ten minutes ago. The sixth row stays blank this morning. We come back for it next week.”

0:45 • Round One — The Solo Build (9 min, slides 30–31)

- 0:45 — FILL, four minutes, silent. The Crosswalk and Skills Harvest rows are already on the Workbook page. Circulate. Say nothing about anyone's page.
- 0:49 — CIRCLE, two minutes. Recognition, not analysis. Say it in those words.
- 0:51 — THE NEED QUESTION, three minutes. Read it twice, slowly. Normalize the stall before they write. Then be quiet.

WHAT YOU SAY

“Four minutes, silent. Fill the five rows.” ... “Now put the pen down and look at the page the way you would look at a photograph of someone you know. Where does the same thing show up in two rows? In three? Circle it. Do not analyze it — notice it.” ... “One line at the bottom: what is the thing you keep noticing that other people walk past? Some of you will have it at once. Some of you will have nothing, and this morning that is normal — write the fallback instead: who has asked you for help in the last two years, and what did they want?”

0:54 • Round Two — The Witness (18 min, slides 32–33)

- Sixty seconds on the rule before you release them. Leave slide 33 (Where. Who. Never Why.) up for the whole round.
- Six minutes per man. Call the switch out loud at 1:00 and 1:06 — every time, no exceptions. The third man is the one who needs it most.
- Circulate for advice-giving. “Not advice. Observation and one question.” Say it three times if you have to. A Why becomes “try that as a Where.”
- For the man who stalled on the need question, the other two offer a candidate, not a solution: “From what I heard, I would guess it is _____. Am I warm?”

WHAT YOU SAY

“Six minutes each, and I will call it. First man: read your Board aloud, top to bottom, need line included — about ninety seconds. Then the other two do exactly two things, in this order. One: name the pattern he did not circle. What you saw on the page — not a verdict on the man. Two: ask him one question, and it begins with Where or Who. Never Why. Why puts a man on trial. Who gets you a name, and a name is something he can call this week. No advice. Observation and one question. The third man in your three is counting on the first two to respect the clock.”

1:12 • Round Three — The Sentence (10 min, slides 34–36)

- 1:12 — One minute: the sentence and its three rules (slides 34–35). Constraints, not suggestions.
- 1:13 — WRITE, five minutes, silent. Circulate for past tense and for “serve the church.”
- 1:18 — THE ONE WORD, three minutes, thirty seconds per man (slide 36). Enforce one word warmly and hard.
- 1:21 — The “not yet” line, then straight into the Test (slide 37). Do not debrief the round.

WHAT YOU SAY

“One sentence, two clauses. At my best, I am the man who — present tense; you are that man this morning, in this chair. Which makes me suspect I am meant to — for —. A real verb and a real person: ‘serve the church’ fails, ‘sit with men who just got laid off’ passes. And the word suspect stays in. This is not your mission statement; that gets written in February, at Session 11. Five minutes.” ... “Read your sentence. The other two say one word each — the strongest word you heard. Not feedback. Not encouragement. One word. Write down what they said; it is usually not the word you thought was carrying the sentence.” ... “If clause two would not come, write ‘not yet.’ That is an honest answer, and a far better one than a manufactured one.”

Setup (1 min, slide 29)

Everything on the Board has already been generated this morning or in a previous session. Men are transcribing, not inventing. Say that — it lowers the resistance considerably. Then walk the rows fast.

WHAT YOU SAY

“There is a sixth row and it stays blank this morning. That is your spiritual gifts, and it is the one row that does not come from an assessment about you — it comes from what God assigned and what this body confirms. We do that next week. You will bring this page back and finish it.”

Men will ask about the blank row. That is the design working. A document a man revises once is a document he owns; a one-and-done worksheet goes in a drawer.

Round One — The Solo Build (9 min, slides 30–31)

WHAT YOU DO

- FILL (4 min, silent). Circulate. Men without materials work from memory and transcribe at home.
- CIRCLE (2 min). Say the instruction is recognition, not analysis — or the engineers will build a correlation matrix. “Look at it the way you would look at a photograph of someone you know.”
- THE NEED QUESTION (3 min). Read it aloud slowly, twice, then be quiet and let them write.

WHY THIS PHRASING — “what do you keep noticing that other people walk past” bypasses the should. Ask a church man what need he wants to meet and he will tell you what a good man ought to say. Ask what he keeps noticing and you get the truth, because noticing is involuntary.

SAY THIS OUT LOUD BEFORE THEY WRITE

Expect 20–30% to stall on the need question. Normalize it in advance so it is not experienced as failure: “Some of you will have this immediately. Some of you will have nothing, and that is completely normal at this stage. Write the fallback instead.” The fallback — who has asked you for help in the last two years, and what did they want — is not a consolation prize. Unsolicited requests are better evidence than introspection.

DO NOT INTERPRET A MAN'S BOARD FOR HIM IN ROUND ONE

If you hand him the pattern, he receives it as your opinion. If the other two hand it to him in Round Two, he receives it as evidence. Circulate and stay quiet.

Round Two — The Witness

18 minutes • 6 per man • slides 32–33

He reads his Board aloud, top to bottom, including his need line if he has one — sixty to ninety seconds. Then the other two do exactly two things, in this order.

Job one — name the pattern he did not circle

This is the Reflected Best Self principle out of Michigan's Ross School: men reliably underweight the trait they are most consistently described by, because to them it is just Tuesday. A man who has spent forty years making other people capable does not experience that as distinguishing. Two outside observers see it in ninety seconds.

Coach the form: describe what you SAW on the page, do not diagnose the man. "Three of your five entries involve other people getting better" is an observation. "You are a natural mentor" is a verdict, and verdicts get argued with.

Job two — one question, "Where" or "Who," never "Why"

WHAT YOU SAY

"One rule and it is not negotiable. Your question begins with Where or Who. Never Why. Why puts a man on trial — he hears "justify yourself," and he will, with a well-constructed answer he has given before that tells you nothing. Where and Who make him locate something. "Why do you want to work with young men" gets you a paragraph. "Who, specifically?" gets you a name — and a name you can call this week."

THE SINGLE MOST LIKELY FAILURE MODE OF THIS SESSION

One group of three spending eleven minutes on the first man and shortchanging the third. Warn them before releasing: "Six minutes each. I will call it. The third man in your three is counting on the first two to respect the clock." Then call it, out loud, every six minutes, without exception.

WHAT YOU DO

- Leave the Where/Who slide up for the whole round. Men need to see it while they are in it.
- Circulate constantly. What you are listening for is ADVICE — men will start solving each other. Intervene immediately and lightly: "Not advice. Observation and one question." You may have to say it three times. Say it three times.
- If you hear a Why, reframe on the spot: "Try that as a Where." The moment a group catches on, the quality of the round doubles.
- For the man who stalled on the need question, the other two hand him a candidate, not a solution: "From what I just heard, I would guess it is _____. Am I warm?" Warm/cold keeps him in charge of the answer.

Proverbs 20:5 is the frame if you want to name it: the man himself often cannot reach his own depths, and someone else draws them out. That is not a weakness in him — that is the design, and it is the whole argument for the triads formed at Session 10.

Round Three — The Sentence

10 minutes • slides 34–36

One sentence, two clauses, two tenses, two destinations. Explain that briefly — men who understand why the sentence is built this way write better sentences. Clause one is The Signature, Charter 1.3, present tense, derived backward from the Board. Clause two is the Contribution Hypothesis, forward-looking and provisional, and it becomes the seed for My Next Chapter over the break.

WHAT YOU SAY

“This is not your mission statement. Your mission statement gets written in February, at Session 11, after this has had five weeks to sit. This morning you are writing a hypothesis — and a hypothesis exists to be tested, which is exactly what the next five weeks are for.”

That framing removes the pressure to be right, which is the single biggest obstacle to a man writing anything at all at minute seventy-five of a hard session.

The three rules, delivered as constraints (1 min, slide 35)

- PRESENT TENSE. Men default to “I was the guy who...” because their identity is filed under a job that ended. Catch it — past tense turns the Signature into an obituary.
- A REAL VERB AND A REAL PERSON. This is the rule they will resist. “Serve the church,” “give back,” “help people” — all noble, none testable, none startable on Tuesday. Push: “If I handed you your sentence and a car, could you drive somewhere with it?”
- “SUSPECT” STAYS. Some men will want to strike it and write a declaration. Do not let them. The hedge keeps him from over-committing to a first draft and it protects Session 11 — a man who declares his mission this morning has nothing to do in February.

WORKED EXAMPLE — use your own if you have a real one. “At my best, I am the man who makes a complicated thing feel manageable to someone who is overwhelmed by it. Which makes me suspect I am meant to sit with men in the first ninety days after a layoff — for the guys at church who are too proud to say they are scared.” What makes it work: a real verb, a real person, and a specific window of time.

The one word (3 min, slide 36)

He reads. The other two say one word each — the strongest word they heard. He writes both down. Next man. Thirty seconds each, and the speed is part of the design.

Why one word: it is the smallest response that still carries information, and smallness is the safeguard. A sentence of feedback becomes encouragement, which is pleasant and tells him nothing. One word forces a choice, and the choosing is the signal. Men consistently discover the word carrying their sentence is not the one they laboured over.

ENFORCE THE ONE-WORD RULE HARD

This is the last exercise of a long morning and men will want to elaborate, encourage, and connect. Stop it warmly: “One word. That is the whole gift.” And make sure every man writes down what he heard — at Session 11, when he builds his mission, that word is often the hinge.

If a man cannot finish clause two

Let him write clause one only and mark clause two “not yet.” That is an acceptable outcome and far better than a manufactured answer. Tell him so out loud, so he does not experience it as failing.

The Close

1:22 – 1:30 • 8 minutes, one of them float • slides 37–44 (38 hidden)

The test (1 min, slide 37)

Under two hours, before Session 11, written on the Board. No lap this morning unless you are ahead; collect every man's test action by text this week. It is Wilderness Week 3 work, not this week's: the homework slide names it that way so it does not sit on top of the Naming the Gift week. Public commitment moves completion rates substantially. The constraint is chosen deliberately: two hours is small enough that no man can honestly claim he does not have it, and small enough that it requires no decision. He is not committing to a ministry. He is making one phone call.

Note the fourth example out loud — “volunteer once. Once, not commit.” Men here either over-commit immediately or avoid entirely for fear of being roped in. Naming the single instance with no obligation releases both types.

Hidden • The Two-Hour Clearing (slide 38, optional)

Optional now (r9): the clearing moves to §3.1 First Steps at Session 13 and sits under Going Deeper on the homework slide. Show it only if you are ahead: one minute, no lap. Frame it as arithmetic, not discipline.

WHAT YOU SAY

“This is not a character question. It is a capacity question. Between this morning and Session 11 you owe a Part One harvest, a first triad meeting, a draft of My Next Chapter, and a test action — three of those weeks on your own in the Wilderness Between. Forty to sixty minutes a week of writing has to live somewhere, and your week is already full. Two hours. Name what comes out. In the spring we do the real subtraction, measured against your mission. Fall subtraction buys time. Spring subtraction spends a life.”

WHAT YOU DO

- One lap, out loud, one sentence each. Specificity is everything: “less TV” is not an answer. “The Sunday afternoon golf I do not actually enjoy” is.
- The man who cannot find two hours has just produced the most useful diagnostic of his fall. Do not shame him — note him, and bring it to his triad in the spring and to Session 13.

Naming the Gift (90 sec, slide 39)

Frame the homework, do not teach gifts. The one sentence that has to land: this is not a test and you will not score yourself. There is no inventory and no website — the Workbook has a card of eleven words and an evidence rule. For every gift not crossed out, name an instance: who, and roughly when. No instance, no claim.

WHAT YOU SAY

“And then next week the room gets a vote. These men have watched you for eight Mondays. If three of them name something you did not put down, the homework did not fail — that is the exercise working.”

IF A MAN ASKS WHY TONGUES OR HEALING ARE NOT ON THE CARD

The honest answer is printed on the card: it draws from Romans 12 and 1 Peter 4, it is a vocabulary rather than a catalogue, and the fuller discussion lives in the Reader’s Companion. Do not litigate it in the room. If he wants to go further, hand him to Gary.

Homework (1 min, slide 40)

Slide 40 is the one closing list, with minutes. Required: §1.3 Strengths & Gifts with The Signature (35) — CliftonStrengths Top 5 and VIA top 5 recorded there, the three kept skills, the Signature in two or three sentences, and the Caring Shift as one line · Naming the Gift, the card and evidence page (20) · Practice: The Barnabas Turn (3 · Speak Truly & Encourage) · Bring the Board and the Gift page (0). About 55 minutes this week. Optional · Going Deeper, only if it calls to you, not counted: a full Caring Shift paragraph, the two-hour clearing, the books on slide 41. Not this week: the test action is Wilderness Week 3, before Session 11. Do not read the list item by item — men have it. Emphasize one thing: the Naming the Gift page is not optional, and next week does not work without it.

Reading (30 sec, slide 41)

Point, don’t teach. No required reading this week — Naming the Gift is the work. Mention Going Deeper once, lightly: any time, pick one; never assigned. Slide 41 now has two cards: Books (a month) and Shorter Readings (an evening): Discover Your CliftonStrengths, VIA Character Strengths, The Caring Shift and Fink’s Six Dimensions, all in the Going Deeper folder. Point at The Caring Shift if line two stirred something; it is the reasoning behind this morning’s three lines. Fink’s partner, Bloom’s Taxonomy, comes at Session 12.

Practice of the Week — The Barnabas Turn (1½ min, slide 42)

WHAT YOU SAY

“When someone runs himself down, hear it, turn it over, hand it back. One minute now: try it once on the man beside you.”

WHAT YOU DO

- Read the practice: The Barnabas Turn. Name its skill and section: “It is section 3, Speak Truly & Encourage, in your Toolkit — the card is the menu, the Toolkit is the kitchen.” Then one minute, in pairs, right now: The man beside you names one thing he is hard on himself about; hear it, turn it over, hand it back. Then swap. Out of time? Each man names the one person he will try it with this week. The tracker is weekly, not daily: “Tried it this week ☐ ” and one moment line on the card. Rooted in Acts 4:36 (Barnabas, son of

encouragement) and Clifton's shadow side of strengths. This morning's basement slide is the same move: every shadow points back to a strength. The three steps are printed on the back of the card.

- Session 9 check-in: "Tell us one moment with this week's practice: The Barnabas Turn."

Handoff and Benediction (1½ min with prayer, slides 43–44)

Then the handoff, and stop: you have named what you are wired to do; next week we ask who wired you, and what He assigned. Read Ephesians 2:10 slowly. Poiema — workmanship, a made thing, crafted on purpose. The wiring was prepared and so was the work; neither was self-assigned. Close in prayer: gratitude for the wiring, petition for clarity on the assignment, blessing on the tests just committed to.

The Facilitator's Kitchen

Frameworks below the waterline — not for the room

These belong in your understanding, not on a slide. Iceberg principle: analytical architecture in the kitchen, experience on the table.

Why five instruments and not three

The convergence exercise only produces signal if the rows are genuinely independent readings. If two rows measured the same trait, every repeat between them would be an artifact of the instrument rather than a fact about the man. Five independent sources converging is evidence; two correlated sources agreeing is arithmetic. That is why the Skills Harvest never touches CliftonStrengths or VIA — it comes entirely from the man's own narrative.

Why the Caring Shift sits in the middle

Strengths give capacity; caring gives direction. Buechner's equation has two terms and an assessment supplies only one. Placed at the end it would be an epilogue; placed in the middle it supplies the second term just before the Convergence needs it — and it breaks the cognitive register between two analytical blocks.

Why spiritual gifts are not in this session

CliftonStrengths and VIA describe natural wiring. Spiritual gifts describe divine commission to a body. Debrief all three in one block and you quietly teach men they are three flavors of the same thing — which is the most common error in Christian vocational work. The separation is doing theology, not just managing the clock.

Why an observation exercise instead of an inventory

Self-report gift inventories reward admiration over evidence — men score high on gifts they wish they had. And every published list has already taken a position on the sign gifts before a man answers question one. An observation-based exercise self-limits to what is actually visible in a Monday-morning men's group, which means the format takes the position for you and the cessationist question never arrives at the door.

Sourcing notes

- CliftonStrengths: 34 themes in four domains (in the room: "Gallup's four groups"). The one-in-33-million figure is Gallup's published estimate for an exact top five in order.
- "Balcony and basement" is coaching-community language, not official Gallup terminology.
- VIA: Peterson & Seligman, Character Strengths and Virtues (2004). 24 strengths, six virtues.

- Carstensen: socioemotional selectivity theory, developed since the early 1990s; general-audience account in *A Long Bright Future*. If a man asks for a source, that is the pointer — do not go further.
- Buechner: *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC* (1973).
- Reflected Best Self: University of Michigan, Ross School of Business.
- Epstein, Range — the Darwin illustration behind Charter Appendix B, *My Forgotten Range*.

The Four Watch-Points

Men to note this morning, and follow up this week

WHEN	WHO	WHAT IT MEANS
Opening round	The man who says “being needed,” “being the guy,” “solving”	An identity word wearing a strength costume. Most likely to stall at the need question — and this morning matters most to him.
Group skew	The man who visibly deflates	Executing-heavy men hear “you are obsolete.” Repeat the structural line to him directly.
Skills Harvest	The man whose page is empty, or who says “all five were the job”	Usually grief about how the career ended, not modesty. Route him to the Forgotten Range.
“You did not get soft”	The man for whom “time is finite” is not abstract	A peer lost, a diagnosis, a parent buried. Do not name him. Find him at the break or call this week.

AND ONE MORE

If you ran the optional clearing: the man who cannot find two hours. That is not a failure to be corrected this morning — it is diagnostic data for Session 13 and for his triad in the spring. Note it and let it go.

POST-SESSION — SAME DAY

Send one text to the cohort from your own number
One sentence, before the day is out.
Write down every man’s test action
You will open Session 11 by asking what they found out, and they will be astonished you remembered.
Note the four watch-point men
Plus anyone whose both values came up orphans.
Contact within 48 hours
Anyone who disclosed something heavy — a diagnosis, a marriage, a death.
Note timing adjustments for Session 9
Especially where you lost or gained minutes.

Appendix A

Scripture reference

REFERENCE	HOW IT IS USED
Ephesians 2:10	Poiema. The wiring was prepared, and so was the work. Benediction, and the theological spine under “talent is not calling.”
Proverbs 20:5	Deep waters; one who has insight draws them out. The warrant for Round Two and for triads.
Psalms 90:12	Numbering our days. Optional anchor after the Caring Shift reframe.
1 Corinthians 12:7	Gifts for the common good — the common good gets a vote. Frames the Session 9 handoff.
1 Peter 4:10–11	Faithful stewards; if anyone speaks, if anyone serves. Structures the gift vocabulary card.
Romans 12:4–8	One body, many members. The primary source for the card’s language.

Appendix B

If you are running late

Cut in this order. Never reverse it.

CUT	SAVES	WHAT IT COSTS
Basement slide — slide 11, show it for ten seconds	1 min	The Barnabas Turn loses its anchor in the room. Men have the four basements in the Participant Guide.
Group examples — shorten slide 7	30 sec	Nothing. They can read their own report.
One-word circuit — slide 36	3 min	A real loss. Only cut if you are 10+ minutes behind at 1:15.
The sentence itself — send home	5 min	Last resort. If you do this, men write it before bed and bring it to S9.

Never cut Round Two.

If Round Two runs short, the man who went third gets nothing, and he is usually the man who most

needed it. Take the time from anywhere else.

Appendix C

Recovery prompts

If the room will not engage the need question

- What do people thank you for that you did not think was a big deal?
- What makes you angry in a way that is actually about something being wrong, not about you being inconvenienced?
- Where have you found yourself explaining something twice because nobody else would explain it?

If a group goes quiet in Round Two

- Read his Trained Hand row back to him. What do you notice about the three verbs together?
- Which row surprised you most when he read it?
- If you had to guess the one thing he does that he does not know he does — what would you guess?

If a man says the whole thing feels like navel-gazing

He is not wrong to be suspicious, and the answer is not reassurance. Point at the test action: “Fair. That is why nobody leaves this morning without a phone call to make. If the sentence is wrong, the phone call will tell you inside a week.” Men who resist reflection usually respect a falsifiable claim.

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Wise Men Still Seek, Knowing Their Why's

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