Beyond the Bonus Facilitation Guide

Overview

These case studies are narrative accounts designed to stimulate dialogue about the virtues that shape professional life. They differ importantly from the ethical case studies most faculty and students encounter in professional training. Rather than presenting a moral dilemma to be resolved, each case illustrates the presence—or absence—of a particular virtue as it operates in everyday practice. The goal is not to reach a verdict on what a character should have done, but to explore what a virtue looks like in action—and what may be at stake when it is absent.

Cases are organized by virtue and professional context, but many will resonate beyond their primary category. A case about curiosity in a business setting may illuminate curiosity in medicine or law. Instructors are encouraged to use cases flexibly and across disciplines.

General Facilitation Tips

- **Focus on virtue, not verdict.** Keep discussion centered on how the virtue appears (or is absent) in the case, not on whether the character made the right call. If the conversation drifts toward “what should they have done?” redirect gently.
- **Start with observation.** Open by asking what students noticed before asking what they think. Grounding early discussion in specific moments from the case prevents premature judgment.
- **Use questions as starting points, not a script.** Follow student energy. If a student raises a more generative question than the ones provided, pursue it.
- **Push back on easy agreement.** If the room converges too quickly, the case’s complexity may not have been fully engaged. Invite students to complicate their own claims and consider opposing readings.
- **Invite connection to professional life.** The richest moments often come when students link the case to patterns they've observed or anticipate: “I’ve seen something like this when . . .”
- **Let silence work.** Resist the urge to fill every pause. Students often need a moment to arrive at their most substantive responses.
- **Close with reflection.** Reserve a few minutes to ask students what will stay with them — a question, an image, an unresolved tension. A sentence or two naming what they now understand about the virtue that they didn't before is a strong closing move.

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Discussion Questions

1. In what ways does Maya excel at gratitude?
2. Does Maya's response to Daniel reflect prudent, professional boundary-setting or a limitation in her practice of gratitude?
3. What is the difference between performing the formal gesture of saying thank you and cultivating an ongoing posture of gratitude in leadership?
4. Beyond financial compensation or general public praise, what would it look like for Apex Software to respond to Chloe's team with deep gratitude?

Facilitation of this Case

Resist making Maya a villain. Maya is not cruel or malicious; she hosted a celebration, gave public praise, and awarded bonuses. Her posture reflects a deeply ingrained corporate worldview: professional relationships are contractual obligations satisfied through compensation and metric-based rewards. Help students locate both where her framing excels and where it falls short.

Elevate Daniel's and Chloe's roles. Draw attention to Daniel's attempt to inform Maya of ground-level realities. Chloe's team offered something beyond their formal duties—personal sacrifice, grace under pressure, and client care. Examine how treating unearned human generosity as a baseline expectation might impact morale, relationships, and organizational culture over time.

Consider different definitions of gratitude. There are many ways the virtue is understood. Discuss the nuances of gratitude.

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